

Saturday 18 October 2025

Warwick Hall, Warwick School, Warwick

Principal Conductor

Roger Coull

Coriolanus Overture
Beethoven

Cello Concerto in B minor
Dvořák

Symphony No. 5 in D major
Vaughan Williams



Cello
Andrew O'Reilly



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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

Sunday 23 November 2025, 3pm | *Family Concert: Winter Wonderland*

Royal Spa Centre, Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV32 4HN

Saturday 14 March 2026, 7.30pm | Rimsky-Korsakov • Brahms • Beethoven

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

Saturday 13 June 2026, 7.30pm | Vaughan Williams • Holst • Bruch • Rachmaninov

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Royal Spa Centre, Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV32 4HN

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Tickets available from the Royal Spa Centre box office

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Copland • Rimsky-Korsakov • Brahms • Beethoven

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Copland Fanfare for the Common Man
Rimsky-Korsakov Overture on Russian themes
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Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A major

Conductor: Richard Jenkinson



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From the Chair

Tonight we have a wonderful young soloist, Andrew O'Reilly. So what is the art of being a soloist? Since Mozart, soloists have become increasingly prominent, later with virtuosos such as Paganini and Liszt, and concertos being written for soloists such as the Brahms Violin Concerto written for Joachim.

However it is a common misconception that being a soloist is just about technical ability. Equally important is being an excellent collaborator and quick learner, capable of forging a high level of musical cohesion with a conductor and orchestra in the span of only one or two rehearsals.

Additionally, charisma and stage presence are vital to soloists, who are almost always the centre of the audience's attention. What truly distinguishes a soloist from a member of the orchestra is individuality: the soloist's job is to stand out, moving and captivating audiences with their passionate performance and singular musical interpretation. It's not easy to create a smooth, coordinated performance from only one or two rehearsals, and for this, soloists must be humble, communicative, and collaborative. It's also important to be reasonable and respectful with the musicians and conductors who are a soloist's frequent collaborators.

As conductor Kenneth Woods puts it well: *"If you play well, connect with audiences, and are easy to work with, nothing else really matters."*

Chris Voss

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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

Coriolanus Overture

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

This work was composed in 1807 as incidental music for an obscure play by Heinrich Joseph von Collin, rather than Shakespeare's similarly titled work. Coriolan, a Roman general who led successful campaigns, became an unsuccessful politician, later turning traitor. It is perfect for a drama full of tragedy and remorse. Beethoven uses just two musical ideas which represent the conflict: Coriolan's desire for revenge, and his mother's pleas to stop.

After incisive chords, the pulsating theme of Coriolan, in Beethoven's most ominous key of C minor, begins. The

graceful second theme represents Coriolan's mother pleading with him to desist from his certain tragic end. Coriolan's theme, weak and fragmented, reappears at the end.

This work was written between Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica") and Symphony No. 5 and it is possible to hear suggestions of both symphonies: off-beat accents, and an underpinning repeated rhythmic figure.

Cello Concerto in B minor

Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Allegro

Adagio, ma non troppo

Finale: Allegro moderato - Andante - Allegro vivo

Dvořák was a prolific composer, but the concerto was not one of his favourite genres. Completed in 1895, Dvořák's 2nd cello concerto was the last concerto he composed.

Dvořák championed Czech music, incorporating significant elements into his works, infusing them with melodies, linguistic inflections, characteristic rhythms, and national legends and stories. At the same time, Dvořák was schooled in the fundamentals of classical composing: its forms, development of ideas, and music as an abstract art.

Dvořák spent most of the years from 1892-1895 in the United States, during which time several works were composed, including his "New World" Symphony and the Cello Concerto in B Minor. Dvořák was concerned that the solo cello could not be balanced against the orchestra, but was advised by the Czech cellist, Hanuš Wihan as he worked on it.

Listen carefully as Dvořák pares back his orchestra when the solo cello plays. Often, the orchestration is reduced to a few woodwinds and low strings and the violins rarely compete with their upper range. Instead, they often stay below the upper range of the cello. Throughout the piece, Dvořák fittingly uses his low brass so that they don't cover the soloist.

It is a traditional three movement concerto, with the Allegro including a long orchestral exposition before the soloist enters. The opening theme is first played softly on clarinets and bassoons, before the full orchestra, giving way to

a beautiful horn melody. The solo cello entry is gently decorated by woodwind. A scherzo-like version of the opening leads to the cello restating the horn melody. A long diminuendo leads to a brief orchestral tutti and a sweeping string melody, echoed by horns. The cello enters pianissimo, developing gradually until an upward rush of octaves brings in the whole orchestra playing the theme of the soloist's first entry. The orchestra then takes over for the remainder of the movement.

Clarinets announce the Adagio, handing over the melody to the cello; the two then duet over a horn accompaniment. A restless passage for full orchestra is calmed by the cello, with a melody quoting a song by Dvořák referencing his beloved sister-in-law who was very ill. Flute and oboe share a beautiful melody, decorated by the cellist, and the horn then restates the opening. The cello cadenza is supported by woodwind, the flute having the final, gentle notes.

The Finale begins with horns, woodwind and strings presenting a rustic Czech folkdance-like theme in the orchestra, vigorous but lyrical, before the cello states the whole melody. The Rondo Finale features alternating short snatches of melody exchanged between cello and orchestra. It ends in abrupt tutti of a mere sixteen bars. The song melody from the second movement is restated by a solo violin. Dvořák said, "*The finale closes with a gradual diminuendo, like a sigh – with reminiscences of the first and second movements, the solo dying down to pianissimo. Then the sound begins to grow and the last bars are taken over by the orchestra, which provides a tempestuous ending*".

Symphony No 5 in D major

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

Preludio (Moderato)
Scherzo (Presto)

Romanza (Lento)
Passacaglia (Moderato)

Vaughan Williams composed his Fifth Symphony between 1938 and 1943. On the first page was written “some of the themes of this symphony are taken from the [then] unfinished opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*”. There is no programme to this symphony, but this connection does give a suggestion of its spirit.

The symphony opens with a low octave C held by strings, which is followed by a surprise D major call from the horns. Woodwind take up the dotted rhythm from the horns, while strings play a cantabile theme, which is heard throughout the movement. These themes are elaborated in various keys until the speed increases, strings keeping up busy quaver movement while the wind add chords and fragments of melody. The movement dies away as it began, with a muted horn call above a dissonance from the cellos and violas.

The Scherzo enters quietly, muted strings accompanying the first theme. The second theme comes from flutes and bassoons over the same figure. This gathers momentum as the strings join in, with occasional interjections from oboe and cor anglais. Horns, bassoons, clarinets and cor anglais together present solemnity in the trio-like middle section. The opening material reappears with a strong rhythmic motif in the woodwind, taken up by the rest of the orchestra before the first theme ends the movement.

In the manuscript score, the Romanza was prefaced by a quotation from Bunyan which gives the key to its mood:

“Upon this place stood a cross, and a little below, a sepulchre. Then he said, ‘He hath given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death.’”

The movement opens with mysterious chords on divided and muted strings which are repeated as a shimmering background to the cor anglais solo. The flute, oboe and bassoon play the next theme in turn. A slight increase in speed and dynamic then fades into an imitative wind passage. Woodwind introduce a new theme, horns play the original oboe solo, and fragments of earlier motifs are followed by muted horn. The music sinks to the lower strings and fades away.

Unison cellos announce the main theme of the Passacaglia variations, soon joined by flutes and violins with a complementary theme. The whole movement develops from their interplay. Both tunes suggest links with earlier movements so that the work becomes an organic whole. It finishes as it began, with the Passacaglia hovering on the note D and the opening returning to end the work on a C chord.

Jayne Stafford



Alistair Kennedy | Leader

After completing a degree in Classics from Liverpool University, Alistair went on to study violin at the Birmingham Conservatoire. He graduated in 1996 and went on to pursue a very busy freelance career, playing with a number of orchestras including Orchestra of the Swan, Orchestra da Camera, Chameleon Arts Orchestra, Moscow City Ballet Orchestra, English Symphony Orchestra, and the International

Film Orchestra to name but a few. Alistair has performed with many top soloists including Nigel Kennedy, Peter Donohoe, John Lill and Katherine Jenkins. Alistair has also toured with “Phantom of the Opera”, and has performed with a large number of “pop” artists including Leo Sayer, Victoria Beckham, Wizard, Procul Harum, and Emerson Lake and Palmer. Alistair has made numerous recordings for film and television, including the soundtrack to *The Krypton Factor* for ITV. Solo engagements have included both Beethoven Romances with the English Philharmonic Orchestra, *The Lark Ascending* and *The Seasons* with Spires Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, and the Beethoven Triple Concerto. This season has seen Alistair go on tour with West End Stars Kerry Ellis and Louise Dearman leading the International Film Orchestra, along with leading English Pro Musica on their *Snowman* Tour. Alistair is founder and artistic director of the Godiva Ensemble and Chairman of Orchestra da Camera. Alistair plays on a Fagnola Violin from 1919. In addition to performing, Alistair is also ABRSM's Regional Development Executive for the West Midlands, South West and Wales.



Roger Coull | Conductor

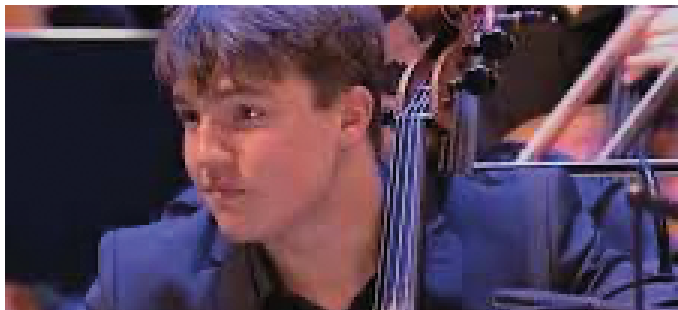
Violinist and conductor, Roger Coull, has been principal conductor of the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra since 2014. His international performance experience and musical versatility have earned him invitations to conduct for various orchestras, including the Beauchamp Sinfonietta, the Guernsey Symphony Orchestra, the Helix Ensemble, and the Crendon Chamber Orchestra. He also conducts the Kammermusik Chamber Orchestra in Santa Fe, New Mexico annually.

Roger Coull's musical journey began at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied violin and formed the Coull Quartet. They quickly gained recognition as one of Britain's leading string quartets. In 1977, they were appointed as the quartet-in-residence at the University of Warwick, a position they held for four decades. The Quartet has performed

in concerts and radio broadcasts across Britain, Western Europe, and the USA, and has also toured the Far East, Middle East, South America, Australia, China, Brazil, Berlin, Poland, Iceland, and Singapore.

The Coull Quartet boasts an extensive discography, featuring the complete Schubert Quartets on Upbeat Classics, the complete Mendelssohn Quartets on Hyperion Records (the recommended choice of BBC Radio 3's Record Review), and a recording of quartets by Walton, Elgar, and Bridge which was voted 'Record of the Year' by the BBC Music Magazine. The Quartet has a broad repertoire and is committed to contemporary music, commissioning works from eminent British composers such as Robert Simpson, Nicholas Maw, and Edward Cowie. Their recording of Sibelius quartet and piano quintet was Editor's choice in the Gramophone magazine. Their recent CDs include Alan Ridout's Six Quartets on the Omnibus Classics label, and the piano quintets by Amy Beach and Henrique Oswald for Somm with pianist Clelia Iruzun. Their latest CD, on Somm, features voice and string quartet with Roderick Williams, James Gilchrist, and Sophie Bevan.

In addition to his work with the Quartet, Roger is a member of the Warwick Piano Trio and performs in a violin and piano duo with Lynn Arnold. He is also a respected teacher, giving masterclasses internationally, and is a regular guest at Britain's music colleges as a teacher, examiner, and adjudicator. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music for his services to professional music making.



Andrew O'Reilly | Cello

Andrew is a second-year undergraduate at the Royal College of Music, where he studies with Melissa Phelps and is a recipient of the Leopold de Rothschild Scholarship. He began learning the cello at the age of six and, in 2020, became one of the youngest members of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Over five years with the orchestra, he has performed as principal cellist in 2024, and was supported by the Leverhulme Scholarship. Notable performances include Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 at the Barbican, Stravinsky's Firebird and The Rite of Spring at the Royal Festival Hall, and Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé and Mahler's Symphony No. 1 at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall.

A passionate chamber musician, Andrew performs regularly in a wide range of ensembles both at the RCM and beyond. He is a founding member of the Mirari String Quartet, whose recent repertoire includes Janáček's String Quartet No. 1 "Kreutzer Sonata", Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 6, and Jessie Montgomery's Strum. His recent chamber music

highlights also include performances of Brahms' Piano Trio in B major, Schumann's Piano Quartet in E-flat major, Ravel's String Quartet in F, Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 59 No. 3, Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht, and Strauss' Metamorphosen.

Andrew made his orchestral solo debut at the age of eleven, performing the first movement of Elgar's Cello Concerto in Appin, Scotland. He has since appeared as soloist in Dvořák's Cello Concerto, and performs a wide range of recital repertoire including works for cello and piano by Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninov, and Fauré.

Originally from Warwickshire, Andrew attended Kenilworth School and Sixth Form, where he first discovered his love of music through local opportunities with the Warwickshire County Music Service and the Coventry and Warwickshire Youth Orchestra. As part of the NYO Local scheme, he has returned to his former primary school to give workshops and performances for young students.

Beyond music, Andrew is an avid follower of Formula 1 and enjoys playing backyard cricket with friends. He is deeply grateful to his former teachers—Elaine Ackers, Jenny Curtis, and Peter Wilson—and to the internationally renowned cellists who have guided him in masterclasses and lessons, including Jean-Guihen Queyras, Bruno Philippe, Guy Johnston, Thomas Carroll, Steffan Morris, and Robin Michael.

Andrew performs on a cello by Lorenzo Ventapane (Naples, 1820), generously loaned to him through the Beare's International Violin Society.



Player Profile

Anne Ransford | Violin

A fine old Blüthner piano stands in Anne's lounge. It came from Foulds and Sons piano shop, which was actually her family's business, started by her great-grandfather, with shops in Nottingham and Derby.

That indicates Anne's musical heritage. Her mother was a very fine pianist, appearing on Radio 3 playing duets with her sister in the 1940's and 50's. Anne's father was a keen drummer in a jazz band, until a war injury to his leg, suffered in France shortly after D-Day, brought his playing to an end. The piano shops, incidentally, moved down the generations and the last ended up being owned by a cousin until it was recently sold.

Anne started the piano aged 7, and it remains her first instrument really. She added the violin at age 13, using a violin stored in the loft. After finishing school, urged on by her brother, Anne did a BMus degree at Sheffield University. Her final dissertation was on Mahler's middle symphonies, 5, 6 and 7, so it was a treat to play number 5 at the WSO concert earlier this year.

A PGCE at Birmingham University followed, and then Anne began a music teaching career, first at a secondary comprehensive school in Loughborough, then a 6th form college in Birmingham, before moving to Shropshire following her marriage, where she took a slightly new direction by running the music department in a boys' preparatory school. Her final position was 25 years with Warwickshire County Music Service, where her varied work included teaching in Rugby, whole class instrumental lessons (perhaps a daunting idea for some people) and small group work. Anne was much drawn to the Suzuki violin method, which involves learning by listening and repetition with a focus on technique. Another important part of her work was organising and conducting orchestras for children after school. Many players in this area have benefitted from these orchestras, including one Andrew O'Reilly, today's soloist! Anne completed her time with Warwickshire Music, as the service became known, in a managerial role.

Anne has played 1st and 2nd in the WSO since 1994. She loves the opportunity it gives to play larger scale works, especially late romantic/early 20th century music. There have been many highlight concerts, too many to name.

Anne met Nick, her husband, in Birmingham. He worked out how to catch her attention: their first date was to a prom which included Elgar's 2nd Symphony. Nick was a dentist till retirement, but always enjoyed playing jazz guitar. With various bands, he performs around the local area and plays voluntarily in the chapel at Warwick Hospital. Anne and Nick have two children, Catherine and Philip.

Anne is a trustee of the WSO and is also the ticket secretary. She liaises with the different concert venues, keeps an eye on internet ticket sales, and sorts tickets for those wanting them direct. You may well see Nick on the ticket desk on concert days, greeting the audience and selling on-the-day tickets, and helping with refreshments. Anne has also helped to organise the orchestra's annual dinner in the past.

Since retiring, Anne has continued playing, and added some voluntary activities, including English language teaching, and visiting elderly people living on their own. There is a lot of tennis, and holidays with the wider family, up to 18 at once. (Who does the cooking, one wonders?). A new project is visiting famous concert halls in Europe, most recently the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Berlin Philharmonic.

Armed with a good 18th century French violin (not the one from the loft!), an English symphony in the programme, and a former pupil as soloist, today's concert is just right for Anne, and she hopes, for the audience too.

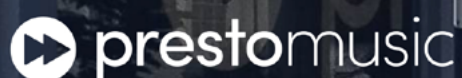
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Jenny Maynard
Claire Monks
Dilys O'Driscoll
Clive Owens
Anne Ransford
Vaughan Reed
Mike Robins
Alice Teulon
Anita Wall

Violin II

Jayne Stafford*
Frances Betts
Susanna Cleaver
James Corbin
Chris Eldridge
Diane Faulkner
Alison Fielding
Sarah Hawkins
Alex Joslin
Frankie Karki
Vaughan Kitchen
Gabby Marsden
Liz Maycock
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