



Glazunov

Autumn

(from 'The Seasons')

Tchaikovsky

Violin Concerto

Shostakovich

Symphony No. 5

Conductor: Howard Williams

Soloist: Stephanie Childress

Sinfonia of Cambridge

Sunday 14th October 2018 7:30pm

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Tickets: £18, £15 (concessions), £5 (under 16s and student standby)

Box Office: www.adcticketing.com t. 01223 300085 & on the door

Sinfonia of Cambridge

Sunday 14th October 2018

Russian Masterpieces

The Sinfonia open their new season with an all-Russian programme, celebrating a nation which despite its traumas and extremes has continued to produce extraordinary music.

Alexander Glazunov's music for Petipa's ballet '*The Seasons*' had its first performance in St Petersburg in 1900.

The section devoted to Autumn has the character of a bacchanal, depicting a celebration of the grape harvest which concludes with a shower of autumn leaves on a starry night.

The Sinfonia are delighted to welcome the brilliant young violinist Stephanie Childress to perform **Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto***. Unlike the Glazunov piece twenty years before, this was not at first received with enthusiasm. Critics like Hanslick hated it for its Russianness and it does indeed embody something of the national character, but its lyrical power and passion transcend nationalism. It opens with music reminiscent of Tchaikovsky's great ballet scores, then rapidly takes off into stratospherically high passage work for the soloist. By contrast, the slow movement has a yearning, tender quality, with the violin calling and responding to different sections of the orchestra. The fiery, savage final movement bursts through 19th century conventions to give a glimpse of the personal torments the composer suffered, but remains exhilarating and beautiful.

Dmitri Shostakovich, like Glazunov a native of St Petersburg, wrote his *Fifth Symphony* during one of the darkest periods of Russian history. 1937 saw the imprisonment, and sometimes the liquidation, of dozens of his friends, and Shostakovich constantly expected to be arrested. However, this symphony met with official approval, though the audience may have been more alert to its ironies and allusions than were the Soviet authorities. Its largo movement echoes the Russian Orthodox requiem, while the finale seems to triumph over despair and pessimism; whatever Shostakovich's intentions and fears, the symphony remains one of the masterpieces of Russian music of any century.

Diary dates: 15th December 2018 and 19th January 2019

www.sinfoniaofcambridge.org.uk

Stephanie Childress



Stephanie Childress is a violinist and conductor from London, and a recent graduate of St John's College, where she read Music and was President of the college's Music Society.

Having joined the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in 2013, Stephanie was appointed its Leader for the 2015 season.

She won the LSO String Academy Candide Award for Outstanding Performance (2014) and was a finalist in the 2016 and 2018 Strings Category of the BBC Young Musician Competition.

In 2017, she conducted Benjamin Britten's opera, *The Rape of Lucretia*, his song cycle, *Les Illuminations* and Lennox Berkeley's opera, *A Dinner Engagement*. She recently conducted Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* in the St John's College Chapel and made her debut as soloist and conductor with the Southbank Sinfonia. She has just finished an appointment as the assistant conductor for British Youth Opera.