

114

PROGRAMME



**Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra**



**Making
Music**
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF MUSIC SOCIETIES

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ALBRIGHTON

SATURDAY 28th JUNE 2003

PROGRAMME

Danse Macabre Saint-Saëns
España Chabrier
Le Chasseur Maudit César Franck

INTERVAL

Symphony in D Minor César Franck

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

The orchestra is managed by a committee consisting of the Musical Director and leader, plus members elected by the orchestra. It is financed through concert receipts and by an annual subscription paid

by the members. It is also affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies.

Rachel Hyde

Rachel Hyde was born in 1977 and began lessons on her first musical instrument at the age of seven. 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 where 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 Principal Conductor of Sandwell Sinfonia 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 Scheherzade by Rimsky-Korsakov. She particularly enjoys working with soloists, having conducted concerto performances including the Beethoven and Bruch violin concertos, the Mendelssohn D minor Concerto, Weber's first Clarinet Concerto and the 2nd Horn Concerto of Mozart. Rachel remains an active instrumentalist, playing for Chandos Symphony Orchestra, Clent Festival Chamber and the Midland Youth Orchestra among others. Rachael was appointed conductor of Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra in July 2000, and looks forward to guiding the orchestra in its musical future.

Danse Macabre

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris in 1835. He was a gifted pianist and was organist at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris for twenty years. He is chiefly remembered for his symphonic poems and for his opera *Samson et Dalila*.

Danse Macabre is the most popular of his works, inspired by Henri Cazali's poem on the dance of the dead on Halowe'en. The following is a free translation of the poem:

"Moonbeams break fitfully through the ragged clouds. Twelve heavy strokes sound from the bell in the church tower. As the last stroke dies away, strange sounds are heard from the graveyard, and the light of the moon falls on a ghastly figure: it is Death, sitting on a tombstone, tuning his fiddle. Shrieks are heard from the graves around and the wind howls through the bare tree-tops.

The sinister notes of Death's mistuned violin call the dead forth from their graves, and clad in white shrouds, they flutter around in a demoniacal dance. The quiet of the churchyard is rent by hollow cries and horrible laughter. Wilder and wilder race the rattling skeletons round the figure of Death, as he beats time with his clacking skeleton foot.

Suddenly, as if seized by a terrible suspicion, they stop. In the icy wind, Death's notes cannot be heard. A tremor runs through the ranks of the dead. The grinning skulls are turned, as if listening, towards the pale moon. There is a sad interlude as a couple, killed on their wedding night, dance out a tragic memory of their once happy times.

But Death's goading notes once more shatter the silence, and once again the dead hurl themselves into the dance, wilder than before. The howling wind joins the ghastly choir, and moans in the bare linden trees. Suddenly Death stops his playing. In the stillness that follows is heard the sound of a cock

crowing. The dead scurry back to their graves, and the weird vision fades away in the light of dawn."

España

Alexis Emmanuel Chabrier (1841 - 1894)

Chabrier was born at Ambert in the Puy-de-Dôme departement of the Auvergne. He took music lessons while studying law. For eighteen years he worked for the Ministry of the Interior in Paris before devoting himself entirely to composition. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Wagner and some of his works show Wagner's influence.

The vivacious orchestral rhapsody *España* copies very adroitly the style and rhythm of Spanish dance music, including the malagueña and the jota.

Le Chasseur Maudit

César Franck ((1822 - 1890)

César Franck was born in Liège, and was a child prodigy who as a young boy made many public appearances as a pianist. He moved to Paris in 1835 and enrolled at the Conservatoire where he impressed his teachers with his virtuosity at the piano. In 1858 he was appointed organist at the church of Sainte-Clotilde and began to write organ music. He later became a successful professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire. However success as a composer proved elusive. Although he had written a number of oratorios, two operas and some tone poems, it was not until his later years that he came to write his greatest music. He died from injuries suffered in an omnibus accident a year after the premiere of his symphony. Today he is regarded with greater affection by the public than he ever received in his lifetime.

Like many saintly people, Franck was fascinated by conceptual imaginings of the devil. Living in a culture far less attuned to religious

portrayals of evil spirits, it is difficult to relate to the reality of evil as felt by people a century or more ago. However, in *Le Chasseur Maudit (The Accursed Huntsman)*, Franck luridly describes the scene in all of its horror. Whether we like it or not, the listener is compelled to believe in the sinister fate of the protagonist in this drama. The tale is based on a ballad by Gottfried. The published score contains the story:

"It is Sunday morning. In the distance are heard the joyous pealing of bells and the sacred chanting of worshippers. What desecration! The wild Count of the Rhine sounds his hunting horn! The chase goes on over grain fields, moors, and prairies. 'Hold on, Count, I pray thee: listen to the pious chants!' 'No!' and the rider rushes on like a whirlwind. Suddenly, the Count is alone. His horse cannot move, nor his horn any longer give forth a sound. A grim, pitiless voice curses him: 'Desecrator!' it says, 'be thou forever pursued by the Evil One!' The flames blaze up on all sides. The Count, mad with terror and pursued by a pack of demons, flees ever faster and faster - across the abysses by day and through the sky by night."

INTERVAL

Symphony in D minor
César Franck (1822 – 1890)

After the main theme, in D minor, has been presented slowly at the outset, the same theme comes more urgently at the tempo of an allegro. The slow tempo returns, but this time switches the theme to F minor, and a resumed allegro likewise adopts that key, then changing to F major for a smooth, song-like tune on the strings, leading to an ardently proclaimed theme – the so-called ‘motive of faith’, on the full orchestra, with trumpets conspicuous. After the expected development, the end of the movement again brings back the opening theme in slow, then in fast tempo, though with a different key-sequence. The motive of faith, even more ardent, rings out in D major. But there is more to come, the conclusion being given to the original opening theme and a glowing, final D major chord.

The second movement displays the cor anglais as soloist in a gently, evenly measured tune in B flat minor; a sequel in the major key is heard on the violins. Then, though the beat remains the same, the music appears to move faster: a winding triplet motion is set up by the violins, and soon a new tune issues from the clarinets. Returning, the cor anglais theme is combined with the other material.

The third and final movement has a sweeping onward drive. Its march-like song in D major may remind us of the song of joy in the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Later, the cor anglais solo from the middle movement returns, and after a development it returns yet again. There is also a reappearance of the motive of faith from the first movement and a version of the first theme from that movement. Nevertheless, it is the march-like song which, led by trumpets, ends the symphony.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jessica Barnett
Barbara Bostock
David Harvey
Rhiannon Taylor

Violin 2

Terri Bethel
Michael Clement
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Frances Walton

Viola

Aimee Bryett
Ruth Hewitt
Jen Humphreys

Cello

Jo Bell
Margaret Bell
Glyn Davies
Sheila Moore
Julie Robertson

Double Bass

Oliver Bouckley
Michael Taylor

Flute

Diana Manasseh
Louisa Mills
Jane Eminson

Piccolo

Jane Eminson

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo
Tony Evans

Cor Anglais

Richard Anderson

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis
Graham Hobbs

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Doug Servant
Jan Riley

Horns

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Sara Shepherd
Richard Waring

Trombones

Linda Washington
Mike Griffiths

Bass Trombone

Don Howard

Trumpets

Chris Cumming
Tom Shevlin

Cornet

Frank Stubbs
Steve Bailey

Tuba

Becky Heywood

Timpani

Debbie Childs

Percussion

Ruth Samuels
Richard Draper
Tom Peverelle
James Souter

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
2003 - 2004

18th October 2003, St. Mary's Church, Albrighton

Tchaikovsky – *Serenade for Strings*
Tchaikovsky – *Polonaise and Waltz from Eugene Onegin*
Wagner – *Prelude to Act 1, Lohengrin*
Dvořák – *Slavonic Dances 1 – 8 Opus 46*

10th January 2004 (venue to be decided)

Copland – *Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo*
Dvořák – *Romance*
Smetana – *Vltava*
Dvořák – *Symphony No. 8*

27th March 2004 (venue to be decided)

Liszt – *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*
Rachmaninov – *The Isle of the Dead*
Shostakovich – *Symphony No. 10*

26th June 2004 (venue to be decided)

Mozart – *Overture, Don Giovanni*
Elgar – *Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)*
Brahms – *Symphony No. 1*

(Please note that the above details are provisional)



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,
please visit our website at www.listen.to/wso
or call Richard Anderson on 01902 752755