

City of
Carlisle
Orchestra



Spring Concert

March 2018

Programme

Conductor: Leon Reimer

Soloist: Leah Nicholson

Leader: Katharine Bowness

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Programme

Joyeuse Marche

Chabrier

Piano Concerto No.3 in D Major

Rachmaninov

Soloist: Leah Nicholson

~ Interval ~

Symphony No. 2

Rimsky-Korsakov

About tonight's music

Joyeuse Marche - Alexis Emmanuel Chabrier

Chabrier's **Joyeuse Marche** evolved in rather unconventional fashion. Late in the 1880s, the Conservatoire of Bordeaux asked the composer to write a pair of piano pieces for the young students in the sight-reading classes. Chabrier assumed the students' abilities to be greater than they actually were, and when he dispatched to the heads of the conservatory a *Prélude Pastorale* and a *Marche Française* there was dismay among the school's authorities, for the pieces proved too much for the young women's technical skill. Chabrier got his scores back and proceeded to arrange them for orchestra, in which form they were first performed at Angers, in 1888, and by the Société Internationale, on April 27, 1889.

Chabrier, who dedicated the march to his friend Vincent d'Indy, claimed that he aimed to represent in it "the burlesque spirit of carnival." The march, rechristened *Joyeuse Marche*, was given for the first time alone at a Lamoureux Concert, in Paris, on February 16, 1890. At this performance it gained a rather lukewarm success, despite which it was published the same year. The march has since become a common favourite of the concert halls around the world, indeed, it was part of the programme for the premiere of Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto in New York on November 28, 1909.

Piano Concerto No.3 in D Major – Sergei Rachmaninov

Rachmaninov composed his **Piano Concerto No. 3** for his own use, specifically for his first North American tour, which he undertook in 1909 with trepidation,

since he had devoted the preceding three years to composing rather than to performing. Nonetheless, he did not stint in crafting this work to show his dizzying pianistic skills to great advantage, and his ever-increasing experience as a composer yielded a work in which the solo and orchestral parts are melded with remarkable sophistication. That was not readily apparent to the New York critics who attended the premiere on November 28, 1909 with Rachmaninov as soloist and Walter Damrosch conducting the *Symphony Society of New York*, which is today known as the New York Philharmonic. They were all but unanimous in finding Rachmaninov's Third Concerto vague and meandering in comparison to his Second, which by that time was well known. The New York *Sun* proclaimed:

The new concerto may be taken as a purely personal utterance of the composer and it has at times the character of an impromptu, so unstudied and informal is its speech and so prone, too, to repetition.

The audience disagreed. The New York *Herald* reported:

Mr. Rachmaninov was recalled several times in the determined effort of the audience to make him play again, but he held up his hands with a gesture which meant that although he was willing, his fingers were not.

Two months later, he performed the work again, this time with no other than Gustav Mahler conducting. Rachmaninov's time spent rehearsing with Mahler had a profound effect on the composer, on which he reflects:

He [Mahler] touched my composer's heart straight away by devoting himself to my Concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection.

Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto has earned a reputation as one of the most technically daunting of all the standard piano concertos, and pianists have often cited it as a sort of Everest they feel compelled to vanquish, no matter the colossal effort required. Rachmaninov himself maintained that his Third Piano Concerto was "more comfortable" to play than his Second. Perhaps – just perhaps – it was more comfortable for Rachmaninov, whose hands individually spanned the interval of a 13th and whose keyboard stamina was practically limitless, but it assuredly was not more comfortable for most other pianists. It was even out of reach for the great Josef Hofmann, whom Rachmaninov admired above all other pianists and to whom he dedicated this score. Hofmann had considerably smaller hands and, as a result he never was able to perform this concerto that bears his name at the top of its first page.

Symphony No. 2 – Nikolai Andreievich Rimsky-Korsakov

Rimsky-Korsakov was so unsure of the symphonic character of **Antar** that he had second thoughts about calling it a symphony at all. It was introduced as such at a St. Petersburg concert in 1869, the year after its composition, but later (in preparing the third and final version, to be played on this occasion) the composer expressed the view that “symphonic suite” might be a more appropriate description.

In any case, it is, like the more famous *Scheherzade* of 20 years later, a programmatic work, based on a story by Ossip Syenkovksy about a seventh-century Arabic poet who was the son of an Abyssinian slave by a chieftain of the tribe of Abs. The score contains the following account of the scene and action:

- I. The grandeur of the desert of Sham; the magnificence of the ruins of Palmyra. Antar has forever abandoned the society of his fellow men, because they have returned only evil for the good he wished to do them. He has fled to the ruins of Palmyra in the desert of Sham, vowing eternal hatred toward mankind. Suddenly a graceful gazelle appears. Antar wishes to be set off in pursuit, but a terrible noise rends the air and the light of day is hidden by a thick shadow: it is that of a gigantic bird, which is chasing the gazelle. Antar attacks the monster, striking it with his lance; uttering a loud cry, the bird flies away, and the gazelle disappears. Antar, alone once more falls asleep. In a dream he sees himself transported to a splendid palace. Slaves press around to serve him, and a melodious song charms his ear. He is in the dwelling place of the Queen of Palmyra, the fairy Gul-Nazar. It is she in the form of a gazelle that he has saves from the clutches of the spirit of darkness. The grateful fairy promises Antar the fullest delights of life. The vision vanishes and the hero awakes among the ruins.
- II. The joy of vengeance: this is the first pleasure bestowed upon Antar.
- III. The joy of power is the fairy’s second gift.
- IV. Antar has returned to the ruins of Palmyra. At last he is to taste the joy of love. In the arms of the fairy himself, intoxicated with rapture, he dies in a last embrace.

In *Antar*, there is in the composer’s own judgement “no thematic development whatever – only variations and paraphrases,” and this is why he concluded that the work was “a poem, suite, fairy tale, story, or anything you like, but not a symphony.” There is just one theme of real structural importance. Inspired by Berlioz’s use of *Idée Fixe* in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, Rimsky examines this

theme, Antar's theme, from a variety of angles, repeating it in its entirety several times, and in the middle movements breaking bits off and looking at them separately. But the other thematic materials of the piece, most memorably a flowing melody in the third movement, a scarcely modified at all except in point of instrumental colouring. The result is the programmatic portrayal of a heroic figure who voyages out in a world teeming with legendary marvels but is not fundamentally altered by them.

Leon Reimer
Music Director and Conductor

Tonight's Soloist: Leah Nicholson



Leah Nicholson (16) is from Lanercost, in her sixth year at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and is studying with Murray McLachlan. At the age of 14, Leah gained the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM) Diploma (Distinction) in Piano Solo Performance, equivalent of a bachelor's degree with honours. She is a winner of numerous competitions including the International Chopin Festival in Mazovia, Poland, The Polyphonica International Competition in St. Petersburg, Russia, Chetham's Concerto Competition playing Rachmaninov's 2nd

Piano Concerto, and at the age of 16 became the youngest winner of the Keldwyth Cumbrian Young Musicians Award.

Leah has appeared at Steinway Hall in London, Sage Gateshead, Stoller Hall and Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, Petrikirche in St. Petersburg, Russia, Kadriorg Palace in Tallinn, Estonia and other top venues. Leah has participated in masterclasses with Martin Roscoe, Murray McLachlan, Anthony Hewitt, Kathryn Stott, Benjamin Frith, Galina Sandovskaya, Noriko Ogawa and Stephen Hough.

Thank you

The proceeds from the refreshments during the interval this evening will go to Teenage Cancer Trust, to support young people with cancer between the ages of 13 and 24, and their families.



The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violin

Katherine Bowness
Isobel Fenton
Joan Wilson
Rachael Cosslette
Sarah Wilson
Alice Reid
Philippa Hall

2nd Violin

Robert Charlesworth
Lorna Strong
Catherine Swarbrick
Ruben Burt
Hilary Lawrence
Beniamin Budzynski

Cello

Linda Forsyth
Rachael Owen
Mary Lawler
Lee Willis
Steven Thompson
Janet Hornby
Lawence Smith

Viola

Peter Wood
Hannah Borlaise

Double Bass

Ben imThurn
Emma Gray

Flute/Piccolo

Lyn Young
Terry Mullett
Samantha Willis

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Raven

Oboe

Glenys Braithwaite
Anthea Lee

Bassoon

Andrew Smith
Ann Bishop

Trombone

Graham Harris
Giles Wilson
Ruth Wood
Cliff Atwood

Horn

Jen Woodward
Julie Ratcliffe
Justin Borlase
Pam Harris

Percussion

Sue Roe
Jamie Hoyle
Toby Cass
Paddy Davies

Trumpet

Alison Richardson
Gordon Kydd

Tuba

Jacob Gallagher

Timpani

David Birkett

City of Carlisle Orchestra forthcoming concerts

Saturday 30th June - St. John's Church London Rd Carlisle

Tuesday 3rd June - Keswick

Programme:

Brahms - Academic Festival Overture

David - Trombone Concerto

Tchaikovsky - Symphony No 5.

Soloist: Nicolas Kent

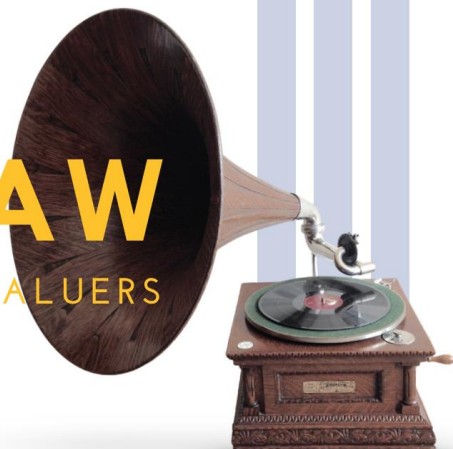
Other classical concerts coming up soon:

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|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 25 March (Sun) | Keswick Music Society | Theatre by the Lake, Keswick | Fitzwilliam Quartet |
| 10 April (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | Elaine Davidson (folk singer) |
| 17 April (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | John Cooper Green (organ) |
| 22 April (Sun) | Keswick Music Society | Theatre by the Lake, Keswick | Piers Lane (piano) |
| 24 April (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | Julie Best and Jean Corrigan (accordions) |
| 1 May (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | Border Reivers (oboe and bassoon) |
| 5 May (Sat) | Wordsworth Singers | Please see www.wordsworthsingers.org.uk for further details | |
| 8 May (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | TBA |
| 15 May (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | TBA |
| 22 May (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | Eden Brass |
| 29 May (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | David Jones (baritone) |
| 5 June (Tues) | Musiclive@lunchtime | Cathedral 12.45 | Jack Stone (organ) |
| 16 June (Sat) | Wigton Choral Society | Wigton Methodist Church | Theme of "Birdsong" |
| 21 July (Sat) | Wordsworth Singers | Please see www.wordsworthsingers.org.uk for further details | |

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