

134

# PROGRAMMI



**Wolverhampton  
Symphony  
Orchestra**



## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT  
AT  
ST MARY'S CHURCH,  
ALBRIGHTON,

SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> October 2008

## PROGRAMME

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Hamish MacCunn	<i>The Land of the Mountain and the Flood Concert Overture Op.3</i>
Handel	<i>The Cuckoo and the Nightingale Organ Concerto</i>
Vaughan Williams	<i>Folk Song Suite</i>

## INTERVAL

Saint-Saëns	<i>Symphony No. 3 in C minor, the 'Organ' Symphony</i>
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Conductor - Peter Morris  
Leader - Ros Rayner  
Solo Organ - Toby Barnard

## 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 - 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 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.

### **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.

### **Hamish MacCunn (1868 - 1916)**

*The Land of the Mountain and the Flood Concert Overture Op.3*

A Scottish romantic composer, MacCunn was born in Greenock, the son of a shipowner, and was educated at the Royal College of Music, where his teachers included Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford.

MacCunn's first success was with the overture *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* in 1887 at the Crystal Palace, and this was followed by other compositions, with a characteristic Scottish colouring. From 1888 to 1894 he was a professor at the Royal College of Music. In 1888, he married Alison Pettie, daughter of John Pettie, RA, who had painted MacCunn's portrait several times. They had one son. John Pettie was an enthusiastic musician, who helped MacCunn build up his career by organising concerts of his work. The production of his opera *Jeanie Deans* at Edinburgh, soon followed. He was for some years conductor to the Carl Rosa Opera company, and subsequently to other companies. His opera *Diarmid* was produced at Covent Garden in 1897. His other music includes cantatas, overtures, part-songs, instrumental pieces, and songs, all markedly Scottish in type. He had a genuine love of Scottish folksong, and although he lived in London he was a lifelong champion of Scottish music and of the country's musical life. A hectic programme of composing, conducting and teaching brought about a gradual deterioration in MacCunn's health, and he died aged only 48.

*The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* is an overture for orchestra, composed in 1887. Often cited as the archetypal Scottish overture, it is frequently likened to the works of Sir Walter Scott in its unashamedly lyrical, romantic view of the Scottish landscape. The title is in fact taken from Scott's 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel'.

After its first performance at Crystal Palace, George Bernard Shaw said witheringly of it:

"Mr MacCunn's *Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, a charming Scotch overture that carries you over the hills and far away, was much applauded. I object, by the bye, to the "working out" section, which Mr MacCunn would never have written if his tutors had not put it into his head. I know a lady who keeps a typewriting establishment. Under my

advice she is completing arrangements for supplying middle sections and recapitulations for overtures and symphonies at twopence a bar, on being supplied with the first section and coda."

In the 1970s it enjoyed renewed popularity as the theme for the BBC television series *Sutherland's Law*.

### **George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759)**

#### *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale Organ Concerto*

George Frideric Handel was a German-born Baroque composer who is famous for his operas, oratorios and concerti grossi. Born as Georg Friedrich Händel in Halle, he spent most of his adult life in England, becoming a subject of the British crown on 22 January 1727. His most famous works are *Messiah*, an oratorio set to texts from the King James Bible; *Water Music*; and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. Strongly influenced by the techniques of the great composers of the Italian Baroque and the English composer Henry Purcell, his music was known to many significant composers who came after him, including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

The organ concertos were designed to fill intervals in the oratorio performances, works in which the composer could display his virtuosity, which he generally did by introducing each concerto with an improvised voluntary. Handel continued to play organ concertos even after he had lost his sight, either trusting his memory for older concertos or improvising the solo parts of new concertos, while the players of the orchestra supplied the skeleton frame-work of ritornelli between solo passages.

The Concerto in F, generally known as "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale", was published in 1740. It was first performed with the Oratorio *Israel in Egypt* in 1739, and may seem singularly inappropriate as an accompaniment to such a weighty subject. The concerto opens with the usual slow introduction, followed by a movement in which the

cuckoo is all too apparent, the nightingale entering later in the proceedings. There is a pastoral third movement, introduced by an organ improvisation, and followed by a vigorous final Allegro.

**Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)**  
*Folk Song Suite*

Ralph Vaughan Williams was an English composer of symphonies, chamber music, opera, choral music, and film scores. He was also a collector of English folk music and song; this also influenced his editorial approach to the English Hymnal, which began in 1904, many folk song arrangements being set as hymn tunes, in addition to several original compositions. Vaughan Williams' music has often been said to be characteristically English, in the same way as that of Gustav Holst, Frederick Delius, George Butterworth, and William Walton. In *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*, Peter Ackroyd writes, "If that Englishness in music can be encapsulated in words at all, those words would probably be: ostensibly familiar and commonplace, yet deep and mystical as well as lyrical, melodic, melancholic, and nostalgic yet timeless." Ackroyd quotes music critic John Alexander Fuller Maitland, whose distinctions included editing the second edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* in the years just before 1911, as having observed that in Vaughan Williams' style "one is never quite sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new."

His style expresses a deep regard for and fascination with folk tunes, the variations upon which can convey the listener from the down-to-earth (which he always tried to remain in his daily life) to the ethereal. Simultaneously the music shows patriotism toward England in the subtlest form, engendered by a feeling for ancient landscapes and a person's small yet not entirely insignificant place within them. His earlier works sometimes show the influence of Ravel, his teacher for three months in Paris in 1908. Ravel described Vaughan Williams as "the only one of my pupils who does not write my music".

Written in 1923, the English Folk Song Suite is one of English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams' most famous works for military band and WSO have chosen to perform it this evening as a tribute to the composer in acknowledgement of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death. The piece has been arranged for full orchestra by Vaughan Williams' student Gordon Jacob. The suite consists of three movements: March, Intermezzo and another March, all of which are subtitled with English folk song names. The first march is based upon Seventeen Come Sunday, the Intermezzo upon My Bonny Boy and the final movement on Folk Songs from Somerset.

### INTERVAL

**Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)**  
*Symphony No. 3 in C minor, the 'Organ' Symphony*

1. Adagio - Allegro Moderato - Poco adagio
2. Allegro moderato - Presto - Maestoso - Allegro

Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer, organist, conductor, and pianist, known especially for *The Carnival of the Animals*, *Danse Macabre*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Havanaise*, *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, and his *Symphony No. 3 (Organ Symphony)*, completed in 1886 at what was probably the artistic zenith of his career. It is also popularly known as the "Organ Symphony", even though it is not a true symphony for organ, but simply an orchestral symphony where two sections out of four use the pipe organ. Of composing the work Saint-Saëns said that he had "given everything to it I was able to give". The composer seemed to know it would be his last attempt at the symphonic form, and he wrote the work almost as a type of "history" of his own career: virtuoso piano passages, brilliant orchestral writing characteristic of the Romantic period, and the sound of a cathedral-sized pipe organ. The work was dedicated to Saint-Saëns's friend Franz Liszt, who died that year, on July 31, 1886. This symphony was

commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society in England, and the first performance was given in London in 1886, conducted by the composer.

The first movement, after a slow introduction, leads to a theme of Mendelssohnian character, followed by a second subject of a gentler cast, with various secondary themes played in major, and soon after repeated in minor forms; chromatic patterns play an important role in both movements. This material is worked out in fairly classical sonata-allegro form, and gradually fades to a quieter mood, which becomes a slightly ominous series of plucked notes in cello and bass, ending on a G pitch, followed by a slow and soft sustained A flat note in the organ, resolving into the new key of D flat for the Poco Adagio section of the movement. This evolves as a beautiful dialogue between organ and strings, recalling the earlier main theme of the movement before the recapitulation. The movement ends in a quiet morendo. The second movement opens with an energetic strings melody, which gives way to a Presto version of the main theme, complete with extremely rapid scale passages in the piano.

The Maestoso is introduced by a full C major chord in the organ. Piano four-hands is heard at the beginning with the strings, now playing the C major evolution of the original theme. The theme is then repeated in powerful organ chords, interspersed with brass fanfares. (It also includes a remarkable parody of the Dies Irae.) This well-known last movement is of considerable variety, including polyphonic writing and a brief pastoral interlude, replaced by a massive climax of the whole symphony characterised by a return to the introductory theme in the form of major scale variations. The lowest pedal notes of both the Poco Adagio and the Maestoso, played on the organ, are of almost inaudibly low frequency. When experienced live in a concert hall equipped with a large concert organ with 32-foot pedal stops (e.g. the Royal Albert Hall Organ) these notes are very dramatic and give a deeply impressive aural experience.

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

<b>Violin 1</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bassoon</b>
Ros Rayner ( <i>Leader</i> )	Julie Robertson	Jill Sparke
Francis Bunch	Roger Hides	Jan Riley
Barbara Carter	Margaret Bell	
Anne Forster	Tim Forster	<b>Horns</b>
Jo Jordan	Sheila Moore	Sara Shepherd
Alice Rayner	Nina Haynes	Robin Hopper
Katie Swann	Dan Addison	Percy Cotterell
James Hamilton	K Wilson	Jill Brittle
Zoe Hunter		
	<b>Double Bass</b>	<b>Trumpets</b>
<b>Violin 2</b>	David Charlesworth	Chris Cumming
Corinne Wright	Yuka Akiyama	Jenny Holt
Jenny Bailey	Sarah Tully	Jenny Creswell
Lucy Clarke		
Ann Perry	<b>Flute</b>	<b>Trombones</b>
Fabienne McAllister	Di Manasseh	Lawrence Hopper
Margaret Myatt	Kathryn Russon	Michael Griffiths
Ken Hawkins	Jane Eminson	Jim Rothnie
Hilary Hurd		
David Naylor	<b>Oboe</b>	<b>Tuba</b>
	Rachel Orotayo	Joe Barnett
	Duncan Spiers	
<b>Viola</b>		<b>Percussion</b>
David Cope	<b>Cor Anglais</b>	Stephanie Jones
Alain Anderton	Becky Sweet	Corin McCann
Elisabeth Barratt		
Philip Turley	<b>Clarinet</b>	
Sharon Bayley	Di Cotterell	
	Lynn Curtis	

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 3pm  
Walsall Town Hall

Parry - *"I Was Glad"* with St Peter's Collegiate Church Choir  
Handel - *Organ Concerto "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale"*  
Soloist - Toby Barnard

Vaughan Williams - *Five Mystical Songs*  
Baritone Soloist - John Thorne

Saint-Saëns - *Symphony No. 3 in C minor, the 'Organ' Symphony*

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Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7.30pm  
Cranmer Methodist Church,  
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton

Berlioz - *Overture "Le Corsair"*  
Sibelius - *Violin Concerto in D Minor*  
Soloist - Rhys Watkins  
Dag Wiren - *Serenade for Strings*  
Bizet - *Symphony in C*

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Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 7.30pm  
Codsall Community High School,  
Elliotts Lane, Codsall

Vaughan Williams - *Overture "The Wasps"*  
Butterworth - *The Banks of Green Willow*  
Holst - *The Perfect Fool*  
Elgar - *Symphony No. 1 in A flat*



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,  
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or e-mail us at [info@wolsymorc.org.uk](mailto:info@wolsymorc.org.uk)

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