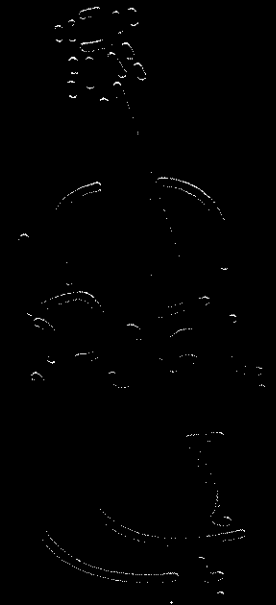


NATIONAL DEPARTMENT
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PROGRAM

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WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
SAINT MARY'S CHURCH,
ALBRIGHTON

SATURDAY, 16th OCTOBER 1999

PROGRAMME

Yeomen of the Guard Overture.....Sullivan
Soirées Musicales.....Rossini (Arr. Britten)
Carmen Suite Number 1.....Bizet

INTERVAL

Symphony Number 3 "Organ".....Saint-Saëns

Conductor - Michael Darke
Leader - Ros Rayner
Soloist - William Hayward

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is a fully independent amateur orchestra formed in 1973 by a group of keen amateur players. The idea behind the formation of the orchestra was to satisfy a need for local players to prepare to as high a standard as possible interesting works for public performance, and this is still the primary aim of the orchestra today. Membership of the orchestra when at full strength is of the order of 50 players and is drawn from keen competent amateur musicians, students and teachers of music in Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas.

The orchestra meets on a regular weekly basis throughout the academic year and produces on average six public concerts a year. It has been invited on several occasions to perform major choral works with local choral societies and has recently performed Beethoven's Choral Symphony. The orchestra regularly engages as soloists professional musicians of national and international reputation as well as local young players of outstanding promise.

The repertoire of the orchestra spans from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, although inevitably a symphony orchestra of this type will tend to concentrate on works from the nineteenth century. The orchestra has performed a large number of symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Mahler, Schubert, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky etc. Earlier works are represented by Albinoni, Bach, Boyce and Handel whereas twentieth century composers whose works have been performed include Barber, Copland, Joubert, Stravinsky, Meirion Williams (a former musical director of the orchestra) and Rory Freckleton (currently a regular member of the viola section).

The orchestra is managed by a committee consisting of the Musical Director, his Deputy and the Leader plus members elected by the orchestra. It is financed through concert receipts and an annual subscription paid by the members. It is also affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies. 101

TONIGHT'S SOLOIST

William Hayward was born in London and educated at Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith. At the Royal College of Music he was a pupil of Richard Latham (organ), Herbert Howells (composition), Sir Adrian Boult (conducting) and Richard Austin and James Lockhart in the Opera School. Compositions include five oratorios, many smaller cantatas, three orchestral suites and twelve Mass settings, three in French for use in Notre-Dame, Paris. He is now a free-lance conductor, opera coach and concert organist.

Recent organ recitals include Notre-Dame, Paris, Ghent Cathedral, Belgium and Westminster Abbey.

William Hayward was organist of Shrewsbury Abbey from 1995 to 1999.

OVERTURE: THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

Arthur Sullivan
(1842 - 1900)

The first performance of *The Yeomen of the Guard* took place on October 3rd 1888 at the Savoy Theatre, London. It was a great success, and both Sullivan and Gilbert thought that it was their finest work together. *The Yeomen* is much the most serious of the Savoy Operas, thus appealing to that side of Sullivan which wanted to succeed as a composer of serious music. However, this never came to pass. Sullivan's serious music is almost forgotten, although some of it, for instance his *Irish Symphony*, deserves to be better known, while the almost facetious music he produced in his collaboration with Gilbert will undoubtedly live forever.

The overture to *The Yeomen* was written and scored by Sullivan himself, unlike those to several of the operas, which were put together by one of his assistants. Sullivan obviously put a lot of effort into it, as it is on a scale much grander than any other of his overtures. Six themes from the opera are used and are subtly woven together into a symphonic structure in the manner of Mendelssohn's concert overtures. The easily recognisable "Tower" motif, which appears at the beginning of the overture is a kind of musical symbol representing the Tower of London. This theme is followed by a suggestion of the quartet in Act II, "When a wooer goes a-wooing", and by Phoebe's "Were I thy bride" which provides flute, oboe and clarinet solos. After a development and an unmistakable building up of tension, the Tower music once again enters imposingly, and, via a snippet of the finale of Act II, leads to the overture's end.

Programme notes by J. Bell with edited extracts supplied through the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies.

SOIRÉES MUSICALES

Suite of Movements by Gioachino Rossini (1792 - 1868)
Arranged by Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

- I. March.
- II. Canzonetta
- III. Tirolese
- IV. Bolero
- V. Tarantella

After the enormously successful premiere of his masterpiece *William Tell* at the Paris Opera in 1829, Rossini wrote no more works for the stage. His original intention was to continue to compose for Paris - a setting of *Faust* was a distinct possibility for a while - but various factors dissuaded him. The huge popularity of the sensational works of Meyerbeer and Halevy, together with what Rossini viewed as a decline in the standard of singing, both represented changes in the operatic world which he was bound to deplore. Rossini was also dismayed by the increasing butchery to which *William Tell* was being subjected. These reasons, combined with growing ill health, prevented him from following those interesting paths opened up by his last operas.

During the remaining thirty nine years of his life, Rossini continued to write occasional items for singers, social gatherings and musical evenings held regularly at his house. The music was a very Rossinian blend of salon, folk and operatic styles in which the composer's acute ear for the possibilities of the voice and his own considerable sophistication as a pianist are everywhere apparent. In 1835 Truopenas persuaded Rossini to publish these as a group of eight chamber arias and four chamber duets all with piano accompaniment under the title *Les Soirées Musicales*.

Many composers made arrangements of this group of short pieces, Britten arranging them into two suites in the early years

of his career with a dazzling orchestration which would surely have delighted Rossini. Soirees musicales was arranged in 1936 and has five movements drawn mainly from Rossini's *Les Soirées Musicales*, but beginning with a portion of the ballet music from *William Tell*.

J.Bell

CARMEN SUITE No. 1

Georges Bizet.
(1838 - 1875)

1. Prélude to Act I : *The sombre theme foretelling the tragic outcome of Don José's love for Carmen.*
2. Aragonaise : *Prelude to Act IV.*
3. Intermezzo : *Prelude to Act III.*
4. Seguedille : *Act I.*
5. Les dragons d'Alcala : *Prelude to Act II.*
6. Les Toréadors : *Introduction to Act I.*

One of the admirers of Bizet's *Carmen* wrote of its "perilous proximity to everyday life" and it is not too difficult to imagine, instead of Seville in 1820, a modern setting where a young man in a safe job, due to marry his neighbourhood sweetheart, is blown off course by the promise of the passionate embraces of an exotic girl from another culture, with tragic consequences.

In the opera the man is Don José, a corporal of dragoons, and his intended is Micaela, sweet and staid, who brings money and messages from his mother in the Basque region. Carmen, a sexy, carefree gypsy, treats men as playthings, and when she sings "si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!" ("if I love you, watch out!") in the famous Habanera, she means it. Unfortunately for Don José her attentions alight on him, although at first he ignores them.

In outline, the story of the opera is as follows. Carmen is arrested for brawling and Don José is ordered to take her to

gaol. She promises him her favours if he releases her and meets her later at Lillas Pastias's tavern. The now infatuated dragoon acquiesces but their rendezvous is delayed a month because Don José is gaoled himself for his offence. When they meet, the delighted Carmen sings and dances for him, but as she does so the cornets sound the retreat to barracks. Don José, who expects to get the best of both worlds, prepares to depart. Frustrated, an enraged Carmen asks him to desert his duties and carry her off to a life of freedom. He refuses but as he leaves is fatefully confronted by his lieutenant who is also seeking Carmen. They fight, and now hopelessly compromised, Don José joins Carmen and her smuggler cronies.

True to form, Carmen soon transfers her attentions to the flashy Toreador, Escamillo. One fancies that she takes to him because his dicing with death in the bullring strikes a chord with her fateful gypsy instincts. She refuses to be alarmed by Don José's threats of violence and deserts him for her new lover.

The tragic outcome occurs outside the Seville bullring; inside Escamillo is fighting a bull, while outside Carmen recklessly refuses the desperate pleas of Don José to return to him. He plunges the knife into her as the crowd is heard acclaiming Escamillo as he kills the bull.

Carmen was first produced at the Paris Opera-Comique in March 1875 and its realism caused a scandal. But the emotionally charged quality of the work and Bizet's brilliant use of local colour eventually won over an initially sceptical music world. Of his eight published operas *Carmen* was Bizet's masterpiece. It was also his last. Bizet died suddenly from a heart condition only three months after its premiere. With his death, a career just coming to maturity was cut short.

Programme Note by Ben Brickman. This note was supplied through the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies.

INTERVAL

SYMPHONY No 3 in C MINOR, Op 78 ("ORGAN")
Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835 - 1921)

Adagio - Allegro moderato - Poco adagio
Allegro moderato - Presto - Maestoso - Allegro

The Third Symphony of Saint-Saëns, commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society of London for its seventy third season, was first performed at a Philharmonic Society concert on May 19th, 1886, with Saint-Saens as conductor. The symphony is dedicated to Liszt, whose influence on Saint-Saëns is evident in the work. Both the formal structure and the orchestration of the symphony are conceived on a grand scale: the work is in two large movements, each of which contains separate contrasting "movements", the enlarged orchestra includes an organ and two pianos, the important part given to the organ resulting in the nickname, the Organ symphony. Yet despite its vastness and variety of effects, the symphony is tightly unified by the use of a basic motto or *idée fixe*, which recurs with constantly changing contexts and moods throughout the work, revealing a masterful organisation upon which Saint-Saens allows his remarkable imagination to build.

After the Adagio, the strings introduce the initial theme which is sombre and agitated. The first transformation of this theme leads to a second motif which is distinguished by greater tranquillity and after a short development in which the two themes are presented simultaneously, the motif appears in characteristic form for full orchestra.

In the Poco Adagio the peaceful theme is given to violins, violas and cellos, which are supported by organ chords. After a variation in arabesques performed by the violins the initial theme of the Allegro appears again with somewhat dissonant harmonies giving way to the theme of the Adagio. The first movement ends in a coda of mystical character in which are

heard the chords of D-flat major and E minor.

The second movement begins with an energetic phrase which is followed immediately by a third transformation of the initial theme in the first movement. Swift arpeggios and scales on the piano are accompanied by a syncopated rhythm in the orchestra in different tonalities, a second Presto in which a new grave, austere theme from the heavy brass and basses is contrasted with the fast moving theme from the first Presto. The organ's *fortissimo* entry in the *maestoso* is particularly well known, its theme used to triumphal effect in the 1995 film *Babe*. Finally the initial theme of the first movement with full orchestra, piano and organ is followed by the Coda.

"We do not expect you to follow us all the time, but if you would have the goodness to keep in touch with us occasionally"
Sir Thomas Beecham (1879 - 1961)

Programme notes by J. Bell with edited extracts supplied through the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Susan Bellingham
Barbara Bostock
Louise Flunt
Jennifer Lewis
Sarah Pursehouse
David Smith

Violin 2

Jo Jordan
Eleanor Asbridge
Michael Clement
Caroline Meads
Margaret Myatt
Rhiannon Taylor
Jenny Walton
Philip Ward

Viola

David Cope
Sharon Bayley
Martin Cropper
Rory Freckleton
Philip Turley

Cello

Jo Bell
Margaret Bell
Glyn Davies
Gaynor Devereaux
Tim Foster
Louise Lawrie
Sheila Moore
Alan Mumberson
Julie Robertson

Double Bass

Jo Hughes
Chris Lewis
Laura Staley

Flute

Diana Manasseh
Allison Finlan
Heather Lancaster

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo

Cor Anglais

Rachel Orotayo

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtiss

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Doug Servant

Horn

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Eric Large
Sarah Robertshaw

Trumpet

Tony Bayliss
Chris Cummings

Trombone

Laurence Hopper
David Heywood

Bass Trombone

Don Howard

Bass Tuba

Rebecca Heywood

Timpani

Malcolm Peters

Percussion

Ian Richards

Harp

Stephanie Roberts

Piano

Ken Gange

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Gershwin : Girl Crazy Overture
Shostakovich : Piano Concerto No. 2
Bruckner : Symphony No. 4 in E flat, "Romantic"

Aelfgar Centre, Rugeley

7.30 pm, Saturday 12th February 2000



Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra
is affiliated to the
National Federation of Music Societies
which represents and supports
amateur vocal, instrumental and
promoting services throughout the
United Kingdom.

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

For more details of the orchestra, visit our website at <http://listen.to/wso>
Tell us your views, e-mail us at wolsymorc@hotmail.com