

PROGRAMME

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Wolverhampton
Symphony
Orchestra



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 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.

Soloist – Alistair Moseley

Alistair Moseley started playing piano when he was six and was soon playing duets with his mother. He first studied with Joyce Mildren and then later with Joyce Woodhead of the Birmingham Conservatoire. Shortly after starting piano lessons, Alistair took up the clarinet with David Sharp and these two instruments have been of equal importance in his playing career ever since. When at school, Alistair was always in demand as an accompanist, and it was not long before he was playing for exams, music festivals and competitions. Since then his particular interest has been the piano and wind repertoire and he has performed most of the major works for wind groups and soloists at recitals and competitions throughout the UK. For many years Alistair accompanied at all of the Midlands competitive music festivals where he would often be required to play more than 100 different works during the day!

Alistair has been principal clarinetist with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra for fifteen years, and has also appeared with them in many

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concerts as soloist, both as a pianist and clarinetist. These have included the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, and Mozart D Minor and C Major Piano concertos. In 1997 he appeared as a soloist and accompanist at the Stratford Music Festival with English Serenade, with whom he recorded his first CD. Alistair is often invited to play concertos with other orchestras and these have included Beethoven's 1st and 3rd Piano Concertos with the Sinfonia of Birmingham, Mozart's 'Elvira Madigan' Piano Concerto No. 21 with the Knowle Sinfonia with whom he also performed the Weber Clarinet Concerto, the Mendelssohn 1st Piano Concerto and the Mozart D Minor Piano Concerto. In 2002 Alistair performed Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Junction 10 Orchestra and Peter Morris for the opening of the New Walsall Art Gallery. Such is Alistair's versatility that in 2005 he played the solo parts in both Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue (piano) and Copland's Clarinet Concerto (clarinet) in the same concert with WSO in July 2005.

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.

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

William Tell Overture

In 1829 the prolific composer of operas Gioachino Rossini suddenly retired at the age of 37. Renowned for his 'laid-back' attitude, it was said that he often composed in bed. If a breeze caused a sheet of manuscript paper to fall on the floor he would find it easier to write the page out again than get out of bed and pick it up. Whether this is true or not, there were no more operas after William Tell in 1829 and he composed relatively little music after that date.

The final part of the Overture to William Tell is his best-known music. The overture is, however, in four parts, each following the next without pause. It paints a musical picture of life in the Swiss Alps where the opera is set. The story of the opera is of confrontation between a local governor and tyrant Gessler and William Tell, who eventually kills him. In an earlier confrontation Gessler forces Tell to shoot an arrow at an apple on his son's head. Tell hits the apple rather than the boy and vows that a second arrow he has will liberate the people from Gessler's rule.

Prelude, Dawn

The Prelude is a slow passage for five solo cellos accompanied by double basses. It begins with a solo cello which is in turn 'answered' by the remaining cellos and the double basses. An impending storm is hinted at by two very quiet timpani rolls resembling distant thunder.

Storm

This dynamic section is played by the full orchestra. It begins with the violins and violas. Their phrases are punctuated by short wind instrument interventions of three notes each, first by the piccolo, flute and oboes, then by the clarinets and bassoons. The storm breaks out in full with the entrance of the horns, trumpets, trombones, and bass drum. The volume and number of instruments gradually decreases as the storm subsides. The section ends with the flute playing alone.

Ranz des Vaches (Call to the Cows)

This pastoral section describes the calm after the storm features the cor anglais, which then plays in alternating phrases with the flute, culminating in a duet with the triangle accompanying them in the background. This section is often used in animated cartoons to portray daybreak.

Finale

The Finale is a "cavalry charge" heralded by trumpets and played by the full orchestra. This segment is often used in popular media to denote galloping horses, a race, or a hero riding to the rescue, and became best known to a certain generation as the *Lone Ranger* theme music.

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Piano Concerto in F

Although not as well known as his *Rhapsody in Blue* for solo piano and orchestra, this employs a more traditional structure and is just as full of jazz idioms. It was written in 1925.

The day after the premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* the conductor Walter Damrosch contacted Gershwin to commission from him a full-scale piano concerto for the New York Symphony Orchestra, closer in form to a classical concerto. He had been greatly helped in the orchestration of *Rhapsody in Blue* so this caused him considerable worries.

Although Gershwin later received formal training from influential figures like Arnold Schoenberg in advanced composition, harmony and orchestration, in 1924 he had had no such training. Under the pressure of a deadline to complete the work, in 1925 Gershwin bought books on theory, concerto form and orchestration and taught himself the skills needed. On completion, he hired a 55-piece orchestra, at his own expense, to run through his first draft. Damrosch attended and gave advice to Gershwin, who made a few cuts and revisions.

The concerto is in the traditional three movements:

1. Allegro
2. Adagio - Andante con moto
3. Allegro agitato

There are strong thematic links between the three movements, all of which are heavily influenced by jazz. The first movement begins with blasts from the timpani, introducing elements of the main thematic material. After an extended orchestral introduction, the piano enters with a solo section, introducing another melody found throughout the movement. From here, the music alternates with contrasting sections of grandiosity and delicacy. The climax is reached at the *Grandioso*, in which the orchestra repeats the

piano's original melody, accompanied by a large triplet figure in the soloist. There is a cadenza of quick triplets which leads to the final section: speeding octaves and chords.

The second movement is quite bluesy – hints of the later music of *Porgy and Bess* - beginning with a solo trumpet melody accompanied by a trio of clarinets. A faster section featuring the piano follows, building gradually until near the end, at which point the piece returns to the original melody, now given to the flute. The movement ends peacefully

The final movement is pulsating and energetic with several references to ragtime, featuring both new material and melodies from the previous movements. Gershwin's huge influence on later American film music of the 40s and 50s – particularly that of cartoons – is very evident.

Gershwin himself played the piano part in the first performance.

INTERVAL

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Symphony No. 7 in A Major

Beethoven's wonderful canon of 9 symphonies, each so different and distinctive, forms the basis of much of the symphonic output of later composers. Here there is delicacy, power, instinctive orchestration and above all playing with the audience to provide unexpected twists and turns. All of this is very evident in his 7th Symphony.

The work was premiered in Vienna on 8 December 1813 at a charity concert for soldiers wounded in the Battle of Hanau, with Beethoven himself conducting and double featured with his patriotic *Wellington's Victory*. The orchestra was led by Beethoven's friend, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, and included some of the finest musicians of the day: violinist Louis Spohr, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Antonio Salieri, Anton Romberg, and the Italian double bass virtuoso, Domenico Dragonetti, whom Beethoven himself described as playing "with great fire and expressive power". The piece was very well received, and the second movement, had to be encores immediately. Spohr particularly mentioned Beethoven's antics on the rostrum ("as a *sforzando* occurred, he tore his arms with a great vehemence asunder ... at the entrance of a *forte* he jumped in the air"), and the concert was repeated due to its immense success.

The Seventh Symphony is in four movements:

- Poco sostenuto – Vivace
- II. Allegretto
- III. Presto and trio – Assai meno presto (trio)
- IV. Allegro con brio

The work begins with a slow introduction, marked *Poco sostenuto*, and the first movement that follows is dominated by lively dance-like rhythms. 'The apotheosis (ideal example) of the dance' said Wagner.

The second movement in A Minor has a tempo marking of *Allegretto* ("a little lively"), making it slow only in comparison to the other three movements. This movement was encores at the premiere and has remained popular ever since.

The third movement is a scherzo and trio. Here, the trio is played twice rather than the usual once, although by this stage in Beethoven's development this was quite common.

The last movement is in a conventional sonata form, where the initial two themes are presented, developed and repeated. Donald Tovey, writing in his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, commented on this movement's "Bacchic fury". The coda contains an example, rare in Beethoven's music, of the dynamic marking *fff* (called *forte fortissimo* or *fortississimo*).

An interesting critical comment on this symphony comes from musicologist Antony Hopkins, who said: The Seventh Symphony perhaps more than any of the others gives us a feeling of true spontaneity; the notes seem to fly off the page as we are borne along on a floodtide of inspired invention. Beethoven himself spoke of it fondly as "one of my best works". Who are we to dispute his judgment?

On the other hand, the composer Weber said that it contained evidence that Beethoven was "ripe for the madhouse" and the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham was uncharitable about the third movement, saying "What can you do with it? It's like a lot of yaks jumping about."

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)
Jonathan Harper
Jo Jordan
Barbara Carter
Ella Harold
Cathy Moseley *x*
Charlotte Moseley *x*

Violin 2

Anne Forster
Hilary Hurd
Jenny Bailey
Michael Clements
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Samantha Spilsbury
Philip Ward

Viola

David Cope
Alan Anderton
Liz Fleetham
Sharon Bayley
Rory Freckleton

Cello

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

Double Bass

David Charlesworth
Jo Middleton
John Davies

Flute

Kathryn Russon
Di Manasseh
Jane Eminson *x*

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo

Clarinet

Tony May *? Bass-*
Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley

Horns

Sara Shepherd
Jill Brittle
Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper

Trumpets

Chris Cumming
Jenny Holt

Trombones

Laurence Hopper
Mike Griffiths *✓*
Jim Rothnie

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Percussion

Alex Farifield *?*
Sam Watson
James Watson

Timpani

Peter Rayner *?*

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Saturday 3rd March 2012 7.30 pm
Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road West,
Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS

Khachaturian – Spartacus Suite No. 2
Fauré – Pavane for a Dead Infanta
Bach - Brandenburg Concerto No. 4
Bartok – Concerto for Orchestra

Saturday 23rd June 2012 at 7.30 pm
Histons Hill Church, Codsall, WV8 2ER

Mozart – Marriage of Figaro Overture
Elgar – Cello Concerto - Soloist: Sarah Tulley
Shostakovich - Symphony No. 10

Ticket prices for the 2011-2012 season will be £9, £7 (unwaged), £5 NUS, Under 18s free
(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

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