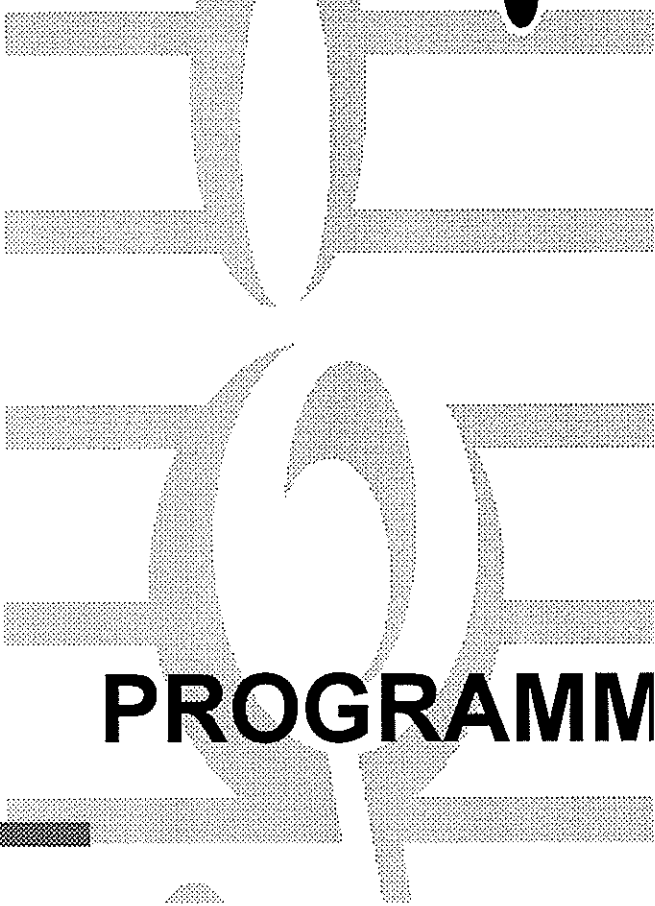
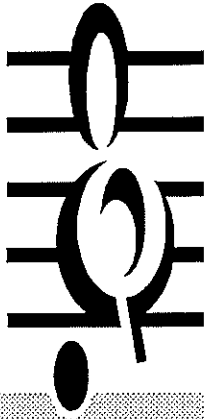




**Wolverhampton  
Symphony  
Orchestra**



**PROGRAMM**

**WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**CONCERT  
AT ST MARY'S CHURCH, ALBRIGHTON**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD, 1996**

**PROGRAMME**



**Pictures at an Exhibition ..... Mussorgsky**

*Interval*

**Symphony No. 6 ..... Tchaikovsky**



**Conductor - Michael Darke**

**Leader - Ros Rayner**

*Pictures at an Exhibition*      *Modest Mussorgsky (1839-81)*  
*(Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel)*

This musical reproduction of ten pictures by the Russian artist Victor Hartmann was originally written as a piano duet but is probably best known in the lavishly orchestrated version we will hear tonight. It was originally composed by Mussorgsky as a tribute to his close friend following a visit to the memorial exhibition of Hartmann's work in 1873.

The trumpet theme which opens the work is the '**Promenade**' which links many of the pictures as we walk in a purposeful yet suitably contemplative fashion around the exhibition. This leads us to the first picture, '**The Gnome**'. One senses that this is not some jolly red-jacketed fisherman, but a rather less attractive individual, scurrying around with malevolent intent and pausing every so often to look around for intruders into his dingy lair. Hartmann's picture was actually a design for a toy nutcracker.

Another Promenade takes us to '**Il Vecchio Castello**', a watercolour painting of a medieval castle in front of which stands a singing troubadour, portrayed in this arrangement by an alto saxophone.

We Promenade on to a view of '**Tuileries**'. Here children are running around in the famous gardens in Paris enjoying their games in the sun. The more elegant theme which intersperses these games portrays the nurses accompanying the children. The painting next door, however, is '**Bydlo**' which depicts a Polish wagon on enormous wheels drawn by oxen. The bassoons and lower strings convey the struggle of the beasts as they trudge along the muddy lane, to the accompaniment of

a folksong. We hear them pulling their load steadily towards and then past us before disappearing around a bend.

Another gentle promenade takes us to the '**Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks**'. This was a design for a ballet staged in St Petersburg in 1871 in which dancers were dressed in large egg shells with canaries heads as helmets. The cheeping and capering we hear though seems more appropriate to real chicks than anything humans could muster!

Portraits of '**Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle**' follow. The first of these Polish Jews is rich and full of swaggering self-importance, while the other is poor, pathetic and wheedling (placing great demands on the trumpeter in the process). The portraits were actually two of Hartmann's pencil sketches that Mussorgsky owned himself.

'**Limoges**' shows women gossiping in a bustling provincial market place, but the mood suddenly changes as we turn to '**Catacombae**' which visits the ghostly and eerily echoing catacombs underneath Paris. '**Con Mortuis in Lingua Mortua**' continues the theme of death with a mysterious promenade said to be brought to Mussorgsky's mind by the creative spirit of the departed Hartmann.

'**The Hut on Hen's Legs**' in Hartmann's drawing shows a clock in the form of the dwelling place of the witch Baba Yaga, a frightening character from Russian folklore. To this image, Mussorgsky added one from her legendary ride through the air on a red-hot mortar. This hair-raising experience leads us straight on to the '**Great Gate of Kiev**', Hartmann's project for a triumphal heroes' gate into the old Russian city. This picture forms a grand and majestic finale to our tour of the exhibition.

## INTERVAL

### *Symphony No.6*

*Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*  
(1840-1893)

*I Adagio - Allegro non troppo*

*II Allegro con grazia*

*III Allegro molto vivace*

*IV Finale: Adagio lamentoso*

In August 1893, as his Sixth Symphony was nearing completion, Tchaikovsky wrote to his nephew, 'I can tell you in all sincerity that I consider this symphony the best thing I have ever done. In any case, it is the most deeply felt.' Few would disagree with this assessment of this, his last work, a masterpiece of frank and disturbing emotion. It is made all the more powerful by the realisation that the music reflects the composer's state of mind just before his death, which was almost certainly by his own hand.

A subject that had haunted Tchaikovsky for many years was the idea of Fate as an implacable power which had frustrated all his hopes of happiness. In this symphony, which he himself subtitled 'Pathetique', he seems to give in totally to this power. Many of the themes suggest upward struggle but this is inevitably followed by downward collapse and the overall mood is one of a steady decline into overwhelming despair.

After a murky opening featuring a solo bassoon, the first theme in the Allegro non troppo has a restless feel to it. A broad and passionate melody follows but any hope of consolation is soon shattered. Although there are frequent

attempts to recreate the passion, it becomes increasingly painful and the movement closes in a mood of resignation.

The second movement promises brighter things, but its waltz-like geniality is undermined by its unusual, limping five-in-a-bar meter and by the poignant sighing of the trio and coda sections. It is followed by a brilliant third movement, in which scurrying preparation and fragments of melody lead to a seemingly joyful and triumphant march, but the descending accompaniment reminds us that any sense of optimism is forced and hollow.

The Finale sees happiness disappear from view for ever and in this bleak movement there is only hopelessness and dejection. The music sinks back into the depths from which it has struggled to arise and finally fades out into emptiness.

*M.D.*

**Our next concert:**

**Mahler's 4th Symphony  
(Soloist Sarah Westwood)**

**and**

**The Wasps Overture  
by Vaughan Williams**

**7.30pm Saturday 22nd March 1997  
at Cranmer Methodist Church,  
Newhampton Rd, Wolverhampton**

# WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*Leader* - Ros Rayner

*First Violins*

Susan Bellingham  
Barbara Bostock  
Catherine Elliott-Hunt  
Colin Elton  
Jessica Ford  
Jennifer Lewis  
Louise Rhodes  
Anthony Weedon

*Violoncellos*

Louise Lawrie  
Margaret Bell  
Glyn Davies  
Tim Forster  
Julie Robertson  
Sylvia Ulrich  
Maggie Wenham

*Bassoons*

Jill Sparke  
Doug Servant

*Horns*

Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper  
Sara Robertslaw  
Caroline Elliott-Hunt

*Second Violins*

Jo Jordan  
Michael Clement  
Ken Hawkins  
Jenny Makin  
Jenny Walton  
Philip Ward

*Basses*

John Fosbrook  
Tony Mortimer  
Alex Rothwell

*Trumpets*

Tony Bayliss  
Jeremy Cross  
Vaughan Smith  
Stephen Bate

*Violas*

David Cope  
Alan Anderton  
Rory Freckleton  
Sheila Freeman  
Heather Ling  
Philip Turley

*Piccolo*

Sandra Korte

*Tuba*

Ian Mitchell

*Flutes*

Diana Manassch  
Heather Lancaster

*Percussion*

Gill Davis  
Andrew Holden

*Obocs*

Richard Anderson  
Sally Griffiths

*Timpani*

Peter Morley

*Clarinets*

Diana Cotterell  
Lynn Sargeant

*Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is registered charity no. 1040991 and is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies.*