

THE SEASON ON A PAGE

11 October

Strauss Ariadne auf Naxos, Overture & Dance
Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 3
Dvořák Symphony No 9

Antonina Suhanova piano
Robin Wallington conductor

14 December
The Family
Matinée

Gaspard the Fox comes to Stockport!
Gaspard's Foxtrot and more!

Emma Cunliffe presenter

28 February

Doreen Carwithen Bishop Rock
Dorothy Howell Lamia
Florence Price Piano Concerto
CLARE HAMMOND
Bartók Concerto for Orchestra
Philip Ellis conductor

16 May

Vaughan Williams Dives & Lazarus
Cosma Euphonium Concerto **DANIEL HOHM**
Wagner Rienzi Overture
Tchaikovsky Swan Lake
Davide Trolton
Chris Binns conductors

8 November

Wagner Polonia
Elgar Sea Pictures **KATHRYN RUDGE**
Lars-Erik Larsson The Winter's Tale
Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet

Agata Zajac conductor

31 January

Arnold Four Scottish Dances
Beethoven Piano Concerto No 5
'Emperor' **ANNA McCARGOW**
Tchaikovsky Symphony No 1
'Winter Daydreams'
Robert Guy conductor

28 March

Mozart Symphony No 38 (Prague)
Strauss Horn Concerto No 1
ANNEMARIE FEDERLE
Beethoven Symphony No 7
Euan Shields conductor

20 June

Sibelius Finlandia
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto **JENNIFER PIKE**
Sibelius Karelia Suite
Stravinsky The Firebird
Robert Guy conductor

STOCKPORT  SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

INVITATION TO THE DANCE

THE 2025/26 SEASON



INVITATION TO THE DANCE

It may seem an odd title for a season of classical music by a symphony orchestra but hear us out.

There is a fine thread of dance running through this year's season: some obvious, some less so. There is the music to accompany ballets: the drama and passion of *Romeo and Juliet*; the soaring romanticism of *Swan Lake* and sheer visceral excitement of *The Firebird*. There are the borrowed Scottish dances of Arnold's popular suite and then there is the less obvious.

Beethoven's 7th Symphony, a work once described by no less a figure than Richard Wagner, as "*the apotheosis of the dance*" is one of Ludwig's most energetic, joyful and rhythmically led compositions and there are hints of African-American juba dance once practised on U.S. plantations in Florence Price's piano concerto.

And if that isn't enough to whet the appetite we bring yet more top class soloists to Stockport: the outstanding Annemarie Federle, appointed Principal Horn at the LPO in 2023 when still in college, Clare Hammond, renowned pianist who thrilled us with her Rachmaninov last season, a Stockport debut for Latvian pianist, Antonina Suhanova, Anna McCargow, winner of our competition in March, Kathryn Rudge, star mezzo-soprano of concert stage and opera, and back with us again, Stockport's own classical superstar, Jennifer Pike.

Enjoy the season and see what other dance motifs you can spot during the year. Every concert has one - or more!

"If you haven't ever been to a performance by the marvellous Stockport Symphony Orchestra then you really should take a look at the forthcoming season and book yourself a ticket. You'll be glad you did."

Moor Magazine



Euan Shields



Davide Trolton



Chris Binns

THE CONDUCTORS



Robin Wallington



Philip Ellis



Robert Guy

STOCKPORT **SYMPHONY**
ORCHESTRA

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



Agata Zając



SATURDAY 11 October 2025 7.30pm

Stockport Town Hall

RACHMANINOV AND A NEW WORLD

Strauss Ariadne auf Naxos - Overture & Dance Scene

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto no 3

Dvořák Symphony No 9 *From the New World*

Robin Wallington conductor

Antonina Suhanova piano

Two of tonight's pieces need little introduction: the second, one of the greatest concertos for piano ever written, premièred in New York in 1909, and the start of Rachmaninov's relationship with the new world; the third, immediately recognisable, also premièred in New York just 16 years before Rachmaninov's arrival in the country which was to become his home.

And to begin, a lesser-known piece from Richard Strauss but one with typical Straussian melody in the overture and then our first dance of the season!

A debut with us this evening for Latvian pianist Antonina Suhanova and a welcome return with the baton for Robin Wallington.

SATURDAY 8 November 2025 7.30pm

Stockport Town Hall

SEA PICTURES

Agata Zajac conductor

ROMEO AND JULIET

Wagner Polonia

Elgar Sea Pictures

Lars-Erik Larsson The Winter's Tale

Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet (excerpts)



Kathryn Rudge mezzo-soprano

11 November is Poland's National Independence Day celebrating independence after the First World War and we celebrate it a few days early with Polish conductor, Agata Zajac and Wagner's Polonia.

After that curtain-raiser we have the delights of Elgar's Sea Pictures sung this evening by the stellar mezzo-soprano, Kathryn Rudge who recorded the work recently with the RLPO and Petrenko.

Then after Swedish composer Larsson's sweetly yearning, poignant incidental music for Shakespeare's Winter's Tale, we move to the drama, romance and spectacle of Prokofiev's coruscating ballet music for Romeo and Juliet.

SUNDAY 14 December 2025

SUNDAY MATINÉE 3.00PM

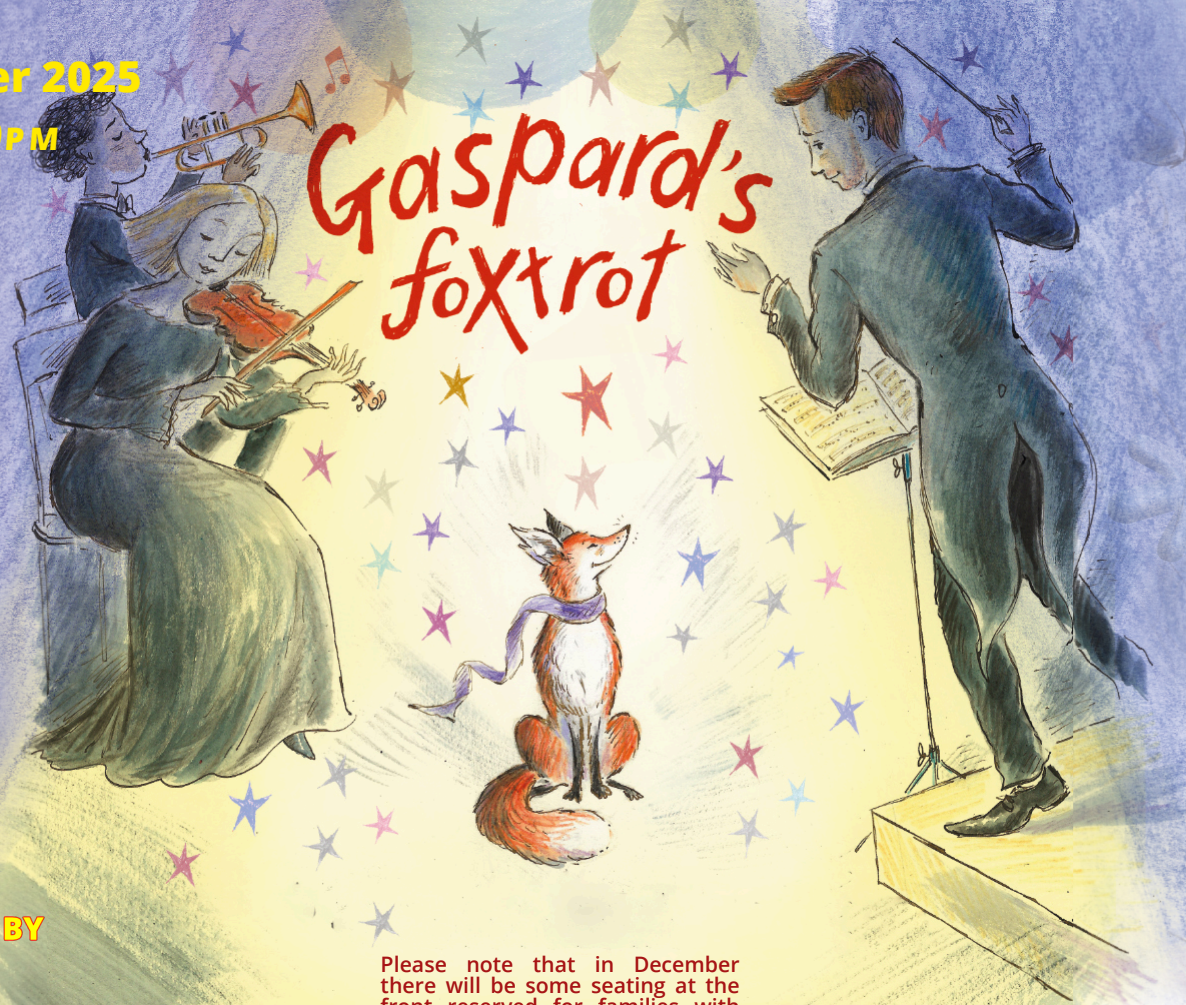
Gaspard accidentally boards the Number 38 bus and has a thrilling fox-eye view of the sights, sounds and smells of London, but how will he ever get home? At Hyde Park he finds himself at a classical concert celebrating the city's wildlife, and becomes front-page news when he trots out on stage.

This exciting adventure for London's handsomest fox has been adapted as a major new concert work by composer Jonathan Dove. Look forward to a lively narration from Emma Cunliffe and projection on the Town Hall big screen of the wonderful original illustrations by James Mayhew to go with a beautiful score.

As for the rest ...well...come and do some chocolate tasting to music (chocolates provided!) and enjoy the other musical surprises on offer.

PRESENTED AND NARRATED BY

EMMA CUNLIFFE



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

SATURDAY 31 January 2026 7.30pm

Stockport Town Hall

WINTER DAYDREAMS

Arnold Four Scottish Dances

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 5

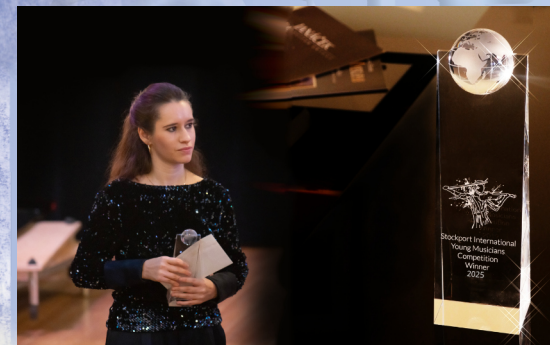
Tchaikovsky Symphony No 1 'Winter Daydreams'

Robert Guy conductor

With sounds of bagpipes, reels and Scotch snap rhythms, Arnold's dance suite conjures up vivid images of Scotland with comic elements in the shape of a tipsy bassoon and moments of calm in a slow, graceful melody evoking thoughts of a calm day in the Hebrides and Scottish ballads like the Skye Boat Song.

The concerto this evening is one of the most popular works in classical music. Our soloist is the wonderful Anna McCargow, winner of our own international young musicians competition last March who joins us this evening from Germany.

Tchaikovsky's first attempt at symphonic form remained one of his favourites. Although its composition took its toll on him, at a point where he had four symphonies behind him he wrote: "It has more substance and is better than any of my other more mature works". A symphony of charm and melody with hints of Russian folk music. Tom Service called it "one of the most ... attractive first symphonies ever written" with an "irresistibly over-the-top conclusion".



Anna McCargow piano

SATURDAY 28 February 2026 7.30 PM

Stockport Town Hall

WOMEN OF NOTES

Doreen Carwithen Bristol Rock

Dorothy Howell Lamia

Florence Price Piano Concerto

Bartók Concerto for Orchestra

Philp Ellis conductor

A trio of long-neglected female composers make up the first half of this concert. From Buckinghamshire, Birmingham and Arkansas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their music has been unfairly overlooked, victim to an undoubted gender bias and misogyny as well as, later, the fashion for modernism, it is now enjoying something of a revival.

Lamia, based on the Keats poem of the snake transformed into a woman, was particularly successful when composed by a very young Howell ("the English Strauss") and was so popular it was played at six subsequent seasons of the Proms but then, after 1940, not again until 2010; Florence Price was the first black woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra; Carwithen, as well as writing for the concert stage, was the first woman anywhere in the world to work full-time as a film composer.

And we conclude, in the second half, with one of Bartók's most popular, and accessible works - an orchestral tour de force.



Clare Hammond piano

Mozart Symphony No 38

Strauss Horn Concerto No 1

Beethoven Symphony No 7

Euan Shields conductor

A joyous work, Wagner described Beethoven's seventh symphony as "*the apotheosis of the dance; dance in its most exalted form*". Tonight we welcome to the SSO Euan Shields to conduct this exhilarating work alongside the Strauss Horn Concerto with Annemarie Federle and Mozart's Prague Symphony.

We are delighted to be introducing two musicians to Stockport on stellar career paths. Annemarie Federle, is well on the way to becoming a star among the world's French horn players. In 2020 she was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician Competition. Three years later, still at the Royal Academy of Music, and just 20, she was appointed Principal Horn of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and is now also principal with the Aurora Orchestra and performing with many of the major UK orchestras, as well as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich.

Raised in Japan and the USA, in 2023, Euan Shields captured global attention by winning the prestigious Siemens Hallé International Conducting Competition and is now in his second season as assistant conductor at the Halle.

SATURDAY 28 March 2026 7.30 PM

APOTHEOSIS OF THE DANCE

Stockport Town Hall



Annemarie Federle horn

SATURDAY 16 May 2026 7.30pm

Stockport Town Hall

SWAN LAKE

Vaughan Williams Dives & Lazarus

Cosma Euphonium Concerto

Wagner Rienzi Overture

Tchaikovsky Swan Lake Suite

Chris Binns

Davide Trolton
conductors

Daniel Hohm euphonium

Everyone will know *Swan Lake*. A lot of people will know *Dives & Lazarus* which consistently rides high in the top 100 Classic FM Hall of Fame.

However, we think not many will know the euphonium concerto. It's a neglected instrument in the classical genre, but tonight's soloist will change minds about the instrument and open ears to an accessible tuneful composer from Romania. Vladimir Cosma is an award-winning composer of over 300 film and TV scores in addition to his output for the concert platform and his concerto has become a stand-out work for euphonium players across the world.

SATURDAY 20 June 2026 7.30pm

Stockport Town Hall

THE FIREBIRD

JENNIFER PIKE'S TCHAIKOVSKY

After the invigorating *Finlandia* we are delighted to welcome back the fabulous Jennifer Pike with the ever-popular Tchaikovsky concerto which she first played with the SSO in 2018.

In the second half, along with *Karelia*, we bring you the dance feature. And what a feature to close the season! Stravinsky's *Firebird*, premiered in Paris in 1910, propelled the composer to instant fame and success. Diaghilev is said to have remarked in rehearsal "*Mark him well, he is a man on the eve of celebrity*". And so it proved. It led directly to his commissions for *Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*, propelling him to his place as one of the giants of 20th century music.

Robert Guy conductor

Sibelius Finlandia
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

Sibelius Karelia Suite
Stravinsky The Firebird



BECOME A PATRON

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, please consider becoming a Patron and buying a season ticket and make Stockport's orchestra your orchestra.

To become a Patron:

- 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.

As a Patron you will receive

- A reserved seat for concerts for which you buy tickets
- Acknowledgement in the programme
- Pre-concert talks on selected concerts
- Invitations to a post-concert drink after two of the concerts with an opportunity to chat to conductor, leader or soloist
- An invitation to attend the semi-finals of our young musicians competition in competition years

Minimum donation
£70 single ; £125 joint

"... all playing as a team, to make some wonderful music. Proud to be a Patron of this orchestra"

TICKETS

PRICES

- Full price £16
- Concessionary £14 (holders of JSA, OAPs and leisure key)
- Full-time students under 22 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:

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

A season ticket for all the concerts of the season can be purchased at the back of the hall up to and including the time of 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 only guarantee a particular seat for Patrons.

All concerts are at the wonderful Stockport Town Hall which is fully accessible and has ample parking behind.

"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. A great orchestra and the programme was fabulous!"

