

STOCKPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*"the boldly-beating, hot-blooded cultural
heartbeat of the town"*

Saturday 14 October | 7.30pm

Shostakovich Festive Overture

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

Rachmaninov Symphony No 2

Sunday 10 December | 3.00pm

A HOLIDAY IN STOCKPORT-ON-SEA
(with pirates!)

Saturday 24 February | 7.30pm

Bruckner Symphonic Prelude

Elgar In the South

Kodaly Dances of Galanta

Dvorak Symphony No 8

Saturday 11 May | 7.30pm

Borodin Prince Igor

Strauss Suite in B-flat major

Brahms Symphony No 2

Saturday 11 November | 7.30pm

Panufnik Katyn Epitaph

Chopin Piano Concerto No 1

Shostakovich Symphony No 5

Saturday 27 January | 7.30pm

Dukas La Peri: Fanfare

Ravel Pavane pour une infante défunte

Debussy La Mer

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique

Saturday 23 March | 7.30pm

Mahler Blumine

Bruch Violin Concerto No 1

Mahler Symphony No 4

Saturday 22 June | 7.30pm

Bach Fantasia and Fugue in C minor

Grieg Piano Concerto

Elgar Symphony No 1

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

Doors open at 6.45. There is a bar open before and after performances and during the interval. Disabled access by ramp on Edward Street side door. Undercover parking available in the Lacy Street car park (access from Edward Street).

The Stockport Symphony Orchestra is a registered UK charity no 516159

STOCKPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Stockport Town Hall

2023/24

*"The orchestra were stunning!!
So exciting to watch and hear."*



"The concert last night was our first time with the Stockport Symphony Orchestra. We usually watch the Hallé. What did we think about SSO? ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL!"

CONDUCTORS

"a stunning performance of Ein Heldenleben"



Philip Ellis



Robin Wallington



Agata Zajac

PHILIP ELLIS

14 October
22 June

Philip Ellis has been conductor of the Birmingham Royal Ballet since 1990. Equally at home with new work, contemporary music and dance styles, he is 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 broad experience and musicality from many years as a concert conductor working with orchestras such as the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, and the Hallé. He has made many recordings with the Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras.

ROBERT GUY

10 December
27 January
23 March

Hailing from North Wales, and shortlisted for the Cadaqués and Besançon International Conducting Competitions, Robert (cover picture) 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

ROBIN WALLINGTON

24 February

Robin Wallington is a versatile young conductor/composer with a reputation for dynamic performances across a wide range of contemporary and established repertoire. He has worked with ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Psappha, and Northern Ballet Sinfonia.

Robin regularly works as an arranger for the BBC Philharmonic and String Infusion. His arrangements have been broadcast on national and local radio stations and he conducted his own orchestral arrangements for the 2022 Children in Need television broadcast.

AGATA ZAJĄC

11 November

Agata Zajac is a Polish conductor who started her musical path as a violinist. After conducting studies at the Poznań Academy of Music she completed her postgraduate degree at the Chopin University of Music in Warsaw.

Agata was a finalist in the conducting competitions of the Orchestre National d'Ile-de-France, and Hallé and in 2021 was invited to the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition with the London Symphony Orchestra. She was conductor-in-residence with the Sudeten Philharmonic for 2020/2021 and in September 2022 joined the RNCM as the Mills Williams Junior Fellow in Conducting.



RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Philip Ellis conductor

Martin James Bartlett piano

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Saturday 14 October | 7.30pm

Shostakovich Festive Overture

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

Rachmaninov Symphony No 2

Rhapsody in Blue occupies a special place in American music: it introduced jazz to classical concert audiences and simultaneously made an instant star of its composer. Martin James Bartlett recorded it with the London Philharmonic orchestra and has played it across the world to great acclaim.

As for the Rachmaninov, never has there been a symphony so rich in sweeping, majestic, extended melodies. The Finale, in a triumphant E major, begins like a whirling dance, succeeded by one of the high points of the symphony, the definitive Rachmaninov Big Tune. The glowing, eloquent theme unfolds sumptuously and a stirring coda brings the symphony to a resplendent conclusion.

"a rare combination of precision and poetry...Here was playing of the highest musical calibre."



Panufnik Katryn Epitaph

Chopin Piano Concerto No 1

Shostakovich Symphony No 5

Saturday 11 November | 7.30pm

Agata Zajac conductor

Warren Mailley-Smith piano

Warren Mailley-Smith has given acclaimed solo recitals at The Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Hall and has performed for the British Royal Family on numerous occasions. He has 40 piano concertos in his repertoire, and has made his concerto debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He was the first British pianist to perform Chopin's complete works for solo piano from memory in a series of 11 recitals. His latest recording includes the work featured tonight, Chopin's popular first concerto, soon to be released.

It's Remembrance Day and Poland's Independence Day so with thoughts of recent conflicts, Polish conductor, Agata Zajac will also lead us through a short work written in memory of thousands of Polish nationals, victims of mass execution by the Soviet regime in 1940. We finish with perhaps Shostakovich's most popular work; itself a Russian composer's response to repression. "I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the fifth. It's as if someone were beating you with a stick saying 'your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing', and you rise shakily and go off muttering 'Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing'".

CHOPIN AND SHOSTAKOVICH



A HOLIDAY IN STOCKPORT-ON-SEA (WITH PIRATES!)

Robert Guy conductor
Emma Cunliffe Narrator

A Christmas-time holiday visit to Stockport-on-Sea!

There's a blue sky and the sun is shining as we begin our holiday adventure with a moment of serene calm rudely interrupted by the arrival of Jaws and then rescue by a lifeboat all the way from Padstow.

Everyone can calm down after that with a lovely visit to the zoo to find the animal behind the mysterious song we hear as we enter.

Later, after a brief trip to the circus, two lots of pirates turn up with a mermaid.

It's just another SSO matinée!

THE SUNDAY MATINEE

Sunday 10 December | 3.00pm

Khatchaturian Adagio from Spartacus

Gregory Smith Zoo Song

Badelt Pirates of the Caribbean

Menken Little Mermaid

Sullivan Pirates of Penzance

Williams Jaws

And much more!

FANTASTIQUE? MANIFIQUE!

Robert Guy conductor

Saturday 27 January | 7.30pm

"We came ... mainly for the Mahler (which we loved) but were blown away by the Beethoven. It's fantastic to have such quality music on our doorstep"

Dukas La Peri: Fanfare

Ravel Pavane pour une infante défunte

Debussy La Mer

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique

A short fanfare introduces our all French programme for this concert followed by Ravel's ever-popular Pavane.

M. Berlioz

Debussy's tone-poem, *La Mer*, is one of the most magnificent musical invocations of the sea but tumultuous as it is, it is calm in comparison to Berlioz's masterpiece. As Bernstein once said: "Berlioz tells it like it is. You take a trip, you wind up screaming at your own funeral." A journey through dreams, ballrooms, the countryside, a beheading and a witches' Sabbath. Things don't get much more fantastic!



BOHEMIAN RHAPSODIC

Saturday 24 February | 7.30pm

Robin Wallington conductor

Bruckner Symphonic Prelude

Elgar In the South

Kodaly Dances of Galanta

Dvorak Symphony No 8

It has never been agreed whether the Symphonic Prelude was written by Bruckner or Mahler but either way it's a great way to start a concert. Elgar in the South, while written in and influenced by the local music of Liguria is unmistakably Elgar with its wistful, poignant viola solo. And in the second half we travel to Bohemia for two of its most celebrated sons. Kodaly's Dances is based on the folk music of Galanta, now part of Slovakia. Dvorák was an enthusiast of the folk music of Moravia and his eighth symphony is one of the warmest, most optimistic in his symphonic cycle.

Kodály



Antonin Dvorák

Robin Wallington



BRUCH VIOLIN CONCERTO

Saturday 23 March | 7.30pm

Robert Guy conductor

Callum Smart violin

Lucy Farrimond soprano

Mahler Blumine

Bruch Violin Concerto No 1

Mahler Symphony No 4

An evening of sumptuous melodies is in store with this concert. Mahler's Blumine is "a heartfelt, rapturous trumpet melody that alternates with melancholy song on the oboe ...lovers exchanging their tender feelings in the stillness of night." Follow that! Well actually in a competition for melody, Bruch scores pretty well and with Mahler's fourth, we have the shortest of his symphonies, all sunshine, warmth and good humour concluding with a sublime depiction of a child's idea of heaven where wine costs 'not a penny', St Martha does the cooking, and angels sing to St. Cecilia while baking bread!

Gustav Mahler

Callum Smart



Lucy Farrimond



BRAHMS' SECOND

Saturday 11 May | 7.30pm

Connor Lyster
Alec Frank-Gemmill conductors

Borodin Prince Igor
Strauss Suite, in B-flat major
Brahms Symphony No 2

It took Brahms years to complete his first symphony. The second was written in a single summer in the Austrian Alps. Of it, his friend Theodor Billroth wrote: "*How beautiful it must be in Pörschach. It is all rippling streams, blue sky, sunshine and cool green shadows*". It's a joyful second foray into the symphonic form.

As usual we welcome two conductors at the start of their careers for May's concert.



GRIEG AND ELGAR

Saturday 22 June | 7.30pm

Philip Ellis conductor
Liana Storey piano

Bach Fantasia and Fugue in C minor
Grieg Piano Concerto
Elgar Symphony No 1

It's not often you hear Bach played by a symphony orchestra these days but this is something different - Bach arranged by Elgar. A stunning reimagining of a classic Bach organ work.

The Grieg needs no introduction and it's played tonight by the exceptionally talented Japanese-British pianist, Liana Storey.

And in part two, one of those beloved, iconic pieces which are quintessentially English in character by the arranger of the Bach.

"a tear-jerking, eye-watering and lump-in-the-throating performance of ...Four Last Songs conducted with finesse by Philip Ellis"

Connor Lyster



Alec Frank-Gemmill



Philip Ellis



Liana Storey

Edward Elgar



TICKETS

- 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 for which childrens' tickets are available at £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
- On the door until sold out

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.

PATRONS OF SSO

Support the orchestra you love - get closer to the music

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

To support us, please:

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

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.

In return for your support you will receive :

- 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

