

Programme

Mikhail Glinka
Russlan and Ludmilla Overture

Pyotr Tchaikovsky
Piano Concerto No.1
(Soloist Leah Nicholson)

~ **Interval** ~

Jean Sibelius
Symphony No.2

About tonight's music

Mikhail Glinka - Russlan and Ludmilla Overture

After Glinka's first opera met with immediate popular success, the director of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg encouraged the composer to adapt Pushkin's epic poem, ***Russlan and Ludmilla***, as his next opera. The poem tells of the abduction of Ludmilla by an evil sorcerer, Chernomor, from a party given for Ludmilla's three suitors, one of whom is Ruslan. Each suitor rides off to save her, encountering a fantastic assortment of witches, hermits, magic castles, enchanted gardens, magic swords, and so sorcerer is inevitably vanquished by Ruslan, who revives Ludmilla from a trance and wins her hand in marriage. The opera was grandiose and rambling, and not as successful as its predecessor, being withdrawn from the repertoire in 1848, only six years after its premiere in 1842. However, the opera eventually gained recognition for its musical worth, with themes based on Russian, Finnish, Tartar, and Persian music, all brilliantly orchestrated.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky - Piano Concerto No.1

The accompanying circumstance of the premiere of Tchaikovsky's **First Piano Concerto** in 1875 are remarkable for the recipient of the work's dedication, Tchaikovsky's tutor at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and world renowned pianist Nikolai Rubinstein, refused to play at the premiere. Instead the honour fell to German virtuoso Hans von Bülow, who finally premiered the work on the 25th of October 1875 in Boston. The work did not reach international acclaim until three years later, when ironically it was Rubinstein's interpretation that aided in the breakthrough of this now infamous Concerto.

The introduction of the first movement commences with the infamous, majestic melody that the Concerto owes much of its popularity to. The powerful instrumentation, in which this Ukrainian Folk melody is heard, contributes to its passion and elementary power. Introduced in a minor key by the four horns it is later taken up and expanded by the violins in major harmony as the piano is first heard supporting the orchestra with marked chords. The large-scale sonata form that follows does not make us of this opening melody again, but instead relies on an abundance of rich and varied thematic material. It begins with a spirited and capricious theme which, after a brief transition, is immediately contrasted by a slower and much more lyrical second theme. The movement continues along a pattern of both brilliant, virtuosic aspects and subtle but effective use of orchestration, each section of the movement being centred around a solo cadenza.

The slower second movement is much lighter in character. Laid out in a short three part form, the movement begins and ends with light music in the style of a Nocturne. The main melody, first introduced by the solo flute over tender pizzicato strings, is filled with simplicity and fantastical charm and is starkly contrasted by a fast middle section dominated by surreal, dreamlike glee and carelessness. The Concerto finishes quasi *attacca* (without a gap), with a *Rondo*, which is again steeped in the Ukrainian folklore that dominated Tchaikovsky's early musical output. Two of the three are lively dance melodies whereas the third is a romantic *cantabile melody*. The successful outer facade, with its extremes between Emotion and Force, has contributed to much of Tchaikovsky's popular acclaim but also to scepticism among musicologists and other composers. Nevertheless, the ingenuous way the young Tchaikovsky knew to combine structure and effect in his first Concerto, remains one of the many reasons why this work continues to be widely adored.

Jean Sibelius - Symphony No.2

Jean Sibelius' **Second Symphony** was composed at a time when Sibelius was increasingly determined to find his own voice. His first compositions had brought him success but ultimately varied little in their approach and influences of national folklore and even of Tchaikovsky's music.

Encouraged by his friends to travel to northern Italy it was this break from the norm that, as Sibelius later commented, enabled his breakthrough as an artist. Even though its composer continued to insist that his symphonies were pieces conceived without extra-musicality, speculation about extra-musical implications have been encouraged by stylistic configuration and characteristic styles. Yet one can easily draw a comparison to the composer's best-known single work, *Finlandia*. The parallels in the nature of the musical language of fanfares, chorales, and passionately uttered and defiant melodies certainly did not detract from such a comparison. Whatever the implications, Sibelius masterfully manages to engage the audience in his in own symphonic world.

The symphony begins with cheerful melodies in the winds and strings which returns after a development section where darker colours conflict with the otherwise bright nature of this movement. We know from the composers sketches that Dante's works inspired him during this time and this can be felt in the lugubrious second movement. Two main thematic groups can be identified. One based on gregorian plainchant first introduced by the bassoons and a celestial second theme, in immediate contrast to the frantic and fragmented music that precedes it. During the course of the movement these two thematic groups continuously try to gain the upper hand over one another, resulting in a hopelessly bleak coda. The fast third movement grows from the second, as it expands upon its conflict of anxious material and broad folk music. This time, however, resulting with the relief of the heroic final movement that follows without a break. The repetitive nature in which the second melody as it builds to the final *crescendo* of this movement and the way the music then erupts into almost spiritual intensity, permits the speculation of the composer's extra-musical intend. While it isn't clear whether that intention was a political one or whether it implied a more religious context, the composer found his artistic breakthrough with his second symphony, which enabled him to further develop his compositional approach.

Written by Leon Reimer
Musical Director

Tonight's soloist – Leah Nicholson



Leah Nicholson (15) is from Lanercost and is in her fifth year at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Leah is an Honours Graduate in a Bachelor degree - LRSM Diploma with Distinction in Piano Solo Performance.

She is a winner of numerous competitions including the International Chopin Festival in Mazovia, Poland, and Chetham's Concerto Competition playing Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano Concerto.

Leah is studying with John Gough and has participated in masterclasses with Martin Roscoe, Murray McLachlan, Anthony Hewitt, Kathryn Stott and Galina Sandovskaya.

Our conductor – Leon Reimer



After graduating from the University of Glasgow with a degree in Music in 2013 and completing his postgraduate studies with Professors Alasdair Mitchell and Garry Walker at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Leon became an Associate Musician of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He has worked with some of Scotland's most prolific orchestras, including the RSN, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and most recently the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the St. Magnus Festival in Orkney.

Leon has been working with amateur and youth orchestras across Scotland, including the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra and the Perth Community Orchestra. Having been brought up as a singer, Leon also enjoys frequent choral conducting opportunities, most notably as the Lanfine Conducting Scholar of the University of Glasgow Chapel Choir.

The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violins

Rachael Cosslette
Robert Charlesworth
Joan Masters
Catherine Swarbrick
Monica Davies
Kasia Davies
Sarah Wilson
Graham Barke

2nd Violins

Katherine Bowness
Susan Campbell
David Howdle
Hillary Lawrence
Carolyn White
Eleanor Buchan

Cello

Kenneth Wilson
Jake Cardigan
Mary Lawler
Susan Beeby
Pam Przbyla
Izzy Roberts
Steven Thompson
Joanne Crossley

Viola

Peter Wood
Jon Buchan
Nick Wragg

Double Bass

Emma Burt
Ben imThurn
Ruth Pickles

Flute

Lyn Young
Samantha Willis
Terry Mullett

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Raven
Ian Wilkinson

Oboe

Glenys Braithwaite
Anthea Lee

Bassoon

Ann Bishop
Eleanor Parkinson

Trumpet

Alan Branstone
Gordon Kydd

Trombone

Graham Harris
Giles Wilson
Ruth Wood
Cliff Atwood

Horn

Pam Harris
Julie Ratcliffe
Justin Borlase
David Logie

Tuba

Jason Gallagher

Timpani

David Birkett

City of Carlisle Orchestra: Next Concert

Spring Concert - Saturday April 8th 2017

Other Classical concerts coming up soon:

11th Dec 2016 (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
Alina Ibragimova, violin, Bach and Isaye

17th Dec 2016 (Sat) Wigton Choral Society - St Mary's Church, Wigton
Bach: Magnificat in D, Vivaldi: Magnificat, Kuhnau: Uns ist ein Kind geboren

15th Jan 2017 (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
(4pm) Nick Pritchard & Ian Tindale - Schubert, Die Schone Mullerin

23rd Jan 2017 (Mon) Penrith Music Club - Penrith Methodist Church
Goya Trio - Haydn and Beethoven on period instruments

26th Jan 2017 (Thur) Carlisle Music Society - St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle
Cassia String Quartet - Haydn, Shostakovich, Beethoven

15th Feb 2017 (Wed) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
(7pm) Local Young Musicians

16th Feb 2017 (Thur) Carlisle Music Society - St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle
Jorgensen Trio - piano trios by Brahms, Ravel, Takemitsu

19th Feb 2017 (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
(3pm) Royal Northern Sinfonia - Children's Concert incl Peter and the Wolf

19th Feb 2017 (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
Royal Northern Sinfonia - Mozart, Vaughn Williams, Tippett, Beethoven

9th Mar 2017 (Thur) Carlisle Music Society - St. Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle
Mauro Lo Conte, piano. - Bach, Beethoven, Schumann

17th Mar 2017 (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
Michael Petrov & Alexander Ullman - Prokofiev, Janacek, Elliot Carter, Chopin

1st Apr 2017 (Sat) Cumbria Rural Choirs - St. Johns Church, London Rd, Carlisle
Puccini: Messa di Gloria, Rossini: Stabat Mater