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CONCERT SEASON

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# Season at a glance

## **Impressions of Italy**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

Saturday 3 October, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **Fire and Brilliance**

### **NCO Soloists**

Director **Zoë Beyers**

Saturday 7 November, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **Christmas at Tatton Park**

### **Choir of St Nicholas Catholic High School, Northwich**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

Conductor **Helen McKenna**

Friday 4 December, 3.30pm & 7.00pm

Tatton Park, Knutsford

## **Mainly Baroque**

Viola **Alex Mitchell**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

Saturday 5 December, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **British Landscapes**

Oboe **Kenny Sturgeon**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

Saturday 16 January, 5pm

St Michael's Church, Macclesfield

## **Russian Romanticism**

Horn **Naomi Atherton**

Director **Zoë Beyers**

Saturday 13 February, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **The World of Beethoven**

### **NCO Soloists**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

Saturday 13 March, 5pm

St Michael's Church, Macclesfield

## **Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross**

Narrator **David Threlfall**

Conductor **Stephen Threlfall**

Leader **Zoë Beyers**

Saturday 3 April, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **Die Wiener Klassik**

Violin & Director **Zoë Beyers**

Saturday 1 May, 7.30pm

The King's School, Macclesfield

## **BOOK YOUR TICKETS**

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# Welcome

**We are delighted to introduce you to our 2026/27 season, where we bring a world of music to Macclesfield. You are more than welcome to join us on our journey. Many works are familiar and we look forward to introducing you to favourites you have yet to meet.**

The season unfolds as a rich, multi-layered journey across countries, eras and musical traditions. The adventure begins in Italy, where Rossini's effervescent Barber of Seville Overture opens our season, with Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony closing the programme in a blaze of Mediterranean warmth.



An international celebration of the string octet follows, again centring on Mendelssohn, whose youthfully brilliant octet is a miracle of 19<sup>th</sup> century chamber music.

Whilst baroque colour and neoclassical clarity shape our December programme, British music takes centre stage in January as the season turns to Elgar, Vaughan Williams and their circle.

February brings the drama and passion of Russian romantic music, there being no finer example than Tchaikovsky's rich and spirited Souvenir de Florence, inspired by a visit to the city he adored.

March highlights chamber works by the young Beethoven and Holst before we turn to Haydn's profound Seven Last Words for Eastertide. The performance will be conducted by Stephen Threlfall, formerly Director of Music at Chetham's and now Artistic Director of Lake District Summer Music. Subject to availability his brother, David Threlfall ('Shameless'), will perform poetry designed to accompany each 'Word'.

Our journey concludes in Vienna with the unstoppable rhythmic vitality of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

We extend our profound gratitude to our sponsors, patrons and the Friends of the Northern Chamber Orchestra. Without your support these performances - and our vitally important outreach work - would simply not be possible.

Whilst presenting this season as a journey of sorts, we believe that live music also reaches inside us. Please do join us to experience world-class music on your doorstep.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Rowley'.

**Charlie Rowley, Chief Executive**

# Impressions of Italy



Sarah Brandwood-Spencer

Rossini - *Overture to the Barber of Seville*  
Mascagni - *Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana*  
Respighi - *Gli Uccelli (The Birds)*  
Mendelssohn - *Symphony No. 4 ('Italian')*

**Sat. 3 October 2026**

**7.30pm - 9.30pm**  
**(incl. 20 minute interval)**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

**The King's School**  
**Macclesfield**

## **Experience the warmth, drama and sparkling energy of Italy in music**

We begin this season's exploration of 'A World of Music' in Italy. Follow the twists and turns around the irresistible figure of Figaro, barber and skilled schemer, in Rossini's Overture to the Barber of Seville.

Luxuriate in heartfelt melodies from Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana. Marvel at Respighi's invention in Gli Uccelli as he adopts the music of composers of the past to evoke fluttering wings, pecking beaks and birdsong.

Bask in the warmth of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4, giving us the composer's impressions of his Italian travels with its Mediterranean sunshine, religious solemnity and scintillating saltarello.

# Fire and Brilliance



Zoë Beyers © Gail Secker

Shostakovich – *Two Pieces for String Octet*

Nicholas Simpson – *Octet (world premiere)*

Mendelssohn – *Octet*

**NCO Soloists**

Director **Zoë Beyers**

**Sat. 7 November 2026**

**7.30pm – 9.30pm  
(incl. 20 minute interval)**

**The King's School  
Macclesfield**

## **A blaze of energy and brilliance for eight players**

We open this programme focussing on the string octet with an appetiser from the young Shostakovich. His *Two Pieces* contrast a sombre, elegiac Prelude with the biting satire of a kaleidoscopic Scherzo.

Mendelssohn's *Octet* was a birthday present for his violin teacher. With memorable melodies and dynamic exchanges between the players, it has delighted audiences and performers for two hundred years since its first performance in the Mendelssohn family home.

Receiving its first public outing is Manchester-based composer Nicholas Simpson's *Octet*. By turns lyrical, funny, touching, sinister and impassioned, Simpson's *Octet* is a companion piece to the Mendelssohn masterwork he has loved and admired since childhood.

This concert is sponsored by Dr Barbara Broadbent in memory of Bevan

# Christmas at Tatton Park



NCO with director Eleanor Corr and the Choir of St Nicholas Catholic High School, Northwich

**Choir of St Nicholas Catholic High School,  
Northwich**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**  
Conductor **Helen McKenna**

**Fri. 4 December 2026**

**3.30pm and 7pm  
(incl. 20 minute interval)**

**Tatton Park, Knutsford**

## **Celebrate the magic of Christmas through music at Tatton Park**

Celebrate Christmas with the Northern Chamber Orchestra as we return to Tatton Park for a festive concert full of warmth and Christmas cheer.

Join us in the grand setting of the Tenants' Hall for a programme of much-loved carols and seasonal favourites, performed live in an intimate setting close to home.

The evening performance also includes a special tour of Tatton Park's Christmas Mansion, glowing with twinkling lights and festive decoration.

A perfect outing for friends, families and groups, with 10% off for parties of 10 or more.

Our Christmas concerts sell out each year, so we recommend booking early.

# Mainly Baroque



Alex Mitchell

Vivaldi – *Concerto for Strings in G minor*

Telemann – *Viola Concerto*

Caroline Shaw – *Plan & Elevation*

Stravinsky – *Concerto in E flat major ('Dumbarton Oaks')*

Bach – *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*

Viola **Alex Mitchell**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

**Sat. 5 December 2026**

**7.30pm – 9.30pm**

**(incl. 20 minute interval)**

**The King's School**

**Macclesfield**

## **Elegance, virtuosity and intricate beauty from the Baroque world**

Vivaldi's vibrant Concerto for Strings in G minor opens the programme, before we are transported to the grounds of Dumbarton Oaks, the setting for Shaw's Plan & Elevation, with its flower gardens, orangery, stone paths, hornbeam and beech trees. A commission by the former owners of that historic estate, now owned by Harvard University, gave us Stravinsky's vibrant, neoclassical Concerto in E flat major.

In his Viola Concerto, Telemann weaves a story for the viola to tell, starting with a noble sarabande and ending with a spirited dance. Three soloists – flute, violin and harpsichord – feature in Bach's superlative Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, with the harpsichordist taking centre stage in a dazzling cadenza.

# British Landscapes



Kenny Sturgeon

Holst – *St Paul's Suite*  
Vaughan Williams – *Oboe Concerto*  
Ruth Gipps – *Cringlemire Garden*  
Elgar – *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*

**Sat. 16 January 2027**

**5pm – 6.15pm**  
**(no interval)**

Oboe **Kenny Sturgeon**  
Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

**St. Michael's Church**  
**Macclesfield**

## **From folk traditions to sweeping British landscapes**

The work of lifelong friends, bicycling companions, and folk-song collectors Holst and Vaughan Williams is integral to the revival of British music in the 20th century. Folk-song idioms permeate Vaughan Williams' lyrical *Oboe Concerto*, and Greensleeves and Dargason feature in Holst's evergreen *St Paul's Suite*. They inspired and nurtured the next generation of composers, including the oboist Gipps, whose *Cringlemire Garden* evokes sweeping views across Lake Windermere to the Langdale Pikes.

Another keen cyclist, Elgar is perhaps the quintessential English composer. During a walk along the Cardiganshire coast, he heard a distant choir 'On the cliff, between blue sea and blue sky, there came up to me the sound of singing', giving him the inspiration for his magnificent *Introduction and Allegro*.

# Russian Romanticism



Naomi Atherton © Kauko Kippas

Anton Arensky - *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky*

Alexander Glazunov - *Idyll for horn and strings*

Stravinsky - *Concerto in D ('Basle')*

Tchaikovsky - *Souvenir de Florence*

**Sat. 13 February 2027**

**7.30pm - 9.30pm**

**(incl. 20 minute interval)**

Horn **Naomi Atherton**

Director **Zoë Beyers**

**The King's School**

**Macclesfield**

## **Music of longing, lyricism and passionate intensity from the heart of Russia**

Steeped in the traditions of Russian folk music, literature and the orthodox church, the music of the Russian romantics is full of drama, yearning and passion, brimming with memorable lyrical melodies.

Glazunov's gently lilting *Idyll* reveals the young student's love of the French horn. The *Concerto in D*, written in Stravinsky's new home in Los Angeles, explores the rich possibilities of a string ensemble, juxtaposing vivacious, gritty writing with the graceful and lyrical.

Arensky dedicated his *Variations* to his friend and teacher, in an elegant setting of one of Tchaikovsky's hauntingly beautiful melodies. Tchaikovsky's lush, energetic *tour de force*, *Souvenir de Florence*, invites us to share in the composer's happy memories of his time in Florence.

This concert is sponsored by Geoff Holman

# The World of Beethoven



Sarah Brandwood-Spencer © Sarah Porter

Holst - *Sextet*

Beethoven - *Septet*

**NCO Soloists**

Director **Sarah Brandwood-Spencer**

**Sat. 13 March 2027**

**5pm - 6.15pm**  
**(no interval)**

**St. Michael's Church**  
**Macclesfield**

## **Discover the charm and intimacy of chamber music for winds and strings**

We focus on chamber music for wind and strings, with two works written by composers in their late twenties, full of bonhomie.

Beethoven's Septet was his most popular work in his lifetime, so sought after that multiple arrangements were made, making it widely accessible. Beethoven himself arranged it as a trio for violin or clarinet, cello and piano.

By contrast, Holst's captivating Sextet, discovered in the British Library archives a hundred years after its composition, is a fine recent addition to the genre.

# Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross



David Threlfall

Haydn - *Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*

**Sat. 3 April 2027**

Narrator **David Threlfall** (*subject to availability*)

**7.30pm - 9.30pm**

Conductor **Stephen Threlfall**

**(incl. 20 minute interval)**

Leader **Zoë Beyers**

**The King's School  
Macclesfield**

## **A deeply reflective meditation on the Passion**

For Eastertide, experience Haydn's evocative meditations on the Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross, reflecting on the tragedy of the crucifixion, as well as the possibilities of hope and redemption.

The orchestra is joined by the narrator David Threlfall ('Shameless', 'What Remains', 'Patriot Games').

# Die Wiener Klassik



Zoë Beyers © Bill Leighton

Anna Clyne – *Breathing Statues*

Mozart – *Violin Concerto in A major ("Turkish")*

Beethoven – *Symphony No. 7*

Violin and Director **Zoë Beyers**

**Sat. 1 May 2027**

**7.30pm – 9.30pm**  
**(incl. 20 minute interval)**

**The King's School**  
**Macclesfield**

## **From classical elegance to exhilarating energy, discover the spirit of Vienna**

This season's exploration of 'A World of Music' concludes in Vienna, the city that was home to so many leading composers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Beethoven's String Quartets are the springboard for Clyne's *Breathing Statues*, which explores the concept of breath and of the music and musicians breathing, sometimes together and sometimes apart.

Mozart composed his A major Violin Concerto in 1775 when he was only 19. In its exotic finale it reflects the Turkish culture so fashionable in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* has captivated audiences ever since its premiere in Vienna in 1813, with its elemental, driving energy and exuberant dance rhythms.

This concert is sponsored by John Walsh

# The NCO Players

<b>Naomi Atherton</b> (horn)	Supported by Geoff Holman
<b>Daniel Bayley</b> (clarinet)	Supported anonymously
<b>Zoë Beyers</b> (Music Director)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Sarah Brandwood-Spencer</b> (Associate Director)	Supported by Kate Slack
<b>Jenny Cox</b> (horn)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Michael Dale</b> (viola)	Supported by Martin Slack
<b>Carol Ella</b> (viola)	Supported by Fiona Squire & Geoff Squire OBE
<b>Jane Evans</b> (oboe)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Simon Gilks</b> (violin)	Supported by Angela Losse
<b>Barbara Grunthal</b> (cello)	Supported by Peter Raynes
<b>Ben Hudson</b> (bassoon)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Nichola Hunter</b> (flute)	Supported by Jane and Wyn Davies
<b>Elizabeth Jordan</b> (clarinet)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Jennifer Langridge</b> (cello)	Supported by Judy Jones, in memory of Alan
<b>Louise Latham</b> (violin)	Supported by Eleanor Lewington
<b>Peter Mainwaring</b> (trumpet)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>James Manson</b> (double bass)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Conrad Marshall</b> (flute)	Supported by Dieter Senn
<b>John Melbourne</b> (timpani)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Alex Mitchell</b> (viola)	<i>Chair available for sponsorship</i>
<b>Tracey Redfern</b> (trumpet)	Supported by Dr John Bush
<b>Kenny Sturgeon</b> (oboe)	Supported by Caro Brown
<b>Rebecca Thompson</b> (violin)	Supported by Dr Michael Sambrook
<b>Rachel Whibley</b> (bassoon)	Supported by John Whibley Holidays
<b>Sarah Whittingham</b> (violin)	Supported by Martyn Jones

We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to sponsor a player's chair for the 2026-27 season. Your support will help us to continue to develop artistically and ensure that we are able to retain our world class musicians.

To find out more about sponsoring an NCO player's chair, please visit [www.ncorch.co.uk/chair-sponsorship](http://www.ncorch.co.uk/chair-sponsorship)

# Help keep world-class music

The Northern Chamber Orchestra brings world-class music to your community. With your support, we can continue to perform, grow, and keep live music at its heart.

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*Please note that the Tatton Park Christmas concerts are not included in the season ticket.*

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### **Matinee concert**

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### **Evening concert (includes a tour of the Mansion)**

£30 | Under 18s and students £20

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Groups of 10 or more receive a 10% discount.

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We gratefully acknowledge that our Macclesfield season and associated education programme is additionally supported by the Albert and Eugenie Frost Music Trust and the Earl of Chester's Fund.

We would also like to thank the Friends of the NCO and all our Patrons. The NCO is a registered charity (no. 278912) and an incorporated company (no. 1430784).

We welcome donations in support of our concert programmes, learning and development programmes, and work with dementia care under the Mind Music banner.

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