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PROGRAMMI



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**Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra**



WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT
AT
St. PETER'S COLLEGIATE CHURCH
WOLVERHAMPTON

SATURDAY 8th March 2008

PROGRAMME

- | | |
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| Weber | <i>Overture "Der Freischütz"</i> |
| William Lloyd Webber | <i>Serenade for Strings</i> |
| Joe Cooper | <i>"The Wanderer", a Fantasia for
Orchestra (conducted by the
composer)</i> |

INTERVAL

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Dvořák | <i>Symphony No. 7 in D Minor</i> |
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Conductor - Peter Morris
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 to 55 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). Recently, in addition to its normal programme of full orchestral concerts, the orchestra has performed a number of chamber concerts

where groups of players from the orchestra have performed works in a more informal lighter vein, and most recently, has presented a "Last Night of the Proms" style concert with Walsall Choral Society in Walsall Town Hall.

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 - Musical Director

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 was the founder conductor of the former 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.

Ros Rayner - Leader

Ros studied the violin at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst there she joined the British Youth Symphony Orchestra. Following her PGCE she taught in Bracknell for four years. She moved to Wolverhampton and was appointed leader of the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra in 1996. She now teaches at the Wolverhampton Girls' High School, and tutors the first violins in the Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra.

Joe Cooper - Composer and Conductor of "The Wanderer"

Joe began his musical life as a chorister in the choir of St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton where he was appointed head chorister and obtained the St Nicholas Award from the Royal School of Church Music. He continued to also become a lay clerk and organ scholar. Joe studied at St Peter's Collegiate School where he achieved one of the top five marks for GCSE music in the country, as well as touring Europe and America with the school band and the Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra, which he conducted on their last tours to Italy and Estonia. After leaving school Joe is currently on a gap year but working as a freelance musician. He was appointed the director of music at St Bartholomew's Wolverhampton, where he maintains the choral tradition, and assistant director of music of the City of Wolverhampton Choir. He also works conducting school choirs, amateur orchestras and theatre groups around Wolverhampton. Music has always been a great passion of Joe's, particularly the aspects of composing and conducting. He is thrilled that the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra wants to perform "The Wanderer", and hopes to pursue his love of composing during his musical career.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

Overture to the Opera "Der Freischütz"

The opera "Der Freischütz" was composed in 1819-1820, and is especially famous for being the first purely German opera in subject and treatment. The libretto was written by Friedrich Kind, and is based upon a German legend by Apel. The story of the opera is roughly as follows. Max, the lover of Agatha, daughter of Kuno, can only win her hand by victory in a shooting contest. Caspar, also a lover of Agatha, who has sold himself to the fiend Zamiel for some unerring bullets cast under magic influences, conspires to deliver Max to the fiend instead of himself. Max loses his skill in shooting and having been defeated by Kilian, abandons all hope. While in this despondent mood, Caspar induces him to cast the magic bullets in the hope of propitiating Zamiel. Max succeeds well with six of his bullets and fires the seventh at a dove flying past. As he fires, Agatha appears to him as the dove, and he fancies he has killed her, but Zamiel has directed the shot to the heart of Caspar and claims his victim, while Max is rewarded with the hand of Agatha.

The overture opens with an impressive Adagio, followed by a beautiful horn quartet, which has no connection with the opera. This is followed by music representing Zamiel and Caspar - tremolos in the strings, weird tones in the clarinet, and drum beats. This leads to an Allegro, taken from Max's scene. Short passage work follows, leading to the Incantation music in full orchestra, in which the composer reaches the supreme height of wild, weird, and almost supernatural music. A beautiful contrast follows in the clarinet, which takes up the aria sung by Agatha when she meets her lover. This continues until phrases of the Incantation music break in again. Once more the beautiful Agatha theme is introduced, leading to a free fantasia based upon fragments of the "Incantation". This leads to the third section of the overture, which opens with the first theme, followed by phrases from Max's aria. At its conclusion, phrases from the introduction reappear, and a decrescendo leads to the Coda, which begins with a fortissimo chord in full orchestra, followed after a brief transition by a second. A short pause ensues, after which the full

orchestra sings a phrase from the superb Agatha aria. The development of the second theme rises to a climax, which closes the overture.

William Lloyd Webber (1914-1982)

Serenade for Strings

1. *Barcarolle*
2. *Romance*
3. *Elegy*

Though William Lloyd Webber, father of Andrew and Julian, was dedicated in his career as a church organist and teacher, he was, behind that façade, an arch-romantic. Throughout his composing career his style remained consistent, unashamedly eclectic, combining English pastoral elements with passages of surging passion using luscious harmonies after Rachmaninov.

The Serenade for Strings emerges as an integrated piece, even though the three movements were originally written at quite different times and for different combinations of instruments. The opening "Barcarolle", written in 1951, started life as a song called "Moon Silver", telling the story of an enchanted boat which gave children good dreams. The central "Romance", written in 1980, is the emotional core of the work, and one of the composer's favourite works. The final "Elegy" was written in 1960, originally as a horn study for his famous son Andrew to play as a student.

Joe Cooper

"The Wanderer", a Fantasia for Orchestra

"The Wanderer" is a piece inspired mainly by the composers of the early twentieth century in England. The middle section in particular could be compared to works by Vaughan Williams and Butterworth, the use of the Dorian mode really giving some of the melodies an English folk song feel. It is a piece of great contrast comparing the great harmonic and lyrical fluency of the middle section to the

bitonality and cross rhythms of the outer sections. The piece (written for the composer's A level course) tries to explore how two different modes, the Dorian and Lydian Modes, can be placed on top of each other and played with effect to produce false relations and uncertainty of direction. The primary motif of the piece is but a bar long but the clash of the thirds of the chord along with the sharpened fourth make its impact great and as it develops through the keys so does the colour of the orchestration.

INTERVAL

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony Number 7 in D Minor, Opus 70

1. *Allegro maestoso*
2. *Poco adagio*
3. *Scherzo: Vivace - Poco meno mosso*
4. *Finale: Allegro*

Five years elapsed between the composition of Dvořák's Sixth and Seventh Symphonies, but these were years of increasing fame and composing activity in other genres. Most important for Dvořák's international reputation was the extraordinary popularity that he enjoyed in London after Joseph Barnby introduced his Stabat Mater in 1883. He himself conducted the Stabat Mater and other works, including the Sixth Symphony, during a visit to London made in the spring of 1884 at the invitation of the Royal Philharmonic Society. Throughout his visit he was warmly fêted by the English, and not long after his return home, Dvořák learned that the Philharmonic Society had elected him a member; at the same time, the Society requested a new symphony.

Dvořák waited six months before starting to sketch out the symphony, and even then the composition involved more than his usual amount of preliminary work and later rewriting. No doubt he was consciously aiming to do his best not only for the English orchestra that requested

the work, but also for his mentor Johannes Brahms, whose Third Symphony, performed just a short time before, was both a challenge and an inspiration to him. Many writers consider the resulting symphony to be Dvořák's greatest single achievement, a work of powerful and varied moods, a nationalistic symphony that offers more than quaint touristy views of peasant dances, that offers, indeed, the highest degree of musical seriousness and refinement while still evoking Czech culture at every turn.

Though he had mentioned the symphony in progress to various friends all along, his publisher Simrock did not know of its existence until Dvořák wrote to him in February: *The new symphony has already occupied me for a long, long time, but it must be something respectable for I don't want to let Brahms down after his remark to me: "I imagine your symphony quite different from this one (the preceding symphony, in D major)." Simrock was not especially impressed, even when the première of the symphony in London, under the composer's direction, turned out to be a brilliant success. He insisted that symphonies never earn any money for the publisher and offered Dvořák only 3000 marks for the work, precipitating an argument that was not settled for months. (What Simrock really wanted - constantly - was ever more sets of Slavonic dances for piano four-hands; they sold like hotcakes.) Even when the dispute was settled during a personal meeting between publisher and composer, Simrock showed a lamentable lack of sensitivity to Dvořák's request for the title to be printed in Czech - or at least Czech and German - rather than in German only. He never did understand why the composer objected to having his first name Germanicised as "Anton" on all of his title pages.*

The symphony opens with a theme of deep Slavic foreboding, lyrical in character but built of motives that can serve as the germ for development. The first page of the final score contains a note in the composer's hand that reveals, "The main theme occurred to me when the festival train from Pest arrived at the State station in 1884." The theme certainly has little of the "festival" character, but the train in question (Dvořák loved everything about locomotives and frequently

memorized train schedules) brought dozens of anti-Hapsburg patriots to a National Theatre Festival in Prague, so it is likely that the Czech colorations in melody and harmony arose from his patriotic mood. Some of the transitional themes are related to ideas in his Hussite Overture, another recent patriotic score composed in memory of the 14th-century Czech religious reformer Jan Hus; they, too, no doubt arose from patriotic connections in Dvořák's mind. These stern reflections usher in a rocking, sunny secondary theme that contrasts strikingly with the other material. The concentration of both development and recapitulation make this one of Dvořák's densest symphonic movements in terms of sheer quantity of incident.

The Poco adagio begins with a square-cut melodic phrase that comes to its ordained end after eight bars, raising visions of a possible theme-and-variations form with a series of starts and stops. But immediately after the statement of that theme, the musical thought opens out to become increasingly chromatic and expressive in a movement filled with wonderful touches of poignancy and colorful elaboration in the orchestral writing.

The Scherzo is written in 6/4 time, but from the beginning there is an exhilarating conflict between the two beats per measure of 6/4 (in the accompaniment) and the three beats per measure of 3/2 that the ear perceives in the melody. This is, in fact, a furious, a characteristic Czech dance that plays especially on the various possible subdivisions of a six-beat pattern. Dvořák worked hard at the rhythmic lightness evident throughout this utterly delightful movement, so spontaneous in effect yet actually the result of much sketching and rewriting to achieve that bubbling effervescence.

In stark contrast, the Finale begins in a mood of tragedy - starting right from the intense opening phrase, the last three notes of which are repeated to begin a slow, hymnlike march—with vivid themes developed to a majestic close that only turns definitively to the major in the last bars.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)
Francis Bunch
Barbara Carter
Jonathan Harper
Jo Jordan
Kate Lorimer
Alice Rayner
Katie Swann

Violin 2

Corinne Wright
Jenny Bailey
Lucy Clarke
James Hamilton
Zoe Hunter-Grewal
Hilary Hurd
Fabienne McAllister
Margaret Myatt
David Naylor
Ann Perry
Sarah Wilson

Violas

David Cope
Alain Anderton
Elisabeth Barratt
Sharon Bayley
Philip Turley

'Cellos

Julie Robertson
Margaret Bell
Roger Hides
Sheila Moore
Kenneth Wilson
Helen Woolley

Double Basses
David Charlesworth
Robert Crawford

Flutes

Di Manasseh
Kate Russon

Oboes

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo

Clarinets

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis

Bassoons

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley

Horns

Sara Shepherd
Robin Hopper
Percy Cotterell
Jill Brittle

Trumpets

Chris Cumming
Jenny Holt

Trombones

Mike Griffiths
Alison Muir
Bernard Moses

Timpani

Corin McCann

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OUR NEXT CONCERT

*21st June 2008 at 7.30 pm - Cranmer Methodist Church,
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton*

Schubert - Rosamunde Overture

*Dvořák - Cello Concerto in B Minor (Soloist -
Edward Smith)*

Berwald - Sinfonie Singulière

(All details above are subject to change)



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

For further details regarding membership or ticket prices,
please visit our website at www.wolsymorc.org.uk
or e-mail us at info@wolsymorc.org.uk
or call Richard Anderson on 01902 752755

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