



Glasgow  
Orchestral  
Society

FREE



# ISLE OF THE DEAD

RACHMANINOV

**DANSE MACABRE**

SAINT-SAENS

**THE RAVEN**

SLATKIN

**NIGHT ON A  
BARE MOUNTAIN**

MUSSORGSKY

**TAM O'SHANTER**

ARNOLD

CONDUCTOR CHRIS SWAFFER

NARRATOR CRAWFORD LOGAN

**SUN 30 OCT 2016 7.30 PM**

GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL  
NEW AUDITORIUM



'The Isle of the Dead' by Arnold Böcklin

# WELCOME TO THIS FIRST CONCERT OF OUR 2016-17 SEASON

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It is just one night before the pagan festival of Hallowe'en, and two days before All Saints Day in the Christian Calendar, dates which influenced tonight's programme. Some of the works you will know, even if you don't recognise their names; others you will be hearing for the first time.

"Danse Macabre" and "Night on the Bare Mountain" you will recognise, from radio and TV programmes and from adverts. "The Isle of the Dead" and "The Raven" will be unknown or unfamiliar but you will still enjoy them.

Thank you for coming along this evening! Now sit back and enjoy the music, with tonight's conductor Chris Swaffer, and our narrator, Crawford Logan.

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Ann Westwood, President

# CHRIS SWAFFER

Chris is currently Artistic Director of the Auricle Ensemble and the Universities of Scotland Symphony Orchestra. He has guest conducted the Appalachian State Symphony Orchestras and the Metropolitan Ensemble of London and recently made his debut with the Orchestra of Opera North conducting Copland's complete original score to Appalachian Spring. His passion for new music has seen him conduct many premieres, including the UK premiere of the Ives Society Critical Edition of Charles Ives' Second Symphony and seven world premieres at the Royal Northern College of Music with contemporary

music group Ensemble 11. He conducted the first public performance of Howard Blake's Diversions for marimba in the presence of the composer, with soloist Heather Corbett. He recently lead a Scottish Opera Connect workshop on a brand new contemporary opera. With Auricle he has directed several critically acclaimed projects including, Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, a two year Mini-Mahler project and two European premieres of works by Copland, one of which, The City, was performed live to film at the Glasgow Film Festival. Educated at Chetham's School of



Music and with a Masters degree in composition and conducting from the University of Manchester, He has actively participated in many masterclasses across the world and gained a place at the Bard Summer Music Festival, New York where he conducted Mahler's Sixth Symphony.

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# CRAWFORD LOGAN

Tonight will be Crawford's second appearance with GOS, following the success of "Around The World In 80 Days" in Paisley in 2014. For over 40 years, he has played theatres all over the UK and



in Australia, America and Germany. In the West End he appeared in Tom Stoppard's "Dirty Linen", played "The Mousetrap" detective, and in 2013 gave 319 performances of "The Woman In Black". He is well-known to BBC R4 listeners as Paul Temple and has recorded many audiobooks. On television he has taken part in old favourites such as "Dr. Who" and "Secret Army" and, this year, in series 2 of "Outlander". Working with musicians

is always a pleasure, and over the past few months Crawford has performed with Trio Isimsiz at the Aldeburgh Festival and Red Note Ensemble at the Cheltenham Music Festival in Sally Beamish's "The Seafarer" and "The Sins". Among others, he has worked with the Carducci Quartet, the Fidelio Trio, the Rose Consort of Viols, Auricle and the Tallis Chamber Choir. He is also a very occasional member of a band called The Martians!

# PROGRAMME

## MODEST MUSSORGSKY

(1839 – 1881)

### *A NIGHT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN*

(EDITED BY RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF)

Though his life was cut short by alcoholism, Mussorgsky was a major figure in the "the mighty handful" of Russian nationalist composers in the late 1800 having composed several characterful songs with piano, the piano suite "Pictures at an Exhibition", two completed operas "Khovanshchina" and "Boris Godunov"; plus shorter works and fragments. Much of his music was edited for publication by Rimsky-Korsakoff whose version of the tone poem "A Night on the Bare Mountain" remains ever popular for its depiction of midnight devilry. As early as 1932 Aleksander Alekseyev and Claire Parker made an experimental animated film accompanied by this music, but the version many remember being scared by is in Disney's 1941 "Fantasia" with the score reorchestrated by Stokowski.

## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

(1835 – 1921)

### *DANSE MACABRE*

In 1872, the hugely prolific Saint-Saëns wrote a song for voice and piano using the poem "Danse Macabre" by Henri Cazalis. Sensing it was worth expanding, he transformed it into a short tone poem for full orchestra. The music vividly depicts ghostly events from midnight chimes, when the devil starts playing the fiddle, to the cock crowing. The solo violin is played with the instrument's top string tuned down a semitone to create the interval of a tritone, the "diabolus in musica" of olden times.

## LEONARD SLATKIN

(b. 1944)

### *THE RAVEN*

The noted American conductor and music educator Leonard Slatkin comes from a distinguished musical extended family. His father Felix (1915–63), orchestra leader and conductor, and mother Eleanor Aller (1917–1995), a 'cellist, were both outstanding members of the significant pool of very high quality classically trained musicians employed in Hollywood film studio orchestras from the 1930s onwards. Felix and Eleanor also founded the Hollywood String Quartet, active in the 1940s and '50s. Its recordings, some with Eleanor's brother Victor Aller (manager of Warner's orchestra) in works with piano, remain very highly regarded. Leonard has held principal conductor posts with several major orchestras including the St Louis, BBC Symphony and more recently the Orchestre National de Lyon. His tenure with the Detroit Symphony from 2007 is credited with reviving that orchestra after a major funding crisis and musicians' strike, restoring it as one of the USA's premier ensembles. His brother Frederick is a noted 'cellist and plays their late mother's fine instrument.

In a short and often chaotic life, Edgar Allen Poe (1809–1849) essentially created American Gothic as a genre, with his often macabre short stories and striking poems. "The Raven" became a sensation in 1845 on publication in a newspaper and remains one of the best known American poems. Slatkin wrote this setting for narrator and orchestra in 1971 for the renowned horror-film actor Vincent Price, who performed it many times. In fact it sets five Poe poems: "The Sleeper", "The Bells", "Romance", "The Coliseum" and finally "The Raven". Rather than notating

exact rhythm for the narrator, Slatkin creates a sonic backdrop to the words, often using groups of instruments rather than full orchestra to create atmosphere appropriate for each section. (In translation, Poe inspired another composer represented tonight: Rachmaninov set "The Bells" in his choral symphony of that name).

## INTERVAL

### **SERGEI RACHMANINOV**

(1873–1943)

#### *SYMPHONIC POEM THE ISLE OF THE DEAD OP. 29*

Rachmaninov composed "The Isle of the Dead" in 1909 at the height of his pre-Russian revolution success as a composer, conductor and pianist. It was actually a monochrome print of the eponymous painting by the Swiss symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901) which inspired Rachmaninov, and he later remarked that the full colour version, seen years later, would not have so affected him!

Though already reserved by a patron, the first (1880) version of the picture attracted such attention while still in his studio that Böcklin made four further versions, all now in public collections apart from one destroyed in WW2. The complementary "Isle of Life" never captured the same attention.

The picture shows a rocky island with veritiginous cliffs either side and tall dark cypresses in the centre behind a haven. A boat is approaching and a tall, paradoxically, white-clad figure stands at the prow.

Musically striking is Rachmaninov's dynamic portrayal of the boat being rowed strenuously

toward the isle. This is achieved by skillful use of mostly quintuple rhythm. As in other works he includes the "Dies Irae" of the medieval Latin mass (an appearance here is echoed in his last composition, the "Symphonic Dances", which quotes too from other earlier works). This vivid piece remains firmly in the repertory. Rachmaninov himself conducted its first recording (1929), with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

### **MALCOLM ARNOLD**

(1921–2006)

#### *CONCERT OVERTURE TAM O'SHANTER*

Malcolm Arnold was already an experienced orchestral player before pursuing composition studies. Helped by his prolific output, he rapidly established himself as one of the most exciting and accessible of the postwar generation of British composers. Compositions include nine symphonies and many concertos and smaller orchestral pieces. An ability to work quickly ensured he was also much in demand for film music, ranging from documentaries to the "St. Trinians" comedies and the Oscar-winning score for "The Bridge on the River Kwai". First fascinated by Robert Burns when still in his teens, the mature Arnold wrote "Tam O'Shanter" in 1955 and conducted its Proms première that year. The music closely follows the events in the poem, which tonight introduces the piece.

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**Alastair Whitelaw**

# GLASGOW ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY



GLASGOW ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

## **VIOLIN I**

Aaron Jamison <sup>LEADER</sup>  
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Sioban Fraser  
Morag Greig  
Rhii Leake  
Diana McCrone  
Katharine Muir  
Meg Munck  
Maureen Quinn  
Mary Sinclair  
Laura Stewart  
Maria Taheny  
Anne Thomson

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Lindsay Pell\*  
Barbara De La Rue  
Michelle Diamond  
Donald Gibson  
Claire Hollingworth  
Fiona Kettlewell  
Nicky MacEwan  
Chloe Morrison  
Christine Paterson  
John Riches  
Liz Sime  
Lynsey Stewart  
Pat Woodcock

## **VIOLA**

Lynne Anderson\*  
Martin Buchan  
Russel Ecob  
Robert Fee  
Frances Goldman  
Christine Johnston  
Chris Lennox  
Sue Mathers  
Sheila Nicol

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Ben Denton-Carlaw  
Amy MacLean  
Diana McNeice  
Nena Riches  
Priscilla Routley^  
Alayne Swanson  
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Diane Mackie  
Ari Loughlin  
Julie McCullagh  
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Pauline Vallance^  
Deborah Mosson^

## **PICCOLO**

Deborah Mosson^

## **OBOE**

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Sylvia Whyte  
Hans Senn^

## **COR ANGLAIS**

Hans Senn^

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Robert Neil  
Lorna Holn^

## **BASS CLARINET**

Robert Neil

## **BASSOON**

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Nicky Moyes

## **CONTRA BASSOON**

Elise Whitley^

## **HARP**

Fiona Duncanson^

## **HORN**

Phillipa Cheron^  
Jethro Dowell  
Tom Ferguson  
Saskia Loysen^  
Niamh McElhill  
Fiona Sim

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Allan McPhee\*  
Fergus Duncanson  
Kristin Malcolm

## **TROMBONE**

Angus McIntyre\*  
Naomi Brown

## **BASS TROMBONE**

Keith Anderson\*

## **TUBA**

Stuart Mortimore\*

## **TIMPANI**

Philip Woodrow\*

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Douglas Gibson^  
Ian Munro^

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Declan Patrick

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Sandy Nicol

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Neil Butterworth  
Ruth Maguire  
Jim Meldrum  
Sally Wilson

\* Section Principal

^ Guest player

# THE SLEEPER - THE BELLS - ROMANCE - THE COLISEUM - THE RAVEN

Our conductor this evening, Chris Swaffer has written the following about "The Raven".

"The Raven" was an early composition from composer/ conductor Leonard Slatkin. His inspiration came from a viewing of Roger Corman's 1963 version of "The Raven", starring Vincent Price (who ultimately would give many performances of the work, with Slatkin conducting). "Poe's use of language was so exquisite," noted Slatkin in an interview. "The beauty and the melancholy of it, and his rhyme scheme is so melodic. Poe himself seems to speak in a musical language. He uses words to delineate a sound, whether it's for worms or for birds. For the most part, I wanted to underpin the text and not get in the way of it. So I chose five of Poe's poems and set each one of them into different musical guises. In each of the poems, one can find a multitude of images that lend themselves to various musical treatments." Indeed Slatkin's approach was to underscore a reading of the text, in a manner one might expect in a radio play or even a film score – rather than something that is intertwined with the text (such as Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf").

The piece itself is actually a continuous setting of five of Poe's poems, each wrapped around by chiming bells and the line "Once upon a midnight dreary...". The first poem, "The Sleeper", takes as its subject a beautiful woman in death and is scored for woodwinds only. The second, "The Bells" becomes darker and darker as the poem progresses from "the jingling and the tinkling" of the bells in part 1 to the "moaning and the groaning" of the bells and is accompanied by an increasingly frenzied percussion section. Romance, in contrast, is a gentle, innocent waltz for strings but with interjections of strange ghostly chords. The brass section then accompanies Poe's vision of ruination and decline in "The Coliseum" with strong fanfare figures, before the piece finally turns to "The Raven" itself. Each of The Raven's stanzas are given to a different solo instrument in the orchestra to accompany – the sections are aleatoric, that is to say the musicians play in free time but with some elements (like rhythm and pitch) given as a starting point.



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WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED TONIGHT'S CONCERT  
AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN!

## Future concerts:

SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER, 7.30pm

**Renfield St. Stephen's Church, Bath Street**

**Sibelius – Finlandia**

**Shostakovich – Piano Concerto No. 2**

**Tchaikovsky – Marche Slave**

**Tchaikovsky – Nutcracker**

*Conductor: Bernard Docherty*

*Soloist: Edward Cohen*

SUNDAY 19 MARCH 2017, 7.30pm

**Stevenson Hall, RCS**

**Smetana, Vltava (Má Vlast)**

**Elgar – Cello Concerto**

**Dvorak – Symphony No. 8**

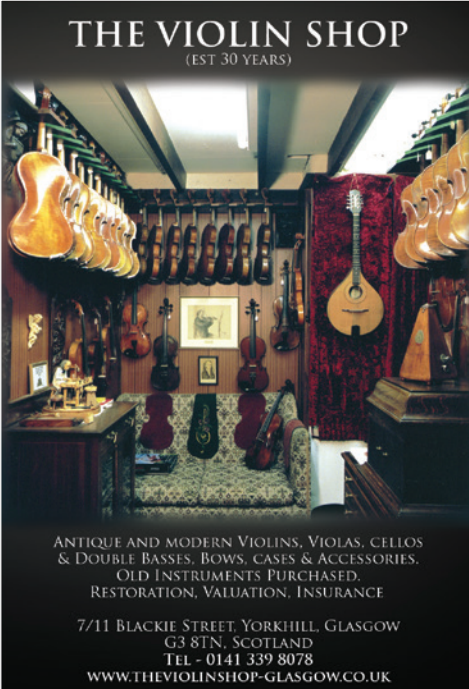
*Conductor: Stephen Broad*

*Soloist: Alice Allen*

SUNDAY 21 MAY 2017, 7.30pm

**Stevenson Hall, RCS**

*Programme to be confirmed*



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