

SHETLAND COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

Autumn Concert

SATURDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2023
7.30pm

Will Cheverton · String Quartet (Première)

Sibelius · Finlandia

Mendelssohn · Fingal's Cave

Prokofiev · Symphony Nr 1

Quoys Baptist Church, Lerwick



Programme

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PROGRAMME NOTES

sco *String Quartet No 1 (Première)*

Will Cheverton

Introduction by the composer

This quartet is, put simply, simple. It's not technically demanding or difficult to listen to, but that does not mean it's boring, as it has interesting forms and joyful melodies to tap your foot to.

The first movement is in 4/4, common for the classical string quartet form where the theme is introduced. This 'swinging' theme is memorable, which was the goal, cropping up in each instrument throughout the piece and taking different forms and interjections. The second movement has a gorgeous overflowing melody which you could fall asleep to if you tried hard enough (being a 17-year-old musician, I don't get much sleep anyhow). The third movement is a dance Minuet and Trio, a fun jumpy tune to bring you out of the melancholic slow state of the

previous movement. This classical form was played at dances in fancy ballrooms for the upper classes, just like in historic dramas set in the 1700s. The fourth movement is a paced finale in Rondo form with structure "ABACADA", where the first theme "A" is heard and keeps cropping up, back to bother you.

I am so grateful to have this quartet played here for me, and I really hope you enjoy the youthfulness in the composition. Annalie Irvine and Co. have been so eager to play this, which makes me even more excited, just to hear what people other than my parents have to say about it!



Will Cheverton, 2023

sco *Symphony No 1*

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Sergei Prokofiev, along with Dmitri Shostakovich, is one of the few composers who stood above the rest of those who laboured during the years of the Soviet Union. Prokofiev was born in Ukraine and enjoyed a significant part of his career living and composing in the West, returning to the USSR in 1936. He was a virtuoso pianist and composer from the beginning, graduating from the St Petersburg Conservatory shortly before the First World War. His musical style was based in the Russian Romantic tradition, but he established early on a personal idiom with pungent dissonance, soaring lyrical melodies, and kaleidoscopic harmonic changes. Part and parcel of his musical personality was an appreciation of satire, parody and even the grotesque.

His "Classical" symphony is a charming example of "what if?" That is to say, what if one of the great twentieth-century modernists had decided to compose a symphony using many of the essential characteristics of Haydn and Mozart, while also employing his own ideas of melody and harmony? Prokofiev's unique answer has long been part of the standard orchestral repertoire, owing to its combination of what would seem to be antithetical elements. Written in the summer of 1917 while still a student, it is cast in the traditional four movements of the classic model: fast movement in sonata form, slower movement, dance movement, and fast concluding movement.

sco *Finlandia, Op. 26*

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Sibelius was pigeonholed by many as primarily a Finnish nationalist, whose dark, remote music was a shallow representative of Romanticism's last gasp. However, he was deemed the champion of American and British conservative musical tastes between the world wars. Many favoured the *avant-garde* of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and company and were scathing in their contempt, a well-known critic writing of Sibelius as "The Worst Composer in the World"!

Finland had been under the rule of Sweden and then in the early nineteenth century fell under the control of Russia, becoming a grand duchy of the Russian Empire. After tighter control of Finland by Russia in 1898, the Finns were distinctly unhappy. Surging nationalism manifested itself in variety of ways, including a patriotic melodrama given in 1899, for which Sibelius contributed incidental music. Its last tableau was entitled "Suomi Herää" ("Finland Awakens", which he reworked into a symphonic tone poem renamed "Finlandia".

It opens with ominous brass chords, moves on into a tumultuous faster section that seems to parallel a growing national sense of strength and ends triumphantly with a powerful chorale (heard earlier, in a soft aura of confidence). The work stands alone as the most affirmative statement of the confidence and independence of the Finnish people.

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

This short but exhilarating percussion quintet is a lightning-fast virtuosic performance, with the players dashing between a collection of varied instruments including brake drums, bongos, congas, a log drum, timbales and a cajón. Originally written for five players, the percussion section has adapted this for a quartet by reworking the lines into their parts.

sco Incantations**Robert Smith (1958)**

Incantations was commissioned by and dedicated to Richard Hornung, director of the Long Beach Middle School 1991–92 Eighth Grade Band, Long Beach, NY. The piece is in a rather classical ternary form of introduction, a rhythmically driven first section, followed by a more expressive melodic second section, before a recapitulation of the first section and a coda. The piece makes much use of the crunchy harmony, rhythmic dynamisms and larger-than-life melodic gestures that characterise much twentieth-century American music (think Copland and Bernstein) but written with the target audience of younger players firmly in mind. A fun piece to include in this concert and one that we hope you will enjoy.

sco The Hebrides Overture, op. 26 "Fingal's Cave"**Felix Mendelssohn (1806–47)**

Mendelssohn was a prodigy, born into a distinguished family of Jewish bankers and philosophers. He and his sister Fanny were raised in a warm, intellectual, highly supportive artistic family. He composed a significant body of work in his relatively short life, including major works for orchestra that constitute an important part of today's repertoire. Those works include five symphonies, six concert overtures and six concertos.

The Hebrides Overture – also known as *Fingal's Cave Overture* – is not an introduction to larger work but simply a stand-alone concert piece. Like so many musical compositions of the Romantic period, it does have an extra-musical inspiration, although it does not tell any stories. Rather, it was simply inspired by the composer's feelings in the presence of specific experiences, in the way that Mendelssohn's visit south in 1830 inspired his "Italian" Symphony. In 1829 Mendelssohn travelled to Scotland, touring extensively, including a trip to the western coast. There, on 7 August, he conceived the main theme of the overture. The next day he visited Fingal's Cave, on the desolate island of Staffa, as well as the island of Iona. It was not until late in 1830, during a visit to Rome, that Mendelssohn finished the Scottish overture and dedicated it to his father as a birthday present. Later, in May 1832 in London, he heard its première, given by the Philharmonic Society.

The first theme of the work, heard right away, is a descending figure played in the low strings, and gives an admirable evocation of the loneliness of the image. The other main theme, and an arresting one, announced by a kind of fanfare in the brass, is soon heard in the cellos and bassoons. It suggests the inversion of the first and it remarkably calls to mind the action of wind and waves. The overture is in sonata form and the development section depicts a maelstrom of nature. The recapitulation continues this stormy mood, which is broken with a quiet clarinet duet. The storm resumes and finally soft woodwind figures restate the opening themes, gently ending this remarkable evocation of the rugged Scottish coast.

sco Radetzky March**Johann Strauss Sr (1804–49)**

The Radetzky March, Op. 228, is a march dedicated to Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz. It was first performed on 31 August 1848 in Vienna and soon became popular among regimented marching soldiers. It has been noted that its tone is more celebratory than martial; Strauss was commissioned to write the piece to commemorate Radetzky's victory at the Battle of Custoza.

Strauss had already used the main theme in his Jubel-Quadrille, Op. 130, and it bears a considerable resemblance to the second theme from the Allegro in Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 100, composed in 1794.

For the trio, Strauss used an older folk melody called *Alter Tanz aus Wien* or *Tinerl-Lied*, which was originally in 3/4 time. When Radetzky came back to Vienna after winning the Battle of Custoza (1848), his soldiers were singing the then popular song. Allegedly Strauss heard this singing and incorporated the melody, converted to 2/4 time, into the Radetzky March.

SHETLAND COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

Conductors

Alistair Justice
Sioban McGregor
Natalie Cairns Ratter

1st Violins

Natalie Cairns Ratter
Annalie Irvine
Andy Kain
Aileen Brown
Margaret Reeves

2nd Violins

John Johnson
Georgia Grant
Emma Clark
Eilidh Kettles

Viola

Alan Gifford (also Euphonium)
Clare Ricketts
Emma Warwick

Cello

Kamran Sheppard
Sophie Wishart
Amy Henderson

Flutes

Anna Breimann
Lucy Morris

Oboe

Susan Clarke

Clarinets

Michelle Grant
Cathrine Coutts
Sioban McGregor

Horn/Saxophones

Martin Jones
Helen Couper
Marcia Galvin
Eleanor Hutcheon
Alexandra Elsey

Trumpets

Kerem Tekcan
Alec Watt
Sue White

Trombone

Alistair Justice

Percussion

Justin Rhodes
Renzo Spiteri
Shareen Scollay
Eamonn Watt

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