



"Didcot's new symphony orchestra"

Principal sponsor:



Conductor: Geoff Bushell
Leader: Kate Bailey
Honorary President: Ed Vaizey, MP

Fourth Concert – Sunday 9 June 2019

PROGRAMME

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Reznicek | Donna Diana: Overture |
| Glazunov | Serenade no 1 |
| Bruch | Violin Concerto no 1 (Leo Appel) |
| Duparc | Danse Lente |
| Duparc orch. Bushell | Extase |
| Bizet | Symphony in C |

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A message from our Honorary President

"I am delighted that the Didcot Concert Orchestra has been established. Didcot is a vibrant and growing town, and the arts have always been a central part of its life. The concert orchestra fills a gap, and it is very much needed. Music brings great joy to people, and it also plays an important role in our schools and our communities. I wish the Didcot Concert Orchestra every success."

The Right Honourable Edward Vaizey, MP

PROGRAMME

Donna Diana: Overture

Emil von Reznicek (1860-1945)

Emil Nikolaus Joseph, Freiherr von Reznicek was an Austrian composer of Romanian-Czech ancestry. His grandfather Josef was a trumpet virtuoso and band leader in imperial regiments based in Budapest and Vienna, where he played music with Johann Strauss I and Joseph Lanner. Reznicek's father Josef rose through the ranks to achieve the second-highest rank in the Austrian army and acquired the noble title of Freiherr. Emil passed his childhood in Vienna until the family moved to Graz in 1874, where he studied law and music. He never finished his law degree, but continued to study music with, amongst others Carl Reinecke, until gaining his composing diploma on 9 June 1882.

Though he composed five symphonies, several dozen orchestral works and various other pieces running to opus 116, Reznicek is mainly remembered today for his comic opera *Donna Diana*, composed in 1894. Written at the same time as Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, it was successful in its day, but despite revisions by the composer in 1908 and 1933, is rarely performed complete these days. The effervescent overture, first performed by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in 1911, is suggestive of springtime with its happy renewal of life and joy.

Serenade no 1 in A, op 7

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936)

Alexander Glazunov directed the St Petersburg Conservatory between 1905 and 1928, when he left the Soviet Union in 1928, never to return, settling in Paris in 1932. (Though he died there in 1936, in 1972 his remains were removed to a Russian grave in St Petersburg.) Glazunov's music was a bridge between different Russian styles, in that he was the direct successor to Balakirev's nationalism, while tending more towards Borodin's epic grandeur, Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral virtuosity, Tchaikovsky's lyricism and Taneyev's contrapuntal skill.

Glazunov began composing at age 11, and was mentored by Belyayev (a wealthy Russian timber merchant, music publisher and philanthropist) who put on concerts of Glazunov's music. As well as eight symphonies, Glazunov wrote a number of smaller orchestral pieces, including two *Serenades*, opus 7 and 11. The first of these, in A major and lasting only five minutes, demonstrates an early skill in handling simple melodic materials. A solo clarinet over plucked strings is soon joined by other wind instruments. A cor anglais announces a central section with an oriental feel, while the principal melody soon returns to the full orchestra.

Violin Concerto no 1, op 26

Max Bruch (1838-1920)

I Allegro moderato

II Adagio

III Allegro energico

Born in Cologne, Bruch achieved high musical distinction in Coblenz, Breslau and Berlin, and between 1880 and 1883 was conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic. His *Violin Concerto no 1* was written in 1866, and Bruch himself conducted the first performance on 24 April of that year. The concerto was then considerably revised with help from the celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim. The premiere of this version – the one we know today – was given on 5 January 1868.

Bruch composed two further violin concertos, but neither has gained the fame of the first. Listeners to Classic FM have regularly voted it amongst their favourite pieces. In its profile of Bruch, Classic FM describes the violin concerto as "one of the best works of the Romantic period".

The first movement has an unorthodox opening whose material is not further used. After a main theme and second subject, a recapitulation of the main theme begins, but this is interrupted and modulated into a new key to link it without a break to the second movement. The emotional heart of the concerto lies in the intensely lyrical *Adagio*, striking in its use of the G string, and of the pensive warmth of the E flat major key. The *Finale* starts in this same key, but soon works round to its home key of G, now major. The violin sets off with a recurring theme, with dazzling virtuosity and double-stopping, and the exuberance and excitement is maintained right to the end.

Leo Appel was awarded first prize at the 2015 Whitgift International Music Competition and in the 2017 Oxford Philharmonic Concerto Competition. In January 2019, Leo performed at the Palace of Westminster as a recipient of the 2018 Big Ben Award for global outstanding talent. He was co-leader of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain during the 2016-17 season, playing at the BBC Proms and in France. In the same year, he performed live on BBC Radio 3 and on French radio. During the 2017-18 season, Leo played over 10 recitals and gave

several performances of the Mendelssohn and Walton Violin Concertos with orchestras in Oxford and Hertfordshire. That year, he also played in masterclasses with Maxim Vengerov and Ani Schnarch. During the summer he attended the Keshet Eilon International Summer Mastercourse in Israel, studying with Qian Zhou, Gilles Apap and Ilya and Olga Kaler. Leo has recently played the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in Abingdon, and later this year will play the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in Watford.

Leo is in his first year studying Music at St John's College, Cambridge. There he is maintaining a busy performing schedule including numerous solo recitals and chamber concerts. Leo is leading orchestras and chamber groups; later in the season he will be directing a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion. Leo studies violin with David Takeno and is supported by an award from the Hattori Foundation. He plays a violin by Joseph Gagliano, kindly on loan from his grandmother.

For information about future concerts, please email Leo.appel1@gmail.com

Interval – 20 minutes – refreshments outside and downstairs

Danse Lente

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Eugène Marie Henri Fouques Duparc was born in Paris in 1848, studied piano with César Franck, and became one of Franck's first composition pupils. Following military service in the Franco-Prussian War, Duparc married Ellen MacSwinney, from Scotland, in 1871. Duparc is best known for his 17 *Mélodies* or art-songs, with texts by poets such as Baudelaire, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle and Goethe. In 1885 at the age of 37 he stopped composing abruptly. He then devoted himself to his family and his other passions, drawing and painting. But increasing vision loss after the turn of the century eventually led to total blindness, and he became heavily critical of his own works, and destroyed a number of them. Suffering from a condition called neurasthenia, combined with blindness in 1913, and the effect of numerous bereavements, Duparc was compositionally silent for the last 40 years of his life. He died in Mont-de-Marsan, in southwestern France, at the age of 85.

By way of explanation of the destruction of many of his compositions, Duparc said: *"Having lived for 25 years in a splendid dream, the whole idea of [musical] representation has become – I repeat to you – repugnant. The other reason for this destruction, which I do not regret, was the complete moral transformation that God imposed on me 20 years ago and which, in a single minute, obliterated all of my past life. Since then, [my opera] Roussalka, not having any connection with my new life, should no longer exist."*

Duparc left only three surviving orchestral works. *Lénore* is an 1875 symphonic poem based on the ballad of the same name by Gottfried August Bürger. *Aux Étoiles* was originally conceived as one of three movements from a *Poème Nocturne* of 1874, but later published in 1911, although the other movements are lost. *Danse Lente*, at only five minutes long, was written in 1892 in a temporary respite from his illness. It is the sole remaining fragment of the projected three-act opera *Roussalka*, which Duparc had worked on for ten years, but then destroyed. A slow waltz eventually leads to a faster one, with much tempo flexibility, and the ending subsides into a quiet C major.

Extase

Duparc (orchestrated Bushell)

Duparc orchestrated eight of his seventeen art-songs, which gives them a more opulent feel compared to a simple piano accompaniment. The composer did not orchestrate the dreamy *Extase* but it later came to the attention of conductor Leopold Stokowski, who made an arrangement for small orchestra. Geoff Bushell was inspired by this to make his own arrangement, featuring a single flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn with divided string accompaniment.

Symphony in C

Georges Bizet (1838-75)

- I – Allegro vivo
- II – Andante. Adagio
- III – Allegro vivace
- IV – Finale. Allegro vivace

Only ten months after Bruch's birth, Alexandre César Léopold Bizet was born in Paris but baptised as "Georges". His father, Adolphe Bizet, had been a hairdresser and wigmaker before becoming a singing teacher despite a lack of formal training. Georges showed an early aptitude, and even before going on to study at the Paris Conservatoire, composed this *Symphony in C* at the age of only 17. It clearly shows his admiration for Rossini and Schubert and there are numerous stylistic, orchestral, melodic and harmonic similarities with the *Symphony no 1 in D major* of his teacher Charles Gounod (1818-1893). Despite this homage, the symphony shows an extraordinarily accomplished talent in melodic invention, thematic handling and orchestration. Begun on 29 October 1855, the *Symphony in C* was completed by the end of November, but remained unknown and unplayed in the library of the Paris Conservatoire for 80 years. It was then brought to the attention of the conductor Felix Weingartner, who then introduced it to a Basel audience on 26 February 1935, sixty years after Bizet's death. The sparkling *Symphony in C* features a prominent oboe solo in the slow second movement, and some notoriously rapid first violin writing in the finale.

Programme notes by Geoff Bushell

ABOUT DCO

Didcot Concert Orchestra (DCO) was founded in 2017 by local amateur musicians Jackie and Geoff Bushell. Realising that the rapidly growing town was bringing ever more orchestral musicians and larger potential concert audiences to the area, Jackie and Geoff felt it could now support its own full-size symphony orchestra and become a cultural destination for classical music. This would enable audiences in the Didcot area to experience high-quality classical orchestral music without needing to travel to London or Oxford, at an accessible price. Participation in classical music, whether as a listener or a performer, has been shown to bring many benefits in health and wellbeing to individuals and to the community.

The new orchestra aims to give local musicians and audiences the opportunity to experience a very high standard of performance. This level of attainment is achieved by personal invitation or audition of players, and through the support and encouragement of professional string section leaders. Players meet for just four rehearsals before each concert, usually over a ten day period.

DCO gave its inaugural performance in early 2018 and programmes three concerts each year, all at Cornerstone. Focusing on popular classical music from the Romantic era, each concert also offers new experiences to both audiences and players by including at least one "rare gem" that is very rarely, if ever, heard in the public concert hall. Programmes for the orchestra's upcoming concerts can be seen on page 12 and at DCO's website at www.didcotconcertorchestra.org.uk.

Sponsorship

DCO is a not-for-profit charitable unincorporated association, underwritten by the founders. The orchestra welcomes offers of sponsorship from businesses, organisations and philanthropic individuals who are keen to support the development of performing arts in south Oxfordshire. If interested in sponsoring future concerts, please contact us via www.didcotconcertorchestra.org.uk.

Participation

If you play an orchestral instrument to a high standard, and are interested in participating in future concerts, DCO would love to hear from you. Contact us via www.didcotconcertorchestra.org.uk or come and speak to us at a concert.



DCO is a member of Making Music, which provides advice, support and resources for leisure-time musicians and music groups across the UK.

CONDUCTOR

Geoff Bushell studied conducting with George Hurst, Denise Ham, Michael Rose and Adrian Leaper. As conductor and musical director of Oxford-based St Giles Orchestra since 1983, Geoff has developed its technical and musical capabilities and conducted concerts in partnership with local choirs, for example in the performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Verdi's *Requiem* in Oxford Town Hall, and recordings including Walton's *Crown Imperial March* which was broadcast on the BBC One Show. On 27 April 2019, Geoff made his conducting debut at Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with a 70-strong St Giles Orchestra, 150 singers from Wantage Choral Society and South Chiltern Society, and three young professional soloists. Geoff also regularly rehearses Abingdon Symphony Orchestra and Phoenix Flutes. Renowned for introducing players and audiences alike to lesser-known and unjustly neglected romantic repertoire, he has also earned a reputation as a composer of romantic-style pieces, including four commissions from the Abingdon and District Musical Society to celebrate their successive tenth anniversaries. Geoff is also well known locally as a player of French horn and double bass.

OXUS

DCO's four string section leaders, Kate Bailey, Louise Graham, Heather Birt and Spike Wilson, are the members of OXUS – an innovative and vibrant string quartet, formed in 2006. They perform music from all eras, but specialise in contemporary repertoire and give regular recitals and workshops in schools and colleges. They frequently work with other performers and media, performing works including Steve Reich's *Different Trains* with electronics; an original composition by and with jazz guitarist Pete Oxley; and, with actor-singer Nicholas Cass-Beggs, *The Juliet Letters* by Elvis Costello and The Brodsky Quartet. Performances include appearances at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, the Oxford Contemporary Music Marathon, and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and they have also enjoyed the challenge of working with artist Pam Foley, composing and improvising, for a project on Chronic Grief, entitled *Routes of Sorrow*.

LEADER

Kate Bailey began her violin studies with Pamela Spofforth at the age of nine, and was an early member of Pro Corda, where she gained a love of chamber music. Whilst reading Music at University College, Oxford, she studied with David Ogden and Emanuel Hurwitz, and then went on to study with Erika Klemperer at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Kate has played in the string quartet OXUS for the last ten years, specialising in approachable contemporary works such as Steve Reich's *Different Trains* and Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*. She is also a founder member of The Holywell Ensemble (formed in 1984), a flexible chamber group renowned for its committed and evocative performances of British chamber music on CD and in the concert hall, which was described by the BBC Music Magazine as "one of the most important chamber music groups on the British musical scene."

Kate lives in Oxford, and regularly leads a number of orchestras in the area. She is also a freelance orchestral player and has performed a number of concertos, including Beethoven's Triple Concerto with her colleagues from The Holywell Ensemble, and in March 2018 she performed Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with viola player Heather Birt. When she is not doing something musical, she enjoys photography, writing and trying to learn Turkish.

SECTION LEADERS

Louise Graham, violin

Louise Graham lives in Headington and is a freelance violinist and teacher. She studied under Bela Dekany at the Guildhall School of Music, plays in various local orchestras, leads the Erato Chamber Orchestra and is a member of OXUS. Louise teaches privately and for the Oxfordshire County Music Service.

Heather Birt, viola

Heather Birt works as a freelance viola player with many period ensembles including Academy of Ancient Music, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, The King's Consort, The English Concert and The Mozartists. Heather has performed in several BBC Promenade concerts and appears on many recordings, including the highly regarded Pachelbel Vespers CD with The King's Singers. Heather also plays Double Bass in Allen Beechey's Bright Stars of Jazz, and has performed at numerous jazz festivals in Britain and Europe.

Spike Wilson, cello

Spike Wilson won a choral exhibition to The Queen's College, Oxford, and now leads a busy musical life combining cello-playing in chamber groups (including The Holywell Ensemble and OXUS) and orchestras, with coaching chamber groups and directing several school and youth orchestras. He coaches for the Oxford Cello School and the Oxford Chamber Course and is much in demand as a cello teacher, with many adult and younger pupils.

PLAYERS – 9 JUNE 2019

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| FLUTE | Sue Hurst Kate Geary | VIOLIN 2 | Louise Graham * Jeanette Thomas Rosie Bruce |
| OBOE | Alan Evans Lorna Rennie | | Alison Forrow Eleanor Bagg Pat Field |
| CLARINET | Barbara Stuart Jackie Bushell | | Jennie Wood |
| BASSOON | Phil Davies Chris Grovenor | VIOLA | Heather Birt * Jane Anderson Margarete Lucas |
| HORN | Sam Dunwoody Rob Bentall Geoff Haines Helen Newing | | Katherine Baker Gill Barbour |
| TRUMPET | Jeremy Wood Thomas James | CELLO | Spike Wilson * Janet Phillips Andrew Rendell |
| TIMPANI + PERCUSSION | Chris Fletcher- Campbell | | Philippa Simon Lisa Rees Lynton Appel |
| VIOLIN 1 | Kate Bailey * Christina Everson Caroline Churchill Lydia Wyn-Jones Hannah Brain Katie Perkins Katrina Davies Chris Kenyon | DOUBLE BASS | Chris Seddon Richard Hodby |

* professional string section leaders

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NEXT CONCERTS

Sunday 6 October 2019 at 4pm at Cornerstone

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Rachmaninov | The Rock – Symphonic Fantasia |
| Wagner | Tannhäuser: Prelude and Venusberg Music (with semi-chorus from Didcot Choral Society) |
| Rimsky-Korsakov | Scheherazade |

Sunday 8 March 2020 at 4pm at Cornerstone

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|-------------|--|
| Butterworth | A Shropshire Lad |
| Suk | Fairy Tale – suite for large orchestra |
| Franck | Symphony in D minor |

Sunday 21 June 2020 at 4pm at Cornerstone

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Prokofiev | Symphony no 1 "Classical" |
| Liadov | Nénie – Sorrowful Song |
| Dvořák | Czech Suite |
| Larsson | Pastoral Suite |
| Beethoven | Symphony no 8 in F |

Sunday 4 October 2020 at 4pm at Cornerstone

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Khachaturian | Adagio from Spartacus and Phrygia |
| Miaskovsky | Symphony no 27 in C minor |
| Mussorgsky orch. Ravel | Pictures at an Exhibition |

March 2021

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Wagner | Parsifal: Prelude |
| D'Indy | Summer Day in the Mountains |
| Wagner | Parsifal: Good Friday Music |
| Strauss, Richard | Four Last Songs (Mary Pope, soprano) |

June 2021

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|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Franck | Les Éolides |
| Fauré | Pélleas et Mélisande |
| Vaughan Williams | The Wasps Overture |
| Debussy | Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune |
| Brahms | Serenade no 1 in D |

Please see further information at www.didcotconcertorchestra.org.uk