

PROGRAMME

141



Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra



WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT AT
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
HEATH TOWN

Saturday 19th June 2010

PROGRAMME

Malcolm Arnold

Tam O'Shanter Overture

Saint-Saëns

Danse Macabre

Humperdinck

Excerpts from Hansel and Gretel

INTERVAL

Ravel

Ma Mere L'Oye (Mother Goose Suite)

Mussorgsky

Pictures at an Exhibition

Conductor - Peter Morris

Leader - Ros Rayner

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is a fully independent amateur orchestra formed in 1973 by a group of keen amateur players. The idea behind the formation of the orchestra was to satisfy a need for local players to prepare to as high a standard as possible, interesting works for public performance, and this is still the primary aim of the orchestra today. Membership of the orchestra when at full strength is of the order of 50 players and is drawn from keen competent amateur musicians, students and teachers of music in Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas.

The orchestra meets on a regular weekly basis throughout the academic year and produces on average four public concerts a year. It has been invited on several occasions to perform major choral works with local choral societies, in 1999 performing Beethoven's Choral Symphony to commemorate its Silver Jubilee. The orchestra regularly engages as soloists professional musicians of national and international reputation, as well as local young players of outstanding promise.

The repertoire of the orchestra extends from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, although a symphony orchestra of this type will tend to concentrate on works from the nineteenth century. The orchestra has performed a large number of symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Mahler, Schubert, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, etc. Earlier works are represented by Albinoni, Bach, Boyce and Handel, whereas twentieth century composers whose works have been performed include Barber, Copland, Joubert, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Meirion Williams (a former musical director of the orchestra) and Rory Freckleton (a former member of the viola section).

The orchestra is managed by a committee consisting of the Musical Director and leader, plus members elected by the orchestra. It is financed through concert receipts and by an annual subscription paid

by the members. It is also affiliated to Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies).

Peter Morris - Musical Director

Peter Morris, who has been our Musical Director since 2004, began his career as a cathedral chorister in Chester and Manchester, went to Chetham's School in Manchester and read music at Durham University. He came to the Midlands as Director of Music at Bluecoat School, Walsall from 1969 until 1991 and held the same post at St. Peter's School, Wolverhampton from 1991 until 1997. He left St. Peter's School to look after his young family, but has since accumulated a variety of roles. He has conducted Walsall Choral Society since 1977, is Borough Organist at Walsall Town Hall, Director of Music at St. Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton and the founder conductor of Junction 10 Orchestra. He is also principal examiner for A-level and GCSE General Studies and an A-level Music examiner. In 2000-2001 he was awarded the Medaille d'Honneur of the French National Association of Music and a Master's degree at Keele University. He lives in Wolverhampton.

Ros Rayner - Leader

Ros studied the violin at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst there she joined the British Youth Symphony Orchestra. Following her PGCE she taught in Bracknell for four years, she moved to Wolverhampton and was appointed leader of the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra in 1996. She now teaches at the Wolverhampton Girls' High School and tutors the first violins in the Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra.

Malcolm Arnold (21 October 1921 - 23 September 2006)

Tam O'Shanter Overture

Malcolm Arnold began his career playing trumpet professionally, but by age thirty his life was devoted to composition. He was bracketed with Benjamin Britten and William Walton as one of the most sought-after composers in Britain. His natural melodic gift earned him a reputation as a composer of light music in works such as his sets of Welsh, English, Scottish, Irish and Cornish Dances, and his scores to the St Trinian's films and *Hobson's Choice*.

The *Tam o' Shanter Overture*, Op. 51 by Malcolm Arnold was completed in March 1955. The overture is a piece of programme music based on the famous poem by Robert Burns and is the grimly humorous legend of a hard drinker who ignores his wife's warnings. The overture begins slowly with string unison forming a background for characteristic woodwind and brass quips that establish the atmosphere. Clarinets put in a bagpipey drone fifth; piccolo whistles a fragment of melody with a Scottish flavour; bassoons with inebriated rhythm and copious "Scotch snap", amble along; muted brass slithers in glissandi (a recurring device). Soon, with growing velocity, Tam is on his wild ride into the storm. Lightning flashes and thunder roars, with gong, cymbals, and drums much in evidence. Tam gallops harder and harder, cracking his whip. Brass and drums suddenly lead to shivering string tremolos, and Tam watches the impious dance. Burns tells us that this is no new cotillion from France, "but hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels". The Scottish character of the music is evident. "Weel done, Cutty-sark!" cries Tam, in a trombone solo that all but articulates the words - and the devilish hunt is up. It comes to a sudden end and there is a short scud of woodwind solos (Tam disappearing in the distance) ending in a high trilling note on the first violins. Flutes and clarinets, perhaps sarcastically, point the moral of the story and with a terrific flurry, the overture ends. The work was first performed at the BBC Proms on 17 August 1955, with the composer conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Camille Saint-Saëns (9 October 1835 - 16 December 1921)

Danse Macabre

Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer, organist, conductor and pianist, known especially for *The Carnival of the Animals*, *Danse Macabre*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Piano Concerto No. 2*, *Havanaise*, *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso*, and his *Symphony No. 3 (Organ Symphony)*.

Danse Macabre, Op. 40 is an art song for voice and piano (first performed in 1872) with a French text by the poet Henri Cazalis which is based in an old French superstition. Two years later, the composer expanded and reworked the piece into a tone poem for orchestra, replacing the vocal line with a solo violin. According to legend, "Death" appears at midnight every year on Halloween. Death calls forth the dead from their graves to dance their dance of death for him while he plays his fiddle represented by a solo violin with its E-string tuned to an E-flat in an example of scordatura tuning. His skeletons dance for him until the rooster crows at dawn, when they must return to their graves until the next year. The piece opens with a harp playing a single note, D, twelve times which is accompanied by soft chords from the string section. This then leads to the E flat and A chords also known as a tritone and the solo violin's E string, which represents death. After which the main theme is heard on a solo flute and is followed by a descending scale on the solo violin which is accompanied by soft chords from the string section, particularly the lower instruments of the string section, followed by the full orchestra who then joins in on the descending scale. The main theme and the scale is then heard throughout the various sections of the orchestra until it breaks to the solo violin and the harp playing the scale. The piece becomes more energetic and climaxes with the full orchestra playing very strong dynamics. Towards the end of the piece, there is another violin solo, now in modulation, which is then joined by the rest of the orchestra.

The final section, represents the dawn breaking and the skeletons returning to their graves. The piece makes particular use of the xylophone to imitate the sounds of rattling bones.

Engelbert Humperdinck (1 September 1854 – 27 September 1921)
Excerpts from Hänsel and Gretel

- Prelude
- Lied des Sandmännchens - Abendsegen und Traum-pantomime

Engelbert Humperdinck was a German composer, best known for his opera, Hänsel und Gretel, which he began work on in Frankfurt in 1890. He first composed four songs to accompany a puppet show his nieces were giving at home. Then, using a libretto by his sister Adelheid Wette rather loosely based on the version of the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, he composed a Singspiel of 16 songs with piano accompaniment and connecting dialogue. By January 1891 he had begun working on a complete orchestration.

The opera premiered in Weimar on December 23, 1893, under the baton of Richard Strauss, who called it "a masterpiece of the highest quality... all of it original, new, and so authentically German." With its highly original synthesis of Wagnerian techniques and traditional German folk songs, Hänsel und Gretel was an instant and overwhelming success. It has always been Humperdinck's most popular work. In 1923 the Royal Opera House (London) chose it for their first complete radio opera broadcast. Eight years later it was the first opera transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera (New York). It remains a worldwide favourite.

INTERVAL

Joseph-Maurice Ravel (March 7, 1875 – December 28, 1937)
Ma Mere L'Oye (Mother Goose Suite)

1. Pavane de la Belle au Bois Dormant

2. Petit Poucet
3. Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes
4. Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête
5. Le Jardin féérique

Joseph-Maurice Ravel was a French composer of Impressionist music known especially for his melodies, orchestral and instrumental textures and effects. Much of his piano music, chamber music, vocal music and orchestral music has entered the standard concert repertoire. Ravel's piano compositions, such as *Jeux d'eau*, *Miroirs*, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Gaspard de la Nuit*, demand considerable virtuosity from the performer, and his orchestral music, including *Daphnis et Chloé* and his arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, uses a variety of sound and instrumentation very effectively. Ravel is perhaps known best for his orchestral work, *Boléro* (1928), which he considered trivial and once described as "a piece for orchestra without music."

Subtitled (in its version for piano, four hands) "cinq pièces enfantines", the "Mother Goose" suite draws upon the fairy-tales of Perrault, Mme d'Aulnoy, and Mme de Beaumont for its inspiration, and Ravel sought to write piano music that could be played by children, as well as reflecting the world of childhood. No.1 was written in September 1908, and then, with the encouragement of his publisher Jacques Durand, Ravel wrote the others in April 1910. They are dedicated to the two children of his friends the Godebskis, Mimie and Jean, with the intention that they would give the first performance. In the event, it proved too difficult for them, and the work was performed at a concert in the Salle Gaveau on 20th April 1910, by the 11-year old Jeanne Leleu and the 14-year old Geneviève Durony. In 1911 Ravel wrote an orchestral version of the suite, and this became the basis of the ballet which was performed in January 1912. For this Ravel wrote some additional pieces (a *Prélude* and *Danse du rouet et scène*) as well as some connecting interludes.

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (March 21 1839 – March 28 1881)
Pictures at an Exhibition

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Gnomus | 6. Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle |
| 2. Il vecchio castello | 7. Limoges – Le Marché |
| 3. Tuileries | 8. Catacombae |
| 4. Bydlo | 9. La Cabane sur des Pattes de Poules |
| 5. Ballet des Poussins
dans leurs Coques | 10. La Grande Porte de Kiew |

One of the Russian composers known as 'the Five', Mussorgsky was an innovator of Russian music in the romantic period. He strove to achieve a uniquely Russian musical identity, often in deliberate defiance of the established conventions of Western music.

Many of his works were inspired by Russian history, Russian folklore, and other nationalist themes, including the opera Boris Godunov, the orchestral tone poem Night on Bare Mountain, and the piano suite Pictures at an Exhibition.

Pictures at an Exhibition is a suite in ten movements composed for piano in 1874. The suite is Mussorgsky's most famous piano composition, and has become a showpiece for virtuoso pianists. It has also become known through various orchestrations and arrangements produced by other musicians and composers, with Ravel's arrangement being the most recorded and performed. The music depicts an imaginary tour of an art collection. Titles of individual movements allude to works by Viktor Hartmann, artist and architect and close personal friend of Mussorgsky. The suite's movements are linked in a way that depicts the viewer's own progress through the exhibition. Two "Promenade" movements stand as portals to the suite's main sections. Their regular pace and irregular meter depicts the act of walking. Three untitled interludes present shorter statements of this theme, varying the mood, colour and key in each to suggest reflection on a work just seen or anticipation of a new work glimpsed. Mussorgsky, not generally

known for cutting a svelte figure, wrote to Stasov: "My physiognomy can be seen in the interludes." A turn is taken in the work at the "Catacombae" when the Promenade theme stops functioning as merely a linking device and becomes, in "Cum mortuis", an integral element of the movement itself. The theme reaches its apotheosis in the suite's finale, La Grande Porte de Kiew.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)
Corinne Walters
Francis Bunch
Jennie Lewis
James Hamilton
Catherine Rayner
Jonathan Harper
Alice Rayner

Double Bass

John Mason
Sarah Smith
Ian Parry

Flute

Diana Manasseh
Kathryn Russon
Jane Eminson

Violin 2

Anne Forster
Hilary Hurd
Jenny Bailey
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Philip Ward
Suman Kanchan

Oboe

Rachel Orotayo
Duncan Speirs

Cor Anglais

Richard Anderson

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis

Bass Clarinet

Lisa Wilson

Saxophone

Ella Harold

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley
Mike Darke

Horns

Sara Shepherd

Jill Brittle

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Des Wilson

Trumpets

Tony Bayliss
Paul Kelly
Dan Lacey

Trombones

Laurence Hopper
Michael Griffiths

Bass Trombone

Jim Rothnie

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Timpani

Peter Rayner

Percussion

Bethan Jones
Alexander Fairfield
Sarah Collinings

Celeste

Toby Barnard

Harp

Helen Barley

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

13th November 2010 – St Peters Church, Wolverhampton

Britten - Simple Symphony
Sibelius - Symphony No. 5 in E flat major

**5th March 2011 – Cranmer Methodist Church,
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton**

Brahms - Variation on a Theme of Haydn
Ravel - Tombeau de Couperin
Beethoven - Symphony No. 4 in B Flat Major

**25th June 2011 – Trinity Methodist Church,
Histons Hill, Codsall**

Britten - Four Sea Interludes and Passacaglia from Peter Grimes
Tchaikovsky - Violin Concerto
Respighi - Fountains of Rome

All concerts start at 7.30 pm
Ticket prices for the 2010-2011 season will be £9 and £7 (unwaged),
(All details above are subject to change)



Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is affiliated to
Making Music
(formerly the National Federation of Music Societies)
which represents and supports
amateur vocal, instrumental and
promoting services throughout the
United Kingdom.

For further details regarding membership or ticket prices,
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or e-mail us at info@wolsymorc.org.uk

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