

West Mendip Orchestra

John Johnson Director of Music

Helen Grey Leader



CONCERT

In conjunction with Yatton Music Society

www.yms.org.uk

Schumann

Glazunov

Finzi

Dvořák

Julius Caesar Overture

Poème Lyrique

Eclogue for Piano and Strings

Symphony No 8 in G Major



Saturday 29th November 2025 at 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church, Yatton BS49 4HH



www.west-mendip-orchestra.org.uk

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PROGRAMME

Overture to Julius Caesar Op.128

Robert Schumann 1810-1856

Schumann was inspired by William Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar. However, he did not intend a strict scene-by-scene depiction, but more the atmosphere and the themes of the play: conspiracy, tragedy, power, betrayal. In his sketches he wrote some central "plot-points" underneath the score: Caesar/Life in Rome/Brutus/Conspiracy/Calpurnia/The Ides/Death/Philippi/Octavian's revenge/Victory over Brutus. However, these points are not followed in any particular order in the music. Schumann was also influenced by Beethoven especially the overtures Egmont and Coriolan. The structural and dramatic intensity, and some aspects of the sonata form in Schumann's overture, show this influence.

The overture begins with a **slow, brooding introduction** which establishes motifs that will be important later. Then it moves into a more active main section. There are dramatic contrasts: militaristic fanfares, turbulent orchestral writing, and moments of tension and release. The mood is largely tragic, dark and with conflict, but also moments of lyrical contrast. There is a typical Schumann sensitivity to orchestral colour, dynamics and tension. The structure is roughly in **sonata-form** (exposition, development, recapitulation). However, Schumann plays with expectations, particularly in how motifs reappear, are transformed and the way intensity is built. There is also a major-key coda at the end, as an ending that offers some light after darkness.

Poème Lyrique Op. 12

Alexander Glazunov 1865-1936

Alexander Glazunov's Poème lyrique in D flat major is an orchestral work composed between 1884 and 1887. It is described as a lyrical and expressive piece for orchestra. It is a single movement work, known for its romantic, lyrical and balletic qualities, with soaring themes and rich orchestration. It is considered one of Glazunov's earlier but significant works, showcasing his talent for orchestration.

Eclogue Op. 10 for piano and strings

Gerald Finzi 1901-1956

Soloist: John Johnson (Piano)

Although largely remembered now as a choral composer, Gerald Finzi also wrote some breathtaking orchestral music. Eclogue is composed for a solo piano and string orchestra and was originally intended to be part of a grand piano concerto that Finzi wanted to write in the late 1920s. However, he was never satisfied with the two outer movements, so he decided to rework this slow movement to be played on its own. The work was published posthumously, and it was the publisher who named the work as we know it today.

An Eclogue is a form of poem in the classical style on a pastoral subject. In music it is applied to a work which evokes a pastoral scene. In this particular piece the intention is to convey a conversation between shepherds. Finzi captures the essence of the countryside in such a nuanced way that it grasps you emotionally from the very start. It is a quintessentially English work; ethereal and beautiful, evoking feelings of nostalgia and a sense of serenity.

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op.88

Antonin Dvořák 1841-1904

Dvořák composed and orchestrated the symphony within the two-and-a-half-month period from 26 August to 8 November 1889 at his summer resort in Vysoka u Pribame, Bohemia. The score was composed on the occasion of his admission to the Prague Academy and dedicated "*To the Bohemian Academy of Emperor Franz Joseph for the Encouragement of Arts and Literature, in thanks for my election.*" Dvořák conducted the premiere in Prague on 2 February 1890.

Dvořák tried to achieve a marked difference from his 7th Symphony, a stormy romantic work. No. 8 would be: "*different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way*". The Eighth is cheery and lyrical and draws its inspiration more from the Bohemian folk music that Dvořák loved. The movements comprise:

1. Allegro con brio

The first movement is a powerful and glowing exposition characterised by liberal use of timpani.

2. Adagio

Despite being marked Adagio, the second movement moves along at quite a reasonable speed. Much of the movement is development of the main theme. Similar to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, the music is inspired by the tranquil landscapes, depicting a summer's day, interrupted by a thunderstorm.

3. Allegretto grazioso

Most of the third movement is a waltz in 3/8 time. Near the end, the meter changes to 2/4, and the music ends in a manner not unlike that of the second movement. In contrast to the "sweet and languid waltz" of the first theme, the second, "functioning as a trio, sounds more like a Bohemian folk dance".

4. Allegro non troppo

The finale, comprising theme-and-variations, is the most turbulent movement. It begins with a fanfare of trumpets and develops into a cascade of instruments triumphantly playing the initial theme. A central contrasting episode is derived from the main theme. There is then a tempestuous middle section, and, after a return to the slow, lyrical section, the piece ends with a coda in which brass, and timpani are greatly prominent. The music is always cheerful and optimistic.

Programme notes by Adrian Targett

Yatton Music Society

Yatton Music Society was formed in 1980 to promote quality music in a rural environment. Both amateur and professional musicians have been welcomed to the society and many young musicians who gained performing experience through these concerts are now enjoying successful musical careers.

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 a range an audience as possible.

Concerts are open to members and non members of the society, with everyone assured of a warm welcome to enjoy an evening of music comparable to events held in larger city venues.

Membership of the society (£10 annual) entitles members to reduced ticket prices and advanced information on concert events. Society details, concerts and membership application are on www.yms.org.uk.



John Johnson - Principal Conductor /Soloist (piano)

Southampton born, John first started playing the piano and violin at the age of 6, and went on to study piano and composition at the Winchester School of Art, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, and at Reading University. After teacher training at Bulmershe College, Reading, John embarked on a 40 year classroom career teaching Music in Windsor, Reading, Cheddar (Kings of Wessex) and Weston-super-Mare (Priory School teacher-training) – from which he is now retired.



John has acted as Musical Director for the Maidenhead Players, the Henley Operatic Society and the Weston Operatic Society and he currently conducts the Cameo Orchestra, based in Warmley, a post held since 2017. He also accompanies Eclectic Voices, a local chamber choir, which he co-founded in 2018, and has been Musical Director for the West Mendip Orchestra since 2021.

John's pianistic highlights include performing in Malcolm Arnold's Concerto for two pianos (1977) and as soloist in Rachmaninov's 2nd Concerto (1980). John first performed Finzi's "Eclogue" in 1982 with the Bulmershe College orchestra and is delighted to have the chance to do so again – 43 years later!

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, working as a piano accompanist for the Strobe Singers and currently as a freelance instrumental teacher.

West Mendip Orchestra



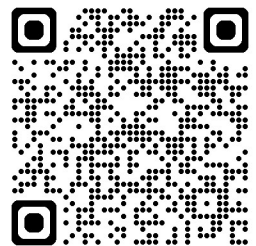
*The West Mendip Orchestra perform at 50th Anniversary Concert July 2024
All Saints', Weston Super Mare*

The West Mendip Orchestra began life over 50 years ago (in 1974) as The Winscombe Orchestra, under the baton of it's founder Ronald Clarke, with only 10 or so players. Over the years it has grown to 50 players at it's height, although we are not as numerous at present. We have performed under a number of conductors - in particular Rupert Bottomley, who conducted us for 21 years !

We still maintain our connection with Winscombe, and continue to rehearse at the Lynch Chapel in Winscombe. We are a mix of professional and amateur musicians, presenting 3 concerts each year, currently at Yatton, Uphill and Weston-super-Mare. These vary from the more traditional classical concert, to lighter programmes, including shorter works, and selections from films and musicals.

We rehearse on Friday evenings and are always keen to welcome new members. At present we particularly need Trumpets and French Horns, and are always happy to boost our String sections. If you would be interested in playing with us please speak to one of us tonight, or email us at: contact@west-mendip-orchestra.org.uk

We hope you enjoy tonight's concert.



WMO

West Mendip Orchestra

Conductor: John Johnson

1st Violin

Helen Grey (leader)
Penny Charman
Nola Pavey
Sonia Loney
Emma Love

2nd Violin

Shirley Vickery-Mills
Sue Ulliyot
Alison Sutton
Roger Levett

Viola

Sheena Warman
Christine Puddy
Abi Miles
Conrad Meehan

Cello

Ruth Beadle
Helen Woolford
Rachel Cullen
Ian Angus
Sally Squire

Double Bass

David Sutton
Nigel Cavey

Flute

Jolanta Modelska

Flute / Piccolo

Ana Lopes

Oboe

Stephen Bidmead

Oboe / Cor

Elizabeth Simms

Clarinet

Jane Lincoln
Abbe Hayward

Bassoon

Penny Hambly
Adrian Targett

French Horn

Sue Tyley
Melanie Arnot

Trumpet

Rob Tyley
Juliette Goodwin

Trombone

Jo Jenkins
Adrian Warman

Tuba

Jose Lopes

Timpani

Nicki Sisman

Harp/Keyboard

tbd

Subject to revision. Details
correct at time of printing

Next Concert: Friday 27th March 2026 at 7:45pm
St Nicolas' Church
Uphill Road South, Uphill
Weston-super-Mare BS23 4SD

Programme: Works by Malcolm Arnold, Richard Rodney Bennett and Eric Coates, and the Carl Reinecke Flute Concerto
Soloist: Jolanta Modelska

Keep an eye on our facebook page and website for more news

<https://www.facebook.com/westmendiporchestra/>

www.west-mendip-orchestra.org.uk Charity no. 1041826

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