

bath
symphony
orchestra

Conductor: Eugene Monteith
Guest Leader: Lucy Richardson

Russian Dancers, Degas, c.1899, National Gallery, London

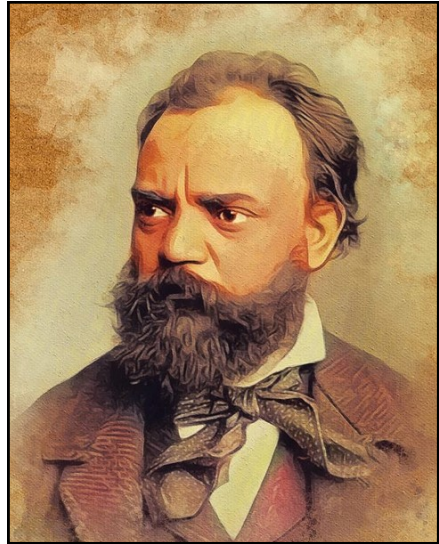
7:30 pm
Saturday 12 March 2022
Roper Theatre
Hayesfield School
Bath

Slavonic Dances Op. 46 Selection

Antonín Dvořák
(1841 – 1904)

Dvořák's first set of eight *Slavonic Dances* was written in 1878 for piano duet, a most popular form of domestic music-making at the time. They were inspired by the similar *Hungarian Dances* written by Dvořák's mentor, Brahms, who introduced the younger composer to his publisher, Simrock. The piano version was very well received and Simrock requested an orchestrated version of the dances – this became Dvořák's first major public success, effectively launching his career as a composer. A second set of eight dances, Op. 72, followed in 1886.

Although they were entitled 'Slavonic' Dances, the forms and styles Dvořák employed were specifically from his native Bohemia. Where Brahms had quoted well-known Hungarian folk tunes in his dances, Dvořák merely evokes the style and spirit of Bohemian folk melodies, writing original material using traditional rhythm patterns and structures.



'Antonín Dvořák, Music Legend',
by Esoterica Art Agency©, www.pixels.com

No. 1 in C major – Furiant

This is a fast and fiery dance, alternating duple and triple rhythm patterns.

No. 2 in E minor – Dumka

A dance originally from the Ukraine, it features sudden changes of mood, from melancholy to exuberance.

No. 6 in D major – Sousedská

This semi-slow Bohemian dance in triple metre has a calm, swaying character and was usually danced in pairs.

No. 8 in G minor – Furiant



Masquerade Suite

Aram Khachaturian
(1903 – 1978)

Khachaturian was born in Georgia to Armenian parents, moving to Moscow in 1921 to study at the Conservatoire. He often made use of Armenian folk tunes in his music and is best known for his ballet scores – in particular *Gayaneh* (the famous *Sabre Dance*) and *Spartacus* (the much-loved *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia*, used in *The Onedin Line*). Unlike his contemporaries Shostakovich and Prokofiev, Khachaturian did not fall foul of the Soviet regime, holding the position of Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers from 1957 until his death.



Portrait of Khachaturian by Musho Garukyan, 2016,
from Public Radio of Armenia website.

The *Masquerade Suite* started life in 1941 as incidental music to a verse play by Lermontov dating from 1835. It was hailed as a Russian version of *Othello* – a jealous nobleman is persuaded of his wife’s infidelity and kills her (although by the somewhat un-Shakespearean method of poisoning her ice cream at a masked ball).

- 1. Waltz** The soon-to-be-murdered wife Nina exclaims “How beautiful the new waltz is! ... something between joy and sorrow gripped my heart.” The hypnotic swirling waltz theme has a more skittish central section.
- 2. Nocturne** A dreamy night-time movement, in which a solo violin melody is accompanied by murmuring strings and elegant clarinet interjections.
- 3. Mazurka** This is a folk dance of Polish origin. Like a Waltz, it is in triple metre, but has a strong accent on the second or third beat and a distinctive ‘dum-ti-dum’ dotted rhythm. The jaunty and playful character is evident throughout.
- 4. Romance** The luscious violin theme is accompanied by woodwind and horns, echoed near the end by an expressive solo trumpet.
- 5. Galop** We are in wild and crazy circus mode here, complete with percussion, honking clown car effects, trips and stumbles. Faux-serious clarinet and flute cadenzas lead into the hurtling final section. How this fitted into an *Othello* story is anybody’s guess!

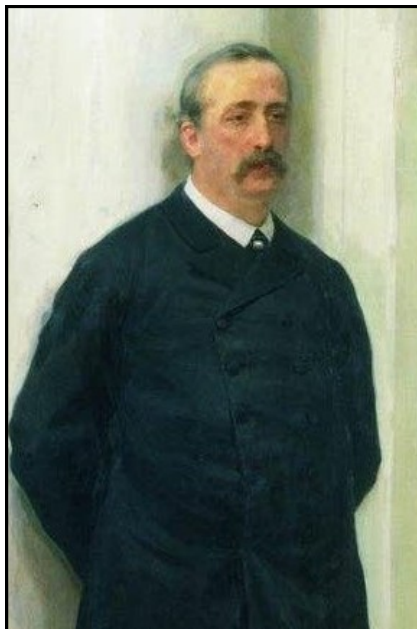
INTERVAL

Symphony No. 2 in B minor

Alexander Borodin
(1833 – 1887)

1. *Allegro moderato*
2. *Scherzo – Molto vivo*
3. *Andante*
4. *Finale – Allegro*

Born the illegitimate son of a Georgian nobleman, Borodin was initially raised as a serf. However, his father soon emancipated the adoptive family and ensured that the young Borodin received an excellent education. Throughout his youth he pursued his twin passions for music and science, but it was in the latter field that he made his professional life, becoming a Professor of Chemistry in St Petersburg and a founder of the first Russian School of Medicine for Women in 1872. This busy scientific career goes a long way towards explaining why Borodin's musical output was relatively small – his friend Rimsky-Korsakov recalled that, while working on a composition, “... he used to jump up, run back to the laboratory to see whether something had not burned or boiled over ...” It is also the reason why so many of his works remained unfinished at his death, often to be completed by his friends.



Alexander Borodin, detail of a portrait by Ilya Repin 1888

Composed intermittently between 1869 and 1876, the Symphony No. 2 is the most important large-scale work actually completed by Borodin. He worked on it alongside his never-finished opera *Prince Igor*, with which it shares many melodic similarities. In 1876, when the Russian Musical Society proposed a date for its premiere, Borodin was horrified to discover that, as a result of his chaotic musical regime, the scores for the first and last movements had disappeared and they had to be rapidly re-orchestrated. Although the symphony was admired by Liszt, the first performance was not very successful – Borodin felt that the scoring was too heavy, resulting in some speeds being lumberingly slow; he thinned out the brass parts and subsequent performances were much better received.

Borodin and his friends in the ‘Mighty Handful’ group of composers (Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Balakirev and Cui) were part of the 19th century Russian Nationalist movement, which saw a reaction against the dependence on Western (mostly German) culture that had been encouraged by Peter the Great in the 18th century. Russian

Nationalist writers and artists tended to look to Moscow and the East for their traditional roots, rather than to St Petersburg and the West. Musicians who were aiming to develop a uniquely Russian style employed the flexible rhythms, irregular metre and exotic scales of Russian folk tunes and Orthodox church music.

In the Symphony No. 2, this new approach is apparent in the abandonment of the typical Western classical key relationships – instead, the work is unified by a sequence of compatible and interrelated melodies (several of which, alongside some from *Prince Igor*, were later popularised by Robert Wright and George Forrest in their 1953 musical *Kismet*). Although Borodin never intended the symphony to portray a specific story, he did indicate that the first movement might bring to mind an assembly of Russian medieval knights, the slow movement was inspired by a traditional Russian minstrel and the Finale might depict a Feast of the Knights.

1. Allegro moderato The striking opening, with its forceful unison line and ominous pauses, started life as a chorus of Polovtsians in *Prince Igor* and its chromaticism straight away indicates the tonal ambiguity of the movement. The forthright first subject is followed by a more lyrical second subject and the central section ranges through many distant keys before the opening phrase brings the movement to an emphatic close.

2. Scherzo – Molto vivo The breathless second movement opens in the remote key of F major and the very unusual time signature of 1/1. The scampering pizzicato strings and staccato winds whizz through phrases of uneven and varying lengths, off-beat sighing figures, sudden crescendos and stabs of sound. The *Allegretto* central section is introduced by a lyrical, swaying melody on the oboe (clearly related to the second subject in the first movement), against sustained notes and pings of colour from the harp and triangle.

3. Andante This is suggested to be the depiction of the Slavic minstrel, Boyan, accompanied by a gusli (a type of zither, here imitated by the harp). The beautiful flowing melody, first heard on clarinet and horn, features characteristic little ornaments and wanders seamlessly between three and four beats in a bar. A second, rather more urgent-sounding melody is introduced by the oboe, with imitative fragments set against shimmering strings. The full orchestra builds the first theme to a great climax and the movement ends as it began, with solo clarinet and horn over rippling harp. The violins sustain the final chord so that this movement merges directly into:

4. Finale – Allegro This movement is a collection of high-spirited Russian dances. The opening energetic first theme for strings is built on a pentatonic (five-note) scale and alternating bars of two and three beats. Triangle, tambourine and cymbals add exotic Turkish colour to the dance. A lyrical ornamented melody introduced by the clarinet recalls the main theme of the slow movement. The opening motif appears in the bass, suddenly much slower, before the main theme races to its joyous conclusion.

Dates For Your Diary

*Argyle String Orchestra



Thursday 24 March 2022, 7.30 pm

A Scandinavian programme, including:

Lars Erik Larsson – *Horn Concerto*
(soloist – Steve Macallister)

Works by Grieg, Svendsen & Sibelius

United Reformed Church, Argyle Street, Bath

Thursday 23 June 2022, 7.30 pm

A Classical programme, including:

Linley – *Overture 'La Duenna'*

Haydn – *Cello Concerto in C*
(soloist – Linda Stocks)

United Reformed Church, Argyle Street, Bath

Lucy Richardson, Leader

After graduating with a Masters degree in Acoustical Engineering, Lucy completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Violin Performance with Lucy Gould at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Throughout her studies, Lucy regularly performed with, and often led, many ensembles including the Southampton University and RWCMD symphony, chamber and opera orchestras. She was also privileged to perform live on Radio 3 with the BBC NOW in a collaboration project with the RWCMD.

Growing up, Lucy was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, co-leading the orchestra in her last two tours under the baton of Owain Arwel Hughes. She has performed in a number of magnificent concert venues with NYOW such as The Sage in Gateshead, St. David's Hall in Cardiff and for the late Lady Walton in her home in Ischia, Italy.



Since moving to Wiltshire to pursue a career in engineering with Dyson, Lucy has continued to perform with a variety of local amateur music ensembles. She feels honoured to be stepping up from her usual co-principal position to lead Bath Symphony Orchestra tonight.

We acknowledge financial support from the Friends of the Orchestra:

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Please consider becoming a Friend of the Orchestra or joining our mailing list to receive information about future concerts. If you are interested, please contact us via our website.

Next Concert by **Bath Symphony Orchestra:**

Saturday 18 June 2022, 7.30 pm
Wiltshire Music Centre
Bradford-on-Avon

'Music from the British Isles'

Hamilton Harty

A Comedy Overture

Denis Wright

Cornet Concerto

Soloist - Chris Avison

Hamish MacCunn

*The Land of the
Mountain and the Flood*

Elgar

Enigma Variations



British Isles image from BBC Radio 4 'Enchanted Isle' series, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes

The orchestra is grateful to Wiltshire Performing Arts Library for supplying music for this concert.

Bath Symphony Orchestra is a member of Making Music, formerly the National Federation of Music Societies.

The orchestra holds rehearsals on Tuesdays. There are vacancies for double bass players and percussionists. If you would like more details, please contact the Secretary.

**making
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Founder:
Acting Chair:
Hon. Auditor:

A. Ernest Monk
Martin Croxford
Mike Laughton

1st Violins

Lucy Richardson *Leader*
Emma Wakelin
Tessa Welford
Vita Martinenko
Florence Hopwood
Katiana Mardinian
Carys Ottner
Guy Colton
Helen Bools
Erica Cusick

2nd Violins

Emily Pieczko *Principal*
Huw Tyson
Frances Laughton
Dan Bentley
Sara Dale
Kathryn Roynon
Kath Jenkins
Pat Corcoran

Violas

Beverley Lewis *Principal*
Roger Latimer
Sonja MacDonald
David Bird
Tim Robb
Mariko Heath
Caoimhe Fahy

Cellos

Peter Phelps *Principal*
Mary Edwards
Rob Pagnamenta
Emily Commander
Martin Croxford
David Stokes
Nicky Waldron
Cathy Lambert

Double Basses

Charles Eve
Ed Kluz
Emma Bridgman

Flutes

Sue Stephens
Nicky Russell

Piccolo

Lizzie Treadwell

Oboes

Rosamund Pendry
Emma Simpson

Cor Anglais

Rosamund Pendry

Clarinets

Fiona Haysom
Elaine Cheshire

Bassoons

Eleanor Whitfield
Shula Dennard

Horns

Tim Greeley
Francis Haysom
Steve MacAllister
Laura Childs

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Trumpets

Nick Zagni
Charlie Matters

Trombones

Simon Ridge
Tom Phelps
David Barnard

Tuba

Simon Kidd

Timpani & Percussion

Jeremy Little
Matt Thorpe
Dan Malone
Matthew Barclay

Harp

Emily Mullins

Eugene Monteith

Born in Ireland, Eugene Monteith read music at Queen's University Belfast studying trumpet and composition before going on to study conducting with David Jones, Adrian Partington, Simon Halsey and Neil Ferris at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, graduating with a postgraduate Diploma in Orchestral Conducting and an MA in Choral Conducting.

In 2015, Eugene was the winner of the RTÉ Conducting Competition in Dublin (winning both the main prize and the orchestra prize). Since then he has conducted BBC National Orchestra of Wales, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and Southbank Sinfonia.

Eugene enjoys conducting opera and is a former Young Artist at NI Opera where he conducted productions of *A Hand of Bridge* and *Der Schauspieldirektor*, and was assistant conductor on productions of *Hansel and Gretel*; *The Flying Dutchman*; *The Bear*; *Dido and Aeneas*; *The Elixir of Love* and *Macbeth*. He has also conducted several new commissions at Welsh National Opera including *The Sleeper* by Stephen Deazley, *Mr Benn* by Stephen McNeff, and *The Hidden Valley* by Richard Barnard. As a choral conductor, Eugene has been a guest chorus master for the BBC National Chorus of Wales, Bristol Choral Society, Gloucester Choral Society and Salford Choral Society.

Eugene is currently musical director of Bath Symphony Orchestra and St Donats Atlantic Chorale.

For further information, please visit www.eugenemonteith.com