

## **Future Concerts**

**Saturday, 14th March 2015**

*Rossini* - Thieving Magpie Overture

*Ireland* - Piano Concerto

Soloist: Pretra Milarova

*Dvorak* - Symphony No 9

(From the New World)

**Wolverhampton Grammar School**

**Saturday, 27th June 2015**

*An English Programme*

*Elgar* Imperial March

*Vaughn Williams* The Lark Ascending

Violin: Ros Rayner

*Britten* Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

Tenor: Tom Castle; Horn: Hazel Whitefoot

*Parry* Symphony No 3

**Wolverhampton Grammar School**

All programme details are subject to change.

**TICKETS: £9 FULL, £7 CONCESSIONS | ALL STUDENTS IN FULL TIME EDUCATION ENTER FREE**

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# *A night in concert with* **Shakespeare** 159

Weber

**Oberon Overture**

Mendelssohn

**Midsummer Night's Dream**

Shostakovich

**Hamlet**

Walton

**Richard III Suite**

Tchaikovsky

**Romeo and Juliet Overture**

**WSTO**  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**Saturday 15th November 2014 at 7.30pm**

Wolverhampton Grammar School, Compton Road,  
Wolverhampton, WV3 9RB.

**Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra**

**A Shakespeare concert at  
Wolverhampton Grammar School**

**Saturday 15th November 2014**

**Carl Maria von Weber**

**Overture to Oberon**

**Felix Mendelssohn**

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

**Interval**

**Dimitri Shostakovich**

**Hamlet**

**William Walton**

**Richard III Suite**

**Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

**Romeo and Juliet Overture**

## 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.

## Shakespeare and Music

As befits one of the world's greatest dramatists and poets, Shakespeare's work has provided huge inspiration for musicians, artists, choreographers, film makers and other writers. Apart from the works whose titles reflect the Shakespearian originals, there are many pieces which are very closely based on the themes of his plays, such as *West Side Story* (Romeo and Juliet), *The Lion King* (Hamlet), *Kiss me Kate* (The Taming of the Shrew), *Falstaff* (Henry IV and Merry Wives of Windsor). Songs from his plays, such as Thomas Arne's *Where the bee sucks* (The Tempest), or Schubert's *Where is Sylvia* (Two Gentlemen of Verona) are also well known. It is said that there are 46 operas based on The Tempest alone.

Other operatic works directly based on Shakespeare include *Otello*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Tonight's programme offers a selection of some of the music inspired by Shakespeare.

### Overture to Oberon

### Carl Maria von Weber

*Oberon* is a 3-act romantic opera in English with spoken dialogue and music by Carl Maria von Weber, a contemporary of Beethoven and Schubert. Commissioned by Covent Garden, the work received its first performance there in 1826, to great acclaim. Weber himself wasn't particularly happy with it, however. He wasn't at ease with the English libretto, which, like many of his other Singspiels such as *Der Freischütz*, contained spoken dialogue rather than recitative, but had to bow to the whims of the English paying public. Against his doctor's advice, Weber undertook the project for financial reasons. He travelled to London to complete the music before the premiere of the opera. He was already suffering from tuberculosis and the pressure of rehearsals, social engagements and composing extra numbers destroyed his health, and he died in London on 5 June 1826 aged only 39.

Imagine a tale which is a cross between Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and a medieval legend, complete with damsels in distress, knights in shining armour and a band of marauding pirates and there you have the essence of the plot of *Oberon*. Weber pioneered many of the Romantic traits in music and his mastery of orchestration and frequent use of supernatural, magical themes and chromatic harmony are very obvious in this overture.

The complete opera is not often performed, but this overture is a popular concert piece, taking its melodies from the main body of the opera. The slow introduction has its roots in fairyland, with its horn call, atmospheric strings and scurrying woodwind, but when we reach the energetic opening theme of the allegro, we are transported into the world of adventurous knights. The lyrical second theme, played by the clarinet and echoed by the strings, is followed by another lilting theme, which will return in exuberant style towards the end of the piece, when Oberon and Puck have worked their magic, perils and dangers have been overcome and everyone lives happily ever after.

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

### Felix Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1809, and died in Leipzig in 1847- another musical life cut short disappointingly early.

He composed his Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the midsummer of 1826 when he was only 17. The piece is dedicated to the Prince of Prussia. The Overture was premiered shortly after it was written, at a private concert at the Mendelssohns' home in Berlin, for piano duet and played by Felix and his sister Fanny.; The first public performance was in February 1827, in Stettin, Germany. It demonstrates at several points the sound of the braying donkey into which Bottom the weaver was transformed during the play.

Mendelssohn returned to Shakespeare's play in 1843, expanding his existing pieces to create an eleven-movement score that could be included in theatrical presentations of the play. Mendelssohn himself led the first stand-alone concert of the incidental music on May 27, 1844, in London. This concert includes four of the most popular items from Mendelssohn's "later" *Midsummer Night's Dream* music: the *Intermezzo*, *Scherzo*, *Nocturne* (with its beautiful French Horn solo), and the famous *Wedding March*.

## Hamlet

### Dimitri Shostakovich

Almost all the works written by Dimitri Shostakovich for theatre were created during the first part of his artistic career. The 1930s were especially productive in this respect. An important milestone in the composer's work was the score created by him for Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' in 1932. This was certainly no ordinary production of 'Hamlet'. The avant-garde director and designer, Nikolai Akimov, wanted a scandalously modern production -not a tragedy but a darkly absurd satire. Everything in the show was back to front: Hamlet was fat and horrible, Ophelia was a tart and Claudius was weak and likeable.

To reflect this improbable vision Shostakovich wrote one of his very finest sequences of incidental music, a long, rich and mercurial score that flickers between laughter and outrageous pomposity, with echoes of Offenbach and cabaret music, and moments of surprising and genuine pathos. From this fascinating and compelling piece he arranged a brilliant orchestral suite, op32a.

The 9 items being performed tonight are:

- |                           |                            |                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Intro and Night Patrol | 3. Fanfare and Dance Music | 4. Longing             |
| 5. The Strolling Players  | 6. Procession              | 9. Ophelia's Song      |
| 10. Cradle Song           | 11. Requiem                | 13. Fortinbras's March |

## Richard III Suite

### William Walton (1902 - 83)

William Walton was one of the foremost British composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His Shakespeare connections include the major opera Troilus and Cressida.

Walton and Laurence Olivier had met in 1936 on the set of *As You Like It* (another Shakespearean film featuring music by Walton). By 1944, when he was approached to write the film score for *Henry V*, Walton had already made a name for himself with his ceremonial and dramatic music (including *Crown Imperial March* for the coronation of George IV in 1937), and music to accompany various patriotic films during World War II. Olivier and Walton were to work together on three films: *Hamlet* (1948), *Richard III* (1955), and their most successful partnership, *Henry V* (1944).

All three film scores were highly acclaimed in their day. What made them so very successful was Walton's unerring ability to reflect the nature of each play in his music; he knew exactly how and when to heighten emotions, create tension, and provide moments of light relief. The score for *Richard III* relies heavily on pastiches of "Shakespearean-style" music, including folk songs.

1. Fanfare
2. Music plays
3. The Princes in the Tower (supposedly murdered by Richard III)
4. With Drum and Colours
5. I would I knew thy heart
6. Trumpets sound.

## Romeo and Juliet Overture

### Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The subject was suggested to Tchaikovsky by Mily Balakirev during the summer of 1869, when the two composers met in Moscow. By October Tchaikovsky had still not begun to compose the overture and wrote to Balakirev: *I did not want to write to you until I had jotted down at least something of the overture. But just imagine: I am played out completely, and not a single tolerable little musical idea will creep into my head.* However, in another letter to Balakirev at the beginning of November 1869, the composer wrote:

*My overture is coming along quite quickly; the greater part is already composed in outline and, if nothing happens to hinder me, I am hopeful that within a month and a half it will be ready. When it has emerged from my womb, you will see that, whatever else it may be, a great deal of it has been carried out in accordance with your instructions. In the first place, the overall scheme is yours: an introduction representing the friar; the struggle—allegro, and love—second theme; and secondly, the modulations are yours: the introduction is in E major, the Allegro in B minor, and the second theme in D-flat major.*

By 30 November the overture had been scored, and Tchaikovsky, calling it an Overture-Fantasy, sent its main themes to Balakirev in a letter. Balakirev wrote back: *The first theme is not at all to my taste. Perhaps when it's worked out it attains some degree of beauty, but when noted down plainly as you've sent it to me, it conveys neither beauty nor strength, and it does not even depict the character of Father Lawrence in the way required. Here there should be a sort of Lisztian chorale in an old Catholic style, similar to the Orthodox church music. As for the B minor theme you've written out, this is not a theme, but a very beautiful introduction to a theme, and after the C major rushing about there ought to be a strong, energetic melodic idea. The first D-flat major theme is beautiful, although somewhat overripe, but the second D-flat tune is simply delightful.*

While staying in Switzerland in the summer of 1870, Tchaikovsky wrote to one of his brothers back in Russia: *Am reading Little Dorrit. A work of genius! Dickens and Thackeray are the only two men I forgive for being Englishmen. One ought to add Shakespeare, but he lived when this vile nation was not so degraded. He fundamentally revised the overture, and wrote to Balakirev: In my opinion the ending is now respectable; the introduction is new; the middle section almost entirely new, and the recapitulation of the second theme (in D major) has been completely reorchestrated. This is essentially the version heard tonight and was dedicated to Balakirev.*

His opinion of the story was: *Nothing is more suitable to my musical character. No kings, no marches, no boring old grand opera. Just love, love, love! And what a delight are the secondary characters: the nurse, Laurence, Tybalt, Mercutio ... From being children heedlessly intoxicated by love, Romeo and Juliet became people, loving, suffering ...* He went on to write two more Shakespearean overtures - *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*.

**Violin 1**

Ros Rayner  
Jonathan Harper  
Ty Rowley  
Claire Shaw  
Jo Jordan  
Jennie Lewis  
Susan Bellingham  
Sarah Wynne  
Caroline Meads

**Violin 2**

Anne Forster  
Hilary Hurd  
Jenny Bailey  
Ken Hawkins  
Margaret Myatt  
Michael Clement  
Philip Ward  
Adria Dongo-Munoz

**Viola**

David Cope  
Alain Anderton  
Liz Fleetham  
Rory Freckleton  
Sharon Bayley-Kitts

**Cello**

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

**Double Bass**

John Davies  
David Charlesworth

**Flute**

Kathryn Russon  
Diana Manasseh  
Jane Eminson

**Oboe**

Rachel Orotayo  
Jane Gledhill

**Harp**

Rita Schindler

**Clarinet**

Di Cotterell  
Lynn Curtis

**Bassoon**

Jill Sparke  
Jan Riley

**Horn**

Sara Shepherd  
Jill Brittle  
Percy Cotterell  
Robin Hopper

**Trumpet**

Chris Cumming  
Peter Atkins

**Trombone**

Laurence Hopper  
Tony Miller  
Mike Griffiths

**Tuba**

Joe Barnett

**Timpani / Percussion**

Phil James  
Lee Gilbert  
Luke Taylor

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.