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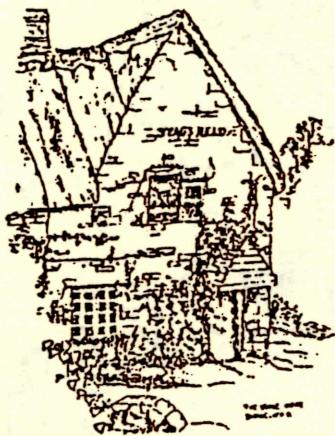
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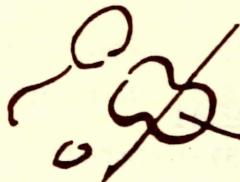
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# Banbury Symphony Orchestra



## Abigail Smith

Abigail Smith was born in Nottingham in 1970. She started learning the violin at the age of nine and studied at the West Bridgford School and Clarendon College of Further Education before pursuing a B.A. Honours Degree course at Birmingham Conservatoire, where she is still studying with Jeremy Ballard. At the Birmingham Conservatoire she has led the Sinfonia Orchestra and Paradise Sinfonietta as well as playing sub-principal in the Symphony Orchestra. Her solo and chamber music performances have included a performance of the Bach Double Violin Concerto with the Capricci Chamber Orchestra, and Schubert's Trout Quintet last March. Abigail hopes to pursue a career in orchestral playing.

## Raymond Head

Raymond Head has been with the Banbury Symphony Orchestra for over 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. The BBC recently commissioned an article by Raymond to accompany the current Proms season. This year he will be conducting at the Dartington International Summer School of Music.

## Elgar

(1857-1934)

### Alassio: In the South

At the end of 1903 Elgar had been enjoying the successes of the *Enigma Variations* and the *Dream of Gerontius*, and had hoped to start his first symphony. But he could write nothing, so he planned a visit to Italy during the winter of 1903-4. However in Italy the weather was cold and wet and the Elgars had given up hope of achieving anything more serious than indulging in the local wine. One day while visiting a town called Moglio he began to sketch ideas for a new work. A little later, on a visit to Andora, Elgar was impressed by a chapel, and a shepherd with his flock who happened to be passing, and was overwhelmed by the power of a large Roman bridge still being used. He began to muse on the conflict between the now peaceful sight of shepherd and chapel and the once mighty armies of the Romans who had fought over this area. In the background there remained constant the snowy mountains, the streams and flowers and in the distance the blue Mediterranean. The result was *Alassio*.

## Vaughan Williams

(1872-1959)

### Fantasia on

Greensleeves

This popular evocative piece emerged from incidental music Vaughan Williams had written in 1912 for Shakespeare's play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The production took place at Stratford and the company was directed by Sir Frank Benson. In the middle section a Norfolk tune called 'Lovely Joan' can be heard.

# Vaughan Williams      The Lark Ascending:

A Romance for violin & orchestra

To see in nature the workings of divine mysteries has been a British preoccupation since Tudor times. In the 18th century Wordsworth, Shelly and then Keats further emphasized our feelings of a special relationship with the landscape. The work of the artist Samuel Palmer has also become embedded in our national consciousness through his Shoreham pictures. In music that place has largely been taken by the work of Vaughan Williams. *The Lark Ascending*, written in 1914, is a key work in this respect because its influence on other English pastoral music was very strong. The heavenly skylark is free, and rhapsodic in its motion, while the earth is represented by folksong. For a time the two are entwined, one influencing the other, but eventually the bird loosens its shackles and flies away free, like the departing human soul. This piece would therefore appear to symbolise the resurrection. It was a source of great comfort to the bereaved when it was first performed in 1921, after the end of the First World War.

## *Interval*

Dvorák

(1841-1904)

1. Allegro con brio
2. Adagio
3. Allegretto grazioso
4. Allegro ma non troppo

Symphony No. 8

in G Major

In 1889 when this symphony was written Dvorak was feeling at the height of his powers, composing music effortlessly. To a friend he confided, "it's going unexpectedly easily and melodies simply pour out of me". Dvorak was speaking of a piano quartet but it could equally well describe the symphony. From the beginning

it is one effortless stream of melody from the beautiful cello opening, and the evocation of birds and nature in general, the dance-like third movement with its sudden changes, and reiterations of the opening cello melody; - not that the symphony is unclouded by deeper, sometimes tragic moments, but all in all this is Dvorak at his most optimistic and affirmative.

Notes by Raymond Head

*We are very grateful to Sibford School for allowing us to use this hall for our concert, and particularly to Mark Paine for all his help in putting on the concert.*

∞

### Tribute to Sue Blanch



This concert is dedicated to Sue Blanch who played the flute with the orchestra for 15 years and who died last summer after a long fight against cancer. The cheerful endurance with which she faced her situation and her courageous struggle against the illness were truly an inspiration to others.

Sue was well known in musical circles of north Oxfordshire as a music teacher and county music adviser. She inspired a love of music in those she taught, several of whom have said they were profoundly influenced by her.

We are donating part of the proceeds of this concert to the Macmillan Nurses as a token of thanks for the care and help they gave to Sue.

∞

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Bach - *Concerto for Oboe and Violin*  
Bruckner - *Symphony No. 9*

## CHILDREN'S CONCERT

Saturday 4th December 1993

Verdi - *Aida*  
Tchaikovsky - *Nutcracker Suite*  
**Howard Blake - *The Snowman***

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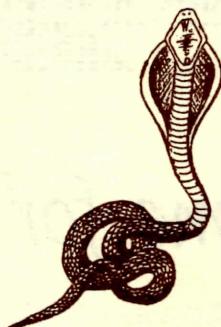
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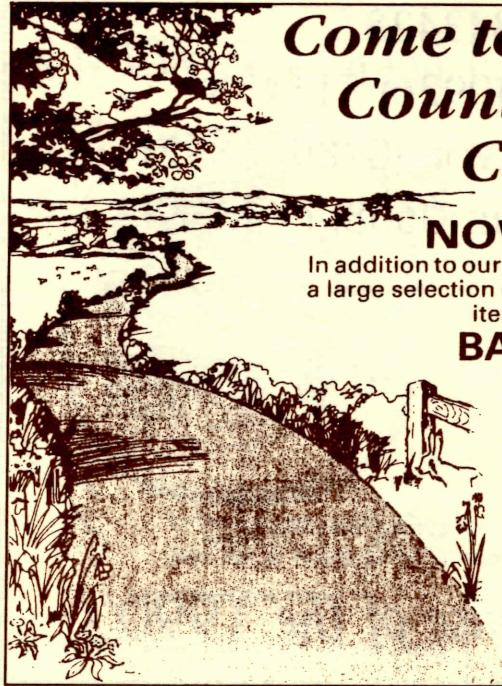
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