



**Conductor:** Roselise Gentile    **Leader:** Edward Judge

# Winter Concert

Saturday 2 December 2017 7.30pm

St. Mary's Church, Marlborough



with Zena O'May



### **Roselise Gentile – conductor**

After studying for her piano diploma in Italy, Roselise has specialized in choral and orchestral conducting, initially developing her expertise through a two year international course held by Julius Kalmar for the Hans Swarowsky Association. Subsequently she studied orchestral technique through orchestral master classes with Romolo Gessi and Donato Renzetti and followed this with a three-year course of study at the European Academy in Vicenza. As Assistant to George Pehlivanian she has collaborated with the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, in Slovenia and France.

Roselise has worked as Coach at the Festival dei Due Mondi (Spoleto), and at the Festival of Contemporary Music for La Biennale (Venice). She has conducted a wide range of instrumental ensembles including, amongst others, the Regional Choir and Orchestra of Umbria and the chamber orchestra Cappella Musicale di Minerbio, which is composed of leading members of the Orchestra of Teatro Comunale in Bologna. Roselise now lives in England where she is continuing her career as a choir and orchestra conductor. As a freelance conductor she regularly conducts the professional chamber orchestra Farnesiana, in Italy, with a vast repertoire ranging from baroque to 20th century music.

### **Edward Judge - leader**

A retired IT professional, Edward rediscovered the violin after 25 fallow years and took lessons with Diana Levitas in Hertfordshire. Edward lives in Hungerford and now plays violin or viola with several local orchestras. As well as being a keen chamber musician he also enjoys playing saxhorn with the Ramsbury Silver Band.

### **Zena O'May - mezzo-soprano**

Zena studied singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and has since continued her studies, more recently with Anne Williams-King. She is a past winner of the Wagner Bayreuth Bursary. Zena has worked for various opera companies including English National Opera, Covent Garden Festival Opera, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and Nottingham Festival Opera. Roles include: Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*), Frugola/Principessa/Zita (*Il Trittico*), Auntie (*Peter Grimes*), Marcellina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Amneris (*Aida*), Jezibaba (*Rusalka*), Waltraute & Schwertleite (*Die Walküre*), Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*) and Katisha (*The Mikado*). She also enjoys a very varied Oratorio and concert repertoire which includes: *Petite Messe Solenne* (Rossini) *Requiem* (Verdi) *Messiah* (Handel) *St John Passion* (Bach) *St Matthew Passion* (Bach) *Jephtha* (Handel) and *Sea Pictures* (Elgar).

Until recently Zena was one of the principal soloists of the Vocal Ensemble, *Mirabile*. She has also been the soloist for the Italian Pereta concert series under the direction of renowned conductor Robin Stapleton (former Chorus Director, Royal Opera House and guest Conductor, BBC Concert Orchestra) who said: "I had the pleasure to work with Zena in Italy. She possesses a dramatic mezzo-soprano voice of rare quality and beauty." Currently Zena sings with the vocal trio, *QuadraVox*, and is working with the North Wales Opera Studio as well as many other solo engagements.

# Programme

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Overture to <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> | <i>Mozart</i>   |
| Symphony No.3 in D Major, D.200           | <i>Schubert</i> |

## *interval*

### **Soloist: Zena O'May, mezzo-soprano**

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Prelude to <i>Attila</i>                             | <i>Verdi</i> |
| 'O don fatale' from <i>Don Carlo</i>                 |              |
| Prelude to Act I, <i>La Traviata</i>                 |              |
| 'Stride la vampa' from <i>Il Trovatore</i>           |              |
| 'Condotta ell'era in ceppi' from <i>Il Trovatore</i> |              |
| <br>   |              |
| Overture to <i>Carmen</i>                            | <i>Bizet</i> |
| Seguidilla, from Act I, <i>Carmen</i>                |              |
| Entr'acte from <i>Carmen</i>                         |              |
| Habanera, from Act I, <i>Carmen</i>                  |              |
| Chanson bohême, from Act 2, <i>Carmen</i>            |              |

## Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*

Mozart (1756-1791)

'In my opinion each number in Mozart's Figaro is a miracle; it is totally beyond me how anyone could create something so perfect'. So said Brahms. The overture is made up of short contrasting themes which flow naturally from one to another in a way that is utterly logical and complete. But beneath the brilliant surface are hints of the emotional complexity of the opera to follow. The music's exuberance catches the high spirits of Susanna, a ward of the Countess, as she contemplates her marriage to Figaro, the valet of the Count. But the twists and turns of the opening theme suggest the devious behaviour that comes to light as the plot unfolds and the sudden climaxes hint at the flashes of anger from Figaro and Susanna as they understand the Count's true intentions towards Susanna.

The first performance in May 1786 had a lukewarm reception, possibly because the audience was full of aristocrats who were sensitive about their own relations with their servants.

## Symphony No 3 in D Major, D.200

Schubert (1797-1828)

Schubert began to write this symphony on 24 May 1815 and finished it on 19 July. However, this doesn't tell the full story of Schubert's activities during those weeks, because, after writing a few pages of the first movement, Schubert put the symphony aside and wrote a large number of songs, a *Salve Regina*, a one-act opera and various other works before returning to the symphony and finishing it in eight days. We are lucky not to have been left with another 'unfinished symphony', for Schubert was a very tentative symphonist, being much in awe of Mozart and Beethoven, and he might have put the first pages aside permanently. The influence of Schubert's great predecessors can be heard in the present work.

**1. Adagio maestoso; allegro con brio:** The introductory *adagio* contains wisps of upward scales, which reappear in the *allegro*, not as the main subject – that comes from the clarinet – but as a forceful answer to it. This is followed by a jaunty second subject.

**2. Allegretto:** a deceptively simple movement in G major, with a central section in C major, the whole of it very delicately scored.

**3. Menuetto – vivace:** this is almost a Beethovenian *scherzo* with accents on the upbeat, but in Schubert's hands it is lighter and more dance-like. In this movement oboe and bassoon take leading roles. The trio is in the style of an Austrian folk-dance, or *ländler*.

**4. Presto vivace:** a tarantella with tremendous energy, inspired perhaps by Beethoven's 7th symphony. In the recapitulation a one-bar rhythm emerges, as it was to do in Schubert's Great C Major symphony, and this drives the movement relentlessly to its conclusion.

None of Schubert's symphonies was performed in public during his lifetime, and it is very likely that the first performance of the Third was given in an informal salon setting by musicians such as those employed by the Viennese merchant Otto Hartwig, whose band of players was almost exactly the same size as tonight's orchestra.

## *Interval*

**Prelude to *Attila*.** Written in 1846, this opera caught the rising tide of Italian nationalism with its story of the downfall of the great barbarian invader. The action begins outside the ruins of Aquileia. Attila sees a group of female prisoners and is powerfully attracted to Odabella, who stands out for her defiant bearing. As a reward for her bravery, Attila returns her sword – a bad mistake, as he eventually discovers. The prelude is based on a yearning melody, which rises quickly to a warlike climax and then suddenly dissolves, before rising again to a confident conclusion.

**'O don fatale' from *Don Carlo*.** The plot of this opera, first performed in 1867, revolves around the fact that Elizabeth of Valois has married Philip II of Spain for political reasons but is really in love with the King's son, Don Carlos. This is revealed to the King by Princess Eboli, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, who has her own designs on Don Carlos. Although the love between Elizabeth and Don Carlos has been chaste and both are trying to suppress their affection for each other, the King is desperately jealous and orders his son's imprisonment and execution. In this aria, Eboli is full of remorse for the trouble she has brought upon Don Carlos and her friend, the Queen. She sees her beauty as a terrible gift (*o don fatale*) and curses it (*ti maledico, o mia beltà*). In a calmer passage she reflects on the injury she has done to the Queen – 'I sacrificed you to the mad error of my heart' (*O mia Regina, io t'immolai al folle error di questo cor*) and she recognises that confinement to a nunnery would be a just penalty. But then her agitation returns: 'tomorrow Carlos will die' (*e Carlo, a morte domani*) – but 'blessed be heaven, I will save him' (*sia benedetto il ciel, lo salverò*).

**Prelude to Act I, *La Traviata*.** This opera is more intimate and more focussed on a single character than *Il Trovatore*, which Verdi was working on at the same time (1852-3). The prelude is a depiction of the heroine, Violetta, her fragility (tragically realised in her death in the final Act) and her gradually-developing love for Alfredo.

**'Stride la vampa' from *Il Trovatore*.** In this aria the gypsy woman, Azucena, describes the death of her mother, burned at the stake as a witch. The blaze crackles (*stride la vampa*), while the crowd gathers cheerfully. Then a woman comes forth, escorted by guards and clad in black, half-dressed and barefoot (*nero vestita, discinta e scalza*) and gives a fierce cry as she dies (*grido feroce di morte levasi*), a cry which echoes around the cliffs while the flames reach to the sky.

**'Condotta ell'era in ceppi' from *Il Trovatore*.** Azucena retells the story of her mother's death, how she was led out in chains (*condotta ell'era in ceppi*) and how she called out for revenge (*mi vendica*). In fulfilment of this, Azucena kidnapped the Count's child and she tells how she dragged him towards a fire, though he was crying and her own heart was torn to shreds (*il core dilaniato, infranto*). At that moment, a vision of frightening phantoms arose (*la vision feroce di spaventose larve*) together with a vision of her mother, deathly pale, barefoot and half-naked (*la madre smorta in volto, scalza, discinta*) and still calling for revenge. Azucena pushed the child into the fire, but recovering from her delirium, saw the son of the Count still there, and realised that by mistake she had killed her own son (*mio figlio avea bruciato*).

This event provides the dramatic undercurrent to the plot of the opera, for Azucena brings up the Count's son, Manrico, as her own.

Manrico becomes a troubadour, attracts the love of the Countess Leonora and the jealousy of the young Count, who is in love with Leonora himself. The young Count contrives to have Manrico arrested and condemned to death and Leonora drinks poison to avoid falling into the Count's hands. After the execution, Azucena reveals that the Count has, in fact, slain his own brother. *Il Trovatore* received its first performance in 1853 and was a great success, though some critics complained about the number of deaths; 'but isn't life all death?', wrote Verdi to a friend.

## **Music from Carmen**

**Bizet (1838-1875)**

This opera has been a popular favourite ever since its first performance in Paris in March 1875. The central character is Carmen, a heartless coquette, who works in a cigarette factory in Seville. She bewitches Don José, a soldier, persuades him to desert his unit and join her in the hills with a band of gypsies and smugglers, and then abandons him in favour of a bullfighter, with fatal consequences for herself.

**Overture.** The atmosphere of movement and colour is well caught by the overture, with its evocation of sinuous dancing and the rhythm of castanets and tambourines.

**Seguidilla, from Act I.** The girls stream out of the cigarette factory into the square, because Carmen has quarrelled with one of her workmates and stabbed her. A senior officer orders Don José, commander of a squad of soldiers, to tie her hands. Carmen then beguiles him with this aria, in which she sings about the inn of her friend Lillas Pastia, where there is dancing and drinking, but the real pleasures are for two (*les vrais plaisirs sont à deux*). She has dozens of suitors, but doesn't care for them; 'who wants my soul?', she sings, 'It's for the taking' (*qui veut mon âme? Elle est à prendre*). Don José, who is already beginning to fall in love with Carmen, is persuaded to release her and Carmen runs off, leaving José to be arrested by his superior for failing in his duty.

**Entr'acte.** This movement prepares the listener for the fourth act of the opera, which is set in a square outside the bullring in Seville. The music opens with a fanfare to greet the bullfighters as they step into the ring, and then continues with a sequence of melodies borrowed from a published collection of Spanish songs.

**Habanera, from Act I.** Carmen flirts with Don José and throws a flower to him. She then sings: 'When will I love you?' (*Quand je vous aimerai?*) and says that love is a rebellious bird (*un oiseau rebelle*), the child of the Bohemian (*enfant de Bohême*), for love is all around you, it comes and goes and then comes back (*il vient, s'en va, puis il revient*) – you may deny it, but if I love you, watch out! (*si je t'aime, prend garde à toi*).

**Chanson bohême, from Act 2.** Set in the tavern of Lillas Pastia. Carmen sings about tambourines, guitars and the tinkle of gypsy music (*les tringles des sistres tintaient . . . tambours de basque allaient leur train et les guitars forcenées*), the rings and striped fabrics on the bodies of the dancers (*les anneaux de cuivre et d'argent reluisaient sur les peaux bistrées*) and the burning and fevered rhythms of their songs (*sous le rythme de la chanson, ardentes, folles, enfiévrées, elles se laissaient enivrées*).

## **Date for your diary:**

### **Next MCO concert - Saturday 17 March 2018**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Haydn</i>       | Symphony No 103 (The Drumroll)              |
| <i>Fauré</i>       | Pavane, Op 50                               |
| <i>David</i>       | Concertino for Trombone and Orchestra, Op 4 |
|                    | <b>Soloist Joe Arkwright</b>                |
| <i>Kevin Riley</i> | In Flanders Field                           |

### **MCO is pleased to acknowledge the invaluable support of**

Christchurch, Marlborough

St. Mary's Church, Marlborough

Sound Knowledge, Marlborough

Making Music

The Performing Arts Service of the Wiltshire Library through which the orchestra has been able to borrow music

### **With special thanks to**

Richard Newman for writing the programme notes

Sue and David Birley for organising the bar

Clare Cookson for organising the raffle

### **About the orchestra**

The Marlborough Concert Orchestra was formed in January 2006 and has since given regular concerts in the town. We warmly welcome new players, particularly violins, violas, horns and brass players of a suitable standard. If you are interested, please contact us at [mco\\_secretary@mco.org.uk](mailto:mco_secretary@mco.org.uk)

### **Social media**

You can follow MCO on Facebook ([facebook.com/MarlboroughConcertOrchestra](https://facebook.com/MarlboroughConcertOrchestra)) and find out more information about past and future concerts by visiting our website at [www.mco.org.uk](http://www.mco.org.uk)

### **Concert bar and raffle**

MCO is a registered charity (number: 1113775) run by volunteers and most of its costs are covered by members' subscriptions. However, additional funds are required to meet the expenses involved in presenting concerts, each of which costs about £1000.

We aim to make our concerts accessible to all by keeping our ticket prices low and we appreciate your generosity in supporting our concert bar and raffle. The proceeds of the latter, this year, are being donated to **Home Start Kennet**. If you would like to support the orchestra further, please contact our treasurer, Rob Napier, on 01672 512333 or email [rob.napier@clara.net](mailto:rob.napier@clara.net). If you would like to offer support by helping out with front of house at concerts then we would also love to hear from you. Contact Anna Marsden at [mcochairman@mco.org.uk](mailto:mcochairman@mco.org.uk) if you are interested and would like more details.

# Marlborough Concert Orchestra

## **Violin 1**

Edward Judge  
Wendy Clark  
Rachael Elliott  
Roderich Heir  
Laura Ingram Hill  
Geoff Naylor  
Karen Sancto  
Robert South  
Sarah Till-Vattier  
Ingrid Uden

## **Violin 2**

Kim Austen  
Barbara Edwards  
Win Eyles  
Evelyn Hill  
Tony Jackson  
Alison Morrell  
Richard Newman  
Catherine Williamson

## **Viola**

Rosemary Stanbury  
Sue Birley  
Charles Brookes  
Rowena Overend  
David Richardson

## **Cello**

David Edwards  
Andrew Clark-Maxwell  
Sarah Higgins  
Alexandra Knox  
Robert Napier  
Karen Smith

## **Double Bass**

John Burgess  
Anna Marsden

## **Flute**

Sue Choules  
Gillian Farkas-Blake

## **Piccolo**

Gillian Farkas-Blake

## **Oboe**

Susan Ousby  
Christopher Joseph

## **Clarinet**

Helen Pysanczyn  
Gráinne Lenehan

## **Bassoon**

Will Ingram Hill  
Bridget Luke

## **Horn**

Jason Hoult  
Phil Springate  
Richard Cowdy  
Roger Kenyon

## **Trumpet**

Clare Webber  
Leo Springate

## **Trombone**

Kevin Riley  
Richard Taylor

## **Bass Trombone**

Martin Holstead

## **Harp**

Edwina Astle

## **Timpani**

Charles Giddings

## **Percussion**

Neil Streeter