

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

148

CONCERT AT
CRANMER METHODIST CHURCH,
WOLVERHAMPTON

Saturday 23rd June 2012

PROGRAMME

Mozart

Overture to 'The Marriage of Figaro'

Elgar

Cello Concerto in E minor

INTERVAL

Shostakovich

Symphony no. 10

Conductor – Peter Morris

Leader – Ros Rayner

Soloist – Sarah Tulley

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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.

Soloist – Sarah Tulley

Sarah was born in Wolverhampton. She was a pupil of Sheila Freeman and Christopher Bunting before continuing her 'cello studies with Moray Welsh at The Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

Later, she completed a PGCE course in secondary music at Reading University and began her teaching career running the music department at a school in Swindon, Wiltshire.

Following the births of her three daughters, Sarah continued her teaching in Wolverhampton, teaching both classroom and Lower Strings. She now works as the Head of Strings at Wolverhampton Music Service.

Sarah leads the 'cellos in Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra and plays regularly in a Piano Trio with Ros Rayner and Peter Morris. She also tutors the 'cellos and Double Basses in the Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra.

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.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Overture to 'The Marriage of Figaro'

In just four minutes, the bustling D major overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* sets the stage perfectly for the sophisticated and witty four act opera that is to follow. Written in a matter of hours just before the opera's first performance, Mozart's main concern appears to have been to give his audience an immediate indication of the opera's pace, and of the hectic events of the 'folle journée' that they were about to witness. None of the thematic material in the overture appears in the opera, but Mozart succeeded in establishing the mood of the opera; nervous, busy, aristocratic elegance threatened by larger, more powerful forces. Beaumarchais' play "The Marriage of Figaro" or "The Follies of a Day", on which the opera is based, was banned in Vienna as being impertinent and subversive. It was felt to be an exposé of the libertine excesses of a ruling aristocracy by the 'serving classes'.

It is scored for two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, strings and timpani. It opens with rapid hushed octaves. Then, suddenly, the full orchestra bursts forth. Strings dash to and fro, with chordal interruptions from wind and brass. Flutes and oboes have their moments, and bassoons 'chuckle' along. Mozart interposes lyrical moments and then, by dint of reviewing his themes, brings the piece to a joyful conclusion. Although cast in a typical sonata form, the overture dispenses with the usual development section, neither is there the customary middle passage in a slower tempo. In its entirety, the piece is a lively curtain raiser for both concert and operatic venues.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934) Cello Concerto in E minor

The Cello Concerto was Elgar's last major work. Although only 62 and an internationally acclaimed composer, events such as the Great War and the death of his wife left him lacking the inspiration which had previously inspired his writing. A world apart from his 'Enigma Variations', it is a work of melancholy and deep

emotion, private and poignant, which the audience at the first performance did not expect from a virtuoso concerto. It is a personal elegy to the pre-war world which he knew had vanished forever. The response to this first performance, by the LSO at Queen's Hall in October 1919, was somewhat downright and chilly, partly because the conductor had not left enough rehearsal time for the orchestra to be able to portray Elgar's real intentions. As one critic noted, "no one in the orchestra seemed to have any idea what the composer wanted."

Parts are scored for a large orchestra, yet Elgar managed to use the ensemble with such skill that they never obscure the soloist, without the textures ever sounding thin. In his work 'Falstaff', he had perfected the manipulation of episodes and the ability to change a subject without losing sight of it, a mastery which he applied in the Cello Concerto. Unusually, it is in four movements, almost like a symphony where the soloist acts as a protagonist.

i – Adagio – Moderato

A bold, noble flourish by the soloist opens the piece, which dies to nothing. This is followed by a gentle, elegiac theme presented the violas. The cello cannot resist taking up this theme, which is eventually taken up by the full orchestra. It winds through several keys, interrupted by a livelier episode in which the woodwind contrasts with the cello. The balance of the movement is broad and lyrical, ending with a sketchy, pizzicato reference to the opening, which acts as a bridge to the second movement.

ii – Lento – Allegro Molto

This movement continues immediately from the first. It opens with a somewhat hesitant new theme in the solo part, where a fantastic *moto perpetuo* scherzo soon takes off, carrying the rest of the orchestra with it. Although playful, there is still a restless air and a hint of wistfulness. The soloist is perhaps most virtuosic here, with fantastically fast spiccato over the orchestra's impressionistic background.

iii – Adagio

Despite its short length, this movement provides a mood of both passion and meditation. It is eloquently simple, accompanied by only the strings, so that the soloist can sing out freely. It is in the distant key of B flat major, so remains apart, like a brief dream which reaches no conclusion.

iv – Moderato – Allegro, ma non troppo

The *finale* begins with a cello recitative that links the work's introductory flourish with the main theme of this movement. Though much of what follows is spirited, there is still an underlying tone of sadness especially when the gentler second subject and chromatic harmonies bringing back the intensely tragic mood of the world of 1918. There is an impassioned accompanied cadenza in which soloist and orchestra sing the pain and poetry of Elgar's most searching visions, reaching stillness in a phrase from the *Adagio*. Elgar cuts resolutely into this with the vigorous opening flourish which returns and, as the solo cello plunges to the depths, a few hurried bars of the *finale's* main theme rush this great work to a superficially high spirited ending.

INTERVAL

Dimitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975)

Symphony no.10 in E minor, op. 93

In recent years the orchestra has played Shostakovich's 1st and 5th symphonies. The first was written while he was at university and the 5th was 'a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism' written to appease the regime, and Stalin in particular. After his 9th symphony he had to endure an even more vicious denunciation of his music in 1948 (where he appeared at the top of a list of composers supposed to be engaged in unsoviet activities). He began to amass material which might prove useful in the event of a return to favour, as had happened with the 5th symphony. There was no way back until Stalin died in 1953. In the 10th symphony, premiered in the same year, Shostakovich found a voice to express something of the horrors of Stalin's era.

The long first movement, in sonata form, begins to sound a note of the terrible sense of repression and inertia of the Stalin regime which was felt by freer spirits. Although there are lighter and more lyrical moments here, there is much Northern European darkness and despair too.

In the second movement, the harshness intensifies. Shostakovich said it was 'a portrait of Stalin, roughly speaking'. It certainly has martial moments suitable for a military dictator and a sense of capricious fury and drive about it.

The third movement is more personal. It includes two musical codes. There is the use of a theme DSCH (a cipher for Dimitr SHostakovich) where the notes D, E flat, C, B natural form a theme where S is the German for E flat and H is the German for B natural) and, increasingly a solo horn theme repeated 12 times containing the notes E, A, E, D, A which, when you mix French and German notation you get the notes spelling E La Mi Re A. Elmira Nazirova was a pianist and friend with whom Shostakovich corresponded every week during the composition of this symphony. She later described her involvement with Shostakovich as that of "a muse, a symbol of beauty and musical inspiration." Their themes are intertwined in this movement, although she later denied a romantic connection.

The finale begins with a more optimistic version of the opening of the 1st movement – with delicate wind solos and little clarinet calls that begin to form a theme eventually presented in a fast swirling texture, more typical of the composer in happy times and based on Georgian folk tunes. Perhaps inevitably the DSCH theme wins the day and concludes the symphony.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)
Jonathan Harper
Barbara Carter
Francis Bunch
Jo Jordan
Ella Harold
Catherine Rayner

Violin 2

Anne Forster
Hilary Hurd
Jenny Bailey
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Samantha Spilsbury
Michael Clement

Viola

David Cope
Alan Anderton
Liz Fleetham
Sharon Bayley

Cello

Roger Hides
Tim Forster
Jean Waller
Sheila Moore
Margaret Bell
Ian Sumner
Sarah Carter
Dominic Smith

Double Bass

John Davies
Jo Middleton
David Charlesworth
Ian Parry

Flute

Kathryn Russon
Di Manessah

Piccolo

Jane Eminson

Oboe

Rachel Orotayo
Richard Anderson
Duncan Speirs

Cor Anglais

Richard Anderson

Clarinet

Lynn Curtis
Diana Cotterell

Eb Clarinet

Graham Hobbs

Bassoon

Jan Riley
Jill Sparke
Mike Darke

Horns

Sara Shepherd
Jill Brittle
Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper

Trumpets

Chris Cumming

Trombones

Jim Rothnie
Mike Griffiths

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Timpani

Peter Rayner

Percussion

Phil James
James Vickers

**WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES**

Saturday 29th September 2012 at 7.30 pm
Wolverhampton Music School, Graisleys Hill
A charity concert in aid of Wolverhampton Music School

Music to include:
Haydn – Farewell Symphony
Mozart – Flute Concerto no. 1 – Soloist: Jane Eminson

Saturday 17th November 2012 at 7.30 pm
Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road Rest,
Wolverhampton WV6 0RS

Sibelius – En Saga
Grieg – Piano Concerto – Soloist: Sothi Paul
Schubert – Symphony no.9

Saturday 16th March 2013 7.30 pm
Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road West,
Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS

American Journey – Patrick Doyle
Borodin – Symphony no. 2
Fauré – Masques et Bergamasques
Vaughn Williams – Greensleeves

Saturday 22nd June 2012 at 7.30 pm
Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road West,
Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS

Britten – Matinées Musicales & Soirées Musicales
Beethoven – Symphony no. 2
Mozart – Clarinet Concerto in A Major – Soloist: Alistair Mosely
Phil James – The Toy Room

Ticket prices for the 2011-2012 season will be £9, £7 (unwaged), £5 NUS, Under 18s free
(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,
please visit our website at www.wolsymorc.org.uk
or e-mail us at info@wolsymorc.org.uk

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