

# Tales and Tunes from Europe

## A concert in memory of Pat Shariatmadari

**Aeolian Sinfonia of North London - Thursday 9th December 2021, 8pm**  
Our Lady Help of Christians Church Hall, Falkland Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 2XT

**Lynn Norris, arranged by Keith Bramich: *Horn Concerto Medley***

*Moderato – Allegro, Light and breezy – Andante, Light and delicate – Andante, Freely and simply – Largo – Allegro – Presto – Allegro*

I studied music and literature at college and have taught various age groups throughout my life, including primary school, general teaching, music teaching and also keep fit for adults, mostly to music. What I enjoy doing with music is to write songs and create dance movements to suit the classes that I have. I found quite early on that tunes and ideas would come into my head fairly quickly. It was particularly satisfying to write for people who would perhaps not think they could perform very well, and give them confidence. I've written at least ten musicals for schoolchildren on a range of subjects, plus various songs and other pieces including *The Ballad of Molly and Ewan* for choir and the very topical *Let the Siren Sound*, about climate change, written for and first performed by Keith and this orchestra in 2016. I started putting together tunes for a horn concerto in 2019. Tonight, the orchestra is playing a selection of tunes from this work, which is still in progress. – Lynn Norris

**Charles Gounod (1818–1893): *Symphony No 1 in D major***

*Allegro molto; Allegretto moderato; Scherzo: Non troppo presto; Finale: Adagio — Allegro vivace*

Gounod is best known as a composer of opera, notably *Faust*, but it was after an unsuccessful production of one that he decided to turn to writing symphonies, in which he was encouraged by Mendelssohn whom he visited in 1843. Symphony no 1 was probably written in Rome where Gounod had won the Prix de Rome in 1839. The two middle movements were premiered in Paris in 1855, where it was reported that the whole hall burst into rapturous applause and a thrilled audience encored the luminous Scherzo; the whole work was premiered a month later, to even greater acclaim. Bizet made a piano reduction of it and modelled his first symphony in C on it. Gounod's symphony was only rediscovered in the 1950s and has been unjustly neglected. Oleg Caetano characterises it as contrasting charm and brio, beautifully blended together in a quite theatrical spirit; Joseph Stevenson describes it as "a nice symphony of classical proportions, restrained emotions, good humour and bright clear orchestration".

The *Allegro molto* in D major is in sonata form. The first theme is a cheerful, skittish melody introduced by the first violins. Wind instruments are more prominent in the more lyrical second theme. The exposition is repeated. Its themes are explored in the development section where a third theme is also introduced. After the recapitulation, the opening six bars reappear as a concluding motif. The *Allegretto moderato* in D minor has reminded some of movements in Beethoven's 7<sup>th</sup> symphony or Mendelssohn's Italian symphony but is Haydnesque in its theme with variations. It opens with muted strings playing a march incorporating a B flat major passage, which is followed by a contrapuntal fugal section. The middle section is a fugato with the subject first stated by the cellos, answered by the second violins, then the violas and finally the first violins. The original march returns with contrapuntal accompaniment from the second violins. Notable features distinctive of Gounod are the extended sequences and solo passages for bassoon, an instrument he regarded as successfully rendering every possible feeling. The *Scherzo* has an elegant minuet in F major, alternating strings and winds, and consisting of two repeated sections, the first short, the second longer. The *Trio* in the unrelated key of B flat major gives the melody to the oboes and bassoons over a low string accompaniment, tonic or dominant pedal drones, all features reminiscent of 18<sup>th</sup> century pastoral musettes. Roger Nichols regards the graceful melodic line and the "delightful surprise of the 'wrong' key that begins the second half", as demonstrating Gounod's admiration of Haydn. The *Finale*, returning to the home key of D major, is full of drama and Haydnesque surprises. It begins with an *Adagio*: a unison chord is followed by a beautiful exchange between the first violins and the clarinet. This crescendoes to where the *Allegro vivace* suddenly takes off. Written in sonata form (the first section is repeated), there is plenty of excitement: sudden interruptions and suspensions, surprise chords, trumpet fanfares (Gounod believed that a single trumpet note, even pianissimo, cast an extraordinary shaft of light over the whole orchestra) and tuneful passages for the woodwind. The operatic conclusion, "without overegging the pudding" as Roger Nichols puts it, is playful rather than triumphalist. – Liz Valentine

**Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), arranged for orchestra by Hans Sitt (1850–1922):**

**Four Norwegian Dances, Op 35**

No 1 *Allegro marcato*

No 2 *Allegretto tranquillo e grazioso*

No 3 *Allegro moderato alla Marcia - Tranquillo*

No 4 *Allegro molto - Presto e con brio – Prestissimo*

Grieg's use and development of folk music brought Norwegian music to international awareness, as well as helping to create a national identity, in much the same way as Sibelius did for Finland. The Norwegian Dances were written during a summer holiday at the village of Lofthus on Sørjord in Hardanger, south-east of Bergen. They were based on the musician and researcher Ludvig Mathias Lindeman's collection of folk-songs, *Mountain Melodies Old and New*, and were originally written as piano duets, of which Grieg was very fond. These together with a version for piano solo were published in 1877. Grieg gave up the attempt to orchestrate them himself and hoped that the French composer Eduard Lalo would do it. In the event the violinist and conductor Hans Sitt's arrangement was published in 1888.

Norwegian folk music is often constructed from short melodic units which are repeated with small variations such as appoggiaturas or rhythmic displacements and combined to form larger units. Grieg regarded rhythm as crucial (he told Ravel, whom he met in Paris in 1894, that it was essential in playing the dances to visualise the fiddler stamping in time with the music, Grieg himself skipping and jumping around the room while Ravel tried to improve his performance!). The other crucial element in interpreting the folk melodies was harmony. Grieg often used radical chord progressions to indicate the underlying modal harmonies.

All four dances are in duple time and composed of three sections, the middle one in a contrasting tempo and mode. The first dance is based on *Sinclair's March* from the Vaga region of Norway. It begins with a fast spirited section in D minor recalling 'The Hall of the Mountain King' in *Peer Gynt*. This moves seamlessly into a more lyrical second section in D major, ending with a final hectic section in D minor. The other three are all hallings, a solo 'parade' dance for men from the Hallingdal region, featuring an emphasis on the strong beats in the bar and syncopation. The second dance begins with a lovely oboe melody in A major. This is followed by a hectic section in the related key of F# before a return to the opening section. The third dance begins with a military march in G major consisting of two short repeated sections. The second section in the minor is tranquil and lyrical. The final section returns to the march. The fourth dance begins with the cellos introducing a haunting oboe motif in D minor. A stringendo passage brings this short introduction to a sudden halt. Strobic lower strings introduce the *Presto* section in D major, in which everyone soon joins. Next there is a sudden change to a tranquil section in the minor. Syncopated strings introduce and then accompany a series of short woodwind solos, interspersed with ebbing and flowing string passages. The *Presto* section is repeated before the coda, which begins more slowly with more woodwind solos but ends in a *Prestissimo* flourish. – Liz Valentine

**Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868): William Tell: Overture**

*Andante – Allegro – Andante – Allegro vivace*

This is the overture to the last of Rossini's thirty-nine operas, premiered in Paris in 1839. It is set in the Swiss Alps and contains four sections. The first, a prelude, mainly in E major, representing dawn, is scored for five solo 'celli (two of which will be played on viola and bassoon in tonight's performance). Our soloists are George Coulouris, Anastasia Sofina (viola), Andrew Williams, Bryan Ogilvie (bassoon) and Priscilla Eyles. It begins with a solo in E minor and ends on a sustained high note. Fast semiquaver passages in the second violins and violas herald the second section, the storm. This develops as different instruments join; first the strings alternate with the wind, then brass enter to reach a climax. The storm then subsides as instruments drop out, leaving Graeme Scott's flute alone at the end. The pastoral third section in G major signifies the calm after the storm. Cows are called by the cor anglais (in our case, David Williamson's oboe), which develops into a duet with the flute. The melody is a *leitmotif* in the opera and has been used elsewhere to depict daybreak. The finale, returning to E major and opening with Richard Cooper's trumpet, represents the victorious battle of the Swiss over the Austrians in the final act of the opera. Subsequently quoted by Johann Strauss and Dmitri Shostakovich, it has become very well known, often being used to denote heroic riders and galloping horses, most famously as the theme music for *The Lone Ranger*. It was also used in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. – Liz Valentine

As we were preparing for this concert, we received the sad news that **Pat Shariatmadari**, our regular second flute, passed away on 7th December. We dedicate this concert to her memory.

**Aeolian Sinfonia of North London**, active for many years, was conducted for most of these by the late Roy Budden, who founded the orchestra at least thirty-five years ago as the Kensington Sinfonia. Known as one of North London's friendliest orchestras, we rehearse on Thursday evenings during school term time. If you know of anyone who would like to join us, we always need string players, and occasionally extra woodwind and brass. Future concerts are listed at [aeoliansinfonia.com](http://aeoliansinfonia.com) - send us a message via the site and ask to be added to our mailing list.

**Elizabeth Ann Binks** studied at the Guildhall School of Music and was awarded the AGSM and the Salzmann Scholarship. She has worked with the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, Scottish Opera, BBC Concert Orchestra and D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and has led the Virtuosi of London.

**Keith Bramich** studied conducting with Lawrence Leonard, Rodolfo Saglimbeni, George Hurst, Paul Sarcich and Mary Mogil. He joined the orchestra in 2008, and is also a regular guest conductor of other ensembles.

**Violin 1**

Elizabeth Ann Binks (leader)  
Olessya Goncharenko  
Mariko Yamamoto

**Violin 2**

Donna Chapman  
Gita Croft

**Viola**

Anastasia Sofina  
Bronwen Taylor

**Cello**

George Coulouris  
Andrew Williams  
Priscilla Eyles

**Flute**

Liz Valentine

**Oboe**

David Williamson

**Clarinet**

Ariane Saulnier  
Nigel Brockmann

**Bassoon**

Bryan Ogilvie

**Trumpet**

Richard Cooper

**Timpani**

Ankie Postma

**At the end of the concert, please give a donation to *Our Lady Help of Christians' Christmas Appeal*, which aims to support local families in need with food vouchers and hopefully a special meal – probably take-away – on Christmas Day. You can make a cash donation if you attend the concert in person, or you can make a bank transfer directly into the Parish Account :**

**Account Name: *WRCDT Kentish Town***

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