



# **Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra**

## **Concert Programme**

**Saturday 16 July, 2022**  
**7:30pm**

***St Paul's Church***  
***Parkend***

*Conductors: Fiona Crawley*  
*Will Sharma*

*Leader: Rosalind Taunton*

*Soloist: Alan Holder*

# PROGRAMME

*~Please silence Mobile Phones~*

## **Rossini**

The Silken Ladder Overture

## **Finzi**

A Severn Rhapsody

*Guest Conductor: Will Sharma*

## **Haydn**

Trumpet Concerto

*Soloist: Alan Holder*

~~ **Interval** ~~

Refreshments Available

## **Beethoven**

Symphony No 3 ( Eroica )

## **Retiring Collection**

British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal



# Rossini

## The Silken Ladder Overture

Rossini was an acclaimed master of the comic opera (opera buffa). Although only a handful of his 39 operas are performed today, the popularity of his overtures has never waned. The Thieving Magpie, The Barber of Seville, William Tell, Italian Girl in Algiers etc. all proclaim the sensuous vitality and brilliance of Rossini's musical imagination, which laid the foundations for a new generation of romantically inspired music-dramatists.

Tonight's sparkling overture, The Silken Ladder, is a buoyant curtain-raiser and was an immediate success when first performed in 1812. The rather staid opera has unfortunately not achieved or sustained the popularity of the overture, and is seldom played today.

The overture is one of Rossini's quickest and most brilliant, distinguished throughout by glorious concertante wind writing. It opens with an animated repeated string note motif, followed by a wistful, elegant oboe solo. The slow introduction leads into first and second subjects, a recapitulation and coda – the whole, being a functional, elegant scaling down of classical sonata form. The strings lead us into the helter-skelter whirlwind of the allegro – a typical piece of harmonic dissimulation where complex interplay of rhythm, phrase length and harmony give us exciting, joyous music.

The specially-constructed celebrated Rossini crescendos build up during the exposition and recapitulation, and the composer's signature touches of piccolo add a vibrant quality of orchestral brilliance to the score. Rossini is probably the most neglected and generally misunderstood of all the great nineteenth-century composers. His detractors have labelled him feckless, cynical, and shallow but in essence he was a gifted, influential and complex composer, whose music we can approach, sit back and thoroughly enjoy.

## **Finzi: A Severn Rhapsody**

### **Guest Conductor: Will Sharma**

Gerald Finzi was born into a Jewish family in London on 14 July 1901. His father was of Italian origin and his mother, German. Despite his background, Finzi became one of the most characteristically English of composers as well as an agnostic who wrote heartfelt Christian choral music. Young Gerald was only 7 when his father died. When the Great War broke out, the family moved to Harrogate, and he began to study music under Ernest Farrar, a former pupil of Charles Villiers Stanford. Farrar's death in the war affected Finzi deeply and losing three of his brothers added to his pain. Such tragedies contributed to an already introspective personality and his bleak outlook on life. Finding solace in poetry, Finzi began to set poems by Thomas Hardy and Christina Rossetti to music. Finzi was attracted by the motif of childhood innocence being corrupted by adult experience. In 1922, Finzi moved to Painswick in Gloucestershire where he began composing in earnest. His first Hardy settings and the orchestral piece "*A Severn Rhapsody*" were performed in London to favourable reviews.

In 1925, at the suggestion of Adrian Boult, Finzi took a course in counterpoint and moved to London, where he was introduced to Holst, Bliss and Vaughan Williams, who obtained a teaching post for Finzi at the Royal Academy of Music.

In 1951, Finzi learned that he was suffering from Hodgkin's disease and had, at most, ten years to live. He composed his deeply moving Cello Concerto in 1955, which was his last major work. In 1956 Finzi developed shingles and died not much later in an Oxford hospital, the first performance of his Cello Concerto having been played on the radio the night before.

Finzi's son Christopher became a noted conductor and an exponent of his father's music. He is married to Hilary Du Pré, sister of the cellist Jacqueline.

# Haydn: Trumpet Concerto

**Soloist: Alan Holder**

Joseph Haydn was a prolific composer of Operas, Masses, Cantatas and Oratorios, Chamber Music and of course, his 104 Symphonies. He only wrote one trumpet concerto, written when he was 64 in 1796, and it was for virtuoso Anton Weidinger on a “new” keyed trumpet. Having then been left virtually unplayed for the next 100 years, it becomes the work in the twentieth century that will kindle a revival in the trumpet as a solo instrument, and eventually inspire composers to write new works for trumpet.

The cadenza played today is that performed by Helmut Wobish on the first long playing recording of the work in 1952, one of the milestone recordings of the above mentioned mid twentieth revival.

Much has been written about Haydn’s perceived musical ‘joke’ at the beginning of the concerto. Bearing in mind the context of its first performance and anticipation of the audience to hear and see the new revolutionary keyed trumpet, the trumpet’s first note is, it has to be said, an unimpressive single long note followed shortly after by a declamatory phrase of quavers mimicking conventional writing for the natural trumpet that was very familiar to the audience. When the trumpet finally enters proper, the first two bars of the theme demonstrate what all the fuss was about, by playing a very basic scale but one that was impossible on any un-keyed trumpet at the time.

The concerto is ‘classical’ in its form in that it has three contrasting but balanced movements. The scoring gives the trumpet soloist for the first time a varied work of diatonic and chromatic thematic material developed in concert ‘with’ the orchestra in contrast to earlier writing where the orchestra would normally provide a continuo accompaniment.

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro

## **Beethoven: Symphony No 3 (Eroica)**

The Symphony No. 3 in E flat (Eroica), by Ludwig van Beethoven, was premiered in Vienna in 1805, and was grander and more dramatic than symphonies of the time. It was Beethoven's largest solely instrumental work. It was originally called "*The Bonaparte Symphony*", by Beethoven himself. Napoleon was a name in the news at the time, and Beethoven was favourably impressed by the man's efforts to reform society so that the working classes would enjoy more equality. At that time Beethoven was planning a concert tour to France. A few months later Napoleon had himself named Emperor of France. According to his friend and student Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven greeted that news with fury: his hero had become a tyrant, and the composer would not dedicate a symphony to such a person. In disgust, the composer tore the title page from the symphony and cancelled his French tour. He gave the symphony a new sub-title, *Eroica*, implying more of a general heroism than specific deeds. A further inscription added "composed to celebrate the memory of a great man", seemingly referring to the earlier Napoleon. When the work was published in 1806, it was dedicated not to Napoleon, but to Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's most loyal patrons. Four years after its 1805 premiere, Beethoven himself conducted the work at a concert in Vienna. By that time France and Austria were at war and the French had occupied Vienna. Napoleon was in town, but did not attend the concert. Whether he ever knew of the work's connection to himself is uncertain.

There are four movements:

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

## **Alan Holder – Trumpet Soloist**

Alan recently moved to the Forest of Dean on his retirement and is one of the RFDO's newest members.

A former Scots Guards musician, Alan has continued to play the trumpet semi-professionally after leaving the Army, albeit principally in the swing and jazz idiom, but is a life long devotee of classical music. In 1998 Alan studied with Principal Trumpet of the Manchester Camerata, Tracy Redfern, and was awarded a diploma in Trumpet Performance. Alan was a founder member, and principal trumpet, of the City of Peterborough Symphony Orchestra.

Playing in the RFDO just for 'fun', Alan said he was delighted to be asked to contribute to tonight's concert as featured soloist and to take us back 200 years with Haydn's most amazing and influential concerto.

## **Will Sharma – Guest Conductor**

A graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Will completed his undergraduate degree in Vocal Studies under the guidance of John Evans and Adrian Thompson, before joining their Opera School, firstly as a répétiteur and subsequently as a conducting fellow. In the summer of 2021, Will was the assistant conductor to Lada Valešová on West Green House Opera's 5 star production of Eugene Onegin, before joining the music team of Saluzzo Opera Academy's inaugural season, working on their production of Le nozze di Figaro as well as accompanying concerts, coachings, auditions and masterclasses.

Full details of Will Sharma can be found on his website:-  
[www.willsharma.co.uk](http://www.willsharma.co.uk)

## **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](http://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](mailto:a.phelps587@btinternet.com)**

**Phone: 01594 516081**

### **Our Next Concerts:**

October 8, 7.30pm:

Chepstow Parish Church

December 10, 3pm:

A Wassail Family Concert, at Coleford Parish Church