

West Mendip Orchestra

John Johnson Director of Music

Helen Grey Leader



Concert Programme

Schubert

Rosamunde Overture

Beethoven

Piano Concerto No 1

Soloist: Joss Wort

Reinecke

Symphony No 2 "Hakon Jarl"

In conjunction with Yatton Music Society

www.yms.org.uk

Saturday 30th November 2024 at 7.30pm

St Mary's Church, Yatton BS49 4HH



www.west-mendip-orchestra.org.uk

Supported by the *Mortlock Memorial Fund*

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PROGRAMME

Overture: Die Zauberharfe (Rosamunde) D.644

***Franz Schubert
1797- 1828***

For all his mastery of selecting and setting music to lyric poetry, Franz Schubert was disastrously inept in selecting plays and librettos for his music. None of the operas he composed succeeded. The closest he ever came to composing dramatic music was the incidental music to the play “Rosamunde” by Helmina von Chézy, a compulsive writer who wrote incomprehensible libretti but managed to persuade producers to mount her plays. Schubert began composing the incidental music (comprising more than 50 minutes) on November 30, finishing it on December 18, 1823, just two days before the premiere. The deadline left him no time to write an overture, so he recycled an earlier composition, the overture to an 1820 melodrama, *Die Zauberharfe* (The Magic Harp). As a result, the music of the overture bears no relationship to the rest of the incidental music and gives us no clue whatsoever to the lost plot of *Rosamunde*. The play folded after the second performance!

The overture opens with a lengthy dramatic introduction *Andante*, followed by a typical lively and lyrical Schubertian sonata-form movement *Allegro vivace*. The energetic closing theme is also in keeping with the standard 19th-century opera overture. Some time after the failed production, the incidental music disappeared, only to be discovered in 1867 when Sir George Grove and Sir Arthur Sullivan went to Vienna in search of lost Schubert manuscripts.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C, Op.15

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770- 1827

Soloist: Joss Wort

Beethoven’s C major piano concerto is known today as his first, but it was actually the second piano concerto he composed. It was, however, the first one that he published—hence the mix-up. Beethoven began composing it in 1794, two years after he had arrived in Vienna, intending it to be a virtuoso showcase for his own piano playing. He seems to have completed an initial version of the concerto sometime in the following year shortly

before premiering it himself. Indeed, Beethoven’s friend Franz Wegeler reports that he composed the finale “only on the afternoon two days before the performance [...] Four copyists sat in the hallway working from the manuscript sheets he handed over to them one at a time.”

Beethoven continued to refine the concerto until it reached its final form in 1800. As with the Piano Concerto No. 2, this C major concerto reflects Beethoven's assimilation of the styles of Mozart and Haydn while its abrupt harmonic shifts demonstrate Beethoven's musical personality. It adheres to the concerto variant of sonata form and is scored for solo piano and an orchestra consisting of flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

The first movement *Allegro* is in sonata form, but with an added orchestral exposition, a cadenza and a coda. It has a main theme repeated many times, and there are several subordinate themes. The coda is played by the orchestra alone.

Like many slow movements, the second movement *Largo* is in ternary (ABA) form. Its opening A section presents several themes that are then developed in the middle B section. The clarinets are given an unusually prominent role in this movement, having the melody as often as violins.

The third movement *Rondo/Allegro scherzando* is a seven-part sonata rondo (ABACABA), a traditional third-movement form in classical concerti. The piano states the main theme, which is then repeated by the orchestra. The two B sections (subordinate themes) are in G major and C major respectively. The middle section is in A minor.

Two short cadenzas are indicated by Beethoven in this movement, one just before the final return to the main theme, and another one immediately before the end of the movement, which finishes with a striking dynamic contrast; the piano plays a melody quietly, but the orchestra then ends the movement forcefully.

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 2 in C minor Op. 134 "Hakon Jarl"

Carl Reinecke

1824- 1910

Carl Reinecke was a German musician, pianist and composer, and was both well-known and highly respected in his lifetime, leaving behind a substantial body of work. A friend of Brahms, he also has the distinction of being the only artist who was alive at the same time as Beethoven to have an extant recording of his playing, in the form of a piano roll.

Reinecke's music is, despite often being categorised as Romantic, also in the traditions and styles of the Classical period. His music therefore is perhaps not as contemporary as others from his generation, but there are easy parallels to make between him and the likes of Mendelssohn, Schumann and of course Beethoven.

His second symphony (1875) is in four movements and is given the title, "Håkon Jarl" It could be said therefore that the whole symphony is one extended tone poem, since each movement is thematic and takes inspiration from the poem by Danish poet Oehlenschläger about the life of the Viking Håkon Jarl, who was Harald Bluetooth's ally in his quest of becoming ruler of Norway.

The first movement *Allegro* is of epic proportion. The scoring is skilful with various melodies abounding in a beautiful display of orchestral understanding. The tone is heroic, and also a little menacing. The second movement *Andante*, "Thora", displays the gracefulness of the poem's heroine. It is elegiac, but melancholic. In the third movement *Allegretto Moderato*, "In Olin's Grave", we hear a much lighter and more uplifting orchestration and melody, perhaps a ride or a game in the grove (as per the poem). Again, observing the poem it could well be a Pagan ritual. In the final movement *Allegro Molto*, "Olaf's Victory", we are back with stirring, highly Romantic themes, almost patriotic in flavour. The music however depicts the defeat of Håkon Jarl at the hands of Olaf' Tryggvason's army. There is therefore some sadness to be heard but mostly however it is glorious and satisfyingly full of pageantry, echoing Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Programme Notes: Adrian Targett

Soloist: Joss Wort



Joss was born and raised in Yatton and started playing the piano when he became a student at Backwell secondary school ten years ago. He made his performing debut after three years at a school concert, playing Debussy's Clair de Lune. Within five years he had gained a distinction in grade eight piano.

Whilst studying for his A levels he was taught by Helen Reid, a renowned teacher and performer in her own right, and in 2020 he was lucky enough to play and study segments of Liszt's Mephisto Waltz with Stephen Hough in London.

Since 2021 he has been studying piano at the Royal Welsh School of Music and Drama in Cardiff, and is now in his fourth, and final year.

Tonight's concerto is Joss's first opportunity to play with an orchestra, and the choice of Beethoven's piano concerto no 1 reflects his deep love and admiration for that composer's work.

John Johnson - Musical Director and Principal Conductor



John studied piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and at the University of Reading. He has recently retired from a 40 year career in music education which included a Head of Creative Arts role at the Kings of Wessex Academy in Cheddar and at Priory Community School Academy, Weston, where he supported and tutored PCGE, School Direct trainees and ECTs.

He is also an Honorary Accompanist for Weston Operatic Society and has MD'd a number of shows for them, winning an award for Best Musical Director for `Crazy for You` in 2015. He is also the musical director of the Cameo Orchestra, based in Warmley, and a founder member of Eclectic Voices, a local chamber choir. In 2021 we were delighted when John accepted the role of Musical Director of the West Mendip Orchestra.

Helen Grey - Leader of the Orchestra

Helen grew up in Southampton, where she discovered music from a young age, playing a variety of instruments, including piano, violin, flute, recorder, ukelele and guitar. She enjoyed spending many years playing and touring with the Southampton Youth Orchestra.



She then studied at Surrey University where she graduated with an Honours music degree specialising in piano accompaniment.

After her teacher training at Reading University, she worked as a piano accompanist and she taught class music and piano in Somerset for 12 years. Throughout her life she has always played in orchestras. After a career break to have her family, she rekindled her love of music by joining West Mendip orchestra in 2012, and working as a freelance instrumental teacher, and a piano accompanist for the Strode Singers.

Yatton Music Society

The Society was formed in 1980 to promote quality music in a village environment. Our concerts are chosen to provide an opportunity for both professional musicians, many with international reputations, and talented local musicians to perform to an appreciative audience. Many young musicians who gained performing experience through these concerts are now enjoying successful musical careers, and are often pleased to return and entertain us again.

The society's concerts are held in St Mary's Church, Yatton, which provides a beautiful venue with superb acoustics. We believe in providing music for all tastes, and our programmes reflect the range of music that can appeal to as wide an audience as possible. This is reflected in our programme for our 2025 Spring season which includes, brass, guitar, choral, string and piano performances:

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| <i>25th January, 2025</i> | <i>Bold Brass (brass ensemble)</i> |
| <i>1st March, 2025</i> | <i>Wyvern Afinado Guitar Orchestra with Craig Ogden</i> |
| <i>29th March, 2025</i> | <i>Fitzhardinge Consort with James Drinkwater
(choir and organ)</i> |
| <i>26th April, 2025</i> | <i>Harry & Alisa Nowakowski-Fox (piano and cello)</i> |
| <i>17th May 2025</i> | <i>Jubovski Gypsy Trio (violin, double-bass, piano)</i> |

Concerts are open to both members of the society and non-members. Membership of the society (£5 annual) entitles members to reduced ticket prices and advance information on concert events. Society details including membership and forthcoming concerts are on www.yms.org.uk

If you love classical music and good company, why not join our committee to help choose concerts? Please contact any of the committee for details (contact details on website).

West Mendip Orchestra

Conductor: John Johnson

1st Violin

Helen Grey (leader)
Penny Charman
Nola Pavey
Emma Love

2nd Violin

Paul Beechey
Shirley Vickery-Mills
Sima Madanipour
Monica Maimaris

Viola

Sheena Warman
Christine Puddy
Abi Miles

Cello

Ruth Beadle
Rachel Cullen
Ian Angus
Helen Woolford

Double Bass

David Sutton
Euan Tait

Flute

Dianne Parfitt

Flute / Piccolo

Ana Lopes

Oboe

Stephen Bidmead
Elizabeth Simms

Clarinet

Jane Lincoln
Abbe Hayward

Bassoon

Adrian Targett
Penny Hambly

French Horn

Sue Tyley
Melanie Arnot

Trumpet

Rob Tyley
Thomas Lacombe

Trombone

Jo Jenkins
Adrian Warman

Timpani

John Rackham

Future Events

Next Concert: Friday 28th March 2025 at 7.45pm
All Saints Church, Weston-super-Mare

Programme: Our next concert is entitled '*by arrangement*' and features an eclectic selection of original pieces by composers such as ***Brahms, Rachmaninov, Bizet and Moszkowski*** – amongst others, celebrating the art of the arranger.



Keep an eye on our facebook page and website for more news
<http://www.west-mendip-orchestra.org.uk/index.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/westmendiporchestra/>

