

PROGRAMME

123.
18/3/06.



**Making
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OF MUSIC SOCIETIES

**Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra**



123

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
CRANMER METHODIST CHURCH,
NEWHAMPTON ROAD WEST,
WOLVERHAMPTON

SATURDAY 18th March 2006

PROGRAMME

Modest Musorgsky (arr.
Rimsky-Korsakov)

Night on the Bare Mountain

Sergey Rakhmaninov

*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for
Piano and Orchestra*

INTERVAL

Dmitry Shostakovich

Symphony No 1 in F minor

Conductor - Peter Morris
Leader - Ros Rayner

Solo Piano - Sothie Paul-Duraisamy

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 extends 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 Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies).

Peter Morris

Peter Morris, who has been our Musical Director since 2004, 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 until 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 since 1977, is Borough Organist at Walsall Town Hall, Director of Music at St. Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton and the founder conductor of Junction 10 Orchestra. He is also principal examiner for A-level and GCSE General Studies and an A-level Music examiner. In 2000-2001 he was awarded the Medaille d'Honneur of the French National Association of Music and a Master's degree at Keele University. He lives in Wolverhampton.

Sothie Paul-Duraisamy

Sothie Paul-Duraisamy graduated from the Royal College of Music, London, where she studied piano under Angus Morrison and singing under Veronica Mansfield. While there, she won an Exhibition (scholarship) and the Borwick prize. She furthered her musical studies at the Koninklijk Conservatorium, The Hague (Netherlands), where she did the "C" recital diploma (piano) under Jan de Man, and played as soloist at their annual concert, Edo de Waard conducting. She has performed in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Trinidad, England, Perth (Australia), Capetown (S.Africa), Holland and Washington DC, and conducted choirs in Trinidad, Malaysia, Holland and Washington DC.

Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881)

Night on the Bare Mountain (arr. N. Rimsky-Korsakov)

For this work, Musorgsky drew on the traditional celebrations surrounding Midsummer Night which, according to Slavic folk legends, pre-Christian Ukrainians celebrated as a fertility festival to the god Kupalo to assure a good harvest. When the Christian church arrived, it generally tried to eradicate pagan festivals of this sort, but in this instance it allowed the solstice traditions to be subsumed into the Feast of the Nativity of St. John (Ivan) the Baptist, which occurred about the same time in the church calendar. The very name of the new combined celebration, Ivana Kupala, reflects this hybrid origin. The occasion was generally joyous but also had an ominous underbelly. On Midsummer Night water nymphs tried to lure the unwary to their deaths in lakes and rivers, and all manner of frightening and dangerous supernatural beings cavorted about the forests. Much of this activity centered on the Bare Mountain, where demons and sorcerers gathered in orgiastic frenzy, with their leader, the satanic Chernobog, who often took the form of a black goat.

The inspiration for Musorgsky's "St. John's Night on Bald Mountain" came from the witches' Sabbath in Nikolai Gogol's story "St. John's Eve". In 1860, Musorgsky wrote to his mentor, the composer Balakirev saying "I have received an extremely interesting commission, which I must prepare for next summer. It is this: a whole act to take place on Bald Mountain — a witches' Sabbath, separate episodes of sorcerers, a solemn march for all in this nastiness, a finale — the glorification of the Sabbath in which Mengden introduces the commander of the whole festival on Bald Mountain. The libretto is very good. I already have some material for it; it may turn out to be a very good thing."

On July 12, 1867, Musorgsky wrote to his colleague Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov telling him that he had finished writing "St. John's Night on Bald Mountain", and acknowledged his indebtedness to certain passages of Rimsky-Korsakov's scores. However, he continued to revise

the work and it was not heard until 1886, five years after the composer's death, when it was given in a new orchestral revision by Rimsky-Korsakov. Rimsky-Korsakov's well-intentioned posthumous revisions of several of Musorgsky's works have been criticized, particularly for "civilizing" the native coarseness of Musorgsky's style. In particular, whereas the ending of Musorgsky's original is violent and orgiastic, Rimsky-Korsakov's version ends quietly with the witches "melting away" with the arrival of dawn. Nevertheless, for better or worse, Rimsky-Korsakov's is the version that is almost always played today and that which we shall play tonight.

Sergey Rakhmaninov (1873-1943)

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra

Rakhmaninov composed this popular work in 1934 as a set of 24 variations on Paganini's Caprice in A minor for solo violin. This particular Paganini Caprice is possibly one of the most popular sources for variations, attracting the interest of composers as diverse as Brahms and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Nevertheless Rakhmaninov's work must surely be the most enduring of these. The work dates from the last creative period of his life and reveals a more invigorating pungent bite to his harmonies, a new urgency in rhythmic thrust and a spareness in scoring which contrasts with many of his earlier works, such as the Second Piano Concerto. Some consider it to be his finest concerto work.

The variations can be divided roughly into three sections - the first ten are mainly quick, variations 11 to 18 are predominantly slow while variations 19 to 24 are lively throughout - thus coinciding loosely with the three movements of a concerto.

The basic outline of the theme in Variation I precedes the theme itself and bears a resemblance to the famous Dies Irae theme. The florid Variation 2 with its cadenza-like passages, effects a modulation from A minor to D minor for the next two variations and then to F major.

Variations 7-10 are dominated by the Dies Irae. We arrive in D flat major by Variation 18 (the culmination of the middle section) for one of the most delectably lyrical of all Rakhmaninov's melodies, ingeniously based on a free inversion of Paganini's theme. From Variation 19 we are back in A minor. The rhythmic impetus and tempo gradually increase until the final variation where the Dies Irae is re-stated in a dramatic recapitulation.

INTERVAL

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

Symphony No 1 in F minor

1. *Allegretto - Allegro non troppo*
2. *Scherzo: Allegro*
3. *Lento*
4. *Lento - Allegro molto*

Written for the composer's graduation from Leningrad Conservatory (as it was then known), Shostakovich's First Symphony received its première under Nikolai Malko on 12 May 1926, when the composer was only 19. Shostakovich's technical mastery is already abundantly in evidence in the symphony which, although showing influences of some of his contemporaries such as Stravinsky and Bartok, also shows glimpses of what is to follow in his later symphonies.

The first movement is characterized by the irresponsible clowning of the first subject on clarinet, embodying a devil-may-care attitude that is relieved but not dispelled by the enchanting waltz-like second subject on flute and other prominent woodwinds. Hints of stress invade the development as the chamber-like sonorities give way to an angry percussive outburst that is abruptly replaced by a return to the waltz in the most innocuous F major. The full tumult of the orchestra is not to be so easily thwarted, however, so the movement, unable to find a solution to its problems, simply disassociates itself from them and goes away.

A similar mood of inoffensive fooling characterises the Scherzo at first, a piano entering for the first time to marshal the material and confirm a direction. Brilliant flashes of orchestration are suddenly swept aside by a chant-like Trio section for woodwind over an ambiguous rhythm, but the Scherzo accelerates back and throws back its head in an exhilarating homeward dash, only for the music to be crushed with three shattering chords on solo piano.

The third movement is a tragic affair in D flat major, oboe and cello pleading for solace amid the brooding string harmonies. At the entry of trumpets and drums with a powerful military phrase, the music becomes disturbed, only to settle again for an even more soulful oboe solo. The military motif becomes ever more prominent but, having established its hold on the music, it withdraws in favour of melting clarinet and violin solos before taking charge once more, even to the extent of invading the delicate mist into which the movement disappears.

It is a mist which is abruptly torn aside by the Finale as it enters rudely, only to stand as if confused, awaiting an order. Flutes, oboes and clarinets attempt to shape a melody but order finally comes as two clarinets announce a running theme reinforced by piano. Eventually a viable melody emerges, and as it does so the clamour of the orchestra ceases so that the melody may be heard on solo violin. The development exults in the strength of this melody and impels it towards a great and overpowering victory. At full speed the music turns a corner and there, standing stark and fearful, is the destructive rhythm of the slow movement, but now inverted and on solo timpani. Behind it, like reinforcements, stand two other statements of it, effectively preventing progress. A solo cello offers the great melody as a kind of sacrifice, but without effect: having supervened so imperiously, the military motif dictates the rest of the movement.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1 Ros Rayner (<i>Leader</i>) Anthonia Boden Jonathan Harper David Harvey Jo Jordan Vanessa Owen Rhiannon Taylor Sarah Wynne	Cello Margaret Bell Rosie Evans Roger Hides Sheila Moore Julie Robertson Helen Woolley	Horns Percy Cotterell Robin Hopper Sara Shepherd Jill Brittle
Violin 2 Jenny Bailey Ken Hawkins Kate Lorimer Fabienne McAllister Margaret Myatt Ann Perry Charlotte Round Frances Walton Philip Ward Corinne Wright	Double Bass David Charlesworth Robert Crawford Tony Mortimer David Taylor	Trumpets Chris Cumming Anthony Pepper Jenny Holt
Viola Alain Anderton David Cope Helen Hogarth LaToya Rose Philip Turley Simon Twyford	Flute Di Manasseh Jane Coxon Jane Eminson	Trombones Laurence Hopper Joe Cooper Mark Wilkes
	Oboe Richard Anderson Rachel Orotayo	Tuba Joe Barnett
	Cor Anglais Tony Evans	Timpani Huw Thomas
	Clarinet Di Cotterell Lynn Curtis	Percussion Drew White Ian Richards
	Bassoon Jill Sparke Douglas Servant	Harp Stephanie Roberts
		Piano Robert Cracknell

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TWO FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Thursday 6th April 2006

In the Main Hall, Wolverhampton College, Paget Road
Wolverhampton

PROGRAMME

Vivaldi - *"Spring" from the Four Seasons* (soloist - Ros Rayner)
Carl Davis - *"Pickwick Papers"*, Suite for 13 wind instruments
Mozart - *Adagio from the Flute Quartet in D* (soloist - Di Manasseh)
Holst - *St. Paul's Suite for string orchestra*
Mozart - *Finale from the Serenade in B flat for 13 wind instruments*
Carl Jenkins - *"Palladio" for string orchestra*
Schubert - *Symphony No. 5 in B flat major*

Saturday 8th July 2006

At St. John's Church, Wolverhampton

PROGRAMME

Rimsky Korsakov - *Capriccio Espagnol*
Schumann - *Conzertstück for Four Horns*
(soloists - the John Davey Horn Quartet)
Elgar - *Wand of Youth Suites*
John McCabe - *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Suite*



Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra
is affiliated to
Making Music
(formerly the National Federation of Music Societies)
which represents and supports
amateur vocal, instrumental and
promoting services throughout the
United Kingdom

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or e-mail us at info@wolsymorc.org.uk
or call Richard Anderson on 01902 752755

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