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**WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**CONCERT AT  
CRANMER METHODIST CHURCH,  
WOLVERHAMPTON**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**PROGRAMME**

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Weber Euryanthe Overture

Grieg Piano Concerto in A minor

**INTERVAL**

Schubert Symphony no. 9 in C major (the Great)

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Conductor – Peter Morris

Leader – Ros Rayner

Soloist – 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 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.

#### **Sothie Paul-Duraisamy - Soloist**

Sothie Paul-Duraisamy was born in Kuala Lumpur. Her mother encouraged her to learn the piano, which she did, but not with the view of being a professional. In fact, she won a merit scholarship to study medicine at the University of Singapore. In her second year there she also did the LRSM piano performers diploma and was recommended for a scholarship by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. She faced a difficult decision but decided to go to London to study at the Royal College of Music, where she studied piano under Angus Morrison and singing under Veronica Mansfield. While there, she won an Exhibition and the Borwick Prize. She furthered her musical studies at the Koninklijk Conservatorium, The Hague (Netherlands), where she did a recital diploma under Jan de Man, and was selected as soloist for their annual orchestral concert. Since then she has performed as a professional soloist with various orchestras from all over the world and also given solo recitals in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Trinidad, the UK, Australia, South Africa, the Netherlands, the US, and conducted choirs in some of these countries. She has taught at the Junior Conservatorium and now lives with her husband, Louis Paul, whom she met on a flight during one of her tours.

#### **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.

#### **CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)**

##### **Euryanthe Overture**

Weber composed his "grand heroic-romantic opera" "Euryanthe" to a libretto by Helmina von Chézy in 1822 and 1823. "The plot," related Sigmund Spaeth, "concerns the noble Adolar, who wagers all his possessions with the villainous Lysiart that his intended bride, Euryanthe, is faithful to him. Euryanthe is a victim of the duplicity of Eglantine, herself in love with Adolar. A ring is stolen from the tomb of Emma, Euryanthe's sister, and Lysiart produces this as evidence of Euryanthe's guilt. When Emma's ghost appears, Eglantine confesses the plot and is stabbed by Lysiart, who is led away to execution, as Adolar and Euryanthe are reunited." The first performance took place in the Kärntnertor Theater in Vienna on October 25, 1823.

"My reception when I appeared in the orchestra to conduct the premiere of *Euryanthe* was the most enthusiastic that one could imagine," wrote Weber to his wife the day after the premiere. "There was no end to it. At last I gave the signal for beginning. Stillness of death. The Overture was applauded madly, and there was a demand for a repetition, but I went ahead so that the performance might not be too long or drawn out."

Schumann was enchanted by the overture: "It is a chain of sparkling jewels from beginning to end—all brilliant and flawless." With a grandiose flourish, Weber sets the mood of his tragic opera. The brass and woodwinds announce the theme by which the hero proclaims his reliance on God and his beloved Euryanthe. In the development section, the famous ghost music is orchestrated for eight muted solo violins, and this is later combined with the majestic opening melody. The poignant progression from the tragic to the triumphant concludes definitively in a grand coda.

Despite the success of the music, the opera itself was criticised. An old-fashioned plot, absurdly stilted language, and some gaping holes in the plot suggested that the story would end too soon to make a full opera. But what is important is how the Weber reacts in his music, and there is no doubt that he produced a rich, colourful, dramatic, and brilliantly evocative score. In fact, no German composer after Weber could write an opera without taking Euryanthe into account: the rich use of chromatic harmony, far more daring than any composer of the time had employed; the varied orchestral colour; the determination to unify the score, rather than allow it to be a patchwork of independent numbers— all these things pointed the way to the future.

**EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)**  
**Piano Concerto in A minor**

It is entirely appropriate that Grieg's only large-scale orchestral work is a piano concerto, for the piano was central to all his compositional output. Hans von Blow even called him 'The Chopin of the North.' However, Grieg was no mere imitator. He built on the stylistic inheritance of the German romantic tradition, but he also integrated elements of Norwegian folk music; and his music is deeply imbued with a quality all his own.

To understand Grieg's music, one must imagine the narrow, steep-walled inlets of the sea along Norway's western coast, created long ago by the chiselling of receding glaciers. The majestic fjords of Norway were where Grieg's heart and soul were at home. He went to study in Germany because he was given a government grant to attend the Konservatorium in Leipzig. But unlike other German-trained composers who abandoned the music of their homeland to enter the world of 'scholarly' German-inspired composition, Grieg held fast to his Norwegian identity, and his music remained Scandinavian through and through. Indeed, he is known today as one of the greatest nationalistic composers of the late nineteenth century.

Grieg was the first composer from Norway to achieve major international recognition, and it was his Piano Concerto that brought him his first major success. Written when he was a young man of 25, it was to become one of the most popular piano concertos ever composed. After its first public performance in Copenhagen on April 3, 1869, another government grant allowed Grieg to visit Italy, where he showed off the concerto to Liszt at his residence near Rome. Liszt played it and encouraged Grieg to 'go on and don't let anything scare you.'

The concerto opens with a drum-roll and solo cascade of octaves, after which the woodwinds play a simple main theme with periodic, intricately embroidered statements by the soloist. A contrasting theme, heard from the cellos, is soulful, almost plaintive. Trumpets usher in the development section and sound prominently once again at the recapitulation. Just before the end of the first movement, we hear a solo cadenza.

The second movement is a structurally uncomplicated Adagio in  $\frac{3}{8}$  time that begins with introspective, muted strings over which the piano rhapsodizes. Throughout the movement a series of delicate trills signal the entrance of the piano, until a dramatically angular version of the main theme shatters the placid

mood. Eventually, the serenity of the beginning of the movement returns and leads to a quiet ending that lapses without pause into the stellar third movement.

This final movement is perhaps the most affected by Grieg's Norwegian origins. It begins with a main theme presented by the piano that incorporates rhythmic patterns from one of Norway's national folk dances. Sound effects such as bare fifths and a drone and slides to dissonant pitches are characteristic of the Hardanger fiddle, a particularly Norwegian folk instrument much like a violin, yet with a distinctive sound created by the presence of a set of sympathetic strings.

The movement's second subject is quicker, more sprightly, and far more elaborate, but no less folk-like. After a tranquil episode introduced by the solo flute, the main theme returns for an extended development. The piano soloist performs a brief cadenza, the music transforms from minor to major, and yet another folk dance theme picks up the pace even further. The concerto concludes with a brilliant, virtuosic final cadenza filled with Lisztian bravura, and a triumphant ending based on the earlier solo flute melody, now transmuted into the major key. At first it had the character of as wistful and poetic a melody as Grieg ever penned. In the concluding pages he demonstrated that it also has the capacity to become a grand, triumphant hymn. It is a flash of majesty to match the magnificence of Norway's fjord coastline.

**INTERVAL**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**  
**Symphony no. 9 in C major (the Great)**

In a short lifespan of just nearly 32 years, the Austrian Schubert was a prolific composer, writing some 600 Lieder, nine symphonies (including the famous "Unfinished Symphony"), liturgical music, operas, some incidental music, and a large body of chamber and solo piano music. Appreciation of Schubert's music during his lifetime was limited, but interest in his work increased significantly in the decades following his death.

Schubert profoundly revered Beethoven. He may have paid the older composer a single visit, but generally he kept a humble distance, content with attending Beethoven's concerts including most probably the premiere of Beethoven's

Ninth "*Choral*" Symphony in 1824. He served as one of Beethoven's pallbearers at his funeral. Perhaps his greatest tribute to Beethoven was his resolve to write a grand symphony with the breadth and profundity of his predecessor's; and his Symphony No. 9 was the result.

*i – Allegro ma non troppo*

Schubert was particularly gifted at writing beautiful lines for the French horn, and it is the French horn's majestic motive from the slow introduction that becomes the recurring theme of the first movement. The movement's *Allegro* portion pulses and throbs with sheet rhythmic vitality, driving the music toward a riveting conclusion. In the powerful Coda, the full orchestra returns to the opening motive once again.

*ii – Andante con moto*

The second movement is intimate and deeply lyrical, and includes an intensely longing, plaintive melody for solo oboe. Once again this exquisite movement features magical writing for the French horn section. Eventually, the quiet mood is broken by an abrupt eruption of violently dissonant emotion.

*iii - Scherzo*

The hearty Scherzo movement glances unmistakably back to the corresponding movement in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Beethoven first introduced the 'Scherzo and Trio,' and this movement, with its several themes and variations on form, closely mimics the earlier composer's work. In the movement's middle trio, the woodwinds play a waltz-like folk dance rhythm; and the Scherzo is filled with lyrical dance melodies.

*iv - Allegro vivace*

Following an energetic introduction by the brass, churning, tumbling, triumphant triplet figures give the Finale an urgent, relentless momentum. In the movement's second theme we hear an unmistakable reminder of the main theme of the last, choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony perhaps another hint of tribute paid by one great composer to another. Just as Schumann observed, this high-spirited movement enthralled its listeners, drawing them along to the last joyous note.

**WOLVERHAMPTON  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Violin 1**

Ros Rayner (*Leader*)  
Jonathan Harper  
Barbara Carter  
Francis Bunch  
Jo Jordan  
Claire Shaw  
Ella Harold  
Alice Harper  
~~Katalin Beke~~

**Violin 2**

Anne Forster  
Hilary Hurd  
Jenny Bailey  
Ken Hawkins  
Margaret Myatt  
Susan Bellingham  
Michael Clement  
Zoë Morris  
Georgia Tulley  
Elizabeth Hurd  
Philip Ward

**Viola**

David Cope  
Alan Anderton  
Liz Fleetham  
Sharon Bayley  
Rory Freckleton

**Cello**

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

**Double Bass**

John Davies  
Jo Middleton  
David Charlesworth  
Ian Parry

**Flute**

Kathryn Russon  
Diana Mannessah  
Jane Eminson

**Oboe**

Rachel Orotayo  
Richard Anderson

**Clarinet**

Lynn Curtis  
Diana Cotterell

**Bassoon**

Jan Riley  
Jill Sparke

**Horns**

Sara Shepherd  
Jill Brittle  
Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper

**Trumpet**

Chris Cumming

**Timpani**

Peter Rayner

**Percussion**

~~Phil James~~  
~~James Vickers~~

**WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013 7.30 pm**  
**Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road West,**  
**Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS**

American Journey – Patrick Doyle  
Borodin – Symphony no. 2  
Fauré – Masques et Bergamasques  
Vaughn Williams – Greensleeves

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012 at 7.30 pm**  
**Cranmer Methodist Church, Newhampton Road West,**  
**Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS**

Britten – Matinées Musicales & Soirées Musicales  
Beethoven – Symphony no. 2  
Mozart – Clarinet Concerto in A Major – Soloist: Alastair Moseley  
Phil James – The Toy Room

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

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