

A stylized, light green line-art illustration of a Nutcracker figure stands on the left side of the poster. It has a tall, ornate hat with a star on top, a decorative body with buttons and swirls, and a long, patterned skirt. A small starburst is positioned near its waist.

Eastbourne
CONCERT :||
ORCHESTRA

THE NUTCRACKER

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

PROGRAMME 2023

WELCOME

Welcome to our Christmas concert which marks the opening of our 73rd Orchestral Season. We start this season with a change and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian Waters, our chairman for the last 10 successful years, for the energy and drive he brought to the role and the support he has given this wonderful orchestra. We wish Brian all the best in his retirement and welcome our new chairman Dr John Caroe, a highly valued member of the orchestra.

We begin our concert with the Overture to Zampa, an opera-comique from the early 19th century by the French composer Ferdinand Hérold. The opera tells the story of seduction, squandered fortunes and pirates - having lost his fortune a young count abandons a girl, changes his name and runs off to sea to become the Pirate Zampa. Love triangles, long-lost brothers and hastily concocted marriage ceremonies abound before, in the final scene, the statue of Zampa's abandoned lover comes to life and whisks him to hell for his indiscretions, akin to the ending of Mozart's Don Giovanni. This rambunctious overture is possibly Hérold's most famous work and I'm sure you will get a sense of the comic plot through the performance.

Fantasia on Greensleeves is included tonight by special request from our ECO Friends, who having heard our performance in the 2019 Christmas concert got in touch and asked us to play it again as they enjoyed it so much. Vaughan Williams once commented, "The art of music above all arts is the expression of the soul of the nation". He manages to capture the very essence of England in music in this work. He not only uses the traditional tune in the title but also the melody 'Lovely Joan' which the composer came across in Suffolk and added to his collection of English folk songs.

The headline piece of the concert, the much loved Christmas-inspired classic, The Nutcracker, ends our first half. The story is set on Christmas Eve at the foot of a giant Christmas tree in a child's imagination. Featuring a Mouse King, a Prince, a Sugarplum Fairy, a Land of Snow and a Land of Sweets, complete with Marzipan castle, this fantastical story is vividly brought to life by Tchaikovsky's magnificent score.

Tchaikovsky took 8 movements from the ballet prior to its premiere to create a concert suite. In the first instance the suite was much more popular than the full ballet. The character dances and the Waltz of the Flowers in the suite are all taken from the second act of the ballet when Clara and the Nutcracker Prince return to the Land of Sweets. The overture and the march are taken from the beginning, before magic transforms the toys into living beings.

Disney made use of the majority of the suite in his 1944 animated classic *Fantasia*. Images of dancing mushrooms, fairies, fish and cossack dancing thistles may spring to mind when listening to our performance.

Victor Hely-Hutchinson was a British composer from the first half of the twentieth century. Growing up between Kent and Cape Town he was a child prodigy, composing and performing at a very young age. He studied conducting at the Royal College of Music under Adrian Boult and joined the BBC in 1926 as a conductor, pianist, and accompanist. In the early 1940s he became the Professor of Music at Birmingham University before returning to the BBC as its Musical Director. Best known for this *Carol Symphony* he did write other music for film and television and had various pieces performed at the BBC proms, although he wasn't overly fond of a lot of his musical output. He developed pneumonia in the harsh Winter of 1947 as a result of refusing to switch the radiators on in his office to save fuel during rationing and subsequently died in March of that year at the age of 45.

His *Carol Symphony* from 1927 is in four movements based on traditional English Christmas carols. The movements are more akin to *Chorale Fantasies* than traditional symphonic movements. *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *The First Nowell* and *Here we come a-wassailing* all feature.

You may also recognise the third movement as the theme to 'The Box of Delights' which was heard on *Children's Hour* on BBC radio and reused in the television adaptation in 1984.

Mascagni wrote the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* for a competition for new opera composers in Italy in 1888. He only found out about the competition two months before the closing date for submission and entered a rushed collaboration with his librettist, sometimes only receiving a few lines of text at a time on the back of a postcard. Mascagni had a crisis of confidence and hid the score away rather than submit it for the competition, but his wife found the manuscript and sent it in just before the deadline. The work was accepted as a finalist and performed in Rome to thunderous applause and numerous curtain calls in 1890 - needless to say it won the competition and has been a staple in the opera repertoire since. By the time of the composer's death in 1945 it had been performed more than 14000 times in Italy alone.

Camelot is one of the final shows to come out of the prodigious Broadway partnership of Lerner and Loewe. The musical premiered in 1960 with Julie Andrews and Richard Burton in the leading roles and despite initially running to over four hours received great acclaim from critics and won four Tony awards. The show has been revived several times, including most recently in 2023, and was adapted into a film in 1967. A 2003 review noted, "this musically rich, legend-based classic evokes enough swashbuckling spectacle to keep one smiling. And for lovers of dime-store romance, Camelot has it all...Camelot features a score rich in English country-tune charm by Mr. Loewe. Its lyrics, by Mr. Lerner, never fail to dazzle with their virtuosity and wit."

I'm sure you will recognise the rich melodies, in particular the famous 'If ever I would leave you' and the title song 'Camelot'.

We end our concert this evening with the orchestra's traditional 'Sleigh Ride' as our way of wishing you, and yours, a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Simon Gower
Conductor & Musical Director

A Note from our New Chairman:

It is a delight to sense that the orchestra is in very good heart. Over the last few years it has grown significantly in many ways. We have known times of joy and times of mature sensitivity. We must give credit to Brian Waters for his steady hand as chairman during this time. He richly deserves his retirement. Thank you Brian!

The ECO has always sought to be a community orchestra. Music is a two way means of communication, of sharing feelings deeper than words. Thus we do appreciate the wonderful support and encouragement of our friends who come faithfully to share each concert. As much as we are enjoying playing ourselves, we wish to give away this gift in this musical language.

Times are getting tougher in our community, and we believe that music can bring hints of restoration, courage and calm to troubled lives. So we seek your wisdom in how we can explore further into our community. Smaller groups of us would love to come to play at community events and we are very open to receiving ideas.

Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy yet another evening of musical adventure.

Dr John Caroe
Chairman

PROGRAMME

HEROLD

Zampa - Overture

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Fantasia on Greensleeves

TCHAIKOVSKY

The Nutcracker Suite

Miniature Overture

Characteristic Dances:

- March
- Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
- Russian Dance (Trepak)
- Arabian Dance
- Chinese Dance
- Dance of the Reed Flutes

Waltz of the Flowers

INTERVAL

HELY-HUTCHINSON

A Carol Symphony

I - Adeste Fideles

II - Scherzo: God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman

III - Romance: Coventry Carol & the First Nowell

IV - Finale: Here We Come A-Wassailing

MASCAGNI

Cavalleria Rusticana - Intermezzo

LOEWE

Camelot Selections

ARR. BENNETT

ANDERSON

Sleigh Ride

THE ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLIN

Simon Smith
Nigel Bland
Hazel Brewer
Liz Bux
Lindsey Cook
Roz Hall
Jill Vaughan
Tessa Younger

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Gill Willis
Sarah Thomson

CLARINET, BASS CLARINET & SAXOPHONE

Dave Bottom
Jason Carbonell-Ferrer
Stephanie Bond
Sally Donegani
Adrian Thomson

HARP

Fiona Horsford

CELESTE

Jonathan Bruce

SECOND VIOLIN

Will Oastler
Sheila Bellamy
Lucy Blyth
Paula Burr
Julia Carlton-Lowe
John Caroe
Lynn Leppard
Alicia Newell
Yvonne Spear

DOUBLE BASS

Julian Baker
Kaye Colier

OBOE & COR ANGLAIS

Gail Taylor
Barbara Ashby

FRENCH HORN

Chris Willard
Aussie Pepper
Bob Turner
Mike Sarna

PERCUSSION & TIMPANI

Edward Bond
Avril Végh

VIOLA

Sophie Bayman
Ann-Marie Brooke
Elizabeth Cotton
Valmai Crane
Sándor Végh

CELLO

Jonathan Bruce
Kathryn Anderson
Miranda Buser
Deborah Pendleton
Penny Philips
Karen Sinstadt
Roger Wintle

BASSOON

Charlotte Willis
Kate Denny
Theresa Keysell
Jan Townsend

TRUMPET

Andy Trowhill
Stuart Welford

TROMBONE

Roger Dibbens
Ian Lawrence
Chris Thompson

FRIENDS OF THE ORCHESTRA

CHAIRMAN

Dr John Caroe

PRESIDENT

The Worshipful, The Mayor of Eastbourne

FRIENDS

Mr A. Anderson

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Mrs JM. Booth

Dr D. Cooke

Mrs P. Dye

Mrs M. Gardner

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Names correct at time of print.

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Please email: eastbourneorchestra@gmail.com for more information on becoming a friend of Eastbourne Concert Orchestra.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Concert Dvořák Symphony No. 8

Eastbourne Town Hall,
Tuesday 19th March 2024

Summer Gala Concert

Eastbourne Winter Garden
Thursday 11th July 2024

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