

Summer Concert

June 2019

Programme

Conductor: Leon Reimer
Leader: Katharine Bowness
Soloist: Isabel Kent

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Tonight's Programme

Otto Nicolai – “Die lustigen Weibern von Windsor” (The Merry Wives of Windsor) Overture

At just 16 years old, Otto Nicolai ran away from home, because his demanding father was bullying him into becoming a musical “Wunderkind”. Out of this unhappy association with music at such an early age would emerge not only one of Germany’s most talented and exciting musicians but also one who has become synonymous with German musical humour. He composed this, his most successful opera in the late 1840s based on the Shakespearean comedy of the same name. Until shortly before his death, Nicolai had written exclusively serious operas. Through his years spent in Italy and in Italian Opera buffa (comedic opera), however, he began to question this form of music. He wrote that, German opera contains too much philosophy and not enough music, whereas Italian opera has the opposite problem. “Would it be impossible to combine both demands satisfactorily?” This is exactly what he managed to achieve. Even though Wagner and Pfizner regarded the opera as a forgettable second-rate composition it has always been successful with audiences.

Hamish MacCunn – Land of the Mountain and the Flood Overture

At the start of the academic year in 1883, a young musician from Greenock named Hamish MacCunn presented himself at the newly established Royal College of Music in London, where he had been accepted to study on a full scholarship. The Scottish musicologist John Purser wrote, “If ever there was a composer who emerged from the glens and firths of Scotland, fully armed, then MacCunn was that person”. MacCunn was a talented pianist, and an accomplished string player (viola and violin), but truly excelled in composition, which he studied with Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers-Stanford. So successful was MacCunn’s ensuing conducting and composing career that it wore him out, dying at a tragically early age. Scotland always featured in his music; he adored authentic Scottish folksongs but detested tokenism and imitation. The piece is based on Walter Scott’s *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, specifically a response to Scott’s line ‘The Bard resum’d his minstrel strain’. The piece paints a picture of Scotland both in geography and myth. From the off, the work is rugged. Its opening theme, heard straight away on the cello, is inflected with the distinctive rhythm of the ‘Scotch snap’. MacCunn’s own brand of poetry took the lead from central European trends, notably that of Liszt, even if it contained what Purser refers to as “a delightful element of plain-thinking”. A secondary, more lyrical tune soon emerges in the violins, but after the “wild horses of the flood” are unleashed the music turns to nobility rather than victory.

Ralph Vaughan-Williams – Oboe Concerto

Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958) wrote his oboe concerto in A minor toward the end of the second world war for the famous oboist Léon Goossens. Due to the threat of German V1 rockets in London, the premiere was instead held in Liverpool on 30 September 1944. The concerto shares many characteristics with his fifth symphony, which was completed only a year before he began work on the Oboe Concerto. Ideas and phrases for a discarded scherzo movement in the symphony became the foundation of this concerto. The two pieces also share their relatively quiet and reflective moods, their modal melodies and the pastoral setting.

The concerto is divided into three movements, each with a very distinguishable character. The first movement Rondo Pastorale, a musical form traditionally left to the final movement of a concerto, offers many opportunities for solo cadenzas. It begins quietly and, but for one brief scherzo episode, remains relatively reflective throughout. The second movement entitled Minuet and Musette is a short upbeat minuet in three parts, which contrasts with a more earthy Musette before returning to a freely composed reprise of the Minuet.

There are elements of cyclic form, e.g., each movement begins and ends with the same pentatonic scale, spanning an octave. Furthermore, after the initial brief scherzo in the middle of the first movement, the longer scherzo-like character of the second movement, the final movement is now a fully-fledged scherzo. However, as with the Rondo, this Scherzo is a free interpretation of a more conventional form. After an initial lively opening, which introduces no fewer than nine themes and a brief cadenza, the music leads to a much slower Aria-like passage in which the oboist sings high above the quiet accompaniment of the strings. It is followed by a brief recapitulation of some of the opening materials before a slow coda offers an opportunity for Vaughan-Williams to show all his skill as a composer of polyphonic music, as each part in the score are given the opportunity to sing.

~Interval~

Ralph Vaughan-Williams – English Folk Song Suite

1. March: Seventeen Come Sunday
2. Intermezzo: My Bonny Boy
3. March: Folk Songs from Somerset

At the beginning of the 20th century, a movement to record and reignite the old and lasting tradition of British folk songs emerged and quickly blossomed into a kind of hype. Vaughan-Williams fully embraced this trend and found in it his unique personal style. Two of his earliest successful compositions; 'Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis' for double string orchestra of 1910 and his enormous 'A Sea Symphony' of 1909/1910 were both heavily influenced by his intensive studies of the older English vocal polyphonic style and the native folk song culture.

The English Folk Song Suite was premiered as a Wind Band composition in 1923, having been commissioned by the band of the Royal Military School of Music. The Suite comprises of three movements. The first is a march entitled Seventeen Come Sunday and begins with the folksong of the movement's name with the melody in the woodwind. It is followed by the folksong Pretty Caroline, which features a solo clarinet and cornet, and the last melody in the first movement is Dives and Lazarus, which features the lower instruments with the upper woodwind playing against them.

The second movement is Intermezzo: My Bonnie Boy which opens with an oboe solo to the tune of My Bonnie Boy and is interrupted by the tune Green Bushes, which is more upbeat and dance-like than the slow, emotional opening. The movement ends with a fragment of the original melody. The third movement opens with a light introduction of four measures before the first melody, the folk song Blow Away the Morning Dew, played by a solo cornet. The second melody, High Germany, is played by the lower instruments and transitions into The Tree So High' and John Barleycorn before repeating back to the beginning of the movement.

Edward Elgar – Excerpts from The Wand of Youth Suites No. 1 and 2, Op. 1:

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|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Overture | 2. Fountain Dance | 3. Sun Dance | 4. Serenade |
| 5. Tame Bear | 6. Wild Bears | 7. Slumber Scene | 8. March |
| 9. Moths & Butterflies | 10. Fairies & Giants | | |

The turn of the 20th century was a period that idealised childhood: Kenneth Grahame's *Dream Days* was published in 1898, and Barrie's *Peter Pan* in 1904. Elgar was not exempt from this. In 1902 Elgar worked up to orchestral idylls from old sketches and called them *Dream Children*, filled with memories of childhood coloured by adult life. Memories soon provided another stimulus, this time of his own childhood at Broadheath. Composers have always found the suite an agreeable form for a collection of character pieces, and a useful way to bring theatre music to the concert hall. Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Grieg's *Peer Gynt* are early examples, Britten's *Gloriana* a more recent one. Elgar's *Wand of Youth* suites are unique in that the 'production' was a private affair, the composer only a boy. By 1907, Elgar was fifty and had already written many brilliant orchestral works and three great oratorios, though his symphonies were yet to be composed. As a birthday present his brother sent him an old family sea chest, which may well have made him think of recapturing his own boyhood.

Many of the numbers of the two *Wand of Youth* suites exist in part or in outline in his early sketchbooks, which he revised and rescored for full orchestra. His own programme note dates some of them back to the Elgar children's play, planned but never performed, when he was twelve or fourteen. The play was to have been an allegory, a moral tale, in which the rebellious Elgar children lured their 'despotic' parents to cross a brook from the everyday world to a transfiguring fairyland.

Elgar divided the original fifteen movements into two suites, calling them Op. 1, 'Music to a Child's Play'. The composing and rearranging of music for these suites spanned almost two decades. The 'Sun Dance' and 'Moths and Butterflies' date from 1878; the opening of the 'March' was sketched in 1879, its central section in 1880 and in 1900-1 Elgar copied some old ideas into sketchbooks, which he then developed as the 'Overture' and the 'Tame Bear'. Because the various movements of the two suites are separate, brief, and captivating pieces, they might be compared with Elgar's 'Enigma'; but unlike the *Variations* they have no common source. Whether or not 'Slumber Scene' was composed over a three-note ground bass for a child to play, as Elgar stated, his harmonic shifts over it show the mature technique and imagination of an experienced composer. The 'Fountain Dance' spurts and falls, 'Wild Bears' scurry, over pedal basses. 'Moths and Butterflies', shows a lightness, whereas clouds appear in the 'Serenade' and 'Sun Dance', where a timpani roll over a pedal note brings a sudden dark reminder of the 'Romanza' in the 'Enigma' *Variations*. The tragedy of the tame bear's awkward gait demonstrates Elgar's sympathy with the poor captive beast 'made to dance'.

Where did he find such an evocative title? The double implication – of a magic rod and a conductor's baton – is brilliant. The work begun in May 1907 still had no title in September. In early October he met Walford Davies whose 'Holiday Tunes' for children had recently been performed. On 6 October Elgar had his title; might something Davies said have suggested it? By no means all the *Wand of Youth* music, in its final form, is emotionally simple. Often there is a melancholy undertow. But in general, these pieces from the earliest stirrings of his imagination define and single out some of the feelings shortly to be combined in the symphonies.

Written by Leon Reimer

Conductor: Leon Reimer



After graduating from the University of Glasgow with a degree in Music in 2013, Leon Reimer went on to study orchestral conducting under the guidance of Professors Alasdair Mitchell and Garry Walker at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. During his time at the Conservatoire Leon was able to benefit from frequent masterclasses lead by, amongst others, Sian Edwards, Martyn Brabbins, Christopher Seaman and Jean Claude Picard. Since graduating from the Royal Conservatoire in 2015, Leon has engaged himself heavily within the youth and community music scene in Scotland.

Professional engagements include working for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra, the National Youth Choir of Scotland, Cumbria Youth Orchestra and Scottish Opera Connect Company.

Having been brought up as a singer, Leon also enjoys frequent choral conducting opportunities, most notably as the Associate Conductor of the University of Glasgow Chapel Choir and Glasgow Chamber Choir. In 2017, Leon made his debut with the University of Glasgow Choral Society and was invited back to lead a performance of Brahms's German Requiem in 2018. Leon has led groups of singers at several major festivals, including the Edinburgh International Festival, the Celtic Connections Festival as well as Glasgow's West End Festival. Eager to embrace the challenges and rewards of working with groups of all backgrounds and experiences, Leon has been heavily involved in the community scene across Scotland and the UK. Notable engagements include the City of Carlisle Orchestra, the Saint James Orchestra, the Perth Community Orchestra, the Lomond and Clyde Community Orchestra, Edinburgh Grand Opera and the Lanark and Carlisle Choral Union.

Other classical concerts coming up soon

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| 26 Sept | Carlisle Music Society, St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle, The Delta Piano Trio |
| 29 Sept | Keswick Music Society, Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, EU Chamber Orchestra
<i>Incl. Britten, Faure, Mozart, Grieg, Bartok</i> |
| 20 Oct | Keswick Music Society, Theatre by the Lake, Keswick. Lara Melda, piano. <i>Incl. Chopin, Rachmaninov, Lyadov, Prokofiev</i> |
| 31 Oct | Carlisle Music Society, St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle. Philip Attard, saxophone, Christine Zerafa, piano |
| 10th Nov | Keswick Music Society Theatre by the Lake, Keswick. Henry Roberts (flute), Luba Tunnicliffe (viola) Oliver Wass (harp). <i>Incl. Gershwin, Bax, Ravel,</i> |
| 14 Nov | Carlisle Music Society St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle. Patrick Hemmerlé, piano |
| 8th Dec | Keswick Music Society, Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, Gitarrissima of Vienna (guitar quintet). <i>Incl. Bizet, Copeland, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky and others.</i> |

Tonight's soloist: Isabel Kent

Isabel Kent dipABRSM ATCL



Isabel started playing the piano at the age of 7 and the oboe at the age of 8. She studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Junior department for 5 years under the tutorage of Stephen West for oboe and Marika Slater for piano. During this time she won the prestigious concerto competition and performed the Cimarosa Oboe Concerto with the symphony

orchestra at the conservatoire. Isabel is an alumnus of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and has been on many UK tours with them. She was fortunate enough to tour China with the orchestra and play in The Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. Having gained the Gladys Braton scholarship to study oboe on the BMus(hons) course at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, she is now in her final year studying with Ruth Bolister and has enjoyed playing in many chamber groups and orchestras around London including Young Musician's Symphony Orchestra, London Sylvan Ensemble and London International Sinfonia. After taking part in many competitions at Trinity Laban Conservatoire she has won the Harold Clarke woodwind competition and the Evelyn Rothwell oboe competition as well as the prize for 'the most deserving woodwind player'. Last year Isabel went on an Erasmus exchange to the Royal College of Music in Stockholm where she chose to study with Emmanuel Laville and Bengt Rosengren. Here she was involved in many concerts with the Royal College of Music's Symphony Orchestra. Isabel has had a fantastic 4 years at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and will go on to study a master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Thank You to Oak Tree



Tonight's refreshments are provided by Oak Tree Animals' Charity.

Oak Tree provides a safe place for all animals in their time of need. We look to rehome dogs, cats, and equines and work to support good, long-term healthy relationships between animals and their owners out in the community.

The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violins

Katharine Bowness
Rachael Cosslett
Joan Masters
Sarah Wilson
Linda Mages

2nd Violins

Robert Charlesworth
Isobel Fenton
Lorna Strong
Hilary Lawrence
Mary Cook

Cellos

Kenneth Wilson
Mary Lawler
Sol Ligertwood
Lee Willis
Rachel Owen
Roger Cooke

Violas

Peter Wood
Hannah Borlase

Double Basses

Emma Gray
Charles Hattrell
Wendy Willis

Oboes

Glenys Braithwaite
Jennifer Slee

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Le Breton

Flute/Piccolo

Lyn Young
Terry Mullett
Samantha Willis

Bassoons

Ann Bishop
Andrew Smith

Trombones

Graham Harris
Giles Wilson
Cliff Attwood
Ruth Wood

Horns

Julie Ratcliffe
Justin Borlase
Ian Williams
Pam Harris

Percussion

David Birkett
Sue Roe

Timpani

Toby Cass

Trumpets

Gordon Kydd
Alison Richardson

Our next concert

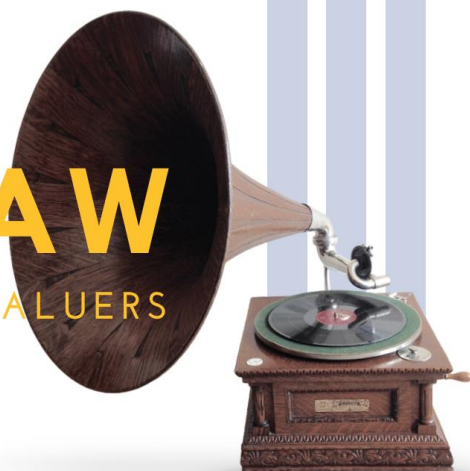
Saturday, 7th December, City of Carlisle Orchestra - St John's Church, London Road, Carlisle, 7:30pm. The programme will include Dvorak Symphony No. 6.

Why not join CoCO?

In particular, we are currently looking for **violins** and **violas**. Visit our website for details or email us at CityOfCarlisleOrchestra@hotmail.com. Rehearsals take place on Tuesday evenings from 7.15pm till 9pm during term time at Trinity Secondary School, Carlisle.

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