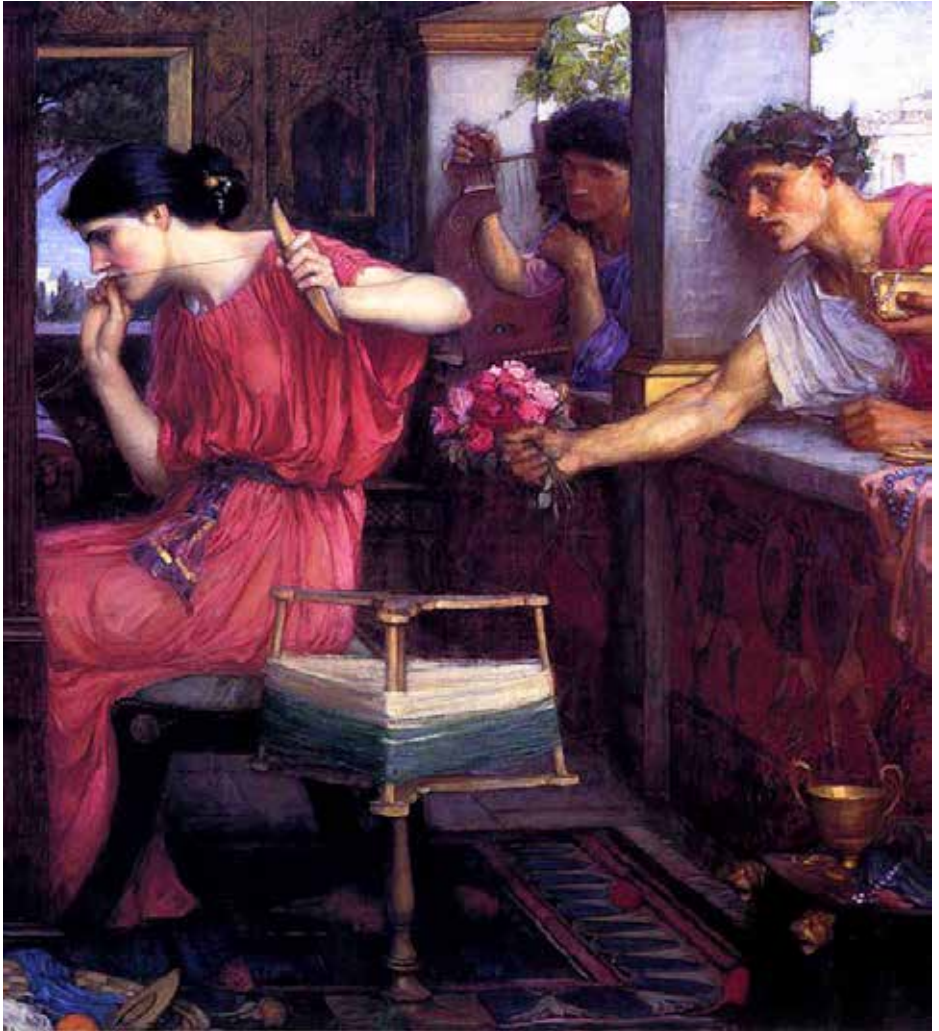




Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Programme £1

Autumn Concert
Shirley Methodist Church, Solihull
15:30, Saturday 25 November, 2023

Sabrina Ko



Born in Taiwan and raised in the UK, Sabrina discovered her love for working with orchestras through the Bedfordshire music service. After studying Music at the University of Birmingham, she took a postgraduate conducting course at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, graduating in 2020 with Distinction. Sabrina has been taught by distinguished conductors such as Michael Rose, Michael Seal, Sian Edwards, Alice Farnham and Kazuki Yamada. Since graduation, Sabrina has guest conducted several orchestras around Birmingham, and was appointed Musical Director of the South Birmingham Sinfonia in 2021.

Sabrina is particularly committed to working with young musicians. She is a member of the National Children's Orchestra's Support Team, and has worked with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Junior Symphony Orchestra. Sabrina qualified as a secondary school music teacher in 2022, and now works as a peripatetic violin teacher for Services For Education, as well as being a part-time Relationship Manager for the West Midlands at the music education charity Future Talent, where she plays a pivotal role in nurturing the region's budding talents and fostering their growth.

Charlotte Beresford



Charlotte studied violin at Birmingham Conservatoire and has worked with orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic and the English Symphony Orchestra. She has played in touring West End shows such as *Les Miserables* and *Miss Saigon*, for artists such as Michael Ball, Gloria Estefan and Barry Manilow and in ITV's 2022 Concert for Ukraine. She is a member of the Enigma String Quartet, and teaches violin both privately and in local schools.

Programme notes - Vivienne Brown and David Evans
Cover - Penelope and the Suitors (1912). John William Waterhouse, oil on canvas, Aberdeen Art Gallery,

Programme

Arakelyan - *Penelope Suite* 15'

world premiere

Reinecke - *Flute Concerto in D major* 25'

INTERVAL

Franck - *Symphony in D minor* 43'

Conductor

Sabrina Ko

Solo Flute

Su Newton Ede

Leader

Charlotte Beresford



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Kristina Arakelyan (1994 -)

Penelope Suite

In Homer's *Odyssey*, one of the earliest surviving works of western literature, Penelope was abandoned for nearly twenty years while her husband fought in Troy and then took a somewhat circuitous trip home. As she waits, she weaves a shroud.

In the opera by Kristina Arakelyan *Penelope: Seven Ways to Wait* we meet seven women who are waiting in different times and places and for very different things. In a fast-paced world, can waiting be a heroic act? A creative act?

The opera, a collaboration between composer and librettist Helen Eastman, with Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Anna Starushkevych (who performed with Solihull Symphony Orchestra earlier this year) weaves its way from Ancient Greece to contemporary Ukraine, from 800 BCE to an early 20th century suffrage meeting, and work-out videos to 16th century witchcraft. It was first performed at the Grimeborn Opera Festival in 2022 (available in full on YouTube) with the composer playing the piano.

Solihull Symphony Orchestra, with generous support from David Roper, commissioned Kristina to create an orchestral suite from

the opera from the original piano score. Many composers have created similar works - the suites from Bizet's *Carmen*, Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* and Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges*, for example. Three scenes from Penelope are presented in this suite.

After a short introduction, the first movement, *Weaving*, is set in ancient Ithaca. Penelope, the wife of the Greek hero Odysseus awaits his return from the Trojan War. She is under pressure to presume him dead and remarry, and her house is full of suitors eager to replace him. To ward them off, she announces that she will consider their proposals when she has finished weaving the shroud. However, she weaves it by day and then unpicks it again at night so it is never finished,

The second movement, *Weightlifting*, takes place in suburban England in the early 21st century. Penelope's new boyfriend is in the army and has been posted to Iraq. She is obsessively working out as she hopes for his safe return.

Finally, *Window-smashing* takes us to a community hall in 1913. Penelope, a suffragette, addresses the assembled gathering at a Womens' Social and Political Union (WSPU) meeting. She advocates for civil unrest - for deeds, not words.

Kristina Arakelyan



Acclaimed for her powerful, emotive and intensely lyrical output, Kristina Arakelyan was described as a ‘rising star’ by BBC Music Magazine in 2021 - and has more than lived up to that promise with works including operatic, choral, symphonic and chamber music alongside solo pieces.

Kristina’s interest in music started as a young child in Armenia, when she would often be found singing at home or listening to classical music and opera. At seven, Kristina started piano lessons after being spotted playing in the school piano club. When she was 11, she auditioned, and was accepted as

a scholarship student, generously supported by the Music and Dance Scheme, at the Purcell School.

Kristina went on to train at the Royal Academy of Music and University of Oxford, followed by a PhD in composition at King’s College London. She has won many awards including first prize in the BBC Proms young Composers Competition in 2010. In 2022 she represented the UK in the International Rostrum of Composers in Palermo, Italy. She has collaborated with the BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra, and the Choir of Pembroke College, Cambridge. Four of her compositions were featured in BBC Proms performances in 2023, including *Whin Lands* commissioned by the Royal Northern Sinfonia Chorus and *Star Fantasy* in a recital of organ music by Anna Lapwood.

Notable works include *Seascapes* (2021), a choral companion piece to Britten’s *Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes*; and *Fantasia on a Theme by Beethoven* (2020), a Sage Gateshead commission first performed by the Royal Northern Sinfonia conducted by Lars Vogt.

And we’re sure you’d want to send Kristina congratulations on her son, Daniel, born on 4 November.

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)

Flute Concerto in D major Op. 283

I Allegro molto moderato

II Lento e mesto

III Moderato

Carl Reinecke was born in Altona, Schleswig-Holstein, near Hamburg. It was part of Denmark until 1864 - which explains 'Carl', rather than the more usual German 'Karl'. He studied in Leipzig with Schumann, Liszt and Mendelssohn (who confirmed that he had 'a very definite talent for composing') and returned there as Director of the Gewandhaus and Professor at the Conservatorium later in his career, teaching Edvard Grieg, Arthur Sullivan, Leos Janáček and Max Bruch among many others, and serving to carry the flame of early romanticism into the 20th century.

Reinecke wrote several operas and symphonies which are rarely performed now, and today tends to be seen as a competent imitator rather than a great original. Much of his early work was based in solid, conventional, bourgeois German 19th century musical culture and it is only in his later works that he shows signs of a more independent musical voice. His three major flute works however are now part of the established repertoire for the



instrument – the Sonata *Undine*, the *Ballade for Flute and Orchestra* and this concerto. Composed in 1908 when the Reinecke was well over eighty, the concerto contains echoes of Brahms and Mendelssohn yet remains a completely original work. The opening Allegro molto moderato is in 6/8 time, which is unusual for a solo concerto. The mood however is less of a dance, and more a wistful twilight serenade, not unlike parts of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Balanced by soft chords in the woodwind, the solo instrument soars in song before suddenly falling silent. But the pause is momentary, and the flute returns

with even more intensity while the delicate main theme returns in the orchestra. The second part of the exposition, an expressive, rhythmic theme is introduced in the minor, but soon afterwards takes on a more colourful major mode. The third theme, introduced for the first time in a refreshing dialogue between the solo flute and the brass, also appears in a similar guise.

Judging from the rhythm, the slow *Lento e mesto* is a funeral march. This explains the dark mood of the solo instrument, which the composer indicates is to be played 'with sorrow'. The intensity of this slow movement was apparently reason enough to adopt the rhythm of the *Lento e mesto* in the closing rondo, at least in its opening bars. But the *Finale* displays all the characteristics of the flute to dazzling effect, including rapid octave leaps, rushing scalar-like figures, and sweet *sostenutos*. The soloist and the orchestra converse together across a wide gamut of emotions, allowing the flute to show its many colours.

Su Newton Ede

Su works as a GP in Harborne and lives with her husband, three children and their energetic dog, Max. She was taught the flute by Julie Schroder at King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls. Su started playing with Solihull Symphony Orchestra in 2019 and also enjoys performing with Birmingham Flute Choir under Sandy Hay. She has previously played with Manchester University Symphony Orchestra, Manchester University Wind Orchestra and Cheshire Sinfonia. She recently took a sabbatical to complete a postgraduate course in flute performance at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, studying with Marie-Christine Zupancic, principal flute of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.



César Franck (1822-1890)

Symphony in D minor Op.48

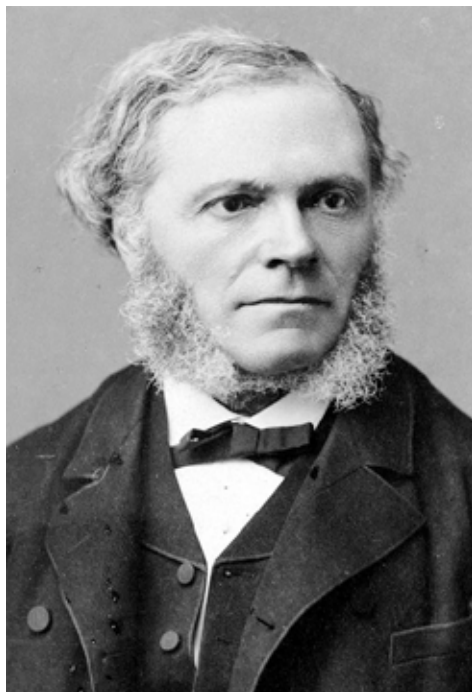
I Lento; Allegro ma non troppo

II Allegretto

III Finale: Allegro non troppo

César-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert Franck (who one might find difficult to distinguish from Carl Reinecke on a dark night) was born in Liege, now part of Belgium, to a German/Belgian father and German mother. His father Nicolas-Joseph, a bank clerk, had grand ambitions for his grandly-named son (known in the family as César-Auguste) and encouraged his musical talents, imagining a lucrative career along the same lines as Liszt. After lessons in Liege, César-Auguste and his younger brother Joseph were enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire in 1837, their father having to take French citizenship first. However, although César-Auguste did particularly well in his studies on the piano and organ, and the boys had several successful recitals, an attempt to continue this early child prodigy success back in Belgium failed, and eventually César-Auguste returned to Paris now as a young man to continue his studies.

His early compositions were not well received, and following a break with the family over his choice of



bride, César Franck (dropping the Auguste) retreated into a career as a teacher and organist, where he gained a reputation as an excellent improviser. This coincided with an explosion in new technology which transformed organ-building and enabled more symphonic sounds to be generated: Franck is once said to have exclaimed 'Mon nouvel orgue? C'est un orchestre !' ('My new organ? It's an orchestra!') and he was much in demand at inaugural concerts for newly-installed instruments (notably by the famous Aristide Cavaille-Coll) in churches in Paris and beyond.

This reputation eventually led to his being invited to take on the

prestigious post of Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatoire in 1872, whereupon it was embarrassingly discovered that his own French naturalisation as a student through his father had lapsed at the age of 21. When this was finally regularised and he took up the post, he at last had the time to work more formally on composition again, with ideas that had no doubt been simmering in those years of improvisation emerging in a burst of late-flowering compositional energy. His first and only symphony emerged in 1888 and although it was not immediately well received by some in the French musical establishment (who criticised his stodgy orchestration and the shocking use of the cor anglais) it soon became a popular and enduring part of the repertoire. Franck's contemporary (and rival) Saint-Saens had famously added a church organ to the orchestra for his Symphony in C – Franck instead plays with the entire orchestra as if controlled by manuals and pedals, and transforms the concert hall into a cathedral.

The symphony itself is in three movements, and uses a 'cyclic' form in which themes are carried through all the movements, reflecting his skill as an organist at improvising around a hymn

tune. The harmonic progressions are often chromatic, with the same material being repeated at a slightly higher pitch. The first movement has a slow introduction followed by a lively Allegro, the second alternating a haunting melody above plucked strings with contrasting sections, and the finale is an exuberant celebration, ending with a coda which reprises and transforms earlier themes into a satisfying conclusion.

Non-Playing Members

If you've enjoyed our concert and want to become more involved with the orchestra, there are a variety of tasks and activities that are always open to friends of the orchestra as well as to players. In return, we can offer you complimentary tickets for our concerts, visits to rehearsals and other benefits!

Sponsorship

We would welcome offers of sponsorship from individuals, local businesses or other organisations. Sponsors can choose to support particular projects - for example, work with young musicians or inspiring soloists and composers. We look forward to hearing from you!

info@solihullsymphony.org.uk

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Julia Åberg Leader
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Solihull Symphony Orchestra

Patron: The Mayor of Solihull



First Violins

Charlotte Beresford
Marina Battey
Liz Branson
Vivienne Brown
Manisha Chauhan
Peter Halldron
Hannah Massey
Jo Oswald
Sarah Sasse

Second Violins

David Roper
John Bayley
Jessica Harris
Rachel Johnson
Sarah Letters
John Maxwell
Charlotte McCluskie
Christine Oates
Emma Wild

Violas

Kelvin Farge
Hannah Branson
Joanna Clarke
Mark Emms
Julia Lawley
Nick Rice
Isabella Smith

Harp

Natasha Gale

Cellos

Helen Atherton
Sheila Armstrong
Raye Garrett
Alison Hart
David Kanyandekwe
Anne Kemp
Louise Robertson
Nicola Walters

Double Basses

David Evans

Flutes

Su Newton Ede
Clare Symons
Mary Wright

Oboes

Hannah Coutts
Fiona Speak
Duncan Speirs
cor anglais

Clarinets

Victoria Rex
Jane Emms
Richard Salt
bass clarinet

Bassoons

Harry Jones
Simon Gates

Trumpets

Lynne Hodgson
Maz Bradbury

Cornets

David Hirst
Colin Farlow

Horns

Stephen Mayes
Sarah Gee
Emma Mcloed
Tim Overton
Edward Fisher

Trombones

Stephen Rhodes
Tony Miller
Bernard Moses

Tuba

Paul Arthur

Timpani

David Pett

Percussion

Sabrina Gedhill



About the Orchestra

Solihull Symphony Orchestra is an inclusive and friendly group that enjoys taking on the challenge of a varied repertoire with professional leadership and inspiring soloists.

We are always open to new members, especially violin and double bass players. Commitment to attend rehearsals regularly, and a willingness to learn are more important to us than formal music qualifications. We like to perform in different venues around Solihull, and will always consider invitations to play at special events.

Rehearsals are held at Shirley Methodist Church every Tuesday from 19:30 until 21:45 during school term time, with at least four concert performances each year.



Our Next Concert

Saturday 3 February 2024, 15:30

St Philip's Church, Dorridge

Williams – Superman March

Morricone – Gabriel's Oboe

Horner – Titanic Suite

Williams – ET's Adventures
on Earth

Rota – Theme from
the Godfather

Pasek – The Greatest Showman

Lunn – Downton Abbey Suite

Bernstein – West Side Story –
Selection for Orchestra

Guest Conductor

Jack Lovell-Huckle



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