

Future Concerts

Saturday June 25th 2016 7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School

FILM MUSIC including: Titanic / 007 / Jurassic park
Star Wars / Superman / Harry Potter / Schindler's List
+ other pieces yet to be selected

Saturday 19th November 2016 7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky - Nutcracker

Paul Dukas - Sorcerer's Apprentice

Richard Strauss - Till Eulenspiegel

Nicholay Rimsky-Korsakov - Christmas Eve Suite

Leroy Anderson - Sleigh Ride

Monday 11th March 2017 7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School

Rory Freckleton - Piano concerto

Gustav Holst - Planets Suite

Ralph Vaughan Williams - Dives and Lazarus

Saturday 25th June 2017 7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School

Dmitri Shostakovich - Symphony no 5

Jean Sibelius - Finlandia

Jean Sibelius - Karelia

Jean Sibelius - Swan of Tuonela

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Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity No. 1040991

Saturday March 12th 2016

A RUSSIAN CELEBRATION



WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Peter Morris Conductor

Ros Rayner Leader

1812 Overture Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tsar Sultan Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Symphony No.4 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

CONCERT BEGINS AT 7:30PM.

TICKETS: £9 FULL, £7 CONCESSIONS

All Students in full-time education enter free.
All programme details are subject to change.

Wolverhampton Grammar School, Compton Rd

Wolverhampton, WV3 9RB



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Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

**A concert at
Wolverhampton Grammar School**

Saturday 12st March 2016

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1812 Overture

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov Tsar Sultan

Interval

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Symphony no 4

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. We have been invited on several occasions to perform major choral works with local choral societies, in 1999 performing Beethoven's Choral Symphony to commemorate our 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, and Rory Freckleton - a 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. We are financed through concert receipts and by an annual subscription paid by the members. We are also affiliated to Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies).

Recently, in addition to its normal programme of full orchestral concerts, the orchestra has performed a number of smaller concerts in aid of local charities. We are currently exploring, as members of the city's music hub, partnerships with Wolverhampton Music School and the Birmingham Conservatoire.

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Peter Morris—Musical director

Peter Morris has conducted the orchestra since 2004. He was a cathedral chorister at Chester and Manchester, went to Chetham's School in Manchester and read music at Durham University.

He was appointed Director of Music at Bluecoat School, Walsall at the age of 22 and subsequently taught at St. Peter's School in Wolverhampton. He conducted Walsall Choral Society for 30 years and in 2000/2001 he was awarded the Medaille d'Honneur of the French National Association of Music and a Master's degree in history at Keele University.

Peter is now Director of Music at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Borough Organist at Walsall Town Hall, Chairman of Wolverhampton's Music Education Hub and has a number of examining roles at GCSE and A-level, including Chief Examiner. 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.

Our music today all comes from the last few years of Czarist Russia. The first half of the programme deals specifically with the history and folklore of the nineteenth century.

1812 Overture

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840 - 1893



In 1880, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, commissioned by Tsar Alexander II to commemorate the Russian victory against Napoleon in 1812, was nearing completion in Moscow; the 25th anniversary of the coronation of Alexander II was going to happen in 1881; and the 1882 Moscow Arts and Industry Exhibition being planned. Tchaikovsky's friend and mentor Nikolai Rubinstein suggested that he should write a grand commemorative piece for use in these related festivities. Tchaikovsky began work on the project on October 12, 1880, finishing it six weeks later.

The first performance was planned in the square in front of the cathedral, with a brass band to reinforce the orchestra, the bells of the cathedral and all the others in Moscow playing "zvons" (pealing bells) on cue, and live cannon fire in accompaniment, fired from an electric switch panel in order to achieve the precision demanded by the musical score in which each shot is written. However, this performance did not take place, partly due to the over-ambitious plan, and then the assassination of Alexander II on March 13th 1881 (145 years ago tomorrow) deflated much of the impetus for the whole project. In 1882, at the Arts and Industry Exhibition, the Overture was performed indoors with conventional orchestration. The cathedral was completed on May 26, 1883.

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Meanwhile, Tchaikovsky complained to his patron Nadezhda von Meck that he was "not a conductor of festival pieces," and that the Overture would be "very loud and noisy, but [without] artistic merit, because I wrote it without warmth and without love," adding himself to the legion of artists who from time to time have castigated their own work. It is this work that would make the Tchaikovsky estate exceptionally wealthy, as it is one of the most performed and recorded works from his catalogue.

Musical structure

Beginning with the plaintive Slavic Orthodox Troparion of the Holy Cross played by cellos and violas, the piece moves through a mixture of pastoral and martial themes portraying the increasing distress of the Russian people at the hands of the invading French. This passage includes a Russian folk dance, *At the Gate, at my Gate* (U Vorot, Vorot"). At the turning point of the invasion—the Battle of Borodino—the score calls for five Russian cannon shots confronting a boastfully repetitive fragment of *La Marseillaise*. A descending string passage represents the subsequent retreat of the French forces, followed by victory bells and a triumphant repetition of *God Preserve Thy People as Moscow burns to deny winter quarters to the French*. A musical chase scene appears, out of which emerges the anthem *God Save the Tsar!* thundering with eleven more precisely scored shots.

The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 - 1908)

The story is about three sisters. The youngest is chosen by Tsar Saltan to be his wife. He orders the other two sisters to be his royal cook and weaver. They become jealous of their younger sister. When the tsar goes off to war, the tsar's wife gives birth to son, Prince Gvidon. The older sisters arrange to have the tsarina and the child sealed in a barrel and thrown into the sea. However, the sea takes pity on them and casts them on the shore of a remote island. The son, having quickly grown while in the barrel, goes hunting. He ends up saving an enchanted swan from a kite bird.4 - 1908)



The swan creates a city for Prince Gvidon to rule, but he is homesick, so the swan turns him into a mosquito to help him. In this guise, he visits Tsar Saltan's court, where he stings his aunt in the eye and escapes. Back in his realm, the swan gives Gvidon a magical squirrel but he continues to pine for home, so the swan transforms him again, this time into a fly. In this guise Prince Gvidon visits Saltan's court again and he stings his older aunt in the eye. The third time, the Prince is transformed into a bumblebee and stings the nose of his grandmother.

In the end, The Prince expresses a desire for a bride instead of his old home, at which point the swan is revealed to be a beautiful princess, whom he marries. He is visited by the Tsar, who is overjoyed to find his newly married son and daughter-in-law.

Rimsky-Korsakov arranged three sections of the music into this suite in 1903.

1. Introduction to Act I: "The Tsar's Departure And Farewell"
2. Introduction to Act II: "The Tsaritsa and Her Son Afloat in the Barrel"
3. Introduction to Act IV, Tableau 2: "The Three Wonders" which are:
The squirrel which whistles; the sea with 30 gold-helmetted warriors and the Swan Princess.

Each movement begins with a trumpet fanfare, rather like the Promenade in Pictures from an exhibition.

The Introduction to Act III is the well-known "Flight of the Bumblebee." Much to the relief of the players, who well exceed their daily allowance of semiquavers in this concert, this movement was never included in the suite.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No 4 in F minor Opus 36

He composed his Fourth Symphony in 1877, and the work was premiered in Moscow. The score bears a dedication "to my best friend," his patron, Mme. Nadezhda von Meck.

By the dawn of 1877 the thirty-six-year-old Tchaikovsky already stood at the forefront of his generation of Russian composers. That year, two things occurred that had a decisive influence on the direction his path would take. Both were fraught with problems. Either could have derailed him entirely.



The first was the consolidation of his relationship with Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck. Immensely wealthy (thanks to the commercial success of her recently deceased husband, an engineer from Riga), maternally productive (with eighteen variously fathered children), and musically adept, she had positioned herself in Moscow society as a notable patron of the arts and as a collector of musicians. She was a friend of the eminent pianist and conductor Nicolai Rubinstein and adored Tchaikovsky's music to the point of obsession. In December 1876 she used Rubinstein as a go-between for her first contact with the composer, which took the form of a generous but undemanding commission.

That was that, Tchaikovsky assumed. But in February of 1877 a second letter arrived from von Meck. "I should like very much to tell you at length of my fancies and thoughts about you," she wrote, "but I fear to take up your time, of which you have so little to spare. Let me say only that my feeling for you is a thing of the spirit and very dear to me." Tchaikovsky responded the next day: "Why do you hesitate to tell me all your thoughts? . . . Perhaps I know you better than you imagine." An affair was born, but an affair with a supremely strange twist. By von Meck's decree, they were not to meet in person. For the next thirteen years they exchanged a flood of effusive correspondence. She deposited 500 roubles in Tchaikovsky's bank account every month, an act of benefaction that freed him significantly to pursue his artistic goals without having to undertake "work for hire" to pay the bills.

Tchaikovsky embarked on his involvement with von Meck and the composition of his Fourth Symphony practically at the same time, and the two "projects" were greatly intermeshed in his mind. In his letters to von Meck he often referred to it as "our symphony," sometimes even as "your symphony." By May he completed the lion's share of work on the new piece. "I should like to dedicate it to you," he wrote on May 13, "because I believe you would find in it an echo of your most intimate thoughts and emotions."

Then a second bizarre thing happened. He got married on the spur of the moment. The explanation for this rash act is open to a broad range of speculation and interpretation. Perhaps it had to do with anxiety about his homosexuality. Perhaps it was an exploit of filial devotion to an eighty-one-year-old father who viewed marriage as the principal goal of a man's life. Tchaikovsky's brother Modest maintained that the bride, Antonina Ivanovna Miliukova, a former pupil of Tchaikovsky's, flung herself on his brother and threatened to kill herself if he didn't marry her—a tale that modern scholars have largely discounted. Whatever the reason, the hastily arranged marriage took place on July 6, 1877. Two weeks later Tchaikovsky fled in panic and spent the summer at his sister's estate in Ukraine, estranged from Antonina. In September he returned to his bride in Moscow to try to make another go of it, but this time the effort lasted only eleven days. At that point, Tchaikovsky fell terribly ill, fled to Saint Petersburg, had a nervous breakdown, remained unconscious for two weeks, and woke up to a life that would not henceforth include Antonina, though they were never divorced.

During this misadventure, the Fourth Symphony had been put on hold. Only in the latter half of 1877 did Tchaikovsky return to edit and orchestrate what he had composed between February and May. "Our symphony progresses," he wrote to von Meck on August 24. "The first movement will give me a great deal of trouble with respect to orchestration. It is very long and complicated: at the same time I consider it the best movement. The three remaining movements are very simple, and it will be easy and pleasant to orchestrate them."

Tchaikovsky's comment is apt. The centre of gravity is very much placed on the first movement, and the other three are considerably shorter and perhaps less portentous. When von Meck begged him to reveal the meaning behind the music, Tchaikovsky broke his rule of not revealing his secret musical ideas and penned a rather detailed description. It is rare to have such full access to a composer's thoughts about a major work, so it is quoted in full below.

The introduction is the seed of the whole symphony, beyond question the main idea This is Fate, the fatal force which prevents our hopes of happiness from being realised.....One must submit to it and to futile yearnings. The gloomy, despairing feeling grows stronger and more burning. Would it not be better to turn away from reality and plunge into dreams? O, joy! At last a sweet and tender vision appears. Some bright, gracious human form passes and beckons somewhere..... Little by little, dreams have completely enveloped the soul. All that was gloomy, joyless is forgotten. It is here, it is here, happiness! No! These were dreams, and Fate awakens us harshly. Thus, life is a perpetual alternation between grim reality and transient dreams and reveries of happiness. There is no haven. Drift upon that sea until it engulfs and submerges you in its depths.

The second movement of the symphony expresses another phase of depression. This is the melancholy feeling which comes in the evening when one sits alone, tired from work, having picked up a book but let it fall from one's hands. A whole host of memories appears. And one is sad because so much is gone, past, and it is pleasant to remember one's youth.....There were happy moments when young blood pulsed and life was good. There were gloomy moments, too, irreplaceable losses. All that is indeed somewhere far off. And it is sad and somehow sweet to bury oneself in the past.

The third movement does not express any definite sensations. It consists of capricious arabesques, elusive apparitions that pass through the imagination when one has drunk a little wine and feels the first stage of intoxication. The soul is neither merry nor gloomy. One is thinking of nothing; the imagination is liberated, and for some reason sets off.

Fourth movement. If you find no cause for joy within yourself, look for it in others Go to the people.....A picture of festive popular rejoicing. Scarcely has one forgotten oneself and been carried away at the sight of someone else's pleasure than indefatigable Fate returns again and reminds you of yourself. But others pay no heed to you. They do not even turn round, they do not glance at you and do not notice how lonely and gloomy you are. Oh, how gay they are! How lucky they are that all their feelings are simple and spontaneous. Reproach yourself and do not say that all the world is sad. Simple but strong joys do exist. Rejoice in other's rejoicing. To live is still bearable.

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jonathan Harper
Caroline Meads
Susan Bellingham
Jo Jordan
Sarah Wynne
Adria Dongo Munoz
Dylan Edge
Jennie Lewis
Francis Bunch
Kate Hoddell

Violin 2

Claire Shaw
Hilary Hurd
Anne Forster
Ken Hawkins
Michael Clement
Philip Ward
Alex Dongo
Anne Forster
Alice Harper
Jenny Bailey
Louise Craig
Samantha Spilsbury

Viola

David Cope
Alain Anderton
Liz Fleetham
Sharon Bayley-Kitts
Peter Whitehead
Rory Freckleton

Cello

Sarah Tulley
Jean Waller
Ian Sumner
Tim Forster
Fiona Daniel
Sarah Carter
Janey Harold

Double Bass

Sharleen Jones
Holly Anderson
David Charlesworth

Flute

Jane Eminson
Diana Manasseh
David Whatley

Oboe

Rachel Orotayo
Ellie Frith

Cor anglais

Jane Gledhill

Clarinet

Lynn Curtis
Di Cotterell
Frankie Tulley

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley

Horn

Sara Shepherd
Joe Clarkson
Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Kevin Boyd

Trumpet

Chris Cumming
Daniel Bryant

Trombone

Laurence Hopper
Stephen Rhodes
Bernard Moses

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Percussion

Miriam Kitchener
Ben George
Ian Richards
Aaron Townsend

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra: forthcoming events:

25th June - Wolverhampton Grammar School

Film Music

29th October - Music school;

Play day Bruckner 7th symphony

19th November - Wolverhampton Grammar School

Dukas: L'apprenti Sorcier

Straus: Till Eulenspiegel

Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite

Rimsky-Korsakov: Christmas Eve

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.