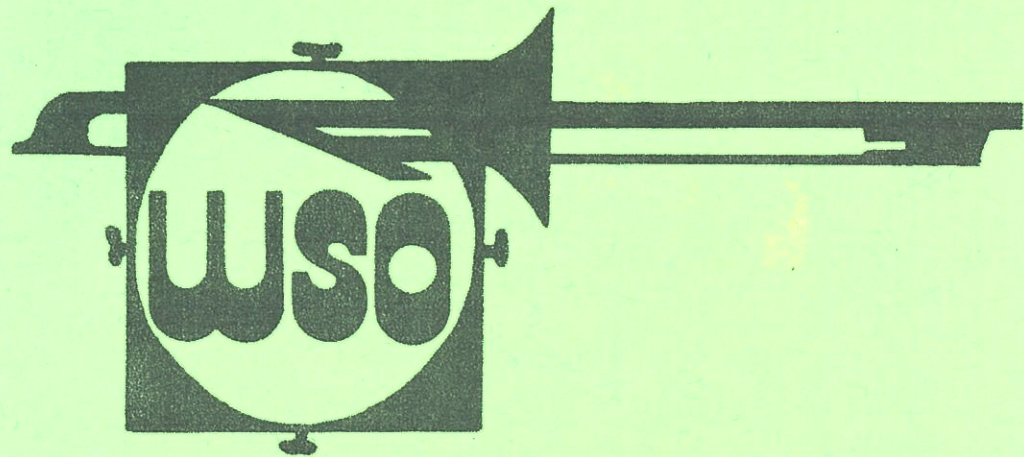


1981

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Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra

Conductor : Mark Finch

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

16.7.81

PROGRAMM

Overture, "The Hebrides"

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

The age of Mendelssohn was one of stylistic change in music. He was a "Romantic" chiefly in his skilful use of literary and other extra-musical stimuli, although his "Classical" inclinations led him to embody these in music of traditional form and elegance, expressed with an individual melodic grace and brilliance. The present concert overture amply shows traits from both worlds.

Mendelssohn "thought of" the first few bars aboard a steamship in quite choppy seas during a visit to the Hebridean island of Staffa in 1829. The "ebb and flow" apparent within each arpeggio and also from phrase to phrase underpins the whole piece. Furthermore, these opening bars also contain the seeds of all the thematic material (e.g. the second, slower theme is quite clearly audible in bar 3, albeit in embryonic form). This "monothematic" approach is coupled with a process of continual variation, so that no two bars (excepting the first two) are identical. Perhaps these techniques and the importance given to the lower strings were employed in direct response to the original extra-musical stimulus. However, the clarity of the contrasts inherent in sonata form are as classical as ever, even if the means of attaining them - changes of speed and widely differing orchestrations of material at their repeats - may be new and the whole is set in the most classical of harmonic frameworks.

M.A.F.

Canzon "L'Alcenagina"	Adriano Banchieri (1567-1634)
"Ricercar del duodecimo tuono"	Andrea Gabrieli (1520-1586)
"Canzon duo decimi toni"	Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612)

The programme this evening contains four works by North Italian composers. The present group of three pieces for two choirs of brass instruments were written by composers who have each left an important mark in music history.

Adriano Banchieri was born in Bologna. He became a priest in 1587 and abbot in 1620. Despite these duties he was instrumental in establishing three academies in Bologna

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by whom he was known as "Il Dissonante". He was an important theorist at a very interesting period in the history of harmony and tonality; and was the first composer to use the dynamic markings "f" and "p" (1613).

Andrea Gabrieli was "a universally minded composer of stupendous originality". Born in Venice he studied under Willaert at St. Mark's before succeeding Merulo as second organist in 1556 and the same man in 1584 to become first organist. Meanwhile, he was deputy to Zarlino, who was Maestro di Cappella. Finally, he was succeeded by his nephew, Giovanni. Such was the well-being at St. Mark's, the most influential building in the history of music. In the year of his death Andrea published the first ever work designed specially for a symphonic combination of instruments only. He used the word "sonata" to describe it.

Like his uncle, Giovanni also travelled much in his youth - he became an assistant to Lassus in Munich when eighteen. His fame as an organist and as the composer of choral music, conceived in the magnificent "al fresco" style of Willaert's "chori spezzati" (divided choirs), which was aided by the gallery design of St. Mark's and replaced the traditional Flemish polyphony, penetrated north of the Alps at an early date. Certainly, we can see this influence on the present piece. Indeed, as the creator of lavishly designed church compositions for voices and instruments of up to 15, 17 or 20 parts divided into 2, 3 or 4 or more parts, carrying on where his uncle had left off, we can only assume that Giovanni must have been extremely popular with the congregation at St. Mark's.

M.A.F.

"Chanson de Matin"
"Chanson de Nuit"

Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)

These two gems from the rich seam of Elgar's art were written in 1901 and first performed at the Queensway Hall, London. They show, above all, the subtlety of Elgar in the delicate orchestrations and the reserve

shown at points of tension. One is reminded by the tunefulness of the story which tells that when Elgar was once asked what he thought about folk song (in reference to Vaughan Williams and other musicians who had been researching into it) he replied "I don't think about it! I am folk-song".

M.A.F.

Adagio for Organ and Strings
Peter Richards Organ

Thomaso Albinoni
(1671-1750)

Our Italian sequence is concluded by another Venetian, Albinoni, who died in the same year as Bach and stands midway between Corelli and Vivaldi, historically speaking. He is known primarily for the fact that Bach subjected three of his fugues to careful study and reworking - and he is known for this piece, whose powerful romantic simplicity is fairly typical of other slow movements in Italian organ concerti of the early part of eighteenth century.

M.A.F.

I N T E R V A L

Symphony No. 6 in F major, "The Pastoral"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

The five movements of this symphony bear the titles:-

1. Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande (awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country).
2. Szene am Bach (scene by the brook).
3. Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute (merry gathering of peasants), interrupted by
4. Gewitter. Sturm (thunderstorm), leading to
5. Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm (shepherd's song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm).

Beethoven, himself, was the author of these titles,

which suggests that he had in mind some "programmatic" content to the work. Indeed, the symphony would seem to contain many direct and indirect associations with such a "programme", especially in the middle three movements. The violin trills and frequent long rests in the melody line of the slow movement suggest bird-song, a suggestion confirmed by Beethoven at the end of the movement when he introduces the characteristic calls of the nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet). The peasant dance of the oboe, the effervescent clarinet and the horn in the 3rd movement conjures up a scene of dancer, mimic and clown entertaining a crowd who all then celebrate and clap hands in their own "hurdy-gurdy" dance. The air seems to fill with flies as their merry-making is interrupted by the oncoming storm.

Yet, despite all these associations, it is important to remember that in the programme to the first performance (on December 22nd, 1808) the work was described as a "Pastoral Symphony: an expression of emotion rather than tone-painting". The listener who expects to be transported along a story-line, as is the case, for example, with Elgar's "Falstaff", rather than be introduced to a series of movements representative to a greater or lesser extent of generalised rural scenes, will be disappointed.

Beethoven's stylistic characteristics are no less in evidence in this symphony. Excepting the storm, which is written over a chromatically rising bass as the storm mounts and two flights of descent in the bass as the storm begins to abate, each movement is cast in the simplest of harmonic moulds. Chord and harmonic changes are slow and deliberate while melodies are built on clear diatonic arpeggios as exemplified by the "Hirtengesang". An interesting melodic quirk of Beethoven's links the first and last movements and can be heard in the second theme of each. The fragment A, G, E, C is a sort of arpeggio (G, E, C) and appoggiatura (A) combined. It may also be clearly heard in the main themes of Leonora No. 3 and Egmont overtures, although in a minor key in the latter instance. The first movement

is in a strict sonata form while the last is a rondo, A-B-A-C-A1-B-A2-A3. The last two variants of A start off as solo cello and bassoon statements but build into two cadential climaxes over very simple chord sequences.

A final hymn from the strings and muted echo from the horn conclude this magnificent work.

M.A.F.

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WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

List of Players for 16th July

Violin I

Cyril Love
 Connie King
 Julie Richards
 Jim Hyslop
 Colin Elton
 Penny Shaw
 Rita Lakeland
 Kathleen Colley

Violin II

Martin Blythe
 Eric Jones
 Ken Hawkins
 Christabel Jones
 Jennifer Lewis
 Jim Chugg
 Philip Ward
 Helen Cubberley
 Richard Featherstone

Viola

Cecilia Galloway
 Paul Westwood
 Geoffrey Haynes
 Paul Jarvis
 Jenny Chugg
 Richard McDonald

Cello

Virginia Whinyates
 Andrew Bound
 Glyn Davies
 Sheila Moore
 Sheila Freeman
 Jean Johnson
 Edward Lishman

Double Bass

Donna Jones
 Brother Godric

Flutes

Diana Manasseh
 Philip Leah
 David Werry

Bassoons

Stuart Hicken
 Graeme Rudland

Oboes

Richard Anderson
 Ann Siviter

Clarinets

Diana Cotterell
 Jane Allison

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Brass - Choir 1

Trumpet 1 Stefan Astbury
 Trumpet 2 Michael Garbett
 Horn Percy Cotterell
 Trombone Christopher Addy

Brass - Choir 2

Trumpet 1 Andrew Thorne
 Trumpet 2 Ian Hedgecock
 Horn Sarah Clymo
 Trombone David Swift

Timpani

Anne Douglas

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