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Wantage Orchestra Autumn Concert

Saturday 27 November 2021 7.30 pm Wantage Parish Church

Louise Farrenc First Overture
Beethoven Piano Concerto no 5 *Emperor*
Prokofiev *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite

We are so pleased to perform again in public, at the end of November. Almost as normal!

The Wantage Orchestra Autumn Concert

The Wantage Orchestra are delighted to be playing with the internationally acclaimed local pianist Dominic Piers Smith, who joins us to play **Beethoven's Piano Concerto no 5**: Beethoven's final composition before deafness overwhelmed him.

It was written whilst Beethoven was under siege from Napoleon's army in Vienna. He wrote to his publisher in July 1809 that there was "nothing but drums, cannons, men, misery of all sorts" around him. To save his declining hearing during the siege, he fled to his brother's cellar and covered his ears with pillows. The piece was nicknamed 'The Emperor' possibly because of its imperious opening but there is a complex dialogue between orchestra and piano going on. The piece journeys to both realms of reflection, and offbeat playfulness. At the time the piece was considered radical as it broke with conventional boundaries of the concerto.

Dominic, our soloist, also has a remarkable story straddling two very different worlds. His work in top level Formula One aerodynamic design, has supported both Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button in their racing careers. Dominic has also won a number of international piano competitions; notably the Yamaha International Pianist Competition leading him to play Rachmaninov's 2nd piano concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He has since created soundtracks for Hammer horror and played many international performances.

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Our second piece is **Prokofiev's Lieutenant Kijé Suite**. A piece written for a satirical, soviet propaganda film in 1934. It portrays the story of an imaginary soldier, Kije who was invented to cover up the misdoings of others in the court of Tsar Paul 1. It was Prokofiev's first attempt at film music and is a masterpiece. His music is used for the birth, adventures, marriage, and eventual death of the fictitious lieutenant. The melodies are humorous, absurd, and tragic. The film is remarkable and is available to view on YouTube.

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Our third piece is **Louise Farrenc's First Overture**. Written in 1834, it is a muscular yet lyrical piece, little known, but like its composer brilliant and forceful. Louise Farrenc broke barriers both with her music and her career. In 1842 she became the only woman to be appointed to as professor at the Paris Conservatory for the entire 19th century.

Farrenc was paid far less than the male professors at the conservatory. She wanted to change this and often protested to the authorities, trying to gain equality for nearly a decade. After a very successful premiere she once again demanded equal pay to her male counterparts, and it was granted.

The Overture opens with an introduction with a broad gait and noble gravity. The main theme is swift and agitated; the complementary subject, begun by the clarinet, is lyrical and more relaxed in mood. These are skilfully woven together in the development section. After a full stop, the earlier musical ideas return to close this unjustly little-known work of one of the 19th century's most gifted musicians.

We hope you will come and enjoy our concert. We feel very privileged to be able to play with and by such amazing talent.

[Buy tickets](#)

Tickets are available in advance, via the button above and via our website: www.wantageorchestra.org.uk Adults £9.00, seniors/students £7.00. Schoolchildren are free.

Paper tickets are also available from **The Mad Hatter's Bookshop** and **The Regent Bookshop** in Wantage, and from orchestra players.

We do hope you can join us for the concert!

Kind regards

The Wantage Orchestra Committee

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