



7.30pm
Saturday
22 March 2025

St Andrew's Church
Linton Road
Oxford

Rossini

William Tell Overture

Tchaikovsky

Romeo & Juliet Fantasy Overture

Wagner (*arr. Mark Prowen*)

Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral

Britten

Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Conductor: Caroline Hobbs-Smith • Leader: Iona Azzopardi

Registered Charity No. 1144327

Introduction

The Thames Vale Youth Orchestra warmly welcomes you to the St Andrew's Church, for this concert, which brings you the poise and grandeur of Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral by Wagner, the drama of Rossini's William Tell Overture, the orchestral brilliance and virtuosity of Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, and the romanticism and tragedy of Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Overture.

The Trustees of the TVYO wish to express our gratitude to Dr Janine Aron and Professor John Muellbauer, whose generous donation to the Trust in 2024-25 has enabled the purchase of a complete set of new music stands for the orchestra, which are being used in performance for the first time this evening. We also wish to thank all the parents and family members who are present this evening for your time and commitment in supporting and encouraging the members of the orchestra, without which this concert would not have been possible.

We hope you enjoy the concert, and will share in a sense of pride in what the orchestra have achieved this term, in preparing for this exciting and challenging programme.

Tim Softley, Chair TVYO Trust (from January 2025).



William Tell Overture

Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)

Gioachino Rossini's William Tell Overture (1829), one of the most famous overtures in the orchestral repertoire, was originally composed as the dramatic introduction to his final opera, Guillaume Tell. The overture is a musical journey in four distinct sections, each vividly depicting scenes of nature and heroism.

The opening Dawn features a lyrical five cello solo, evoking the serene Swiss Alps at sunrise. This is followed by the Storm, a powerful and dramatic section with thundering timpani, trombones and rapid string passages capturing the fury of nature. The Ranz des Vaches (Call to the Cows) offers a pastoral respite, with a gentle melody played by the cor anglais and flute, symbolising the peaceful life of Swiss shepherds.

The overture culminates in the exhilarating Finale, famously known as the March of the Swiss Soldiers. Marked by rapid galloping rhythms and triumphant brass fanfares, this section represents the victorious charge of the Swiss forces against Austrian oppressors. Popularised in film, television, and notably as the theme for *The Lone Ranger*, the William Tell Overture is a masterpiece of orchestral storytelling.



Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Composed in 1869 and revised in 1870 and 1880, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* is a powerful orchestral work inspired by Shakespeare's tragic love story. While not a literal retelling, Tchaikovsky masterfully captures the drama, passion, and fate of the star-crossed lovers through his expressive orchestration and rich melodies.

The overture begins with a solemn and foreboding introduction, representing Friar Laurence. The slow, chorale-like harmonies in the woodwinds and strings suggest wisdom and religious devotion, but also foreshadow the inevitable tragedy. This is followed by the violent conflict theme, a furious, driving motif with aggressive rhythms and dramatic orchestral outbursts, vividly portraying the deadly feud between the Montagues and Capulets.

At the heart of the overture lies the famous love theme, one of Tchaikovsky's most passionate and lyrical melodies. Sweeping and deeply expressive, it embodies the romance and yearning between Romeo and Juliet, soaring through the orchestra in lush harmonies. However, this love is ultimately doomed, the music building to a tragic climax and dramatic coda where the themes return in a sorrowful and fateful resolution, symbolising the lovers' demise.





An 1870 oil painting by Ford Madox Brown depicting Romeo and Juliet's famous balcony scene

The Orchestra

Violin 1

Iona Azzopardi

Karsten Cheung

Crystal Luo

Rebecca Mason

Oliver Oross

Samrakshini Ramesh

Nikhil Tennant

Branden Wong

Andrey Yakovlev

Misha Yakovlev

Violin 2

Harry Bolton

Evie Fan-Chiang

Brian Chu

Thérèse Kelly

Sam Lee

Keira Mason

Rose Nichols

Sumadhyuti Ramesh

Tamara Smythe

Ashwin Tennant *

Xinyi Xu

Bass

Leo Gonzalez-Merckx

Samuel Price

Charlotte Wilson

Viola

Malaika Adlung

Elizabeth Dallosso *

Eleanor Dalton

Thomas Howarth

Cello

Rebecca Bales

Robbie Blundel

Alice Bolton

Martha Bolton

Mia Fan-Chiang

Adrian Chiu

Chi Hoi Chow

Vincent Law

Eric Liu

Alastair Mucklow

Daniel Phillips

Ursula Smith

Shaun Wang

Kayden Wong

Tilly Wyn-Jones

Percussion

Finley Glaister

Nyzal Gurung

Edmund Kimber

Katharina Pongratz

Oboe

Aspen Chamberlin
Joshua Price
Alexander Regardsoe
Irfan Sampurno
Tommy Vereker

Cor Anglais

Irfan Sampurno
Tommy Vereker

Flute

Florence Bolton
Leo Chek
Willow Martin
Sahana Vaidyanathan
Mia Xie
Simone Yu

Piccolo

Leo Chek

Bassoon

Erin Bellcourt
Amelia Bruce
Anna Zlodre

Harp

Alexa Lee

Clarinet

Bethan Platt
Toby Price
Annie Shaw
Jerry Wong

Trombone

Isaac Poyton
James Rayment
Arthur Robertson
Alex Somerville
Miles Treavis

Trumpet

Gabriel Bosse Chitty
Loz Coles
Joshua Crisp
Tabitha Goyder
Lachlan Keene

Horn

Simon Body
Sue Cooke *
Akira Johnston
Laurence Maggs

Tuba

Felix Somerville

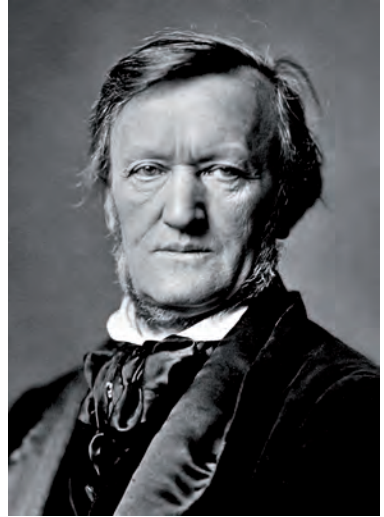
* Guest player

Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral

(arr Mark Prowen)

Richard Wagner (1813 – 1883)

Taken from Act II of Wagner's opera Lohengrin (1850), Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral is a majestic and reverent orchestral procession that accompanies Elsa of Brabant as she prepares to marry the mysterious knight Lohengrin. The scene is one of solemn devotion and quiet triumph, filled with an air of sacred anticipation.



The music begins softly with a noble, hymn-like melody in the winds, gradually building as brass and strings join, creating an atmosphere of growing reverence. The melody swells in intensity, mirroring Elsa's deep emotions as she approaches the cathedral. Wagner's signature use of orchestral layering and harmonic and textural opulence gives the procession a sense of grandeur and inevitability.

As the piece progresses, the orchestration expands, with triumphant brass fanfares and soaring string lines, evoking both the grandeur of the occasion and the overwhelming sense of destiny. The climax is a magnificent outpouring of sound, with the full orchestra resplendent in its majesty.

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

Composed in 1945, Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Op. 34 was originally created for an educational documentary, *Instruments of the Orchestra*, with a narrator and orchestra introducing listeners to the different sections of the orchestra in a brilliant set of variations and a grand fugue.



Britten based the work on a theme by the 17th-century composer Henry Purcell. The piece opens with a bold statement of Purcell's theme played by the full orchestra, followed by four main themes that highlight each instrument family. The woodwinds, strings, brass, and percussion each take turns showcasing their unique tone colours and techniques.

This is followed by a set of highly virtuosic variations, each demonstrating the individual instruments and wide range of moods and textures, from the delicate flutes and clarinets to the rich, sonorous strings and the majestic brass. The percussion section, often overlooked in orchestral music, gets its moment to shine with lively and dramatic rhythms. The work concludes with an exhilarating fugue, where each instrument enters in rapid succession, building to a thrilling and triumphant restatement of Purcell's theme.

With its masterful orchestration and engaging structure, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* remains a beloved staple of concert halls and an essential introduction to orchestral music for audiences of all ages. Britten also arranged a concert performance version of the work, without narration, which the orchestra will be playing this evening.

About TVYO

Thames Vale Youth Orchestra welcomes talented and committed young musicians in full-time school attendance, and offers them the opportunity to work together regularly, studying and performing large-scale orchestral works at the highest possible standard and in an enjoyable atmosphere.

The Orchestra's origins lie in the Abingdon Holiday Orchestra Christmas courses started by Frances Kitching in the late 1950s. By 1969 these had led to the foundation of the North Berks Youth Orchestra, and the orchestra took its present name in 1974. Today it is an independent youth orchestra with players coming from schools in both the state and independent sector. Several recent members have played in the National Children's Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra. Amongst former orchestra members, who have moved on to distinguished careers, are the conductors Daniel Harding and Sian Edwards.

Rehearsals take place on term-time Monday evenings at Larkmead School, Abingdon, from September to May. A major feature of the orchestra's work is the period of sectional tuition with specialist instrumental tutors at the start of most rehearsals. The players are usually aged 12 – 18 in full time education, and entrance is by audition. Performances are given twice a year and the concerts feature the Orchestra's wide repertoire.

TVYO is managed by the Thames Vale Youth Orchestra Trust, a Registered Charity, No.1144327. For further information about the Trust please visit our website: www.tvyo.org.uk



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Directors & Tutors

Since its foundation, the Thames Vale Youth Orchestra has benefitted from the services of distinguished local musicians as its Musical Directors and Instrumental Tutors. Their enthusiasm and support is gratefully acknowledged here.

Musical Directors

Antony le Fleming: 1969 – 1973

Bryan Kelly: 1973 – 1975

Robert Secret: 1975 – 1976

John Melvin: 1976 – 1992

Michael Stinton: 1992-2023

Caroline Hobbs-Smith: 2023-

Instrumental Tutors

Violin: Philip Augar

Violin: Caroline Churchill

Viola: Rachel Byrt

Cello: Valerie Findlay

Double Bass: Stuart Murray

Woodwind: Victoria Lewis

Horn: Sue Cooke

Brass: Nigel Somerville

Percussion: Chris Hadland

Harp: Jenny Hill

How to join us

To become part of this great orchestra you need to play to at least Grade 5 standard, and we ask you to undertake a short audition. The audition process is very straightforward: we would like you to perform two short contrasting pieces that you have prepared in advance, and we ask you to do a short piece of sight-reading. String players may also be asked to play some scales. An accompanist will be available to support you – just remember to bring the piano music with you. Auditions to join the orchestra are held in June although we are keen to hear from potential member at any time of the year and auditions can be provided by video. Interested players should contact the Admissions Secretary, Carolyn King, at carolyn2king@btinternet.com or on 01235 522774. Information is also on the website: www.tvyo.org.uk

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