

# KINGSTON PHILHARMONIA

Kingston Parish Church  
Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
7.30pm

Conductor – Levon Parikian  
Leader – Clare Howick  
Violoncello – Michael Wigram

Rimsky-Korsakov – May Night Overture  
Shostakovich – Cello Concerto No 1

*INTERVAL & RAFFLE*  
*(Refreshments available)*

Dvorak – Symphony No 7

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**Shostakovich** Cello Concerto No 1  
**Michael Wigram** Cello

**Dvorak** Symphony No 7

**Rimsky Korsakov** May Night Overture

## Kingston Philharmonia

Clare Howick *Leader*  
Levon Parikian *Conductor*

All Saints Church  
Kingston Upon Thames

### PROGRAMME

[www.kingstonphil.org.uk](http://www.kingstonphil.org.uk)

## LEVON PARIKIAN – CONDUCTOR

Levon Parikian studied conducting with George Hurst and Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies, he has pursued a freelance conducting career, and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, and is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Rehearsal Orchestra. He works extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, the National Youth Strings Academy, and Royal Holloway University of London, where he also teaches conducting.

Levon lives in South London and his hobbies include making retaliatory hoax calls to call centres, cycling headlong into bendy buses, and wondering why he came upstairs.



## MICHAEL WIGRAM – ‘CELLO

Michael graduated in July from his final year of postgraduate study at the Royal College of Music where, as a scholarship holder, he studied with Thomas Carroll and Catherine Rimer, receiving distinction in both Modern and Baroque Cello. During his time there he took part in master classes with Alexander Baillie and Jonathan Mason, played as Principal Cello with the Royal College Symphony Orchestra working alongside conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, and was a finalist in the Concerto competition performing Elgar’s Cello Concerto. He was supported in his postgraduate studies by a generous award from the Arts and Humanities Council.



During the past year Michael has been a member of London’s premier orchestra for young professionals, Southbank Sinfonia. This year of orchestral training has culminated most recently with a concert in the Wigmore Hall in which Michael played alongside Raphael Wallfisch. Michael was also invited

by the London Philharmonic Orchestra to become their cellist in the Foyle Future First apprentice scheme in 2008, in which he was given the opportunity to work alongside the orchestra in rehearsals and perform at the Purcell Room with the Future Firsts Ensemble.

Previously, Michael gained a first class honours degree in music at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he performed Shostakovich’s 1st Cello Concerto with the university orchestras and was awarded the Pompilia Legge prize for performance. After a performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto with the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra in 2007, Michael was invited to perform the Brahms Double concerto with the St. Albans Amadeus Orchestra in 2008. More recently he has performed Saint-Saens 1st Cello Concerto with Southbank Sinfonia and the Dvorak Cello Concerto with the Northdowns Sinfonia.

Michael is also an active chamber musician playing regularly with his clarinet, cello and piano trio, Trio Preti, as well as playing with a variety of quartets; a recital in 11 Downing Street with the Olivier quartet being one of the more exciting venues he has played in recently. He also regularly gives recitals in venues such as the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and St Peter’s Church, St Albans.

When Michael isn’t playing the cello he enjoys uncompetitive football with his university team, ‘The Blue Dragons’, and playing a slightly more competitive round of golf with his brother!

Michael plays a 1987 cello by Sabino Preti.

## CLARE HOWICK – VIOLIN



Clare Howick has been leader of the KPO since the early 90s when Walter Wurtzburger, the orchestra’s founder was conductor. Clare has established herself as one of the leading violinists of her generation. She has performed most of the violin concerto repertoire with various orchestras including the Philharmonia Orchestra, and has collaborated as soloist and chamber musician with many outstanding artists including Maxim Vengerov, Lynn Harrell, Philip Dukes, Leon Bosch and Sophia Rahman. She has appeared at major festivals in the UK including the Cheltenham International Festival, which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Clare combines solo and chamber performances with an orchestral career, appearing as guest leader of many orchestras, including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, and the Orchestra of English National Opera.

She began her musical studies as a Junior Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music with Dona Lee Croft and subsequently went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Maurice Hasson, where she was awarded the DipRAM, the highest accolade given for performance. She has also studied with Anne-Sophie Mutter, Dorothy DeLay and Zahkar Bron. Clare was first prizewinner in the Jellinek Competition and has received several major awards.

A special interest in 20th century British violin repertoire has resulted in Clare premiering a number of contemporary works and the recording of a CD for the Dutton Epoch label of works for violin and piano by Cyril Scott. Clare's first disc was Editor's Choice in the March 2008 issue of Gramophone magazine.

## Nicolay Rimsky Korsakov (1844 – 1908) Overture to 'May Night' a comic opera in 3 acts

Based on a short story by Gogol 'May Night, or The Drowned Maiden', R-K's opera received its premiere at the Marinsky Theatre in St Petersburg on January 21, 1880, with one of the leading roles sung by Fyodor Stravinsky, Igor Stravinsky's father. The opera reflects the composer's keen interest in the pantheistic ideas put forward in a book entitled The Poetic Outlook on nature by the Slavs, which chimed well with atmosphere of fantasy conjured up by Gogol's tale.

From the perspective of the music critic, the overture offers a rare opportunity to hear R – K in his own clothes: if you take his musical activity as a whole, a high proportion of it was devoted to editing and orchestrating other composers' works. While this was done in a constructive spirit, and arguably saved several works from oblivion and made others accessible in a way that would never have been achieved by their composers, it has left him open to the charge of meddling, and neglecting the composer's original intentions in favour of a superimposed concept of his own. May Night gives us the chance to appreciate R - K's skills as an orchestrator and as a great musical story-teller.

## Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975) Cello concerto No 1 in E flat major Op. 107

- I. Allegretto
- II. Moderato
- III. Cadenza: attacca
- IV. Allegro con moto

Shostakovich wrote this concerto for Mstislav Rostropovich in 1959, and it was the dedicatee who gave the first performance in Leningrad under Yevgeny Mravinsky. The four movements include a 148 bar cadenza which is treated as a movement of its own, and the second, third and finale are played in one sweep. As you might expect with a soloist of the stature and virtuosity of Rostropovich in his mind, Shostakovich makes extreme technical demands, and the concerto is counted amongst the most difficult of any in the repertoire.

As ever with Shostakovich, once you put the music in its social and political context you are confronted with the challenge of trying to understand what he might have had on his mind, and whether he had a personal agenda. Reflecting on the period of the first cello concerto's creation, the composer Sofia Gubaidulina maintained that 'the circumstances [Shostakovich] lived under were unbearably cruel – more than anyone should have to endure', and it does indeed seem that Shostakovich alternates between consciously distancing himself from the prevailing intellectual climate (sarcasm is very evident in this concerto), and – terrier-like – seeking to snap at its heels. Some commentators have drawn attention to Shostakovich's use in the Finale of a distorted version of 'Suliko', reputed to be one of Stalin's favourite songs. This sort of subversive intellectual game came naturally to Shostakovich, and he was confident enough of cloaking his thought with such ambivalence that, whatever they suspected, the authorities hesitated to seek an open confrontation with him.

The work is unusual in that it is scored for one brass instrument only – the French Horn – which plays a very prominent role in the work and could be described as a sort of *alter ego* of the soloist.

## Antonin Dvorak (1841 – 1904) Symphony No 7 in D minor, Op. 70

- I Allegro maestoso
- II Poco adagio
- III Scherzo vivace
- IV Finale allegro

Dvorak's musical career got off to a slow and pretty obscure start. He spent some time as a viola player in the so-called Provisional Orchestra in Prague when Smetana was its principal conductor, but left that to become organist at a local church and concentrate on composing. It wasn't till he was 33 and had written two symphonies that he caught the eye of the musical authorities and he was awarded an Austrian State grant for 'young, talented, impecunious writers, artists and musicians'. Brahms and Hanslick (yes the same critic who dismissed Tchaikovsky's violin concerto as an expression of oral ordure!) were on the panel of judges, and in promoting Dvorak's cause, it became apparent that Hanslick, who was a German-speaking native of Prague, had an ethnic axe to grind. He tried to persuade Dvorak to move to Vienna to become better known; to write a German song cycle or at least set some German

poems to music; and to have his choral works translated into German. Hanslick wanted to stem the influence of Bruckner and Wagner, and grooming a talented younger composer to provide an alternative music seemed a good way forward. Hanslick even arranged for Dvorak to be offered a commission to write a German opera. In spite of recognizing that making his work more accessible to German musical culture would open wider channels, Dvorak was too much of a Czech to play along, but it was not always easy: Simrock, who had begun publishing Dvorak's works on Brahms' recommendation, was always trying to persuade Dvorak to allow his name to be given as Anton Dvorak, as it would be familiar in German, whereas Dvorak always insisted on the Czech version – Antonin! They eventually agreed on the compromise 'Ant.'!

In the mid 1880's Dvorak made a series of visits to Britain. In response to commissions by the London Philharmonic Society he brought 'The Spectre's Bride' and 7th Symphony; for the Leeds festival he wrote an oratorio called St Ludmilla ; and for Birmingham he brought the G major symphony, a Requiem and Stabat Mater - which elicited the suggestion that he should write a setting of Gerontius! In 1896 his 'cello concerto was premiered in London.

I think we owe ourselves a pat on the back as Brits for having recognised Dvorak's great talents and provided him with such an appreciative audience in his lifetime. His achievements received formal recognition in the form of an Honorary Doctorate conferred on him by Cambridge University.

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# RAFFLE

The raffle is an important source of much needed income for the orchestra, so please buy plenty of tickets from the table by the main door. The orchestra acknowledges with thanks all those who have so generously contributed to tonight's raffle, in particular:

Bentalls Wine Department	Kingston on Thames
Chessington Garden Centre	Leatherhead Road Chessington
Garsons Farm	West End Esher
Mrs Julie Scotty	
Tesco Metro	East Molesey

Table arrangement by  
Margaret Pattenden  
Ardfinnan Crafts,  
45 Station Road Thames Ditton  
Tel: 020 8398 7659

The orchestra would like to acknowledge the support of **Kingston Arts Council, Mail Boxes Etc.** and would like to thank **AKP Chartered Accountants** for their support in auditing our accounts. They provide continual encouragement and guidance to the orchestra.



## OUR NEXT CONCERT (CHILDREN'S CONCERT)

Kingston Parish Church  
Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
7.30pm

Walton – Facade Suite no. 2  
Patterson – Little Red Riding Hood  
Hancock – Bitter Suite Concerts

## FUTURE DATES

13th March 2010 Kingston Parish Church  
10th July 2010 Kingston Parish Church

Full details available soon on  
[www.kingstonphil.org.uk](http://www.kingstonphil.org.uk)

**1st Violins**

Clare Howick (Leader)  
Robert Beattie  
Sheila Cochrane  
Jill Hollingberry  
Dorothea Klinge  
Jem Muharrem  
Sonja Nagle  
Chris Spiers  
Dominic Steinitz  
Pauline Waghorn  
Marton Zempleni  
Maria Zempleni

**2nd Violins**

Chris Smith  
Sarah Bruce  
Catherine Deere  
Jane Hicks  
Chris Johns  
Heather Lucas-Brown  
Maggie Pattenden  
Caroline Phillips  
Jackie Steinitz

**Violas**

Dan Hamm  
Helen Currah  
Richard Dorrington

**Cellos**

Philip Austin  
Charlie Shore  
Sue Dunne  
Marguerite Pocock  
Hilary Willis  
Celia Allaker  
Catherine Joseph  
Samantha King

**Double Bass**

Terry Gibbs

**Flutes**

Janina Byrne  
Chris Gould

**Oboes**

Linda Marley  
Vicky Owen

**Clarinet**

Sheena Balmain  
Ros Preston

**Bassoons**

Jeff Cox  
Rebecca Adams

**Horns**

Andrew Osborne  
Robin Livermore  
Chris Pocock

**Trumpets**

Jeremy Neep  
Rachelle Bradley

**Trombones**

Gordon Faultless  
Alison Henry

**Percussion**

Chris Kimber