



Plymouth Symphony Orchestra

Sunday 17th June 2018
Sterts Theatre, 5.30pm

Wednesday 20th June 2018
Plymouth Guildhall, 7.30pm

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PROGRAMME

Conductor
Anne Kimber

Leader
Dave Adams

Barber of Seville Overture

Rossini

Suites from Carmen

Bizet

Grand March from Aida

Verdi

INTERVAL

Symphony No.5

Glazunov



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 has been a mentor for the renowned 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.

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.

**First Violins**

Dave Adams
Dawn Ashby
Jessie Wellbourne
Sandra Sutton
Becca Hewlins
Elena Sidman
Jonathan Stromberg
Neville Devonport
Margaret Sampson
Christine Harvey
Chantal Whitfield
Sharon Evans
Natali Puskarova
Andy Clarkson

Second Violins

Catherine Smith
Maggie Willmott
Lorna Groves
Pam Pinder
Lindsay Pengelly
Gill Healey
Stephen Macro
Vanessa Tyler
Jasmine Whiteleaf
Hannah Gregson
Hamish Overend

Violas

Petra Stephenson
Roger Waterfield
Rosalind Turner
Cathy Smart
Colin McKay
Rob Kellagher
Sean Overend

Cellos

Emma Batley
Celina Cox
Alicia Stolliday
Debbie McMurrin
Susanna Campbell
Denise Hasshill
Kate Whyman
Richard Toll
Ian Tunbridge

Double Basses

Judy Whitlock
Andy Tunbridge

Flutes

Kristy Marcer-Griffiths
Lucy Annetts

Piccolo

Cathy Quinlan

Oboes

Carolyn Haynes
Tracy Senior

Clarinets

Patrick Saunders
Hannah Epps
Olwen Knowles

Bassoons

Ben Morrow
Helen Simmonds

French Horns

Sue Durant
Simon Keates
Debby Cotton
Catherine Garland

Trumpets

Ben Dawson
Bruce Fox
Ivan Sidgreaves
Sarah Gray

Trombones

Mark Trewin
Andrew Oldfield
Frank Robinson

Tuba

Matthew Watkinson

Timpani

Michelle Hiley

Percussion

Kieran Richards
Roger Bews

Harp

Julia Hammersley

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



Overture, The Barber of Seville
Rossini
(1792-1868)



Rossini's overtures are short, vivacious orchestral pieces, usually without musical reference to the opera. The orchestral style is direct and clear, the catchy melodies supported by strong, regular harmonic changes. The form is consistent and unproblematic: a slow and spacious opening section, too substantial to be called an introduction, is followed by a fast movement in a kind of compressed sonata-form. Two main 'tunes' are presented, the second in a new key, then, with no development but only a few bars of transition, the first subject returns, and eventually the second – this time in the home key.

No overture is probably more famous than The Barber of Seville, though originally Rossini used it for an earlier work which failed. The Barber itself, originally taking a title from its tenor hero – 'Almaviva, or the Useless Precaution' – was first heard in Rome under the composer's baton in 1816. The slow section in E major achieves an elegance with a violin melody above the other strings, playing pizzicato. The ensuing fast movement first engages the listener with a mischievous starting-tune in E minor, after which the oboe presents the second subject in the relative major key (G), which will ultimately make a more fully-scored return in E major.

Carmen Suites (excerpts)
Bizet
(1838-1875)



| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Prelude</i> | <i>Danse Bohème</i> |
| <i>Aragonaise</i> | <i>Habañera</i> |
| <i>Intermezzo</i> | <i>Chanson du Toréador</i> |
| <i>Séguedille</i> | <i>La Garde Montante</i> |
| <i>Les Dragons D'Alcala</i> | <i>Les Toréadors</i> |

It is difficult for present-day audiences to understand the relative failure of the opera Carmen, when it was first staged in Paris in 1875. Bizet had enjoyed some intermittent success in the theatre, but it was above all with Prosper Mérimée's novel that he was to find a subject fully suited to his abilities. The story of the opera shocked audiences. It dealt with the love affair between the factory-girl Carmen and the toreador Escamillo, her flirtation with Don José, a corporal of the guard, and her murder by the jealous soldier, whose life she had ruined and corrupted. Two Carmen Orchestral Suites – each originally comprising six movements – were compiled after the composer's death by his friend Ernest Guiraud, and which adhere very closely to Bizet's orchestration. Guiraud had also written the recitatives for Carmen, as well as putting together the second of the two suites from Bizet's incidental music for L'Arlésienne. The present selection includes the Prélude to Act 1, which sets the Spanish atmosphere of the piece, includes strains of the Toreador's Song, and an ominous theme of 'Fate', portending the murder that is the opera's denouement. The Aragonaise is based on the Spanish jota dance, and is followed by the Intermezzo that serves as a prelude to Act 3, where Carmen and her gypsy-smuggler companions march to their mountain encampment. It was in the

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Séguédille that Carmen had first seduced Don José, to secure her release from arrest on a charge of wounding a fellow-worker in the cigarette factory. Les Dragons d'Alcala is the marching-song of Don José's regiment, whose love for Carmen had induced him to desert. Then comes an exhilarating Gypsy Dance (Danse Bohème), followed by the famous Habañera, the song which Carmen is heard singing, when she first emerges from the factory, and the centre of male attention. The Toreador's Song (Chanson du Toréador) is probably the best-known of all the melodies in the opera, marking the appearance of Escamillo, Carmen's toreador-lover. Next comes music for Don José's regiment to mount guard (La Garde Montante), leaving the bustling March of the Toreadors (Marche des Toréadors) to end the current selection on a real high.

Triumphal March from Aida
Verdi
(1813-1901)



In the late 1860s, the attention of Europe turned to Egypt as the long-awaited Suez Canal neared completion, but while many composers celebrated the occasion, Verdi remained seemingly disinterested and declined to contribute. However his imagination was captured in 1870 by the suggestion of a scenario invented by the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, and, doubtless aided by the prospect of a commission from the Royal Opera House in Cairo – itself built to celebrate the Suez opening, and which demanded a specifically Egyptian opera. The result was *Aida*, one of Verdi's grandest and most distinctive works – set apart not only by its non-European setting, but also its vivid instrumental and

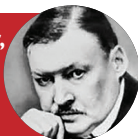
harmonic colouring all of which giving the piece an unusually strong sense of place. Intended to open the Cairo Opera in early 1871, *Aida*'s first performance had to be postponed while sets and scenery remained under siege in Paris as a result of the Franco-Prussian war – no small irony given the war between ancient Egypt and Ethiopia that forms the background to the story. *Aida* received its first performance at Cairo in December 1871, with the Italian premiere taking place just six weeks later. Despite receiving criticism for being less adventurous and more traditional than Verdi's by-now expectant public demanded, the piece has remained a cornerstone of the operatic repertoire since the mid-1870s.

The Triumphal March forms the main part of the second-act finale, set at the gates of Thebes, capital of ancient Egypt. The opening theme is that of the main chorus, a victorious cry of "Glory to Egypt" heralding the returning army. This is followed by a lyrical interlude from the women's chorus (played by the woodwinds) and the angularly-contrapuntal chorus of priests, after which the arrival of the King is announced by two corps of trumpets – the main march tune having become one of Verdi's most well-known. In the opera itself, the following section is a sequence of ballet music, such features as ballet and tableaux being part of the French tradition of grand opera to which Verdi at this time had taken. As a showcase for the orchestra's virtuosity as well as the composer's ingenuity – the music is full of orchestral and melodic devices strongly suggestive of the Egyptian setting – it is unfortunate that the ballet sequence is often cut or, indeed, omitted in concert performances. The victorious opening music returns as Radames, commander of the



Egyptian army (also the object of Aida's affections) is crowned with laurels by the King, and the excerpt concludes with an animated coda section combining the chorus themes of people and priests.

**Symphony No 5 in B flat major,
Op 55, Glazunov
(1865-1936)**



Moderato; Maestoso; Allegro
Scherzo (Moderato)
Andante
Allegro; Maestoso

By the mid-1890s Glazunov's position as one of the leading musical lights in Russia seemed assured. A mark of the esteem in which he was held by the musical establishment can be seen from the commission he received in 1895 to write a coronation cantata for Nicholas II, and also by the fact that in the same year he began conducting the Russian Symphony Concerts jointly with Rimsky-Korsakov. Glazunov's reputation was also spreading beyond Russia: in 1896 his Fourth Symphony was heard for the first time in London, and the following year the composer conducted the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies with the London Philharmonia.

The clear sense of evolution that can be felt in Glazunov's symphonies reached an important stage with the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. On the one hand, the pan-Slavic and Russian style of his first two symphonies clearly owes a huge debt to the nationalist traditions of Balakirev and 'The Mighty Handful' – also known as 'The Five', or 'The New Russian School', five prominent Russian composers who worked together from 1856 to 1870 to create a distinct style

of Russian classical music. On the other hand, his newly-formed friendship with Tchaikovsky in the late 1880s came to bear on the Third Symphony with its transparent textures and heightened lyricism. By the time he had completed the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies in 1893 and 1895 respectively, a synthesis of these earlier influences had been more or less achieved, and it can be said that these works mark the mature phase of his development as a symphonist. In many ways Glazunov can be seen as the first important bridge between two bitterly hostile camps in Russian music: the nationalists with their Free Music School and the Rubinstein brothers and Tchaikovsky with their 'foreign, Teutonic' conservatories. It is very significant that Glazunov dedicated his Fourth Symphony to Anton Rubinstein (who, unbeknown to the composer, had less than a year to live), and his Fifth Symphony to Sergey Taneyev, the great master of counterpoint from the Moscow Conservatory.

One of the most important aspects of Glazunov's orchestral manner that he inherited from his nationalist teachers (Balakirev in particular) was the idea of thematic transformation. Liszt, one of the composers whom Balakirev held up as a shining model for others to follow, had used the technique in the Faust Symphony and in other works, and Glazunov adopted it as his own chosen method of composition. The vital role that Liszt played in Glazunov's development can be gauged by the dedication of his Second Symphony to the memory of the Hungarian composer. While thematic transformation became a major factor in many of Glazunov's symphonic works, the influence of Wagnerian orchestration, particularly his writing for the brass, also had a growing impact on Glazunov's style during the 1890s.



Glazunov had completed his Fourth Symphony in December 1893, and it was first performed just a few weeks later, towards the end of January 1894, in the third Russian Symphony Concert of the season, under the direction of Rimsky-Korsakov. Throughout the work Glazunov displayed a keen awareness for the importance of texture: he darkens and lightens his colours, produces the most delicately scored pages, and follows them with robust tutti (passages for the whole orchestra) full of contrapuntal richness.

These qualities are highlighted even more forcefully in the Fifth Symphony, on which Glazunov worked from April to October 1895. The work met with approval from Rimsky-Korsakov, who found in it the beginning of something new, although a few years later his youngest daughter, Nadezhda Nikolayevna, apparently expressed a dislike for it, when she played it through, rather badly, with Stravinsky. The Symphony received its first performance in St Petersburg early in 1897 and still gained immediate and lasting popularity. The heroic spirit of the outer movements looks back to the epic world of Borodin, but by this time Glazunov had thoroughly absorbed the influence of Wagner and it had a profound effect on the colour, timbre and character of the Symphony. The work opens with an imposing, solemn theme that encompasses the range of a falling minor sixth. From this basic material Glazunov constantly evolves new ideas which he presents in ever-changing rhythmic and harmonic guises throughout the Symphony. In the first movement, for example, the craggy, unyielding contours of the opening theme are transformed, as if by magic, into the mellifluous cantabile of the principal second theme. If the 'Allegro' leaves the

impression of awesome majesty, the Scherzo (Moderato) is in a much lighter vein, and reminiscent of Mendelssohn in the same key of G minor, though with a more direct debt to Tchaikovsky. Its six-bar introduction ushers in a bustling theme for the woodwind of scintillating dexterity, to which the composer adds some legato chromatic scales in the first violins along with flecks of colour from the harp and glockenspiel. The woodwind continues to dominate in the contrasting middle section (*pochissimo meno mosso*), and, as in the Scherzo of the Fourth Symphony, the music has a balletic quality. The 'Andante', in the subdominant key of E flat, is prefaced by a twenty-bar introduction from which an elegy of great beauty suddenly emerges. Never before in his symphonies had Glazunov achieved this kind of pathos. At times the music even hints at tragedy – the dark colours of the trombones and tuba in the middle of the movement sounding distinctly threatening. The reprise of the main theme is handled in an almost Tchaikovsky-like manner and the music soars sequentially to a climax of intense and sublime passion.

Perhaps the finale of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony was uppermost in Glazunov's mind when he came to write the finale of his own Fifth Symphony, for the introspection of the 'Andante' is immediately banished with a forthright theme full of power and life-affirming energy, all cast in the by-now-traditional 'rondo' format. With this monumental structure the composer pulls off an undeniable tour de force, its wealth of interesting details, shifting rhythms, vitality and dazzling orchestration all contributing to making this one of the composer's finest symphonies.

Programme Notes by Philip R Butall
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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.

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