

The Banbury Symphony Orchestra

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The Banbury Symphony Orchestra, under its conductor Raymond Head, is going from strength to strength. More than 60 amateur players from the Banbury area attend weekly rehearsals, and give four concerts a year, including a children's concert. The orchestra plays a very wide repertoire, introducing new and unusual works as well as the well loved masterpieces. Top rate soloists play with the orchestra, and members have benefited from sectional tuition from professional players at rehearsal. The orchestra depends on support from the public, through their attendance at concerts, and the generous extra support given by Patrons and Friends. If you enjoy our concerts, you would perhaps like to consider becoming one of our Patrons or Friends.

PATRONS are those who wish to give valuable financial support in the form of an annual donation. In return, they receive news of each concert from the Treasurer, and are recognised in the programme notes. If you would like to become a Patron, please complete the slip and return to: *Claire Hedges, Treasurer, Banbury Symphony Orchestra, 6 Park Close, Banbury. Tel. 263886*

FRIENDS are those who perhaps do not play an instrument but would like to be more closely involved in the orchestra. They are invited to help in the concerts, for example, by selling tickets at the door or looking after soloists just prior to a concert. For an annual subscription of £8 Friends receive a regular newsletter, £1 off their ticket to each concert, and an invitation to attend dress rehearsals, and any social events the orchestra may hold.

Friends are also recognised in the programme notes. If you would like to become a Friend of the orchestra, please complete the slip below and return to:

Rosie Houldsworth, Friends' of the BSO Secretary, 23 Distons Lane, Chipping Norton, OX7 5NY. Tel. 0608 643967.

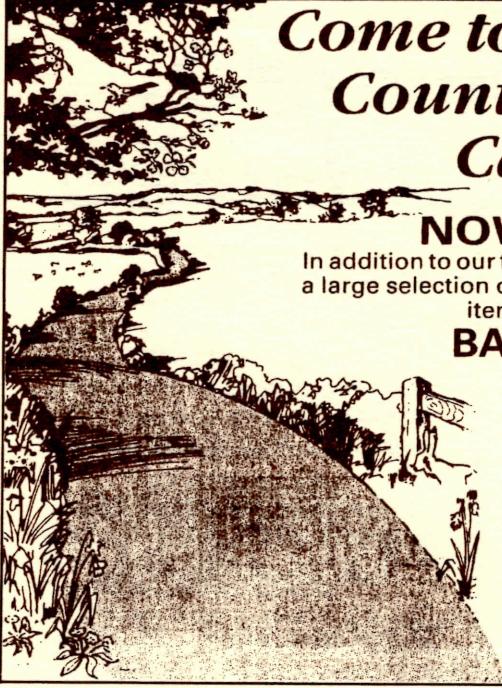
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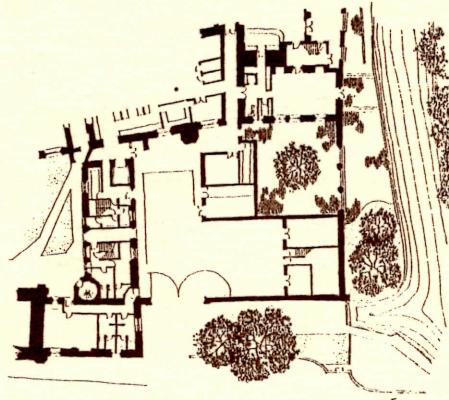
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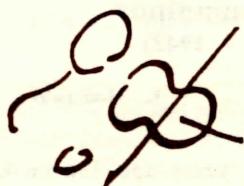
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Banbury Symphony Orchestra



Charles Martin

Charles Martin studied with John Simons and the composer Richard Arnell at Trinity School of Music, London. He left there in 1974 to become a pianist at the Royal Ballet School. During this time he performed regularly, as part of a piano duo, in and around London.

In 1978 he went to live in Klagenfurt in Austria, where he was a répétiteur in an opera company. It was there that he gained experience as an accompanist, and he broadcast on Austrian radio in a series on Yugoslavian music. He returned to England in 1981, to take up a post at Winchester House School in Brackley, where he is now Director of Music. He has become well known locally as an accomplished and enthusiastic teacher, accompanist and performer. Charles played Grieg's piano concerto to great acclaim with the Banbury Symphony Orchestra in March 1989.

Raymond Head

Raymond Head has been with the Banbury Symphony Orchestra for four years. During this time he has introduced all kinds of music into the orchestra's repertoire, from 18th century to modern music. The orchestra has given first performances, such as David Pope's *Never Such Innocence* and John Fould's *Chinese Suite*, which was later broadcast by the BBC World Service. At other times it has performed rarely heard works, such as Parry's *Second Symphony*, of which it gave the first modern performance two years ago.

Raymond is very interested in training the orchestra through the help of professional players. In the past the orchestra has had help from the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, from Lorna Windass and from Peter Walden, oboist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Raymond's musical career has been honoured with awards from the Holst Foundation, the British Academy and Yale University. He has broadcast for the BBC and appeared as an accompanist and recitalist in Britain and Europe. He has also published two books, one on architecture and one on oriental art. Next year he will be conducting at the Dartington International Summer School of Music.

Rachmaninov
(1873 - 1943)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor
Opus 18

1. Moderato 2. Adagio sostenuto 3. Allegro scherzando

Thirty years ago Rachmaninov's music was very much maligned by the musicologists of the day. His music, full of memorable melodies and rich harmonies, seemed anachronistic to some. But the general public has always held Rachmaninov's music in deep affection. Indeed, a new generation has rediscovered and cherished such important works as *The Bells*, *The Isle of the Dead*, *The Vespers*, as well as the symphonies, and of course, the works for piano and orchestra.

Rachmaninov was a great pianist himself and toured widely throughout his life. At the St. Petersburg and, later, at the Moscow Conservatory, he studied piano and composition, and in 1892 won the Gold Medal. His first piano concerto of 1895 and the Prelude in C sharp minor made him internationally famous. It seemed nothing could stop him becoming a celebrity. But the disastrous first performance of his first symphony in 1897 and its subsequent derision left the composer profoundly wounded. His confidence evaporated and he could compose nothing. A commission from London in 1899 for another piano concerto found him desolate. Finally, in 1900 he went to Dr Nikolas Dahl, a psychologist and physician in Moscow who put him through a course of hypnosis to restore his confidence. It was very successful and by the end of the year, a new piano concerto, the one being played tonight, was completed. Its astounding success re-established his position as a composer of note.

During the Revolution of 1917 Rachmaninov left Russia for good, never to see his country again, and divided his time between the U.S.A. and Switzerland, giving recitals.

The opening bars of the concerto for solo piano would seem to indicate the tension within Rachmaninov himself. The chords eventually resolve into an heroic march, albeit one which seems at times of fragile strength. Throughout the work the moments of heroic activity are interspersed with profound reflections (notably the second movement), excitement and tender, lyrical beauty. Had it not been for the failure of his first symphony, and the intense struggle to overcome depression, he undoubtedly would not have journeyed into the innermost recesses of his soul and brought forth such a remarkable work. It comes as no surprise to learn that the work is dedicated to Dr. Dahl, the person who had healed him.

Interval

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)

The Planets Suite

At the time that Holst began to write *The Planets* in 1914, he had suffered a period of about two years when the failure of his most ambitious work *The Cloud Messenger* haunted him. Holst was much older than Rachmaninov when this feeling descended upon him. His great friend Vaughan Williams had been very successful with *The Tallis Fantasia*, and *The Sea Symphony* but Holst had only modest successes, with *The Mystic Trumpeter* (which the Banbury Symphony Orchestra played two years ago), a few choral works and little else. His great opera *Sita*, along with the cantata *The Cloud Messenger*, failed. Holst became very disenchanted with music, particularly his own. He had great friends who resolutely supported him in every way, including financially, but this only made him more depressed.

By 1912 Holst had begun to study astrology seriously, and he recognised that within its symbolic system profound insights into the human condition could be gleaned. Together with his friend, the author Clifford Bax (brother of the composer Arnold Bax) they would draw up charts of their friends and were surprised to discover how closely they resembled the chosen people. As he read books about the subject so did the character of each planet suggest musical ideas to him. It should be remembered that Pluto had yet to be discovered when Holst was writing his suite. It was for the insights into the human condition that Holst studied astrology, so it comes as something of a shock to find some commentators, even people Holst knew, talking about wizards in the Uranus movement, and merry peasants dancing in Jupiter. Nothing of the kind was mentioned in the programme note for the first performance. What Holst gives us is a mystical journey of the soul as it develops.

MARS is the energy of youth, the pioneer and the will to turn thought into action. At one extreme it represents the unleashed elemental forces and their powers to create or destroy.

VENUS brings with it the discovery of the power of love. This can only be discovered once the influence of Mars has spent itself so that the soul longs for peace and friendship with others.

MERCURY, the winged messenger, refers to the development of mind and the silver thread of memory through which we can dart hither and thither in space and time.

JUPITER brings the understanding and wisdom gained from experience. Here there is a sense of well-being, mirth and expansion of the spirit and an inclination to nobility of thought, well expressed in Holst's famous tune.

SATURN, the bringer of old age, when people have to face their own mortality and the meaning of life. The acceptance and resolution of the tension increases personal insight and wisdom.

URANUS, the magician, brings inspiration and governs forces we cannot see or explain. He is erratic and illogical, well expressed in the music, and informs us that there is more to life than what is revealed through our senses.

NEPTUNE, the mystic, the poet, priest or musician. Neptune signifies the moments when the mortal self seems to fall away and one is face to face with the eternal spirit and angelic forces.

When *The Planets Suite* was first performed in 1920 it was greeted with great acclaim and made the composer famous overnight. One critic wrote "The Planets is one of the biggest things this century has produced. Holst has indeed arrived."

Notes by Raymond Head

*We are most grateful to Sibford School for the opportunity to use
their hall for this concert*

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FUTURE CONCERTS

Saturday 7th November 1992

Mendelssohn - Hebrides Overture
Dvorak - Othello
Wagner - Ride of the Valkyries
Haydn - Trumpet Concerto
Grieg - Peer Gynt Suite No.1

Saturday 28th November

Children's Concert
Grainger - Country Gardens
Tchaikovsky - Selection from the Nutcracker Suite
Songs & Carols
Prokofiev - Peter and the Wolf

Saturday March 27th 1993

Wagner - Tannhäuser
Rodrigo - Guitar Concierto de Aranjuez
Sibelius - Symphony No.1

Saturday 3rd July 1993

An Overture
Vaughan Williams - Symphony No.5
Dvorak - Cello Concerto

O

THE BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Sir Charles Groves

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Rachel Saunders
Robert Franklin
Jessica Walker
Martin Saunders
Clare Davis
Emma Callery
David Golby
Carol Davis

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Gill Walker
Cyril Williams
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Menna Frost
Bryony Yelloly
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Penny Tolmie
Nadia Temple
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David Bolton-King
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Cor Anglais
Margaret Malpass

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Jeremy Little
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Rachel Williams

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Robert Gotch
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Tony Chapman
Rachel Kent
Ian McCubbin

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Cathy Gray
Rachel Kent
Ian McCubbin
Contra Bassoon
Maurice Byrne

Horns

Paul Godman
Gareth Lewis
Robert Fox
David Terrett
Jonathan Williams
Richard Todd

Trumpets

Andrew Bruce
Samantha Ford
Paul Mummary
Martin Mills

Trombones

Paul Macey
Gary Clifton
Malcolm Saunders

Tubas

Colin Brind
Alan Prickett

....over)

...cont.)

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Jeanette Skeath
Kathy Hill

Rosalind Densham
Joanna Rigg
Phillipa Furlong
Anne Muir

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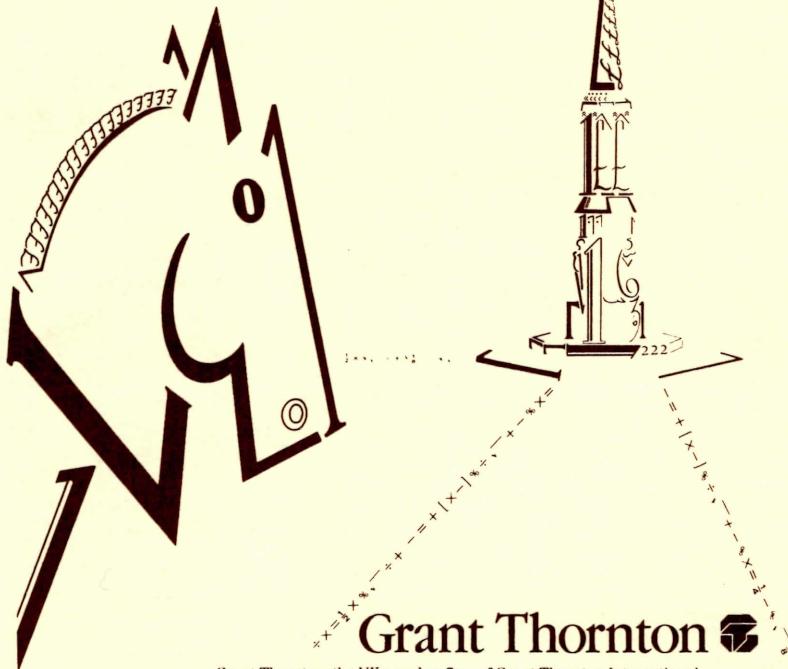
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