



Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra

Concert Programme

**Saturday 2 April, 2022
7:30pm**

***St Peter's Church
Newnham GL14 1AD***

Conductor: Fiona Crawley

Leader: Rosalind Taunton

Soloist: Grace Lewis

PROGRAMME

~Please silence Mobile Phones~

Bologne

Symphony No 2 in D.

Janacek

Idyll for Strings

Cimarosa

Oboe Concerto

Soloist: Grace Lewis

Conductor: Caron de Burgh

Interval

Refreshments Available

Ives

The Unanswered Question

Beethoven

Symphony No 1

An Oboe Concerto and the Retiring Collection were chosen in memory of Val Jackson, who died recently and had played oboe with us for many years.

Retiring Collection

Cancer Research UK



Joseph Bologne - Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Symphony No 2 in D

Born in 1745 in the French colony of Guadeloupe, Joseph was the son of Georges de Bologne Saint-Georges, the wealthy owner of the Saint-Georges plantation, and his wife's 16 year old African slave. Joseph, aged 7, was taken to Paris and received the tutoring appropriate for a member of the French nobility, attending a boarding school run by a famous swordsman named La Boëssière. It was there that he became one of the foremost fencers in Europe. When he graduated in 1766, Joseph was appointed a Gendarme du Roi (a member of the King's bodyguard). With his prowess as runner, skater, fencer, crack shot and excellent rider, not to mention his party piece of swimming across the Seine with one hand tied behind his back, a career in the military might have been predicted, however a different path was beckoning. Whether Joseph had received any musical tuition in Guadeloupe or if it was all received in France is unknown, but music is the course his career took, as a violinist, conductor and composer. During the French revolution a new law was declared giving equal rights to all French people. Being of mixed race Joseph embraced the new law and decided to provide his services to the Revolutionary Army. He rose to be one of the first black colonels in the French army, leading 800 infantrymen and 200 cavalries, in Europe's first all-black regiment. It was there he acquired his title, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. He died in 1799, aged 53, of bladder disease.

Bologne wrote a comic opera, *L'Amant anonyme* (The Anonymous Lover), that premiered in 1780 Paris. His Symphony No 2 is a reworking of the overture from that opera.

The symphony is in three movements.

1. Allegro Presto
2. Andante
3. Presto

Janacek: Idyll for Strings

Leoš Janáček (1854 – 1928) was a Czech composer, musical theorist, folklorist, publicist and teacher. He was inspired by Moravian and other Slavic folk music, to create an original modern musical style. Until 1895 he devoted himself mainly to folklore research. While his early musical output was influenced by contemporaries such as Dvořák, his later mature works incorporate his earlier studies of national folk music in a modern, highly original synthesis, first evident in the opera *Jenůfa*, which was premiered in 1904 in Brno. The success of *Jenůfa* (often called the "Moravian National Opera") at Prague in 1916 gave Janáček access to the world's great opera stages. Janáček's later works are his most celebrated. They include operas such as *Káťa Kabanová* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the Sinfonietta, the *Glagolitic Mass*, the rhapsody *Taras Bulba*, two string quartets, and other chamber works. Along with Dvořák and Smetana, he is considered one of the most important Czech composers.

Janáček composed his *Idyll for Strings* in 1878, when he was 24. The work received its premier in December 1878, in Brno under Janáček's direction and with Dvořák in the audience.

Tonight you will hear the first (Andante) and fifth (Adagio) movements of the Idyll.

Cimarosa: Oboe Concerto (Arranged Benjamin)

Soloist: Grace Lewis

Conductor: Caron de Burgh

Domenico Cimarosa (1749 – 1801) was an Italian composer of the Neapolitan school and of the Classical period. He wrote more than eighty operas and also wrote instrumental works and church music. Cimarosa was principally based in Naples, but spent some of his career in various other parts of Italy, composing for the opera houses of Rome, Venice, Florence and elsewhere. He was engaged by the empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, as her court composer and conductor between 1787 and 1791. In his later years, returning to Naples, he backed the losing side in the struggle to overthrow the monarchy, and was imprisoned and then exiled. He died in Venice at the age of 51. Cimarosa wrote a number of piano sonatas, which were discovered in manuscript in the 1920s; the quantity has been asserted as over 80 single-movement works, but it is thought that many of these may in fact belong with each other as three movement works.

Cimarosa's *Concerto for Oboe* is in fact a 1949 mix, by Arthur Benjamin, of oboe arrangements of various Cimarosa sonata movements.

1. Larghetto
2. Allegro
3. Siciliana
4. Allegro Guisto

Ives: The Unanswered Question

The Unanswered Question is a musical work by American composer Charles Ives. Originally paired with *Central Park in the Dark* as *Two Contemplations* in 1908, *The Unanswered Question* was revised by Ives in 1930–1935. As with many of Ives' works, it was largely unknown until much later in his life, and was not performed until 1946.

Against a background of slow, quiet strings representing "The Silence of the Druids", a solo trumpet poses "The Perennial Question of Existence", to which a woodwind quartet of "Fighting Answerers" tries vainly to provide an answer, growing more frustrated and dissonant until they give up. The three groups of instruments perform in independent tempos.

Beethoven: Symphony No 1 in C major, Op. 21

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) dedicated his Symphony No. 1 to Baron Gottfried van Swieten, an early patron of the composer. The piece was published in 1801. It is not known exactly when Beethoven finished writing this work, but sketches of the finale were found to be from 1795.

There are four movements:

1. Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
2. Andante cantabile con moto
3. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
4. Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

Grace Lewis – Oboe Soloist

Grace writes :- “My name is Gracie, I’m 17 years old and love to play the oboe alongside studying for my A levels – psychology, music and a practical course in performing arts. I have received an offer and been awarded a scholarship from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama to study their music course, starting in September this year, and I’m very excited for it. I have also been a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales since 2019, and take part in regular rehearsals, concerts and residential courses with Gwent Youth Orchestra, (Gwent) Youth Wind Orchestra and Bristol Youth Orchestra. Being in these groups has enabled me to progress as a player, make lots of good friends and lead to exciting opportunities such as performing in the Royal Albert Hall in London for the *Music For Youth Proms* in 2018. I also love to sing (I currently direct Wyedean Gospel Choir) and play the saxophone as I am a big fan of jazz. I play at gigs with my hometown’s community big band and, until the Covid-19 pandemic started, Gwent Youth Big Band. I think it is incredibly important to appreciate all different kinds of music – it feels good to enjoy sophisticated classical works, dance around to musical theater and pop, admire the creativity in improvisation in jazz and look forward to attending Reading festival all at the same time. The piece I have chosen for the Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra’s Spring concert is Cimarosa’s oboe concerto, which is one of my favorites to play as I find his music written for woodwind solos to be very pretty and almost spiritual – the same reason I also enjoy works of Albinoni. My main goal is to achieve a creative career and inspire others to make and enjoy music. I feel privileged to have been invited to perform a concerto for the orchestra – an exciting opportunity I’m very grateful for. I hope you enjoy it.”

Val Jackson

One of our oboists, Val Jackson, recently died and her husband writes:- “Val was an amazing, charming and compassionate woman, whose achievements could easily fill a book. To many, she was a talented musician who played oboe, euphonium, and several other instruments. To others, she was the climber, caver, powerboat skipper and SCUBA instructor, who had adventured across many parts of the world. In another facet of her life, she was passionate about wildlife and its conservation. She was a qualified bird ringer and was responsible for one of the country’s largest nesting box schemes. Whatever Val did, she always wanted to put something back, sometimes by coaching and mentoring others or at other times by organising and making things happen. Few knew all of Val, because her interests were just so diverse. She is much missed by all of us who were privileged enough to be close to her and would be thoroughly enjoying this evening’s concert, whether as a performer or spectator.”

The Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra

Launched in 1993, the Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra is a lively and friendly ensemble which draws musicians from the Forest of Dean and surrounding areas. The orchestra performs exciting orchestral music and specialises in concerto performances by young talented musicians. For further details please visit our website at: www.rfdo.org.uk and on Facebook.

The Orchestra, which meets on Thursday evenings, is continuing to expand and would like to hear from interested musicians.

Email: a.phelps587@btinternet.com

Phone: 01594 516081

Our Next Concert:

July 16, 2022 St. Paul’s Church, Parkend

It will include works by Rossini, Finzi, Haydn and Beethoven