

Everyone loves a good mystery. Of the 15 riddles (theme and 14 variations), packed into Sir Edward Elgar's 1899 *Enigma Variations*, the most intriguing one has yet to be solved. Is there a hidden melody? The TSO's Autumn concert in Reid Hall, Forfar, on Saturday evening, rose to the challenge of Elgar's composition, with the strings coping admirably with the degree of difficulty written by the expert violinist.

The concert opened with the very popular Overture, *Thieving Magpie*, by Rossini. The orchestra entered into the spirit of the overture, proving the piece is a curtain-raiser and a sure crowd-pleaser. The opening side drum rolls added a bit of military colour, and conductor Richard Allan was in total control of the variations in dynamics, ranging from double forte to pianissimo.

The final work was Beethoven's 6th Symphony, '*Pastoral*.' This work is the arch example of picturesque music. The solo instruments rose to the occasion - two cellos depicting the stream meandering ; the bird calls by flute, oboe and clarinet ; the village dance scene with the band having the oboe, a clarinet, horns and a bassoon ; cellos and bass depicting thunder ; oboe dramatising the rainbow ; the distant muted horn creating a gentle curfew. The high standard of each section of the orchestra was well displayed in this work. In all, it was a most satisfactory evening and the members have right to be proud of their efforts.

The Friends' Chorus from Arbroath will join the orchestra for an evening of music and song in the next concert on 2nd February 2019.