

# PROGRAMME

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PROGRAMME  
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Department of  
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WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT  
AT  
THE AELFGAR CENTRE  
RUGELEY

SATURDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2000

**PROGRAMME**

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Girl Crazy Overture.....Gershwin  
Piano Concerto number 2.....Shostakovich

*INTERVAL*

Symphony number 4 "Romantic".....Bruckner

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Conductor – Michael Darke  
Leader – Ros Rayner  
Piano Soloist – Kate Dixon

## 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 last year performing Beethoven's Choral Symphony to commemorate its Silver Jubilee. The orchestra regularly engages as soloists professional musicians of national and international reputation as well as local young players of outstanding promise, as is the case this evening.

The repertoire of the orchestra spans from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, although 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, Dvorak, 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 payed by the members. It is also affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies.

### KATE DIXON – Piano

Kate Dixon was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire where she began to learn music at the age of eight. She played a total of five instruments including the piano, flute and violin and had an active role in the Youth Orchestras and ensembles available to her. In January 1998, under piano tutor Christine Palmer, Kate gave her first piano recital at the Brewhouse in Burton-Upon-Trent. She went on to play Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto with the Staffordshire Youth Orchestra in April of the same year and Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto with another Staffordshire Orchestra in June.

Now twenty years of age, Kate is studying piano performance under Sally-Ann MacLeod at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester, where last year she premiered two new works for piano, and is currently working with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra.

With a strong sense of pride about where her success began, Kate is delighted to be returning to Staffordshire to play with the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra.

**OVERTURE : GIRL CRAZY**

George Gershwin  
(1898 – 1937)

The Aarons and Freedley musical *Girl Crazy* saw the end of an era for George Gershwin's life, being the last of his twenties-style lightweight musicals.

The plot of the musical concerns the adventures of a young New York playboy, Danny Churchill, whose parents fear their son is being led astray by the temptations of Manhattan life such as bootleggers, nightclubs and especially women. To save him, his parents send him out west to the isolated cow town of Custerville, Arizona where the intention is that he can learn to be a man, away from the distracting fleshpots of the big city.

Arriving in Custerville by New York taxi-cab, Danny falls in love with the postmistress, Molly Gray, who is practically the only woman in town. Unfortunately for Danny, Molly spurns him as a girl crazy effete Easterner. Danny converts the town's only hotel into a dude ranch, complete with gambling, drinking and entertainment, staffed by girls from Broadway. Soon Custerville is filled with women and song, among the women being a number of Danny's old flames who have followed him from New York. Among the new arrivals is a not very sharp gambler, Slick, and his long-suffering wife Kate, played in the original by Ethel Merman in her Broadway debut.

The actions of the first act occur in and around Custerville while the second act takes place in Mexico, providing some musical spice. Eventually, through the love of a good woman (Molly), Danny becomes a reformed character and all live happily ever after.

In *Girl Crazy*, George and Ira Gershwin turned out one of their best ever scores. The show opened at the Alvin Theatre on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1930 with George conducting the opening night. It was an instant hit, the verve of the music keeping it triumphantly alive, despite the fact that the story line was by this time old-fashioned and over familiar, complete with love-gone-wrong at the end of the first act and a happy reconciliation at the end of the second. Songs included in the overture are *Embracable You* (salvaged from the aborted "East is West" and the hit song of the show), *I Got Rhythm* (which Merman introduced and thrust her to instant stardom), *Mexican Dance Scene*, *But Not For Me* and *Bronco Busters*.

**PIANO CONCERTO No. 2. Op 101**

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906 – 1975)

Allegro  
Andante  
Allegro

The second piano concerto of Shostakovich was written to display the gifts of his son, Maxim, being a present for his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1957. The work apparently contains many private family jokes in the piano solo, one being a reference to some infamous student finger exercises. Maxim's performance of the work gained him entrance to the Moscow State Conservatoire.

The first movement is jaunty and cheeky, and filled with a feeling of Russian patriotism. Woodwind opens the movement with the piano skipping in with a bright little tune after a few bars. The tone then becomes a little more strident with off beat strings, and the brass and woodwind mimicking the "What shall we do with a drunken sailor" theme played by the piano. The mood calms down a little until the piano, remembering that it is leading the orchestra on a merry, drunken dance crashes back into life, causing the woodwind to shriek in alarm. The piano and orchestra dance merrily along

until the piano takes a break, allowing the whole of the orchestra to revel in an expansive tune until, with a crash the orchestra demands the piano to take over again. The piano plays solo for a while until the orchestra joins in, bringing the movement to a close.

The Andante is a truly enchanting movement, having distinct echoes of Rachmaninoff. It is scored for piano and strings only and is full of long, unbroken lines having a tranquil and sublime mood.

The peaceful Andante leads straight into the chattering and scampering final Allegro. This movement skips along, changing key signature and time constantly. This is in direct contrast to the previous movement, the whole of the final movement careering on until the triumphant final bars.

## INTERVAL

### **SYMPHONY No. 4 "ROMANTIC"**

Anton Bruckner  
(1824 – 1896)

Bewegt, nicht zu schnell  
Andante, quasi allegretto  
Scherzo: Bewegt  
Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

The fourth symphony of Bruckner, the "Romantic", was the only work to which the composer himself gave a nickname and is considered to be the most easily approachable of the ten symphonies he wrote.

Bruckner took a long time to reach the confident maturity that his contemporaries Schumann and Brahms achieved in their early twenties. A protracted apprenticeship as a school teacher, choir master and organist brought him to his early forties before he moved from Linz to Vienna and to the composition of the symphonies upon which his reputation rests.

The fourth symphony was begun in 1873, finished in 1880 and first performed in 1881 under Hans Richter, with great success. In the first movement, Bruckner attempted to describe a medieval mood picture in the style of Lohengrin. (In Bruckner's eyes, Wagner was one of the three most important things in his life along with God and music). It conveys a medieval city, dawn, morning call by trumpets, the knights galloping into the forest and the sounds of the forest. Against a string tremolando, a mystical opening call on solo horn shines out, establishing the E flat tonality of the work and the ambience and majesty of the alpine forest in which it moves. A contrasting second subject, with something of bird song in its outline makes the right foil to the great mass of its first-subject material that the horn introduces.

The following *Andante* has a dreamily melancholic air and an almost funereal atmosphere, similar in mood to a Schubert elegy.

Hunting horns dominate the *scherzo*, which Bruckner called "Hunting of the Hare" and which does indeed convey pictures of huntsmen galloping through the woods.

The expansive *finale*, which Bruckner labelled "Popular Festival" returns to the open-air world of the first movement, not only revealing Bruckner's deep attachment to nature, but with its irresistibly Viennese lilt it suggests scenes of the city in which he had made his home. There is no real culminating point in the course of this music, which is interrupted by lengthy becalmed passages, yet an incredible power accumulates inexorably, and is finally established by incandescent brass in the closing bars.

Bruckner's "Romantic" symphony will continue to remain his most lovable, most popular and most easily performable work.

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### Violin

Ros Rayner  
Jessica Barnett  
Barbara Bostock  
Julianne Bourne  
Louise Hunt  
Richard Lane  
Jennifer Lewis  
David Smith  
Val Young

### Violin 2

Jo Jordon  
Michael Clement  
Caroline Meads  
Margaret Myatt  
Rhiannon Taylor  
Jenny Walton  
Philip Ward  
Monica Woodall

### Viola

David Cope  
Alain Anderton  
Sharon Bayley  
Rory Freckleton  
Philip Turley  
Jenny Wyatt  
Keith Young

### Cello

Jo Bell  
Margaret Bell  
Glyn Davies  
Gaynor Deveraux  
Tim Forster  
Sheila Moore  
Alan Mumberson  
Julie Robertson  
Emily Tellwright  
Iain Young

### Double Bass

Joanna Hughes  
Laura Staley

### Flute

Diana Manasseh  
Heather Lancaster

### Oboes

Richard Anderson  
Rachel Orotayo

### Clarinets

Di Cotterell  
Ros Jacom

### Bassoons

Jill Sparke  
Doug Servant

### Horn

Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper  
Sara Robertshaw  
Eric Large  
Hazel Whitefoot

### Trumpet

Tony Bayliss  
Chris Cumming  
Chris Jordan

### Trombone

Laurence Hopper  
John Barnett

### Bass Trombone

Don Howard

### Tuba

Rebecca Heywood

### Timpani

Malcolm Peters

### Percussion

Alastair Cornell

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

Gershwin: Girl Crazy Overture  
Canteloube: Songs of the Auvergne  
(Soloist: Sarah Westwood)  
Rory Freckleton: Suite for Orchestra  
Rossini: Soirees Musicales  
(Arranged Britten)  
Bizet: Carmen Suite No 1

**New Road Methodist Church, Stourbridge**

**7.30pm, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 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.

For more details of the orchestra, visit our web site at <http://listen.to/wso>  
Tell us your views, e-mail us at [wolsymorc@hotmail.com](mailto:wolsymorc@hotmail.com)