

BEDFORD SINFONIA

Saturday 16 January 2027

Bedford School, Bedford, 7:30pm

Conductor: Ian Smith

Soloist: Charlie Lovell-Jones, violin

Programme

Symphony No. 35 in D Major (Haffner), K.385

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756 – 1791)

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Menuetto and Trio

Finale – Presto

In 1781 Mozart thankfully left Salzburg, and it was a strange twist of irony that his first symphony after leaving should arise from a commission from that same town. Haffner, a prominent Salzburg family, one of whose members had recently served as burgomaster, asked Mozart to compose a serenade to celebrate their ennoblement. The piece was to be on the same lines as the one that he had written for Elizabeth Haffner's wedding in 1776. Mozart duly wrote the serenade in great haste because his own wedding was approaching, but later altered it, leaving out the march and the first minuet in order to develop the 'Haffner' Symphony. The whole work is a joyous outpouring of Mozart's genius.

The festive brilliance of the first movement reflects the celebratory origins of the work, and is unusual in being based on a single, jaunty subject, which is melodically unpromising, but worked on by the composer with the utmost technical skill. The wide leaps of the opening rhythmic motif dominate the course of the movement.

This is followed by a relaxed and easy flowing second movement *Andante*, which provides a welcome relief with its slow, graceful melodies announced by the woodwind section. The movement is in an abridged sonata form, and instead of a development, a brief chorale-like passage is presented by the woodwinds.

The D major *Menuetto* and *Trio* provides a bright change of atmosphere from the previous slow, serious *Andante* movement. There is a constant tug between two main chords – the tonic and dominant keys. In addition, the dynamics for the whole menuetto is marked *forte*, except where chords IV and VI appear. These sections are marked *piano*, and the change produces a pleasant contrast, both melodically and dynamically.

The bustling, witty last movement is labelled *Presto*, and the composer wrote 'the first movement must be played with great fire, and the last as fast as possible.' It is permeated with silences and rapid dynamic shifts, and with a typically Mozartean joke, the rondo theme is approached differently for each of its appearances.

Programme notes: John McLeod, William Gould

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto, leading to
Rondo

Composed in 1806 this concerto bears a dedication to Clement, the violinist at the first performance, with a plea for his 'clemency'. Whether or not Beethoven received this clemency is a matter for conjecture if the circumstances of the first performance are considered. The work was divided into two parts, the first movement being played in the first half of the concert, and the remaining two in the second half. Between these was interpolated, among other items, a sonata written by Clement himself to be performed on one string with the violin held upside down!

The opening of the *Allegro* is one of the most striking in all the concerto repertoire. The tympani taps out a four-note rhythmic motif, which, like the opening motif of the fifth symphony, is to dominate the whole movement. This leads to the first subject on woodwind with tympani accompaniment. After a subsidiary theme based on the scale of D major, the orchestra bursts in with the chord of B flat, which serves to pave the way for the second subject in D major on the woodwind, accompanied by the drum motif. The orchestral sound dies down to a quiet string chord heralding the first entry of the solo violin. The rest of the movement is now based on the material already heard, with the emphasis very much on the solo violin, which has very little rest throughout this extremely long movement. After the usual cadenza, the coda begins very quietly, with the soloist playing the second subject theme over pizzicato strings. In a short time however, the music crescendos to a rousing conclusion.

The second movement, in G major, is described by Tovey as 'one of the three cases of sublime inaction achieved by Beethoven'. The other two he quotes as being the slow movements of the *Sonata Appassionata* and the Op. 97 Trio. This movement is a set of variations with elements of a rondo form but with no change of key (Tovey's 'sublime inaction').

The final *Rondo* opens with one of Beethoven's best-known tunes, and follows a standard rondo form, with the second subject in A major and a middle episode in G minor. After what should be the theme's last entry, there is a pause and a cadenza followed by an eighty-bar coda based on the finale theme and one of the transition themes. The violin, of course, manages to get in the last word!

Programme notes: Ben Brickman

Soloist: **Charlie Lovell-Jones** – Violin

Welsh violinist Charlie Lovell-Jones (b.1999) has been recognised as one of the most promising international soloists of his generation. Since his sold-out Royal Festival Hall debut aged fifteen, Charlie has appeared as soloist with orchestras across the UK and beyond, appeared in live radio broadcasts and has worked with many eminent conductors. Charlie is also a Beare's International Violin Society Artist.

In 2025, Charlie featured as concerto soloist on two releases from Chandos Records. His recordings of William Walton's Violin Concerto (1939) with John Wilson and the Sinfonia of

London, and Ruth Gipps' Violin Concerto (1943) with Rumon Gamba and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, received widespread critical acclaim. Gramophone Magazine, BBC Music Magazine, The Strad Magazine, The Financial Times, and BBC Radio 3 were among the reviewers to praise Charlie's technical virtuosity, sound quality, and musical voice.

Charlie was the youngest-ever member of the John Wilson Orchestra and has since led Wilson's multi-award-winning Sinfonia of London (SoL) on many occasions - at the BBC Proms, on tour, and on many recordings. He has also been invited as guest concertmaster with orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Competition successes include The Gregynnog Young Musician Competition (winner, 2013), BBC Young Musician (category finalist, 2016), The Sendai International Music Competition (2019), Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition (2020), The International Joseph Joachim Violin Competition (2021), and the Sibelius International Violin Competition (2025). At 16, Charlie became the youngest-ever person to receive the Under-25 Composers' Medal at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Wales, where he has also won first prize in solo piano, instrumental duo, chamber, orchestral, vocal ensemble, choral, and dramatic competitions.

Charlie read Music at the University of Oxford where he was a Christ Church Prize Scholar and a William Ewald Instrumental Exhibitioner, graduating in 2020 with a Gibbs Prize for the highest First-Class Degree in Musicology. That same year, Charlie was awarded an immediate Bicentenary Scholarship during his postgraduate audition at the Royal Academy of Music, from where he graduated in 2022 with the Strings Postgraduate Prize. Charlie studied for over ten years with Rodney Friend MBE, and for two years at the Yale School of Music with Augustin Hadelich, where he graduated in 2024. To support his studies, Charlie was the recipient of generous awards from the Harriet Cohen Music Award for British musicians aged 18-30, the Hattori Foundation, Drake Calleja Trust, Countess of Munster Trust, and John Fussell Trust.

With support from the Welsh Livery Guild and Cardiff City Council, Charlie attended the Cambridge International String Academy annually from 2012–2017, the Residart 'Horigome in Italia' Festival 2014, and the Friend's International Violin Academy 2020. Additionally, he has enjoyed masterclasses with Ida Haendel, Yuzuko Horigome, György Pauk, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Vadim Repin, Menahem Pressler, Pinchas Zukerman, Leonidas Kavakos, James Ehnes, Tai Murray, and most recently, Ida Kavafian at the Lincoln Center.

Charlie is in demand as both a soloist and recitalist. His 2024–25 season featured performances of concertos by Sibelius, Gipps, Britten, Brahms, Bach, Bruch and Vivaldi, a duo recital with pianist Ariel Lanyi at the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and quartet concerts with the award-winning Barbican Quartet at the Lake District Music Festival. He debuted as soloist at the Wigmore Hall in 2022, Birmingham Symphony Hall and De Oosterpoort in 2023, and the Konzerthaus Berlin, the Krakow Philharmonic, and the Snape Maltings in 2024.

Charlie's debut recital album, recorded with Linn Records as part of his RAM Bicentenary Scholarship, was released in December 2022. Titled *Piercing Silence*, the album promotes music by queer, Black, and female composers, including a new commission from British Composer Award winner Deborah Pritchard, *Towards Freedom*, written in response to contemporary human rights issues.

Charlie is passionate about contemporary music: alongside *Towards Freedom*, Charlie gave the world premiere of Tod Machover's *Resolve Remote* for violin and electronics as part of the RAM's 200PIECES Bicentenary celebration in 2022, which he performed again at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in April 2023. While leader of Oxford University's contemporary music group, Ensemble Isis, he also performed Pritchard's *Inside Colour* for solo violin. In 2023 he premiered Yale Professor of Composition Aaron Kernis' piano trio, *Bright Abyss*, and then in 2024, recorded it.

Upcoming engagements include further recordings and concerts with SoL as well as their debut at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, performances of concertos by Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Vivaldi, Bach, Vaughan-Williams, Korngold, Dyson, and Bruch, and chamber music recitals in the UK and Germany.

Charlie plays a 1777 G.B. Guadagnini violin on loan from a generous benefactor.

Symphony No. 4 in B flat, Op. 60

Ludwig van Beethoven

Adagio - Allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

It was Beethoven's original intention to follow his monumental *Eroica Symphony* (No. 3 in E flat, composed in 1803-4) with the one in C minor, which we now know as No. 5. It was intended to be a work of comparable weight, and more compact and concentrated in structure. Indeed, he had already finished the first two movements of the C minor Symphony late in 1805 when he set it aside and turned his attention instead to this symphony in B flat. This symphony now occupies a position between two titans, a situation comparable to that of his 'smaller symphony in F' which nestles between No 7 and No 9 (the Choral).

The *Fourth Symphony* was almost certainly composed during the summer and autumn of 1806, most of which Beethoven spent on the Hungarian estate of Count Franz von Brunswick. From there he moved, in October, to Silesia, where he stayed with Prince Karl Lichnowsky, until storming away in a fit of temper because he did not want to play the piano to some French officers who were also guests there. He brought with him the rich fruits of the previous months' work, which included the *Appassionata Sonata*, the three Razumovsky Quartets, the piano *Variations in C minor*, and the new symphony. The symphony was premiered, together with the fourth piano concerto and the *Overture Coriolan*, at a subscription concert at the Palais Lobkowitz in Vienna in March 1807.

Superficially, the fourth is one of the most conventional of Beethoven's nine symphonies. It contains both the slow introduction favoured by Mozart and Haydn, and a scherzo that Beethoven jokingly described as a minuet. But within this relatively conservative framework he explores a far wider range of mood and colour than did either of his two great predecessors. One remarkable feature is the introductory *Adagio*, whose extent, atmosphere of darkness and mystery and almost complete lack of melody, puzzled many contemporary listeners. The following lively *Allegro vivace* lets in a flood of sunlight with its vigorous main theme (whose crisp, detached notes are derived from the slow introduction) and its mellifluous second subject, first heard on clarinet and bassoon in canon. The dramatic

development section is based exclusively on the first subject and is particularly notable for its concluding bars, with their cunning enharmonic use of the timpani, in preparation for a substantially varied recapitulation.

The second movement *Adagio* is in the form of a sonata-rondo, with a shapely main theme which is subtly varied in outline and colouring at its two reappearances, and which is associated with an angular, rhythmic tonic-dominant motif that permeates the music. There is also a glorious subsidiary theme for the clarinet, which sounds almost like an improvisation.

The scherzo is full of cross-rhythms and sliding unisons with minor-key inflections. It frames a slightly slower tempo trio that is more lyrical in mood and is a dialogue between the winds and the strings. For the first time in a symphonic scherzo by Beethoven, the trio is played twice, and the third appearance of the scherzo proper is accordingly shortened. The busy main theme of the *Finale*, so aptly suited to the bassoon in its brief solo immediately before the recapitulation, carries a suggestion of Haydn. So too do the sly hesitations and pauses in the concluding bars, although there is a steely strength and a dynamic unpredictability beneath the infectious joviality of the music.

Programme notes: Robin Golding

Several of these notes were supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies, and from other sources.