



C A M D E N
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O R C H E S T R A

Autumn Concert



Conductor Levon Parikian
Leader John Crawford
Soloist Amarins Wierdsma

Saturday 25th November 2023 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Tickets: £15 / £12 concessions including programme.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to the first event of our 2023-2024 season. This evening's concert opens with Borodin's *In the Steppes of Central Asia* before Amarins Wierdsma, leader of the Barbican Quartet, joins us as soloist for Brahms' *Violin Concerto*. After the interval, we'll be performing Dvořák's *Symphony No. 8*, a work which takes inspiration from the Bohemian folk music that Dvořák loved. We look forward to welcoming you back throughout the season, and do hope that you'll consider becoming a Friend of the Orchestra. You can find further details of our Friends Scheme in this programme.

Camden Symphony Orchestra has been a mainstay of musical life in north London for more than forty years with around seventy regular players. Under our Musical Director Levon Parikian we seek to combine the familiar staples of the classical and romantic repertoire with less well-known and more challenging works. We rehearse weekly and perform three major orchestral concerts a year.

Recent highlights have included symphonies by Florence Price, Vaughan Williams and Brahms, Holst's *The Planets*, Strauss' *Four Last Songs* and Sibelius' *Finlandia*. Our world premiere performance of *Dream Big for Tomorrow*, a work for improvising vocalist and orchestra, was recently broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Recent concerto performances include Gershwin's *Piano Concerto*, Elgar's *Cello Concerto* and Strauss' *Horn Concerto No. 1*. The orchestra has performed many choral works including Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Elgar's *The Spirit of England* and Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

Whilst we pride ourselves on our friendly, inclusive environment, we take our music-making seriously. We are always pleased to hear from musicians interested in joining us. For more information about the orchestra, please visit www.camdenso.org.uk.



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Camden Symphony Orchestra is affiliated to Making Music which represents and supports amateur choirs, orchestras and music promoters.





C A M D E N
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Alexander Borodin
In the Steppes of Central Asia

Johannes Brahms
Violin Concerto
Soloist: Amarins Wierdsma

~ Interval ~

Please join us for refreshments which will be served at the back of the church.

Antonín Dvořák
Symphony No. 8

Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, digital watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched off during the performance.

We would like to thank the Clergy, Parish Administrator and PCC of St Cyprian's Church for permission to perform here tonight, and for their assistance in organising this concert.

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887) - *In the Steppes of Central Asia* (1880)

Borodin was a doctor and chemist by profession who made important contributions to organic chemistry. He regarded medicine and science as his primary occupations, practicing music and composition in his spare time or when he suffered from poor health, having overcome cholera and several minor heart failures. He was a promoter of education in Russia and founded the School of Medicine for Women in Saint Petersburg, where he taught until 1885.



1993 Russian one rouble coin commemorating the 160th anniversary of Borodin's birth.

As a Georgian-Russian Romantic composer, he was one of the prominent 19th-century composers known as 'The Five', a group of musicians dedicated to producing a 'uniquely Russian' kind of classical music. He is known best for his symphonies, his opera *Prince Igor* which features the *Polovtsian Dances*, his second string quartet and the symphonic poem that we perform this evening. *In the Steppes of Central Asia* was dedicated to Franz Liszt. Borodin's reputation outside the Russian Empire was established by Liszt, who arranged a performance of Borodin's first symphony in Germany in 1880, and the Comtesse de Mercy-Argenteau, who championed his music in Belgium and France. His music is known for its strong lyricism and rich harmonies.

Themes from Borodin's *In the Steppes of Central Asia*

"Russian" Theme:



"Traveling" Theme:



"Eastern" Theme:



In the Steppes of Central Asia had been intended to be presented as part of the silver anniversary celebrations for the reign of Emperor Alexander II of Russia, who had done much to expand the Russian Empire. Even though the intended production did not go ahead, the work has been a favorite since its premiere on 20th April 1880 in St. Petersburg. The work depicts an interaction between Russians and Asians in the steppe lands of Central Asia where a caravan of Central Asians is crossing the desert under the protection of Russian troops. The composer provided the following description in a note to the score:

In the silence of the monotonous steppes of Central Asia is heard the unfamiliar sound of a peaceful Russian song. From the distance we hear the approach of horses and camels and the bizarre and melancholy notes of an oriental melody. A caravan approaches, escorted by Russian soldiers, and continues safely on its way through the immense desert. It disappears slowly. The notes of the Russian and Asiatic melodies join in a common harmony, which dies away as the caravan disappears in the distance.

The evocative characteristics of Borodin's music, specifically *In the Steppes of Central Asia*, his second symphony and *Prince Igor*, made it possible for Robert Wright and George Forrest to adapt his compositions for use in the 1953 musical *Kismet*. In 1954, Borodin was posthumously awarded the Tony Award for this show.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) - Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 77 (1878)

I Allegro non troppo - II Adagio - III Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace

1878 was a relatively calm year for the restless Brahms. He had finally published his much anticipated first symphony in 1876 which was quickly followed by his second symphony at the end of 1877. He spent the spring of 1878 with friends on a long-awaited trip to Italy, sending his friend Clara Schumann an update, 'How often do I not think of you, and wish that your eyes and heart might know the delight which the eye and heart experiences here'. On his return to Pörtschach on Lake Wörth, southern Austria, near the Italian border, he spent the summer writing his *Violin Concerto*. In a letter to the critic Eduard Hanslick, Brahms wrote, 'The melodies fly so thick here that you have to be careful not to step on one'.

Brahms sent two brief letters to the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim, a close friend, advising that he was busy composing a concerto. He modestly asked Joachim to consider playing it. 'Naturally, I was going to ask you to make corrections,' he wrote, 'Thought you should have no excuse either way, neither respect for music that is too good, nor the excuse that the score isn't worth the trouble'. Joachim received the final solo parts on 12th December which did not allow him much time to shape the music before its premiere on New Year's Day 1879 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus with Brahms conducting.

Brahms intended this work to be a symphonic concerto which fully integrated the orchestra and soloist, as opposed to a show piece designed to display the soloist's virtuosity where the orchestra is relegated to mere accompaniment. Even with this in mind, the concerto, written for the prodigious Joachim, still presents formidable challenges to any soloist. It elicited harsh comments from critics at its premiere. Perhaps the most famous is that of conductor Hans von Bülow, who remarked that Brahms had composed a concerto against the violin,

whereupon violinist Bronislaw Huberman responded, 'It is a concerto for violin against the orchestra - and the violin wins!' Sentiments quickly changed after Joachim performed it in Vienna on 14th January 1879, with his own cadenza. Brahms and Joachim worked together for the next six months perfecting the work into the concert hall staple that we know today.



Johannes Brahms, left, with his close friend Joseph Joachim, the celebrated violinist who collaborated with Brahms on his Violin Concerto and performed its premiere.

The first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, is a collaboration between orchestra and soloist. A slow orchestral introduction contains ideas for the subsequent themes presented throughout the movement; the soloist enters with dramatic flair before presenting the expansive warmth of the main theme and its counterpart, a yearning, searching melody. The movement combines Brahms' great intensity with gentler passages and its finale is a cadenza composed by Joachim. Even though Brahms described the second movement as 'a poor *Adagio*', the movement is the preferred of the three for many. A solo oboe presents the tranquil main theme and the violinist echoes and elaborates, tracing airy arabesques of sound. In the final movement, *Allegro giocoso*, the main theme demonstrates Joachim's extraordinary technical ability, but as with the preceding music, the violin and the orchestra blend their combined abilities to create a sound full of irrepressible joy.

Sketches of Brahms conducting by the German artist Willy von Beckerath. Brahms conducted the concerto's premiere in 1879.





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Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) - *Symphony No. 8 in G major, Opus 88 (1889)*
I Allegro con brio – II Adagio - III Allegretto grazioso - IV Allegro ma non troppo

As a child, Dvořák did not immediately reveal his musical talent. His family was poor, yet they found the means for music lessons with the local schoolmaster and then with a nearby organist. In 1857 he studied at the Prague Organ School, and following this he secured a position as violist within a dance orchestra. This group prospered and in 1862 its members formed the founding core of the Provisional Theatre Orchestra in Prague. Dvořák played principal viola for nine years, often under the direction of esteemed conductors Bedřich Smetana and Richard Wagner.

By 1871, having honed his skills and despite the considerable financial risk, he left the orchestra to devote himself to composition. In 1874 he was awarded the Austrian State Stipendium, a grant created by the Ministry of Education to assist young, poor, gifted musicians. He received the award again, in both 1876 and 1877. The influential music critic Eduard Hanslick greatly enjoyed Dvořák's music, and he persuaded him to allow the great Johannes Brahms to view his scores. Delighted with what he received, Brahms recommended Dvořák to his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, who immediately published two collections of Dvořák's works and set up contracts for the future.

Dvořák composed this symphony between August and November 1889 at his summer house in Vysoká u Příbramě, Bohemia. Its world premiere on 2nd February 1890 with the National Theatre Orchestra in Prague was conducted by the composer himself. Ironically, the symphony was not published by Simrock, whose offer of merely one-sixth of the fee paid for Dvořák's previous symphony (No. 7 in D minor, Opus 70) was refused by the composer.



*Dvořák's summer house
in Vysoká u
Příbramě, Bohemia.*

Compared to Dvořák's somber *Symphony No. 7*, this symphony is decidedly upbeat even though a surprising amount of minor-key music inhabits the major-key symphony. It starts with a solemn richly scored introduction with some joyful birdcall from a solo flute. This develops into the principal cheerful pastoral and optimistic theme. As the movement progresses, its mournful introduction returns, and the development section is full of foreboding passages. When Dvořák initially sketched the movement, it was essentially cheerful. The minor-key introduction was introduced as an afterthought with the composer

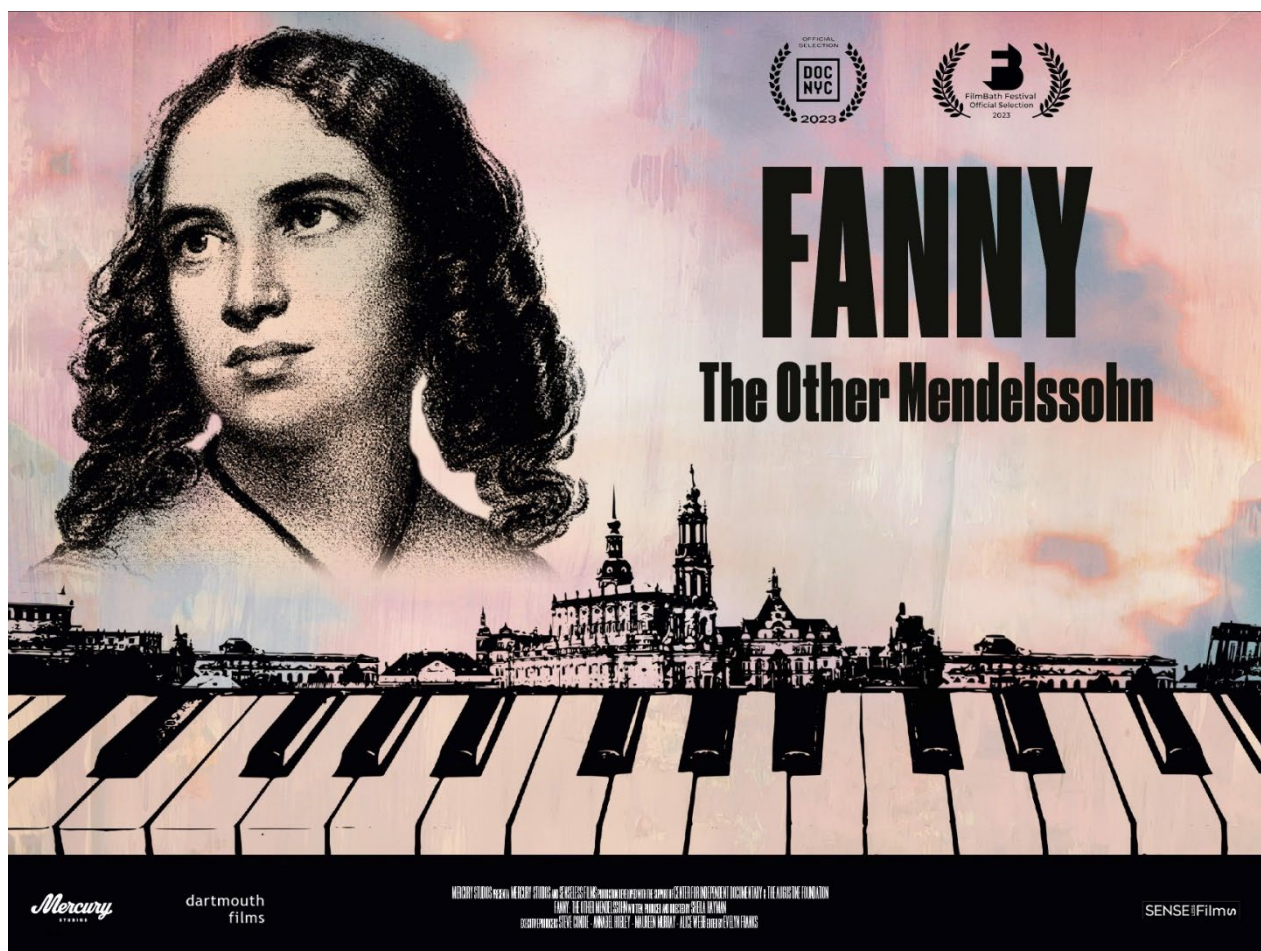
adding reminders of it into the existing flow of the piece. The opening movement suggests how the sun seems to shine more brightly after it has been darkened by passing shadows.

The *Adagio* has similar contrasting features; its opening displays ambiguity of mood with luscious warm string sequences leading to a somber march; later in the movement this reflective character is continually interrupted by sounds of a Wagnerian style village band. This subtly scored movement ends with a peaceful conclusion. The folk inspired third movement is perhaps a melancholic waltz, its wistfulness underscored by the minor key. The central trio section presents some beautiful pastoral material.

The final movement opens with a fanfare and then a dance-like finale theme is followed by a series of variations. In his 1984 biography *Dvořák*, Hans-Hubert Schönzeler offers insights into the finale of this symphony, describing it as, 'The most intimate and original within the whole canon of Dvořák's nine... [Dvořák] himself has said that he wanted to write a work different from the other symphonies, with individual force worked out in a new way, and in this he certainly succeeded, even though perhaps in the Finale his Bohemian temperament got the better of him... The whole work breathes the spirit of Vysoká, and when one walks in those forests surrounding Dvořák's country home on a sunny summer's day, with the birds singing and the leaves of trees rustling in a gentle breeze, one can virtually hear the music... [The] last movement just blossoms out, and I shall never forget [the Czech conductor] Rafael Kubelík in a rehearsal when it came to the opening trumpet fanfare, say to the orchestra, "Gentlemen, in Bohemia the trumpets never call to battle, they always call to the dance!"'



Title page of the autograph score for Dvořák's Symphony No. 8.



*Congratulations to CSO violinist Sheila Hayman on the acclaimed release of her feature documentary **Fanny: The Other Mendelssohn**.*

'It's a great story of a long-overdue revival.'
The Guardian

'A rewarding, civilised film.'
The Sunday Times

Felix Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* may be the best-known classical composition of all time. But Felix's sister Fanny was also a brilliant composer whose music is only beginning to get the recognition it deserves. In an amazing plot twist, captured as it happened in this extraordinary film, it is once and for all proven definitively that the *Easter Sonata*, long presumed to be the work of Felix Mendelssohn, was Fanny's own piano masterpiece, written when was only 22. Fanny's music is brought to life by the gifted virtuoso pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason, recipient of the 2021 Leonard Bernstein Award and 2021 best classical artist at the Global Awards. Directed by Sheila Hayman, the unheralded composer's great-great-great-granddaughter, *Fanny: The Other Mendelssohn* is as moving as it is joyous. This is the story of a very modern woman - who just happened to live 200 years ago.

For further information, including details of forthcoming screenings at cinemas across the UK, visit www.dartmouthfilms.com/fannytheothermendelssohn.



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Friends of Camden Symphony Orchestra

Would you consider supporting the orchestra by joining our Friends Scheme?

We enjoy performing an extremely varied range of repertoire for you, but it costs around £5,000 to put on a concert, and ticket sales only cover around a third of the costs. In the present climate, funding for any arts endeavour is increasingly difficult and like any other organisation, we face rising costs every year.

Our aim is to continue to provide players and audiences with the opportunity to perform and hear adventurous repertoire, to keep membership of the orchestra open to accomplished players regardless of their means, and to provide a platform for emerging soloists. We would like to thank our Friends who are helping us to achieve this.

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Laura Darling

Alia Lamadar

Mr Nigel Mott

Joanna and Paul Pearson

Denis Ribeiro in Memory of Marie Francisca Ribeiro

Silver Friends

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Mrs Elizabeth Jones

Mrs Jennie Taylor

If you have enjoyed our concert and feel able to contribute to the orchestra's future development, we ask you to consider becoming a Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra.

For a donation of **£50** per year, **Gold Friends** will receive:

- Two free tickets per year for our concerts.
- Complimentary refreshments with those concert tickets.

For a donation of **£25** per year, **Silver Friends** will receive:

- A free ticket for one concert per year.
- Complimentary refreshments at that concert.

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- An acknowledgement in each programme (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).
- The opportunity to attend a rehearsal, giving insight into how the orchestra works.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@camdenso.org.uk.

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Account Number: 45204276
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Amarins Wierdsma - Violin



Amarins Wierdsma was born in Utrecht in 1991 to a musical family. After starting aged two with the Suzuki Method, Amarins studied with Coosje Wijzenbeek at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and with Vera Beths at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. In 2013 she moved to London to study with David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, completing her Masters, Artist Diploma and Fellowship with distinction.

During her studies Amarins won numerous awards including the RPS Emily Anderson Prize and the Young Music Talent of the Year Prize in the Netherlands (2007). She has participated in masterclasses at IMS Prussia Cove, the International Holland Music Sessions and the East Neuk Festival. In 2017 Amarins was selected to perform during the finals of the Young Classical Artists Trust and together with her duo partner Edward Liddall was a finalist in the 2019 Parkhouse Award at Wigmore Hall.

A committed chamber musician, Amarins is the first violinist of the Barbican Quartet. Formed in 2014 at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the quartet has appeared at numerous halls including Wigmore Hall, Het Muziekgebouw aan't IJ in Amsterdam and Casa da Musica in Porto. Recently they received an outstanding first prize at the 71st ARD International String Quartet Competition, also being awarded the special prize for Best Interpretation of the commissioned work by Dobrinka Tabakova, the Genuin Classics CD production special prize, the GEWA prize and the Henle Urtext prize. This win follows a third prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition and the first prize at the Weimar Joseph Joachim Chamber Music Competition. This season the quartet will perform in the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Canada, USA, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.

As a soloist Amarins has performed across Europe, playing concertos at venues including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Cadogan Hall among others. Further afield she has given recitals on tour in the USA and Indonesia. Recently Amarins performed *The Lark Ascending* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and she will record a CD in 2024. Aside from her work as a soloist and chamber musician, Amarins is a sought-after concertmaster. She has lead orchestras such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, Manchester Camerata and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. She plays on a Guaragnini violin from 1764 generously on loan from the National Music Instrument Foundation in Amsterdam.

To find out more about Amarins, visit www.amarinsmwierdsma.com.

Levon Parikian - Conductor

Levon Parikian has been one of our regular conductors since 2000, and our Musical Director since 2004.

After studying conducting with Michael Rose, David Parry and George Hurst, Lev went to St Petersburg to study with the great Russian teacher Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies, he has pursued a freelance career and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra, and Artistic Director of The Rehearsal Orchestra. He has worked extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Hertfordshire County Youth Orchestra, National Youth Strings Academy, Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, and at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he also taught conducting for fifteen years. In 2012, Lev conducted the UK première of Armen Tigranian's opera *Anoush* with London Armenian Opera. In 2014 he conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in a re-recording of the theme tune for *Hancock's Half Hour* for lost episodes recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Lev conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra again, along with violinist Jack Liebeck, for *Raptures*, the debut orchestral album of composer Stuart Hancock which was released in November 2019.

Lev has a parallel career as a writer, and his latest book, *Taking Flight: The Evolutionary Story of Life on the Wing*, was published in May 2023 and was shortlisted for the 2023 Royal Society Trivedi Science Book Prize. Lev's previous books include: *Waving, Not Drowning*, an entertaining insight into the conductor's world; *Why Do Birds Suddenly Disappear?*, a sorry tale of atrocious birdwatching; *Into the Tangled Bank*, an exploration of our relationship with nature longlisted for the Wainwright Prize; *Music to Eat Cake By*, a collection of essays commissioned by readers exploring everything from the art of the sandwich to how not to cure hiccups; and *Light Rain Sometimes Falls: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons* which was published in September 2021. For further information, visit levparikian.com.

John Crawford - Leader

John Crawford has been our leader since September 2006.

John received his early musical training in Sheffield, but later was able to study with Molly Mack at the Royal Academy of Music through the help of the National Youth Orchestra. He won a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Leonard Hirsch. After further study in Vienna and Siena, John joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra where he played for a decade. A growing interest in teaching led to his appointment as principal violin teacher at the Keski-Pohjanmaan Conservatory in Finland. John now combines a busy performing life with teaching at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music Junior Department.

John is also a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique and has had a lifelong interest in freedom of movement for musicians. He works regularly as an adjudicator and leads the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra as well as CSO.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

John Crawford (Leader)
Ashleigh Watkins
Nick Sexton
Hannah Min
Jonathan Knott
Susie Bokor
Ellie Shouls
Sarah Benson
Diana Muggleston
Hannah Hayes
Jasmine Cullingford
Marianne Tweedie
Martin Fraenkel

Violin II

Sheila Hayman
Josh Hillman
Marion Fleming
Jo Wilson
Josie Pearson
Lea Herrscher
Kathy He
Nanako Kimura
Martin Young
Mark Denza

Viola

James Taylor
Ingolf Becker
Roz Norkett
Lottie Copley
Joanna Dunmore
Sarah Dewis
Sophie Varlow
Stephen Brown

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones
Denis Ribeiro
Benjamin Phipps
Antje Saunders
Rebecca Cowper
Sophie Linton
Richard Campkin
Andrew Erskine

Double Bass

James Mott
Paul Tomkins
Seth Edmunds

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight
Jarad Slater

Oboe

Sonia Stevenson
Rachel Sutton

Cor Anglais

Adam Bakker

Clarinet

Sheena Balmain
Debbie Shipton

Bassoon

David Robson
Sebastian Till

Horn

Ed Dorman
John Isaacs
Michael Slater
Gwen McDougal

Trumpet

Sarah Hall
Daniel Haigh

Trombone

Kirk Robinson
Pete Rowe
Peter Biddlecombe

Tuba

Sean Byrne

Timpani

Julie Scheuren

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 16th March 2024 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Johannes Brahms - *Tragic Overture*
Aram Khachaturian - *Masquerade Suite*
Sergei Rachmaninov - *Symphony No. 2*

Our spring concert includes three iconic works that we have never performed before. Brahms' *Tragic Overture* has a turbulent, tormented character. Khachaturian's *Masquerade Suite* includes his famous Waltz, considered one of his finest works. Following the disastrous premiere of his first symphony, Rachmaninov suffered years of self-doubt before completing his second symphony which has become one of the best-loved works in the repertoire.

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Saturday 6th July 2024 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Karol Szymanowski - *Violin Concerto No. 2*
(Soloist: Fenella Humphreys)
Hector Berlioz - *Symphonie Fantastique*

Our Summer Concert includes some important unfinished business. We planned to perform Szymanowski's *Violin Concerto No. 2* in June 2020, and we're delighted to welcome back Fenella Humphreys to perform it at last! The highly evocative movements of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* include a ball, a rural scene in the fields, a march to the scaffold and dreams of a witches' sabbath.

For further details about these concerts, including ticket information, visit:

www.camdenso.org.uk

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