

Programme

Jean Sibelius - Karelia Overture

Max Bruch - Violin Concerto No. 1

~ Interval ~

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy - Symphony No. 5
"Reformation"

About tonight's music

Jean Sibelius - Karelia Overture

Sibelius composed incidental music for various theatrical performances throughout his career. Among the earliest is music composed for a historical tableau vivant staged by the Viipuri Student Association in November 1893. The main city of the province of Karelia, Viipuri (Vyborg) was an important site of Finnish cultural and political strength, particularly as opposed to Russia, the giant on the other side of the border. In the summer of 1892, following his marriage to Aino Järnefelts, Sibelius made his own pilgrimage to Karelia, where he wrote down many folk tunes. But Sibelius' concept for a modern nationalism in music relied on conveying the essence of folk music rather than on literal quotation. "I think I am now on the right path," he had written to Aino in 1891. "I now grasp those Finnish, purely Finnish tendencies in music less realistically but more truthfully than before." In the case of the Karelia Overture this new path led to boldly pictorial music expressed within simplistic orchestral means that further underlines the folk-element of the music. The Overture, which also introduces themes heard in the other movements of the Suite, depicts the grandeur of the Viipuri castle with bare harmonic changes and drone like accompaniment throughout.

Max Bruch - Violin Concerto No. 1

Max Bruch was already a respected composer as an adolescent. By age 20, he was teaching in Cologne and had written and produced his first opera. Today, he's known almost exclusively for the Violin Concerto, though his *Kol Nidrei*, for cello and orchestra, and his *Scottish Fantasy*, for violin and orchestra, are still performed with some regularity. Bruch is known for his love of folk music, and this work displays that affinity from the opening moments. The Vorspiel (Prelude) begins as the violin intones a passionate and earthy lament. This sets the stage for an only slightly more robust Allegro moderato, but also prepares us for the longing of the Adagio to come. This all-too-short first movement is compelling, filled with melancholy and impassioned melodies set against a rich orchestral background that only enriches the soloist's mournful utterances. With a nod to the Vorspiel, Bruch's first movement yields to the luxurious Adagio, which is as rich and seductive as any in the genre. The violin spins out mournful tunes, adding to the luscious lamentations of the first movement. The Finale is a gypsy romp, a virtuosic display of technical bravado that perfectly balances the Concerto, and also displays keen emotional intensity. It is just this balance of approachability, quirkiness, bravado, and passion that have ensured this work its continued place among excellent Violin Concerti.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy - Symphony No. 5 "Reformation"

If the "Reformation" Symphony had been performed according to Mendelssohn's original intentions, it might have escaped the disdain in which he seems to have held it ever since. Aware that the year 1830 was to be celebrated as the tercentennial of the Augsburg Confession submitted by Luther and Melancthon to the Emperor Charles V in 1530, Mendelssohn was already thinking about a suitable composition during his adventurous trip to the British Isles in 1829.

As a devout Protestant himself and a boundless admirer of Bach (whose *St. Matthew Passion* he had recently revived in Berlin), Mendelssohn felt drawn by the idea of a symphony that symbolised the Protestant Reformation not with a grand choral work on a sacred text, as might be expected, but with a four-movement symphony without words. The "Reformation" Symphony was thus conceived as celebrating the triumph of Protestantism, represented in the finale by Luther's chorale "Ein feste Burg," over Catholicism, which is depicted very briefly at the beginning of the Symphony in beautiful Palestrinian polyphony. However, Berlin's leading music critic objected to the

idea of a symphony carrying some kind of external message, but whether or not this was enough to turn the composer against his own work, he later refused to have it performed, describing it as “juvenile.” He even said he thought it should be burnt. Happily for us, the Reformation Symphony survived and is today rightly appreciated among the rest of Mendelssohn’s great compositional output.

The first movement persuasively carries the notion of conflict, at first in the slow introduction where clarion figures seem to call out for reform over the aspiring counterpoint in the lower strings. Mendelssohn also cites the “Dresden Amen,” a simple rising scale heard twice very softly in widely spaced strings, which he may have regarded as a symbol of the Protestant church. Then the main Allegro, in the minor mode, comes close to Beethovenian anger, dramatically interrupted at the end of the development when the music speeds up almost out of control, only to be stopped in its tracks by the strings quietly singing out the Dresden Amen once again and bringing order out of chaos. The *Scherzo* second movement can be interpreted as an Intermezzo, might well have struck its composer as juvenile since it evokes the world of Haydn, or perhaps early Beethoven, although its Trio is closer to Mendelssohn’s own style in its elegant melodiousness. The slow movement resembles one of his famous song without words, the vocal line entrusted to the first violins, it is compact and short and leads directly into the final movement. The first strain of the chorale that introduces the *Finale* is heard on the flute alone, and the winds and lower strings gradually join in. What follows is a surprise, for the chorale is treated in jaunty fashion as if it were to be a set of variations. But only a few fragments of the chorale are admitted into the texture until eventually the chorale appears in a strong statement from the winds. Its final strain provides a close from which all elements of doubt and conflict have been banished, representing the triumph of the Reformation.

Written by Leon Reimer
Musical Director

Tonight's soloist – Colin McKee



Colin was born in Glasgow in 1992, and has just completed the first year of his Masters degree in Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he studies with Laura Samuel.

From 2010-2014, he studied for his Bachelor of Music degree at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Performing with ensembles around the United Kingdom, Colin has a large variety of musical experience, ranging from chamber music recitals to leading orchestras, as well as performing as a session musician.

Colin has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with many top class musicians, including violin soloist Nicola Benedetti, and conductors Sir Mark Elder and Donald Runnicles as well as orchestral musicians who play in many of the UK's leading professional orchestras. This year, he has been part of apprenticeship schemes with both the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, where he has rehearsed and performed with both ensembles.

Recent engagements include concerts with the RSNO and Sinfonia Cymru, and leading the RCS Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed in prestigious musical festivals such as the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh International Festival, the Cantilena Festival on Islay and the Cantiere Internazionale D'Arte.

Colin also enjoys working as an orchestral coach and performs around the UK with his ceilidh band.

Our conductor – Leon Reimer



After graduating from the University of Glasgow with a degree in Music in 2013 and completing his postgraduate studies with Professors Alasdair Mitchell and Garry Walker at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Leon became an Associate Musician of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He has worked with some of Scotland's most prolific orchestras, including the RSNO, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and most recently the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the St. Magnus Festival in Orkney.

Leon has been working with amateur and youth orchestras across Scotland, including the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra and the Perth Community Orchestra. Having been brought up as a singer, Leon also enjoys frequent choral conducting opportunities, most notably as the Lanfine Conducting Scholar of the University of Glasgow Chapel Choir.

Next Season

Concert dates

Autumn Concert - Saturday December 10th 2016

Spring Concert - Saturday April 8th 2017

Summer Concert - Saturday July 1st 2017

Season ticket

Next season we are planning to trial a season ticket. This will be a discounted ticket for all three concerts.

Prices and additional benefits to be confirmed.

If you would be interested in a season ticket please contact us at
CityofCarlisleOrchestra@hotmail.com.

The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violins

Robert Charlesworth
Joan Masters
Katharine Bowness
Monica Davies
Sarah Wilson
Graham Barke

2nd Violins

Rachael Coslette
David Howdle
Catherine Swarbrick
Beniamin Budzynski
Hillary Lawrence
Eleanor Buchan

Cello

Kenneth Wilson
Joanne Bertram
Mary Lawler
Joanne Crossley
Steven Thompson

Viola

Peter Wood
Jon Buchan

Double Bass

Emma Burt
Ben imThurn
Ruth Pickles

Flute/Piccolo

Lyn Young
Samantha Willis
Terry Mullett

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Raven
Ian Wilkinson

Oboe

Glenys Braithwaite
Anthea Lee

Bassoon

Andrew Smith
Ann Bishop

Contrabassoon

Peter Hutchison

Trombone

Graham Harris
Ruth Wood
Giles Wilson
Cliff Atwood

Horn

Pam Harris
Julie Ratcliffe
Mark Shaw
Jen Woodward

Trumpet

Gordon Kydd
Tom Phillips

Timpani

David Birkett

Percussion

Sue Roe
George Nixon
Jamie Hoyle

Other Classical concerts coming up soon:

2 July (Sat) - Wordsworth Singers - *Lanercost Priory*
Bernstein, Missa Brevis; Whitacre, Hebrew Love Songs

19th July (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
Haydn Jeugd Strijkorkest (Orchestra)

13th Aug (Sat) - Posaunenchor St. Matthäus Nürnberg – *Carlisle Cathedral*

13th Sept (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
Roz Sluman (Jazz)

20th Sept (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
Adrian Self (Organ)

25th Sept (Sun) - Keswick Music Society - *Theatre by the Lake, Keswick*
Raphael Wallfisch & Orchestra of the Swan play Rossini; Beethoven, 8th Symphony;
Dvorak, Cello concerto

27th Sept (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
Andrew Johnstone & Michael Hancock (Bass baritone/piano)

4th Oct (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
John Green plus one (Organ duet)

6 Oct (Thur) - Carlisle Music Society - *St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle*
Jack McNeill, clarinet and string quartet

11th Oct (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*

16th Oct (Sun) - Keswick Music Society - *Theatre by the Lake, Keswick*
Dante String Quartet, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Beethoven

18th Oct (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*

25th Oct (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*

27 Oct (Thur) - Carlisle Music Society - *St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle*
Riyad Nicolas, piano

1st Nov (Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
Eve Kennedy & Liivi Arder

8th Nov(Tues) - Live@lunchtime - *Carlisle Cathedral*
William Howard strings, woodwind, brass

13th Nov (Sun) - Keswick Music Society - *Theatre by the Lake, Keswick*

Patrick Hemmerle, piano, Bach, Goldberg variations Chopin Etudes op 25