



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

Spring Concert



Conductor: Levon Parikian

Leader: John Crawford

Violin: Fenella Humphreys

Saturday 22nd March 2014 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

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

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to our spring concert. We are delighted to be welcoming back the outstanding violinist Fenella Humphreys, who returns tonight to play Prokofiev's first violin concerto.

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 symphonies by Dvořák, Beethoven, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky, concertos by Britten, Brahms, Delius 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, Brahms, Elgar, Handel 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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www.camdenso.org.uk

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





C A M D E N
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Smetana – ***Vltava***

Prokofiev – ***Violin Concerto No 1***

Soloist: Fenella Humphreys

~ Interval ~

*Please join us for refreshments during the interval,
which will be served at the back of the church.*

Janáček – ***Jealousy***

Sibelius – ***Symphony No 6***

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

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) – *Ma Vlast: Vltava*

Smetana identified himself with the struggle for Czech national freedom from Austrian oppression. He founded the national school of modern Czech music and was principal conductor of the Provisional Theatre Prague. *Má Vlast (My Fatherland)* is a series of six tone poems that celebrate the composer's love of his homeland, its landscapes and legends. Written between 1874 and 1879, each poem was first drafted for piano duet. The composition of the first poem, *Vyšehrad*, took place shortly after Smetana became deaf. Five poems followed; *Vltava*, *Šárka*, *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields*, *Tábor* and *Blaník*. The work was dedicated to the city of Prague, where it was first performed in 1882. It enjoyed great success and holds an honoured place in the affections of the Czech people.

Vyšehrad, a castle on the River Vltava, begins with a noble harp figure which forms the central motive of the whole cycle. Smetana wanted the listener to understand the cycle and wrote an explanation for each poem. This is Smetana's programme note for *Vltava*: "The composition depicts the course of the Vltava beginning with its two sources, cold and warm; the two combine to form a gradually widening stream which flows through woods and meadows, past villages where country folk are celebrating; by moonlight, water nymphs dance in its depths, in the background proud castles and mansions break up the skyline; the Vltava rushes through the St John Rapids; then as the broad and noble river, it approaches Prague. *Vyšehrad* looms and streaming past it majestically, the river passes out of sight."

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) – *Violin Concerto No 1 in D Major, Opus 19* *I Andantino - II Scherzo: Vivacissimo - III Moderato*

Born in the Ukraine region of Russia, Prokofiev displayed early talent for music. His aptitude was accompanied by a rebellious streak which exhibits itself in his work. After the 1917 revolution, Prokofiev disliked the cultural climate and moved to America, then to Paris. Towards the end of his life, he returned to Russia. Like Shostakovich, he had altercations with the regime who expected composers to deliver music appealing to their patriotic sensibilities. Prokofiev and the Soviet leader Stalin both died on 5th March 1953. The composer may have permitted himself a wry smile from beyond the grave at this turn of events.

This concerto enjoys a special place in the composer's output – even Stravinsky, with whom Prokofiev had a tempestuous relationship, was generous in his praise of it. It is relatively short, lasting around 23 minutes. Prokofiev took technical advice from the famous Polish violinist Paul Kochanski, and explored the full range of the violin's technical possibilities: rapid shifts from *pizzicato* to *arco*; crystal clear harmonics and harsh *marcato sul ponticello*. The first movement opens with a tender theme emerging from the orchestra. After a *bravura* passage, the second theme emerges. Chromatic twists contrast with the flowing main theme and the exposition ends explosively. The lyrical theme is modified and transferred to the orchestra. Dark forces attempt to overturn the sunny images, serenity prevails and the movement ends with sweet chromatic phrases set against shimmering orchestral texture. The *scherzo* has great energy and scurries along whilst notes tumble from the violin. Lyricism prevails in the third movement. The finale is in three part form and culminates in a huge coda, a summation of the work. Its two themes are combined in an ingenious manner.

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) – *Jealousy*

Jealousy is our earliest glance at the work of Janáček, a late bloomer completing his first major score at 50, attracting international acclaim at 61, and becoming most adventurous towards his seventies. His final works gave him a place amongst important composers of his time. His contemporaries, Elgar, Dvořák and Mahler, finished their careers before Janáček hit his stride and his most significant work was in the time of Berg, Ravel and Stravinsky who were younger composers forging a new language. Janáček, an important exponent of 20th century musical nationalism, collected folk songs and his distinctive style connected with inflections in his native language and Moravian folk music. *Jealousy* began life as the overture to the opera *Jenůfa*. In this opera, the composer found his voice and developed his personal harmonic and melodic style. Janáček had second thoughts about the need for an overture and when *Jenůfa* premiered, the opera was staged without it. With a new name, *Jealousy*, it became a concert overture. It is a powerful, compact piece without obvious thematic ties to the opera.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) – *Symphony No 6 in D Minor, Opus 104*

I Allegro molto moderato - II Allegretto moderato - III Poco vivace - IV Allegro molto

The career of Sibelius is bound to Finland's history. Born at a time of increasing Russian repression that led to a Finnish nationalistic movement, Sibelius attended a Finnish-language school. This provided him with themes for his life's work, as his compositions took inspiration from the Finnish mythological cycle, *The Kalevala*. Other influences came from the landscape around him. By 1897 his work was considered so important to his culture that the government gave him a life pension so that he remained undisturbed by mundane matters. Sibelius developed from an enthusiastic nationalist into a master with a unique symphonic language.

The fifth and sixth symphonies grew together, but while the former is light and airy, the latter is dark and gloomy, at least in the last movements. The sixth symphony grows from one basic idea, an ascending stepwise motion in the Dorian mode on D. The "Cinderella" of the series, it hasn't reached the popularity of its predecessor, but for Sibelius connoisseurs it is the finest. Evidence of what he intended emerges in a letter to a friend: "The sixth symphony is wild and impassioned in character, sombre with pastoral contrast, probably in four movements with the end rising to a sombre roaring in the orchestra in which the main theme is drowned. The plans may possibly be altered according to the development of musical ideas. As usual, I am a slave to my themes and submit to their demands". The symphony, when it appeared, differed from his description. It premiered in Helsinki in 1923, conducted by the composer.

The first movement mixes sweetness and held animation. It reveals Sibelius's admiration for Palestrina. Free flowing rhythms in the second movement extend the pastoral mood as do woodwind bird calls. Repeated notes build tension and movement. As the music progresses, the melodic line weaves until an unexpected fade to nothing. The scherzo-like third movement rises to an animated conclusion. Flowing quavers are interrupted by timpani and brass bringing a change of energy. In the finale, something remains of the storminess that Sibelius forecast, yet an overall mood of restraint, even regret prevails. The melodic line passes from the strings to woodwinds and the sparse orchestral texture allows the tiniest of details to register until the final pages where the music gradually merges into the light.

Fenella Humphreys – Violin

With playing described in the press as ‘alluring’ and ‘a wonder’, Fenella Humphreys is much in demand as a chamber musician and soloist. Performances have taken her to venues including the Wigmore Hall, the South Bank Centre and the new Helsinki Music Centre, and she has broadcast for the BBC, Classic FM, DeutschlandRadio, WDR, ABC Classic FM (Australia) and Korean radio, and Canadian TV. Fenella performs widely as soloist, and her recording of Christopher Wright’s Violin Concerto was released in 2012 to great critical acclaim. Regularly invited to take part in the prestigious Open Chamber Music at IMS Prussia Cove, Fenella has collaborated with artists including Alexander Baillie, Pekka Kuusisto and Martin Lovett. A number of eminent British composers have written works for Fenella and during 2014/15 she will premiere a set of six new solo violin works by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Gordon Crosse, Sally Beamish, Adrian Sutton, Piers Hellawell and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Konzertmaster of the Deutsche Kammerakademie, Fenella studied at the Purcell School, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule in Düsseldorf. Fenella plays a beautiful violin from the circle of Peter Guaneri of Venice, kindly on loan from Jonathan Sparey.

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
Marianne Frost
Aaron Fish
Kate Fern
Antonia Denford
Stacey Lupton
George Maddocks
Sarah Spitzfaden Paige

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
Joanna Dunmore
Rosie Keep
Lindsay Jones
Mike Safo
Roksana Nikoopour

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones
Denis Ribeiro
Sally Isaacs
Robert Aitken
Hermione Calvocoressi
Antje Saunders
Kate Nettleton

Double Bass

Mark McCarthy
Sara Dixon
Jess Ryan
Marina Aldeguer

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight
Isobel Colchester

Piccolo

Anna Melander

Oboe

Sonia Stevenson
Adam Bakker
Lisa Stonham

Clarinet

Sheena Balmain
Debbie Shipton

Bass Clarinet

Sue Moss

Bassoon

David Robson
Zoë McMillan

Horn

Ed Dorman
John Isaacs
Maria Vitale
Michael Slater

Trumpet

Tim Milford
Laura Gilroy
Rob Smith

Trombone

Paul McKay
Sion Jones
Jim Alexander

Tuba

Bedwyr Morgan

Timpani

Gerard Rundell

Percussion

Hannah Beynon
Emily Cumby
George Andrews

Harp

Federica Mossone

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 29th March 2014 at 7.30pm

St Mark's Church, Regents Park, London, NW1 7TN

Concert with Islington Choral Society

Gounod – *Messe Solennelle en l'honneur de St Cécile*

Haydn – *Mass in Bb (Harmoniemesse)*

Join us as we accompany Islington Choral Society for a choral concert featuring the mass that made Gounod's reputation, and one of Haydn's last works.

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Saturday 21st June 2014 at 7.30pm

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

Brahms – Academic Festival Overture

Strauss – *Oboe Concerto* (soloist: Christopher Cowie)

Elgar – Enigma Variations

Join us for our summer concert which opens with Brahms's musical thank you for the honorary doctorate he received from the University of Breslau. We are delighted to be joined by Christopher Cowie, one of the country's most accomplished oboists. After the interval, we'll be performing Elgar's famous set of variations – his best known orchestral work, but one still full of mystery. This concert will be dedicated to the memory of Malcolm Turner, for many years our principal oboist, who died in 2012.

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

www.camdenso.org.uk