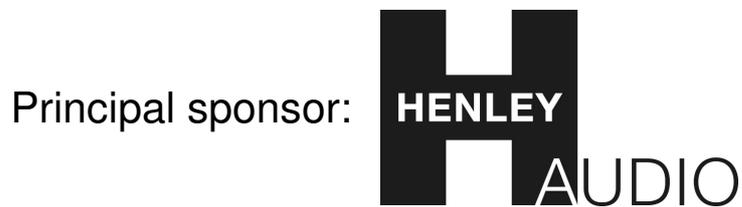




"Didcot's new symphony orchestra"



Conductor: Geoff Bushell
Leader: Kate Bailey
Honorary President: Ed Vaizey, MP

Inaugural concert – Sunday 11 February 2018

PROGRAMME

Bushell	A Fanfare for Didcot
Ponchielli	La Gioconda: Dance of the Hours
Franck	Symphonic Poem: Psyché
Brahms	Symphony no 2

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A message from the Honorary President

"I am delighted that the Didcot Concert Orchestra has been established. Didcot is a vibrant and growing town, and the arts have always been a central part of its life. The concert orchestra fills a gap, and it is very much needed. Music brings great joy to people, and it also plays an important role in our schools and our communities. I wish the Didcot Concert Orchestra every success and I look forward to seeing them perform soon in Didcot – if not at the Proms!"

The Right Honourable Edward Vaizey, MP

PROGRAMME

A Fanfare for Didcot

Geoff Bushell (floruit 2018)

This two-minute fanfare was written and first performed, by St Giles Orchestra, for the first orchestral concert given at the newly-opened Cornerstone in November 2008. The fanfare has a six-note phrase near the end which is the name "Didcot" translated into musical notes.

Dance of the Hours

Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-86)

Born near Cremona, Ponchielli won a scholarship at the age of nine to study music at the Milan Conservatory, writing his first symphony by the time he was ten. His output consisted mostly of ten operas, including *La Gioconda*. The opera is set to a libretto by Arrigo Boito, and based on *Angelo, Tyrant of Padua* by Victor Hugo. It was first performed in 1876. The only fragment of Ponchielli's orchestral music performed today is the *Dance of the Hours*, which was made famous by its use in Walt Disney's 1940 film *Fantasia*.

Dance of the Hours is the music to the brilliant and spectacular ballet interlude from the end of Act III of the opera. The ballet represents successively dawn, day, evening and night, and is also intended to symbolise the eternal struggle between the powers of darkness and light. The exuberant *Finale* brings the Hours together in an effervescent grand ballet.

*And now to gayer spectacles let me invite ye.
Hither come the masqueraders,
A troop of lovely dancers;
Each one is glowing with beauty and ardour;
In graceful movements the hours representing,
And their dance now commences.*

Symphonic Poem: Psyché

César Franck (1822-90)

- I – Psyché asleep
- II – Psyché borne away by the Zephyrs
- III – The Gardens of Eros
- V – Psyché and Eros

César Franck spent much of his life in the organ loft and as a teacher. His composition pupils include Vincent D'Indy, Henri Duparc, Ernest Chausson and Paul Dukas. Teaching prevented him becoming a significant composer in his early years, and indeed most of his most famous works were written after the age of 60.

Franck is best known today for his *Symphony in D minor* of 1888, and his *Symphonic Variations* of 1885, and these seem to have eclipsed his other symphonic repertoire. Among the better known are *Le Chasseur Maudit* (The Accursed Huntsman), and *Les Éolides* (The Breezes, from Homer's *Odyssey*), but perhaps the most unjustly neglected of all is his longest Symphonic Poem *Psyché* of 1887.

The full version of *Psyché* is a seven-movement 50-minute work for orchestra and women's chorus – the latter added by Franck after first publication. Its most common version in orchestral performance is the four-fragment suite which Franck later extracted, effectively omitting the choral movements, and halving the length.

Franck's inspiration is the Greek myth of Psyché and Eros (Cupid). In the first movement, Psyché has travelled to Hades, and is sleeping (clarinet melody), dreaming of Eros. The second movement sees her carried off by the Zephyrs (those gentle westerly breezes depicted initially by flutes). In the Gardens of Eros (third movement), Psyché rests in a haven of flowers. For continuity of the plot, the (omitted) fourth movement continues the story with an eulogy to love, but the chorus warns Psyché that she should never look directly at Eros. In the passionate fifth movement, Psyché finally achieves her dream of being with Eros, but she disobeys the instruction not to look at him. In the (omitted) sixth and seventh movements, the chorus speaks of the punishment Psyché should receive for her disobedience, and of her subsequent suffering and tears, but a happy ending is contrived. Despite the quiet ending of the fifth movement, the four-fragment version performed tonight makes an effective introduction to this rare gem.

Symphony no 2 in D major

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

- I – Allegro non troppo
- II – Adagio non troppo
- III – Allegretto grazioso
- IV – Allegro con spirito

Where Brahms' first symphony of 1876 is an epic owing much to Beethoven, the second, written the following year, is an idyllic pastoral poem. The distinguished conductor Felix Weingartner commented "the stream of invention has never flowed so fresh and spontaneous in other works by Brahms, and nowhere else has he coloured his orchestration so skilfully". Each of the movements is infused with melody, and to many, the second symphony is the warmest of heart, the gentlest, and the sunniest of Brahms four symphonies. The first and third movements feature major solos for the horn and oboe, while the second has the rare distinction of having horn parts written in 'H' – the German notation for B natural – in which the versatile horn players must transpose an augmented fourth away from usual – but all we hear is a serene elegy. Only when we reach the finale does the serenity give way to some long-awaited jubilation.

Programme notes by Geoff Bushell

CONDUCTOR

Geoff Bushell studied conducting with George Hurst, Michael Rose, Denise Ham and Adrian Leaper. As conductor and musical director of Oxford-based St Giles Orchestra since 1983, Geoff has developed its technical and musical capabilities and led it through many new opportunities such as partnerships with local choirs for the performance of Orff's Carmina Burana and Verdi's Requiem in Oxford Town Hall, and recordings including Walton's Crown Imperial March which was broadcast on the BBC One Show. Geoff also regularly conducts Abingdon Symphony Orchestra and Phoenix Flutes. Renowned for introducing players and audiences alike to lesser-known and unjustly neglected romantic repertoire, he has also earned a reputation as a composer of romantic-style pieces, including four commissions from the Abingdon and District Musical Society to celebrate their successive tenth anniversaries. Geoff is also well known locally as a player of French horn and double bass.

DCO WOULD LIKE TO THANK...

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Special thanks: Chris Fletcher-Campbell, Sue Hurst, Steve Mollon, Laurence Armstrong, Simon Powell.

PLAYERS – 11 FEBRUARY 2018

FLUTE	Sue Hurst Kate Geary	HARP	Helen Coad
PICCOLO	Mia Gaudern	VIOLIN 1	Kate Bailey * Eleanor Bagg Christina Everson Jonathan Lightfoot Iris van Pijlen Martin Reed Jeanette Thomas
OBOE	Jackie Bushell Alan Evans Laura Sandford		
COR ANGLAIS	Jackie Bushell		
CLARINET	Ashleigh Alderslade David Cohen Rebecca Teager	VIOLIN 2	Louise Graham * Rosie Bruce Paul Chesson Kate Gould Alice Little Annie Thomas
BASS CLARINET	Rebecca Teager		
BASSOON	Mike Dowling Will Grainger	VIOLA	Heather Birt * Katherine Baker Glynne Butt Evelyn Sanderson
HORN	Rob Bentall Sam Dunwoody Steve Guard Claire Stinchcombe		
TRUMPET	Rose Hadshar Thomas James	CELLO	Spike Wilson * Tim Baker Jude Barnby Lisa Rees Polly Silk
TROMBONE	Neil Brownless Maria Palmer Simon Ward	DOUBLE BASS	Richard Hodby Alex Rothwell
TUBA	Richard Meads	* professional string section leaders	
TIMPANI + PERCUSSION	Chris Fletcher- Campbell		

ABOUT DCO

The continuing expansion of Didcot is bringing more orchestral musicians and ever-larger potential concert audiences to the area. Didcot Concert Orchestra is the first high-quality amateur concert-giving symphony orchestra based in Didcot. It aims to bring together the best players, so participation is by invitation or audition.

Professional players have been engaged to lead each of the string sections.

Players meet for four rehearsals before each concert, and DCO plans to give concerts every February, May and October. DCO's repertoire will focus on concert classics from the late-Romantic era, and a key feature will be tuneful unjustly neglected works from this period – at least one such "rare gem" in each concert.

DCO is not-for-profit, and is underwritten by founders Jackie and Geoff Bushell. If you are interested in playing in or sponsoring future concerts, please see our Facebook page or visit www.didcotconcertorchestra.org.uk.



DCO is a member of Making Music, which provides advice, support and resources for leisure-time musicians and music groups across the UK.

NEXT CONCERTS

Sunday 14 October 2018 at 4pm at Cornerstone

Coleridge-Taylor
Elgar
Herbert
Dvorak

Ballade in A minor
Cello Concerto (Jacqueline Johnson)
Yesterthoughts (Jacqueline Johnson)
Symphony no 6 in D

February 2019

Glinka
Suk
Tchaikovsky

Ruslan and Ludmilla: Overture
A Fairy Tale – suite for large orchestra
Symphony no 5 in E minor

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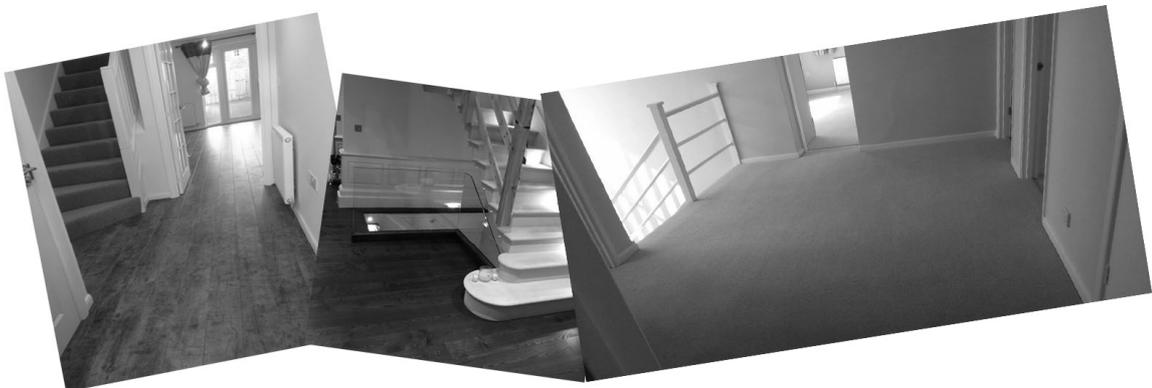
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