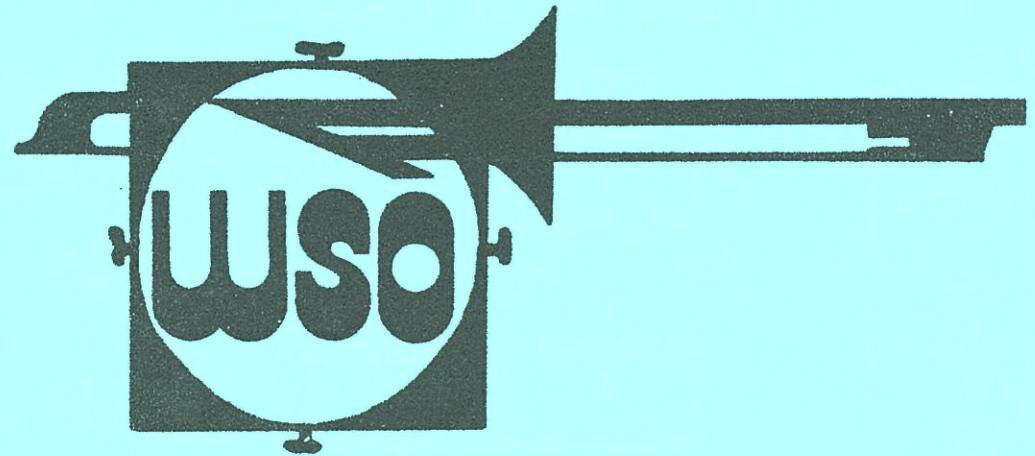


1979

S4

(18)



Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra

Conductors: Meirion Williams
Sheila Freeman

Leader: Cyril Love

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.

CONCERT

8.12.79

PROGRAMME 7

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

C O N C E R T

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8th

7.30 p.m. 1979

WOLVERHAMPTON POLYTECHNIC

PROGRAMME

- OVERTURE 'THE BARTERED BRIDE' SMETANA
- CELLO CONCERTO IN E MINOR ELGAR
- SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN E MINOR SIBELIUS

Conductor Sheila Freeman

Soloist Roderick McGrath

OVERTURE - 'THE BARTERED BRIDE'

SMETANA, 1824-1884

Bedrich Smetana was the first of the Czech nationalist composers to make an impact on the musical world outside.

The Bartered Bride was his second opera which he wrote as a contrast to his poorly received 'The Brandenburgers in Bohemia'. It achieved instant success, although not in its present form, which is actually the fourth version.

The overture is light and tuneful with a typical Czech dance and notoriously tricky opening.

The 'Bride' of the title is neither bartered nor wed, merely betrothed, the translation being inaccurate although the alliteration is attractive.

S.F.

3.

CONCERTO IN E MINOR FOR VIOLONCELLO OP. 85 ... ELGAR, 1857-1934

Adagio - moderato
Allegro - molto
Adagio
Allegro

This is a work of Elgar's later years and is unusual for a concerto in having four movements - the first leading straight into the second. After a bold opening the violas introduce the first theme, a lazy wandering tune which is admirably suited to the solo 'cello for which it is intended. The orchestral scoring is very light, gently supporting and occasionally reinforcing the soloist.

The second movement has a tentative start followed by a short cadenza before it becomes airborne and fizzes its way to the end.

The third movement is an intense and soaring song for the 'cello with moments of passion. The accompaniment is reduced further to strings plus touches of clarinets, bassoons and horns.

The final movement is on a large scale and has as its first part a buoyant march with strong off-beat backing although this takes a minute or so to get going as though the 'cello could hardly bear to destroy the beauty of the third movement.

There are a few skittish moments before an undulating passage gives way to a bubbling, driving section which derives its energy from the arpeggios of the 'cello. There is a hint, too, of the demons from Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius'. Back to the march, at first sneering and later jaunty with pizzicato 'cello. This breaks down into a long poignant section with many references to the third movement, leading to a re-statement of the opening cords of the concerto which thus frame the whole work.

S.F.

4.

SYMPHONY NO. 1. Op. 39 SIBELIUS, DECEMBER 8th, 1865-1957

Andante - Allegro energico
Andante - molto tranquillo - Andagio - Andante
Scherzo Allegro
Finale (Quasi una Fantasia) andante - Allegro molto - Andante
ma non troppo

This day 114 years ago Jean Sibelius was born in Finland, a musical giant and a unique symphonist. He did not begin to take a serious interest in music until the age of 15 and indeed studied law for a year before deciding to make music his life. His hopes of becoming a virtuoso violinist diminished with the years and he devoted more and more time to composition. When he was only 32 the Finnish Government took the unusual step of granting him a pension so that he might concentrate on writing music. This symphony was written during the next two years. He visited England several times and in 1905 stayed with Granville Bantock in Birmingham.

The first symphony is a massive work which calls for harp and percussion as well as an extra trumpet.

It opens with a haunting passage for solo clarinet over a barely perceptible drum roll. This is rudely interrupted by the strings who introduce a striving, conflicting idea which is soon taken up by the full orchestra in a powerful battle. Later in the movement a series of overlapping falling chromatics in the woodwind with scurrying, rising murmurs from the 'cellos and basses creates an impression of wind and storm through which the sun suddenly shines with a return of an earlier theme in the strings. Throughout this movement Sibelius makes great use of long notes which grow with increasing tension until they split into vital fragments.

The gentle opening of the second movement gives a hint of what is to come. The woodwind begins a steady stirring which develops into violent trills, working the strings up to a seething mass which subsides suddenly into the first theme and settles.

5.

The Scherzo begins with a dramatic announcement by the timpani over strumming strings. The second theme emerges with stammering syncopation from the violas and bursts through into the violins who soon lose interest in it and start worrying another fragment. The trio section relaxes the tempo a little but the throbbing, stabbing mood of the movement is not to be denied and returns with greater vigour.

The clarinet solo of the introduction returns in a stronger version at the beginning of the finale. An urgent restless discussion is initiated which continues for some time. It is followed by a broad romantic melody, powerful in its simplicity and wonderfully coloured by the harp. It is not allowed yet to become supreme, the restlessness returns and ferments, producing a wild dance-like section, the excitement heightened by the addition of cymbals. The frenzy is eventually quelled by the grand sweeping tune, but not without a struggle.

S.F.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductors - MEIRION WILLIAMS
SHEILA FREEMAN

Leader - CYRIL LOVE

1st Violins

Cyril Love
Connie King
Clive Davies
Julie Richards
Stephen Rhodes
Karen Walton
Mollie Painter
Phil Turley
Jim Gosling
Colin Elton

2nd Violins

Christine Cook
Eric Jones
Rita Lakeland
Ken Hawkins
Philip Ward
Angela Peat

Violas

Paul Westwood
John Riseborough
Peter Johnson
Paul Jarvis
John Barry
Rosemary Cleaver

'Cellos

Tessa Williams
Glyn Davies
Ginny Winyates
Andrew Bound
Sheila Moore
Gillian Dudley
Edward Lishman
Jean Johnson

Basses

Donna Jones
Mark Finch

Flutes

Diana Manasseh
Douglas Servant
Phil Leah

Oboes

Richard Anderson
Andrew Jowett
Ann Clements

Clarinets

Diana Cotterell
Jane Allison

Bassoons

Ronald Buckley
John Sankey

Horns

Percy Cotterell
Sara Clymo
Carol Smith
Al Manley

Trumpets

Stefan Astbury
Michael Garbutt

Trombones

Chris Addy
Richard Henry
Stephen Preedy

Tuba

Andy Branhall

Harp

Sheila Watts

Timps

Sean Hooper

Percussion

Meirion Williams