

various orchestral colours available within the strings. The two inner movements are extraordinary. The Waltz (Tchaikovsky's answer to the minuets of Mozart's serenades) is exquisite, and the Elegy is one of the most moving, heartfelt statements in music. Again, from Tchaikovsky's letter to von Meck, "*It is often said that good actors never perform for a whole audience. They choose one person in the theatre who appears to be a compassionate soul and perform the entire piece with the aim of pleasing only him or her*". There are not too many scores that can rival this Elegy as a medium to address "*a compassionate soul*".

The Finale includes two Russian folk tunes. The first, appearing in the Andante introduction, is a slow tune sung by Volga draymen. The second is an animated Russian dance, which Tchaikovsky sometimes scores with some quickly pulsing, balalaika-like pizzicato in octaves. Contrasted with this second theme is a third, lyrical motif by Tchaikovsky that provides broadly sweeping movement against the vivacious dance. The theme from the first movement's Andante makes its reappearance, then Tchaikovsky cleverly transforms the descending portion of this stately theme into the pulsing descending scale of the dance, ending the piece with vigour.

*(Notes by Roger Booth from sources including Johan van Veen, Barbara Heninger, Michael Steinberg, Adrian Jack and Steven Ledbetter)*

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## ORCHESTRA

<b>Conductor</b>	Sarah Bisley
<b>Violins I</b>	Mary O'Brien, Emily Allen, Michael Hunter, Lucy Chilberto, Emily Bouwhuis, Jim Hessel
<b>Violins II</b>	Joe Pinto, Katie Lin, Tsui-Wen Chen, Averil Griffin, Sharanya Sankaran
<b>Violas</b>	Judith Gust, Robyn Strange, Neil Shepherd, Megan Wang
<b>Celli</b>	Janet Robinson, Dora Green, Judith Williams
<b>Basses</b>	Andrew Kincaid, Huko Kobé
<b>Harpsichord</b>	John Hume

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Next Concert: "Concert with Choir"  
Sunday 27th November, 2pm, Holy Trinity Church

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<http://dco.net.nz/>

# Devonport Chamber Orchestra at the Depot

**Serenades for Strings**

*Tchaikovsky Serenade,  
Elgar Serenade, Albinoni Sonata*

**Conductor: Sarah Bisley**

**Sunday 25th September, 2pm**  
**28 Clarence Street, Devonport**  
**Admission \$10, Children under 12 free**

## **Tomaso Albinoni (1671-1751)**

### **Sonata a Cinque in G minor, Op.2 No.6 for Strings**

**Adagio – Allegro - Grave - Allegro**

Today the name Albinoni is best known for a piece he did not compose - the Adagio in G minor for organ and strings composed by the musicologist Remo Giazotto in 1958. Giazotto claimed that he based his baroque-styled work on a fragment of music manuscript in Albinoni's hand, containing part of a bass line, that he had discovered in the ashes and rubble that remained of the Saxon State Library in the aftermath of the World War II firebombing of Dresden.

Albinoni was born into a wealthy Venetian merchant family that ran a stationery business making playing cards. Tomaso, being the eldest son, was supposed to take part in his father's business, and so he did, but he also was able to study music. When his father died, Tomaso left the business to his two younger brothers in order to devote all his time to music. Albinoni wrote over forty operas, fifty cantatas and ten opus numbers of instrumental compositions and enjoyed a fine reputation in his lifetime. His music was regularly reprinted and was transcribed and arranged by composers including Bach, who used some of Albinoni's compositions as teaching material and also based four fugues on subjects from Albinoni's Op. 2 sonatas.

The Op. 2 set of *Sinfonie e concerti a cinque* alternates sonatas with concertos, showing a closer affinity between these terms than modern usage suggests. The typical Venetian practice of the time would have been to play the sonatas (sinfonias) and the concerti with just one player to a part. However, Albinoni's music was widely disseminated, and part sets for some of the Op. 2 sonatas survive from Dresden and Sweden with duplicates for each of the two violin parts, suggesting something closer to the orchestral performance we hear today. Around 1740, a collection of Albinoni's violin sonatas was published as a posthumous work and scholars presumed that meant he had died by that time. However it appears he lived on in Venice in obscurity until he died of diabetes in 1751.

## **Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)**

### **Serenade in E minor, Op. 20 for String Orchestra**

**I: Allegro piacevole, II: Larghetto, III: Allegretto**

Great composers are best known for their large-scale creations. Often years of writing smaller works and working in noncreative jobs precede that elusive fame. Before Elgar penned such profound, mature masterpieces as the Enigma Variations, the serene Violin Concerto, and the eloquent Cello Concerto, he conducted amateur music societies and wrote pieces that were not too difficult for part-time musicians. The genesis of the Serenade for Strings was probably a set of Three Pieces for Strings that Elgar completed for the Worcester Musical Union in 1888. Four years later, he reinvented the basic material as the Serenade.

Although all three movements are enchanting, the heart of the richly textured Serenade is the second movement *Larghetto*. A noble melody seems to unfold with spacious, unforced ebb and flow in this gem of orchestral string writing. The movement has often been compared to the Nimrod section of the Enigma Variations. Framing this serene outpouring is a beautifully sculpted *Allegro piacevole* - a lively theme followed by a wistful secondary subject - and pastoral *Allegretto* which concludes with a reprise of the work's opening motif. The cyclical nature of that theme is comparable to Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings.

As a violinist, Elgar was sensitive to the coloration of the string orchestra, and his touch does not falter throughout a work which he described as being "real stringy". There is no straining after effect and all is pure music as well as pure poetry. Moreover, although there are no obvious personal or pictorial associations, anyone who knows the English countryside around Hereford where Elgar lived can hardly fail to be reminded of that peaceful, solitary landscape.

## **Peter Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)**

### **Serenade in C, Op. 48 for String Orchestra**

**I: Piece in form of a sonatina: Andante non troppo - Allegro moderato, II: Waltz: Tempo di Valse, III: Elegy: Larghetto elegiaco, IV: Finale (Russian Theme): Andante - Allegro con spirito**

Although Tchaikovsky was a solidly romantic composer, he idolized Mozart whom he once referred to as "the Christ of music." Indeed, Tchaikovsky wrote that a performance of Don Giovanni which he attended at the age of 10 was what introduced him to the power of music to express deep emotion. It is no surprise therefore, that in September 1880, at the same time as he was working on his thunderous 1812 Overture, Tchaikovsky decided to write an orchestral serenade that would serve as an homage to Mozart's own serenades. Unlike many of his compositions, he completed the work relatively quickly and appeared much more satisfied with it than with the overture. As he wrote to his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, "The overture will be very showy and noisy, but will have no artistic merit because I wrote it without warmth and without love. But the Serenade, on the contrary, I wrote from inner compulsion. This is a piece from the heart." Later he told von Meck, "I am violently in love with this work and cannot wait for it to be played." It was premiered in St. Petersburg in 1881 and met with instant success.

The Serenade for Strings is not a truly classical piece in its musical content - it is as romantic as any of Tchaikovsky's other works. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky intended the work to be classical in form and spirit, especially in the stately opening theme of the first movement, recapitulated at the close of the final movement. As he wrote to von Meck, "This is my homage to Mozart; it is intended to be an imitation of his style, and I should be delighted if I thought I had in any way approached my model." The first movement moves from the measured *Andante* introduction to a simple, four-note theme in the *Allegro* that develops into vigorous scale passages demonstrating the