

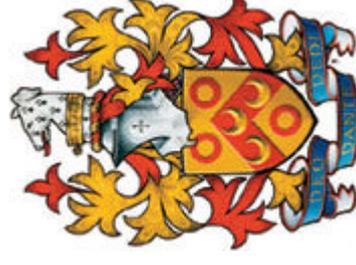
reliable explanation comes from Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny who claimed that the little pattern of notes had come to Beethoven from a yellow hammers song, heard as he walked in the Prater park in Vienna. Although in traditional sonata form, Beethoven's treatment of the opening motif is entirely original, using a torrent of sequences and imitations to sweep the four notes forward until a more lyrical theme in the relative E flat major is presented. It is tender and gentle in character, with only the persistence of the four note theme pulsating in the cellos to disturb its equanimity. The development section relentlessly exploits the opening motif with series of sequences that never allows the tension to diminish, eventually a two note dialogue becomes a single note exchange between the strings and woodwind before the recapitulation - the movement ends with a massive coda.

The second movement in the warmer key of A flat major is a lyrical work in double variation form, with two themes presented and varied in alternation. Its mood is one of benign calm and serenity, where grandeur is combined with tenderness. We find this quality expressed with equal felicity in the two principle melodies.

The third movement is in ternary form consisting of a scherzo and trio with a coda at the end, where it differs from its classical predecessors is in its' subject matter which again is in the form of motifs rather than melodies. These motifs are immediately developed and transformed.

The triumphant and exhilarating finale in C major begins without interruption after the scherzo. It is written in an unusual variant of sonata form. At the end of the development section, the music halts on a dominant cadence and continues after a pause with a quiet reprise of the horn theme from the scherzo movement. The shadow it casts is fleeting, for nothing can stem the exuberant sweep of this finale which culminates in an exciting presto coda and gloriously insistent repetition of the pure and triumphant chord of C major.

# Old Carthusian Music Society



## The Orchestra

<b>Conductors</b>	<b>Double Bass</b>	<b>Bassoon</b>
John Landor (S79) Mark Shepherd (BH)	Sue Griffiths (H80) (nee Burden) Vincent Chang (R08)	Gill Bartholomew
<b>Violin</b>	<b>Flute</b>	<b>Trumpet</b>
Vaughan Jones (Leader) (R88) Kiann Chow (W07) Oliver Walker Tilley (g91) Elena Chiu (H08) John Parsons (BH) Andrew Wong Michelle Lewis	Claire Morrish (P80) Alison Aries	Adrian Deslongrais (B83) Paul Bendit (V77)
<b>Viola</b>	<b>Oboe</b>	<b>Horn</b>
Bill Shipton (G80) William Corke (P80)	Gladys Ching G07 Sheila *****	Joe Harper (H56) David Pinnegar (S78) Catherine Whalley (G94)
<b>Cello</b>	<b>Clarinet</b>	<b>Timpani and Percussion</b>
Richard Apley (g66) David Pennant (V69) Emma Louisa Mutter (V98) Felicity Taylor (nee Mutter) Sarah Morrish (G97) Davina Bien (P08)	Shelley Phillips (g77) Miles Wakelin-Harkett (H)	Chris King (P61) Charlotte Cox (nee King) (P89)

## Inaugural Concert

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Charterhouse Hall

## Programme

Vaughan Williams      Lark Ascending  
*Soloist - Vaughan Jones (R88)*

Rachmaninov      2<sup>nd</sup> Piano Concerto – First Movement  
*Soloist - Matthew Shipton (G84)*

Mendelssohn      Violin Concerto – First Movement  
*Soloist - Kiann Chow (W07)*

## Interval

Beethoven      Fifth Symphony

*Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872 - 1958)*  
**The Lark Ascending**

The Lark Ascending is subtitled Romance for Violin and Orchestra, and is one of Vaughan-Williams' most popular works. It was written in 1914, the year of the outbreak of World War 1, but was not performed until after the war, in 1920. The score is prefaced by a quotation from a poem by George Meredith, a Victorian author and poet who was both long-lived and prolific, though now largely forgotten:

He rises and begins to round  
He drops the silver chain of sound  
Of many links without a break,  
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,  
For singing till his heaven fills,  
Tis love of earth that he instils,  
And ever winging up and up,  
Our valley is his golden cup,  
And he the wine which overflows  
To lift us with him as he goes  
Till lost on his aerial rings  
In light, and then the fancy sings.

This piece is hauntingly prophetic. Written on the eve of a war which was to wipe out a whole generation in the mud and blood of the trenches, the lark sings in a landscape already devoid of people. Beginning and ending with the lark alone in a completely empty sky, even the folk melody of the central section seems a little unreal, as if the people exist only in our imagination. There is certainly much beauty here but, as so often in Vaughan Williams' best music, there is also something deeper.

*Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 - 1943)*  
**Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18**  
I. Moderato

In 1897, Rachmaninov's first symphony was premiered in Moscow. He was 24, and already recognised as rising young pianist and composer. The event was eagerly anticipated by press and public - but it was a disaster. The symphony was badly played, and was slammed by the critics. (It is always easy to blame the composer.) Rachmaninov was stunned, and in despair tore up the only score. It was never played again in his lifetime.

This shock completely destroyed his confidence; he wrote no music for the next three years, and neither a successful concert trip to London nor a request from the London Philharmonic Society for a concerto was enough to pull him out of a deep depression.

He turned to alternative medicine (nothing is new!) and to a well-known hypnotist, one Dr. Nikolai Dahl for help. Rachmaninov explained it later thus: "I heard the same hypnotic formula repeated day after day, while I lay half asleep in Dahl's study. "You will begin to write your concerto ... You will work with great ease ... The concerto will be of excellent quality ..." It was always the same, without interruption. Although it may sound incredible, this cure really helped me. At the beginning of the summer I began to compose. The material began to grow, and new musical ideas began to stir within me." And when the concerto was finished in 1900, Rachmaninov gratefully dedicated it to Dr. Dahl. One hopes Dr. Dahl appreciated it, since the resulting concerto is Rachmaninov at his best, and remains one of the most popular of all piano concertos. It is in three movements, of roughly equal length.

The first movement opens with deep bell-like chords on the piano, leading into a big but solemn tune on the whole orchestra. The melody spreads its wings wide, and the piano weaves accompaniment round it. A big orchestral climax is answered by a serious little phrase on the violas, and leads into a second theme for the piano, which rises and falls like an arch. Both themes are developed, and then the opening theme comes back on full orchestra, this time with a brilliant martial accompaniment for the piano. The second theme comes back too, this time on solo French horn. The movement ends with a sudden burst of rhythmic energy.

*Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809 - 1847)*

**Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64**

I. Allegro molto appassionato

Mendelssohn was only 16 when, in 1825, he first met the violinist Ferdinand David, one year his junior. They remained friends all Mendelssohn's life and when, ten years later, he was appointed director of the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig, Mendelssohn arranged for his friend to be engaged as leader of the orchestra. Quite soon, David asked Mendelssohn to write him a violin concerto. Normally a very rapid and fluent composer, it took Mendelssohn a surprisingly long time to complete the commission. In 1839 he wrote "It is nice of you to press me for a violin concerto! I have the liveliest desire to write one for you and, if I have a few propitious days, I'll bring you something. But the task is not an easy one." It clearly was not easy, for a full five years passed before the concerto was ready, and the first performance took place in Leipzig in 1845. Ferdinand David played the solo part, but Mendelssohn was ill and unable to conduct, so the concert was directed by a mutual friend, the Danish composer Neils Gade.

Many features of the concerto are unusual for its day. Instead of a long orchestral prelude presenting the main themes, the soloist comes in immediately with the passionate melody on which the first movement is built. The second theme, appearing much later on flutes and clarinets, is gently melancholic. The positioning of the cadenza is unconventional too, coming before the recapitulation of the opening material rather than at the end of the movement.

*Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)*

**Symphony no. 5 in C minor Op. 67**

I. Allegro con brio

II Andante con moto

III Scherzo. Allegro

IV Allegro

Beethoven's fifth symphony was written between 1804 and 1808. The work is notable for the amount of time Beethoven spent perfecting it. The first sketches date from 1804, following the completion of the Eroica symphony – however Beethoven routinely interrupted his work to start other compositions. The final preparation for the fifth symphony took place in 1807 – 1808, in parallel with the sixth symphony which premiered at the same concert. There was little critical response to the premier of the symphony which took place in Vienna's theatre an der Wien under adverse conditions in 1808. The orchestra did not play well with only one days rehearsal before the concert and at one point, following a mistake by one of the performers, Beethoven had to stop the music and start again! The auditorium was extremely cold, and the audience was exhausted by the length of the programme – however 18 months later another performance resulted in a rapturous review and the symphonies prodigious reputation spread soon afterwards. The first movement opens with perhaps the most familiar motif in the history of western music. Beethoven's secretary Anton Schindler expounded the view that Beethoven himself uttered the immortal phrase “thus fate knocks at the door....”. A more