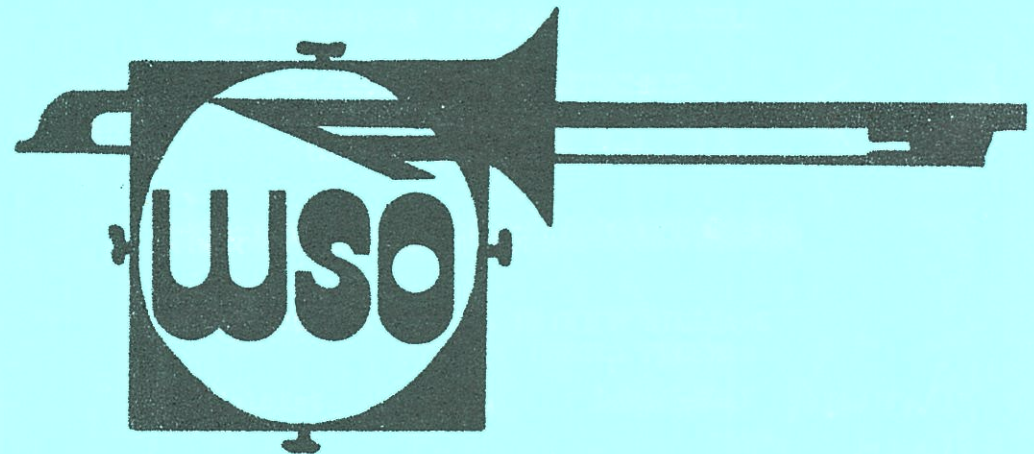


1979

SM

15



Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra

Conductors: Meirion Williams
Sheila Freeman

Leader: Cyril Love

CONCERT

18-3-79

*Repeated at ...
Wolverhampton
[unclear]*

PROGRAMME 5

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.

THE THIEVING MAGPIE

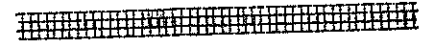
GIOACCHINO ANTONIO ROSSINI 1792-1868

The overture to the Thieving Magpie is the only part of this opera to survive in today's repertoire, although the whole opera was produced in 1817 - just. Rossini, like many of us, worked best under pressure and was often late delivering music to be performed although his output was copious. On the opening day of this opera, not a note of the overture had been written, and the theatre manager locked Rossini in an upstairs room guarded by 4 stage hands and ordered him to start composing. Each page of his manuscript was thrown through the window to the waiting copyists, and the stage hands had instructions to throw out the composer should he fail in his task. This rousing overture is a testimony to the effectiveness of this desperate procedure.

DAVID GRAY, who was born in Liverpool, studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music with both James Eastham and Sidney Coulston.

He has played with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Liverpool Mozart Players.

For the past four years he has been on the staff of the Wolverhampton Education Authority.



HORN CONCERTO NO. 3 in E FLAT. K.447 W.A. MOZART 1756-1791

Mozart's development of the concerto was probably his greatest achievement in the field of instrumental music. Apart from his numerous piano concertos, he produced solo works for violin, flute, clarinet, bassoon, and horn. One also for violin and viola, and even one for flute and harp. Most of these works show a great understanding of the capabilities and depths of expression of the solo instruments concerned.

Three of the four Mozart horn concertos were written expressly for the Salzburg born player, Ignaz Leitgeb. The autographed scores of these contain many good-natured jokes at Leitgeb's expense, and the fourth is labelled "fur der Leitgeb".

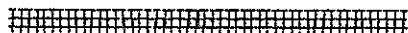
The third concerto does, however, stand apart from the other three works. No autographed score has ever come to light but, judging by the demands made of the soloist, it seems

unlikely to have been written for "that ass Leitgeb". The orchestration is also different to that of the earlier works - clarinets and bassoons replace oboes and horns.

The type of instrument for which Mozart would have written the concertos would be very different from the modern valve horn. Throughout the classical period only natural horns were available. This meant that certain notes which could not be produced by the lips alone had to be obtained, with various degrees of success, by inserting the right hand into the bell of the instrument, thus altering the pitch of the existing notes. Inevitably the tone quality must have been very uneven in comparison with the modern horn, and it is interesting to imagine just how such a work would have sounded on eighteenth century instruments.

The concerto is in three movements -

Allegro
Larghetto
Allegro



FINLANDIA

.....

SIBELIUS
1865-1957

Apart from his seven symphonies, the symphonic poems of Sibelius constitute his greatest contribution to the orchestral repertoire.

In the 1890's, Sibelius became acquainted with a number of nationalist writers. Indeed, a surge of discontent and nationalism was sweeping through Finland as a direct result of the ever-tightening grip of Tzarist Russia. The influence of these nationalist writers, together with his own passionate love of Finnish folk-lore, made the symphonic poem the ideal vehicle for the expression of his ideas and interests in music.

Finlandia was composed in 1899 when anti-Russian feelings were running high. It does not describe an actual historic or legendary event, but is rather a form of nationalist

hymn for choir and orchestra. The hymn-tune presumably represents the unity of the Finnish people in the face of oppression. The contrast between the harsh brass chords at the opening and the warmth of the hymn tune which persistently returns and eventually dominates the texture has obvious political implications.

The original version of 1899 was scored for choir and orchestra, but in 1900 it was revised for orchestra alone. The work became a great popular success outside Finland and did much to establish Sibelius's reputation throughout Europe.

I N T E R V A L

SYMPHONY NO. 1 in C MINOR

.....

BRAHMS
1833-1897

Apart from the two early orchestral serenades and the D Minor Piano Concerto all of the Brahms' orchestral music was written within 14 years - between 1873 and 1887. Part of the reason for this would be due to Brahms' notorious ruthlessness towards his own work. Early works and those with which he had grown dissatisfied were mercilessly destroyed. His first attempt at a symphony is known to have suffered this fate, although much of the material found its way into the D Minor Piano Concerto and the German Requiem.

The C Minor Symphony, then, is not as we might expect an early work written in Brahms' apprenticeship, but a first symphony by an already mature and experienced composer who had perfected his technique in the realms of piano music and chamber music. In fact, Brahms was

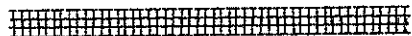
in his fourth-third year when the work was completed in 1876.

The symphony was received with hostility by one section of German society to whom the work was too backward-looking as it disregarded the recent experiments in orchestration and colour carried out by Wagner and Liszt in their more complex tonal explorations. Hugo Wolf complained that "Brahms writes symphonies regardless of what has happened in the meantime". On the other hand, the more conservative element of society hailed the work as a masterpiece and even labelled it - much to Brahms' exasperation - "Beethoven's Tenth Symphony".

Clearly many parallels may be drawn with the Beethoven Symphonies, particularly the 5th (also in C Minor). Brahms contents himself with an orchestra no larger than that used by Beethoven, and even then the trombones have to sit patiently through three movements to make their appearance in the Finale. It is too easy to overstate the influence of Beethoven on Brahms. More recent composers, such as Mahler and Schoenberg, grew to look upon Brahms as an innovation rather than merely the traditionalist that many of his contemporaries took him for.

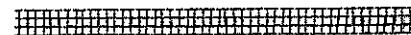
The First Movement - Un poco sostenuto; Allegro - begins with a slow, ominous introduction of such dramatic intensity as to immediately distinguish it from any 'classical' symphony with its persistent pounding of the timpani adding a feeling of menace. Moreover, this introduction contains most of the musical threats which make up the Allegro section.

The Second Movement - Andante Sostenuto - is a return to tranquility after the tragedy of the opening. In this movement we find Brahms at his most romantic.



The Third Movement - Un poco allegretto e grazioso - is another departure from classical tradition. Although it is constructed in three sections conforming to the standard scherzo - trio - scherzo pattern, it is less a scherzo than a short, delicate intermezzo movement.

The Fourth Movement - Adagio; Allegro non troppo - begins, as did the first movement, with a dark, sinister introduction. Out of the gloom a solo horn emerges like a ray of sunshine transforming the whole atmosphere. Again the material of the introduction is expanded and developed in the allegro section which proceeds in a similar spirit of triumph and jubilation to the finale of the Beethoven C Minor Symphony.



WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductors: Meirion Williams and Sheila Freeman

Violin I

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

Violin II

Christine Cook
James Chugg
Anthony Clements
Helen Cubberley
Derek Hawley
Eric Jones
Richard Kent
Michael Keyes
Rita Lakeland
Hilary Oseman
Molly Painter

Horn

Percy Cotterell
Alwyn Manley
Richard Mynors
Carole Smith

Trumpet

Stevan Asbury
Andrew Bryant

Cello

Tessa Russell
Andrew Bound
Glynn Davies
Gillian Dudley
Peter Johnson
Sheila Moore
Virginia Whinyates

Viola

Ruth Hewitt
John Barry
Jenny Chugg
Eric Russell
Paul Westwood

Trombone

Christopher Addy
Philip Johnson
Stephen Preedy

Flute

Philip Leah
Diana Manasseh
Douglas Servant

Bass

Donna Jones
Mark Finch

Timpani & Percussion

Ian Ellis
David Howe
Lal Simpson

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Anne Clements
Andrew Jowett

Clarinet

Diana Cotterell
Jane Allison

Bassoon

Jane Newcombe
John Sankey