

Nicholas Bromilow is a born-and-bred Bristolian, and was a singer from a young age. At the age of 7, he took up the piano, and 10 the French horn. He made his debut as a conductor at the age of 18 in 2009, with a complete performance of Handel's 'Messiah'.

He started his conducting studies at the University of Southampton with Robin Browning and he continues to study privately with Jason Thornton from the Bath Philharmonia. Other tutors include Sian Edwards (Royal Academy of Music), Neil Thompson (Royal College of Music), John Farrer (Bakersfield Orchestra) and George Hurst (Bournemouth Sinfonietta). After graduating, Nicholas moved back to Bristol, his current Musical Directorships include the Redland Green Choir, Long Ashton Orchestra, Burnham & Highbridge Choral Society and West Mendip Orchestra. Nicholas is a co-founder of the Bristol-based 'Insight Ensemble' whose aim is to make classical musical accessible to all.

Lisa Orton began playing the violin at the age of eight, going on to study with Ralph Holmes at the Royal Academy of Music. After working with both the Welsh National Opera and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras, she joined the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House where she played for 30 years until her retirement. Since then she has enjoyed working with pianist Marianne Szurma as the Lima Duo and, since moving to Bristol, with the Bristol Chamber Orchestra. She is also currently leader of the Portishead Sinfonia.

Alison Bell began studying singing whilst a student at Cambridge University and subsequently won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, where she studied with Yvonne Minton. Her repertoire as an oratorio soloist includes St Matthew Passion, A Child of Our Time, Messiah, Verdi's Requiem, Duruflé's Requiem and Elgar's The Music Makers and The Dream of Gerontius. She has appeared as soloist at Malvern Festival, Edinburgh Festival, at the Paris Festival D'Automne, Salzburg Festival and with the Danish Symphony Orchestra in Copenhagen. Her many roles in opera and operetta include Dido (Dido and Aeneas), Suzuki (Madama Butterfly), Buttercup in HMS Pinafore and Katisha in The Mikado, for which she received critical acclaim in the national press. Since moving to the South West, she has given recitals in and around Bristol and appeared as soloist in Elgar's Sea Pictures with Frome Symphony Orchestra and with the West Mendip Orchestra, Messiah with Bristol Millennium Orchestra, Mozart's Requiem in the Lord Mayor's Chapel, Bristol, Bach's Magnificat with Portishead Choral Society and with Bristol Cabot Choir, Haydn's Paukenmesse, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle and Messiah with Fairford Choral Society.

The **Bristol Chamber Orchestra**, founded in 1963, has several professionally qualified players amongst its members, and gives five or six public concerts a year, occasionally combining with other instrumentalists to perform concertos and chamber symphonies.

Violins: Lisa Orton, Sarah Beetham, Susan Burdock, Wendy Gillman, Jenny Heathcote, Trevor Jennings, Bob Pinniger, Morven Ringrose, Celia Skrine, Erica Wright

Violas: Vanessa Pinniger, Edna Cause, Catharine Deam, David Jewell, Joan Sidgreaves.

Cellos: Anne Tyler, Cathy Lambert, Carolyn Little, Catherine Tayler, David Trott

Double bass: Martin Sanders

Next concerts of Bristol Chamber Orchestra:

24th November 2018 Trinity Henleaze United Reformed Church, Bristol

5th April 2019 St Mary Magdalene Church, Bristol

BRISTOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Guest Conductor: Nicholas Bromilow

Leader: Lisa Orton

Soloist: Alison Bell

CONCERT PROGRAMME

Saturday 30th June 2018 7:30pm

Frenchay Parish Church,
Bristol

Programme £1.00

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Holberg Suite op. 40

Praeludium (Allegro vivace) – Sarabande (Andante) – Gavotte (Allegretto) – Air (Andante religioso) – Rigaudon (Allegro con brio)

Grieg's great-grandfather Greig was a Scot who changed the spelling of his surname on emigrating to Norway in 1779. This lovely suite, "Fra Holbergs Tid" ("From Holberg's time"), commemorated the bicentenary of the birth of Ludvig Holberg in 1684, Norway's celebrated writer of social comedies à la Molière. Subtitled "Suite in olden style", it is a sequence of pastiche courtly dances in a variety of moods and tempi.

Grieg became a great favourite in England, where he was awarded an honorary degree by Cambridge University along with Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky in 1894. An early photograph shows his diminutive figure solemnly clad in doctoral cap and gown.

"Molly on the Shore"**Percy Grainger (1882-1961)**

Australian Percy Grainger spent much of his life in Europe or the US. He achieved fame as a fine pianist as well as composer. Possessed of good looks, originality and great personal charm, he became firm friends with, among others, Delius and Grieg. His lighter compositions are inspired by folk music, of which he was an avid collector, but the fact that the jaunty "Country Gardens" became his best-loved piece rather annoyed him, since he had also written a quantity of serious music.

"Molly" is variations on an Irish reel. It contains quirky tempo indications such as "louden hugely bit by bit" instead of the conventional Italian "poco a poco cresc."

Two Waltzes from op. 54**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Opus 54 consists of eight waltzes for piano of which we are playing nos. 1 and 4 in his arrangement for strings. His melodic inspiration and love of the musical traditions of his native Bohemia came out very strongly in his dances but also in his beautifully crafted symphonies, chamber music, operas and songs.

Dvořák's surprising passions, apart from beer, were pigeons and railway engines. "He's rather an odd chap," said his great friend Brahms, "but his heart is in the right place."

Exsultate, jubilate K165**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

Mozart wrote this solo motet in Milan in 1773 at the age of 17 for Venanzio Rauzzini, the leading example of that intriguing and now mercifully extinct species, the castrato (adult male soprano), whom he had heard in Vienna in 1767. Rauzzini was also an eminent teacher of singing who came to London before settling permanently in Bath, where one of his pupils was Mozart's friend, the English soprano Nancy Storace, the original Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The work is in the form of a solo cantata in three movements in Latin, the anonymous text being a jubilant affirmation of religious faith. The *Allegro* final movement is the famous and exuberantly showy *Alleluia*.

I n t e r v a l

Symphony no. 1

Allegro – Andante dolce – Vivace

Boyce was born and died in London. As a boy he was a chorister at St. Paul's cathedral and he later became known as a composer of masques and oratorios. He rose to become appointed Master of the King's Musick, a role of greater distinction than it is now. Increasing deafness forced him to cease public performing, but he devoted himself to forming a collection called *English Cathedral Music* which was used for over a century.

The symphony we play tonight was performed at the recent Royal Wedding, where all the music played was by English composers.

"Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess***George Gershwin (1898-1937)**

American-born Gershwin was the son of Russian Jewish immigrants whose real surname was Gershwitz. His distinctive personal style blends elements of jazz and native folk music with classicism and an outstanding melodic gift. As well as the much-loved *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) for piano and orchestra, he left a wealth of enduringly popular songs, including "Swanee" and many to witty, wistful or worldly-wise lyrics by his brother Ira, such as "Nice work if you can get it" or "The way you look tonight".

The opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935) is a story of love and jealousies amongst the poor African-American community; the lullaby 'Summertime' occurs right at the beginning. Gershwin once said "True music must reflect the thought and aspirations of the people and time. My people are Americans. My time is now."

Serenade for Strings op. 20**Edward Elgar (1857-1934)**

Allegro piacevole – Larghetto - Allegretto

Elgar became a practising musician early on but was largely self-taught as a composer. His great breakthrough to fame came with the *Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)* in 1899. His great choral setting of a Newman poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, to a commission for the 1900 Birmingham Festival, was not well received in Britain, but in Germany Richard Strauss hailed it as a masterpiece and from then on Elgar became famous on the Continent too. He was equally gifted at writing well-crafted miniatures such as this charming Serenade. Elgar spent much of his life in his native Worcester, from where the extensive and fascinating "Elgar route" makes a delightful excursion.

Radetzky March**Johann Strauss I (1804-1849)**

At a time when Vienna was beset by political dangers, it found that the safest outlets for its notorious urge to enjoy itself lay in music and dance, and Strauss was just the person to satisfy this need. He provided lively waltzes and other dance music, blazing the trail for those of his son, Johann Strauss II, the "Waltz King", but he is remembered above all for the Radetzky March, composed in 1848 to celebrate Austria's victory over Italy under Field-Marshal Radetzky. Written, it is said, in just two weeks, this irresistibly catchy march was enough to ensure Strauss's immediate and immortal fame.

Programme notes © Celia Skrine