

PROGRAMM



Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra



WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
ALBRIGHTON

SATURDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2004

PROGRAMME

Shostakovich Excerpts from "The Gadfly" Suite

Richard Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1

INTERVAL

Berlioz Symphony Fantastique

Conductor - Peter Morris
Leader - Ros Rayner
Soloist - John Davy

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

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

Peter Morris

Peter Morris lives in Wolverhampton and is the founder conductor of Junction 10 Orchestra. He began his career as a cathedral chorister in Chester and Manchester, went to Chetham's School in Manchester and read music at Durham University.

He came to the Midlands as Director of Music at Bluecoat School, Walsall, from 1969 until 1991 and held the same post at St. Peter's School, Wolverhampton from 1991 - 1997. He left St. Peter's School to look after his young family, but has since accumulated a variety of roles. He has conducted Walsall Choral Society for 27 years, is Director of the National Schools Symphony Orchestra, Borough Organist for Walsall, Acting Director of Music at St. Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton and Chair of the Lichfield Diocese for the Royal School of Church Music. He is also principal examiner for A-level and GCSE General Studies and an A-level Music examiner. In 2000/1 he was awarded the medaille d'honneur of the French National Association of Music and a Master's degree at Keele University.

John Davy

John Davy was born in Kettering in 1979 and graduated from Trinity College of Music. He has played with several orchestras and was the original principal horn with Junction 10 Orchestra. He is establishing a fine reputation as a soloist and teacher.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)
"The Gadfly" Suite (Excerpts)

Dmitri Shostakovich, born in St. Petersburg, was the most important Russian composer of the day. His First Symphony won immediate favour, but his subsequent career in Russia varied with the political climate. The initial success of his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* was followed by official condemnation, emanating apparently from Stalin himself. In 1948 he fell foul of the official musical establishment with a Ninth Symphony, thought to be frivolous, but enjoyed the relative freedom following the death of Stalin in 1953.

Writing for films provided a lifeline for Shostakovich and his family in the late 1940s and early 1950s - a vital source of income when his major works were no longer being performed.

The Gadfly (1955) differed from the majority of films for which he wrote music during this time: it is not a Russian patriotic epic, but a tragic-romantic-heroic-weepee based on a novel by Ethel Voynich set in Austrian-occupied Italy during the nineteenth century.

The gadfly of the title is Arthur, an agitator for Italian independence. In his youth he unwittingly betrayed a fellow conspirator. Furiously rejected by Gemma, whom he loves, he discovers at the same time that Montanelli, the priest who had brought him up, is in fact his father. Ashamed and disillusioned, he disappears and it is assumed that he has committed suicide. Thirteen years later, under the name of Rivarez, he returns to the struggle for independence. He is wounded and captured by the Austrians, attempts unsuccessfully to escape, and after a final interview with Montanelli is executed by firing squad. Montanelli is overcome with remorse and Gemma realises too late that she has always loved him. Shostakovich responded to this story with a big, romantic style for the dramatic numbers, a nineteenth-century melancholy redolent of Tchaikovsky for the more reflective numbers,

and also with lively and witty numbers depicting the vivid Italian background.

1. *Overture* is based on a theme of dignity and energy which frames the whole work and returns in the Finale.
2. *Contredance* contains a waltz with more than a touch of Vienna.
3. *National Holiday* begins with a very energetic clarinet theme - suggested as a Russian view of Italian gaiety.
4. *Waltz* has some beautiful, slightly tongue-in-cheek melodies and orchestration.
5. The *Galop* is lively and rumbustuous.
6. *Romance* - A solo violinist sets out a beautiful tune which the orchestra picks up.
7. *Finale*

Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)
Horn Concerto No. 1

Richard Strauss was born in Munich, the son of Franz Joseph Strauss, the cantankerous first horn-player of the Munich Court Orchestra, and his long-suffering wife Josepha.

As a child he was reared on his father's preferred repertoire, the classics of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Spohr. He composed copiously from the age of six. He went briefly to university, but had no formal tuition in composition.

Strauss started to compose his First Horn Concerto in 1882. It was to be a gift for his father's sixtieth birthday. It was completed the following year and received its first performance at Menningen on 4th March 1885 with Gustav Leinhos as soloist and Hans von Bülow conducting.

It is a short work in three linked movements, notable for its flowing melodies and neat orchestration. It reveals a new confidence in the

handling of musical structure. Strauss dispenses with sonata form and gives the work cohesion by deriving the buoyant theme of the final *Rondo* from the Concerto's introductory flourish and by devising other thematic cross-references between sections. Uncertainty persists as to his intentions in this Concerto, but it seems most likely that he conceived the solo part for a valve horn in F, while the orchestral horns were natural instruments using E-flat crooks.

INTERVAL

Hector Berlioz (1803 - 1869)
Symphony Fantastique

Berlioz was born at La Côte St. André, among the mountains near Grenoble. His father, a doctor, wanted him to follow him into the profession and sent him to the École de Médecine in Paris. However after two years Berlioz abandoned his medical studies and, despite parental opposition, entered the Paris Conservatoire where he learnt composition.

Also entitled "*Episode in the Life of an Artist*," this first symphony was one of the most original and fanciful works of the 19th century. It describes the romantic tale of a young artist meeting a woman, his unreciprocated love, and the eventual tragic consequences.

The following notes were written by Berlioz for the first performance of the symphony in 1830. His intention was to give the audience an outline of the tale depicted by the music.

Reveries-Passions

I take as my subject an artist blessed with sensibility and a lively imagination ... who meets a woman who awakens in him for the first

time his heart's desire. He falls desperately in love with her. Curiously, the image of his beloved is linked inseparably with a musical idea representing her graceful and noble character. This *idée fixe* haunts him throughout the symphony.

A Ball

The artist attends a ball, but the gaiety and festive tumult fails to distract him. The *idée fixe* returns to torture him further.

Scene in the Country

Alone in the country on a summer's evening, the artist hears two distant herdsmen calling to each other in a *franz des vaches* (an alphorn melody of the Swiss Alps). Their pastoral duet, the rustle of wind in the trees, and the hope that his beloved might yet be his, all lull him into a reverie, but the *idée fixe* returns in his dreams. His heart palpitates and he experiences dread premonitions. The sun sets, there is thunder in the distance, then solitude and silence.

March to the Guillotine

In despair the artist attempts to commit suicide by taking an overdose of opium, but the drug, too weak to prove fatal, instead induces fearsome dreams. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, is condemned to death, and is being taken for execution. The *idée fixe* floats into his mind, only to be terminated by the fall of the blade.

Dream of a Witches' Sabbath

The artist at a Witches' Sabbath hears again the *idée fixe*, but now transformed into a brazen and trivial dance. She has come to witness his burial! Later comes a monstrous parody of the Dies Irae. The dance of the witches is combined with the Dies Irae.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Susan Bellingham
Barbara Bostock
David Harvey
Jo Jordan
Vanessa Owen
Corinne Wright
Sarah Wynne

Violin 2

Sharleen Samuels
Ken Hawkins
Richard Lane
Fabienne Milhavy
Margaret Myatt
David Naylor
Charlotte Round
Frances Walton
Philip Ward

Viola

David Cope
Alain Anderton
Sharon Bayley
Christine Henderson
Steve Hugh
Philip Turley

Cello

Jo Stubbs
Margaret Bell
Josie Bradford
Rosie Evans
Tim Forster
Roger Hides
Sheila Moore
Julie Robertson

Double Bass

David Taylor
David Evans
Wendy Waldock

Flute

Di Manasseh
Kathryn Baker

Piccolo

Jane Eminson

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Rachel Oratayo

Cor Anglais

Rachel Oratayo

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis
Nikki Loveridge

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Doug Servant
Teddy Harman
Janet Riley

Horn

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Sarah Shepherd
Jill Brittel

Trombone

Laurence Hopper
Joe Cooper

Bass Trombone

Don Howard

Trumpet

Chris Gasson
Phil Berry
Anthony Pepper
Chris Cumming

Cornet

Chris Cumming

Tuba

Dave Heywood
Mike Griffiths

Timpani

Debbie Childs

Percussion

Andy Chapman
Ian Richards
Drew White

Harp

Stephanie Roberts

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2005

5th March 2005, Centre Stage, Graisleys, Wolverhampton

Beethoven – *Overture Leonora No. 3*

Beethoven – *Piano Concerto No. 3*

Beethoven – *Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral)*

2nd July 2005, Histons Hill, Codsall

Gershwin – *Rhapsody in Blue*

Bernstein – *Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"*

Gershwin – *An American in Paris*

Barber – *Adagio for Strings*

Copland – *Clarinet Concerto*

(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,
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