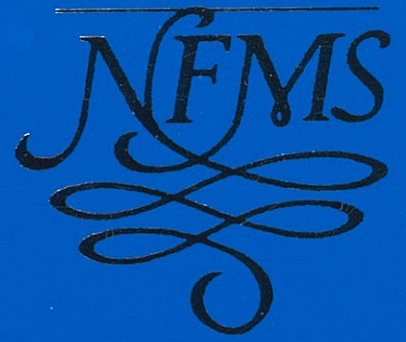


# PROGRAMME

108



NATIONAL - FEDERATION  
OF - MUSIC - SOCIETIES



Wolverhampton  
Symphony  
Orchestra



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108

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT  
AT  
ST JOHN'S CHURCH  
ST JOHN'S SQUARE  
WOLVERHAMPTON CITY CENTRE

SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2001

*PROGRAMME*

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In the Steppes of Central Asia.....Borodin  
The Swan of Tuonela.....Sibelius  
Polovtsian Dances.....Borodin

*INTERVAL*

Symphony No. 1.....Sibelius

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Conductor – Rachel Hyde

Leader – Ros Rayner

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### Borodin – In the Steppes of Central Asia

Borodin composed the symphonic sketch *In the Steppes of Central Asia* at great speed, and the work very quickly became popular in both Russia and Western Europe as a whole. At the debut performance at the Kononov Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1880, the programme notes described the work as follows:

“In the silence of the monotonous deserts of Central Asia are heard for the first time in the strains of a peaceful Russia song. From the distance we hear the approach of horses and camels and the melancholy notes of an oriental melody. A caravan emerges out of the boundless steppe, escorted by Russian soldiers and continues safely and fearlessly on its long way, protected by the formidable military power of the conquerors. It slowly disappears. The tranquil songs of conquerors and conquered merge in harmony, echoes of which linger on as the caravan disappears in the distance.”

The work opens with high, sustained notes on the flute, and harmonics on the first violins, giving a feeling of the space of the steppes. Far away in the distance, we hear the refrain of a Russian folk-song, the theme of the soldiers, followed by the sound of the approaching camel-train and horse-riders as they make their way through the desert. A second theme, heard on the cor anglais is oriental in character represents the song of the camel drivers. As the procession grows closer, the music becomes louder.

Eventually, as they move away, the songs of the soldiers and camel drivers intertwine and the music dies away as the caravan recedes into the distance.

The “tread of the camels” accompaniment returns, and there is a steady diminuendo as the Russian theme is played half speed on the first violins, and is similarly repeated on clarinet. As the “tread of the camels” dies away, we hear the harmonics of the first violins and the Russian theme is heard for the last time on the flute.

### Sibelius - The Swan of Tuonela

The Swan of Tuonela was originally intended to be included as part of a prologue to the opera *Veneen Luominen (The Creation of the Boat)*, but Sibelius did not complete the opera. In Finnish mythology, Tuonela is hell, or the land of death, and Tuoni the equivalent of God. Tuonela is surrounded by a large, black river down which the swan majestically floats, singing its song of death.

The swan is represented by a melancholy tune, played almost continually on the cor anglais, against a background of strings. No bright toned instruments, such as flutes, clarinets or trumpets are used, only the bass clarinet and horns later take up the three notes of the cor anglais melody in C major, which intensifies the feeling of gloom. As the swan’s song ends, the strings are given the final phrases of this work, described by Cecil Gray as “one of the most deeply poetic and imaginative things in modern music”.

### Borodin – Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*

Borodin worked on his opera *Prince Igor* for almost 20 years, and it was not finished when Borodin died in 1887. It was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov, and had its premiere at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1890. Much of the music was recycled from Borodin’s unfinished opera ballet *Mlada*, and the Polovtsian Dances appear in Act 2.

Based on the play by the Russian art and music critic Vladimir Vasil'yevich Stasov, the opera tells the story of the epic 12<sup>th</sup> Century conflict between the forces of Igor Sviatoslavich, Prince of Seversk, and the invading Polovtsians commanded by Khan Konchak. The *Polovtsian Dances* are performed to entertain Igor while he is being held prisoner by the Polovtsians, and capture the colour and atmosphere of the invaders’ camp. The dances are an energetic expression of folk melodies, probably originating from Hungary, although certainly containing some Oriental influences, and it is easy to imagine them being performed by dancers in their national costumes.

### Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) Symphony No 1 in E minor, Op 39

Andante ma non troppo-Allegro energico

Andante ma non troppo lento

Scherzo: allegro

Finale (quasi una fantasia)-andante-allegro molto

Sibelius embarked on the composition of his first symphony during the spring of 1898. Almost exactly one year later, on 28 April 1899, Sibelius himself directed the symphony’s hugely successful Helsinki premiere.

A lonely clarinet solo intones the symphony’s winding motto theme, the source from which much of the subsequent material in the work ultimately evolves. This very Tchaikovskian device suggests comparisons with the Russian master’s Fourth and Fifth Symphonies; similarly the brooding melancholy of much of the slow movement can perhaps be attributed to the deep-rooted impression that the *Pathétique* Symphony made on the emerging Finnish composer. (“There is much in that man that I recognise in myself,” he wrote to his wife Aino during this period.)

Introduction over, we are launched into an exciting *Allegro energico*. Of particular note are the fearsome dynamic contrasts between snarling, brass-dominated outbursts and passages of chamber-like intimacy in the development section, and the compelling drive and the recapitulation. The whole movement represents a genuinely exciting achievement, surely the most irrefutable evidence yet to Sibelius’s enormous symphonic potential.

Following this remarkable opening movement, the ensuing *Andante* casts a poignant spell. Again, it is the shadow of Tchaikovsky which looms large over the wistfully grave main theme heard at the outset; later, first solo cello and then horn are given entrancing solos. The pounding *Scherzo* which follows is an invigorating, rumbustious affair, incorporating, by way of a most agreeable contrast, a central Trio section memorably endowed with a rustic, innocent bliss.

Labelled *Quasi una fantasia*, the finale is a thrilling and passionate essay, not least the noble second subject and its glorious final presentation. The symphony closes in a mood of implacable defiance, and, with two exhausted string pizzicati (harking back to the end of the first movement), the burning candle of Sibelius’s hot-blooded inspiration is finally snuffed out.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2001/2002 SEASON

**Violin 1**

Ros Rayner  
Jessica Barnett  
Vicci Cox  
Violetta Davis  
Rhiannon Taylor  
Jo Jordan  
Anna Gomberg  
Lindsey Buster

**Double Bass**

John Mason

**Horns**

Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper  
Hazel Whitefoot  
Richard Waring

**Flute**

Di Manasseh  
Heather Lancaster  
Allison Birch

**Trumpets**

Ben Palmer  
Chris Cumming

**Violin 2**

Terri Bethel  
Jenny Bailey  
Michael Clement  
Ken Hawkins  
Margaret Myatt  
Philip Ward  
Andrew Clothier

**Oboes**

Richard Anderson  
Rachel Orotayo

**Trombones**

Laurence Hopper  
Ian Bourne

**Cor Anglais**

Richard Anderson

**Bass Trombone**

Don Howard

**Clarinet**

Di Cotterell  
Lynn Curtis

**Tuba**

Chris Pearson

**Viola**

David Cope  
Sharon Bayley  
Philip Turley  
Alan Anderton  
Steve Hugh

**Timpani**

Debbie James

**Bassoon**

Jill Sparke  
Doug Servant

**Percussion**

Neil Muir  
Philippa Cormell

**Cello**

Jo Bell  
Margaret Bell  
Sheila Moore  
Julie Robertson  
Tim Forster  
Louise Lawrie  
Fay Pemberton  
Andrew Perry

**Harp**

Eleri Darkins

Tchaikovsky – Music from The Nutcracker

Delius – La Calinda

Ravel – Mother Goose Suite

Anderson – Sleigh Ride

**St Mary's Church, Albrighton**

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2001**

Delius – Walk to the Paradise Garden

Copland – Appalachian spring

Mendelssohn – Symphony No 3 (Scottish)

**Venue – to be advised**

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2002**

Shostokovitch – Symphony No 5

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

**Venue – to be advised**

**29<sup>th</sup> 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.