



# Plymouth Symphony Orchestra

## PROGRAMME



Conductor: Anne Kimber Leader: Dave Adams

**Wednesday 22nd March 2017**  
**Plymouth Guildhall, 7.30pm**

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# PROGRAMME

**Conductor**  
**Anne Kimber**

**Leader**  
**Dave Adams**

**Festival Overture**  
**Shostakovich**

**Piano Concerto No 1**  
**Tchaikovsky**  
**Soloist: Martin James Bartlett**

**INTERVAL**

**Night on the Bare Mountain**  
**Mussorgsky**

**Adagio for Strings**  
**Barber**

**An American in Paris**  
**Gershwin**

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Conductor  
Anne Kimber



Anne has been connected with the PSO for many years, first as a player and subsequently as conductor (only the sixth in the 139 years of the orchestra's existence).

As a flautist her musical activities have ranged widely in the South West, performing with groups such as the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Opera South West, New Devon Opera, the South West Sinfonietta and many others.

She also manages the Dartington Festival Orchestra as part of the Dartington International Summer School and is a mentor for the newly developed South West Music School.

As conductor of the PSO she has helped to draw performances of real power and vibrancy from the players, enabling it to become the most accomplished group of its kind in the South West.







## Soloist

Martin James Bartlett



*'Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue gave us the Proms debut of last year's BBC Young Musician: joining the Royal Philharmonic, the pianist Martin James Bartlett brought maximum feeling to the music and played with astonishing delicacy and punch.'*

*The Telegraph / BBC Proms / August 2015*

In 2014, at the age of 17, Martin James Bartlett won the BBC Young Musician competition, following a performance of Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kirill Karabits.

Since then, he has made his BBC Proms debut as soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, performed Rachmaninov with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and opened the Cheltenham Festival with the BBC Concert Orchestra. In June, Martin was invited to perform at St Paul's Cathedral as part of the Queen's 90th birthday thanksgiving service, broadcast live on the BBC.

This season Martin performs recitals at venues throughout the UK and in Monaco. Concerto highlights include Gershwin with CBSO Youth Orchestra in Birmingham's Symphony Hall, Tchaikovsky with Plymouth, Cranbrook, and Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestras, and Mozart with Lara Melda and Aurora Orchestra at Kings Place. Further afield, Martin makes his debut in Japan performing Prokofiev with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

Martin studies with Vanessa Latarche at the Royal College of Music, where he holds a Foundation Scholarship. He has participated in masterclasses with Sir András Schiff, Lang Lang, Stephen Kovacevich, Mikhail Petukhov, Kathryn Stott, Aaron Shorr and Alberto Portugheis. Martin began his studies with Emily Jeffrey at the RCM Junior Department and the Purcell School, and has previously played the bassoon and the recorder as well, achieving Grade 8 Distinction on all three instruments by the age of 12. His studies at RCMJD were generously supported by a Tsukanov Scholarship and Awards for Young Musicians grant.

Martin has organised and performed in numerous charity concerts, to date raising over thirty thousand pounds for a wide range of deserving causes. In 2014, Martin was one of 27 international artists, including Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Nicola Benedetti, invited to record a cover of the Beach Boys classic 'God only Knows'. The song was released as the BBC Children in Need single.



Leader  
Dave Adams



Dave Adams has been a member of PSO since he moved to Plymouth in 1992. He grew up in Salisbury where the vibrant amateur and professional music scene provided the ideal backdrop to the early days of his musical development. He started playing violin and piano at the age of 8 and was particularly inspired by his violin teacher, Daphne Moody, and Alan Harwood, head of music at his secondary school, who provided him so many opportunities to experience music of different styles - from madrigal groups and chamber music to full size oratorios and concertos.

After three years studying Physics at Bristol University, a year as a volunteer conservation officer and teacher training at Oxford University, Dave moved to Plymouth to take up a post at Devonport High School for Boys where he is now Deputy Head. Since then Dave has played violin and guitar in several orchestras and folk clubs, and can occasionally be seen playing fiddle in his son's rock band in local pubs and festivals. However, the one constant musical membership throughout this time has been the PSO. 'Playing wonderful music is just part of PSO's attraction for me – it's also given me a really close set of friends and a great social life.' When he's not making music, Dave also enjoys mountain walking and dinghy racing.





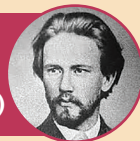
**Festival Overture, Op 96**  
**SHOSTAKOVICH**  
 (1906-1975)



Dmitri Shostakovich, one of the greatest twentieth-century Russian composers, had a career full of ups and downs. Living and working in former communist Russia, he composed a good deal of music celebrating the spirit of Russian nationalism and valour, in keeping with the official tenets of Socialist Realism. But there were equally satiric and modernist elements in his music that, on more than one occasion, brought him into disgrace with the official political and artistic establishments. The celebratory side of his achievements is demonstrated in the *Festival Overture*, written in 1954 for a concert commemorating the thirty-seventh anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power in Russia, though listeners will find little political sentiment in this short and exuberant work.

There is a brief introductory *Allegretto* opening with a brass fanfare, which is soon followed by the main *Presto* section. The first theme, consisting of woodwind scale-passages against an ostinato on strings and brass, leads to a contrasting *espressivo* theme, given out firstly by the horn, before being taken up by the strings. Noteworthy in the recapitulation is the way in which the composer reverses the original roles of his orchestral resources, especially for the first theme. There is a brief reference to the opening fanfare, now much grander than at the start, before the *Presto* returns to conclude what is a highly-effervescent and joyful creation.

**Piano Concerto No 1 in**  
**B flat minor**  
**TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)**



*Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso –*  
*Allegro con spirito*

*Andantino semplice – Prestissimo –*  
*Andantino*

*Allegro con fuoco*

What has become perhaps one of the most popular piano concertos in the repertoire began its career by being rejected by a distinguished Russian pianist of the day, Nikolai Rubinstein. Tchaikovsky dedicated it instead to the German pianist Hans von Bülow, who took it on his scheduled American tour and gave its first performance in Boston in 1875, becoming an immediate success. Later, Tchaikovsky made considerable alterations, only then arriving at the final form of the piano's thunderous opening. The pianist confronts a challenge of force, agility and endurance as the solo instrument contends with the full display of the composer's large orchestra, and used with his usual virtuosity.

The opening horn-call, the chords which march majestically up the piano keyboard, and the sweeping tune in the strings which these accompany, all are powerful elements in the impression left by the concerto. Yet the whole of this first section of the first movement presents something of a puzzle. It is 106 bars long (out of 667) and seems no mere introduction. But on the other hand it makes no return and fades out when what has to be regarded as the self-contained main section of the movement actually starts.

***First Violins***

Dave Adams  
Catherine Smith  
Petra Stephenson  
Sandra Sutton  
Jessie Welbourne  
Eva Axelby  
Margaret Sampson  
Marianne Siebeck  
Jonathan Stromberg  
Heather Sadler  
Madeleine Vickers  
Christine Harvey

***Second Violins***

Dawn Ashby  
Maggie Willmott  
Lorna Groves  
Pam Pinder  
Lindsay Pengelly  
Gill Healey  
Sharon Evans  
Doris Hildick  
Stephen Macro  
Ian Scullion

***Violas***

Melanie Scullion  
Roger Waterfield  
Rosalind Turner  
Catherine Smart  
Colin McKay  
Denise Bowden

***Cellos***

Emma Batley  
Susanna Campbell  
Celina Cox  
Debbie McMurrin  
Alicia Stolliday  
Robert Taylor  
Kate Whyman  
Richard Toll  
Diana Darwall  
Ian Tunbridge

***Double Basses***

Judy Whitlock  
Andy Tunbridge  
Liz Lonsdale

***Flutes***

Michael Wood  
Lucy Annetts

***Piccolo***

Cathy Quinlan

***Oboes***

Carolyn Haynes  
Tracy Senior

***Clarinets***

Patrick Saunders  
Hannah Epps

***Bassoons***

Ben Morrow  
Helen Simmonds

***Horns***

Sue Durant  
Simon Keates  
Debby Cotton  
Catherine Garland

***Trumpets***

Ben Dawson  
Bruce Fox  
Ivan Sidgreaves  
Merryn Cocking

***Trombones***

Mark Trewin  
Andrew Oldfield  
Frank Robinson

***Tuba***

Matthew Watkinson

***Timpani***

Michele Hiley

***Percussion***

Nick Baron  
Paul Dunsmoor  
Roger Bews

***Keyboards***

Paul Foster

Players interested in joining the PSO should contact the  
Musical Director, Anne Kimber on 01803 732550



A rippling theme for the solo instrument in B flat minor (apparently derived from a beggar's song which Tchaikovsky heard), is developed at some length. Woodwind take over with a smooth, persuasive theme in the relative major (D flat), confirmed by muted strings. The piano then asserts itself once more with bold passages in octaves, and later with an entirely solo passage, like a free, new development, rather than a cadenza as such. Later still, after the 'persuasive' theme has returned in the home key, a further raft of figuration leads to an alternation of chords between piano and orchestra and a cadenza proper (the composer's own), accelerating and then slowing down as if improvised, and dying away as flute and clarinet recall what was earlier the muted strings' theme. The happier major key (the tonic major of B flat in this case) is then sustained through a final burst of energy.

For the quiet middle movement muted strings strike up a *pizzicato* rhythm over which the flute gives out a simple, gentle melody which the piano then takes over. Later, this theme is taken up by two solo cellos, while the piano provides a decorative accompaniment. There is what seems to be a full stop, before a new, quicker and scherzo-like section ensues, in which a graceful waltz-tune is heard on violas and cellos – another 'borrowed' tune, this time a French popular song. The piano emerges from its background role for a brief meditation on its own, of which the climax is marked by a single loud chord, the full orchestra's only entry in the movement. The original flute theme – now transferred to the piano – gently resumes.

The finale, a 'fiery' (*con fuoco*) movement, starts with yet another borrowed tune, now from a Ukrainian folksong. This fast, dance-

like theme on the piano is followed by an even more vigorous, stamping statement by the full orchestra in G flat major. In quieter vein, and now in D flat major once more, the soloist gives out a yearning tune which is destined to linger in the memory. Towards the end of the movement, majestically heralded by rapid octaves from the soloist, this same theme finally soars out triumphantly on piano and full orchestra in the tonic major, effectively clinching the work, and needing only a short, quick resumption of dance-like energy once more, to finish off in a blaze of glory.

### Night on the Bare Mountain MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)



The subject of a witches' revel, similar to the Walpurgis Night in Goethe's *Faust*, haunted Mussorgsky for many years. In 1860, he made some sketches for a musical setting of a drama called *The Witch*, in which witches and sorcerers performed their rites and take part in a dance to Satan. When Balakirev proved unenthusiastic over this project, Mussorgsky put his sketches aside. In 1867, he tried adapting them into a fantasy for piano and orchestra. Later on, in 1871, when members of the Russian 'Five' planned to collaborate on an opera, *Mlada*, Mussorgsky thought of using his sketches for a second-act prelude about a Witches' Sabbath, but the *Mlada* project never materialised. In 1877, while working on his opera, *Sorochinsky Fair*, Mussorgsky thought of using his Witches' Sabbath music this time as an intermezzo describing a nightmare of a Ukrainian peasant. But not until after Mussorgsky's death was the composer's music crystallized into its final shape and form. At that time

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Rimsky-Korsakov assembled the sketches, revised them, re-orchestrated them, and developed them into an integrated fantasia. In this new and definitive setting, the *Night on the Bare Mountain* was finally introduced in 1886.

'Bare Mountain' is Mount Triglav near Kiev where, according to folk lore, witches, sorcerers and evil spirits, presided over by the Black God, Tchernobog, gather on St John's Eve for revelry. The published score offers the following programme: 'A subterranean din of unearthly voices. Appearance of the Spirits of Darkness, followed by that of Tchernobog, Glorification of the Black Gods, The Black Mass. The Revelry of Witches' Sabbath, interrupted from afar by the bells of a little church, whereupon the spirits of evil disperse. Dawn breaks.'

### Adagio for Strings, Op 11 BARBER (1910-1981)



Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1910, and studied piano and composition at the Curtis Institute. Among his many awards were the Prix de Rome (1935) and the Pulitzer Prize (1935 and 1936). His works show a respect for romantic tradition as well as an original mind.

Few twentieth century pieces have caught the public imagination more than the *Adagio for Strings*. Barber's original score dates from 1936, when it formed the central movement of his String Quartet in B minor, Op 11. In 1937, Toscanini heard Barber's Symphony No 1 at the Salzburg

Festival and asked the composer to supply a piece for his first season with the newly-formed NBC Symphony Orchestra. Barber offered the *First Essay* and the *Adagio*, which were both broadcast on NBC radio on November 5, 1938. The inward nature of the latter probably helped reinforce its public significance, with performances at the funerals of such luminaries as President Roosevelt and Albert Einstein.

The hushed but expressive theme, its modal flavour imparting an evocative timelessness, unfolds in a series of dynamic terraces; intensity increasing as the rapt mood is effortlessly sustained. Cellos take up the theme, and the music reaches an impassioned climax. A heartfelt pause, and the melody resumes its elegiac course, resolving as if with a benediction, on an imperfect cadence, or half-close.

The extent to which the *Adagio* appeared overshadowed his other works understandably caused Barber frustration in later years. Yet it is difficult to gainsay Aaron Copland's description: 'The sense of continuity, the steadiness of the flow, the satisfaction of the arch that it creates from beginning to end... makes you believe in the sincerity which he obviously put into it'.





Plymouth's own Symphony Orchestra has been central to the musical life of the city for 139 years, and continues to perform challenging music, ranging from the traditional to the contemporary.

In 1875 a local teacher of music, Dr Samuel Weekes, brought together a group of musician friends and founded what was then known as an Orchestral Society: their first concert was presented in the graceful Tea Rooms of Plymouth's old Royal Hotel. The renamed Plymouth Symphony Orchestra can claim to be one of the longest-established orchestras in the country, with an amazing record of continuity: the founding conductor was succeeded by his son; his grandson, John Weekes, was a vice-president until recently! The present conductor, Anne Kimber, is only the sixth in 139 years.

The members of the orchestra travel from as far afield as Tiverton and Wadebridge to attend weekly rehearsals, although none receive payment for playing in the orchestra.

In its choice of programmes the orchestra aims to achieve a balance between established

masterpieces and an adventurous selection of less familiar music. Among the contemporary pieces performed in recent years have been several specially commissioned from local composers, including Judy Whitlock, who leads the double bass section.

Many distinguished soloists have played concertos with the orchestra, including Nigel Kennedy, Peter Donohoe, the late Jack Brymer, Julian Lloyd Webber, Priya Mitchell, Anna Markland, Ralph Kirshbaum, Noriko Ogawa, Craig Ogden, Guy Johnston, Tasmin Little, Thomas Gould, Joanna MacGregor and BBC Young Musician of the Year, Jennifer Pike.

In addition to making appearances in Plymouth, an important feature of the orchestra's work is to present concerts in other centres which professional symphony orchestras rarely, if ever, visit, such as Liskeard, Totnes, Dartington, Christow and Buckland Abbey. But the purpose of Samuel Weekes in founding the orchestra has remained central to all its activities: to bring friends together once a week to make music.





**An American in Paris**  
**GERSHWIN**  
 (1898-1937)



While in Paris Gershwin completed *An American in Paris*, his next major concert work after *Rhapsody in Blue*. "My purpose", Gershwin told an interviewer in 1928, "is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to the various street noises (the score calls for four actual taxi horns!) and absorbs the French atmosphere."

As in my other orchestral compositions, I've not endeavoured to present any definitive scenes in this music. The 'rhapsody' is programmatic only in a general impressionistic way, so that the individual listener can read into the music such episodes as his imagination pictures for him...

The opening part [*is*] developed in typical French style, in the manner of Debussy and *The Six*, though the themes are all original. The opening gay section is followed by a rich 'blues' with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American friend, perhaps after strolling into a café and having a few drinks, has suddenly succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simple than in preceding pages. This 'blues' moves to a climax, followed by a coda where the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impressions of Paris. Apparently the homesick American, having left the cafe and reached the open air, has downed his spell of blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life.

At the conclusion the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant."

The critical response was much like that to *Rhapsody in Blue*, mostly positive but still a bit tongue-tied about the nature of the Gershwin musical phenomenon. 'Jazzbo in Montparnasse', quipped one writer! It later provided the title for a film musical in 1951, which received the Academy Award as the best release of the year, and starred Leslie Caron and Gene Kelly. Here the music of the tone poem was used for a twenty-minute modernistic ballet that is the climax of the production, the dance conceived by Kelly, and danced to by him and Miss Caron.

Programme Notes by Philip R Buttall  
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# Lucy Annetts

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