

FREE



Glasgow
Orchestral
Society



SCHUMANN

SYMPHONY NO. 3 (RHENISH)

SAINT-SAËNS

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 5
(EGYPTIAN)

TOM DAVID WILSON

OVERTURE GOS

CONDUCTOR CHRIS SWAFFER
SOLOIST SARAH AYOUB

SUN 25 OCT 2015 7.30^{PM}

ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND

WELCOME TO THIS FIRST CONCERT OF OUR 2015-16 SEASON

It is a very special year for us. We are celebrating 130 years of women first becoming playing members of GOS and we are marking the anniversary by featuring women artists in different ways throughout the coming season. Tonight we feature Sarah Ayoub, recently graduated from the Masters course in RCS and already a rising star in the twin worlds of concert performance and chamber music. You are in for a great treat!

The new work you will hear, Overture GOS, was specially written for us by Tom David Wilson, who teaches Composition here in RCS. We are very grateful to Tom for his generosity in offering to write for us, especially for tonight's programme, and are delighted to be giving the first performance this evening.

You can listen to more of Tom's music at: soundcloud.com/tom-david-wilson

Our conductor tonight, Chris Swaffer, is new to GOS. His organisation and preparation for rehearsals has been superb and he has worked us very hard in the last two months, with great musical insight, elegance and gentle good humour. We hope that this will be the start of a continuing partnership.

To round off our season, in July 2016, we will be embarking on our second playing Tour abroad, to the Czech Republic, based in Prague. This time, we hope to take a full sized orchestra and are very keen to offer supported places to student musicians. You will have seen our collection buckets as you arrived – we are collecting tonight specifically to raise funds for these student places. Please give generously – all donations will be gratefully received!

In the meantime, sit back and enjoy the concert!

Ann Westwood, President

MEET THE CONDUCTOR

CHRIS SWAFFER

Chris is currently Artistic Director of the Auricle Ensemble and the Universities of Scotland Symphony Orchestra. He has guest conducted many ensembles, including the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestras and the Metropolitan Ensemble of London and recently made his debut with the Orchestra of Opera North conducting Copland's complete original score to Appalachian Spring. Christopher's passion for new music has seen him conduct many premieres, including the UK premiere of the Ives Society Critical Edition of Charles Ives' Second Symphony and seven world premieres at the Royal Northern College of Music with contemporary

music group Ensemble 11. He also recently conducted the first public performance of Howard Blake's Divisions for marimba in the presence of the composer, with soloist Heather Corbett. With Auricle he has directed several critically acclaimed projects including, Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, a two year Mini-Mahler project and two European premieres of works by Copland, one of which, The City, was performed live to film at the Glasgow Film Festival. Chris was educated at Chetham's School of Music and holds a Masters degree in composition and conducting from the University of Manchester. He has actively participated in many masterclasses across the



world and gained a place at the Bard Summer Music Festival, New York where he conducted Mahler's Sixth Symphony. He has worked with over 50 youth, amateur and university orchestras, and has held many Principal Conductor posts with such groups.

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MEET THE ORCHESTRA

SARAH AYOUB (SOLOIST)

Sarah Ayoub, studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, with Professor Fali Pavri for which she was awarded a scholarship from the Wilson Bequest and graduated in the summer of 2014 with First-Class Honours. Before commencing her studies, Sarah was the recipient of The Nivina MacDuff Prize (ABRSM), the Lillian Campbell Memorial Prize, the William Findley Trophy, the Allie Cullen Memorial Prize and the John Fife Trophy from Glasgow Music Festival. Sarah made her concerto debut age 16 with the WSSSO, performing Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 2 under the baton of James Lowe. Achievements

at the RCS included: 3rd prize at the Moray International Piano Competition, the Philip Halstead Concerto Prize, the Dunbar-Gerber Prize for chamber music and the Lamond Piano Prize. Sarah was concerto soloist with the Kelvin Ensemble and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 Sarah made her concerto debut with the Cairo Symphony Orchestra performing the Khachaturian Piano Concerto, which was broadcasted on Egyptian Television. Also in 2015 Sarah won The Big Music Project Classical Competition with sister Laura (violin) and together they will make their Royal

Albert Hall debut in April 2016 featured on Classic FM Live. Performance highlights include: Glasgow Piano Festival; Cottier Chamber Project; Edinburgh International Festival: Swiss Embassy, London: collaborating with London Sinfonietta and Hebrides Ensemble as well as an appearance alongside Lang Lang, at the South Bank Centre in May, 2011.



TOM DAVID WILSON (1957 -) **OVERTURE GOS**

This overture was completed in the spring of 2015 for the Glasgow Orchestral Society who plan to perform it during their 2015/16 season as they approach their 150th anniversary celebrations in 2020. It was suggested that this new piece might share the programme with Robert Schumann's Third Symphony and so, with these things in mind the piece is celebratory in mood and uses Schumann's swooping opening horn theme as a creative engine for tunes and chords. It lasts a little under six minutes during which a wide arc is described from the arresting, iridescent opening chords to the climax at the coda when the Schumann motif is heard most overtly.

I am grateful to Ann Westwood for our productive discussions regarding this piece and am impressed by the commitment of the Glasgow Orchestral Society to innovative programming and the continuation of their long history of quality music making by and for the people of Glasgow.

Tom David Wilson, March 2015

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921) **PIANO CONCERTO NO. 5 IN F** **"THE EGYPTIAN"**

- 1 Allegro animato**
- 2 Andante**
- 3 Molto Allegro**

Was there ever a major composer whose reputation sank so far after his death? But there are signs now of a revival of interest in the music of Camille Saint-Saëns after decades when only a handful of his works was heard with any

frequency. He himself said that he composed music "as naturally as a tree produces apples". Phenomenally talented as both composer and pianist, he once offered as a recital encore to play any of Beethoven's piano sonatas from memory. Broadly cultured, he single-handedly led a revival of interest in French Baroque music, and edited and performed Rameau. In the later 19th century, with Berlioz out of favour in his last years, French music was dominated by the likes of Delibes, Gounod, Thomas and Massenet (mainly writing opera or ballet) until the emergence of Debussy and Fauré as new voices. Saint-Saëns stands out for his contribution to orchestral and instrumental music (though he too wrote several operas and was the first composer to write a score for a silent film). Though harmonically conservative he could be innovative, for instance in the movement pattern of some of his symphonies and concertos. He may have disapproved of harmonic advances by his pupil and friend Fauré, but was willing to listen to new music, even attending the première of Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring".

Saint-Saëns was an inveterate traveller, often visiting North Africa (he died in Algiers). Written in 1896 for a concert marking his fiftieth year as a concert pianist, the "Egyptian" Piano concerto was intended to express "the joy of the sea voyage". Though composed in Luxor, there is no specific programme but the opening movement does have an anticipatory air, perhaps suggesting the first leg of a cruise, while the middle movement contains elements of exoticism, with its quotation of a Nubian fisherman's song and imitation of chirping crickets and frogs. In the finale we get very much a sense of full steam ahead for the next port of call. Its compositional intricacy is worn lightly and the piano writing is as elaborate and brilliant as one would expect from this composer-virtuoso.

INTERVAL

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN E FLAT “THE RHENISH”

1 Lebhaft (lively)

2 Scherzo, Sehr mässig (very moderate speed)

3 Nicht schnell (not fast)

4 Feierlich (solemnly)

5 Lebhaft (lively)

In a sadly curtailed creative life, Schumann was a remarkably prolific composer and major figure in the development of musical romanticism.

Early promise as a concert pianist was undermined by a hand injury but he supported himself through music journalism. A happy marriage to the concert pianist and composer Clara Wieck (her father originally disapproved) was a vital support: his physical and mental health were sometimes fragile. Acceptance in 1850 of a conducting post in Dusseldorf, for which he was not really suited, sadly undermined his health and he deteriorated from about 1853, attempting suicide in 1854. He died in a mental hospital two years later.

Schumann wrote only piano music up to about 1835, but after his marriage to Clara in 1840 suddenly threw himself into song writing, producing over 100 in that year alone, with several annually thereafter. The piano works show a florid, even whimsical, imagination, some featuring his imaginary companions Florestan and Eusebius who represented active and contemplative personalities. The four symphonies (and the neglected “Overture, Scherzo and Finale”) all date from 1841–50, with the “Rhenish” the last. (The number 4 went to the 1851 revision of the D minor symphony, actually second chronologically). In his later years Schumann produced three striking

works for chorus and orchestra: “Manfred” (with spoken narration) based the Byron poem and of which the overture is sometimes played independantly; Scenes from Goethe’s “Faust” and “Paradise and the Peri”. Much maligned in print, his sole opera “Genoveva” contains some fine music and is worth its occasional revivals (the plot is no dafter than, say, “Il Trovatore”).

Though outwardly more conservative in outline than much of his piano music, Schumann’s symphonies do have original tendencies while rooted in classical form. In the D minor the movements are linked (like Mendelssohn’s “Scotch”); and in the present work there is an extra movement. He also favoured a more flowing tempo for slow movements than a typical adagio, a model sometimes followed by Brahms. The “Rhenish” is a genial picture of the Rhineland. Individual movements in this symphony are relatively short and the whole structure beautifully proportioned. The opening movement is in vigorous triple time and notable for the cross rhythm in its soaring opening theme, heard at the outset. The second movement, labelled “Scherzo” is actually a “ländler”, a dance in moderate triple time, in the unexpected key of C major. For the first of two slow movements, he turns now to A flat major for a charming intermezzo in gently flowing quadruple time. The solemn, processional, fourth movement in E flat minor, brings a very different atmosphere and darker texture. This was inspired by the Schumanns’ visit to Cologne Cathedral during a religious ceremony. The fifth movement reverts to E flat major. There are echoes here of the processional music, but completely transformed. The movement has a lively, light and dancelike texture, a felicitous close to one of Schumann’s sunniest works and to his symphonic writing.

Alastair Whitelaw, October 2015

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WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED TONIGHT'S CONCERT
AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN!

Please put the dates of our next three concerts
in your diary:

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER 2015

Conductor: Marco Romano

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 1 (Winter Daydreams)

Arnold – Holly and the Ivy Suite

Warlock – Bethlehem Down

Kelly – Improvisations on Christmas Carols

SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2016

Conductor: Stephen Broad

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Ravel – Mother Goose Suite

Debussy – Nocturnes with Les Sirenes

SUNDAY 15 MAY 2016

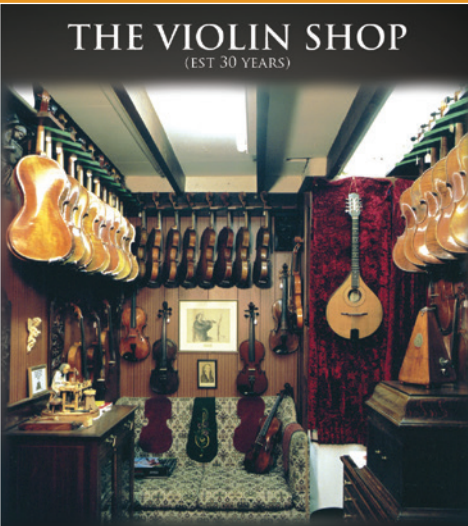
Conductor: Catherine Larsen-Maguire

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Arnold – Scottish Dances

Walton – Viola Concert soloist Nicola Boag

Rachmaninov – Symphonic Dances



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