

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 CONCERT 3 MARCH 1990
 WOLVERHAMPTON POLYTECHNIC (DUDLEY SITE)

MacCunn Land of the Mountain and the Flood
 Dvorak Cello Concerto
 Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 2

Violin 1

Martyn Blythe
 Margaret Friar
 Jennie Lewis
 Katalin Beke
 Colin Elton
 David Harvey
 Harry Green

Cello

Richard Painter
 Sheila Moore
 Margaret Bell
 Sylvia Ulrich
 Glyn Davies
 Dawn Smith
 Ann Dudley

Flute

Diana Manasseh
 Helen Layne

Clarinet

Diana Cotterell
 Lynn Sargeant

Violin 2

Margaret Myatt
 Cyril Love
 Ken Hawkins
 Maria Mulligan
 Vanessa Owen
 Michael Clements
 Philip Ward

Double Bass

Br Godric F.M.S.
 Thelma Green

Oboe

Richard Anderson
 Jennifer Marshall

Bassoon

Maggi Rowland
 Doug Servant

Horn

Percy Cotterell

Trumpet

John Bettey
 Andrew Southwell
 Chris Stringer

Viola

David Cope
 Philip Turley
 Liz Davenport
 Eluned Jenkins
 Mike Crump
 Julia Cotterell

Timpani

Hugh Thomas

Trombone

Les Whitehouse
 Ray Downs
 Don Howard

Tuba

Richard Elliot

1990

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WOLVERHAMPTON
 POLYTECHNIC

Wolverhampton
 Symphony
 Orchestra

conductor
 Craig Sproston

leader
 Martyn Blythe

7.30pm
 Saturday 3rd March

1990

The Great Hall
 Dudley Site

The programme is as follows:

Maccunn - Land of the mountain and the flood
 Dvorak - Cello Concerto in B Minor - Op 104
 Soloist Helen Barber
 Tchaikowsky - Symphony No. 2 in C Minor Op 17

Overture Land of the Mountain and
The Flood Op 3

Hamish MacCunn

Hamish MacCunn was born on 22 March 1868 and died 2 April 1916. He was the son of a shipowner, and was fortunate to have grown up in a cultured atmosphere. Due to a lack of professional opportunity in Scotland for composers, Hamish moved to London where he became one of the first students of the newly established Royal College of Music (1883). Under the direct influence of Parry he wrote the Overture Land of the Mountain and the Flood.

Right from the beginning one can see the Scottish character of the work, its main themes exploiting the unusual rhythmic constituent of the opening bars played by the cellos.

Although the standard 19th century orchestration is employed with sonorous romantic effect, too frequent repetition of themes and unproductive use of sequence did at that time make it sound rather tedious to the public. However, this is a valiant attempt by the composer to demonstrate his wholehearted allegiance to his country.

Cello Concerto B Minor op 104

Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

- 1 Allegro
- 2 Adagio Ma Non Troppo
- 3 Finale (Allegro Moderato)

By the time Dvorak had composed the Cello Concerto, he was not only the most gifted melodist of his day, but also a master of scoring, a skill he had learnt from playing in the ranks of the Orchestra. Born the son of a butcher, he remained an unassuming man, with a robust love of life; yet he was never totally the rough Bohemian peasant, travelling widely throughout Europe and the United States.

We owe the Cello Concerto in B minor to a sequence of happy chances. In March 1894, 2 years after entering the United States, Dvorak met a Cellist friend Victor Herbert who was giving a performance of his 2nd Cello Concerto in New York. Dvorak was intrigued to hear 3 trombones used without drowning the soloist. This concerto obviously influenced Dvorak greatly when writing his Cello Concerto - both share a lot of octave work, quite a few technical things, and above all, present important melodic ideas on the Cello's highest string.

The Concerto is full of strokes of genius - like the opening movement's lovely 2nd subject, introduced by the Horn and later brought back to usher in the recapitulation. Dvorak achieves great orchestral outbursts without allowing the cello to feel that it's fighting the orchestra - indeed it sings affectionate duets with several orchestral soloists, the characteristic Dvorakian woodwind sound always to the fore. It also enhances memories of Josefa Cernvakara for whom Dvorak had an unrequited passion in 1865. Hearing of her heart condition he wrote the melody of "leave me alone" (her most favourite among songs) into the Adagio. Soon after her death Dvorak inserted a reminiscence of the song into the coda of the finale. The premiere was given by Dvorak in London in 1896 with Leo Stern as the soloist.

Symphony No. 2 in C minor Op 17
(Little Russian 1872)

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
(1846-1893)

- 1 Andante Soltenuto
- 2 Andantino Marziale Quasi Moderato
- 3 Allegro Molto Vivace

Tchaikovsky received his early education at the School of Jurisprudence in St Petersburg, where he was subsequently appointed to an official position in the Ministry of Justice. Discontented he decided to enter the Conservatory at the age of 21. Six months later he resigned from the ministry to devote his full time to the study of music.

By 1864 Tchaikovsky was already being looked upon as the 'Future star of Russian music' and in January 1866 he was appointed teacher of harmony at the Moscow Conservatory.

The second Symphony was composed in 1872 when Tchaikovsky was only 32 and first performed in Moscow by the Imperial Russian Music Society on 7 February 1873. It was an immediate success and was given a second performance on 8 April. Tchaikovsky, not satisfied with the symphonies revised the work in 1878-1880. The title Little Russian was affixed to the Symphony by the composer's friend, Nicholas Koshkin, and is intended to refer to the one in the Finale of a folk song from the section known as Little Russia (Malorussia). Unlike most of his works which sooner or later succumb to waves of depression, this Symphony is a happy sunny and cheerful work probably the most national of all his compositions.

The beautiful horn solo in the Introduction to the first movement bears a resemblance to the well-known Russian folk song 'Down The Mother Volga'. The second movement is based on a wedding march from an earlier unpublished opera 'Ondine' while the third movement is a bustling scherzo which gives way to a charming folk-like trio. The finale is ushered in by a series of lingering introducing chords, the humour and charm of which become apparent only once the listener realises that they are overblown foreshadows of the Macorussian folk song which is weaved through a succession of lightning-like variations.

Soloist Helen Barber came to Birmingham in 1982 where she studied under Naomi Butterworth and Ulrich Heinen.

Since leaving college she has had numerous engagements with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, including television and radio broadcasts. She is also in great demand for both chamber and orchestral concerts throughout the West Midlands.