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PROGRAMME

107



Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra



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WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
CODSALL HIGH SCHOOL
ELLIOTTS LANE
CODSALL
NEAR WOLVERHAMPTON

SATURDAY 7th JULY 2001

PROGRAMME

London Suite.....Eric Coates
Londonderry Air.....Arr. Hamilton Harty
Four Scottish Dances.....Malcolm Arnold

INTERVAL

London Symphony.....Vaughan Williams

Conductor – Rachel Hyde

Leader – Ros Rayner

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, in 1999 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.

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, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Meirion Williams (a former musical director of the orchestra) and Rory Freckleton, a regular member of the viola section and the orchestra's deputy musical director.

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

Rachel Hyde was born in 1977 and began lessons on her first musical instrument at the age of 7. By the age of 14 she had discovered that she had limited patience when playing one instrument, and therefore was busy playing piano, cello, percussion and drum-kit, french-horn and trumpet. At 15 she was given her first opportunity to conduct, having already decided that this was there the real interest in performance lay whilst on an orchestral tour of Eire. Rachel rapidly began to acquire conducting experience, and is currently Musical Director and Principle Conductor of Sandwell Sinfonia, The Central England Ensemble and Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra, as well as having acted as MD for a variety of Musical Theatre companies, including Brierley Hill Amateur Operatic Society, Mayhem and Oldbury Rep. She has conducted works ranging from Baroque classics to romantic masterpieces such as Brahms Symphony No 1, Sibelius 2nd Symphony, Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4 and Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov. She particularly enjoys working with soloists, having conducted concerto performances including the Beethoven and Bruch Violin Concertos, the Mendelssohn D minor Violin Concerto, Weber's first Clarinet Concerto, and the 2nd Horn Concert of Mozart. Rachel remains an active instrumentalist, playing for Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Chandos Symphony Orchestra, Clent Festival Chamber Orchestra and the Midland Youth Orchestra among others. Rachel was appointed conductor of WSO in July 2000, and looks forward to guiding the orchestra in its musical future.

Eric Coates (1886-1957) *London Every Day Suite for Orchestra*

I. Covent Garden (Tarantelle): II. Westminster (Meditation): III. Knightsbridge (March)

Eric Coates was an English composer born in Chichester. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music before finding employment as an orchestral viola player. The era during which Coates became renowned as a composer of light music was the time of the radio, the BBC Light Programme with its demands for new music, and the need to brighten the country after the First World War. It was the perfect scene for a composer who could produce a seemingly endless stream of easily memorable melodies. His music spoke to all generations, from those looking for nostalgia, to the very young. He produced one major success after another, his music in the war years valuable to the morale of the nation, and included the stirring march for the Eighth Army to mark their Alamein victory in 1942 under General Montgomery. Perhaps his two most famous works are pieces that earned their fame through association. In 1955 Coates' *Dambusters March*, written for the film of the same name, shot into the Top 10, where it stayed for over a year, truly bridging the divide between popular music and light classical music. The final movement from the suite being performed tonight, *Knightsbridge March*, with its traffic noises, street cries and fanfares was chosen to introduce the BBC's new radio feature *In Town Tonight*. Thousands of listeners rang the BBC to request the title of the tantalising few bars they had just heard and 20,000 letters descended on the BBC asking the composer's name. Gramophone records of the march could not be made fast enough. Like his favourite poet, Byron, Eric Coates woke up one morning to find himself famous. *In Town Tonight* ran for 27 years and Eric Coates became England's best known composer at home and abroad. His melodies were whistled in the streets as well as sung in concert halls.

Hamilton Harty (1879-1941) *Londonderry Air*

Hamilton Harty was an Irish-born composer, conductor, organist and pianist, who spent most of his working life in London. He is most famous for his 13-year period as Principle Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester (from 1920-1933), building the orchestra's reputation up to that of one of the finest symphony orchestras in Europe. His beautiful and moving arrangement of the ever-popular Irish folk tune *Londonderry Air*, is scored for strings, harp and solo violin.

Malcolm Arnold (1921-) *Four Scottish Dances, Op 59*

I. Pesante: II. Vivace: III. Allegretto: IV. Con brio

Malcolm Arnold was born in 1921 in Northampton. He began his musical career as a trumpeter, having studied at the Royal College of Music, where he was also taught composition by Gordon Jacob. He played for many years with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom he held the position of principle trumpet until 1948. Since 1948 Malcolm Arnold has earned his living as a composer. He is perhaps most well known for his film scores, of which he has written over eighty, including music for the David Lean film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, for which he won an Oscar. There is much music outside of this genre however, which shows that Arnold is a composer of considerable stature who deserves greater recognition outside of the popular idiom. Donald Mitchell has compared Arnold, illuminatingly, with Dickens, both of them great entertainers but both well aware of the human predicament, unsettlingly revealed particularly in the remarkable series of symphonies. The *Four Scottish Dances* were written in 1957. The opening dance gives full scope to brass and percussion and makes full use of expected Scottish elements, the characteristic rhythm and form of scale. The second dance is a lively reel that relaxes for a moment, before resuming its original mood in conclusion. This is followed by gentler music that still keeps its national identity in the rhythmic snap, although now more rhapsodic, as its flute melody sings above harp accompaniment. Once again there is a spirited ending in the final dance, marked *Con brio*.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) *A London Symphony*

I. Lento - Allegro Risoluto: II. Lento: III. Scherzo, *Nocturne - Allegro Vivace*
IV. Andante con moto - *Maestoso alla Marcia (quasi lento)-Allegro-Lento-Epilogue*

It has been recorded of *A London Symphony* that the composer thought a preferable title would be 'Symphony by a Londoner'. In a sense, the work may be said to have been written by an onlooker. He presents us with a vivid picture of the cockney and his special brand of laughter, with London's size and variety, with the city's halfheard noises and vibrations. The scheme is grand, even perhaps grandiose. The music is crammed full of ideas and tunes and even incidents, and the varied rhythms are enchanting to the ear. There is a magnificent forward movement, as of a great ship swinging outward from port on the ebbing tide. London is, in fact, dramatised for us symphonically.

The first movement opens mysteriously in a London fog, or at least in the mists of an autumn morning rising off the River Thames at Westminster Bridge. The opening phrase is characteristic of Vaughan Williams's idiom - four notes made up of two rising fourths in succession. After some treatment the Westminster Chimes from 'Big Ben' are faintly but emphatically heard on harp and clarinet. The scene is set, and London's noise clashes on us in a first subject. Other ideas occur - an urgent short phrase on the woodwind and a succession of bare fifths in the bass. The second subject is more suave, a long tune, but suddenly gives way to a tense phrase on brass and woodwind; then comes some typical cockney humour. The development is long and imaginative, with a curious point of stillness as its climax. Then the first main idea returns softly, and all the opening matter is curtailed and changed, with a *coda* that leads back to brilliance.

A string of low bare chords, familiar in later Vaughan Williams works, heralds the second movement. The cor anglais gives out a semi-modal tune that is developed; repeated chords usher in one of the composer's characteristic phrases, emotional but epigrammatic. There comes a second section less peaceful in mood with a folk-like theme of tonal arabesques which leads to a direct and strong statement. All the material is considered and discussed with deep meaning.

We may take it that the *scherzo* is meant to represent London by night, the streets with their liveliness, the houses and offices with their stillness. The musical subject-matter speaks for itself - a firm short clarinet phrase much elaborated, a kindred idea, and a new theme on the heavy brass. Suddenly, we are confronted by an almost visual scene - mouth-organs and an assembled company outside a public house; 'a gigantic piece of realism', one commentator has called it.

The broad last movement opens with a strong, blunt-spoken theme; then comes a solemn march-tune, which builds itself up massively. An assertive *allegro* follows and the march returns. 'Big Ben' chimes again, and we return in the Epilogue to the damp, quiet atmosphere of the opening, and leave London in the dead silence of the midnight watches.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2001/2002 SEASON

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jessica Barnett
Vicci Cox
Violetta Davis
Rhiannon Taylor
Jo Jordan
Steve Shelley
Anna Downes
Cynthia Downes
Richard Lane

Double Bass

Ronald Large
Mat Heighway

Flute

Di Manasseh
Heather Lancaster

Violin 2

Terri Bethel
Jenny Bailey
Michael Clement
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Mike Johnson
Andrew Clothier
Allie Jackson

Oboes

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo

Cor Anglais

Rachel Orotayo

Clarinet

Di Cottrell
Lynn Curtis
Graham Hobbs

Viola

David Cope
Sharon Bayley
Philip Turley
Alan Anderton
Steve Hugh

Bass Clarinet

Lynn Curtis

Cello

Jo Bell
Margaret Bell
Glyn Davies
Sheila Moore
Andrew Perry
Claire Stevenson
Janet Lindsay

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Doug Servant

Contra Bassoon

Martin Skirrow

Horns

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Sarah Robertshaw
Eric Large

Trumpets

Sarah Croxon
David Place
David Shepherd

Trombones

Laurence Hopper
Linda Bailey

Bass Trombone

Don Howard

Tuba

Rebekah Heywood

Timpani

Debbie James

Percussion

Tom Peverelle
Paul Asbridge

Borodin – In the Steppes of Central Asia

Sibelius – The Swan of Tuonela

Borodin – Polovstian Dances

Sibelius – Symphony No 1

St John's Church, St John's Square, Wolverhampton

20th October 2001

Tchaikovsky – Music from The Nutcracker

Delius – La Calinda

Ravel – Mother Goose Suite

Anderson – Sleigh Ride

St Mary's Church, Albrighton

15th December 2001

Delius – Walk to the Paradise Garden

Copland – Appalachian spring

Mendelssohn – Symphony No 3 (Scottish)

Venue – to be advised

23rd March 2002

Shostakovitch – Symphony No 5

This programme will also include a violin concerto –
to be advised at the October concert

Venue – to be advised

29th June 2002

(Please note that the above details are provisional. If you require details confirming our next programme, please complete and return the enclosed slip. You will then be placed on our mailing list and will receive a reminder and confirmation of the concert nearer the event).

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 further details regarding membership or ticket prices,
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or call Richard Anderson on 01902 752755.