



"Didcot's new symphony orchestra"

Principal sponsor: 

Conductor: Geoff Bushell

Leader: Kate Bailey

Honorary President: Lord Vaizey of Didcot

Concert **7** – Sunday 6 February 2022

PROGRAMME

Johann Strauss II Gipsy Baron Overture

Reinecke Nachtstück (Clare Howick)

Glazunov Violin Concerto (Clare Howick)

Dvořák Symphony no 5 in F



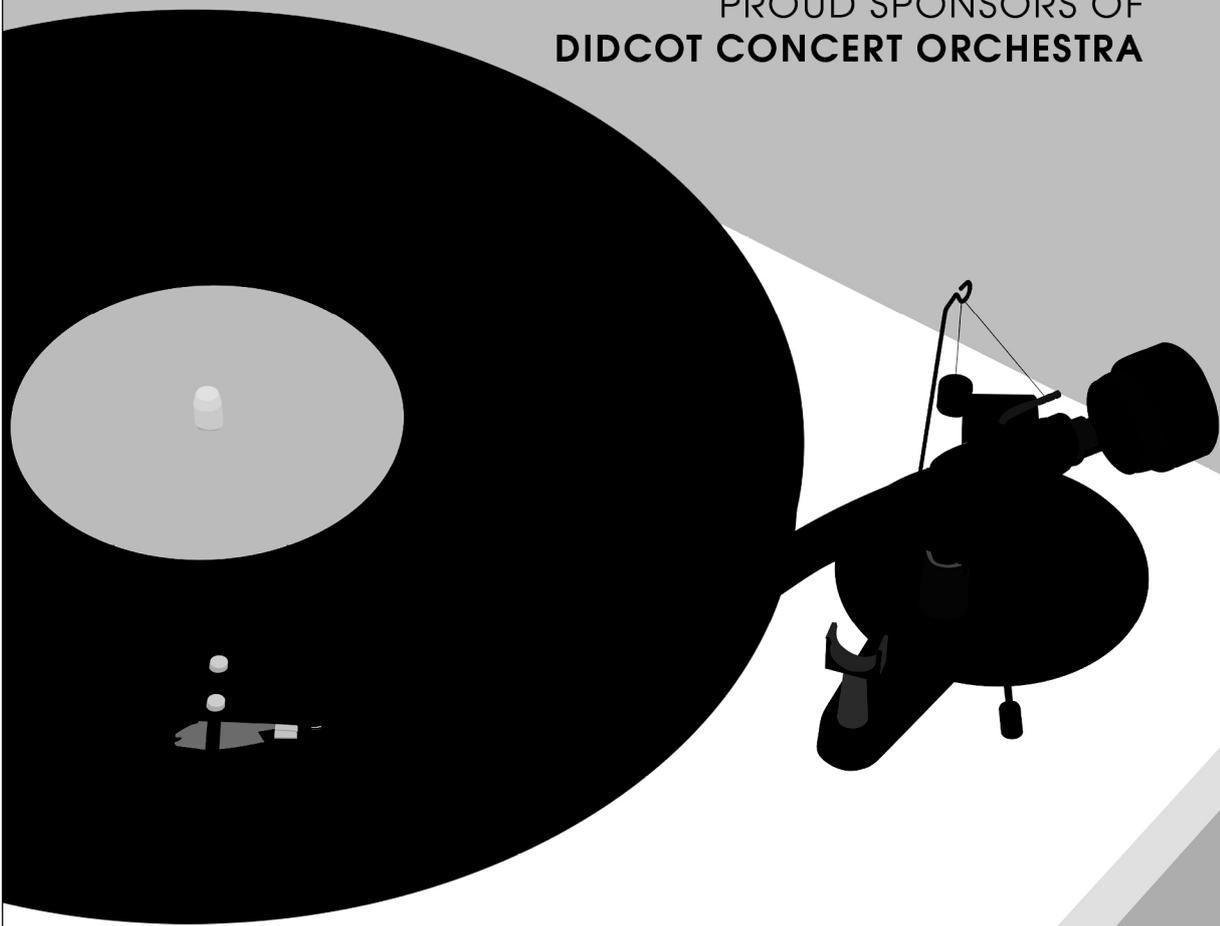
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A message from our Honorary President

"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."

Lord Vaizey of Didcot

PROGRAMME

The Gipsy Baron: Overture Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

The Gipsy Baron is an operetta in three acts about the marriage of an exiled landowner and a gipsy girl who is the daughter of a Turkish Pasha, and who owns hidden treasure. During the composer's lifetime, the operetta enjoyed great success, second only to the popularity of *Die Fledermaus*. Though receiving its first performance in Vienna in 1885, it's surprising that the operetta wasn't performed in the UK until 1935, and not professionally until 1964. The opening has a serious and symphonic feel, but it's not long until Strauss launches into a string of his trademark tuneful marches and waltzes.

Nachtstück Emil von Reznicek (1860-1945)

Emil Nikolaus Joseph, Freiherr von Reznicek was an Austrian composer of Romanian-Czech ancestry, spending his childhood in Vienna, moving to Graz in 1874 to study law and music, and later studying under Carl Reinecke in Leipzig. Much of his output includes attempts at musical humour which have not stood the test of time, but his most enduring work – the overture to his opera *Donna Diana* – is still played these days – including by DCO in June 2019. Reznicek was a friend of Richard Strauss, but said that his greatest influence was Gustav Mahler. The *Adagietto* of the latter's *Fifth Symphony* (premiered a year earlier) may have been the inspiration for Reznicek's 1905 *Nachtstück*, and is in the same key of F major.

Nachtstück is a nine-minute miniature jewel, translucently scored only for violin (or cello) solo, four horns, harp and strings. There are frequent additions of a deliciously dissonant F sharp (instead of the expected F natural), recalling a precedent set by Wagner in *The Ring* and *Tristan and Isolde*. While the rogue notes always resolve, the use of accented hand-stopped horns adds stings which momentarily disturb the almost uninterrupted lyrical solo line.

Conductor Geoff Bushell came across this piece during one of his searches for unjustly neglected repertoire, and although it is rarely played nowadays, and only recorded once, he feels it richly deserves its place amongst the "hidden gems" that characterise much of his programming for the orchestras he conducts. Tonight's performance may be a UK premiere.

Violin Concerto, op 82

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936)

I – Moderato

II – Andante sostenuto

III – Allegro

At the age of 40, Glazunov had already produced his eight symphonies before turning his attention to the *Violin Concerto*. In the same year, 1905, he had become Director of the St Petersburg Conservatory. He led three inter-related careers – as professor and scholar, conductor, and composer, the latter activity sponsored by wealthy art patron and timber merchant Mitrofan Belyayev, who was later to become a publisher of much of Glazunov's music.

After a brief orchestral introduction reminiscent of Mendelssohn, the soloist begins the *Violin Concerto* with a simple improvisatory theme. The first movement appears to ramble, though appealingly, and eventually dissolves without a break into the more reflective and pastoral slow movement in F major. Later there is an impassioned section in D flat major – a Glazunov favourite key. The cadenza at the end of the second movement serves as a transition from the introspective portions of the work so far to the colourful and lilting tune of the finale, announced on the trumpets and leading eventually to a warm-hearted exhilarating conclusion.

Clare Howick

Described by *The Strad* as “playing with beguiling warmth and affection” and by *American Record Guide* as “simply spectacular”, internationally acclaimed violinist Clare Howick is at the forefront of a generation of inspiring violinists. With a repertoire of 54 concerti, she has performed with many orchestras including the Philharmonia Orchestra and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Clare has released seven CDs, all receiving great acclaim, including 'Editor's Choice' in *Gramophone*, 'Recording of the Month' on *Music Web International*, 'Editor's Choice' in *Classical Music Magazine*, 'Recommended Recording' on *BBC Radio 3 Record Review*, a nomination for 'Recording of the Year 2018' by *MusicWeb International* and 'The Strad Recommends'.

Her CD, *British Music for Violin and Piano* (Naxos), which includes Elgar's Sonata and rare gems, was selected as 'Drive Discovery of the Week' on *ClassicFM*, featured on *BBC Radio 3* and was awarded 'Editor's Choice' by *AllMusic.com*, with

The Strad praising “a ravishing account of the Elgar Sonata that tends to sweep the board... utterly captivating”.

Her latest discs, British Violin Sonatas and Entente Musicale (a celebration of Anglo-French music) received rave reviews "this performance is superb...I cannot imagine a better performance...she reveals other strengths and parallels in this very familiar piece (Debussy). Likewise Ravel's *Habañera*...this new version is completely compelling, indeed hypnotically sensuous, in its own right. With Tasmin Little having recently laid down her bow, there is a strong case for Clare Howick becoming the leading proponent of British violin repertoire...A unique and successful combination of familiar repertoire given performances of the highest quality." Clare's CDs will be for sale in the interval. Credit cards accepted.

Interval – 20 minutes – refreshments and CDs downstairs

Symphony no 5 in F, op 76

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

I – Allegro ma non troppo

II – Andante con moto

III – Andante con moto, quasi l'istesso tempo – Allegro scherzando

IV – Allegro molto

Dvořák was one of the first Czech composers to gain worldwide recognition, although during his life only five of his symphonies were widely known, due to his publisher Simrock's initial concern about the commercial viability of large works. Thus the *Sixth Symphony* (DCO October 2018) was published as number 1, and though Dvořák catalogued the *Fifth Symphony* as opus 24, Simrock decided to present it as a later work by giving it opus number 76, and giving it the number 3 against Dvořák's will. The *Fifth Symphony* has a pastoral feel, sharing the same key and happy outlook as Brahms' *Third Symphony* (DCO October 2022) and Beethoven's *Symphony no 6 "Pastoral"*.

The *Fifth Symphony* was composed in a mere six weeks. The first movement is indeed pastoral, whilst the second is a wistful nocturne in A minor, punctuated by sunnier moments in major keys. The third movement follows almost continuously and after a short introduction, becomes a typical playful scherzo in B flat major, bringing to mind the character of Dvořák's sixteen *Slavonic Dances*. The fourth movement would normally be expected to return to the home key of F major, but Dvořák first returns to A minor, finally reaching the home key in happier mood, and the symphony moves forward a jubilant conclusion.

Programme notes by Geoff Bushell

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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 performing orchestra and become a cultural destination for classical music. Audiences in the Didcot area would then be able 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 seldom, 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. Do join our audience emailing list there, to receive notifications of future concerts.

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

Geoff studied conducting with George Hurst, Denise Ham, Michael Rose and Adrian Leaper. He has been conductor and musical director of Oxford-based St Giles Orchestra since 1983, regularly conducts Abingdon Symphony Orchestra and other orchestras in the Oxfordshire area, and is also conductor and musical director of Didcot Concert Orchestra which he co-founded with his wife Jackie in 2018. Highlights of Geoff's conducting career have included large-scale performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Verdi's *Requiem* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with 200 performers, and a recording of Walton's *Crown Imperial March* which was broadcast on the BBC One Show. With a growing repertoire of over 400 different works conducted in public concerts, Geoff is renowned for introducing players and audiences to lesser-known but unjustly neglected romantic repertoire, and has conducted several UK premieres of these. Geoff also composes romantic-style pieces, including four commissions from the Abingdon and District Musical Society to celebrate its major anniversaries.

LEADER

Kate Bailey

Kate 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.

OXUS

DCO's four string section leaders

Kate Bailey and Louise Graham (violins), Heather Birt (viola) and Spike Wilson (cello), 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.

OXUS frequently works 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*.

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PERFORMERS – 6 FEBRUARY 2022

FLUTE	Sue Hurst Kate Geary	VIOLIN 1	Kate Bailey * Caroline Churchill Misha Brazier Tope Cathie Ng Andrew Frawley Gillie Watson Catherine Gough
PICCOLO	Kate Geary		
OBOE	Aldus Whitfield Alan Evans		
CLARINET	Barbara Stuart Jackie Bushell	VIOLIN 2	Louise Graham * Jane Terepin Gillian Corrigan Alison Forrow Pat Field Jennifer Robinson Jeanette Thomas
BASS CLARINET	Barbara Stuart		
BASSOON	Will Grainger Chris Grovenor		
HORN	Joel Allred Richard Todd Sam Hill Paul Willett	VIOLA	Heather Birt * Steve Terepin Rosie Bruce Margarete Lucas
TRUMPET	John Sawyer Vere Lintern-Smyth	CELLO	Spike Wilson * Polly Silk Sarah Higgins Andrew Rendell Rachael Rendell
TROMBONE	Nigel Howard Charles Vereker Stephanie Howard	DOUBLE BASS	Chris Seddon Richard Hodby
TIMPANI	Chris Fletcher- Campbell		
PERCUSSION	Huw Morgan		
HARP	Helen Coad		* professional string section leaders



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NEXT CONCERTS

8 Sunday 22 May 2022 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Khachaturian	Adagio from Spartacus and Phrygia
Myaskovsky	Symphony 27 in C minor
Mussorgsky orch. Ravel	Pictures at an Exhibition

9 Sunday 2 October 2022 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Rossini	William Tell: Overture
Dohnányi	Symphonic Minutes
Vaughan Williams	Tuba Concerto (Sam Elliott)
Brahms	Symphony 3 in F

10 Sunday 5 February 2023 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Wagner	Parsifal: Prelude
Richard Strauss	Four Last Songs (Mary Pope, soprano)
Dvořák	Hussite Overture
Tchaikovsky	Sleeping Beauty: ballet highlights

11 Sunday 14 May 2023 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Franck	Les Éolides
Fauré	Pélleas et Mélisande
Vaughan Williams	The Wasps: Overture
Debussy	Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune
Brahms	Serenade 1 in D

12 Sunday 8 October 2023 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Saint Saëns	Phaéton
Howard Hanson	Symphony 2 "Romantic"
Goldmark	Sakuntala Overture
Goldmark	The Queen of Sheba: Ballet Music
Tchaikovsky	Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture

13 February 2024

Goldmark	The Queen of Sheba: Overture
Karłowicz	Eternal Songs
Elgar	In the South
Respighi	The Pines of Rome

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