



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

Saturday 28th June 2025 at 7.30pm

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

Tickets: £15 / £12 concessions including programme.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to the final concert of our 2024-2025 season. We're delighted to be joined by Rosalind Ventris, one of the country's most prominent soloists, to perform York Bowen's *Viola Concerto*, a great romantic masterpiece that surely deserves to be better known! We hope you've enjoyed the range of music we've played this season, and look forward to seeing you again for our 2025-2026 season - further details are on the back of this programme. If you enjoy the concert, please do consider becoming a Friend of the Orchestra - and thank you to all our existing Friends for your continued support.

Camden Symphony Orchestra has been a mainstay of musical life in north London for more than forty years with around seventy 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. We rehearse weekly and perform three major orchestral concerts a year.

Recent highlights have included symphonies by Elgar, Berlioz and Florence Price, Bernstein's *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*, music from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Holst's *The Planets*. Our world premiere performance of *Dream Big for Tomorrow*, a work for improvising vocalist and orchestra, was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Recent concerto performances include violin concertos by Bloch and Szymanowski, Gershwin's *Piano Concerto* and Elgar's *Cello Concerto*. We have performed choral works including Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Elgar's *The Spirit of England* and Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

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

Hector Berlioz
Béatrice et Bénédict Overture

York Bowen
Viola Concerto

~ Interval ~

Please join us for refreshments which will be served at the back of the church.

Jean Sibelius
Symphony No. 1

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

We would like to thank the Clergy, Parish Administrator and PCC of St Cyprian's Church for permission to perform here tonight, and for their assistance in organising this concert.

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) - *Overture to Béatrice et Bénédict* (1862)

During the 1850s French composer Hector Berlioz toured as a conductor, performing his own works, and his concerts in Baden-Baden were particularly successful. Edouard Bénazet, an entrepreneur in the Black Forest spa town, commissioned Berlioz to write an opera for the opening of his new Theater Baden-Baden in 1862, and the composer turned to Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. Berlioz devised his own libretto, keeping lines from Shakespeare's original play but introducing characters and scenes of his own inspiration. The result was what Berlioz called "an opéra comique" in two acts. The opera is rarely performed in full today, in part because it includes large amounts of spoken dialogue, but Berlioz's lively overture plays on in the concert hall.

Whilst the play focused on the potentially tragic relationship between Claudio and Hero, Berlioz instead decided to enjoy the battle of the sexes as exemplified by Beatrice and Benedick: the couple may express their disdain for marriage in general, and for each other in particular, but they end up married at the happy conclusion of Shakespeare's play. *Béatrice et Bénédict* was well received by audiences during its premiere and in subsequent performances over the following seasons. Its success gave pleasure to Berlioz during his final years when he experienced ill health, passing away just a few years later, in 1869.

The overture brims with life and comedic touches. It begins with music from the end of the opera in which Béatrice and Bénédict get married, singing "*Love is a torch... Love is a flame... today the truce is signed; we will become enemies again tomorrow!*" The fast triplets of the opening theme illustrate these flames of love. Just as the overture gets going, it stops, and the music slows. Brass fanfares lead to a more lyrical melody as the "flames of love" recede into the background of the orchestral texture. Like many opera overtures, there is no extended development, and the composer moves directly into a reprise of the main themes. The overture ends with orchestral laughter, preparing the way for the Shakespearean comedy that follows.



Cover of the first edition of the vocal score for the opera, featuring an illustration by the French artist Antoine Barbizet.

Edwin York Bowen (1884-1961) - *Viola Concerto in C minor, Opus 25* (1907)
I Allegro assai - II Andante cantabile - III Allegro scherzando

Edwin York Bowen was an English composer and pianist whose musical career spanned more than fifty years during which time he wrote more than 160 works. He was also a talented conductor, organist, violist and horn player. Despite achieving considerable success during his lifetime, many of the composer's works remained unpublished and unperformed at the time of his death in 1961 and his music quickly faded from prominence. Since the 1980s there has been renewed interest in his music, although many of his works remain unpublished. The romantic style of Bowen's music was considered outdated by the 1920s, but his work is now recognised, by those familiar with it, for its rich harmonic language and lush Romantic style.



York Bowen, photographed in 1935, was a celebrated pianist, performing regularly at venues such as the Queen's Hall and the Royal Albert Hall.

Born in Crouch Hill, London, Bowen studied music from an early age and his exceptional talent was recognised almost immediately. He won numerous awards whilst at the Royal Academy of Music, gaining a fellowship in 1907 and two years later he was appointed a professor. His talent as a pianist led to an invitation to play his first piano concerto at the Proms under the baton of Henry Wood when he was just 19 years old. Bowen wrote three further piano concertos as well as concertos for the viola, violin, cello and horn, three symphonies and numerous other works for orchestra, chamber ensembles and solo piano. His music was highly regarded during the years before the First World War with French composer Camille Saint-Saëns describing him as "the most remarkable of the young British composers".

In 1912 Bowen married singer Sylvia Dalton, the daughter of a Somerset vicar. During the First World War Bowen played in the Scots Guards Band but contracted pneumonia whilst on active duty in France and he was forced to return home where he resumed his life as a composer and concert pianist. Bowen was awarded several prizes for composition including the Sunday Express Prize for *March RAF* (1919) and Chappell's Orchestral Suite Prize and the Hawkes and Co. Prize for *Intermezzo* (1920).

Many of Bowen's instrumental works were dedicated to, and premiered by, renowned musicians. As an instrumentalist, Bowen considered the tone quality of the viola to be superior to the violin and composed many works for viola including this concerto which was premiered in 1908 at the Wigmore Hall by Lionel Tertis, the great champion of the viola and one of the first violists to achieve international fame. Bowen and Tertis campaigned together to increase the popularity of the viola as a solo instrument. Tertis wanted to make his career as a violist, yet he faced huge challenges. As he wrote, "I gave lots of [viola] recitals but the prejudice I came up against was extraordinary. Everybody seemed to be up in arms at my daring to play solos on the viola". Tertis stated that the critics "declared that it was never meant to be, and could never be, a solo instrument...". Thanks to their efforts, attitudes began to change, and many other composers wrote pieces for Tertis including Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arthur Bliss and William Walton.



Lionel Tertis, who gave the premiere performance of York Bowen's Viola Concerto.

Many years after the concerto first premiered, Tertis wrote that he "shall always feel indebted to [York Bowen] for [his] generosity in writing compositions for the viola... Bowen was always full of exuberance and this characteristic permeated his works".

In recent years there has been renewed interest in York Bowen's compositions with a flurry of recordings, including several of this concerto, books and articles. Despite much of his music being out of print and rarely appearing in concert programmes, listeners and performers who do get the opportunity to hear his music are becoming aware of a wonderful musician and some truly extraordinary music.



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Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) - *Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Opus 39* (1898-1900)
I Andante, ma non troppo; Allegro energico – II Andante (ma non troppo lento) - III Scherzo: Allegro - IV Finale (Quasi una Fantasia): Andante; Allegro molto; Andante assai; Allegro molto como prima; Andante (ma non troppo)

Finnish composer Jean Sibelius' first symphony was originally completed in 1898 but extensively revised following the premiere with the final version completed in 1900. The original version (that was withdrawn and lost) had premiered on 26th April 1899 in Helsinki with Sibelius himself conducting the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. The following spring, mindful of an upcoming European tour with the orchestra, Sibelius revised the work "during three days and two nights". The premiere of the final version took place in Berlin on 1st July 1900, with the orchestra conducted by Robert Kajanus, a great champion of Sibelius' music. The symphony is composed for an audience used to the symphonies of Beethoven and Bruckner, and it has four movements in a traditional order. The Berlin premiere was one of nineteen concerts performed by the orchestra in thirteen different cities, and the grand tour marked the beginning of Sibelius's international breakthrough.



Robert Kajanus and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra rehearsing in the premises of the city's volunteer fire brigade before their European tour of 1900.

Although this was his first full symphony, Sibelius had already proved his mastery of the orchestra through his programmatic symphonic poems. The 1890s saw the composition of *En Saga*, the *Lemminkäinen Suite* and *Finlandia*. Like Beethoven and Brahms, the great symphonists before him, Sibelius used a model composer for his first symphonic effort and his was Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6, 'Pathétique'*, was performed in Helsinki in 1894 and 1897, and hearing it made a distinct impression on Sibelius. He wrote to his wife, "There is much in that man that I recognize in myself". Whilst the harmony, extended melodies and dark orchestration show influence of the Russian master, there is significant originality in the symphony which points to Sibelius' future as a great symphonist of his era.

The first movement is marked by sweeping melodies and dramatic contrasts, with the orchestral sections alternating between lush and powerful moments and more introspective lyrical passages. The second movement is a scherzo, characterized by a playful energetic rhythm, with the strings and woodwinds weaving intricate patterns over a driving rhythm in

the percussion section. The third movement is a slow contemplative adagio, characterized by expressive melodies. Sibelius creates a sense of stillness with delicate sustained strings, and soft atmospheric woodwinds. The movement builds to a climax before resolving in a peaceful and serene coda. The final movement is a triumphant allegro, with the full orchestra building to a rousing conclusion. Sibelius creates great energy with driving rhythms and powerful brass and percussion, culminating in a joyful finish that leaves a lasting impression on the listener.

Although the symphony was well-received at its debut, another work premiered at the same concert was met with greater enthusiasm: Sibelius' choral piece *Song of the Athenians*. Based on a poem describing an Athenian victory over the Persians in 267AD, the song for chorus and orchestra was immediately interpreted as an allegory for Tsar Nicholas II's recent curtailing of constitutional rights in the Duchy of Finland. The song became a symbol of Finnish patriotism and resistance to Russian oppression, overshadowing the symphony, much to Sibelius' annoyance. *Song of the Athenians* continues to occupy an important place in Finnish national identity, but today it's the symphony that is better-known internationally. In 1930 Robert Kajanus conducted the first recording of the symphony, this time with the London Symphony Orchestra. The symphony continues to be widely performed and frequently recorded and its sweeping melodies, dynamic contrasts, and emotional depth make it one of the greatest symphonies of the Romantic era, and a testament to Sibelius's skill as a composer and his distinctive musical style.



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St Cyprian's Church, Clarence Gate

St Cyprian's is an Anglican Parish of the Church of England in the Diocese of London. Designed by Sir Ninian Comper and built in 1903, it has been described as "a spacious, whitewashed church of beautiful proportions and restrained detail".

The church was originally founded by Charles Gutch in 1866. The fourth son of the Rector of Seagrave in Leicestershire, Gutch was educated at Cambridge and after his ordination served curacies in Leicestershire, Leeds and Bath before moving to London. By 1864 he had served curacies in St Matthias', Stoke Newington, St Paul's, Knightsbridge, and All Saints', Margaret Street. Anxious to acquire a church of his own, he proposed to build a mission church in a poor and neglected north-eastern corner of Marylebone, which would require a portion of the parishes of St Marylebone and St Paul, Rossmore Road to be handed over. However, neither the Rector of St Marylebone nor the Vicar of St Paul's approved of the churchmanship of Father Gutch. Furthermore, he proposed to dedicate the mission to St Cyprian of Carthage.

This caused difficulties, and a few weeks before the mission was due to open, the Bishop of London protested and suggested that the district be named after one of the Apostles instead. Father Gutch pointed out that a number of other churches in the Diocese had recently been dedicated to other saints, and the dedication to St Cyprian was allowed to remain.

Over the next thirty years, St Cyprian Mission Church flourished, and became overcrowded. Lord Portman refused to make available a site which would allow the building of a larger church as he too was opposed to Gutch's churchmanship. Charles Gutch died in 1896 with his vision of his larger church unrealised. His successor, Reverend George Forbes, immediately stressed that a new permanent church was urgently required, and in 1901, Lord Portman agreed to sell a site for well below market value, provided that sufficient funds were available to build the church by June 1904. It was completed with time to spare and dedicated to the memory of Charles Gutch.

The church was designed by Comper in a Gothic Revival style and built in red brick with stone dressings. The building has a nave, aisles and clerestory, but no tower, and features perpendicular window tracery and stained glass by Comper. St Cyprian's was designed to reflect Comper's emphasis on the Eucharist and the influence on him of the Oxford Movement. He said his church was to resemble "a lantern, and the altar is the flame within it".

The interior, also in the perpendicular style, features a white and gold colour scheme with ornate furnishings, including a finely carved and painted rood screen and a gilded classical font cover. The timber hammer beam roof features tie beam trusses with panelled tracery spandrels. The building is regarded as one of London's most beautiful churches.



Friends of Camden Symphony Orchestra

Would you consider supporting the orchestra by joining our Friends Scheme?

We enjoy performing an extremely varied range of repertoire for you, but it costs around £5,000 to put on a concert, and ticket sales only cover around a third of the costs. In the present climate, funding for any arts endeavour is increasingly difficult and like any other organisation, we face rising costs every year.

Our aim is to continue to provide players and audiences with the opportunity to perform and hear adventurous repertoire, to keep membership of the orchestra open to accomplished players regardless of their means, and to provide a platform for emerging soloists. We would like to thank our Friends who are helping us to achieve this.

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Mr John Bowers

Mrs Elizabeth Jones

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If you have enjoyed our concert and feel able to contribute to the orchestra's future development, we ask you to consider becoming a Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra.

For a donation of **£50** per year, **Gold Friends** will receive:

- Two free tickets per year for our concerts.
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- The opportunity to attend a rehearsal, giving insight into how the orchestra works.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@camdenso.org.uk.

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Rosalind Ventris - Viola

Violist Rosalind Ventris leads an international career as a soloist and chamber musician, and has given recitals at the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, Dublin International Chamber Music Festival, Purcell Room, Bozar, Flagey, Slovak Philharmonic, Aldeburgh Festival and Het Concertgebouw. She has performed with orchestras such as the European Union Chamber Orchestra, Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, Sinfonia Cymru, l'Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie and the Belgian National Orchestra.

Rosalind's debut album (Delphian Records, 2023), featuring music by leading women composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, was 'Instrumental Choice' in BBC Music Magazine and subsequently nominated for the BBC Music Magazine Premiere Award, and The Sunday Times hailed the recording as 'rich and illuminating... a uniformly engrossing disc'. She will be performing a solo recital of works from the album at the Wigmore Hall on International Women's Day next year. Highlights of the forthcoming season also include Walton *Viola Concerto* with the Orchestra of St John's and appearances at the Dublin International Chamber Music Festival.



As a chamber musician, Rosalind frequently performs as part of the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective (Associate Ensemble, Wigmore Hall), and Trio Anima. She has collaborated with artists such as Mitsuko Uchida, Llŷr Williams, Tabea Zimmermann, and Nicola Benedetti. She has been invited to perform at prestigious venues and festivals internationally, including the West Cork, Marlboro, Salzburg and Båstad Festivals, IMS Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music, the Auditorium du Louvre, Paris, and the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn.

Praised for her 'beguiling' (Gramophone) and 'gorgeously full-bodied playing' (The Guardian), Rosalind is the Director of Musical Performance and Performance Studies at the University of Oxford and a Professor of Viola at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Alongside her husband, she is one of the Artistic Directors of the Cowbridge Music Festival in Wales.

Find out more about Rosalind, including details of her forthcoming engagements, at rosalindventris.co.uk.

Levon Parikian - Conductor

Levon Parikian has been one of our regular conductors since 2000, and our Musical Director since 2004.

After studying conducting with Michael Rose, David Parry and George Hurst, Lev went to St Petersburg to study with the great Russian teacher 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 taught conducting for fifteen years. In 2012, Lev conducted the UK première of Armen Tigranian's opera *Anoush* with London Armenian Opera. In 2014 he conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in a re-recording of the theme tune for *Hancock's Half Hour* for lost episodes recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Lev conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra again, along with violinist Jack Liebeck, for *Raptures*, the debut orchestral album of composer Stuart Hancock which was released in November 2019.

Lev has a parallel career as a writer, and his latest book, *Taking Flight: The Evolutionary Story of Life on the Wing*, published in May 2023, was shortlisted for the 2023 Royal Society Trivedi Science Book Prize. He also writes regularly for The Guardian's *Country Diary*. Lev's previous books include: *Waving, Not Drowning*, an entertaining insight into the conductor's world; *Why Do Birds Suddenly Disappear?*, a sorry tale of atrocious birdwatching; *Into the Tangled Bank*, an exploration of our relationship with nature longlisted for the Wainwright Prize; *Music to Eat Cake By*, a collection of essays commissioned by readers; and *Light Rain Sometimes Falls: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons* which was published in September 2021. For further information, visit levparikian.com.

John Crawford - Leader

John Crawford has been our leader since September 2006.

John 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 where he played for a decade. 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.

John 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 Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra as well as CSO.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

John Crawford (Leader)
Ashleigh Watkins
Nick Sexton
Ellie Lister
Sofiia Tymchenko
Susie Bokor
Diana Muggleston
Lyndsey Silver
Sarah Too
Nathan Steele

Violin II

Sheila Hayman
Josh Hillman
Marion Fleming
Jo Wilson
Kathy He
Nanako Kimura
Martin Young
Smriti Ramakrishnan
Joshua Lee

Viola

James Taylor
Ingolf Becker
Roz Norkett
Isobel Jones
Joanna Dunmore
Sarah Dewis
Luke Waterfield

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones
Denis Ribeiro
Sophie Linton
Antje Saunders
Benjamin Phipps
Andrew Erskine

Double Bass

Rachel Rea-Smith
Mark McCarthy
Seth Edmunds
Ben Fosker

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight
Tommaso Valletti
Chris Gould

Oboe

Helen Cockroft
Marvin Perrott

Clarinet

Sheena Balmain
Noriko Lody

Bassoon

David Robson
Sebastian Till

Horn

Ed Dorman
John Isaacs
Gwen McDougal
Zack Hart

Trumpet

Sarah Hall
Daniel Haigh
Kieran Booker

Trombone

Kirk Robinson
Carter Holloran
Peter Biddlecombe

Tuba

Sean Byrne

Harp

Maria McNamee

Timpani

Owain Williams

Percussion

Francisco Negreiros
Theo Francis-Crossley

Forthcoming Concerts

Please join us at St Cyprian's for our 2025-2026 season for which, once again, we've included a mixture of well-known music with some less familiar pieces which we hope you'll enjoy discovering with us.

Saturday 22nd November 2025 at 7.30pm

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

Franz Liszt *Hamlet*

Ludwig van Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 3*

(Soloist: Simon Callaghan)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5*

Saturday 28th March 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Ethel Smyth *The Boatswain's Mate Overture*

Max Bruch *Violin Concerto No. 1*

Johannes Brahms *Symphony No. 3*

Saturday 20th June 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Dorothy Howell *Lamia*

Edward Elgar *In the South*

Nicholai Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*

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

www.camdenso.org.uk

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