

**Tasmin Little, violin**

with

**Orchestra of St John's  
John Lubbock, conductor****Morven Bryce, leader**

7.30pm

Oundle School Chapel

**Overture to The Italian Girl in Algiers****Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)**

Rossini was twenty-one and already establishing a name for himself in Italy through his early works, but it was Tancredi and The Italian Girl in Algiers, both of them produced in 1813, that launched his international reputation. The Italian Girl tells of the bamboozlement of the Bey of Algiers, Mustafa, who attempts to replace his wife with a lively Italian girl, Isabella, who has fallen into his hands. Wily and quick-witted, Isabella circumvents his intentions and escapes with her true love – her fellow captive, Lindoro.

The Overture makes no specific reference to the course of the opera, content to provide a general evocation of mood. Cast in the form of a symphonic allegro, it begins with a slow introduction, notable for its oboe solo. With the coming of the main section of the overture it is the strings which enjoy the opening tune with its explosive interjections, and the woodwind which so enchantingly launches further melodies. The famous Rossinian crescendo effect also plays its part in the proceedings.

**Violin Concerto in E minor, Op 64****Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)***Allegro molto appassionato – Andante –  
Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace*

It was in a letter to the violinist Ferdinand David in 1838 that Mendelssohn first made mention of composing a violin concerto; seven years later the work received its first performance in Leipzig with David as soloist. The concerto met with immediate and lasting success and has since become one of the best-loved of all concertos.

Mendelssohn's Concerto broke away from the usual classical mould and is characterised by several highly original features, most of which we now tend to take for granted. The first is its key of E minor. Up to this time it was usual for works for

violin to be written in major keys, so that Mendelssohn's choice of the minor opened up a new emotional range of melancholy for the instrument; serene expression and a kind of wistful yearning are also to be found. In design too this Concerto broke new ground, most evidently in the way each movement flows into the next with hardly a perceptible break between them. The layout of the movements was also new. Formerly, melodic ideas were first stated by the orchestra and then repeated by the soloist. Here, instead, the soloist takes command from the outset, proclaiming the passionate theme upon which the movement is built, only to become an accompanist for the second theme, sustaining a low G below the poignant woodwind tune.

Schumann, who was present at the first performance, praised Mendelssohn's work, referring to the Concerto's poetic character which raised it above the displays of technique that were common for violin repertory of the time. Indeed, the Concerto cannot be described as a demonstrative piece at all; it is so finely conceived in its features, and so expressive, that it has come to represent the essence of the violin in romantic music.

**Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op 92****Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)***Poco sostenuto – Vivace; Allegretto;  
Scherzo, Presto: Trio, Assai meno presto;  
Allegro con brio*

Beethoven completed his Seventh Symphony in May 1812 and conducted its first performance in a Viennese gala concert in aid of wounded Austrian soldiers. According to Spohr, who was performing in the string section, Beethoven's conducting was eccentric in the extreme, with dramatic gestures which included crouching behind the music stand and leaping into the air to signify dynamic change. Also clearly deaf, the composer was unable to hear the pianissimo passages. Despite this handicap, however, and the fact that the main attraction of the concert appeared to have been another new work – the Battle Symphony celebrating Wellington's conquest of the French at the Battle of Vittoria – the Seventh Symphony was warmly received and its second movement was encored.

The Symphony is traditional in form, although it lacks a true slow movement. The opening slow introduction of the first movement follows a pattern previously heard in three of Beethoven's earlier symphonies, although in this case it is

significantly longer, and the opening hints at the grand scale of the work as a whole, setting out its daring range of keys.

It is the overall rhythmic drive of the work, however, that is most impressive. At the Symphony's first performance in Leipzig some years following the Vienna premiere, listeners were inclined to believe that Beethoven must have been drunk when composing the first and fourth movements. The younger composer Weber was so shocked by one passage that he even proclaimed Beethoven ripe for the madhouse.

Such is the feeling of spontaneity the almost reckless nature of the Seventh Symphony exudes that Wagner described it as 'the happiest realisation of bodily movement in an ideal form', and Beethoven himself simply claimed it as 'one of my best works'.

**Tasmin Little**

Tasmin Little studied at the Yehudi Menuhim School, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she won the Gold medal in 1986, and in Canada with Lorand Fenyves. She has played with many of the greatest orchestras and conductors, and gives recitals throughout the world.

Increasingly in demand as a concerto soloist, she is recognised as a champion of recent additions to the repertoire. Following a tour with the CBSO in

2000, during which she performed the Ligeti Concerto with Sir Simon Rattle to great critical acclaim, Tasmin has been invited to perform the work with the Berlin Philharmonic at the 2003 Salzburg Festival. She plays a 1757 Guadagnini violin and has the

'Regent' Stradivarius on loan from the Royal Academy of Music.

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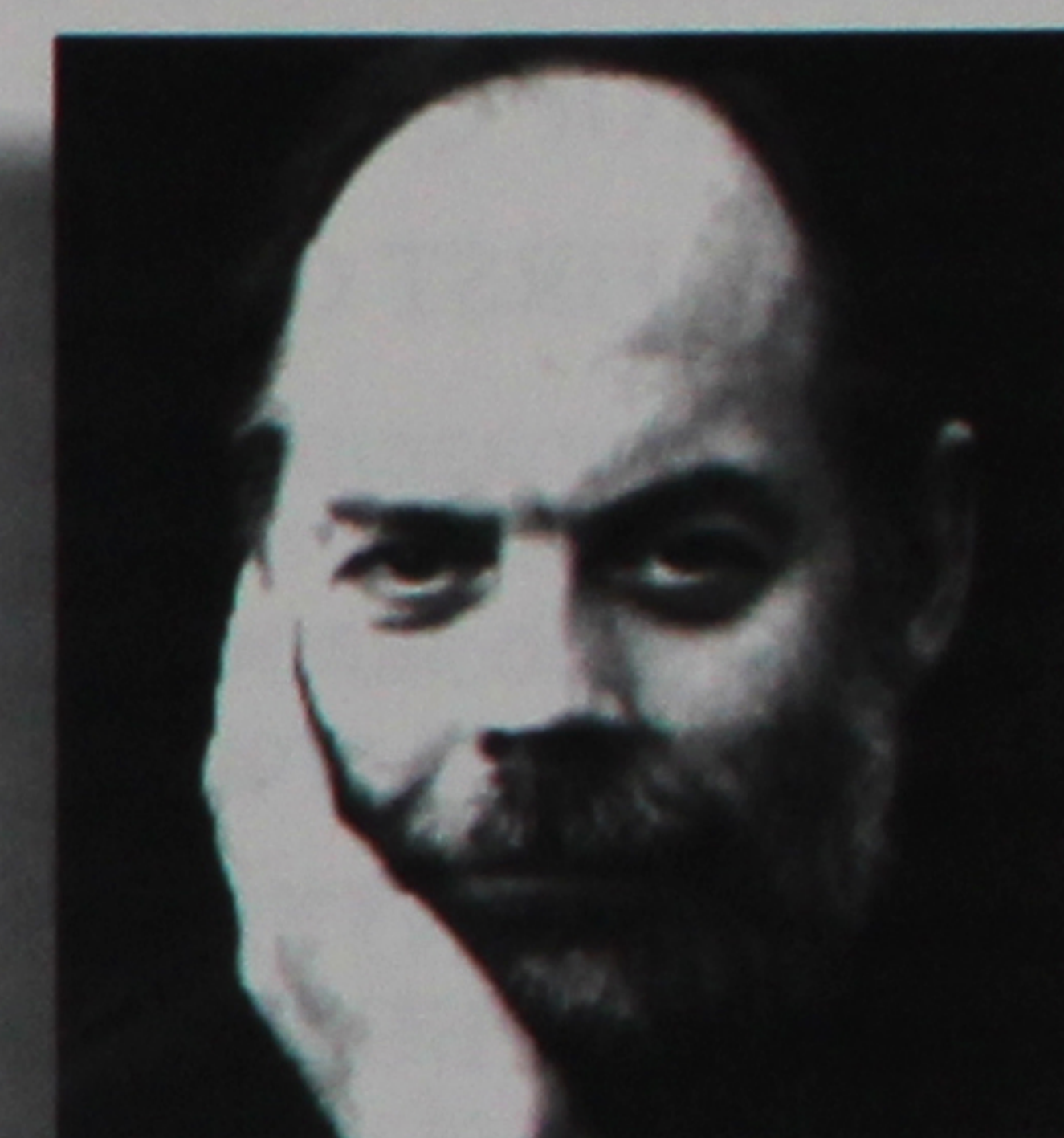
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**John Lubbock**

John Lubbock began his musical career as a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor and later was a member of the Swingle Singers. He founded the OSJ in 1967

whilst still a student at the Royal Academy of Music, with the aim of building an orchestra which would serve the community, the start of his commitment to making music accessible to those who might otherwise have little or no musical experience.



John was Director of the IAPS Orchestra, started by Benjamin Britten. He works with youth orchestras at the Royal Academy of Music, Oxford University and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and plays an active part in Adventures in Sound, the OSJ's thriving programme of education and community activities.

**Orchestra of St John's**

Founded in 1967, the Orchestra of St John's has built its reputation on world-class concerts. It produces recordings and is regularly broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM, further ensuring its national profile and accessibility. Alongside its public performances the OSJ is nationally acclaimed for its Adventures in Sound community programme. This was established to promote new experiences, and to foster musical interests and talents.

The OSJ is a champion of new music and regularly commissions new works. For the Millennium OSJ commissioned Paul Patterson

to write the Southwell Millennium Mass, performing the world premiere in Southwell Minster on 2 January. In February 2000 the Orchestra recorded with the rock band Radiohead for its albums Kid A and Amnesiac.

