

Plymouth Symphony Orchestra

Sunday 17th March 2019
Public Hall, Liskeard, 5.30pm
Wednesday 20th March 2019
Plymouth Guildhall, 7.30pm



Soloist - Savitri Grier

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PROGRAMME

Conductor
Anne Kimber

Leader
Dave Adams

Egmont Overture
Beethoven

Violin Concerto No.1
Bruch

Soloist – Savitri Grier

INTERVAL

Symphony No.2
Rachmaninov



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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 over 140 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.





Soloist Savitri Grier



Photograph: Kaupo Kikkas

It was [Savitri Grier's] playing, of course, that took the spotlight – a deep, eloquent tone, making every line sing, and all delivered with remarkable poise and flair.

Birmingham Post / Birmingham Sinfonia - Sibelius Concerto / May 2016

...the highlight of the evening: an account of Chausson's Poème for violin and orchestra, in which Savitri Grier was the wonderfully assured and lyrically poised soloist.

The Guardian / Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra / Norfolk & Norwich Festival / May 2016

Over the last year Savitri has returned to Wigmore Hall both as soloist, and with the IMS Prussia Cove Ensemble. She toured throughout China, and collaborated with the renowned sarod players Amaan Ali and Ayaan Ali Bangash at The Times Swarsangam Music Festival in Bangalore.

In 2019 Savitri undertakes a complete Beethoven Sonata series in Scotland as part of a Tunnell Trust award with pianist Richard Uttley.

Recent solo highlights include the Royal Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, English Chamber, London Mozart Players, Welsh National Opera, Barbican Young and Oxford Philharmonic Orchestras. In 2016 she made her debut at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall.

Savitri read music at Christ Church, Oxford and in 2017 completed her Artist Diploma with distinction at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno. She is currently at the Universität der Künste Berlin in the class of Nora Chastain on a full DAAD scholarship.

Savitri has given recitals at festivals and venues across Europe including the East Neuk Festival retreat, the Holland International Music Sessions, Musique à Marsac in France, Krzyzowa Chamber Music in Poland, Avigdor Classics in Bern, Sage Gateshead, the St Magnus, Bury St. Edmunds, Newbury, Norfolk & Norwich, Portsmouth, Harrogate and Roman River Festivals.

Sought after as a chamber musician she has collaborated with Susan Tomes, Christoph Richter, Steven Isserlis, Krzysztof Chorzelski, Tom Poster and the Kaleidoscope Collective, Richard Uttley, Andrew Marriner and Alasdair Beatson, and regularly gives recitals with the Grier Trio.

During her studies Savitri participated in masterclasses with Ferenc Rados, Johannes Goritski, Maxim Vengerov, Anne-Sophie Mutter and Thomas Adès, and was especially grateful for guidance from Ana Chumachenco and Andras Keller. Awards include 1st Prize at the Oxford Philomusica and Tunbridge Wells International Competitions. She was selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust in 2015.

Savitri is grateful for support from Help Musicians UK, the Philharmonia Orchestra/Martin Musical Scholarship Fund, Hattori Foundation and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Savitri plays on a Matteo Goffriller violin on generous loan from the Aidan Woodcock Charitable Trust.



Young Classical
Artists Trust



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.



Overture, Egmont, Op 84 Beethoven (1770-1827)



In the period when Spain ruled Flanders – the Dutch-speaking northern portion of modern Belgium – Count Egmont (1522-1568) was a Flemish nobleman who had given distinguished service to the Spanish king. Later, standing for a more liberal attitude to the people, he incurred the enmity of the Duke of Alba, the repressive Spanish captain-general who executed about 18,000 people. Egmont, himself executed in Brussels and remembered as a national hero, is the central figure of Goethe's play, *Egmont* (1788). Admiring the German writer and statesman, Beethoven responded to the anti-tyrant theme. The play itself is now chiefly immortalized by the incidental music which Beethoven contributed to the Vienna production in 1810.

There are nine numbers including two songs, and this overture. Not yet completed when the play opened (May 24), Beethoven's music was first heard at a subsequent performance on June 15. The composer essentially uses a classical orchestra, with woodwind and trumpets in pairs, together with timpani and strings. However, he beefs up the horn section by asking for four players, while the second flute is required to change to piccolo for the work's dramatic conclusion. Unlike the Beethoven's earlier *Coriolanus* overture, which is in one continuous tempo, *Egmont* has a solemn slow introduction, followed by an agitated main theme, descending on cellos, and a second theme beginning in chords on strings – a 'knocking' or 'destiny' figure as definite as the opening of the composer's Fifth Symphony. The opening exposition is not repeated, but rather merges into a short development. At the recapitulation, cellos again take the main theme – the 'destiny' theme is followed by an expectant pause, and what would appear to be an evidently

feeble reply. The cause of liberty would seem to have failed for the moment, but a swelling coda, in the tonic major key, with the piccolo adding a new note of excitement, signifies the impending triumph, and the overture concludes in a victorious blaze of glory.

Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor, Op 26 Bruch (1838-1920)



*Allegro moderato, leading to
Adagio
Allegro energico*

Bruch's first violin concerto was completed in 1866, and the final version was given for the first time in January 1868 two years later. Max Bruch is known today primarily for two solo violin works, this G minor concerto, and the 'Scottish Fantasy', as well as his 'Kol Nidrei' for cello and orchestra. However, Bruch was a tremendously successful composer in his day, with a catalogue of nearly a hundred works that included three operas, three symphonies, and many solo pieces, sacred and secular choral works, art songs, and chamber works. He was a well-regarded conductor and one of the most sought-after composition teachers in Europe, numbering both Respighi and Vaughan Williams among his more famous pupils.

Bruch made the first sketches for a violin concerto as early as 1857. He finished the work early in 1866, and in April of that year, conducted a preliminary version at a benefit concert in Koblenz, where the solo part was played by a violinist from Cologne, Otto von Königsłow. Bruch made several significant revisions after hearing this performance, even considering recasting the work as a 'Fantasy' because of its relatively free form. Finally, the composer solicited the advice of the greatest Austrian (then Hungarian) virtuoso of the day, Joseph Joachim, who was impressed, and

**First Violins**

Dave Adams
Catherine Smith
Jessie Welbourne
Sandra Sutton
Nathan Broomhead
Heather Sadler
Jonathan Stromberg
Eva Axelby
Margaret Sampson
Andy Clarkson

Second Violins

Dawn Ashby
Alan Thomas
Maggie Willmott
Lorna Groves
Pam Pinder
Kate Wheeler
Gill Healy
Sharon Evans
Hannah Gregson
Jasmine Whiteleaf
Stephen Macro
Vanessa Tyler

Violas

Petra Stephenson
Rob Kellagher
Cathy Smart
Rosalind Turner
Colin McKay
Peter Snoxall
Lindsay Endean
Emma Bagnall

Cellos

Emma Batley
Debbie McMurrin
Celina Cox
Alicia Stolliday
Susanna Campbell
Kate Whyman
Bert Tayler
Denise Hasshill
Diana Darwall
Richard Toll

Double Basses

Judy Whitlock
Andy Tunbridge
Mark Perry

Flutes

Kristy Marcer-Griffiths
Lucy Annetts

Piccolo

Cathy Quinlan

Oboes

Carolyn Haynes
Tracy Senior

Cor Anglais

Andrew King

Clarinets

Patrick Saunders
Hannah Epps

Bass Clarinet

Barry Parsons

Bassoons

Helen Simmonds
Gemma Hayes

Horns

Sue Durant
Simon Keates
Debby Cotton
Catherine Garland

Trumpets

Ben Dawson
Bruce Fox
Ivan Sidgreaves

Trombones

Mark Trewin
Andrew Oldfield
Frank Robinson

Tuba

Matthew Watkinson

Timpani

Michelle Hiley

Percussion

Noelle Boucherat
Mark Hambly

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



suggested several additional changes. Joachim played the premiere of the revised concerto, and Bruch dedicated the published score to him. Almost forty years later, Joachim cited Bruch's G minor as one of 'the four German violin concertos' – alongside those of Beethoven, Brahms, and Mendelssohn, and referred to it as the 'richest, and most seductive' of the four.

The concerto is traditionally set in three movements, but none, as such, follows a strict Classical form. Bruch titles the first movement Vorspiel or 'Prelude', and it serves as a kind of extended free-form introduction to the second movement. Two ideas are introduced and briefly developed: a very lyrical solo line played over a quiet orchestral accompaniment and a contrasting melody, heard above pizzicato basses. The prelude builds to a peak and then dies away, leaving space for a lovely cadenza, which ties directly into the slow movement. This Adagio is carried entirely by the solo part, which plays almost without pause until a brief orchestral passage in the middle. The violin introduces three unhurried and beautiful themes, developing each in turn, and which marks the emotional heart of the whole work.

When Joachim placed this concerto alongside the more famous examples from Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, it was in their respective finales that the resemblance appears most noticeable. While in his closing Allegro

energico, Bruch does not use the same classical-rondo form as the others, the spirit is effectively the same. After an opening orchestral flourish, the violin introduces the main theme – a lively Gypsy-style melody played in double stops, where the family resemblance between this and the main theme of Brahms's finale is particularly striking, even though Brahms's concerto appeared some ten years later. The movement proceeds in a loose sonata-form, with a slightly more solemn second subject. The main theme dominates throughout in both the solo part and accompaniment, eventually becoming the basis for a flamboyantly exhilarating coda and the concerto's ultimate conclusion.

Symphony No 2 in E minor, Op 27 Rachmaninov (1873-1943)



Largo – Allegro Moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro vivace

Rachmaninov composed his First Symphony in 1895, and the first performance was a complete fiasco. The failure of this work, followed by that of the First Piano Concerto, brought the composer to the brink of a nervous breakdown. Out of this period of silence and morbidity, Rachmaninov emerged completely revitalized, composing his first masterpiece, the Second Piano Concerto. Then, retiring to Dresden in 1907 to devote himself entirely to creative work, he wrote his Second Symphony and 'The Isle of the Dead'. He completed the Second Symphony in 1907 and it was given its first performance the following year in St Petersburg under the direction of the composer. An expansive work firmly in the late Romantic tradition, the symphony also continues a particularly Russian vein of Romanticism, explored already by Tchaikovsky.

Lucy Annetts

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Rachmaninov was careful to follow the textbook rules of symphonic composition, while placing the unmistakable imprint of his unique personality on every movement and theme in the work. The symphony opens with a Largo introduction whose main motif, first presented by the cellos and basses, will recur in varied form throughout the four movements. The main features of the motif are a stepwise motion (first ascending, then descending), and a rhythmic pattern with ties across the bar-line. This material dominates both the lengthy introduction and the subsequent main section of the movement. First soft and subdued, the main theme is gradually transformed, through variation and development, and reappears, played forte, by the full orchestra. A second melodic idea is based on an alternation between woodwind and strings, and brought to a climax, only to fade back to pianissimo at the end of the exposition. The beginning of the development section is marked by the return of the main theme as a violin solo. The theme is soon taken over by the clarinet, and turned into fast-moving figurations in both winds and strings. After a new emotional high point, the recapitulation begins, concentrating on the second theme, which appears in E major. The coda, however, reverts to E minor, the symphony's main tonality, and brings the movement to a close.

The second movement is a scherzo of the greatest energy that also has a contrasting second theme, as sonata movements do. Its main melody is played first by the horns and then by the violins against a lively rhythmic background. The second theme, without being a direct quote of the first movement's main idea, shares with it a stepwise motion and its characteristic rhythm. It is followed by a return of the first theme. The Trio also contains two distinct ideas – the first is played staccato by the violins, while the second, with brass and percussion as the protagonists, is a special mix of march and church hymn, with unexpected off-beat accents. A return to the first tempo brings back both themes of the main section, but the movement closes with some reminiscences of the march from the Trio.

The slow third-movement Adagio begins with an expressive violin melody followed by a clarinet solo in the mould of the symphony's earlier themes in stepwise motion. A third idea, played by the first violins, receives a counterpoint from the other strings and the woodwinds, and leads back to the first theme, now heard in a full orchestral fortissimo. The middle section starts very softly with cor anglais and oboe solos. A new climax is reached, soon to recede into a decrescendo and, finally, a long silence. In the recapitulation the first theme is re-introduced by the horn. The other two ideas also return, in richer orchestration than before, and contrapuntally combined with parts of the first theme. Like the second movement, the third also ends with an allusion to material heard in its middle section, while once more resembling the mood of the opening Largo – reflective music touched with an indefinable yearning.

The Finale, in the tonic major (E), starts with a fanfare-like theme played fortissimo by the entire orchestra. It is followed by a transition section for horns, timpani and double bass, which leads into a march for winds (not unlike the one heard in the second movement). The main theme returns, and then gives way to a broad melody, eventually winding down to pianissimo chords over a long-held pedal-note. After a short recall of the third movement's main theme, a development section begins, with mostly new melodic ideas, among which a descending scale gains increasing prominence. The recapitulation brings back the fanfare, the march, the broad melody, and the descending scale, combining them all in the symphony's triumphant ending, while recalling the main idea of the slow movement, heard in counterpoint against the finale's energetic main subject.

Programme Notes by Philip R Buttall
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The Plymouth Symphony Orchestra has been central to the musical life of the city for over 140 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 over 140 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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Registered Charity No. 286656





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Christine
Harvey



Members of the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra would like to dedicate this concert to the memory of Christine Harvey, a long-standing member of the orchestra, who sadly passed away at the end of February this year.

Christine joined the violin section of the PSO in the 1970's and had been a loyal member ever since. She was a great supporter of the Orchestra and particularly promoted us in and around Liskeard. In all the years that she was a member of the orchestra she hardly missed any concerts, apart from ill health or when she embarked on a world tour. With her easy, friendly manner, she liked to make sure that new members to the Orchestra were always made to feel welcome. She also created beautiful handmade cards, for all sorts of occasions, for members of the Orchestra. Hand painted flowers were her speciality.

Christine was preparing for this concert and had been attending rehearsals right up until the week before she died. She will be greatly missed by her many friends in the orchestra.

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LIVE
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Sunday 16th June 2019

Sterts Theatre, 5.30pm

Wednesday 19th June 2019

Plymouth Guildhall, 7.30pm

The Wasps Overture

Vaughan Williams

Fantasia on Greensleeves

Vaughan Williams

Façade

Walton

Symphonic Suite from Porgy & Bess

Gershwin

Appalachian Spring

Copland

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The logo for the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, featuring a stylized blue and green wave or 'S' shape.

Plymouth Symphony Orchestra

The Wasps Overture - Vaughan Williams
Fantasia on Greensleeves - Vaughan Williams
Façade - Walton
Symphonic Suite from Porgy & Bess - Gershwin
Appalachian Spring - Copland

2019 Summer Concert

Sunday 16th June 2019

Starts Theatre, 5.30pm

Wednesday 19th June 2019

Plymouth Guildhall, 7.30pm