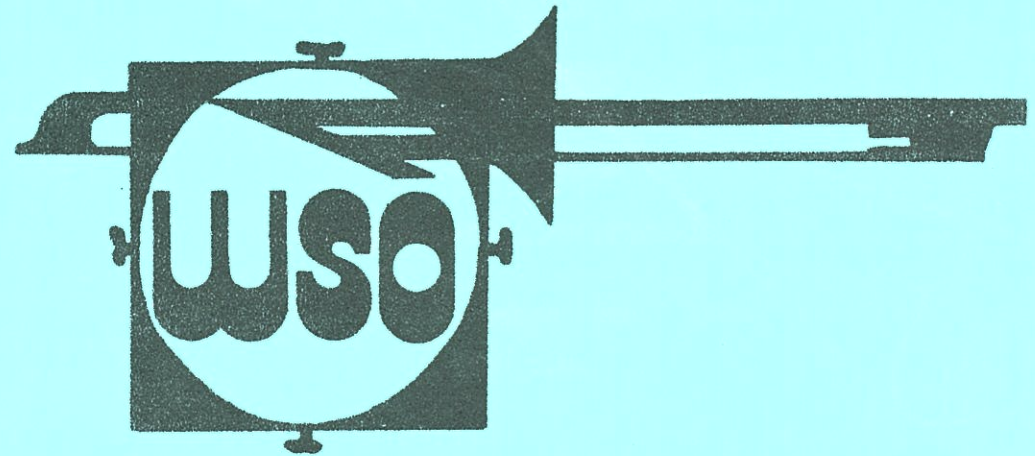


1980

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Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra

Conductors: Mark Finch
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

6.12.80

PROGRAMME

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
CONCERT
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WOLVERHAMPTON POLYTECHNIC

Saturday, December 6th, 1980,
7.30 p.m.



PROGRAMME

Variations on the St. Anthony						
Chorale	Brahms
Appalachian Spring	Copland

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 2.	Borodin
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Variations on the St. Anthony Chorale

- Johannes Brahms, 1833-97.

Although conceived as an orchestral work Brahms wrote two versions of these variations simultaneously, the parallel version for two pianos being just as impressive an achievement.

The theme is taken from an unpublished divertimento for wind band by Haydn who is now not believed to have written the tune himself. It was shown to Brahms by his friend and Haydn scholar, C.F. Pohl. Brahms noted it down with its square distinctive rhythms and then took it up a year or so later in 1873.

The variations, though they adhere to the general outlines of the main theme, still expand through the widest possible range of mood and expression, culminating in a magnificent 'finale', which more than anything else gives promise of the symphonist in the making. Brahms shows that he is able to set the beautiful tunefulness of the theme 'free' in the variations without the need for them to keep reminding us of the original melodic surface.

M.F.

Appalachian Spring - Aaron Copland (1900-).

Appalachian Spring was composed in 1943-44 as a ballet for Miss Martha Graham by whose company it was first performed at the Coolidge Festival in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., on October 30th, 1944.

The original score called for a chamber ensemble of thirteen instruments. The present arrangement, a condensed version, which omits those sections in which the interest is primarily choreographic, was made by the composer in the spring of 1945.

The action of the ballet concerns "a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly-built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, which their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbour suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house".

Aaron Copland, who was eighty last month, has been described by Leonard Bernstein as 'the best we have'. His music is instinctively American in flavour - the balanced, four-square melodic phrasing, the clear arpeggiated tunes and the rooting of harmonies on diatonic "added" chords emphasising open fourths and fifths instead of the two types of third are all here although they are frequently interrupted by passages of great metrical upheaval and vitality. The first yearnings of spring from the woodwind are marked "semplice" (white tone). We recognise at once the passing of winter in Appalachia and perhaps also the simple white boarded frames of its churches and farmsteads.

In 1945 Appalachian Spring received the Pulitzer prize for music as well as the award of the Music Critics' Circle of New York for the outstanding theatrical work of the season, 1944-45.

M.F.

Symphony No. 2. - Alexander Borodin.

Borodin, a member of the Russian nationalist school of composers, known as 'The Five' (the others being Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky and Cui), pieced together his second symphony between 1869 and 1876 while he was also working at 'Prince Igor'.

The first movement, intended to evoke a gathering of the Russian princes of legend, is built on three main ideas, each of which receives its own tempo and metre. The first two provide most of the motivic material for the developments, while the latter offers a lyrical contrast.

The Scherzo, in $\frac{1}{T}$, is in a simple A-B-A form, and the contrast is between the rapid staccato wind patterns and the syncopated string melodies of the outer sections, and a middle section which is lyrical, though it has an intervallic relationship with the last movements opening theme.

It is in the beautiful Andante that Borodin's hauntingly lyric arioso style blossoms forth, with memorable solo horn melody, which after several perorations is taken up by the whole orchestra, in a masterful tutti the end of the movement.

The Finale, formally the most inventive of the movements, follows without a break and contains elements of both sonata and rondo form. The tutti melodies owe something of their excitement to the frequent changes of time signature. There is much original writing for the orchestra as well as much that looks forward in style including the very last few bars.

M.F.