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WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT AT  
ST PETER'S CHURCH,  
WOLVERHAMPTON

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2010

PROGRAMME

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Dvorak	Symphonic Variations
Benjamin Britten	Simple Symphony

INTERVAL

Sibelius	Symphony No. 5 in E flat major
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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 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.

**Antonín Leopold Dvořák (8 September 1841 - 1 May 1904)**  
**Symphonic Variations**

During four days in the middle of January 1877, Antonín Dvořák composed the three part-songs for male voices (now known as B. 66), the first two of which are settings of Moravian folk poems. While the third song of B. 66, "Huslaf" (The Fiddler), cannot boast a folk origin, it can claim a much greater distinction than either of its two sister-pieces: seven months after its composition, Dvořák used its music as the theme for his Symphonic Variations for orchestra, Op. 78. The Symphonic Variations, composed in August and September 1877, were premiered in Prague within three months of Dvořák putting his signature to the manuscript. The work was almost immediately thrown into the pit of neglect, however – Dvořák's publishers were uninterested in buying it, and, until the famous conductor Hans Richter took the work under his wing in the late 1880s, it remained a stranger to the concert hall. The now-famous success of Richter's 1887 London and Vienna performances of the Symphonic Variations more than made up for this neglect, and the work, while perhaps nowhere near Dvořák's best-known symphonies and string quartets in popularity, has since joined Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn, Op. 56 as the most frequently played of all orchestral variations-sets.

Following the initial presentation of the C major theme, there are 27 variations and an extended Allegro maestoso finale. The theme itself is wonderfully suited for the purpose of variation-making: the irregular lengths of its three phrases (the first and third of which are basically identical, making a miniature ABA design) – 7, 6, 7, respectively – help to avoid metric monotony and provide all kinds of possibilities for expansion and condensation, and the chromatic descents and rises of the melody provide useful stepping-stones that are immediately recognizable no matter how far from the original theme Dvořák's development might take us. At first, Dvořák tinkers with the theme very little – countermelodies are added, textures take new shapes. But as the variations progress, the theme becomes a fountain of material for

extended inventions. The finale, as per tradition, exposes the theme as a fugue-subject before bursting forth into a vigorous and ever-faster orchestral workout.

**Benjamin Britten (22 November 1913 - 4 December 1976)**  
**Simple Symphony**

- 1. Boisterous Bourree
- 2. Playful Pizzicato
- 3. Sentimental Sarabande
- 4. Frolicsome Finale

Britten was an English composer, conductor, and pianist. Showing prodigious talent from an early age – he composed his Quatre Chansons françaises for soprano and orchestra at the age of fourteen – he first came to public attention with the a cappella choral work A Boy Was Born. With the premiere of his opera Peter Grimes in 1945 he leapt to international fame, and for the next fifteen years he devoted much of his compositional attention to writing operas, several of which now appear regularly on international stages. Britten's interests as a composer were wide-ranging; he produced important music in such varied genres as orchestral, choral, solo vocal (much of it written for the tenor Peter Pears), chamber and instrumental, as well as film music. He also took a great interest in writing music for children and amateur performers, and was a fine pianist and conductor.

By the age of twelve Britten had composed drawers full of sonatas, symphonies, songs and suites. In 1933 he chose extracts from eight of these works and shaped them into a symphony for strings. Its alliterative movement titles indicate the character and roots of the work, although there is nothing childlike about the music itself: it is a tuneful and exciting concert piece, one of the best-known works from Britten's early years.

## INTERVAL

**Jean Sibelius (8 December 1865 - 20 September 1957)**

### **Symphony No. 5 in E flat major**

1. Tempo molto moderato - Allegro moderato (ma poco a poco stretto) - Vivace molto - Presto - Più Presto
2. Andante mosso, quasi allegretto - Poco a poco stretto - Tranquillo - Poco a poco stretto - Ritenuto al tempo I
3. Allegro molto - Misterioso - Un pochettino largamente - Largamente assai - Un pochettino stretto

Sibelius was a Finnish composer of the later Romantic period whose music played an important role in the formation of the Finnish national identity. His mastery of the orchestra has been described as "prodigious." Sibelius was commissioned to write this symphony by the Finnish government in honor of his 50th birthday, which had been declared a national holiday. The symphony was originally composed in 1915. It was revised first in 1916 and then again in 1919. The original version was premiered by Sibelius himself with the Helsinki City Orchestra on his own 50th birthday, 8 December 1915. The second version (only part of which has survived) was first performed by the Orchestra of Turun Soitannollinen Seura in Turku exactly one year later. The final version, which is the most commonly performed today, was premiered by Sibelius conducting the Helsinki City Orchestra on 24 November 1919.

Gray, the first musicologist to write on the structure of the Fifth Symphony, makes no mention of sonata form in his discussion, yet refers to the existence of two different subjects that seems to imply that he feels the movement is in sonata form. Abraham is one of the first to analyse the work in terms of sonata form and clearly lays out where he believes each section begins and why. He shows that the work opens with a double exposition, each with distinct A- and B-group material, then moves into the development of this material. He explains the

distinctly melodic section beginning at the "Allegro moderato" as a Scherzo and Trio used as a substitute for the second half of the development. However, Layton disagrees with Abraham and considers the Scherzo to be the beginning of the recapitulation. Most musicologists agreed with this formal analysis until Hepokoski's research, published in his 1993 text *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, offered an altogether different interpretation. He explains that the Symphony can only be analysed in terms of what he has called "rotational form." Here, he maintains the same divisional sections of the movement – double exposition, Scherzo, and recapitulation – however he has created new vocabulary for its analysis. Hepokoski shows how Sibelius allows the material itself to determine form in many of his works, developing by the necessity of the music and not by a pre-ordained eighteenth or nineteenth century form. From here, Sibelius uses a circular form of rotation or strophe that passes through sections of material, further developing it with each rotation. Through this he maintains the general location of sectional changes as described by the earlier musicologists and agrees that the movement can roughly be analysed in sonata form.

The 'swan-call' motif has been appropriated for a number of pop songs, including "Popsicles and Icicles" by The Murmaids (1963), "Beach Baby" by The First Class (1974), "Since Yesterday" by Strawberry Switchblade (1984), "I Don't Believe in Miracles" by Sinitta (1988), "On My Own" by Peach Union (1996) and "Oh What A Life" by Play People (2008). The opening of the first movement is quoted in the opening to John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. It is believed that Coltrane did not directly quote Sibelius, instead quoted Leonard Bernstein's "On the Town" which, in turn, quoted from the symphony

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### Violin 1

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)  
Jonathan Harper  
Catherine Rayner  
Alice Rayner  
Francis Bunch  
Jennie Lewis  
Jo Jordan  
Barbara Carter

### Violin 2

Anne Forster  
Hilary Hurd  
Ken Hawkins  
Margaret Myatt  
James Hamilton  
Sam Spilsbury

### Viola

David Cope  
Alan Anderson  
Liz Fleetham  
Anne de Cursay  
Sharon Bayley

### Cello

Sarah Tulley  
Roger Hides  
Sheila Moore  
Margaret Bell  
Tim Forster  
Ian Sumner

### Double Bass

John Mason

### Flute

Kathryn Russon  
Diana Manasseh

### Oboe

Richard Anderson  
Rachel Orotayo

### Clarinet

Di Cotterell  
Lynn Curtis

### Bassoon

Jill Sparke  
Jan Riley

### Horns

Sara Shepherd  
Jill Brittle  
Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper

### Trumpets

Richard Price

### Trombones

Laurence Hopper  
Michael Griffiths  
Philippa Done

### Percussion

Peter Rayner  
Alexander Fairfield

## WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – Cranmer Methodist Church,  
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton**

Brahms – Variation on a Theme of Haydn  
Ravel – Tombeau de Couperin  
Beethoven – Symphony No. 4 in B Flat Major

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2011 – Trinity Methodist Church,  
Histons Hill, Codsall**

Britten – Four Sea Interludes and Passacaglia from Peter Grimes  
Tchaikovsky – Violin Concerto  
Respighi – Fountains of Rome

All concerts start at 7.30 pm  
Ticket prices for the 2010-2011 season will be £9 and £7 (unwaged),  
(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](http://www.wolsymorc.org.uk)  
or e-mail us at [info@wolsymorc.org.uk](mailto:info@wolsymorc.org.uk)

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