

autumn concert

anton bruckner
motets

pyotr il'yich tchaikovsky
serenade for strings

gerald finzi
prelude and romance

franz schubert
mass in g

conductors: benjamin wolf, andrew rochford



Hampstead
Sinfonietta

Royal *f*ree
Music Society

7.30 pm, saturday 5 october, st mark's church, nw1
programme £12

Welcome

Dear audience

Welcome to our autumn concert. As the evenings start to draw in, we hope you will find some warmth in the wonderful evening's music in store for you. As well as Schubert's Mass in G, the choir will be singing motets by Bruckner and the orchestra will be playing Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in G Major and Finzi's Prelude and Romance.

The choir has been busy recruiting new members over the last few months and following a very enjoyable 'come and sing' event at the Royal Free Hospital, we have now increased the number of our regular singers considerably. We are delighted to welcome our new recruits on board! We've also been busy planning our programme for next year and although the programmes are still to be agreed, please note the dates (on the next page) in your diary. If you wish to receive email updates please leave your details at the door and we will add you to our mailing list.

As ever, we would like to thank Ben, our musical director, for his dedication to getting the best out of us and Gill Cracknell, our wonderful accompanist. We also thank the parish of St Marks and Rev. William Gulliford in particular for allowing us to perform in this beautiful venue.

Sally Rochford and Diana Parkinson, RFMS Co-chairs



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programme

bruckner (choir)

motets:

locus iste

os justi

christus factus est

tchaikovsky (hampstead sinfonietta)

serenade for strings in c major, opus 48

interval

finzi (hampstead sinfonietta)

prelude, opus 25

romance, opus 11

schubert (choir with hampstead sinfonietta)

mass in g

soloists:

charlotte-anne shipleigh (soprano)

andrew rochford (tenor)

anthony ordman (bass)

organ:

matthew rickard

the hampstead sinfonietta is led by tim miller

programme notes

by Benjamin Wolf and Andrew Rochford

Locus Iste - Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896)

In 1856, Bruckner, a devout Catholic, undertook a five-year course of study in the traditional techniques of Renaissance counterpoint. In subsequent decades he composed a number of motets which were inspired by these years of study. We will be performing three of these motets tonight. The first, *Locus Iste*, is the simplest of the three. Composed in 1869, it is a gradual for a mass, and it describes the church in which it is sung (*This place is made by God, a sacrament beyond value and beyond reproach*). The texture is primarily chordal, though Bruckner makes use of dramatic dynamics. The initial ten bars are repeated at the end of the motet, though the repetition is elongated to create dramatic tension before the ending.

Os Justi - Anton Bruckner

This Gradual was written in 1879 for the choir of St Florian, a monastery near Linz, and shows most clearly the influence of Renaissance polyphony. The text comes from Psalm 37: *The mouth of the just man will contemplate wisdom, and his tongue will speak justice. The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps will not falter.* The first part of this text is initially set chordally, rising to a dramatic crescendo before falling away. The second part of the text is set to an extended section of imitative polyphony in which voice parts imitate, though do not exactly copy, what has been sung already. This section too climaxes on a fortissimo. The final section of the motet begins quietly. It is similar to the opening, but concludes with a coda and a final alleluia. The final seven bars were added after Bruckner was asked to add extra text to the initial version of this

motet. Nonetheless, the added bars provide a gentle and effective conclusion.

Christus Factus Est - Anton Bruckner

This third motet was written in 1884, and is the most dramatic of the three compositions performed tonight. It is both longer than the other two and also written with a more complex structure (whereas the other two motets are tripartite in form, this motet arguably possesses four separate sections, and there is no reprise of the opening material). It was written as a gradual for Maundy Thursday, and tells of Christ's sacrifice: *Christ was born for us, obedient unto death upon the cross. On account of this God exalted him and gave him his name, a name which is greater than any other.* The motet begins mysteriously, growing towards the moment in which God exalts his son. Nonetheless, in common with Bruckner's other motets, the ending is gentle. Overall, the composition is somewhat chromatic, shifting between different harmonies in unexpected ways, and exploiting expressive dissonance to particularly good effect.

Serenade for Strings in C major, Opus 48 - Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)

- 1. Pezzo in forma di sonatina: Andante non troppo – Allegro moderato**
- 2. Valse: Moderato – Tempo di valse**
- 3. Élégie: Larghetto elegiaco**
- 4. Finale (Tema russo): Andante – Allegro con spirito**

Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* is widely acknowledged as one of the most perfectly formed works for string orchestra. It was written towards the end of 1880 at the same time as the 1812

Overture. Whilst the overture was a commissioned piece, the serenade was written in homage to Mozart who Tchaikovsky idolised. Whilst many of the forms used within the work reflect those of Mozart, the music is pure Tchaikovsky. The term *Serenade* is used to describe many different musical styles and forms but in this instance, it is used to describe a four movement mini-symphony.

The first movement starts with a stunning, slow motif; which is only developed and resolved at the conclusion of the work; the movement then continues in a broadly sonata form with a recapitulation of the opening theme and coda. The second movement, 'Waltz', is well-known in its own right and the third movement, 'Elegy' is pensive rather than melancholic. The **finale** opens with the high floating violin notes that closed 'Elegy'; Tchaikovsky then spins them into a Russian folk tune from his folksong collection of 1869. This neatly accelerates into another folk tune from that collection, which constitutes the main theme of the vivacious *Allegro con spirito*. To close, Tchaikovsky returns to the stately introduction from the Serenade's first movement and as the tempo accelerates again, we discover that this noble theme is none other than the finale's vivacious Russian folksong.

Interval

Prelude, Opus 25

Romance, Opus 11

Gerald Finzi (1901 - 1956)

Gerald Finzi was a London born British composer best known as a song-writer. He had a shy character and his life was scarred by personal tragedy during the Great War. A contemporary of Holst and Vaughan Williams, his musical works are often overshadowed.

The *Prelude* was written in 1929 and intended as the first movement of a chamber symphony which was never completed; the piece being salvaged from Finzi's abandoned works after his death.

Romance was originally composed in 1928 but was later rewritten by the composer when 'his style had relaxed and he had gained practical experience of string orchestras'. It is speculated that Finzi had hoped that the piece would form part of a larger Serenade but this never materialised and the *Romance* was first performed in 1951 and published in 1952.

Finzi's work is not well-known but he was a skilled composer and his works for string orchestra are eloquent and pleasing both to play and hear.

Mass in G Major - Franz Schubert

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Benedictus
6. Agnus Dei

Schubert wrote the first four of his completed mass settings between 1814 and 1816. The Mass in G Major was composed in 1815, and is an intimate setting of the traditional mass text. The individual movements are relatively short, showing the influence of the Viennese *missa brevis* (short mass) tradition, while it is scored simply for strings and organ. As in all of his composition, Schubert wrote quickly, and the surviving autograph manuscripts suggest that he wrote the mass in just six days. Stylistically it is

quite a traditional *missa brevis*, written for the most part homophonically (the choir singing unison rhythms) and in a graceful manner that owes much to the style of late eighteenth-century composers such as Mozart. It also provides interplay between soloists (particularly a soprano soloist, perhaps reflecting Schubert's alleged interest in a local soprano of the time) and chorus.

The opening *Kyrie* is perhaps the most graceful of the individual movements, while the subsequent *Gloria* is more dramatic, alternating sections that praise God with those that seek his mercy. The *Credo* (creed) is set very simply, with a moving bass part that offsets the homophony in the choir. It also features dramatic dynamics, particularly in the sections that describe a belief in the crucifixion ('*crucifixus etiam pro nobis...*') and the resurrection ('*et resurrexit...*'). The opening of the *Sanctus* recalls the French overture style of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the *Osanna in Excelsis* provides a moment of lightness, and is the only section in the mass to be written in imitative counterpoint. As was common in eighteenth-century practice, the *Benedictus* is written for solo singers (a trio) and concludes with a reprise of the *Osanna*. The ending of the mass is a gentle *Agnus Dei* in which first soloists and then choir plead for God's mercy.

2013-14 concert dates

14 december 2013

15 march 2014

14 june 2014

11 october 2014

13 december 2014

conductors

Andrew Rochford

Andrew has a variety of musical interests. At school he studied singing with Geraldine Hackett-Jones and started playing the bassoon at the age of 10 under the tutelage of Charles Cracknell, OBE. He has since had tuition from Gareth Newman (London Mozart Players & Royal Academy of Music, and an old pupil of Charles). Andrew has performed solo concerti with Lawyers Music and the Abbots Langley Symphony Orchestra; and when time permits, he plays with the London Charity Orchestra. After leaving school in Canterbury, Andrew completed a degree in Medical Biochemistry at King's College, London. He then studied Medicine at the Royal Free where he was a founding member of the choir in 1995.

Andrew trained in North London and is now Clinical Lead for Gastroenterology at Newham University Hospital, Barts Health NHS Trust and has a special interest in Intestinal Failure and Clinical Leadership.

Andrew will also be singing solo tenor in tonight's performance.

Benjamin Wolf

Benjamin Wolf works as a conductor, pianist, composer, singer and academic. He is Musical Director of the Zemel Choir, the Wallace Ensemble and the Royal Free Music Society, Choirmaster of Belsize Square Synagogue and a regular conductor of the Quorum Chamber Choir. Performances with the Zemel Choir have included Holocaust memorial services for the Mayor of London, concerts at the South Bank and St John's Smith Square, a broadcast for the BBC's Songs of Praise and tours to Europe, Israel and the USA. Activities with the Wallace Ensemble have included performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, while the professional choir of Belsize Square Synagogue

has been featured on documentaries for BBC radio and television. Forthcoming performances include a Kristallnacht commemoration service at Westminster Abbey and a tour to Berlin.

As composer, he has written music for the concert hall and the stage, including works using the texts and modes of Ancient Greek (performed in London and Oxford), a piano concerto (performed in 2003) and a cello concerto commissioned for the 70th anniversary of Belsize Square synagogue. He has written a number of pieces for the Zemel Choir, while he performed his latest instrumental work, *Cocaine Overture*, at the Chichester Festival in June 2013. As pianist, he works as both accompanist and solo recitalist, while his singing is primarily focussed on performances with his own Jewish barbershop quartet, bOYbershop, for which he has written a number of arrangements and original compositions, including comic songs *The Only Jewish Cowgirl* and *Fifty Shades of Hay*.

Following the award of a PhD in 2010, he has worked as a visiting lecturer at Royal Holloway and Bristol University. In 2011 he was appointed as Lecturer in Music at Regent's University, London, where he teaches both academic courses and runs the newly formed choirs of the Regent's School of Drama, Film and Media. He has given conference papers in the UK and America, and was on the organising team for a conference at the IMR in January 2013 (focussing on music in twentieth-century Britain). He has also worked as a researcher on a Royal Holloway project investigating the use of music to accompany silent films.

Soloists

charlotte-anne shipley (soprano)

Charlotte-Anne read Music at Oxford University, where she held a choral scholarship. Despite applying as an instrumentalist (piano & clarinet), during her three years as an undergraduate she became heavily involved in the choral scene and soon became

sought-after as a soprano soloist with all the major university choirs. Her concert performances have included Britten's *Les Illuminations*, Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate*, *Coronation Mass*, *Great Mass in C* and *Solemn Vespers*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, *Messiah*, & *Alexander's Feast*, Vivaldi's *Laudate Pueri* and *Gloria*, Bruckner's *Te Deum*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Bach's *St John's Passion*, *Beethoven's 9th Symphony*, Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, Vaughan-Williams' *Serenade to Music*, and *Mahler's 8th Symphony*.

Charlotte studied at the *Rome Opera Studio* for two years, where she worked with Italian soprano *Renata Scotto*. Most recently, Charlotte was a finalist in both the *Concorso Lirico Magenta* (Milan), and the *Concorso Montserrat Caballe* in Zaragoza (Spain). Her operatic repertoire includes *Mimi* (La Boheme), *Violetta* (La Traviata), *Dido* (Dido & Aeneas), *Contessa* (la Nozze de Figaro), *Liu* (Turandot), *Donna Anna* (Don Giovanni) and *Pamina* (Die Zauberflute). She has had the pleasure of working with *John Scott*, *Andrew Parrott*, *Bob Chilcott*, *Bruno Aprea* and *John Rutter*, and participating in Masterclasses with *Ann Liebeck*, *Ian Partridge*, *Gidon Saks* and *Emma Kirkby*.

Anthony Ordman (bass)

Anthony is a consultant in Pain Medicine at the Royal Free, and as a medical student was vice president of a previous Royal Free Music Society. Anthony studied voice under Adrian de Peyer and Vivienne Bellos, and his reputation as baritone soloist is growing in North London. He has sung as soloist in the North London Music Festival accompanied by Gill Cracknell, coming first in his Class.

Anthony has performed Mozart's *Coronation* and *Requiem Masses*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* as soloist with this choir and sinfonietta, and is delighted to be singing with the Royal Free Music Society again this evening.

the royal free music society

The Royal Free Music Society is a group of healthcare professionals, local residents and their friends, who meet on a weekly basis in the Royal Free Hospital to stage four concerts a year. We sing a wide variety of music. Performances have included Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Haydn's *Creation*, *Harmoniemesse*, *Heiligmesse* and *Paukenmesse*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Faure's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Grand Mass in C Minor* and *Coronation Mass*, Brahms's *German Requiem*, Elgar's *The Music Makers*, Dvorak's *Mass in D Major*, Rutter's *Magnificat*, Stainer's *Crucifixion*, Gounod's *St Cecilia Mass*, Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and *Chandos Anthems*, and many concerts of light music. We have also premiered work, such as Stephen Gillespie's *Gloria*. For the major works, we are joined by an orchestra of hospital members and their friends: the Hampstead Sinfonietta.

Visit us at www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk
and www.HampsteadSinfonietta.org.uk

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the royal free music society

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RFMS, c/o Wilder Gutterson, 11 Croftdown Road, London NW5 1EL

Our heartfelt thanks to our loyal Patrons: Adrian Cahill, Rev. & Mrs. Devonshire-Jones, Billy Elkins, David Gluckman, and Rev Peter Baker.

