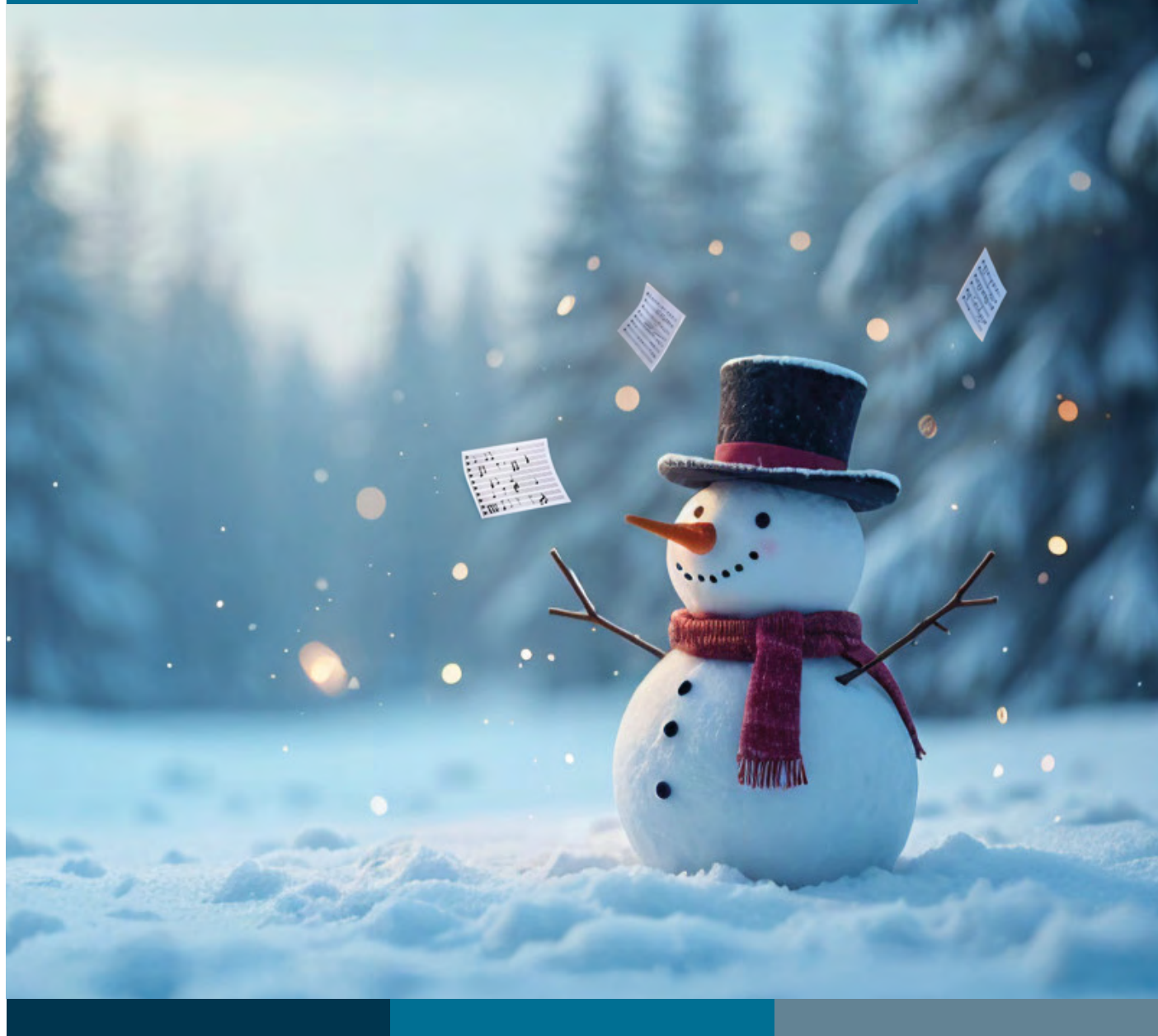


Sunday 23 November 2025

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

Conductor
Tommaso Nista

Family Concert: **Winter Wonderland**



Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra
Patrons: Sir John Egan | Peter Donohoe CBE

Chair: Chris Voss
Email: chairman@wso.org.uk

Ticket Secretary: Anne Ransford
Email: boxoffice@wso.org.uk

Treasurer: Jenny Maynard



www.wso.org.uk
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The WSO has been performing in Leamington since 1940, and as the Leamington Orchestral Society before that. Its players are drawn from all over the county and beyond. The Royal Spa Centre was the orchestra's regular venue following its opening in 1972 with a concert given by the WSO. The orchestra now performs in the Warwick Hall and All Saints Church, Leamington Spa.

Over the years the orchestra has worked with many illustrious soloists such as Janet Baker, Julian Bream, Peter Donohoe, Leon Goossens, Tasmin Little and Nadine Benjamin. Guy Woolfenden, permanent conductor from 1972–2012, succeeded a line of distinguished past conductors, and enhanced the WSO tradition of achieving the very highest musical standard. The orchestra now has Roger

Coull as its Principal Conductor and Paul Leddington Wright as its Associate Conductor.

The WSO is proud of its association with Coventry Cathedral Chorus and the Royal Leamington Spa Bach Choir, with which it has performed several major works, including Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, Holst's *The Planets*, Berlioz' *Te Deum*, Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*.

In July 2008 the WSO took part in the prestigious International Church Music Festival at Coventry Cathedral and in March 2009 and May 2012 performed joint concerts in both Warwick & Paris with the Choeur des Prés de Villebon, returning again in 2016 where the orchestra and two choirs were joined by the Coventry Cathedral Chorus.



Our 2025/26 Concert Season

Dates for your Diary

Copland • Rimsky-Korsakov • Brahms • Beethoven

Saturday 14 March 2026 7.30pm

All Saints' Church, Victoria Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV31 1AA

Copland Fanfare for the Common Man
Rimsky-Korsakov Overture on Russian Themes
Brahms Violin Concerto in D major
Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A major

Violin Callum Smart

Conductor Richard Jenkinson



This concert begins with Fanfare for the Common Man in tribute to our much loved and respected percussionists Huw Thomas and Seb Farrall.

Rimsky-Korsakov included folk song references in the overture to our concert. We welcome back Callum Smart to play the Brahms Violin Concerto which features a glorious oboe solo in the slow movement. Beethoven's 7th Symphony has been called 'the apotheosis of the dance'. Its stirring rhythmic contrasts will leave the audience uplifted.

We welcome Richard Jenkinson as our guest conductor.

Vaughan Williams • Holst • Bruch • Rachmaninov

Saturday 13 June 2026 7.30pm

All Saints' Church, Victoria Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV31 1AA

Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Greensleeves
Holst Lyric Movement
Bruch Romanze for Viola
Rachmaninov Symphony No. 2 in E minor

Viola Soloist Jonathan Barritt

Conductor Roger Coull



The theme of this concert is celebrating the viola. The viola is a much misunderstood and underestimated instrument, and this concert aims to put that right. The warmth and depth of the viola sound launches this concert in Vaughan Williams glorious viola-centred Greensleeves. We welcome virtuoso Jonathan Barritt to play Bruch's beautiful Romanze, and Holst's last work, his Lyric Movement.

The 2nd Symphony of Rachmaninov also features some soaring viola melodies within a dramatic overall soundscape. The symphony is often interpreted as a journey through diverse emotions, reflecting a sense of homeland loss and a yearning for a brighter future.



**Leamington
Music**

Family Concert

Sunday 8 March | 11.30am
Royal Spa Centre, Leamington



THE STORM WHALE



Ensemble 360
and narrator

This musical story follows the adventures of Noi, the son of a fisherman who finds a baby whale on the beach and takes it home to care for it. Based on the colourful children's book by Benji Davies, with specially composed music by Paul Rissmann, this tale of family and unforgettable friendship is a wonderful way to introduce children to live music, with plenty of audience participation in songs and actions, and projections of images from the story. **Our Family Concert is ideal for ages 3-7 but great fun for everyone!**



Tickets: £9 children | £15 adults | £42 Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children)
visit www.leamingtonmusic.org or call 01926 334418 to book



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From the Chair

As winter arrives, it is the time of year for families to get together. Psychologists argue that music brings families together by fostering bonding through shared experiences, releasing “bonding hormones” and creating a universal language that transcends generations. When we dance and sing together, there is a sense of community, where everyone moves together with shared intentions and a mutual goal.

Some research by Virgin Media found that families who listen to tracks together say it helps them form better bonds and makes them less likely to argue. The bond is most felt by those in their 20s, with this age group also most likely to feel a connection to their parents’ musical tastes. This feeling of connection comes from people finding out they like an artist their parents loved, hearing parents’ stories whilst listening to music from former years and the shared experience of singing along to their favourite tracks.

We hope that listening together and singing together today will contribute to the enjoyment of all the family.

Chris Voss

Q: *What do you call a snowman in summer?*

A: *A puddle*

Q: *Where did the snowman go in a snowstorm?*

A: *Sno-where*

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The WSO would like to thank Professor Colin Fink of Micropathology Ltd for his support of this season’s concerts.

Programme Notes

Troika

Sergei Prokofiev

Troika is the fourth of five pieces in the Symphonic Suite Lieutenant Kije. The sleigh portrayed here is a traditional Russian one, with three horses side by side, making it a very fast ride.

Listen for the sleigh bells as the troika goes through the snow, watch out for the violins and violas doing dramatic pizzicato playing. The brass players play some very unexpected sounding notes that might suggest a bump in the snow. The piccolo is easy to hear, playing loud, high notes - maybe this is the wind whistling past your ears.

Skaters' Waltz, Op.183

Emile Waldteufel

This waltz is part of the tradition of popular dances made most famous by the Strauss family. The Skaters' Waltz, Waldteufel's best-known piece, was written in 1882.

It begins with some sliding sounds – perhaps skidding on the ice? The horn then introduces the 'big tune' and the violins take it over, before some high notes which might suggest slipping on the ice – but no falling over!

Many tunes follow, but you will hear 1,2,3, 1,2,3 in the background throughout – the basic pulse of a waltz.

Let it Go (Frozen)

Lopez

The music from this film is dramatic and includes several memorable songs. Frozen involves the complex relationship between two sisters and true love being at the root of everything that is good. The sisters, who are princesses, go through many dramas and adventures, but at the end they reconcile.

Let It Go is a powerful song with a rousing chorus. The orchestra builds the sound, and the song has a very short but memorable three note motif for the words 'Let It Go'. Elsa, the Queen finally accepts that the powers she has, the ability to create and control snow and ice, can be used and are things she can be proud of.

Winter from The Four Seasons, Op.8

Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi was a dazzling violin virtuoso. He became a teacher at a school writing many of his instrumental works for the pupils there. The Four Seasons is in effect a set of four violin concertos each following the three-movement formula of two fast movements with a slower one in the middle.

The icy wind is suggested by rushing runs of violin notes creating a swirling sound. Leaping violin notes give a sense of people stamping their feet, and chattering teeth are represented by the solo violin playing very fast, repeated notes. Stamp your feet as your teeth chatter along with the orchestra playing high and low notes very quickly. Be careful as you slip and slide on the ice, with the solo violin playing a series of notes coming down quickly. In the middle movement, the cellos and basses play moody dark notes to suggest the dark clouds, and the violins play pizzicato to suggest the snowflakes falling as the solo violin plays a gentle tune while you sit by a nice warm fire.

Soloist: George Ewart

Walking in the Air

Howard Blake

This song is the centrepiece of the film The Snowman, where a young boy and a snowman who has come to life, go on a wonderful adventure together to the North Pole. This song is the theme for that journey. They go to a party and meet Santa Claus and reindeer. Dark clouds are at first heard in the lower strings, but the melody takes over and soars over the top as the wonderful journey takes place.

We welcome our soloist Hannah Maxwell to sing this with us.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

J Horner, arr. Brubaker

The music is taken from the film based on the Dr. Seuss book of 1957.

A mean, green Grinch does not like Christmas, and tries to ruin it for everyone, but after several adventures everything works out right in the end. The music has a big cinematic sound with some funky swing from the brass players.

Polar Express

Silvestri and Ballard, Arr. Brubaker

It is Christmas Eve and the story takes us to the North Pole where friendship, bravery and the true spirit of Christmas are found. During a party with Santa, a bell flies off a reindeer's harness, and is lost. The lost bell is returned in a Christmas present by Santa. It can still be heard by all who truly believe – even if they are adults.

Sleigh Ride

Leroy Anderson

This is a cheerful sleigh ride on a happy trip through the snow. Leroy Anderson had the original idea for Sleigh Ride during a heat wave!

The first tune you hear is jolly as the ride gets going. Listen for the percussion section suggesting the horses' hooves and the sparkle of the snow. The horse whinny at the end of Sleigh Ride is made by a glissando on the trumpet, and the whip cracks are made by a percussionist with a slapstick.

Ice, Snow & Mountains

Robert Ramskill

Composer's note: Ice, Snow and Mountains was written for the Coventry Youth Orchestra in 2015. The title is taken from a painting by my wife, Margaret. Earlier that year we had been to Canada and the image she subsequently painted is of Lake Louise, near Banff, with the Rocky Mountains reflected on the water's surface. I attempted to mirror this uplifting scene in a bright, rhythmic and tuneful orchestral miniature. RR

Frosty the Snowman

Rollins

This popular song was originally recorded in 1950. It describes the adventures of Frosty who is a snowman that comes to life after a group of children place a magical silk hat on his head. He laughs and plays with the children but then the hot sun threatens to melt him. After leading them through the village streets, Frosty says goodbye to the children, reassuring them he'll be back again someday. Strangely, although it is often sung in the Christmas season, Christmas is not mentioned in its lyrics.

Winter (from Seasons Ballet)

Alexander Glazunov

Glazunov wrote many lovely melodies with a very Russian inflection and feel, using some Russian melodies, or suggestions of them.

Winter, with its frost, ice, hail, and snow are all depicted in this piece. Descending lines in the woodwind give us the rain, swirling strings suggest windy weather, the glockenspiel gives us the sun sparkling on the snow, and spiky string playing imitates sharp frosty patches. Ice ripples through the violas and clarinets, and hail takes on a fast dance, followed by the waltz of the snow which begins in the violins, catching the rest of the orchestra as it goes..

Winter Wonderland

Dick Smith Music: Felix Bernard

A New commission Arr. Robert Ramskill

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening?
In the lane, snow is glistening
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight
Walking in a winter wonderland

Gone away is the bluebird
Here to stay is a new bird
He sings a love song as we go along
Walking in a winter wonderland

In the meadow we can build a snowman
And pretend that he is Parson Brown
He'll say, "Are you married?" We'll say, "No man"
But you can do the job when you're in town

Later on, we'll conspire
As we dream by the fire
To face unafraid, the plans that we've made
Walking in a winter wonderland

(INSTRUMENTAL SECTION)

In the meadow we can build a snowman
And pretend that he is Parson Brown
He'll say, "Are you married?" We'll say, "No man"
But you can do the job when you're in town

Later on, we'll conspire
As we dream by the fire
To face unafraid the plans that we've made
Walking in a winter wonderland
Walking in a winter wonderland



Tommaso Nista Conductor

Italian conductor Tommaso Nista is known for his passion for storytelling across symphonic, operatic, and contemporary repertoire. He serves as Music Director of the Solihull Symphony Orchestra, Assistant Conductor and Librarian of the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, and Chief Conductor of the Junior Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra, and is invited regularly by several orchestras around Birmingham.

A passionate advocate for innovative programming, Tommaso is also Chief Conductor of the Birmingham Game Music Ensemble, an orchestra dedicated to the performance of video game soundtracks, for which he often works as an arranger. Under his direction, the ensemble has presented music from Final Fantasy, Persona, Kingdom Hearts, and The Legend of Zelda, bringing new audiences to orchestral music. Dedicated to education and inclusivity, he is keen to explore new ways of connecting orchestras and audiences through expressive and imaginative performances.

Tommaso graduated with Distinction from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, earning a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting. His mentors include Kazuki Yamada, Karen Ní Bhroin, Daniele Rosina, Michael Seal, Paul Murphy, Paul Wingfield, Tony Kraus, Harry Sever and Richard Laing. During his studies, he assisted in several opera productions, including Cendrillon (Massenet), Albert Herring (Britten), Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck), and Fête Galante (Smythe).

He is the recipient of both the Guy Woolfenden Prize for Young Conductors (2024) and the Michael Beech Conducting Award (2025). In recent seasons, he has conducted the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, RBC Symphony Orchestra, Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra and musicians of the Orchestra of the Swan.

Tommaso began his conducting journey in Italy, studying wind band and choir conducting. In 2020 he attended the Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna under Riccardo Muti, which deepened his commitment to the Italian operatic tradition. Now he is also active as an Italian language coach with several opera companies across the UK.



Gareth Price-Baghurst Narrator

Gareth is a freelance actor-musician, puppeteer, fire technician and director. Gareth has predominantly worked in the outdoor arts sector, and has toured nationally and internationally for 15 years whilst also co-running his own theatre company, 'The Fabularium' (based in Coventry) since 2010. In 2022, he co-created and directed a fully devised Murder Mystery with Heartbreak Productions, and in 2024, performed with his acoustic duo 'Midnight Fyre' busking across Europe, and played at Glastonbury festival.

Gareth is very, very excited to be hanging around with an orchestra!



George Ewart Leader and Violin Soloist

George studied with the Hungarian pedagogue Bela Katona. In 1983 he was first prize winner of the Sascha Lasserson International Violin Competition and afterwards gave solo debut recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room.

George has wide orchestral experience playing with the Royal Opera House Orchestra Covent Garden from 1976-81. During his time at the opera, George worked with leading conductors including Carlos Kleiber, Sir Colin Davis, Zubin Mehta, Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti.

George was appointed Principal Violin with the English Symphony Orchestra in 2000; he has performed as soloist with the orchestra and appeared as leader on numerous occasions.

He is currently leader of the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra, the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra and New English Concert Orchestra. George plays with Michael Bochmann's Orchestra Pro Anima, often appearing as soloist.



Hannah Maxwell Vocalist

Hannah Maxwell, 17, is a singer from Warwick. She is currently Head Chorister at St Mary's Collegiate Church, Warwick, having been a committed choir member for over 10 years. She studies singing with Katie Trethewey at King's High School, and recently achieved her ARSM Diploma with Distinction. Hannah is an avid musician; in addition to singing, she plays both violin and viola to a high standard and is aiming to study Music at University.

The WSO would like to wish all our audiences a happy and peaceful festive season and we look forward to welcoming you back in 2026.





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George Ewart*
Jenny Maynard
Chris Brown
Andrew Harris
Ivan Jewel
Claire Johnson
Dilys O'Driscoll
Anne Ransford
Mike Robins
Alice Teulon
Anita Wall
Alison Webb

Violin II

Jayne Stafford*
Emma Benson
Sarah Hawkins
Frankie Karki
Vaughan Kitchen
Gabby Marsden
Liz Maycock
Louise Romilly
Chris Voss

Viola

Alice Crane*
Lawrence Good
Cameron Gregor
Graham Hayden
Fay Plumb
Margaret Ramskill
Ed Rushton
Simon Spencer

Cello

Gill Whiting*
Kerry Beaumont
Steve Carroll
Helen Cooper
Chris Hawkins
Caroline Menadue

Double Bass

James Hunt*
Sara Coldicott
Justine Doe
Mark Starling

Flute

Lindsay Martin
Alison Cooley

Piccolo

Emma Kendrick

Oboe

Jane Meredith
Emma Williams

Cor Anglais

Emma Williams

Clarinet

Liz Murphy
Helen Stares

Saxophone

Andrew Middup

Bassoon

Patrick Hinks
Alex Allan

Horn

Raymond Joyce
Helen Pugh
Martin Eyles
Dominic Allison

Trumpet

Terry Mayo
Peter Wain
David Hirst

Trombone

Fergus Norrie
Jon Webber

Bass Trombone

Gur Rotkop

Tuba

Colin Lea

Timpani

Jon Pearce

Percussion

Ben Chaundy
Andrew Holtom
Ruth Robertson

Harp

Dilys O'Driscoll

Keyboard

Robert Ramskill

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