

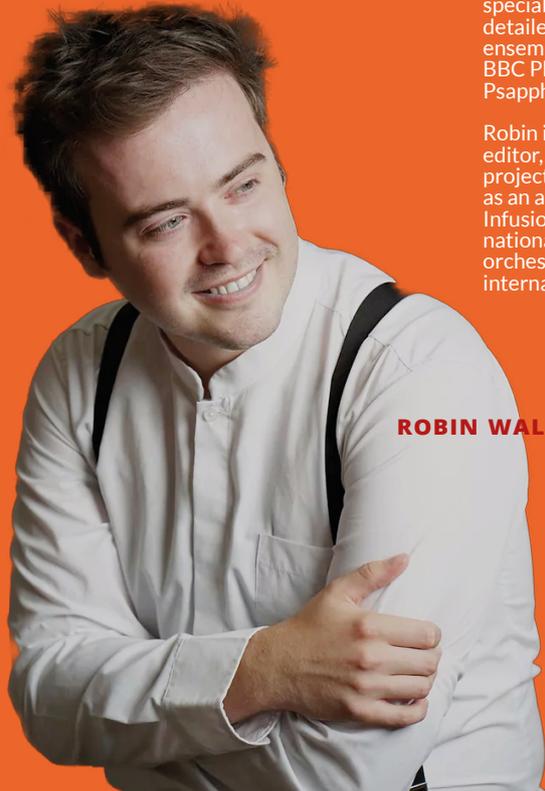
STOCKPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



2022/23
SEASON

CONDUCTORS

Some of the
conductors appearing
this season



ROBIN WALLINGTON - NOVEMBER

Robin Wallington is a versatile young English conductor/composer with a reputation for dynamic performances across a wide range of contemporary and established repertoire.

Equally at home in front of a full symphony orchestra, period instrument ensemble or contemporary music specialist ensemble, Robin brings a driving energy and detailed eye to his wide repertoire. He has worked with ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Psappha, and Northern Ballet Sinfonia.

Robin is also a professional composer, arranger, and editor, having arranged for both classical and cross-over projects with a variety of ensembles. He regularly works as an arranger for the BBC Philharmonic and String Infusion. His arrangements have been broadcast on national and local radio stations and his reductions of orchestral works for chamber ensembles have sold internationally.

Winner of the 1992 Leeds Conductors' Competition, Philip Ellis has been conductor of the Birmingham Royal Ballet since 1990, giving between 40 and 100 ballet performances every season. He is now increasingly in demand as a guest conductor, appearing regularly with The Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, Paris Opera Ballet, La Scala Ballet, Mikhailovsky Ballet, and Australian Ballet.

Philip combines his broad experience and musicality from many years as a concert conductor working at the highest level with orchestras such as the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, and the Hallé.

Mainly in demand for his experience and flair with the classic ballets he is equally at home with new work, contemporary music and dance styles.

Philip has made many recordings with the Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras.

Agata Zając is a Polish conductor who started her musical path as a violinist and then began conducting studies at the Poznań Academy of Music.

In 2021 she completed postgraduate studies at the Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. In September 2020, she was one of the two finalists in the conducting competition of the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, and in 2021 was one of 20 invited to the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition with the London Symphony Orchestra. Agata Zając was conductor-in-residence with the Sudeten Philharmonic for 2020/2021 and in September 2022 joins the RNCM as the new Mills Williams Junior Fellow in Conducting.



PHILIP ELLIS - JANUARY

AGATA ZAJĄC - FEBRUARY



Robert has established himself as one of the most exciting conductors of his generation. Hailing from North Wales, and shortlisted for the Cadaqués and Besançon International Conducting Competitions, he is Artistic Director of the award-winning NEW Sinfonia, the Orchestra in Residence at North Wales International Music Festival, and a regular guest conductor at Manchester Camerata.

Robert's collaborative approach to building trust with musicians has been shaped by his early professional career as a viola player, where he notably played with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra of Opera North and alongside the Allegri and Edinburgh String Quartets

Robert Guy

PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR

2022/23



"really fine young Welsh conductor, Robert Guy... has the relaxed authority, excellent technique, deep musicality and winning personality that is all too rare."

Raphael Wallfisch

THE PLANETS

15 OCTOBER 2022 7.30 PM
Stockport Town Hall

BRAHMS Academic Festival Overture
MOZART Clarinet Concerto
HOLST The Planets

Robert Guy, conductor
Fraser Langton, clarinet

Written between 1914-1916, 'The Planets' represents the then known planets of the Solar System but with their corresponding astrological character. Ironically, Pluto was discovered later, had an additional movement written for it and was then declared not to be a planet after all!

Much of Holst's own character is captured in the suite - the extrovert Jupiter, the humorous Uranus, and the relaxed and lyrical Venus. The work is a perennial

favourite of the concert halls for good reason. It also affords us our first of two opportunities this season to hear the Town Hall's Wurlitzer organ in action played this evening by Stephen Brown.

With the lively Brahms curtain-raiser the new season gets off to a rousing start and in between, one of the best loved concertos in the repertoire played by the BBC Philharmonic's Fraser Langton.



"Langton's technique is sure, his musicianship all-encompassing and his head balanced with his heart." - Gramophone Magazine

"... displays admirable control throughout a huge dynamic and pitch range. His technique is impressive, and his phrasing is always emotionally compelling" - Larry Guy, International Clarinet Association



PICTURES

12 NOVEMBER 2022 7.30 PM
Stockport Town Hall

BAX A Picaresque Comedy
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No 3
MUSSORGSKY Pictures at an Exhibition

Robin Wallington, conductor
Yuxuan Zhao, piano

In February 1874, inspired by a memorial show of art for a recently deceased friend, Mussorgsky decided to compose a set of piano pieces capturing in music the art that was shown publicly at the exhibition as well as two or three sections based on canvases that he had been shown privately. Mussorgsky links his sketches together with a musical Promenade representing the moving from one picture to the next.

Normally modest by name and by nature, Mussorgsky took particular pride in this work which it is more often heard, not in its original piano version but in the

orchestrated arrangement created by Ravel in 1922 and which we play tonight.

Our soloist for this concert in Beethoven's third great piano concerto, is Yuxuan Zhao. Yuxuan was born in China and is currently studying at the RNCM with Graham Scott. He has won major prizes in several leading competitions in China and Korea and in July 2022 was a prize-winner in the Birmingham International Piano Competition.

An afternoon of magical beings and marvellous music. From the ballet music of The Nutcracker with the Sugar-Plum Fairy to the return of Craig Charles' more scary one in a sequel to last year's hit. From the Sorcerer's Apprentice made popular by Disney's animated classic, Fantasia, to the modern-day wizardry of Harry Potter . Oh yes, and the odd witch (witches are usually odd!)



**SCARY FAIRY
IS BACK!!**

ROBERT GUY , conductor

11 DECEMBER 2022

3PM SUNDAY MATINEE



WITCHES, WIZARDS AND FAIRIES

FAMILY CONCERT

Stockport Town Hall

FARRINGTON Scary Fairy Saves Christmas

WITH BEATRICE LAMB, Narrator

MUSSORGSKY Night on a Bare Mountain



TCHAIKOVSKY Nutcracker Suite



WILLIAMS Harry Potter

Beatrice Lamb, the last-minute concert-saving narrator who rescued our last Christmas concert when Covid struck, gets to prepare properly this year for the narration of - how appropriate is this?! - 'Scary Fairy Saves Christmas'. A piece for narrator and orchestra, with the text in the form of a poem by Craig Charles, the lively and engaging orchestral score is in the tradition of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf. A deliciously dark tale in the best fairytale traditions with the usual blend of murder, mayhem and laughter.

DUKAS The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Please note that in December there will be some seating at the front reserved for families with children. Come early!



A HERO'S LIFE

28 JANUARY 2023 7.30 PM
Stockport Town Hall

TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet
STRAUSS Four Last Songs
STRAUSS Ein Heldenleben

Philip Ellis, conductor
April Fredrick, soprano

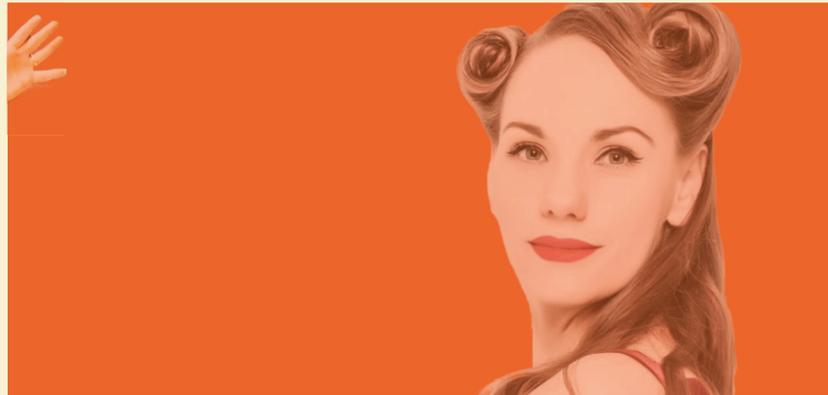
It is hard to think that a more sublime set of songs than Strauss' final compositional work was ever devised. American-born soprano, April Fredrick joins conductor Philip Ellis for the first of two Strauss masterpieces and one which is close to her heart.

In the second half, from the introduction of the hero of the work's title in a soaring romantic melody to his withdrawal from the world in the knowledge of his virtues and accomplishments, Heldenleben offers a scintillating semi-autobiographical

journey through a life. Themes from Don Juan, Till Eulenspiegel, Death and Transfiguration, and several other compositions are quoted as the hero reaches journey's end.

If you have never been sure about Strauss, this is a concert to convert you. If you are already a fan where else would you want to be this evening?

Oh, and did we mention Tchaikovsky's ravishing overture?



"An unusually charismatic performer, engaging herself emotionally from the first bar; I was mesmerised by the power of her voice, her control and her communication of musical passion. She had me on the edge of my seat and in tears'. ...Susan Elkin

ELGAR CELLO CONCERTO

25 FEBRUARY 2023 7.30 PM
Stockport Town Hall

MENDELSSOHN Calm Sea & Prosperous Voyage

ELGAR Cello Concerto

Agata Zając, conductor

Rachel Siu, cello

SAINT SAENS ORGAN SYMPHONY

SAINT SAENS Symphony No 3

Richard Brocklehurst, organ

A warm welcome back for our Stockport International Young Musicians Competition winner of 2021/2, Rachel Siu. Having heard her final-winning performance of the Dvorak cello concerto, we are all keen to hear her interpretation of the Elgar. After completion of her studies at the Julliard in New York, Rachel is now back home in Australia from where she has travelled to be with us tonight.

And after the interval, a rare chance, but the second this season, to hear the mighty Stockport Town Hall Wurlitzer in action. Whether or not you caught it in October, it's worth hearing again. This is a

symphony in which pretty much every theme is hummable and will stay with you long after the concert. And the climax is thrilling! Every trick of the trade is used by Saint-Saëns to build the tension and the excitement all the way to the last ground-shaking chord. This is the Wurlitzer at its most thunderous under the fingers of Richard Brocklehurst; you will feel as much as hear it.

We are delighted to be joined this evening by Polish conductor Agata Zając, the new conducting Fellow at the RNCM.



MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN CONCERTO



SCHUBERT Unfinished Symphony
MENDELSSOHN Violin Concerto
BRAHMS Symphony No 4

Stephen Threlfall, conductor
Callum Smart, violin

25 MARCH 2023 7.30 PM
Stockport Town Hall

Callum Smart made a long-overdue debut with the SSO last season in a memorable performance of Elgar's violin concerto. He returns this evening with another from the list of the world's favourite music. If we thought Callum's appearance was overdue, it's 15 years since the orchestra recorded this work (how time flies!) and, unbelievably, that is also when we last performed it.

Brahms, haunted perhaps by the ghost of that symphonic titan, Beethoven, took 15 years to finish his first symphony. Once he had, the next three came quickly. The fourth is full of rich orchestral colours with melody after melody flowing freely. The triumphant finale is an optimistic and joyous ending to the work

which Brahms himself once doubted was good enough for an orchestra. It proved an instant hit, however, and has remained a favourite of concert-goers and players ever since.

And was it similar self-doubt that caused Schubert to leave what we now call his eighth symphony unfinished and abandoned until its discovery nearly 40 years later? One of several theories has it that the Entr'acte from Schubert's Rosamunde is in fact one of the missing movements. We will probably never know.

A warm welcome back to conductor Stephen Threlfall who needs little introduction to North West audiences.

CLASSICAL GENIUS

13 MAY 2023 7.30 PM

Stockport Town Hall

MOZART Overture to Don Giovanni
BACH Concerto for Oboe and Violin
BACH Brandenburg Concerto No 4
BEETHOVEN Symphony No 3 'Eroica'

The SSO doesn't venture that often into the realms of the Baroque. The occasional Mozart and Haydn is usually as early as we go as a symphony orchestra. However we decided to do something a little different for this year's May concert and at the same time showcase several SSO regular players.

After a Mozart overture, therefore, we have two offerings from Bach. In one, orchestra leader Helen Brackley Jones joins forces with principal oboe, Simon Beesley for the Bach Double Concerto for oboe and violin.

In the other Helen again steps into the spotlight, this time with principal and sub-principal flautists Lindsay Grainger and Anna Shipton for Brandenburg 4.

In both pieces we are also fortunate to have the wonderful harpsichordist Charlotte Turner as part of the ensemble. Charlotte has performed across the UK, winning second prize twice in the Broadwood Harpsichord Competition

Maca Barbosa, conductor
Matteo Dal Maso, conductor

Helen Brackley Jones, violin
Simon Beesley, oboe

and appearing with her own ensemble and as guest performer with Nicola Benedetti, Manchester Camerata, The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and as a soloist at the Bruges International Harpsichord Exhibition.

The second half of the concert speaks

Lindsay Grainger, flute
Anna Shipton, flute
Charlotte Turner, harpsichord

for itself - Beethoven's ground-breaking third symphony, 'Eroica'.

We are joined for these works of classical genius, as is usual for our May concerts, by RNCM conducting students. Maca Barbosa from Columbia and Italian Matteo Dal Maso.



RACHMANINOV 2

24 JUNE 2023 7.30 PM

Stockport Town Hall

GLINKA Russlan and Ludmilla

RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No 2

SIBELIUS Symphony No2

Robert Guy, conductor

Giulia Cantaldo, piano

Rachmaninov's second piano concerto; is this the only music ever dedicated to a composer's hypnotist? After the poor reception his first concerto received, Rachmaninov underwent treatment including hypnotherapy for his depression and creative block and in gratitude dedicated this work to his therapist.

The second concerto, of course, was a huge success and has ever since been at the very top of everyone's favourite pieces of all time. It has been a regular No.1 in Classic FM's annual charts and is the overall No.1 in the aggregated chart.

Giulia Cantaldo became a smash hit when she stepped in to play a BBC Phil concert on two days' notice in 2022. We think you are going to love her.

Sibelius 2 was premiered in 1902, and became one of Sibelius' most popular works. The triumphant finale with its soaring, heroic music led the Symphony to be labelled as the 'Symphony of Independence'. It is doubtful that was the composer's intention, however, much of the music having been conceived as a sketch for a work based on Don Juan during an Italian holiday!



TICKETS

OUR PRICES

- Full price £15
- Concessionary £13 (holders of JSA, OAPs and leisure key)
- Full-time students up to 21 years of age £5

Under 16s are FREE when accompanied by a full price or concessionary adult (excluding Christmas - children's tickets £5).

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE:

- Through our online booking system at www.ticketsource.co.uk/sso (a small booking fee applies)
- By calling the Box Office on 07947 474574
- By post from 26 Bodmin Ave, Macclesfield SK10 3JU (please send SAE and cheque payable to Stockport Symphony Orchestra)
- From the orchestra stand at the back of the hall at concerts

If ticket sales on the door are not possible, online purchases will be available until shortly before the concerts. Please be aware that tickets may be for timed entry slots.

SEASON TICKETS

A ticket for all the concerts of the season can be purchased at the back of the hall at the first concert making your first concert free! And in the event that audience numbers have to be restricted you will have priority though we can not guarantee any particular seat.

GROUP DISCOUNTS

Why not come with a group of friends? Buy 10 tickets, pay for only 9. Contact the Box Office for details.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: COVID

Sadly, none of us can predict how the continuing coronavirus pandemic might affect the holding of public events. With that in mind:

We may not be able to sell tickets on the doors so that numbers and flow-through can be properly managed. To avoid disappointment please buy early. There's an added incentive to planning ahead too; if audience numbers have to be cut to fewer than tickets already sold, this will be done on a last bought, first out basis!

All our concerts will be undertaken in accordance with regulations in force at the time and in co-operation with the Town Hall's events team to make our venue as safe as it can be. Your co-operation with any restrictions or special requirements such as proof of vaccination or immunity is greatly appreciated and we will try to give you as much warning as possible.

We expect it will continue to be possible to provide refreshments in the intervals at our concerts but that is dependent on the venue management and evolving legislation may prevent or restrict that. We apologise in advance should that be the case.

Changes in rules, travel restrictions and other circumstances may mean that we have to change programmes and/or performers, at short notice. Where we have your contact details we will try to keep you informed of such changes.

In the event that a concert has to be cancelled or restrictions mean that your seat can no longer be occupied you will receive a refund of your ticket price from Ticketsource if purchased through our online booking system or from us if booked direct.

PATRONS OF SSO:

BE PART OF IT

We believe the SSO is unique amongst non-professional orchestras in staging a season of eight concerts with great professional conductors and international soloists. We are only able to do so with the much appreciated help of our audience, Stockport MBC and our Patrons.

We want to continue to promote our role as part of the cultural bedrock of Stockport. We provide much-needed support and encouragement to young musicians at the early stages of their careers and with initiatives like our Young Musicians Competition, we believe we bring something unique and special to the cultural life of the town.

If you would like a closer involvement with the orchestra and help to maintain our commitment to music in Stockport for the next 40 years, please consider becoming a Patron and buying a season ticket and make Stockport's orchestra your orchestra.

Please:

- email sponsorship@stockportsymphony.co.uk
- call at the orchestra stand at the back of the hall; or
- just speak to a member of the orchestra.

In return you will receive (where permitted by covid regulations) :

- A reserved seat for concerts for which you buy tickets
- Acknowledgement in the programme
- Pre-concert talks on selected concerts
- Invitation to a post-concert drink after two of the concerts with an opportunity to chat to conductor, leader or soloist
- Preferential booking where possible if audience numbers restricted by coronavirus rules

Minimum donation £65 single £115 joint

ALL CONCERTS AT STOCKPORT TOWN HALL, Edward St, Stockport SK1 3XE

On concert evenings, subject to any coronavirus restrictions, doors open at 6.45 and there is a bar open before and after performances and during the interval.

Disabled access is by ramp at the Edward Street side entrance. Undercover parking is available in the Lacy Street car park behind the Town Hall (access from Edward Street).





SEASON AT A GLANCE

15 OCTOBER | 7.30 PM

BRAHMS Academic Festival Overture

MOZART Clarinet Concerto

HOLST The Planets

SUNDAY MATINÉE

11 DECEMBER | 3.00 PM

WITCHES WIZARDS & FAIRIES

Scary Fairy Saves Christmas | Nutcracker

Harry Potter | The Sorcerer's Apprentice

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heartbeat of the town”*

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