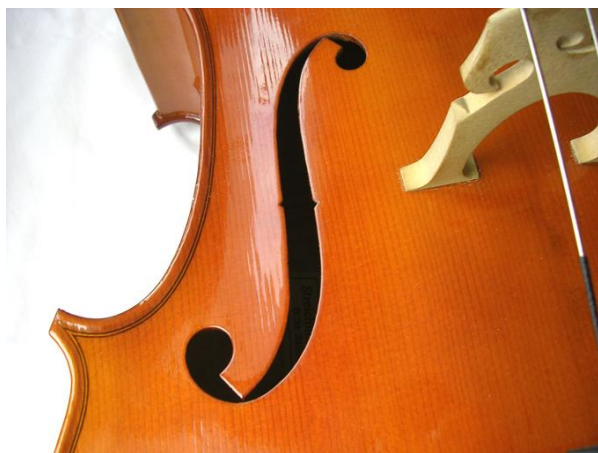


Autumn Concert

Saturday 22nd November 2014

**Church of St Peter and St Paul,
Deddington**

Programme £1



Hello and a very warm welcome to our concert.

We have a terrific programme for this evening.

Everybody will recognize the familiar melody in our opening overture. Hopefully it will not leave you too thirsty! We are very grateful to our outstanding soloist Mikhail Nemtsov who steps in at short notice to perform the wonderful Dvořák Cello Concerto.

Many in our audience will be less familiar with the symphony this evening. It is a towering and hugely moving work. All of us within the orchestra have been won over by the range of emotions represented in the music. No wonder it's one of the composer's favourite works.

On behalf of the orchestra and our supporters, I want to record the warmest and most sincere thanks to Geoff Kent who has recently retired from the orchestra after 50 years. Geoff's humility and spirit made him an excellent leader for many years, who set the highest possible musical standards both for himself and for the orchestra. Thanks very much indeed Geoff for all that you have achieved for Banbury Symphony Orchestra.

We really hope that you enjoy our concert as much as we will!

Peter Button
Chairman, BSO

Programme

Overture 'La forza del destino' - Verdi

Cello Concerto No. 2 in B minor – Dvořák

Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Allegro moderato

(Soloist – Mikhail Nemtsov)

Interval

Symphony No. 5 in D minor – Shostakovich

Moderato

Allegretto

Largo

Allegro non troppo

Mikhail Nemtsov

As a soloist Mikhail Nemtsov has performed all over the world. Recent highlights include performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Porto Symphony Orchestra, European Union Chamber Orchestra, the RNCM Chamber Orchestra, Liverpool Mozart Orchestra and London Festival Orchestra. Previous musical collaborations include Vassily Petrenko, Nicholas Collon, The Nash Ensemble, Razumovsky Ensemble, Alexandre Zemtsov, Maxym Rysanov, Anna Kandinskaya, Leon McCawley and Me Kyong Lee.



Nemtsov has given recitals in the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre's Purcell Room and the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester as well as participated in music festivals in Chichester, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Buxton, Chester and Salzburg.

Nemtsov was the recipient of the Pierre Fournier Award in 2011 and as well as this he has been a Silver Medal winner from the Rostropovich Memorial International Competition, the Muriel Taylor Scholarship, Silver Medal of The Worshipful Company of Musicians, Gold Medal of the Royal Northern College of Music and twice recipient of MBF Guilhermina Suggia Gift.

Mikhail and his sister Elena form the Nemtsov duo, who are winners of the Swedish International Duo Competition as well as the 3rd prize winner of the Pinerolo International Chamber Music Contest. They have performed at a number of venues including the Edinburgh International Festival and have given a recital live on BBC Radio 3. They have recently released a CD on the Italian Azurro Records, featuring Boccherini Sonata No. 6 for Cello and Piano, as well as Beethoven and Chopin.

Nemtsov grew up in St Petersburg and following his graduation from the Rimsky-Korsakov Special Music School, he moved to Manchester where he studied at Chetham's School of Music and Royal Northern College of Music. He has studied with eminent professors including Nicolas Jones, Hannah Roberts, Ralph Kirshbaum and Gary Hoffman.

Nemtsov teaches at the Birmingham Conservatoire and at the Altensteiger Sommermusik Akademie in Germany. He has held masterclasses in the UK as well as in Alicante, Spain. He is holder of an International Artist Diploma at the RNCM and was awarded the position as a CMF Artist in 2013, in the company's inaugural year. He's appeared as guest principal cello in Bergen Symphony Orchestra and co-principal cello in BBC Philharmonic.

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 is currently Deputy Headteacher at Didcot Girls' School and he continues his music making conducting various ensembles, both adult and youth.



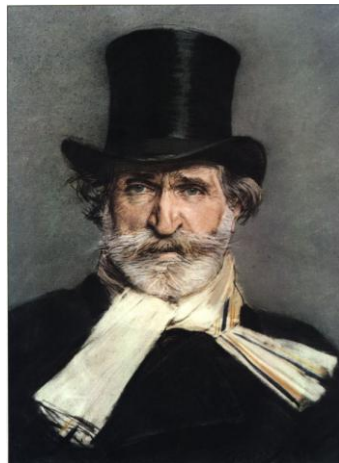
Anna Fleming - Leader

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.

Overture ‘La forza del destino’ - Verdi

In 1860 Giuseppe Verdi¹ who was already rich and internationally famous, was considering retirement. The famous Italian Tenor Enrico Tamberlik asked Verdi to compose an opera for his upcoming engagement in St. Petersburg. The initial run of this opera – **La forza del destino** (The force of destiny) – was less than successful. The audiences reacted against the absurd violent plot which was worthy of treatment by Quentin Tarentino (plot summary: everyone dies) and perhaps were also put off by a foreign composition in an atmosphere of growing Russian nationalism.



Giuseppe Verdi

Later Verdi revised the opera, removing some deaths along with many musical revisions which included discarding the original short prelude. The present overture is from this revision which received its premiere at La Scala on February 20th, 1869. In this overture we hear previews of several hit songs from the opera such as **Leonora’s Prayer** from Act II.

The overture begins with the brass section intoning the “fate motif” which is a unison E played three times. The motif is repeated and then the strings enter with an agitated motif that appears both in the foreground and background throughout the work.

Example 1. Agitato theme

Allegro agitato e Presto



The fate motif returns followed by an andantino theme in the woodwinds while we hear echoes of the agitato theme in the strings. This is from the Act 3 duet between Don Alvaro and Leonora’s brother Don Carlo.

Example 2. Andantino



Then, very quietly (ppp) we hear an andante third theme emerge from the strings. This is Leonora’s prayer from Act II. She is preparing to spend the rest of her life atoning for her sin. The agitato theme is still there in the background.

¹ Programme note – by kind permission Gene De Lisa (<http://genedelisa.com/>)

Example 3. Andante mosso (strings)



The agitato theme comes to the foreground, is briefly developed then subsides with snippets of the andantino theme. We then hear the clarinets quietly introduce the final important theme. This is from Act II when Leonora retires to a cave in the forest dressed as a hermit.

Example 4. Allegro brillante (clarinet)



We then hear various settings of these themes including an interesting chorale like setting for the brass section. The agitato theme brings us to the climax where then andante theme is played fortissimo by the winds and strings. A brilliant coda which intertwines all of the themes brings the overture to a stirring conclusion.

Cello Concerto No. 2 in B minor - Dvořák



Antonín Dvořák

Dvořák² wrote his 'Cello Concerto (actually his second; as a young man he had written one in A which was never orchestrated) between November 1894 and February 1895 during his second stay in America. It is one of his last symphonic works. Brahms' grumble-cum-compliment is well known: "If I'd known it was possible to write a 'cello concerto like this I'd have written one long ago." But Dvořák was no pioneer in the field. Apart from classical works, there already existed concertante 'cello pieces by Schumann, Raff, Lalo, Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky. The force of Brahms' remark was that

Dvořák's concerto was immeasurably superior to its predecessors.

The work was written at the repeated request of Dvořák's friend, the 'cellist Hanus Wihan, to whom it is dedicated. Wihan, however, did not give the first performance. The première was to take place in London for the Philharmonic Society at a concert conducted by the composer, but no date could be found which was possible for all three, the Society, Dvořák and Wihan. The Society engaged an English 'cellist, Leo Stern. Dvořák

² Programme note – Making Music

dug in his heels and refused to conduct. The impasse was broken when Wihan generously persuaded the composer to go ahead with the Stern performance.

By 1894 it was unfashionable to open a concerto with an extended orchestral tutti as Dvořák does here. The clarinets lead off with an ominous-sounding theme which works up to a powerful restatement by the full orchestra. A modulatory passage leads to the second subject, a haunting horn solo, exquisitely extended by the clarinet and oboe. In a letter of December 1894 the composer wrote, "I become excited every time I play over the horn solo in the first movement". The soloist enters with a passage marked quasi improvisando. Dvořák's ear for orchestral colour and his experience as an orchestral player (he had been principal viola at the Prague National Theatre for nine years) well equipped him to solve the problem of pitting the 'cello against the full orchestra.

The Adagio opens with a gentle, nostalgic strain announced by the clarinets, the very soul of romantic Bohemia. The 'cello weaves a delicate tracery round the woodwind melody to magical effect. A more dramatic middle section is based on an earlier song by Dvořák, *Leave me alone*. The finale opens with an energetic march-like theme from the soloist. This movement, which shows remarkable prodigality of material, becomes increasingly lyrical and ends with a long dreamy coda in which the opening of the concerto is wistfully recalled, as is the *Leave me alone* theme.

The concerto was first performed on 19th March 1895. Dvořák retained the dedication to Wihan, who played it many times in later years.

Symphony No. 5 in D minor - Shostakovich

In 1937 Russia³, at the height of Stalin's purges, the Communist Party strongly denounced Dmitri Shostakovich's most recent works. The Fifth Symphony was Shostakovich's fight to defend his name, but features many hidden protestations against the regime.

Instead of writing in the nationalist style, Shostakovich wrote his Fifth Symphony on the model pioneered by Beethoven; by beginning his symphony with a sonata. By the third bar, the music breaks off abruptly and reaches a dead end in an implacable repetition of three notes. This pattern recurs throughout the symphony: assertive statement, apprehensive retraction, dead end.

The second movement of Symphony No. 5 is a Scherzo, a spoof on waltzes. Shostakovich draws a musical picture of a dance floor. There are peasants in their heavy boots, a wise guy on his squeaky clarinet, and a deluxe dance master with his little kit violin.

³ Programme note – Claire Thomas

The third movement brought people to tears at a time when weeping publicly was itself an act of courage. The movement is considered a memorial for Stalin's victims featuring a mournful oboe solo and strings arranged to give the impression of a choir.

The fourth movement begins with a string of march-like themes. The pace of the piece grows and the orchestra swirls with musical currents that burst with triumph – until all hope is dashed by another dead end. The movement also features a musical reference to Boris Godunov – the opera in which crowds are forced to praise the Tsar.

Finally, Shostakovich reveals his triumphant ending. As in the first movement, there is one expressively altered note, though. Not B natural, confirming the happy major version of the scale, but B flat, which delivers the sad minor version.

When the work was premiered in 1937, it received a 40 minute ovation. Many of the audience were in tears. Fundamentally they were tears of gratitude that someone had had the extraordinary courage and ability to write about their times in a way that was true but also permissible. They had a voice after all. The repeated notes that end the work are shocking. Repeated 252 times, they are a sign that Shostakovich knew the battle would be a long time in winning. He knew there would be millions more deaths before the truth was discovered.



Dmitri Shostakovich



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Banbury Symphony Orchestra



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Interested in joining the orchestra?

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.

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