

Symphony no.6 **Dvořák**

**Cello concerto
no.1** Saint-Saëns

**Force of Destiny
Overture** Verdi

Conductor
Mark Gateshill

Leader
Tina Mehta

Cello
Harry Jordan

**Saturday 19th October
7.30pm**

Redland Hall, Redmaids' High
School, Bristol BS9 3AW

Tickets: £15 adult

£12 concessions

£6 NUS

£3 under 18s

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Design by Fei Yuan



Programme

Giuseppe Verdi
Overture: La Forza del Destino

Camille Saint-Saëns
Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor

~ **Interval** (20 mins) ~

Antonin Dvořák
Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op 60

Giuseppe Verdi

Overture: La Forza del Destino

Verdi wrote nearly 30 operas, many of which are still in the repertoire. Several of them, like 'La Forza del Destino', caused Verdi considerable angst in their creation and were subject to considerable revision. This opera was the result of a commission from the Imperial Opera in St Petersburg, to a libretto in which Verdi clearly saw the dramatic possibilities inherent in the rival death-dealing factions on stage. It was first presented in St Petersburg in 1862. Although it was only moderately successful at first, it soon became much in demand throughout Europe's capitals, with its first performance in La Scala, Milan in 1869.

The overture opens with three re-iterated 'knocks on the door' of fate itself demanding to be heard. The music then proceeds to seethe with barely restrained intensity, denoting an anger which runs throughout the whole opera. This is followed by a beautiful and moving theme of religious devotion and aspiration, played on the violins. Thereafter the overture continues to its end with the seething fate motive as a background undercurrent to several melodies which relate to the main characters in the opera, showing Verdi's unerring sense of the theatre in his orchestral operatics.

Camille Saint Saëns

Cello Concerto No 1 in A minor

Camille Saint-Saëns composed his Cello concert No. 1 in 1872, when he was 37 years old. It was written for the cellist Auguste Tolbecque and first performed by him in 1873 at the Paris Conservatoire to great acclaim. The music historian Sir Francis Tovey later wrote "Here, for once, is a violoncello concerto in which the solo instrument displays every register without the slightest difficulty in penetrating the orchestra'. Indeed, Shostakovich and Rachmaninov considered this concerto to be the greatest of all cello concertos.

In certain respects, this concerto breaks with standard conventions in a number of ways. The cello enters in the first bar of the music without there being any of the usual orchestral introduction, throwing the soloist immediately into the limelight. From the beginning the soloist is cast in a declamatory role, a characteristic employed throughout the concerto to

great effect. The concerto is cast in cyclic form, that is to say in one continuous movement with a number of musical ideas cross-referenced in each of the three sections into which it falls: Allegro, Allegretto, Finale Tempo Primo. The idea for this may have come from Saint Saëns' acquaintance with Liszt who used this procedure in several of his works.

The turbulence of the first Allegro section is sometimes offset by an element of 'call and response' between the soloist and orchestra, at times playful, at times a bit more serious. This leads into a highly original Minuet in which the strings are muted and which contains, unusually for the middle section, a cello cadenza which might traditionally appear towards the end of the Finale. This section runs seamlessly into the Finale in which a number of previous ideas are revisited by both orchestra and soloist. Especially notable is an entirely new theme introduced by the soloist towards the end of the piece, as if to say 'you haven't done with me yet'.

Antonín Dvořák **Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op 60**

- 1 Allegro non tanto
- 2 Adagio
- 3 Scherzo (Furiant) – Presto
- 4 Finale - Allegro con spirito

This symphony was composed in 1880 and shows Dvorak looking toward Vienna in style, being composed for the Vienna Philharmonic and Hans Richter its conductor at the time. Richter kept delaying its first performance due to 'family problems' and possibly a certain anti-Czech feeling in the orchestra and Vienna at the time. In fact, the first performance was given by the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Adolf Cech in Prague in 1881. The Vienna Philharmonic did not perform it until 1942.

In some ways the symphony is a tribute to his mentor Brahms, particularly to the latter's Second symphony in the opening of Dvorak's finale with its gloriously freewheeling character. The third movement, one of Dvorak's favourite 'Furiant' scherzos, has heavy references to typically Czech cross-rhythms.

Dvorak's style of orchestration tends towards alternating 'blocks' of wind and string sound with one group quite often finishing off a phrase being played by another group. This is particularly evident in the beautifully constructed slow movement. As a general rule the brass, though not so much the horns, tend to lend support and volume in the tutti passages.

The Sixth Symphony provides a turning point in Dvorak's compositional style. He had been very impressed with Wagner's Germanic style and structure, playing as a violist in Czech orchestras when Wagner came to Prague to conduct some of his own works. However, his penchant for Germanic and Austrian Viennese compositional methods did not ultimately find favour with the musical establishment of those countries, as mentioned above, hence Richter's possible political delaying tactics for this symphony. As a result, Dvorak decided that henceforth a more Czech nationalistic approach would work more to his advantage. His Symphonies 6, 7, 8 and 9 (The New World) have become his most characteristically Czech and best loved.

Composers are notoriously self-critical, and it is interesting to note the candour with which they communicate with each other: Brahms in a letter to Dvorak expressed the opinion that 'You do write a bit hastily', and Dvorak in a letter to a young Sibelius who excelled in the art of saying a lot with minimal means, 'I have composed too much'. Perhaps tonight's audience can pronounce on those two observations.

Programme notes
Ed Kay

Mark Gateshill

Mark is a highly dedicated and motivated musician, with a passion for sharing and developing music within the community.

Having grown up in South London where he began studying the violin with Douglas and Helen Paterson - he went on to read music at the University of Exeter, it was whilst here that he was first given the opportunity to start conducting on a regular basis. After graduating, he studied conducting with Jonathan James from 2005 and from 2009 with Peter Stark (RCM). In 2014 he was given the opportunity to observe and assist Parvo Jaarvi and the Orchestre de Paris rehearsing Sibelius' Symphonies 6 and 7 for performance and recording.

His current conducting portfolio consists of Musical Director of Frome Symphony since 2009, conductor of the Brunel Sinfonia since 2011 and in 2014 he started working with Keynsham Orchestra. He has also had professional freelance experience with the Bath Philharmonia and the Bristol Ensemble.

Mark has toured extensively around Europe conducting concerts in France, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Estonia. He feels very privileged to work with the great, exciting musicians he collaborates with on a regular basis – but also the opportunities to work with prestigious soloists such as the pianist, Stephen Hough.

Working with young musicians is a core element to Mark's professional life. He is currently Head of Strings at Bristol Cathedral Choir School where he teaches violin and viola, coaches a variety of chamber ensembles as well as conducting the String Orchestra.

Mark is currently based in Bristol with his wife and children. He is a keen cyclist; coached by and racing for PDQ Cycle Coaching.

For more information, please visit www.markgateshillmusic.com

Tina Mehta

Tina has been playing the violin since the age of six, and studied with Judith Young. She played with the Southampton Youth Orchestra and Musical Score. At university Tina played with the University of Bristol Orchestra, and led the University of Bristol Chamber Orchestra.

Tina has been playing with Brunel Sinfonia since the year of it's launch in 2004; she has been leading since 2009, and is a trustee, and chair of the orchestra. She led the Bristol Classical Players from their launch in 2008. Tina enjoys performing with many other local orchestras, and has led Bristol Concert Series since 2020. Alongside three Brunel friends, Tina enjoys performing with The Cotswold Quartet www.cotswoldquartet.com, and enjoys writing string quartet arrangements for weddings and other events.

Outside of music, Tina works as a Gastroenterology Consultant in the South West and is a Royal College of Physicians Tutor. She enjoys being a Mum, cooking, eating out, gardening, horse riding, and socialising with her family and friends.

Our next concerts

Sunday 16th March 2024 at 7.30PM

at Vic Rooms, Bristol

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Please feel free to tweet during the concert, our twitter hashtag is **#brunelsinfonia**, but please remember to keep your phone on silent!

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Members of the Brunel Sinfonia also play in various string ensembles. For more information, please contact:

The Cotswold Quartet (www.cotswoldquartet.com)

Violin 1

Tina Mehta
Tom Budden
Zac Kahn
Patrick Lane
Rosa Mumford-Turner
Paul Packwood
Lizzie Porteous
Sally Read
Richard Reader
Hilary Ross
Freya Whittaker
Isabel Wiltshire
Rachel Woolmer

Violin II

Sarah Jennings
Tina Biggs
Rachel Bishop
Frances Gammie
Frances Hopkins
Laura Humphreys
Aisling Jones
Catherine Streater
Anna Wilson

Viola

Izzie Balmer
Greg Banks
Michael Collis
Jen Crossthwaite
Kate Crossthwaite
Anne Kay
Robert King
Helen Lambourne
Jo Maimaris
Cami Shotton

Cello

Jo Hughes
Sophie Collet
Rachel Everington
Vanessa Hill
Marion James
Kate Leckie
Sam May
Judith McMullen
Thomas Mitchell
Alex Murrell
Billy Quain

Double Bass

Shayle-Ann Baldwin
Robert Lillis
David Ritchie
Ioannis Tsagurnis

Flute

Michelle Krawiec
Laura Jeffery

Clarinet

Catherine Zollman
Andrew Bond

Oboe

Hilary Oliver
Sarah Ridgeon

Bassoon

Louise Tricklebank
James Ashby

Horns

Maddie Shields
Edward Kay
Martyn Ford

Trumpet

Matt Hildrew
Richard Matthews

Trombone

Nathan Williams
Phil Thomas
Matt Davies

Tuba

Ben Moon

Harp

Julia Hammersley

Percussion

Sue Juggins
Mike Organ

Timpani

Paul Hemmings