

Saturday 18 January 2025

St. Michael's Church | Macclesfield

Sunday 19 January 2025

Storyhouse | Chester

NORTHERN
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

STRUM



Northern Chamber Orchestra

Strum

Harpsichord Darius Battiwalla

Director Christopher Jones

Canadian violinist **Christopher Jones** has established himself as one of today's most versatile and compelling artists, earning acclaim for his "exquisite playing" (The Strad) and performances that have been hailed as "a voice from another planet" (The Arts Desk, Wigmore Hall).

As a founding member of the Gildas Quartet, Christopher has appeared at prestigious venues throughout Europe, China, and Australia. A passionate advocate for the music of living composers, Christopher also often plays with the acclaimed Ligeti Quartet.

This past season, Christopher frequently directed the Northern Chamber Orchestra and the London Concertante from the violin, with whom he has appeared as a soloist for works by Auerbach, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Vivaldi. Other concerto appearances include performances of the Sibelius, Stravinsky, and Paganini Concertos with the New Bristol Sinfonia and Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra.

A committed educator, Christopher serves on the faculty of the University of York. He performs on a magnificent 1715 Pietro Guarneri of Mantua violin, and previously played a 1783 Onorato Gragnani instrument, generously loaned by the Harrison Frank Foundation.

Darius Battiwalla gives solo recitals all over the UK and abroad. Darius took up the post of Leeds City Organist in 2017, programming the very successful Town Hall recital series and giving regular solo concerts. He is currently overseeing the renewal of the Leeds Town Hall organ.

He has appeared as soloist with the Halle - most recently in a live broadcast of Janacek's Glagolitic Mass with Sir Mark Elder - and London Philharmonic Orchestras, and is a regular orchestral organist and pianist for the BBC Philharmonic and Halle orchestras. As a pianist, he gives regular chamber concerts with members of the Manchester orchestras, and on the harpsichord he has played continuo with many UK orchestras, and performed and broadcast harpsichord concertos: recently, as soloist in Frank Martin's Harpsichord Concerto for the Northern Ballet Theatre.

Darius has been music director of the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus since 1997. In addition to preparing them for visiting orchestras and conductors - including Mark Elder, Gianandrea Noseda, Nicholas Kraemer, and Paul Daniel - he has conducted the choir in performances with the Halle, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Northern Sinfonia, and directed from the harpsichord with the Manchester Camerata.

Before taking up his post at Sheffield he was chorusmaster of Leeds Philharmonic Chorus. He has worked regularly as guest chorusmaster or conductor with many other choirs including the Northern Sinfonia Chorus, Leeds Philharmonic Chorus, Huddersfield Choral Society, CBSO chorus and Netherlands Radio Choir.

Established in 1967, the **Northern Chamber Orchestra** (NCO) has evolved into a prominent ensemble. The upcoming Macclesfield concert season features esteemed guest soloists including Raphael Wallfisch and Jeneba Kanneh-Mason. The orchestra's twenty-one members are not only accomplished chamber musicians but also perform regularly as soloists. Our orchestra is led by the talented Zoë Beyers as Music Director and Sarah Brandwood-Spencer as Associate Director. Their creative experience and dynamic approach allow our orchestra to reach new audiences and expand our horizons.

The NCO actively engages with schools, colleges, and music groups in its concert locations, providing tailor-made, inspiring programmes for both young and adult learners. This commitment to education extends to collaborations with institutions like Chetham's School of Music and Essential Music Hub. The NCO works with and is supported by several area music education hubs, such as 'Accent' Warrington and Halton Education Hub, the Love Music Trust, NYMAZ North Yorkshire Music Education Hub, Derbyshire, and Greater Manchester Music Education Hubs. These collaborations strengthen the NCO's mission of spreading the power of music education and nurturing young talents in the field.

NORTHERN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Text © Adrienne Spilsbury 2024

SATURDAY 18 JANUARY 7.30PM, ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH | MACCLESFIELD

SUNDAY 19 JANUARY 3PM | STORYHOUSE, CHESTER

Concerto Grosso, Op. 6 No. 2 in F major, Arcangelo Corelli (1653 – 1713)

- I. Vivace – Allegro – Adagio
- II. Allegro
- III. Grave – Largo
- IV. Presto

Strum, Jessie Montgomery (1981 –)

Harpsichord Concerto No. 1 in D minor, BWV 1052, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Interval

Serenade for Strings, Op. 48, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

- I. Pezzo in forma di sonatina (Andante non troppo – Allegro moderato)
- II. Valse (Moderato – Tempo di Valse)
- III. Elegia (Larghetto elegiaco)
- IV. Finale – Tema russo (Andante – Allegro con spirito)

The term 'concerto' conjures up a vision of virtuoso soloist pitted against an orchestra. This meaning evolved gradually, though, and a more useful image of a concerto from around 1700 is that of three main layers of sound: the 'ripieni' (a small string orchestra), contrasted with the 'concertino' (a number of solo instruments), all underpinned by the 'basso continuo' providing the harmonic drive. We hear this clearly in **Arcangelo Corelli's** Op. 6 concerti grossi, works which were highly influential in the development of Baroque instrumental music. His *Concerto No. 2* opens with a multi-sectional movement: a Vivace with dramatic alternating solo and orchestral textures, an Allegro with close imitations between the melody instruments, and a contrasting Adagio *con molta espressione* in the minor mode. A Largo andante draws the movement to a close, with expressive descending harmonies which hint at the minor while remaining in the major mode. The lively second movement Allegro starts in a fugal style, followed by more freely-formed alternations of the concertino and the full orchestra. An expressive, minor mode third movement is followed by a playful Allegro, contrasting solo with full orchestra textures.

Jessie Montgomery, Musical America's 2023 Composer of the Year, is a GRAMMY-winning, acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator whose music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry, and social consciousness. Originally composed in 2006 for cello quintet, *Strum* draws on American folk idioms evoking a spirit of dance and movement. As Montgomery writes in the program note for this piece: 'I utilised texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out... The piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.'

About thirty of **Johann Sebastian Bach's** concertos survive, though it is likely that he wrote many more which have been lost. The weighty *Harpsichord Concerto No. 1* is the first of Bach's seven concertos for a single harpsichord, and is thought to date from the 1730's when he was musical director of Leipzig's Lutheran churches and of the *Collegium Musicum*, a secular performance ensemble started by Telemann. The concerto uses material in common with two cantatas which Bach wrote around this time, and while this may have been for practical reasons, as a way of meeting the considerable compositional output which Bach's position required, it can suggest an expressive interpretation: the dark, solemn mood of the first two movements suits the message of Cantata BWV 146: "We must pass through great tribulation to enter God's kingdom". The concerto opens with a powerful unison ritornello theme, which recurs throughout the movement. The intervening solo passages are built from dense motivic elaboration of elements of the theme. The second movement is built on a ground bass, presented in unison by the whole ensemble at the start and then providing an ostinato-like accompaniment to the dolorous, elaborately ornamented keyboard solo. The work ends with a brilliant, intense Allegro.

In a letter to his patron Nadezhda von Meck, **Pyotr Tchaikovsky** wrote: "The Serenade... I composed from an innate impulse; it is something I felt deep within myself". Written in the autumn of 1880, around the same time as his *1812 Overture*, the first movement explores an 18th century sonatina form to pay homage to Mozart's poised classical aesthetic, while the second movement is a graceful waltz. Beginning with a soft dissonance, the Elegy grows in emotional depth with rich string sonorities, ending with delicate harmonics that lead into the finale. Here, the opening Andante section includes the folksong 'On the Green Meadow', and the sparkling main theme of the ensuing Allegro is the folksong 'Under the Green Apple Tree'.

PATRONS

Professor Alison and Dr Craig Adam · Alison Allcard · Dr Mary Anderson · Michael and Judith Biggin · Roger Brice · Hilary Brice · Nicola Bright · Bevan and Dr Barbara Broadbent · Caro Brown · Dr John Bush · Arthur Dicken · Ian Edgar MBE · David Ellis (in memoriam) · Kate Foster · Heather Griffiths · Geoff Holman in memory of Jennie David Johnson · Judy Jones in memory of Alan · Dr David Kingsley · Alan and Eleanor Lewington · Angela Losse · Drs Chris and Mary Loughran · Joan Matthews · Vernon Matthews · Kevin Malone · Kim Maxwell · Peter Raynes · Anthony Rybicki · Dr Michael Sambrook · Dieter Senn · Kate Slack · Martin Slack · Adrienne Spilsbury · David Sutton · Dr Peter Thomasson · Steve Threlfall · Jonathan Tipler · John Walsh · Catherine Webb · Mike and Ruth Wilbey · Sue Williams · Jane and Wyn Davies

Patron: Stephen Barlow
President: Raphael Wallfisch
Vice-President: Martin Roscoe
Honorary Patron: The Baroness Bakewell OBE

CHAIR SPONSORS

Angela Losse (supporting Simon Gilks, violin) · **Eleanor Lewington** (supporting Louise Latham, violin) · **Dr Michael Sambrook** (supporting Rebecca Thompson, violin) · **Kate and Martin Slack** (supporting Michael Dale, viola) · **Judy Jones in memory of Alan** (supporting Jennifer Langridge, cello) · **Peter Raynes** (supporting Barbara Grunthal, cello) · **Dieter Senn** (supporting Conrad Marshall, flute) · **Jane and Wyn Davies** (supporting Nichola Hunter, flute) · **Geoff Holman** (supporting Naomi Atherton, horn) · **Caro Brown** (supporting Kenny Sturgeon, oboe) · **John Whibley Holidays** (supporting Rachel Whibley, bassoon) · **Dr John Bush** (supporting Tracey Redfern, trumpet) · Elizabeth Jordan (clarinet), Daniel Bayley (clarinet) and Jennifer Cox (horn) are supported anonymously.

For information about sponsoring a chair or concert, or becoming a Friend or Patron, please visit www.ncorch.co.uk/support

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Mozart on Tour (Vienna)
The King's School, Macclesfield
Saturday 15 February 7.30pm

Northern Winds Shall Blow
St Michael's Church, Macclesfield
Saturday 15th March, 7:30pm

From Darkness to Light
The King's School, Macclesfield
Saturday 5th April, 7.30pm

Mozart on Tour (Prague) at Storyhouse
Storyhouse, Chester
Sunday 27th April, 3pm

www.ncorch.co.uk
0161 706 1990

CDL
creating powerful partnerships

THE ORCHESTRA

Violin I
Christopher Jones
Sarah Whittingham
Paula Smart
Catherine Studman

Violin II
Simon Gilks
Louise Latham
James Pattinson

Viola
Ben Newton
Ben Norris
Amy Hark

Cello
Alex Holladay
Elliott Bailey

Double Bass
James Manson

Harpichord
Darius Battiwalla

'Strum' at St. Michael's Church, has been generously sponsored by the Friends of the Northern Chamber Orchestra.



Even classics need to be checked

Accurate information at a price you can't afford to ignore

1 in 3 vehicles has a hidden past. Ensure your choice is sound: get a comprehensive vehicle history check at mycarcheck.com for just £9.99

CDL is a proud patron of

NORTHERN
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

mycarcheck.com

MyCarCheck.com is powered by CDL, proud patron of the Northern Chamber Orchestra

mycarcheck.com

The Albert and Eugenie Frost foundation

The Earl of Chester's Fund