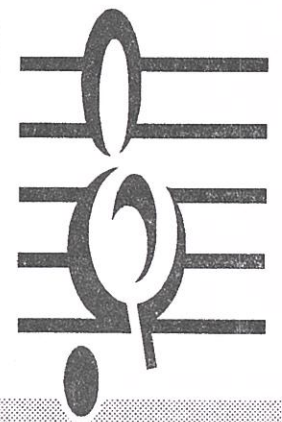


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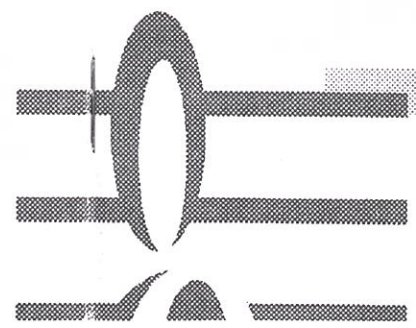
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Wolverhampton  
Symphony  
Orchestra



**PROGRAMME**



22/3/97

**WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**CONCERT  
AT CRANMER METHODIST CHURCH  
WOLVERHAMPTON**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND, 1997**

**PROGRAMME**

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**Overture: "The Wasps" Vaughan Williams**

**Aria: "Voi Avete un Cor Fedele" Mozart**

**Prélude a l'Après-midi d'un Faune Debussy**

*Interval*

**Symphony No. 4 Mahler**

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**Conductor Michael Darke**

**Leader Ros Rayner**

**Soprano Sarah Westwood**

## Tonight's Soloist

We are delighted to welcome back **Sarah Westwood** for her second concert as soloist with us.

Sarah graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire with a BA (Hons) degree in music, specialising in performance. She then continued her postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst there, she was runner up in the Isabel Jay Opera prize and received a Highly Commended in the Vincent Lieder prize. She has taken part in masterclasses with Robert Tear, Paul Esswood and Valerie Masterson, graduating with a recital diploma in June 1996.

Sarah performs regularly around the country and future engagements include a concert of baroque music with the Borromini Ensemble in Birmingham Cathedral, Warwick Arts Centre and the Hollywell Music Room, Oxford.

Sarah has also been a member of the violin section of the WSO on several occasions. She lives with husband Paul (another former WSO member) and their recently arrived daughter Lydia in South Shropshire.

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## Overture: "The Wasps" Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

In 1909, Vaughan Williams was commissioned to write the incidental music for a production of "the Wasps" by Aristophanes put on by the Cambridge Greek Play Society. It was the composer's first experience of writing for the stage and although a suite survives, only the overture is generally heard today. With plenty of buzzing effects and the glorious folksong melodies for which he was to become famous, the work makes a rumbustious and good-humoured curtain raiser.

## Aria: "Voi Avete un Cor Fedele", K217 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart composed this comic aria in Salzburg in 1775 intending it for Galuppi's opera "Le Nozze di Dorina". Dorina is expressing her misgivings as to the constancy of her fiancé's affections: "You, as a passionate lover, are faithful at heart, but when you are proclaimed my husband, what will you do? Will you alter? Say what will happen then. Will you remain faithful? Oh, I doubt it! Already I expect that you will deceive me. For the present, for the moment then, I will not trust you!"

## Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

This atmospheric reflection on an oblique Mallarmé poem was an immediate success at its premiere in 1894, when the audience demanded it be encored. It has retained its enormous popularity and the languid flute introduction probably remains Debussy's signature tune.

*INTERVAL*

**Symphony No. 4**  
**Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)**

- I *Bedächtig - Nicht eilen - Recht gemächlich*
- II *In gemächlicher Bewegung*
- III *Ruhevoll (Poco adagio)*
- IV *Sehr behaglich*

Now regarded as the most popular and easily accessible of Mahler's symphonies, the Fourth was the subject of considerable criticism when it first appeared in 1901. The composer was, by this time, enjoying considerable success and apparently audiences thought the new work, with all its cheerful naiveté, was some kind of joke aimed to tease them out of seriousness. Mahler himself regarded it as a kind of epilogue to the first three symphonies which drew their inspiration from a volume of traditional folk poetry known as "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" (The Youth's Magic Horn). The key to the work lies in the fourth movement which is a setting of one of the composer's favourite poems from the collection, "Das Himmlische Leben" (Heavenly Life). This song gives us an innocent child-like view of heaven and the soprano soloist is specifically instructed to avoid any suggestion of sophistication. The rest of the symphony grows from this finale, giving it a simplicity which is more than a little deceptive.

The orchestra used is quite large, with extra woodwinds and percussion. Only trombones and tuba are missing (which leads to some very low work for the horns!) but for much of the time the scoring is very light, much like chamber music. Indeed the first movement seems like a pastiche of an 18th-century symphony. The jingling sleighbells provide the first link with the finale and the array of gorgeous themes that follow provide a mood which is at various times countrified, gracious, broadly songful and, when the four flutes give out their high call part way through the movement, bright with visionary wonder. It

certainly supports Mahler's view that a symphony should be like the world, organic and various as life itself.

The symphony's scherzo which follows was originally called a "Totentanz" (Dance of Death) and headed "Freund Hein spielt auf" (Friend Hein strikes up). Hein was a folklore fiddler, a symbol of death who under the guise of friendliness led his followers to a distant land. The orchestral leader uses a violin which is tuned up a whole tone to suggest a rural fiddler and perhaps to remind us of the medieval pictures of Death as a fiddler. Mahler's preoccupation with mortality is indeed evident and he himself described the movement as "so mystical, confused and uncanny that it will make your hair stand on end". In the overall scheme of things, however, it is but a brief disturbing dream in the nursery. The two trio sections, when they arrive, are much more placid in nature and provide a glimpse of the main theme in the finale.

The slow third movement begins with a restful theme in the lower strings, which later alternates with a more poignant melody first heard in the oboe. These are both subjected to wide-ranging transformations including, later in the movement, a courtly dance and a surprising *allegro vivace*. Mahler said that while writing the first theme he had in mind his mother's face recalled from childhood "sad and laughing, as if through tears. For she, too, had suffered endlessly, but had always resolved everything in love and forgiveness." The atmosphere is one of sustained quietude and, after the brief period of rushing around, a quiet devotional ending seems imminent. Suddenly drums and trumpets strike up and, in a dazzling vision of paradise, the horns play the finale's main theme, their bells pointed heavenwards. The music quickly subsides into calmness, however, and the coda is ineffably peaceful "like the music of the spheres."

At last we reach the finale and our heavenly vision is revealed. It is not all sweetness, however, and while the soloist tells us of the abundance of fine food and the angelic life of dance, there are less savoury moments as the lamb St John loses is butchered by Herod, while St Luke is kept busy slaughtering oxen. Serenity returns as the last stanza describes the heavenly music with which none on earth can compare and the harp gently rocks the symphony, lullaby-like, into silence.

*MD / Mark Finch*

Our next concert:

A family concert at

Brewood Parish church

7.00pm, Saturday 12th July 1997

featuring The Nutcracker Suite and Toy Symphony

# WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

## 1st Violin

Ros Rayner  
Coin Bates  
Barbara Bostok  
Catherine Elliott-Hunt  
Colin Elton  
Jessica Ford  
Linda Fowler  
Richard Lane  
Louise Rhodes

## 2nd Violin

Jo Jordan  
Michael Clement  
Ken Hawkins  
Margaret Myatt  
Jenny Walton  
Philip Ward

## Viola

David Cope  
Alan Anderton  
Rory Freckleton  
Sheila Freeman  
Philip Turley

## Cello

Louise Lawrie  
Joanne Bell  
Margaret Bell  
Glyn Davies  
Sheila Moore  
Julie Robertson

## Double Bass

David Foster  
Ian Parry

## Harp

Stephanie Roberts

## Flute

Di Manasseh  
Krista Hainsworth  
Heather Lancaster  
Jenny Hunter

## Oboe

Richard Anderson  
Kirsty Langlands

## Cor Anglais

Carol Parr

## Clarinet

Diana Cotterell  
Peter Bayliss

## Bass Clarinet

Lynn Sargeant

## Bassoon

Jill Sparke  
Doug Servant  
Toddy Harman

## Horn

Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper  
Sarah Robertshaw  
Caroline Hunt

## Trumpet

Tony Bayliss  
Ross Donaldson

## Timpani

Peter Morley

## Percussion

Andrew Holden  
Gill Davis

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