



Sutton Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Philip Aslangul
Leader: Annmarie McDade

Brahms Academic Festival Overture
Dvorak Cello Concerto

Soloist Niall Trainor

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique

St Andrew's United Reformed Church
Northey Avenue, Cheam

Saturday 25th November 2017 : 7.30pm

This concert is dedicated to Ernie Gornall (1930 – 2017).

www.suttonsymphonyorchestra.org
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CONDUCTOR PHILIP ASLANGUL

Philip Aslangul graduated from the Guildhall School of music in 1990, where he studied cello, piano and conducting with Stefan Popov, Carola Grindea and Alan Hazeldine respectively.

He has pursued a varied career; as a cellist, he has given recitals around the country with the Burlington Duo and The Q Piano Trio, including a live radio broadcast in 1991. He has worked as a freelance cellist appearing as principal with orchestras including the National Pops Orchestra, The Camerata of London and The City Chamber Ensemble, and has played with other orchestras including the English Philharmonia.

As a pianist, Philip is in demand as a repetiteur and accompanist; he has worked with the award-winning ladies choir 'Impromptu' for the past 20 years including performances on BBC2 and Radio 3. He is a Jazz and Grades examiner for ABRSM for whom he is also a Music Medals Moderator, and has worked as a Mentor for The Open University.

Philip is actively involved in youth music and conducted Kingston Schools Orchestra and Kingston Young Strings between 1998 and 2004. He is currently conductor of SYSO, Sutton's Youth Orchestra, which performs regular concerts at St Andrew's, with a tour to the Music Festival in Lisbon and a concert at the Royal Festival Hall planned for 2017.

LEADER ANNMARIE MCDADE

Annmarie studied violin with Trevor Williams and Jonathan Carney and piano with Raymond Fischer at the Royal College of Music.

Annmarie had many years leading touring shows and in West End shows such as Annie get Your Gun, Aspects of Love, The Sound of Music, Oklahoma, The Producers and Company.

She spent nearly eight years in the West End production of Les Miserables (frequently leading) until 2004 and worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia, British Symphony Orchestra, Opera Della Luna, London Arts Orchestra (principal 2nd), Camerata of London (principal 2nd & guest leader), Pro Arte Orchestra (leader), London Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (principal 2nd & founder member) and many others.

Solo performances include Mozart A major and G major and Bruch G minor concertos, Beethoven's F major Romance, Bach's and Malcolm Arnold's Double Violin Concertos and Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

Annmarie teaches in schools and privately - all ages, all abilities! She was orchestral coach for Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust, Beauchamp House International Music and drama courses and ENCORE.

NIALL TRAINOR

Niall started playing cello aged 8 and studied at the Belfast School of Music and St. Malachy's College under the tutelage of Fr. Gerard Magee. He continued his studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music alongside a law degree at Trinity College, Dublin, and was principal cellist for the Irish National Youth Orchestra, Royal Irish Academy Symphony Orchestra and Hibernians Orchestra.

He attended masterclasses with Stephen Doane, Prof. David Strange, Alexander Baillie, Julian Lloyd Webber and Pieter Wispelway among others. During this time he performed for a number of high profile figures including Prince Charles, the Irish President and the US Senate, along with chamber and orchestral music performances on BBC Radio Ulster and RTE Lyric FM.

His previous concerto and solo works include Shostakovich Cello Concerto No.1, Tchaikovsky Rococo Variations, Beethoven Triple Concerto, Brahms Double Concerto, Prokofiev Sinfonia Concertante and Popper Hungarian Rhapsody, the latter with performances in Ireland, France, Germany and Poland.

Niall plays with the Orion Orchestra, with performances at the Royal Albert Hall, Cadogan Hall, Royal Festival Hall and a tour to Singapore. He also performed at Buckingham Palace for the Queen and Prince Philip with the Orion string quartet with a new commission written by Rick Wakeman.

Outside of classical music, Niall plays in an acoustic guitar and cello duo, "Neil & Niall" who regularly perform in live music venues across London. They also perform in charity fundraising events around the globe, with gigs in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Vienna, Washington D.C. and France in the last 3 years. Niall has also recently performed in acoustic duos with Phoenix Whyte in collaboration with Goodenough College, with live performances of music ranging from David Bowie to Guns'n'Roses.

Niall's day job for the last few years (generally to much amusement) is as a lawyer for the children's cartoon Peppa Pig. Outside of cello and work, Niall enjoys cycling and fitting in cello practice/work to allow him to watch Manchester United games!



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PROGRAMME

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE

JOHANNES BRAHMS

It was in 1879 that the University of Breslau conferred upon Brahms, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Brahms was flattered and sent a postcard of thanks to the faculty. However, a subsequent letter from his friend Bernhard Scholz, Director of Music in Breslau, made it clear that the university expected him to express his gratitude in musical form. While vacationing at Bad Ischl during the summer of 1880, Brahms penned his musical “thank you” – the Academic Festival Overture.

With a masterful balance of serious and light-hearted elements, the emphasis is on the “festival” rather than the “academic” in an overture that brims with an irrepressible sense of fun. The work also sports the most extravagant orchestral forces the composer ever employed. Brahms himself described the piece as “a very boisterous potpourri of student songs.” Indeed, excerpts from four student beer-hall tunes play a significant role in the orchestral texture.

A hushed, but urgent statement launches the Overture, followed by a dramatic succession of contrasting ideas and dynamics. The principal idea here is an adaptation of the Rakóczy March, a favourite tune with the composer since his youth. Following a soft drumroll, three trumpets then present the first of the traditional students’ songs: “Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus” (We have built a stately house). Its roots lie in a Thuringian folk song, which had been transformed into a defiant protest song in the East German town of Jena when the students’ association there was disbanded in 1819. After Brahms develops and mixes this song with the earlier Rakóczy adaptation, the melody of “Der Landevater” (The father of our country) appears in a sweeping, lyrical rendition introduced by violins and violas.

The tempo shifts to *animato* for the freshman’s song known as The Fox-Ride (“Was komm dort von der Höh’ ” – What comes from afar). Bassoons, accompanied by off-the-beat violas and cellos, add a touch of humor that must have raised a faculty eyebrow or two at the premiere. Not forgetting to stir in his original material, Brahms then plays the three student songs off one another in a light-handed development. For the grand finale, a rambunctious version of the imposing “Gaudeamus igitur” (Therefore, let us be merry) makes a joyful noise and provides a rousing conclusion with its blazing brass and full orchestral forces.

The Overture has been one of Brahms’ most often played works ever since the composer himself conducted the premiere in Breslau on January 4, 1881.

CELLO CONCERTO IN B MINOR

ANTONIN DVORAK

Written at the end of Dvorák's three-year tenure as director of the National Conservatory in New York, the Cello Concerto reflects some of the composer's American experiences but is at the same time filled with the spirit of his beloved Bohemia where he longed to return.

The idea of writing a cello concerto certainly had something to do with his American experiences: Dvorák was inspired by the example of his colleague at the National Conservatory, cellist-composer Victor Herbert, who performed his own Second Cello Concerto with Anton Seidl and the New York Philharmonic in March 1894. As a young man, Dvorák had already written a cello concerto; however, that work was never orchestrated. And in the case of a cello concerto, orchestration is a matter of crucial importance, since the low pitch of the instrument makes it more difficult for it to stand out against a full orchestral texture. The 24-year-old Dvorák may not have been prepared to meet this challenge, but three decades later, the mature composer knew how to solve the problem.

He solved it not simply by reducing the volume of the accompaniment, but by placing the solo cello into a variety of constantly changing combinations with selected wind soloists from the orchestra. This results in a delicate, almost chamber music-like instrumental writing in which the timbre of the cello comes into full display. Despite this chamber-music quality, the concerto has a certain symphonic grandeur one doesn't find in most other Romantic cello concertos. Dvorák continues the Beethoven-Brahms tradition in which solo passages are balanced by full-fledged orchestral statements. The orchestra's role is not restricted to mere accompaniment: it always shares the limelight with the soloist and often even takes centre stage. That is because, clearly, this concerto is much more than a virtuoso showpiece for the soloist; it is in many ways a dramatic, even tragic, work, from its sombre opening to the unprecedented closing section of the finale.

Dvorák's sister-in-law Josefina Kaunitzová, became seriously ill shortly after the composer had begun work on the concerto. It is no secret that, as a young man, Dvorák was deeply in love with Josefina but their union was not to be; instead, the composer ended up marrying Josefina's sister. In the second movement of his cello concerto, Dvorák quoted one of his own songs, "Lasst mich allein" or "Let be me alone", which, according to leading Dvorák biographer Otakar Šourek, was a favorite song of Josefina's and its appearance here is a personal tribute. This view is supported by the fact that this melody returns at the end of the concerto, in the part that Dvorák revised after his return to Bohemia, and after Josefina's death. Here Dvorák made the almost unheard-of decision of inserting a wistful and elegiac slow section in the middle of a finale that has up to this point been dominated by a spirited dance melody. What is more, the solo cello is joined here by a second solo violin voice; creating unmistakable associations with an operatic love duet. Precisely at the moment when one would expect a final *presto* to begin, the music drifts more and more into sadness. The dramatic first theme of the opening movement is recalled, as is a variant of Josefina's song. It is apparently only with some effort that Dvorák gathers up enough momentum for a few measures of *Allegro vivo* to end the concerto.

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

HECTOR BERLIOZ

Three important influences entered Berlioz's life during his 24th year. The first was Goethe's *Faust*, which the composer read and reread in a translation by Gérard de Nerval. The second influence was the symphonies of Beethoven, particularly the *Eroica*, heard for the first time in Paris in 1827. Berlioz was overwhelmed by the power and originality of the Bonn master's orchestration. And, finally, there was Shakespeare, known in Letourneur's

translation and experienced in performances by an English troupe of actors that toured France in 1827. The young Frenchman understood Goethe, Beethoven and Shakespeare as kindred romantic spirits. No matter that these perceptions were one-sided and coloured by what Berlioz was looking for—these three artists seemed to answer a great longing the composer felt for seriousness of purpose, depth of vision, bold originality and all-encompassing humanity. The inspiration he drew from their works coalesced two years later in one of the most original pieces ever composed—the *Symphonie fantastique*.

Berlioz was an unknown student composer when he first met Harriet Smithson who was an actress with the aforementioned troupe of touring actors. He felt the first step of winning her love was to make himself at least known to her. He began to give concerts with the main purpose of making his name better established, hoping that she might hear of him. After a few months of touring the provinces, Smithson's company returned to Paris and Berlioz ventured backstage after a performance, but she refused to see him. He wrote her love letters, which she took as fan mail and left unanswered. She returned to England without having even acknowledged the existence of her strange suitor. She still had only a vague idea of who he was.

Somehow Berlioz convinced himself that she had been impressed with his letters and was testing his sincerity by a few months of silence. His feelings for her began to wane, but then they returned with great intensity as he decided to make his love for her the subject of his new symphony.

Smithson, in the meantime, had fallen on hard times, as her acting company had gone bankrupt in London, and the actress was forced to accept walk-on parts at the Opéra-Comique. Since she did not have a singing voice and did not speak French, her roles were minor, and she was barely able to make a living. By coincidence Smithson gave a benefit performance the very night of the *Symphonie fantastique's* afternoon premiere. Berlioz stayed away from her performance as he did not want to fuel the rumours that she was the beloved woman mentioned in the published program of the *Symphonie fantastique*.

A few weeks after this premiere,, Berlioz left for a year and a half in Rome. There he revised the second and third movements of the piece, and he composed a sequel called *The Return to Life*. He returned to Paris in November 1832 and rented an apartment across from where Smithson used to live. Berlioz then arranged for a concert that would include the revised *Symphonie fantastique* and its new sequel. He had a man named Scutter see to it that Smithson attended the concert. She was distressed at the time because Shakespeare was no longer popular in Paris and attendance at her company's productions was scanty. She decided to spend an afternoon at a concert as a diversion from her financial troubles. By now she knew who Berlioz was, but she still had never met him and she had no idea of her intimate connection with the music she was about to hear. In the cab to the concert, she studied the concert programme and she learned that Berlioz was "the originator of the proceedings." The title of the symphony and the headings of the various movements somewhat astonished her; but it never so much as occurred to her that the heroine of this strange and doleful drama might be herself.

Every eye was on her as she arrived. Everyone in Parisian music circles knew the truth, but Harriet did not. She took the stares as directed at a famous actress. During the intermission

(after the *Symphonie fantastique* but before *The Return to Life*), Scutter made “veiled allusions to the cause of this young composer’s well-known troubles of the heart. [She] began to suspect the truth.” The second half began, and the actor playing the part of Léo (the hero who represents Berlioz in *The Return to Life*) delivered this line: “Oh, if I could only find her, the Juliet, the Ophelia for whom my heart cries out! If I could drink deep of the mingled joy and sadness that real love offers us, and one autumn evening on some wild heath with the north wind blowing over it, lie in her arms and sleep a last, long, sorrowful sleep!”

“God!” she thought. “Juliet-Ophelia! Am I dreaming? I can no longer doubt. It is of me he speaks. He loves me still.” From that moment...she felt the room reel about her; she heard no more but sat in a dream and at the end returned home like a sleepwalker, with no clear notion of what was happening.

This was Berlioz’ account of how Smithson finally came to understand that the irrational young man who had written her love letters two years earlier had actually made a monumental musical composition based on his hopeless love for her. Finally, the day after the concert, the inevitable happened: the two met. Thus ended a fairy tale and began life’s reality. Several months later they were married, but within a few years they were miserable. They separated after a decade of marriage. Berlioz married his mistress when Harriet died in 1854.

Berlioz actually made two different versions of the program for the *Symphonie fantastique*. The original one is printed here; the revised version was intended for use when *The Return to Life* is also performed. But that strange second work is rarely heard today.

The composer’s intention has been to develop, insofar as they contain musical possibilities, various situations in the life of an artist. Initially, the programme below was considered by Berlioz to be indispensable, but in his later years he encouraged performances without them, so the listener could form their own picture of the work

Reveries, Passions. The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the *vague des passions*, sees for the first time a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal being he has imagined in his dreams, and he falls desperately in love with her. Through an odd whim, whenever the beloved image appears before the mind’s eye of the artist, it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved.

This melodic image and the model it reflects pursue him incessantly like a double *idée fixe*. This is the reason for the constant appearance, in every movement of the symphony, of the melody that begins the first *allegro*. The passage from this state of melancholic reverie, interrupted by a few fits of groundless joy, to one of frenzied passion, with its movements of fury, of jealousy, its return to tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations—this is the subject of the first movement.

A Ball. The artist finds himself in the most varied situations—in the midst of the tumult of a party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature. But everywhere—in town, in the country—the beloved image appears before him and disturbs his peace of mind.

Scene in the Country. Finding himself one evening in the country, he hears in the distance two shepherds piping a *ranz des vaches* [a simple melody played or sung by herdsmen as they drove their cattle to or from the pasture] in dialogue. This pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain—all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. He reflects upon his isolation; he hopes that his loneliness will soon be over. But what if she were deceiving him! This mingling of hope and fear, these ideas of happiness disturbed by black presentiments, form the subject of the *adagio*. At the end one of the shepherds again takes up the *ranz des vaches*; the other no longer replies. Distant sounds of thunder—loneliness—silence.

March to the Scaffold. Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold and that he is witnessing his own execution. The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end of the march, the first four measures of the *idée fixe* reappear, like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

Dream of a Witches' Sabbath. He sees himself at the sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, who have come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath. A roar of joy at her arrival. She takes part in the devilish orgy. Funeral knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies irae* [hymn sung in the funeral rites of the Catholic Church], sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round and the *Dies irae* combined.

The drug-induced fantasy world of this program is only one of many utterly original aspects of the *Symphonie fantastique*. The degree of detail in the program and the composer's insistence on its importance for the listener are also unprecedented. The most original aspect of the work, however, is its orchestration. The use of four bassoons, four types of clarinets (A, B-flat, C and E-flat), large bells and cornets as well as trumpets lends this score a unique sound. But it is mainly Berlioz' uncanny sonic imagination that gives the piece its special quality, that makes it sound as fresh today as it must have in 1830. The finale in particular abounds in incredible sonorities—from the parody of the *idée fixe* tune in the C and then E-flat clarinets, to the bells that announce the ancient Gregorian chant *Dies irae*, to the subsequent woodwind distortion of that melody, to the weird sound of the wooden parts of bows hitting the strings just before the end. The work consistently demonstrates Berlioz's incredible originality as an orchestrator.

The *Symphonie fantastique* is a work like no other. Its reason for being is odd. Its sound palette is unprecedented. Its forms are fresh. Its program is grotesque. And the result is a composition that creates its own world in sound. The influence of Goethe, Beethoven and Shakespeare, plus the irrational love for Harriet Smithson, all worked on the mind of the 27-year-old composer, and what resulted was completely new, amazingly fresh, wholly personal—and a masterpiece.

SUTTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

We are grateful for the continuing financial support from the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Charitable Trust, our President, Patrons, and our loyal audience and donors. We would like to thank St Andrew's Church for the use of the Church buildings and refreshments service, Homefield Preparatory School for use of their premises for rehearsals, and Sutton Music Service for use of their transportation and percussion equipment.

Our next concert...

Tchaikovsky Romeo And Juliet Fantasy Overture

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2
Soloist John Paul Ekins

Shostokovich Symphony No 10

SATURDAY 24TH MARCH 2018 : 7.30 PM
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ERNIE GORNALL (1930-2017)

This concert is dedicated to Ernie Gornall, former member of Sutton Symphony Orchestra who sadly passed away earlier this year.

Ernie's professional playing career started when he first joined the Band of the Buffs (East Kent Regiment) in 1946 and underwent a course of flute playing/performance at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. Later he played with the Sino-British Club Symphony Orchestra in Hong Kong, and the Welsh Guards from 1957-70 during which time he toured the West Country with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Sir Neville Marriner, and also performed solo on the BBC's Friday Night is Music Night.



After leaving the army, he freelanced in several ensembles and in the 1980's started to play with Sutton Symphony Orchestra and Croydon Symphony Orchestra. Most recently, Ernie developed the orchestra's website and was an active member of the committee.

SUTTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA – PLAYERS LIST

1ST VIOLINS

Annmarie McDade
Paul Dickman
Liz Evans
Stephen Lock
Charlotte Dodwell
Natalia Wierzbicka
James O’Neil
Soeun Bae

2ND VIOLINS

Joanna Lee
Carol Disspain
Michael Boxall
Emma Foulger
Ann Arber
Henrik Jensen

VIOLAS

David Brooker
Penny Dispirito
Vince Turner
Sue White
Pauline Dixon
Carolyn Brett

CELLOS

Fraser Bowles
Niall Trainor
Lorraine Lenaghan
Alex Clark
Frances Burton
Vibeke Hansen
Clare Sturdy

BASSES

Gaye Endler
Liz Hollowood
Adrian Warwick
Casper Green
Miles Briggs

PICCOLO

Sam Wade

FLUTES

Richard Ellis
Juliet Porter
Sam Wade

OBOES

Kathryn Gunn
Hilary Dennis

COR ANGLAIS

Hilary Dennis

CLARINETS

David Cox
Laura Drane

BASSOONS

David Silvera
Janet Martin
Jamie O’Connor
Olwen Griffin

CONTRA BASSOON

Olwen Griffin

HORNS

Caroline Auty
Janice Barker
Emma Edwards
Kristina Yumerska

TRUMPETS

Paul Martin
Mick Ahearn
Billy Fisher
Mark Steadman

TROMBONES

Roger Willey
Vince Freeman
Hannah Roberts

TUBA

Andy McDade

TIMPANI

Helen Burgess

PERCUSSION

Cameron Reed
Fraser Reed
Izzy Lyons
Sam Aslangul

HARP

Harriet Adie
Elisabeth Green