

FUTURE CONCERTS

**Saturday 22 March 2014 7.30 pm - Cranmer Methodist Church
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS**

Dvorak - American Suite

Brahms - Violin Concerto in D major - Soloist Nicole Wilson

Beethoven - Symphony No. 5 in C minor

**Saturday 21 June 2014 7.30 pm - Cranmer Methodist Church
Newhampton Road West, Wolverhampton, WV6 0RS**

Carl Nielsen - Helios Overture

Chopin - Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor - Soloist Petra Milarova

Tchaikovsky - Symphony No. 2 in C minor (The Little Russian)

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**WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

CONDUCTOR Peter Morris

LEADER Ros Rayner



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Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra
Concert at Cranmer Methodist Church
Saturday 23rd November 2013

Edward Elgar	Cockaigne Overture
Gustav Holst	Somerset Rhapsody
Peter Warlock	Capriol Suite
Eric Coates	Dambusters March

Interval

Edward Elgar	Enigma Variations
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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. We have been invited on several occasions to perform major choral works with local choral societies, in 1999 performing Beethoven's Choral Symphony to commemorate our 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, 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. We are financed through concert receipts and by an annual subscription paid by the members. We are also affiliated to Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies).

Recently, in addition to its normal programme of full orchestral concerts, the orchestra has performed a number of smaller concerts in aid of local charities. We are currently exploring, as members of the city's music hub, partnerships with Wolverhampton Music School and the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Peter Morris—Musical director

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Peter Morris has conducted the orchestra since 2004. He was a cathedral chorister at Chester and Manchester, went to Chetham's School in Manchester and read music at Durham University. He was appointed Director of Music at Bluecoat School, Walsall at the age of 22 and subsequently taught at St. Peter's School in Wolverhampton. He conducted Walsall Choral Society for 30 years and in 2000/2001 he was awarded the Medaille d'Honneur of the French National Association of Music and a Master's degree in history at Keele University.

Peter is now Director of Music at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Borough Organist at Walsall Town Hall, Chairman of Wolverhampton's Music Education Hub and has a number of examining roles at GCSE and A-level, including Chief Examiner. 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.

Cockaigne Overture
(1857 - 1934)

Edward Elgar

Subtitled '*In London Town*', this concert overture was composed in 1900, very shortly after the Enigma Variations and the Dream of Gerontius. It was dedicated to 'My many friends, the members of British orchestras'.

'Cockaigne' was an Edwardian term for rather deprived (and depraved?) places and had been transferred as a description of the city of London itself. The overture is therefore a description of aspects of London life. A 1921 analysis of its content reads:

Cockaigne is the most popular of Elgar's three large overtures. Composed about the same time as the first two *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, it reflects in many places, the broad, British, and almost vulgar spirit of the victorious military events of the period. The overture opens with a swinging scherzando theme, the little figure of three reiterated semiquavers giving the impression of gaiety. This theme is succeeded by a still more sprightly tune, and the two are developed with great exuberance until a passage of some dignity announces the theme of the nobler Londoner.

With a return of the cheerful atmosphere, the brass has some brilliant work, but soon a mood of peacefulness comes over the whole, and after a few cheeky moments, the episode representing the lovers occurs. This is followed by a new theme, which is the sole property of the couple, and the music is now strikingly tranquil and expressive, becoming still more so in the elaboration of the love scenes.

The romantic atmosphere, however, is suddenly squashed by the pert tune of the London street-boy. His theme is happily and significantly derived from that of the nobler Londoner, although the element of fun is naturally irresistible. The music becomes increasingly jerky until presently the opening theme appears fortissimo, presently associated with the lovers' theme. The noble theme now enters softly, followed by the concluding music of the lovers over arpeggio figures, the whole of this portion forming one of the most beautiful in the work.

As this serene atmosphere becomes enjoyable, the jaunty, swinging tune of a military band is heard in the distance. The lovers make several attempts to resume their peaceful conversation, but the growing activity of the urchins and approach of the band makes this impossible at the moment. The music continues to increase in intensity until at last, with a blaring splendour, the band passes by. The passage is strikingly imaginative, the din of drums, bells and triangle, the shrilling of piccolos, and the brazen tune in the brass, combine to make up a most exhilarating and realistic effect.

After the street-boys' glee has been testified, the opening theme appears under a sparkling little accompaniment. This is followed by a thump, thump, thump, that unmistakably tells of another body of musicians. This band is a stationary one, however, as the sounds come no nearer and it turns out to be a Salvation Army meeting. The tune is discordant with the accompaniment, but as soon as one makes an attempt at perfect harmony, the other obligingly shifts into a different key. Peace comes to the lovers again through the medium of a neighbouring church, the music now being engaged with contrapuntal working. The street-boy turns up again, and his theme is mingled with that of the lovers as they leave the church. The opening theme appears vigorously in the trombones, the whole being colourfully treated. The military band approaches again, and passes by with all its former swagger and magnificence.

A big ritardando passage now occurs and leads to the final statement of the nobler Londoner theme. The utmost splendour is now used, and the broad tune comes out in the full strength of the orchestra. The overture concludes with a last, vigorous reference to the opening theme. Altogether the *Cockaigne Overture* is a clever work. In places it is inclined to be rather vulgar, but that is because of Elgar's endeavours to obtain local colour of the Bank-Holiday London.

J.F. Porte 1921

Somerset Rhapsody

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)

A Somerset Rhapsody, Op. 21, was composed in 1906, the same period as the Elgar works, and was dedicated to Cecil Sharp, the renowned collector of English folksong music. It is based on three Somerset tunes found among Sharp's many collections:

It's a Rosebud in June, High Germany and The Lover's Farewell.

Capriol Suite

Peter Warlock (1894 - 1930)

'Peter Warlock' was the nom de plume of Philip Heseltine. Born in the Savoy Hotel in London and Eton educated, he was a troubled personality and committed suicide at the age of 36. It has recently been revealed that he was the father of Brian Sewell, the well known broadcaster and art critic.

He became great champion of early music and the 6 short movements of the Capriol Suite for strings are based on 16th century melodies by Thoinot Arbeau. They are named:

- 1. *Basse-Danse*
- 2. *Pavane*
- 3. *Tordion (A twisting dance)*
- 4. *Branles (A simple line or circle dance)*
- 5. *Pieds-en-l'air (feet in the air)*
- 6. *Mattachins (Sword Dance)*

The Dam Busters March

Eric Coates (1886 - 1957)

Eric Coates had apparently recently written this march, following the pattern of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, when he was asked to write music for the 1955 Dam Busters film, celebrating the raids on German dams, using the bouncing bombs devised by Barnes Wallis. The music has become so associated with the RAF itself that it has achieved an iconic status, associated with the daring raids whose 70th anniversary fell this year.

INTERVAL

Enigma Variations

Edward Elgar

This is the work that catapulted Elgar to real fame when it was first performed in 1899. He said: "I have sketched a set of Variations on an original theme. The Variations have amused me because I've labelled them with the nicknames of my particular friends ... that is to say I've written the variations each one to represent the mood of the 'party' (the person) ... and have written what I think they would have written - if they were asses enough to compose". Elgar loved puzzles and the 'Enigmas' of the title were the identity of each friend (especially Variation 13); the character traits they portrayed and also the theme itself, which was thought to be a counter-melody of a different but well-known tune. Elgar's only help to enquirers seems to have been "Auld Lang Syne won't do." You may wish to imagine each of the characters from their variation. It is dedicated to 'My Friends pictured within'.



Variation 1 (CAE).

This was his wife, Caroline Alice - and he wished it to be a tender and romantic portrait.

Variation 2 (H.D. S-P) is Huw David Stuart - Powell. He was a pianist who played chamber music with Elgar. As he sat down to play he gave a quick run over the keys. Elgar said: "it is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver passages; these should suggest a Toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.'s liking."

Variation 3 (R.B.T.) Richard Baxter Townshend was the author of the once popular Tenderfoot books. He loved amateur theatricals and Elgar caricatured his wide ranging voice here.

Variation 4 (W.M.B.) was William Meath Baker. He was a country squire whose abrupt manner is perfectly captured in this short variation. He breezes about issuing instructions and inadvertently slams the door on his way out.

Variation 5 (R.P.A.) was Richard Arnold, the son of author Matthew Arnold. Elgar wished to reflect his manner of conversation in this variation.

Variation 6 (Ysobel) portrayed Isabel Fitton was a Malvern lady who was a viola pupil of Elgar.

Variation 7 (Troyte) refers to the Malvern architect Troyte Griffith. He was a pianist with more enthusiasm than skill and there is a suggestion of a boisterous personality.

Variation 8 (W.N) is as much an image of her elegant 18th century house as well as her characteristic laugh.

Variation 9 (Nimrod) is a profound piece of music recognising the huge support Elgar received from his friend music publisher Augustus Jaeger (the German for 'hunter' is Jaeger and Nimrod was the Greek Classical huntsman, hence the title of the most famous of all the variations - an example of Elgar's love of puzzles).

Variation 10 (Dorabella). Here is Dora Penny, the daughter of the Rector of St Peter's in 1899. She is the one who fostered the connections we are celebrating tonight and to whom Elgar sent 'He banged the leather for goal.' Her slight stutter is depicted by the woodwind. Further connections in these variations are that she became Mrs. Richard Powell (see variation 2), was the stepdaughter of the sister of William Meath Baker, (variation 4) and was the sister-in-law of Richard Baxter Townsend, (variation 3).

Variation 11 (G.R.S.) George Sinclair was the organist of Hereford Cathedral from 1889 to 1918. The variation is a picture of his bulldog Dan jumping into the river Wye, paddling upstream and climbing out with a bark. Elgar comments: 'Dr Sinclair said "Set that to music!", so I did!'

Variation 12 (B.G.N) portrays Basil Nevinson - a cellist friend who it is said helped to persuade Elgar to write his cello concerto.

Variation 13 (* * *). For a long time this was only known as someone who was at sea at the time. The clarinet plays quotations from Mendelssohn's overture "A Calm Sea and a Prosperous Voyage." Dora Penny said that the variation was actually Lady Mary Lygon, who was on her way to Australia.

Variation 14 (E.D.U.)

This is a self portrait based on his wife's pet name for him (Eduard, Edoe). The music for Nimrod and his wife can be heard here because, as Elgar wrote in 1927, they were the "two great influences on the life and art of the composer". A fitting Finale.

Wolverhampton Symphonty Orchestra

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jonathan Harper
Jennie Lewis
Susan Bellingham
Ty Rowley
Sharleen Jones
Claire Shaw
Alice Harper

Violin 2

Anne Forster
Hilary Hurd
Jenny Bailey
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Michael Clement
Zoe Morris
Georgia Tulley
Philip Ward

Viola

David Cope
Alain Anderton
Liz Fleetham
Rory Freckleton
Sharon Bayley
Stephen Matthews

Cello

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

Double Bass

Joanne King
John Davies
David Charlesworth

Flute

Kathryn Russon
Diana Manasseh

Oboe

Alison Reynolds
Richard Anderson

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley

Horn

Sara Shepherd
Jill Brittle
Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper

Trumpet

Chris Cumming
Peter Atkins
Rose Chandler

Trombone

Laurence Hopper
Mike Griffiths
Bernard Moses

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Timpani

Aiden Marsden

Percussion

Sam Watson
Nathan Smith

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