

The Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 15th June 1996
Programme 50p

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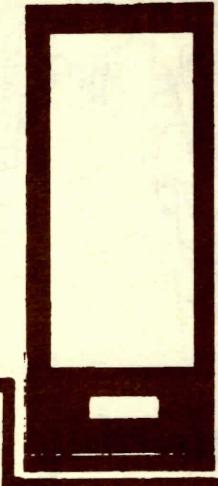
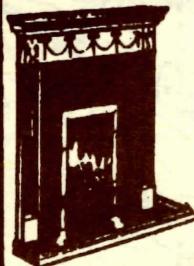
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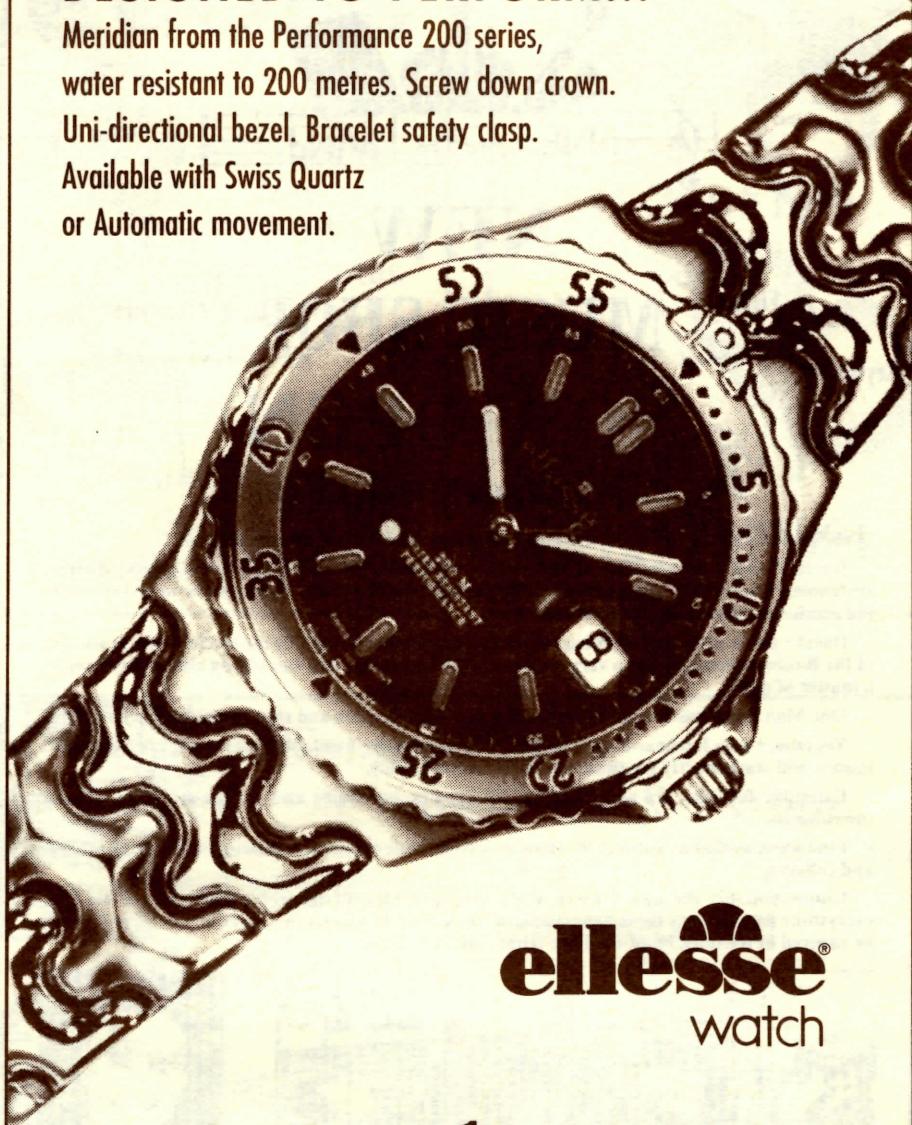
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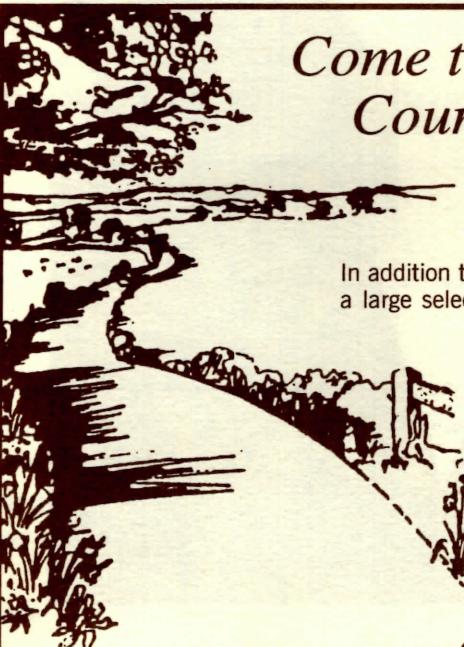
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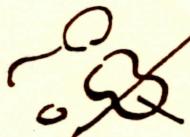
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Banbury Symphony Orchestra



Madeleine Mattar

Madeleine's early musical studies took place at the Intermediate School of the Royal Academy of Music. She was then an instrumental scholar at Worcester College, Oxford, and graduated in English Literature.

In 1991 she entered the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she was awarded the Concert Recital Diploma and was a finalist in the Gold Medal Competition. From 1994-1995 she studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Jean-Claude Pennetier. She has also received the advice of pianists such as Murray Perahia and John Lill. In 1994 she was selected to broadcast for Radio 3's Young Artists' Forum and has subsequently been invited back to record her Début Recital.

In the competitive field, her successes include the First Prize at the Incorporated Society of Musicians' Piano Competition, and most recently, Second Prize at the 1995 Concours International de Piano Médoc-Aquitaine.

Paul Willett

Paul Willett studied the French Horn with Ifor James and gained his performance Diploma from the Royal College of Music at 16.

He read music at The Queen's College, Oxford, on scholarship, and now combines teaching and freelance playing. He has given solo recitals and performed concertos throughout the country. He was a member of The Five Winds for many years, a group which performed both at home and abroad, and also on BBC radio.

He is currently Acting Head of Music at Fitzharrys School in Abingdon, and is the conductor of Oxfordshire Schools Senior Orchestra.

**Malcolm Arnold
(b. 1921)**

Little Suite for Orchestra no.1

Prelude; Dance; March

Malcolm Arnold is now recognised as being one of the foremost English composers of our time, and he has produced an astonishing range of works. As an ex-orchestral player, his scoring shows an unerring sense of good orchestral style, with parts which players like to play.

This suite has three traditional classical short movements, invested with rhythmic and melodic invention. Fully scored throughout, the texture nevertheless is of classical clarity.

Raymond Head

Orpheus Returns from Egypt

First Performance - conducted by the composer

The orchestra commissioned this piece from me nearly two years ago when I was its conductor, but illness intervened and composition stopped.

However, early this year, feeling better, I thought I would start again. In its completed form it has several sections starting with an opening oboe call, a distant memory from a forgotten time. Forgetting the first call the music becomes dark and leads to a crisis, after which the call is heard again in a modified form. Love is re-awakened (an 11-part canon) leading to a quickening, not free from doubt and sorrow but which leads in the end to a feeling of never ending creativity. Orpheus brought the ancient mysteries to Greece from old Egypt, the land of bondage. With him he brought the special power of music to bring life, health and creativity. Within the music there are many references to people and places. But most of all this piece is a testament to the friendship and admiration I have for the people in the orchestra who, in their spare time, play wonderful works of music in an area which would be otherwise devoid of these sounds.

Note by Raymond Head

**Dmitry Shostakovitch
(1906-1975)**

Piano Concerto no. 2

Allegro; Andante; Allegro

This work, composed in 1958, was written in a time influenced by the political background of the Soviet Union. The central committee of the Communist Party were against "art for art's sake" and attacked as "anti-national formalists" composers such as Shostakovitch and Prokofiev and this led to more simple diatonic melody and harmony. It also encouraged composers to write music for children to listen to, and Shostakovitch's second piano concerto was composed with this in mind.

The mild sense of foreboding in the first movement gives way to a relaxed and reflective slow movement. This leads into an exciting finale full of rhythmic vitality.

INTERVAL
refreshments will be available

**Borodin
(1833-1887)**

with Sibford School Choral Society

Polovtsian Dances

The Polovtsian Dances end Act II of his great opera *Prince Igor*, which occupied Borodin on and off for almost 20 years, but was unfinished at his death. It was Rimsky Korsakov who made a performing version, first heard in 1890 in St.Petersburg.

Some of the material for the dance is folk or tribal music. There is an introduction, a Dance of Savage Men, a general dance, and a maiden's song, before a brilliant coda.

*Borne on wings, of gentle breezes,
Fly swiftly home, ye songs of grief and exile,
Away to our far distant mother country,*

*Where once we sang, rejoicing in our freedom.
There, beneath warm skies the languid air moves softly,
There, the cloud-capped mountains dream
beside the whispering sea,
There the green and fragrant pastures of our dear land
lie basking in the sunshine.
The crimson roses cluster in the valleys,
and nightingales sing loud in moonlit forests,
And purple grapes hang ripe and sweet.
Speed, O song, by zephyrs wafted,
Speed, O song on gentle winds.*

*Sing we praises to our glorious Khan!
Praise him for his valour, peerless Khan.
Hail great Khan! Praise our Khan! All Hail!
He is like the sun at midday! Hail!
There is no-one like our glorious Khan!
Bend before him, lowly captives.
See'st thou these fair maidens, brought from distant shores?
See'st thou these slaves from beyond the far Caspian Sea?
Tell me, O Prince, which maiden thou dost favour.
She shall be thine, fain would I give thee unfettered choice.
Famous art thou as thy forebears, proud Khan! Khan Konchak!
Mighty as thy sires art thou, ruthless Khan! Khan Konchak!*

*May our dancing give him pleasure.
Look with favour on my handmaids,
For we strive to please thee, lowly slaves we strive to please thee.
Maidens charm our glorious Khan.*

Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Night on a Bare Mountain

Mussorgsky started as an army officer, but on leaving joined a composers' group called "The Five", who all had other jobs, but yearned to write music.

Night on a Bare Mountain began as "The Sacrifice to the Black Goat on the Bare Mountain" but was unfinished at his death. Later Rimsky Korsakov, another member of "The Five", revised it, keeping allusions to the Black Mass and a Witches' Sabbath, ending with a distant bell which heralds the dawn.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Cantique de Jean Racine

Jean Racine (1639-99) was one of Europe's leading dramatists, and one of the few French classical playwrights to have had any success outside their own country. His other writings are less often remembered, and it is only because of Fauré that anyone except a literary specialist is aware that in 1688 he published translations of a series of Latin hymns for the days of the week. *Verbe égal au Très-Haut* is a free version of *Consors paterni luminis*, the hymn for Tuesday matins, which was thought at the time to be by St. Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan. Matins was sung, at least in strict monasteries, during the night and the words refer to breaking the night's silence with praise to God, putting to flight dark's evil spirits and driving away sloth, though Racine's classical phraseology is less specific than the original. Fauré wrote his setting in 1865 at the end of his student days and it won the composition prize at his college, the École Niedermeyer. It has a mature simplicity that most students would foolishly scorn!

Note by Clifford Bartlett
supplied by the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies

*Verbe égal au Très-Haut
Notre unique espérance,
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux
De la paisible nuit,
Nous rompons le silence,
Divin Sauveur jette sur nous les yeux!*

*Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante,
Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix,
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante,
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois,
O Christ sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle
Pour te bénir maintenant rassemble,
Reçois les chants qu'il offre
À ta gloire immortelle
Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé!*

*Word equal to the Most High
Our only hope,
Eternal day of earth and sky,
Of peaceful night,
We break the silence,
Divine Saviour cast Thine eyes on us!*

*Cast on us the fire of Thy mighty grace,
That all Hell may flee at the sound of Thy voice,
Cast sleep from a languishing soul
Thou who bears it to the limit of Thy laws,
O Christ, look favourably on this faithful people
Who gather now to bless Thee,
Receive the songs they offer
To Thy immortal glory
And Thy gifts which they return manifold!*

Translation by Louis Dunn

Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Jerusalem

Parry began composing at the age of eight, and, after Eton and Oxford, joined the staff of the Royal College of Music. He was knighted in 1889 and was created a baronet in 1903. His output was vast and included works for chorus and orchestra for English Festivals, including the Three Choirs' Festival. All his compositions are very English in character. This beautiful and idealistic song has assumed almost the position of a second National Anthem over the years. It is a setting of words by the poet and Pre-Raphaelite artist, William Blake. It was composed on the suggestion of Robert Bridges, the then Poet-Laureate, and was first performed in 1916. It is a choral song for unison voices which, like "Rule Britannia!" has become a great favourite with audiences at the Proms. Elgar orchestrated the song for the 1922 Leeds Festival.

Note supplied by the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies

*And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon those clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I shall not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land!*

William Blake

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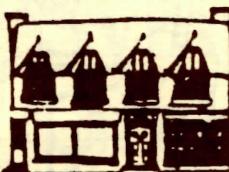
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