

# *Bedfordshire Orchestral Society & Bedford Choral Society*

**2019/20 Concert Season**







Baroness Barbara Young,  
President of Bedfordshire  
Orchestral Society



Sir Samuel Whitbread,  
President of Bedford  
Choral Society

Photograph by Bob John

## Welcome

We welcome you to the 2019/20 season of concerts by the Bedford Choral Society and Bedfordshire Orchestral Society. As always we aim to showcase an attractive, varied and exciting programme, and this season is no exception. The opening concert of the season features our local cellist Felicity Gibson as soloist in Saint-Saëns *cello concerto*, followed by the Bedford Sinfonia performing one of Mozart's great final symphonies. In November Bedford Choral Society present their first concert of the season accompanied by the Bedfordshire Symphony Orchestra. They will perform Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, considered by many as his greatest work; we hope when you hear it you will agree. Then comes the popular biennial Christmas Carol Concert performed by the Choral Society with Bedford Town Band.

The New Year begins with a wonderful programme in the Corn Exchange welcoming back Jaroslav Nadrzycki to play the dazzling violin concerto by Paganini - a concert not to be missed. The next concert displays the brilliance of Rimsky-Korsakov and the depth of Tchaikovsky. Bedford Choral Society then invite you to hear *The Seasons* by Haydn. Not as well-known as *The Creation* but equally full of splendid music by the master composer of the eighteenth century.

Weber, Chopin, Brahms, Parry, Sibelius and Gounod conclude the season with the Symphony Orchestra performing in May and the Choral Society in June. We hope you will find much to enthuse you this season and encourage you to come to many of the concerts.

# Bedford Choral Society



Formed in 1867 Bedford Choral Society is the 7th oldest Choral Society in the country. We celebrated our 150th Anniversary with a concert on 30 April 2017,

exactly 150 years to the day since the first ever concert by the Choral Society. We perform a varied repertoire three or four times a year, usually in Bedford's Corn Exchange. We also provide the choir for Bedford's Proms in the Park in early August. We currently have approximately 140 members. Our Musical Director is Ian Smith (pictured above), our Guest Conductor Michael Rose and our Assistant Chorus Master Tim Grant-Jones.

We rehearse on Monday evenings at St. Gregory's School, Biddenham Turn, Bedford. We always welcome new singers. If you would like to sing with us or support us by becoming a 'Friend of the Society', please email [membership@bedfordchoralsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@bedfordchoralsociety.org.uk) for further information.

We are grateful to our sponsors The Harpur Trust and the support we have had from the Wixamtree Trust.



## *The Bedford Sinfonia*

The widely acclaimed performing standard of this orchestra is the result of the talent and enthusiasm of its members and the skilled direction of its founder, Michael Rose. Membership is by invitation. It specialises in programming chamber orchestra works, wind ensemble and string orchestra items and a healthy selection of 20th century pieces.

## *Bedfordshire Symphony Orchestra*

The BSO, also conducted by Michael Rose, is a larger group of 80-90 local players of all ages, including talented young musicians. Its programme is diverse and includes major symphonies and concertos. It rehearses in Bedford every Wednesday evening during term time. Those interested in playing should contact the Orchestra Manager at [manager@bedfordsymphony.com](mailto:manager@bedfordsymphony.com).

## *Friends of the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society*

Over many years the Society has been able to thrive by generous donations and bequests from audience members and members of the Society. New contributions are always needed and most gratefully appreciated.

The Society benefits from tireless unpaid work from some 20 members of both Orchestras to organise the endless arrangements for rehearsals, performances, membership, accounting, websites, social media and secretarial, for which we are all very grateful and without which the running of the Society would be unaffordable.

If you are interested in making a contribution no matter how small, or have ideas or contacts for potential sponsors, or wish to place an advert in future programmes, then please contact our Treasurer, Mark Jeffery at [bos.treasurer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bos.treasurer@hotmail.co.uk)

## *Major Supporters of the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society*

**The Society would like to thank:**

**The Harpur Trust** for a a three-year grant to help the Society to build larger audiences and therefore revenues, and encourage students in their playing, music studies, listening and enjoyment.

**The Gale Family Trust** for its generous support.

**The Wixamtree Trust** for its generous grant.

**The Bedford Borough Council** for its support in the form of discretionary grants.



# Pearls from Europe

**Sat 5 October 2019 - 7.30pm**

St Paul's Church, Bedford

**Soloist** *Felicity Gibson (cello)*

**Conductor** *Michael Rose*

**Arriaga** Symphony in D  
**Saint-Saëns** Cello Concerto No.1

**Delius** On hearing the first cuckoo  
in Spring

**Mozart** Symphony No.39



Welcome to our first concert of the season. To enhance the enjoyment, our concert includes works by four composers of different European nationalities.

One highlight will surely be the Saint-Saëns first cello concerto, a beautifully written work, to be played by our gifted cellist leader, Felicity Gibson. We have a chance to hear a short, fresh and beguiling symphony by the undeniably talented Spanish composer Arriaga, who sadly died very young while studying at the Paris Conservatoire. And then Mozart's symphony No.39 - the first of his final three symphonies, all written during the summer of 1788. It is quite likely that Mozart never heard these towering masterpieces, the culmination of his symphonic output - we are considerably more fortunate.



Adults £13

Concessions £12

Children/Students £5

# Dream of Gerontius

**Sat 16 November 2019 - 7.30pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Soloists**

*Peter Hoare (tenor)*

*Alison Kettlewell (contralto)*

*Ben Bevan (bass)*

**Conductor** *Michael Rose*

"This is the best of me" was Elgar's matter-of-fact statement about his oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*. Elgar sets words by Cardinal Newman which describe Gerontius facing death and subsequently starting his journey to eternity. The music follows the events: soft and prayerful as we watch over the dying man, quiet and ethereal as the angel leads him into the unknown, snarling and angry as they pass the demons' lair. It builds to a massive explosion of sound as he meets his Lord and as he is taken away to prepare for heaven we hear Elgar's sublime setting of the hymn 'Praise to the holiest in the height' and the angel's farewell.

Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £5





## *Christmas Carols and other favourites*

**Sat 14 December 2019 - 7.00pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Bedford Choral Society**

**Bedford Town Band**

**Conductor Ian Smith**

This biennial event is always an excellent way to kick-start your Christmas celebrations. The programme contains a mixture of old and new carols for the choir and band and also some favourites for the audience to join in with the singing. Bedford Town Band will also perform some items of their own which always delight the audience!

## *Music to delight and astound*

**Sat 25 January 2020 - 7.30pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Soloist Jaroslav Nadrzycki (violin)**

**Conductor Michael Rose**

**Rossini Overture: The Thieving Magpie**

**Paganini Violin Concerto No. 1**

**Dvorak Symphony No. 9 'New World'**

Rossini's opera *The Thieving Magpie* has a lively overture which is a Rossini favourite and a great way to start a concert. The story centres around a magpie who fancies the silver spoon – you can guess the rest! Then we say a big "Hello" again to Jaroslav Nadrzycki, Bedford's favourite virtuoso of the violin. This time he has chosen to treat us to his amazing performance of Paganini's equally amazing and virtuosic *Violin Concerto No. 1*. The culmination of the concert is Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. Dvorak had accepted the post of Director of the new Conservatory of Music in New York and this symphony was a wonderful result of the new set-up. The symphony has everything – beautiful melodies, drama, excitement, vigour, brilliance, pathos, all put together with enormous skill and musicianship. Don't miss this concert!



Balcony/Tier £12, Flat £10

Concessions £11/£9

Children/Students FREE



Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £5

# Celebrating Tchaikovsky

**Sat 29 February 2020 - 7.30pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Soloist** Mengyang Pang (piano)

**Conductor** Michael Rose

**Rimsky-Korsakov** Capriccio Espagnole

**Tchaikovsky** Piano Concerto No.1

**Tchaikovsky** Symphony No.4



Rimsky-Korsakov wrote "My intention was that the *Capriccio* should glitter with the virtuosity of its orchestral colour, and it would seem that I was not mistaken". Its first performance in St Petersburg was an

immediate success, with many instruments having their special solo moments. Then to Tchaikovsky with his magnificent *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Our soloist, Mengyang Pang, is a great match for this brilliant work, and we are delighted to welcome her again to Bedford. Still Tchaikovsky, but a very different work follows. In 1876 he saw Bizet's opera *Carmen*, and his reaction confirmed him in his belief that, as with the opera characters, Fate was dictating his life. He finally came to terms with his feelings, and produced the 4th symphony – certainly another masterpiece, but much of it restless and foreboding.



Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £5

# The Seasons

**Sat 21 March 2020 - 7.30pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Soloists**

Rachel Nicholls (soprano)

Joel Williams (tenor)

Andrew Slater (bass)

**Conductor** Ian Smith

**Hadyn** The Seasons

Haydn wrote four major Oratorios the best known of which is, of course, *The Creation*. However, *The Seasons*, the last to be written three years after *The Creation*, contains equally memorable music. The three soloists represent archetypal country folk and each season is described in a series of recitatives, arias and choruses. Some especially lyrical passages are the Choral Prayer for a bountiful harvest, the gentle nightfall that follows the storm and a beautiful reflection on Winter.

The work is filled with the "tone-painting" that also characterized *The Creation*; a ploughman whistles as he works (whistling the well-known theme from Haydn's own *Surprise Symphony*), a bird shot by a hunter falls from the sky, there is a sunrise and much merry-making.

If you have not heard this work before, or have not heard it for a while, then you will not be disappointed!



Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £6

# Great Romantics

**Sat 16 May 2020 - 7.30pm**

Bedford School Main Hall

**Soloist** Robert Thompson (*piano*)

**Conductor** Michael Rose

**Weber** Overture: Oberon

**Chopin** Piano Concerto No.2

**Brahms** Symphony No.1

Summoning us to this concert is a magic horn-call – the opening phrase of Weber's Overture to his opera *Oberon*. We should obey the call, enjoy the overture and see what's next. Chopin's delightful *Piano Concerto No. 2* is played by the impressive pianist Robert Thompson, well-known to Bedford School. After the interval comes Brahms' 1st Symphony. A severe self-critic and always feeling that Beethoven was watching in the wings it took Brahms from 1855 to 1876 to compose this symphony. It was worth the wait! It opens with a long crescendo reaching a dramatic climax, has a thoughtful moment and takes the final plunge into the first Allegro. There are struggles and tensions, a great wealth of themes, excitement and finally a positive end, all gloom displayed in dazzling light.



Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £5

# *A Summer Celebration*

**Sat 13 June 2020 - 7.30pm**

Bedford Corn Exchange

**Conductor** *Paul Searle-Barnes*

**Parry** *Blest Pair of Sirens*

**Sibelius** *King Christian II Suite*

**Gounod** *St Cecilia Mass*

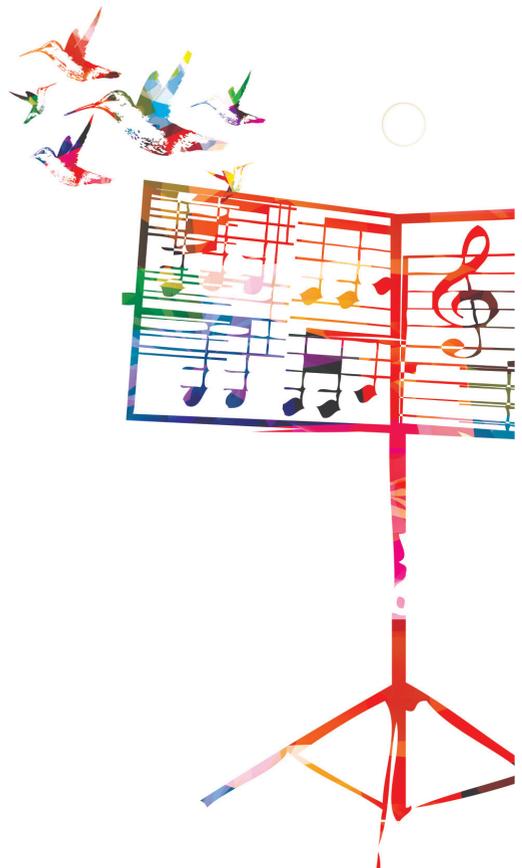
We welcome Paul Searle-Barnes to conduct this Summer Concert which contains one of the most popular works written by the great English composer C. Hubert H. Parry namely *Blest Pair of Sirens*. The work was frequently performed in the Twentieth Century, when it was written, and has rightly retained its initial popularity. To complement this work the choir will be singing Gounod's ever popular *St Cecilia Mass*. This early work of Gounod's immediately provides clear evidence of his later mature style. Saint-Saens wrote at the time: "The appearance of the *Messe Saint-Cecile* caused a kind of shock. This simplicity, this grandeur, the serene light which rose before the musical world like a breaking dawn, troubled people enormously. .... at first they were dazzled, then charmed, then conquered." He regarded this as one of Gounod's best works. To complete the programme the orchestra will play the incidental music *King Christian II Suite* by Sibelius. Again foreshadowing later works by the composer you will hear hints of Sibelius' *1st Symphony*.

# *Sinfonia 'Out and About'*

**Sun 5 & 12 July 2020 - 3.00pm**

Members of the Sinfonia will be taking the opportunity to perform a programme of French music in collaboration with Cantamus Choir. Works by Rameau and Lully, amongst others, will be performed at Blunham Church on Sunday 5 July and Houghton Conquest on Sunday 12 July.

Full details of the programme will follow on the BSO website, on our Facebook page and other publicity.



Balcony/Tier £16 Flat £13

Concessions £15/£12

Children/Students £6



The Bedfordshire Orchestral Society and the Bedford Choral Society wish to express their grateful thanks to all those Charitable Trusts, Commercial Sponsors, Friends and Advertisers for their financial support.

### *Supporters In Kind*

**Steve Monico Limited**, Chartered Accountants, who advise and audit the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society's accounts and Charity Commission filings.

**Jet the Dog**, who design programmes and posters for the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society.

**White Hart Press**, who produce programmes, posters and leaflets for the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society.

**Kall Kwik**, for publicity for Bedford Choral Society.

**Mark Bowler**, who supplied photography for the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society.

**Kevin Lines**, who supplied photography for the Bedford Choral Society.

# Booking Information

Tickets are available from:



**01234 718044**

The Central Box Office, Harpur Suite,  
Harpur Square, Bedford, MK40 1LE

Prices £5 - £16 (concessions available)

All major credit / debit cards accepted.

24 hour reservations and booking at  
[www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk](http://www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk)



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