



C A M D E N
S Y M P H O N Y
O R C H E S T R A

Summer Concert



Conductor: Levon Parikian

Leader: John Crawford

Oboe: Christopher Cowie

Saturday 21st June 2014 at 7.30pm

St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9ED

Tickets: £10 / £8 concessions. Programme: £1.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to our summer concert. We are delighted to be joined by Christopher Cowie, one of the country's most distinguished oboists, to perform Richard Strauss' *Oboe Concerto*. This is doubly fitting because 2014 is Strauss' 150th anniversary year, and because this concert is dedicated to the memory of Malcolm Turner, for many years our principal oboist, who died in 2012.

Camden Symphony Orchestra has been a mainstay of musical life in north London for more than thirty years with around sixty regular players. Under our Musical Director Levon Parikian we seek to combine the familiar staples of the classical and romantic repertoire with less well-known and more challenging works. Founded as Camden Chamber Orchestra in 1980, we rebranded in 2013 to reflect better our size and repertoire. CSO rehearses on a weekly basis and performs three major orchestral concerts a year. Since 2008 we have also performed regularly with Islington Choral Society.

Recent concert programmes have included works by Beethoven, Dvořák, Janáček and Sibelius, concertos by Britten, Brahms and Prokofiev and a concert of stage and screen music. The orchestra has performed a number of operas, and with Islington Choral Society we have performed a wide range of choral works by composers including Bach, Bernstein, Elgar, Handel, Haydn and Verdi.

While we pride ourselves on our friendly, inclusive environment, we take our music-making seriously. We are always pleased to hear from musicians interested in joining us. For more information about the orchestra, please visit www.camdenso.org.uk.



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Camden Symphony Orchestra is affiliated to Making Music which represents and supports amateur choirs, orchestras and music promoters.





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Brahms – *Academic Festival Overture*

Strauss – *Oboe Concerto*

Soloist: *Christopher Cowie*

~ Interval ~

Elgar – *Enigma Variations*

Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, digital watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched off during the performance.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) – *Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80*

Brahms was a German composer and pianist of considerable popularity and influence. As an uncompromising perfectionist, he destroyed some works and left others unpublished. While many contemporaries found his music academic, his craftsmanship was admired by Arnold Schoenberg and Edward Elgar. The diligent, highly constructed nature of Brahms' works was an inspiration for a generation of composers. This overture was written to commemorate the doctorate awarded to Brahms by the University of Breslau in 1880. It was one of a pair of contrasting concert overtures, the other being the *Tragic Overture*. Initially, Brahms sent a simple handwritten note of acknowledgment to the University, since he loathed the public fanfare of celebrity. However, he was advised that protocol required a grander gesture: the University expected nothing less than a musical offering from the composer.

It is a one-movement, rhapsodic treatment of ten themes, four of which are German student songs which capture the exuberance and *joie-de-vivre* associated with a carefree existence. The last one is *Gaudeamus igitur* ("Therefore let us rejoice, while we are young"). Whilst this provides a brilliant effective conclusion, it engages Brahms' sophisticated mastery of counterpoint, further fulfilling the "Academic" aspect of his programme. Brahms evokes ravishing euphoria without sacrificing his commitment to classical balance. The composer himself conducted the premiere at the University in January 1881 to a delighted audience. Due to its easily grasped structure, its lyrical warmth, as well as its excitement and humour, the work has remained a staple of today's concert-hall repertoire.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) – *Oboe Concerto, AV 144*

I Allegro moderato – II Andante – III Vivace

Strauss was a leading German composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras. Known for his operas such as *Der Rosenkavalier* and tone poems such as *An Alpine Symphony*, Strauss pioneered subtleties of orchestration combined with advanced harmonic style. Strauss was living in Garmisch-Partenkirchen when the US armies liberated Bavaria in 1944. Serving with them was John de Lancie, an oboist who asked Strauss for a little piece. The attentions of his American visitors tired the aged composer, who requested leave to stay in Switzerland, where he could concentrate. Strauss considered the evolution of chamber textures; and so it was that by 1945 the "little piece" became a chamber concerto which premiered in Zurich on 26th February 1946. Lancie was the principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra for 30 years. After his retirement, he performed and recorded the concerto.

Its three movements are interconnected. The first develops from a gracefully ornamented theme for solo oboe which is no less than 56 bars long (a severe test of endurance and breath control); the *andante* also springs from a long melody, capturing the spirit of the composer's youth. In the finale, we are reminded of the pastoral origins of the instrument. Strauss died at the age of 85 in Germany. George Solti, who had arranged Strauss' 85th birthday celebration, also directed an orchestra during Strauss' burial. The composer had a profound influence on the development of 20th century music and his late works, modelled on "the divine Mozart at the end of a life full of thankfulness," are widely considered the greatest works by any octogenarian composer.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934) - *Variations on an Original Theme "Enigma", Op. 36*

Elgar's dedication is "To my friends pictured within, Malvern, 1899"

Elgar was working as a violin teacher in Malvern when the ideas for what was to become the Enigma Variations first came to him. The work premiered in London on 19th June 1899, conducted by Hans Richter, and it launched Elgar's international career. Strauss declared that "here for the first time is an English composer who has something to say". It was Elgar's uniquely personal approach that gave *Enigma* its novelty and lasting appeal. Each variation is a sketch of the idiosyncrasies of a member of Elgar's circle. He maintained that through his original theme, another theme is not played. Elgar advised "the Enigma I will not explain – its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed". It remains unsolved. It may be that the larger theme is not musical, but conceptual: a bond to link the 14 individuals, perhaps friendship or love. Maybe it represented "the loneliness of the creative artist"?

Theme The theme "Enigma" is in three parts: the first in a minor key, the central section in the major and the return of the minor opening gives symmetry. Elgar treats characteristic features of his theme so each variation differs in length and mood to portray his characters.

Variation I – C.A.E. (Caroline Alice Elgar) was the composer's wife. The music reflects a warm and gracious personality.

Variation II – H.D.S.P. (Hew David Steuart-Powell) played the piano in trios with Elgar. His preliminary finger exercises are playfully suggested.

Variation III – R.B.T. (Richard Baxter Townshend) an amateur actor whose theatrical presentations of an old man amused Elgar.

Variation IV – W.M.B. (William Meath Baker) a country squire noted for musical house parties.

Variation V – R.P.A. (Richard Arnold) was the son of the poet, Matthew Arnold, a serious man with a delightful sense of humour.

Variation VI – YSOBEL (Isabel Fitton) was an amateur viola player and her instrument plays an important and mischievously taxing solo line in this variation.

Variation VII – TROYTE (Troyte Griffith) - the opening timpani creates the mood, before the strings play excitedly - Elgar's joke, for Griffith was apparently staid and a little pompous.

Variation VIII – W.N. (Winifred Norbury) lived in a delightful old charming country house.

Variation IX – NIMROD (August Johannes Jaeger). This richly scored variation is dedicated to Elgar's closest friend, the music editor A.J. Jaeger. In German, Jaeger means hunter: hence, Nimrod, "the mighty hunter".

Variation X – DORABELLA (Dora Penny) in this intermezzo, the woodwind suggest the rhythm of the name Dorabella. The lady in question suffered with a stammer.

Variation XI – G.R.S. (George Robertson Sinclair) was the organist of Hereford Cathedral. The variation describes not him but his bulldog Dan.

Variation XII – B.G.N. (Basil Nevinson), the cellist of Elgar's trio, 'a serious and devoted friend'.

Variation XIII – *** (Romanza) – the asterisks may conceal the identity of Lady Mary Lygon who travelled by sea to Australia when the variation was written. The clarinet quotes from Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, while the drum suggests the throb of a liner's engines.

Variation XIV – E.D.U. (Finale) is a portrait of the composer, vigorous and confident. Lady Elgar called him Edouard, or Edu for short. An introduction brings a version of the theme to the full orchestra. The first variation and Nimrod are recalled, drawing the musical threads together in a symphonic finale of masterly conception and dynamic energy.

Christopher Cowie – Oboe

Christopher is Joint Principal Oboe of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Principal Oboe of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chamber Orchestra. Previously he has held principal oboe positions at the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House. He is also Professor of Oboe at the Royal College of Music. He studied oboe at the Royal College of Music with Michael Winfield where he was awarded an Exhibition and the senior oboe prize, and later with Maurice Bourgue in Paris. Christopher has performed with orchestras including the Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich, the NDR Symphonie Orchestra in Hamburg, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. As a soloist, he has performed at all the major venues in London and around the UK, under conductors such as Christoph von Dohnányi, Daniele Gatti, Neeme Jervi, Sir Charles Mackerras and Sir Neville Marriner. His recordings include the Mozart *Concerto* under Sir Neville Marriner with the Orquesta de Cadaques, the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the world premiere of the Schnittke *Concerto Grosso* for flute and oboe with Sharron Bezaly, Owain Arwel Hughes and the Cape Town Philharmonic.

Levon Parikian – Conductor

Levon Parikian studied conducting with George Hurst and Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies he has pursued a freelance career, and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra, and Artistic Director of The Rehearsal Orchestra. He has worked extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Hertfordshire County Youth Orchestra, National Youth Strings Academy, Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, and at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he also teaches conducting. In 2012 Levon conducted the UK premiere of Armen Tigranian's opera *Anoush* with London Armenian Opera. His first book, *Waving, Not Drowning*, was published in 2013 and is an entertaining insight into the conductor's world (www.wavingnotdrowningbook.com). Levon has been one of our regular conductors since 2000, and our Musical Director since 2004.

John Crawford – Leader

John Crawford has been our leader since September 2006. He received his early musical training in Sheffield, but later was able to study with Molly Mack at the Royal Academy of Music through the help of the National Youth Orchestra. He won a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Leonard Hirsch. After further study in Vienna and Siena, John joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra. A growing interest in teaching led to his appointment as principal violin teacher at the Keski-Pohjanmaan Conservatory in Finland. John now combines a busy performing life with teaching at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music Junior Department. He is also a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique, and has had a lifelong interest in freedom of movement for musicians. He works regularly as an adjudicator, and leads the Forest Philharmonic and Ernest Read Symphony orchestras as well as CSO.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

John Crawford (Leader)
Robbie Nichols
David Divitt
Alexandra Bowers
Jonathan Knott
Marianne Frost
Aaron Fish
Stacey Lupton
Kate Fern
Antonia Denford
George Maddocks
Marianne McLoughlin

Violin II

Sheila Hayman
Josh Hillman
Gemma Nelson
Marion Fleming
Susie Bokor
Diana Frattali-Moreno
Jo Wilson
Calvin Graham
Rebecca Ho
Yvonne Spark

Viola

James Taylor
Andrew Robinson
Edward Thorne
John Broad
Lizzi Parsons
Sarah Dewis
Mark Denza

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones
Denis Ribeiro
Sally Isaacs
Robert Aitken
Nick Storrs
Antje Saunders
Andrew Erskine

Double Bass

Mark McCarthy
Sara Dixon
Lewis Tingey
Alfie Harries

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight
Isobel Colchester

Piccolo

Hollie East

Oboe

Sonia Stevenson
Adam Bakker

Clarinet

Sheena Balmain
Debbie Shipton

Bassoon

David Robson
Zoë McMillan

Contrabassoon

Calum Kennedy

Horn

Ed Dorman
John Isaacs
Maria Vitale
Michael Slater

Trumpet

Tim Milford
Jack Jones
Laura Gilroy

Trombone

Paul McKay
Alec Coles-Aldridge
Richard Buck

Tuba

Bedwyr Morgan

Timpani

Owain Williams

Percussion

Hannah Beynon
George Andrews

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 5th July 2014 at 7.30pm

Christ Church Spitalfields, Commercial Street, London, E1 6LY

Concert with Islington Choral Society
Vaughan Williams – A Sea Symphony

Join us as we accompany Islington Choral Society for a performance of the first of Vaughan Williams' nine symphonies, and one of the first symphonies to feature a choir throughout the work.

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Saturday 22nd November 2014 at 7.30pm

Christ Church Spitalfields, Commercial Street, London, E1 6LY

Beethoven – Symphony No 9, 'Choral'
With Islington Choral Society

Join us for our autumn concert as we perform one of the great works of the repertoire - the final complete symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven. We will be joined by our friends from Islington Choral Society, and four distinguished soloists for the final movement, considered to be a symphony within a symphony, with its famous text taken from Schiller's *Ode To Joy*.

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For further details about these concerts, including ticket information, visit:

www.camdenso.org.uk