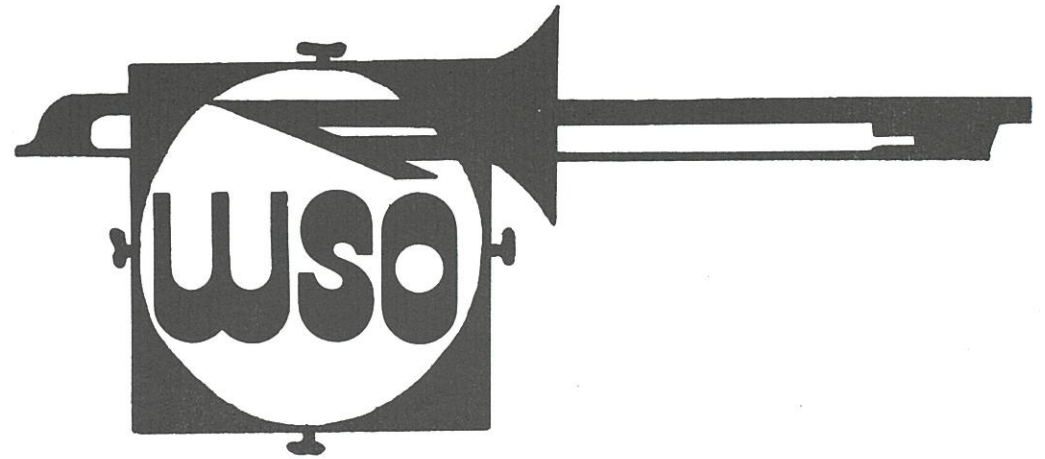


1978

S.4
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Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra

Conductors: Meirion Williams
Sheila Freeman

Leader: Cyril Love

CONCERT

9.12.78.

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which the orchestra is affiliated, supports this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WOLVERHAMPTON POLYTECHNIC

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9th 1978

Conductors MEIRION WILLIAMS
SHEILA FREEMAN

Soloist GORDON BACK

PROGRAMME

A KINGSWOOD OVERTURE MEIRION WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY NO. 4 BEETHOVEN
FAUST INCIDENTAL MUSIC GOUNOD

----- Interval -----

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 RACHMANINOFF

GORDON BACK was born in Neath, South Wales. While still at school he broadcast on both radio and television. His initial period of advanced study was at the Royal Manchester College of Music where he graduated in 1973, gaining two diplomas with distinction. His studies then continued in Italy for one year.

On returning to England in 1974, and subsequently in 1976 and 1978, he became official accompanist for the Carl Flesch International Violin Competition and also at the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow in 1978. During the last two years he has had engagements in France, Italy and Spain, Bulgaria and the U.S.A., and is engaged to return to all these countries in the 78-79 season. He has appeared in several important Music Festivals, including the Bath Festival, and at all of the London concert halls, as well as making frequent broadcasts for the B.B.C. Gordon Back is at present on the staff of the Guildhall School of Music.

A KINGSWOOD OVERTURE METRION WILLIAMS

The overture was composed in 1977 for the Wolverhampton Education Authority to be used for their annual residential orchestral course held at Kingswood. It was given its first public performance by the Youth Orchestra in July, 1977.

Having been intended originally for young players, my aim was to create a small show-piece for each individual section of the orchestra. The whole piece is built on three short contrasting ideas. The continuous changes in texture were intended to make the parts as interesting to play as possible, and the uneven phrase length and changes in time signature were designed to keep everyone on their toes - including the conductor!

M.W.

SYMPHONY NO. 4 in B MAJOR (Op. 60) ... BEETHOVEN 1770-1827

Each one of Beethoven's nine symphonies possesses an individual character all of its own. The majority of them (Nos. 3 - 8) belong to what is often termed his middle or 'mature' period (1803-1815) when Beethoven had 'served his apprenticeship' and broken away from the tradition of Haydn and Mozart. During this period of his life, Beethoven also composed many of the well-known piano sonatas, the opera, 'Fidelio', the fourth and fifth piano concertos and the violin concerto which appeared the same year as the fourth symphony. Generally speaking, symphonies numbers 1, 2, 4 and 8 tend to be fairly classical by nature, whereas numbers 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are very much more romantic and less formal in construction.

The fourth symphony was begun in 1806 after Beethoven had completed two movements of the C Minor Symphony (No. 5). However, the next two works are exact opposites both in style and temperament. Far from containing any of the emotional conflicts of the latter work, the fourth symphony is possibly the happiest and most good humoured of all his symphonies.

The first movement - Adagio Allegro vivace - begins tentatively in true classical fashion with a slow, sombre

introduction. This suddenly gains momentum and launches into an Allegro vivace which maintains its exuberance right through to the end of the movement.

The second movement - Adagio - begins in a spirit of almost Mozartian serenity which seems to conflict with the passionate outbursts that we more readily associate with Beethoven.

The third movement - Allegro vivace - is labelled "menuetto" in many editions of the work, but with its rhythms and displaced accents it is more of a scherzo than a minuet. The trio section is slightly slower and is more lyrical in style. After the return of the 'minuet' section, just where the listener would expect the movement to finish, Beethoven suddenly repeats himself and returns to the slower tempo of the trio section, thus making the overall form of the movement Minuet - Trio - Minuet - Trio - Minuet.

The Finale - Allegro ma non troppo - is simply a 'moto perpetuo' in Haydn-esque tradition. At the very end of the movement, the pace suddenly drops and the violins give us the main theme at half its previous pace. Just before the whole thing appears to grind to a halt, the lower strings and bassoons quickly race away and make for the finishing line - a humorous touch Haydn would surely have appreciated.

BALLET MUSIC FROM FAUST GOUNOD 1818-1893

1978 sees the 160th anniversary of the birth of Charles Gounod. Faust (1859) was the first of his operas which, by their style, were aimed at attracting a wider audience than the more esoteric Grand Opera. That he succeeded, at least in part, is proved by the continuing popularity of this ballet suite of 7 numbers which vividly conjure up the spirit of theatre and dance.

S.F.

----- INTERVAL -----

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 in C MINOR (Op. 18) ... RACHMANINOFF
(1873 - 1943)

Although he was born in Novgorod, Rachmaninoff spent most of his life in exile in America. A very sullen and insecure person by nature, his compatriot, Igor Stravinsky, once rather cruelly described him as "six feet of Russian gloom".

Following the failure of his First Symphony, Rachmaninoff went through a period of deep mental depression which robbed him of his self-confidence as a composer. At about this time he paid a visit to London where he was impressed by the very warm reception he was given. When asked to return with the invitation of performing his First Piano Concerto, written eight years earlier, the grateful composer instead committed himself to producing another concerto for the occasion.

Still finding it impossible to apply himself to writing this work, in a state of absolute despair, he visited a psychiatrist, Dr. Nicholas Dahl, who treated him daily through his powers of hypnotic suggestion. The treatment was most effective, the second and third movements being composed in the autumn of that year (1900), and the whole work was completed and dedicated to Dr. Dahl in the spring of 1901.

Of the four piano concertos written by Rachmaninoff, the second is probably the best known. The piano writing in each of these works reminds us that Rachmaninoff's reputation was first made as a brilliant pianist rather than as a composer. The physical and emotional demands that he makes upon his soloists shows his understanding and love of the instrument. Although in many ways the idiom of the Second Concerto belongs to the nineteenth century rather than the twentieth, the work is very symphonic in conception. This is not a showpiece in the grand tradition of Liszt - soloist and orchestra continually intermingle and meet each other on equal ground. In the second movement the soloist is allowed a brief cadenza, but there are none of the long solo or purely orchestral sections that we normally associate with nineteenth century concertos.

The work is in 3 movements:-

Moderato

Adagio Sostenuto

Allegro Scherzando

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductors - Meirion Williams and Sheila Freeman

Violin 1

Cyril Love (Leader)
Clive Davies
James Gosling
Michael Gainsford
Connie King
Philippa Mitchell
Stephen Rhodes
Julie Richards
Philip Turley
Karen Walton

Violin 2

Christine Cook
Jim Chugg
Helen Cubberley
Derek Hawley
Eric Jones
Richard Kent
Rita Lakeland
Hilary Oseman
Molly Painter

Horn

Percy Cotterell
Alwyn Manley
Richard Mynors
Carole Smith

Trumpet

John Harris
Ian Hedgecock
Graham Large

Cello

Tessa Russell
Andrew Bound
Glyn Davies
Gillian Dudley
Keith Horsfall
Ann Hounslow
Peter Johnson
Sheila Moore
Clare Parr
Virginia Whinyates

Viola

Ruth Hewitt
John Barry
Jenny Chugg
Joan Horsfall
Dilyn Keely
Paul Westwood

Trombone

Christopher Addy
Philip Johnson

Timpani

Mary Davies

Bass

Mike Davies
Mark Finch
Donna Jones
David Parr

Percussion

Hilary Barry
David Howe
Alan Manasseh

Flute

Honor Cowie
Philip Leah
Diana Manasseh
Douglas Servant

Clarinet

Jane Allison
Diana Cotterell

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Anne Clements
Andrew Jowett

Bassoon

Jane Newcombe
Graeme Rudland