

Autumn Concert



Saturday 25th November 2023

Deddington Church

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Christmas Concert

Saturday 9th December 2023

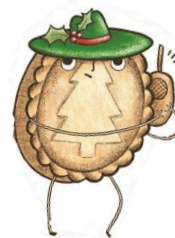


A programme of festive favourites!

Including

Lawrence Killian's

Mince Spies



4.00 pm - St Mary's Church, Banbury

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Spring Concert

Saturday 16th March 2024

Ethel Smyth – *Overture 'The Wreckers'*

Dvořák – *American Suite*

Leokadiya Kashperova – *Symphony in B minor*

7.30 p.m. – Deddington Church

Tickets from

www.banburysymphony.com

Programme

Beethoven – *Egmont Overture*

Finzi – *Cello Concerto*

I – Allegro moderato

II – Andante quieto

III – Rondo: Adagio – Allegro giocoso

Soloist – Yoanna Prodanova

Interval

Rachmaninoff - *Symphony No. 2 in E minor*

I Largo – Allegro moderato (E minor)

II Allegro molto (A minor)

III Adagio (A major)

IV Allegro vivace (E major)

A message from the chair of Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Welcome again to the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Deddington – I'm delighted that you are able to be with us for our concert this evening.

This evening we have a two well-known works, in Beethoven's Egmont Overture and Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, as well as a lesser-known work, Finzi's Cello Concerto.

Rachmaninoff's symphony will be familiar to many of you, and is one of his best-loved works, full of romantic tunes and lush harmonies. The Finzi cello concerto, on the other hand, is likely to be a new piece to many of you. A relatively recent work, the first recording was released only in 1977 (introducing Yo-Yo Ma), and it remains relatively unknown, certainly compared to the Elgar cello concerto. However, it is a glorious piece that deserves to be performed more often, and I hope that you enjoy this evening's performance with our fabulous soloist, Yoanna Prodanova.

Looking forward, the orchestra will be in St Mary's church, Banbury performing our Christmas concert at 4pm on December 9th, full of enjoyable Christmas favourites and of course, plenty of carols. We will also be making the world-premier performance of Lawrence Killian's new Christmas piece Mince Spies – not to be missed.

Looking forward further still, we have another exciting concert planned here in Deddington on March 16th, which will include more lesser-known works which are now beginning to emerge from underserved obscurity.

I hope that you enjoy our concert tonight and we look forward to seeing you again!

Dave Settle,

Chair, Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Yoanna Prodanova

Cellist Yoanna Prodanova was born in 1992 in Varna, Bulgaria. She completed her studies in 2019 at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she was a Bicentenary Scholar on the prestigious Advanced Diploma course, already having obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Previously she studied in Varna and in Montreal where her family immigrated in 2006.

Yoanna has performed concertos with the Royal Academy of Music Orchestra, the Amati Orchestra, the Surrey Philharmonic and the Guildford Symphony Orchestra among others. She regularly performs as a recitalist in the UK and Europe. In 2019 she gave her recital debut in Switzerland at the Studio Ernest Ansermet where she played the Swiss premiere of Valentin Gheorghiu's sonata for cello and piano with her duo partner Mihai Ritivoiu. This recital was broadcast live on RTS Espace 2.

Yoanna's debut album including works by Janacek, Fauré and Chopin with Mihai Ritivoiu was released in 2020 on the Linn Records label. She has also recorded the Brahms clarinet trio with Joseph Shiner and Somi Kim for Orchid Records.

Yoanna has been invited to festivals such as OCM Prussia Cove, Rencontres de violoncelle de Bélays in France, Siete Lagos Festival in Patagonia, St Magnus Festival in Orkney and the Lincolnshire Chamber Music Festival, and has collaborated with artists such as Andrew



Marriner, Alissa Firsova, Ian Swensen, Matt Hunt and the Doric String Quartet.

Yoanna's awards include The Philip and Dorothy Green Award for Young Artists (2016), the Sylva Gelber Award (2017, 2018), Tunnell Trust Award (2019) and the First prize at the International Joachim Competition in Weimar with her string quartet, the Barbican Quartet.

Yoanna's most important cello mentors have been, in chronological order, Daniela Kirilova, Denis Brott, Louise Hopkins, Rebecca Gilliver, Richard Lester and Hannah Roberts. She is extremely grateful to the Canimex Group for the loan of a beautiful cello made by Giuseppe Gagliano in 1788.

Paul Willett – Conductor

Paul Willett is our Conductor and Musical Director. Paul studied violin, singing and piano as a student but his main instrument was the French horn on which he gained his Performance Diploma from The Royal College of Music at the age of 16. He then went on to read music on scholarship at The Queen's College, Oxford, and studied for his teaching certificate in Music and Physical Education at Reading University.

For several years Paul combined teaching and freelance playing. He has given solo recitals and performed concertos throughout the country. He was a member of The Five Winds, a group that performed both at home and abroad, and also on BBC radio. Paul worked as a brass teacher for Oxfordshire Music Service and was director of a Saturday Music School of 200 students.

Paul was the Director of Didcot Sixth Form and whilst he is now mostly retired to concentrate on his music making and

being a 'stay-at-home' dad to his son Alfie, he has continued working part-time at Didcot Girls' School where he was Deputy Headteacher for many years.

Anna Fleming - Leader

Anna was born in South Africa where she started playing the violin at the age of ten. While studying music at secondary school, Anna became a member of the South African National Youth Orchestra. After successfully completing her music degree, majoring in orchestral studies, Anna joined the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra in 1992.

Anna moved to England in late 1996. Keen to continue her orchestral playing, Anna joined the Banbury Symphony Orchestra in 1997 and became the leader of the orchestra in 2000, a post that she has held ever since. As a committed Christian, Anna plays an active role in church music. Focusing primarily on private violin tuition, Anna particularly enjoys helping adults to learn to play and she can be contacted on 01295 780017.



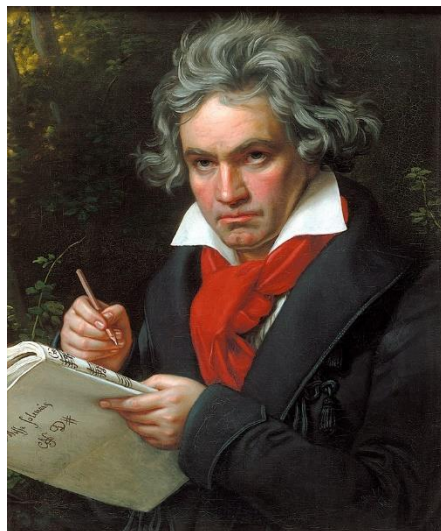
Ludwig van Beethoven

Egmont Overture

As the musicologist Paul Mies has remarked, heroism was close to Beethoven's own personality and it was a major concern of his times. It is not surprising then, that in his comparatively rare forays into music for the theatre Beethoven proved most attracted to protagonists who dared much against repressive forces.

Egmont would certainly be a case in point. In 1809 Beethoven was commissioned to compose incidental music for the belated Vienna premiere of the play by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1754-1832). This was Goethe's free interpretation of the titular Count Egmont's 16th-century struggle for Dutch liberty against the autocratic imperial rule of Spain. Egmont is imprisoned and sentenced to death, and when Klärchen, his mistress, fails to free him, she commits suicide. Before his own death, Egmont delivers a rousing speech and his execution becomes a victorious martyrdom in a fight against oppression.

Beethoven's incidental music begins with a powerful, strikingly original overture that summarizes the course of the drama, from its ominous slow introduction (suggesting the oppressive tread of Spain with the rhythm of the sarabande) to the manic transformation of tragedy into triumph in a brilliant



coda, which Beethoven echoed at the end of the play as a Victory Symphony. (Beethoven conducted the Overture in another charity concert in Vienna in March 1814, coupled with Wellington's Victory.)

Gerald Finzi

Cello Concerto

Gerald Finzi's Cello Concerto was his last completed work, first performed in 1955, a year before his death. It is also by a long way his most substantial orchestral score at 37 minutes. And for a composer whose output was so closely entwined with words and their setting, it is a rare extended essay in abstract musical thought. But after Elgar's concerto, which it occasionally echoes, it ranks as one of the finest of all British works for cello and orchestra,

standing alongside Bridge's Oration and Britten's Cello Symphony.

When he started writing the concerto in 1951, Finzi already knew he did not have long to live, and the wistful land of lost content that never seems too far away in any of his music certainly pervades this work.

The concerto was written as the result of a request by John Barbirolli, and first performed by Barbirolli and the Hallé



Orchestra, with Christopher Bunting as the soloist at the Cheltenham Music Festival on 19 July 1955. The first radio broadcast of the concerto was given on the night before Finzi died in 1956.

Part of the second movement was used as the signature tune for the BBC Radio 2003 of adaptation of C. P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers*.

The cellist Raphael Wallfisch says:

“For me, Gerald Finzi's Cello Concerto is the greatest of all British cello concertos. It's amazing that it had to languish in obscurity for so long after it was first performed – I love playing it, I think it's full of excitement and dramatic contrast, and I continue to offer it when I'm asked to perform both in Britain and overseas. It's always hard to convince people to take it on, though; Elgar, Britten and Walton are always the favoured British composers, but in my opinion the Finzi outshines the Elgar Concerto for sheer drama and intensity.”

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Symphony No. 2 in E minor

Following the disastrous March 27, 1897 St. Petersburg world premiere of his First Symphony, Russian composer and pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff plunged into a profound depression. The crisis that threatened to destroy Rachmaninoff's musical career lasted for three years. A breakthrough for Rachmaninoff finally occurred in 1900. On the advice of relatives, Rachmaninoff consulted Dr. Nikolai Dahl, a psychiatrist who used hypnosis in the treatment of his patients. The consultations with Dr. Dahl were an extraordinary success. Rachmaninoff experienced a tremendous resurgence of confidence and immediately began to

compose his Second Piano Concerto (1901), a work he dedicated to Dr Dahl.

Rachmaninoff even summoned the courage to attempt another Symphony. In the fall of 1906, Rachmaninoff and his family moved from their native Russia to Dresden. The relocation offered Rachmaninoff the solitude he needed to devote himself entirely to composition. In October, Rachmaninoff began his Second Symphony, and finished the first draft of the score on New Year's Day, 1907.

Rachmaninoff later refined the score of his Second Symphony and conducted its premiere in St. Petersburg on February 8, 1908. The work's favourable reception by the audience and critics did much to vindicate Rachmaninoff after the humiliating premiere of his First Symphony. The Second Symphony proved to be immensely popular throughout Rachmaninoff's life, and remains one of his most beloved orchestral works. The rich orchestration and passionate melodies assure its status among the finest Russian symphonies of the late Romantic era.

The Second Symphony is in four movements. The first begins with an extended slow-tempo introduction (Largo), opening with a motif that will appear in various guises throughout the work. The principal quick-tempo section (Allegro moderato) follows. The second movement is a vibrant scherzo

(Allegro molto), culminating in the brass's chorale transformation of the Symphony's opening measures. The beautiful third movement (Adagio) is based upon two melodies, presented at the outset. The finale (Allegro vivace), recalling music from previous movements, propels to an exuberant close.



Banbury Symphony Orchestra

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All rehearsals take place in Banbury in term time on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30 pm.

