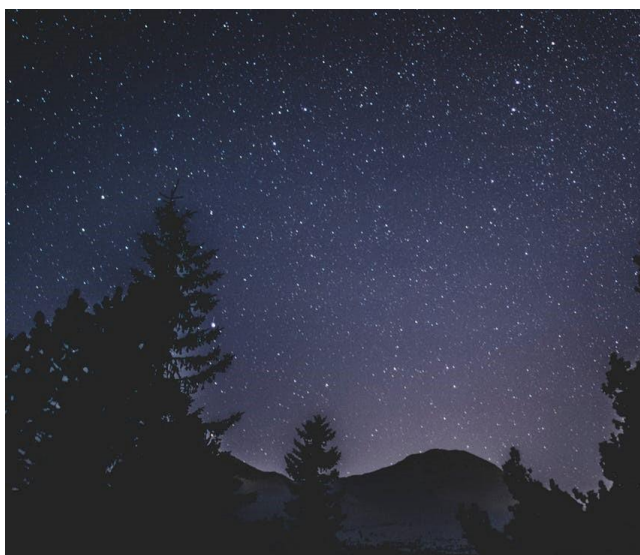


Chamber Concert



Sunday 19 May 2019

Hook Norton Church

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Summer Nights Concert

Saturday 29th June 2019

Scapino Overture – Walton

Violin Concerto No 1 – Bruch

Soloist – Maria Kouznetsova

Sheherazade – Rimsky-Korsakov

7:30 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Autumn Concert

Saturday 23rd November 2019

Overture *Der Freischütz* – Weber

Piano Concerto in A minor – Grieg

Symphony No 6 – Bruckner

7:30 pm – Deddington Church

Tickets from

banburysymphony.org

Welcome to St. Peter's, Hook Norton

It's great to see you at Banbury Chamber Orchestra's May concert!

Today we will perform three diverse pieces for chamber orchestra. We start with **Sibelius'** stirring suite of incidental music for **Pelléas & Mélisande**, a play by the symbolist playwright Maurice Maeterlinck. The first movement of this suite has been immortalised as the theme music to the BBC's 'Sky At Night' programme. Following this will be **Holst's** short and entertaining **Fugal Concerto**, for flute, oboe and strings, featuring Rachel and Christine as our soloists.

To end the programme we play **Haydn's Symphony No. 98**, written in 1792 while the maestro was in London, and shortly after he had heard of the death of his great friend **Mozart**.

This concert has been kindly supported by the **Holst Society**.

Don't forget our Summer Concert, in St. Mary's Banbury, on Saturday 29th June!

Ian McCubbin
Chair, BSO

Programme

Pélleas and Mélisande – Sibelius

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. At the Castle Gate | 6. Pastorale |
| 2. Mélisande | 7. Mélisande at the Spinning Wheel |
| 3. At the Seashore | 8. Entr'acte |
| 4. A Spring in the Park | 9. The Death of Mélisande |
| 5. The Three Blind Sisters
(Mélisande's Song) | |

Fugal Concerto for Flute and Oboe – Holst

Soloists: Rachel McCubbin (Flute), Christine Griggs (Oboe)
Moderato, Adagio, Allegro

Interval

Symphony No 98 – Haydn

Adagio – Allegro, Adagio, Menuetto - Presto, Finale - Presto

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, until recently, the Director of Didcot Sixth Form. He is now retired to concentrate on his music making and being a 'stay-at-home' dad to his son Alfie.



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.

Rachel McCubbin



Rachel has been a member of Banbury Symphony Orchestra for many years. She also plays in a number of other musical ensembles including the Loxley Wind Quintet, the Warwickshire Flute Ensemble and the Rugby Recorder Ensemble. Away from musical activities, Rachel volunteers with Chipping Norton Green Gym and is enjoying studying Ancient Egyptian Material Culture through the Oxford University Continuing Education programme.

Christine Griggs



Christine comes from Buckinghamshire and studied oboe at the royal academy of music with Janet Craxton. After two years performing with the Royal Ballet Touring Orchestra, she joined the Cape Performing Arts Board Opera House Orchestra in South Africa, giving concerts in all the major centres there; she was a recording artist for the SABC. After a period of five years teaching at Hudson Park High School in the Eastern Cape, she returned to the UK in 1995 and became a woodwind teacher in Northamptonshire. She has chaired the 'Teacher's Forum' and led oboe workshops at British Double Reed Society Conventions. Christine plays Principle Oboe with the Leicester Symphony Orchestra and is a founder member of the Reed Warblers Oboe Ensemble.

Pelléas and Mélisande

Sibelius

Sibelius began writing incidental music in the late 1890s as the symbolist movement from Paris made its way to Helsinki. The subject of these initial works had an historical basis, as he composed the incidental music for Adolf Paul's play *King Christian II* (1898), and festival music in 1893, *Karelia Suite*, at which *Finlandia* made its first appearance. As the new century unfolded however, Sibelius found himself composing incidental music for some of the key symbolist dramatic works that portrayed more exotic themes of love, death, mysticism and dreams. One of these works was *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which had been premiered in Paris in 1893 and had sparked musical works by Debussy, Fauré and Schönberg. The Scandinavian premiere was given at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki, in 1905, with incidental music by Sibelius.

The play of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was written in 1882 by the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck. The story opens in the vicinity of King Arkel's castle where Mélisande is found in a nearby forest by the grandson of the king, Golaud. They marry, however Mélisande's life in the castle is not a happy one and she eventually becomes friends with Golaud's younger brother Pelléas. Pelléas, realizing he can no longer bear

his life in the castle with his true love married to his brother, announces to Mélisande that he must leave. At this meeting, she declares her love for him and upon embracing, Golaud, who had been watching them, appears and kills his brother in a fit of jealousy. Mélisande runs away, but is found and returned to the castle where she dies shortly thereafter, presumably over the heartbreak of losing her love.

Sibelius wrote a total of ten pieces for the incidental music for this play, including seven interludes (one being the overture) and a song. He later arranged this music into a concert suite with only nine movements, containing all but one of the original pieces, giving each movement a name rather than the original numbers. The first movement (the overture), **"At the Castle Gate"** sets the scene outside of King Arkel's castle. **"Mélisande"** depicts the heroine crying by a stream in a nearby forest when the king's grandson Golaud discovers her there. Here the English horn's melody reflects the sadness of Mélisande and the muted strings perhaps that of the flowing stream.

"At the Seashore" portrays Pelléas and Mélisande in their first intimate meeting, the low rumbling in the basses depicting the deep undercurrents of the sea, while the woodwinds' cries above suggest the coastal birds in this dramatic scene. **"By A Spring In the Park"** has the couple meeting again, here in a lighter more

cheerful waltz setting, yet still one senses the ominous mood underlying the scene. **“The Three Blind Sisters”**, originally sung by Mélisande to express her dwindling hope, is transcribed for woodwinds in the orchestral suite. **“The Pastorale”** was composed at the point where Pelléas and Golaud emerge from the depths of the castle to the open air surrounding it. Sibelius’ characteristic thirds can be heard in the woodwinds here over a pizzicato figure in the cellos. The violins’ melody soaring above as the flutes complete the peaceful scene, birds fluttering in the midst of it all.

“Mélisande at the Spinning Wheel”

returns to the ominous overtones played by the incessant viola trill suggesting the persistent spinning of the wheel (and perhaps fate). **“Entra’cte”** is said to express the growing love of Pelléas and Mélisande, as well as the difficulties they face in their circumstances. However Sibelius’ biographer, Robert Layton, suggests it may simply have been the composer at his best displaying his ‘sheer joy in music-making.’ In the final tragic scene of the play, **“Mélisande’s Death”**, we find the heroine resigned to sadness and death at losing her true love. Sibelius again depicts the depth of emotions with his adept orchestrations. Harriet Bosse, wife of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, who once played the role of Mélisande commented on the effects of the music from this last scene: “...lying on my deathbed in the last act, the orchestra played ‘The Death

of Mélisande’. I was so moved that I cried at every performance.”

Fugal Concerto for Flute and Oboe

Holst

Please don't be put off by the appearance of the word "Fugal" in the title of this lovely concerto. This is not a dry or academic piece at all. This short work (eight and a half minutes) is one of the prettiest, most heartwarming works by Gustav Holst, known to most music-lovers only for his huge and powerful orchestral suite *The Planets*.

Composing had actually been a painful process for him for some years due to the neuritis that crippled his hands (it had forced him to give up piano in favor of trombone years earlier). Holst's difficulty in writing, as well as his feeling that he had submerged his own personality beneath the huge orchestral machinery of *The Planets*, led him in the early 1920s to try smaller combinations of instruments that didn't require so many notes, and to attempt to find a more intimate, personal style.

The two works with "fugal" in the title, *A Fugal Overture*, Op. 40, No. 1, and this work are one part of this search. The rather strict form of the fugue offers composers a chance to see what they can achieve in a very disciplined format that demands complete mastery of counterpoint. Even in the High Baroque

many people were put off by the word "fugue," and called it an example of "learned counterpoint," often meaning dry or pedantic. In terms of musical history, both works represent Holst's response to the brand-new, post-World War I European style of neo-Classicism.

The Fugal Concerto firmly contradicts the idea that fugues have to reek of the academy. Above all, Holst finds lovely flowing melodies that are also first-rate fugue subjects. The first movement has a running quality, with quicksilver tradeoffs among the orchestra and the two soloists. The second movement is essentially a canon for the two soloists, sharing a plaintive melody. The lovely middle sections admits the viola section as a third voice in canonic writing. It leads directly to a joyful concluding movement in a very English 6/8 dancing rhythm. In the middle there is a simultaneous cadenza for flute and oboe, leading to introduction of an English folk song called "If all the World were Paper." This tune sticks around as the main rhythmic tune returns, making the last part of the finale, in fact, a double fugue with breathless, propulsive rhythms.

Symphony No 98

Haydn

Joseph Haydn's tenure of nearly three decades heading the music staff of the Esterházy Court ended shortly after the death of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy on

September 28, 1790. His successor did not care for music, so he promptly fired the court orchestra and opera company, and granted Europe's most admired composer a pension of 1,000 florins a year. Although he kept Haydn on staff as his official music director, he made it clear that no particular duties — or even attendance — would be required.

For the first time in decades Haydn was free to explore. He turned down an immediate job offer from another prince and briefly considered the idea of accepting a position with the King of Naples. On learning of the changes at the Esterházy court, the German-born violinist Johann Peter Salomon, then working as a concert impresario in England, arrived unannounced, presumably introducing himself with words along the lines of, "I am Salomon of London and I have come to fetch you. Tomorrow we will arrange an *accord*."

An *accord* was reached. Following his first voyage aboard a ship, Haydn arrived in London on January 1, 1791. "My arrival caused a great sensation throughout the whole city," he wrote to a friend, "and I went the rounds of all the newspapers for three successive days. Everybody wants to know me." After the initial flurry, he embarked on a schedule of music-making and social appearances that included dinners with the royal family and acceptance of an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. Haydn returned home in the

summer of 1792, having enjoyed his time in England so much that he happily accepted a second invitation to go back in 1794.

For each of these two residencies in England, Haydn wrote a group of six symphonies (his Nos. 93 through 104), which ever since have been dubbed the *London* or *Salomon* Symphonies. The works exhibit enormous diversity, but the set as a whole, grander in scope and orchestration than anything he had previously written, represents the apex of his symphonic achievement.

Symphony No. 98 was the final entry from Haydn's first London visit. Though marginally less famous than the nicknamed *London* symphonies (such as the *Surprise*, *Military*, *Clock*, or *Drum Roll*), it takes a back seat to none. Despite its major key, the work is touched by a degree of poignancy. One hears it right at the opening, with the exploration of a theme built from the B-flat-minor triad — a key so obscure that 18th-century audiences rarely encountered it apart from passages of fleeting modulations. The *Allegro* that emerges from that introduction turns out to be based on the major-key equivalent of the same theme, an uncommon example of unifying sections that normally stood discretely apart at that time. At the work's premiere, the first movement was repeated, as was the *Finale* — or, as Haydn wrote in his notebook, exercising his newly acquired

English, "The new Symphony in B-flat was given, and the first and last Allegros encort."

The profoundly moving *Adagio cantabile* has evoked much comment in that it includes references to the slow movement of Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony. This is no coincidence. Haydn began composing this symphony only a few weeks after learning of Mozart's passing. "For some time I was beside myself about his death," he wrote in January 1792 to Michael Puchberg, one of his and Mozart's friends back in Vienna, "and could not believe that Providence would so soon claim the life of such an indispensable man."

Deep thoughts are banished from what remains of the symphony: a vigorous *Minuet* with a charming, pastoral *Trio*, and a frisky *Finale*. Haydn gives free rein to his beloved musical jokes in this conclusion — unexpected silences (including one, at the end of the exposition, into which many a premature applauder has stumbled), stuttering repetitions, unpredictable turns of direction and character, momentary solo incursions from the concertmaster (Salomon, at the premiere), and more opportunities to end than one would expect a composer could ignore and get away with.

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If you play an instrument to a standard of Grade 7 or above and would like to play with the orchestra, find out more by contacting Anna Fleming on 01295 780017.

All rehearsals take place in Banbury in term time on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

