



VALE ROYAL STRING ORCHESTRA

Strings at St Peter's Music of the British Isles

Sunday 16th March 2025

**making
music**

Programme

Concerto Grosso I, George Frederic Handel (1685-1759) A tempo giusto; Allegro, Adagio, Allegro, Allegro

The **Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 1 in G major, HWV 319** by **George Frederic Handel** is a brilliant work that showcases his mastery of the Baroque concerto form. Composed in **1739**, this piece is part of a set of twelve grand concerti grossi.



Handel's concerti grossi are noted for their dynamic contrasts between the full orchestra (the ripieno) and a smaller group of soloists (the concertino).

In Op. 6 No. 1, Handel employs lively rhythms, elegant melodies, and rich harmonies to create a captivating musical experience.

This concerto is a testament to Handel's ability to blend Italian influences with his unique compositional voice, resulting in a work that is both sophisticated and expressive. It's a staple in the Baroque repertoire and a delight for audiences and performers alike.

Two Aquarelles, Op 91 Frederick Delius (1862-1934)

These were composed in 1917 originally set wordless, for a choir a cappella as *Two Songs to be of a summer night on the water*. This arrangement for String Orchestra was by Eric Fenby in 1932 with title *Two Aquarelles*. An aquarelle is a painting made with water soluble coloured ink.



Suite for Strings, Frank Bridge (1879-1941) Prelude, Intermezzo, Nocturne, Finale

Frank Bridge was virtuoso viola player, conductor, and teacher, his most notable pupil being Benjamin Britten. The Suite for Strings was composed in a few short weeks during the winter of 1909 and 1910 in the first part of his career before the Great War.



The work is around **21 minutes** long and is a great example of Bridge's early 20th-century Romantic style.

Interval, 20 minutes

Welsh Folk Song Suite, (2011) Mark Lansom

Gogerddan, Robin Ddiog, Cadair Idris, Rhosymedre

Mark Lansom's "Welsh Folk Song Suite" was composed in 2011 for the Wrexham Schools String Ensemble, who performed it many times in that academic year, including a performance in the National Festival of Music for Youth. Based on four traditional Welsh melodies (though not all strictly folk songs), the composer makes them his own with more modern harmonic and rhythmic changes, and a hopefully perceivable sense of humour. This is its first performance outside of Wales.

The first movement is based on "Gogerddan", a melody which the composer found in Edward Jones's 1794 work "Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards", altered often into a seven beat pattern. This is followed by "Robin Ddiog", more nursery rhyme than folk song, characterised by the composer by hazy close canons and an unnecessary sinister overtone.

The heart of the suite is in the third movement, "Cadair Idris", which maintains more traditional harmonies and provides solos for the lead violinist, and briefly the lead violist. The folk tune is joined by a second original theme which creates the movement's structure. The suite is rounded off by "Rhosymedre", a well-known Welsh hymn previously arranged by Vaughan Williams and others. The pace is upped considerably to give a Finale feel, and at one point references the "Gogerddan" theme from the first movement. The composer was never completely satisfied with the ending to the piece, so has rewritten it for this occasion, meaning that the last sixteen bars or so are indeed a World Premiere!

Suite for Strings, Joan Trimble (1915-2000)

Prelude, Air, Finale

The **Suite for Strings** by **Joan Trimble** (1951) is a delightful piece that captures the essence of Irish folk music. Trimble, an accomplished composer from Northern Ireland, was known for her ability to blend traditional Celtic influences with classical forms.

The suite consists of three movements, each evoking the rugged beauty, national pride, and resilience of the Irish people. Trimble's music often reflects her deep connection to her cultural heritage, and this suite is no exception.



Mark Lansom Conductor, Composer

Within a week of starting a violin teaching job, tonight's conductor Mark Lansom declared to himself that he would be happy doing that job for the rest of his career. Almost thirty years on, and now head of strings at The King's School, Chester, his commitment to music education remains. Despite his chosen career, he has been successful in many other musical paths.



As a player he is in demand professionally in a freelance capacity, and plays weddings and functions with the Snowdonia String Quartet. He can also be found regularly leading such orchestras as Wrexham Symphony Orchestra and St John's Festival Orchestra. He is also a composer and arranger, and his arrangements, mostly for string quartets and school groups, sell regularly and worldwide through websites such as sheetmusicplus.com.

He started conducting regularly through his job as a violin teacher in schools, and first conducted Wrexham Symphony Orchestra in 1999. Since then he has been the most regular conductor for that orchestra, and has also conducted the Cambrian Orchestra and St John's Festival Orchestra. A general contentment with his chosen career has quashed any ambition to take conducting further, but nevertheless he is very proud to be asked to conduct Vale Royal String Orchestra, and has thoroughly enjoyed working with the group.

Away from music, Mark is an avid follower of speedway and the Belle Vue Aces. He lives in Llay, Wrexham, with his wife Annabel and their two teenage children.

Next Concert

Strings at the Abbey in the Great Hall, Vale Royal Abbey

Sunday 15th June 2025 7.00 pm

Vale Royal String Orchestra

1st Violins:	Edward Holmes (leader), Robert Anderson, David Love, Rosy Smith, Eloise Smith
2nd Violins:	Margaret Parks Smith, Alison Gabbitas, Andrew Ball, Anthony Sluce, Wendy Macdonald, Lucy Holmes
Violas	Laura Baker, Eunice Moss, Lorelly Wilson
Cellos	Tom Teague, Peter Raynes, Janet Goy,
Double Bass	Johan Stalmans