

Future Concerts

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

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WSO

WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Rossini - Thieving Magpie Overture

Ireland - Piano Concerto

Soloist Petra Milarova

Dvorak - Symphony No 9

(From the New World)



Saturday, 14th March 2015 7:30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School, Compton Road, WV3 9RB

TICKETS: £9 FULL, £7 CONCESSIONS | All Students in full time education enter free

All programme details are subject to change.

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

**A concert at
Wolverhampton Grammar School**

Saturday 14th March 2015

Gioachino Rossini	Thieving Magpie Overture
John Ireland	Piano concerto in E flat major

Interval

Antonin Dvořák	Symphony no 9 'From the New World'
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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

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.

Petra Milarová - piano soloist

Petra has been a prize-winner at international piano competitions (Concourse Musicale de France 2012, Citta di Barletta Young Pianist Prize and Chamber Music Prize 2011 in Italy, Smetana International Piano Competition 2010, Beethoven and Chopin Piano Competitions in the Czech Republic). She has appeared in concerts both as a soloist and a chamber musician at many varied venues in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Austria, Turkey, UK and the USA; in concertos with Czech Pilsen, Janáček, Olomouc, Turkish Hacettepe Symphonic Orchestra and English Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra; concerts with the National Theatre in Prague, British Isles Music Festival, California Summer Music, and has featured in the Ambassador's Concert Series in Prague. Petra has also recorded a CD for the InnoVatio company in Germany.

She graduated from the Janáček Conservatoire in Ostrava (studying with Monika Tugendliebová) and attended Musikhochschule Luzern where she obtained a Konzertdiplom with honours and the Edwin Fisher Prize. Whilst teaching piano at the Prague Conservatoire, she continued her studies at the Academy of Performing Arts as a student of Professor Ivan Klánský and in 2011 graduated with a Master's degree.

Petra lives in Wolverhampton and is attending a part-time PhD programme on Janáček's piano music at Birmingham Conservatoire, where she recently obtained first prize in the Peter Donohoe competition, the Renna Kellaway Piano Recital Prize and the John Ireland Prize. Petra teaches piano at Repton College and here at Wolverhampton Grammar School.

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Tonight's concert contains two of the best known pieces of 19th century romantic music and a 20th century piano concerto which deserves to be better known.

Rossini in 1868

Overture to La Gazza Ladra

Gioachino Rossini

La Gazza Ladra (The Thieving Magpie) is a 2-act melodrama, completed in 1817 when Rossini was only 25 years old. He was a contemporary of such composers as Schubert, Weber and Beethoven (whom Rossini met and who said "Ah, Rossini. So you're the composer of *The Barber of Seville*. I congratulate you. It will be played as long as Italian opera exists. Never try to write anything else but opera buffa; any other style would do violence to your nature.>").

By the age of 21, Rossini had become the idol of Italian opera audiences and such works as *The Barber of Seville* and *William Tell* reinforced his popularity. A visit to London in 1823 was reputed to have earned him the equivalent of £550 000 for a five-month residency. Although he was described as a 'genial lazybones' his output had been prodigious and his fame had spread throughout Europe. He had composed 38 operas by the age of 38 when he suddenly retired. He devoted the remaining 40 years of his life to the other great passion of his life - food. We owe the Tournedos Rossini to his inspiration. The only musical products of his later life were the delightful series of salon pieces which he called *Péchés de vieillesse* ('Sins of Old Age', 1857-68) and two sacred works, the *Stabat Mater* (1841) and his '*last mortal sin*', the *Petite Messe Solennelle* (1863) for chorus, soloists, two pianos and harmonium. He died in 1868.

He undoubtedly found composition easy - reputedly claiming '*Give me the laundress' bill and I will set it to music.*' He wrote the whole of *The Barber of Seville* in three weeks and it is said that he often composed in bed and would re-write a piece of music if the manuscript blew onto the floor.

One of the characteristic mannerisms in Rossini's orchestral scoring is a long, steady building of sound over an ostinato figure, creating what have been described as "tempests in teapots by beginning in a whisper and rising to a flashing, glittering storm." These earned him the nickname of "*Signor Crescendo*" and are often described as the "Rossini steamroller." Spot them in this overture!

John Ireland in 1929 (Jane Bown)

Piano Concerto in E flat major

John Ireland

Soloist: Petra Milarova

This was John Ireland's only concerto. It was composed in 1930, and given its first performance on 2 October of that year by its dedicatee, Helen Perkin (1909-1996), at a Promenade Concert in the Queen's Hall. The work was an immediate success, and it was frequently performed by pianists such as Clifford Curzon, Moura Lympany, and Arthur Rubinstein. It is considered to be one of the best piano concertos ever written by an Englishman, and is becoming more frequently heard these days. It has indeed featured around 30 times in the Proms, most recently in 2010.

John Ireland was born in 1879 in Bowdon, near Altrincham, Cheshire. His father was a publisher and newspaper proprietor, aged 70 at John's birth. His mother was 30 years younger but she died when John was 14, and his father died the following year. Unsurprisingly, John Ireland was described as "a self-critical, introspective man, haunted by memories of a sad childhood".

He entered the Royal College of Music in 1893 and from 1923 he taught at the Royal College of Music. His pupils there included EJ Moeran, the socialist composer Alan Bush and Benjamin Britten (who later described Ireland as possessing "a strong personality but a weak character"). From 1904 until 1926, he was organist and choirmaster at St Luke's Church, Chelsea and composed church music such as the anthem *Greater Love* which are still popular today.

He took an interest in a young student, Helen Perkin (1909-1996) and dedicated both the Piano Concerto in E flat and the *Legend* for piano and orchestra (which began life as a second concerto) to her. She gave the premiere performance of both works, but any thoughts he had for a deeper relationship with her came to nothing when she married and moved to Australia. Subsequently, Ireland withdrew the dedications.

Ireland retired in 1953, settling in the small village in Sussex, where he lived in a converted windmill for the rest of his life. He died in 1962.

The concerto has three sections. The first begins gently, described by one writer as 'unconcernedly, as if chatting to itself'. Eventually a sparkling theme appears on trumpets and clarinet and much of the movement is based on the opening material. A slow movement follows (*Lento espressivo*) in beautifully lyrical meditative style and this leads straight on without a break into a lively and jolly Rondo. The first episode (with a change of time and mood) is again thoughtful and gentle. There is a lively ending.

Dvorak

Symphony No. 9 'From the New World' Antonin Dvořák

The iconic nature of Dvořák's last symphony led it apparently to be taken to the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969. It was composed in 1893 while he was spending three years as the Director of the National Conservatory of Music of America.

Dvořák was born in Bohemia in 1841 and success came slowly to him. He was a violinist in the Czech Provisional Theatre until 1871, when he resigned to try to build a career as a composer. In 1874, 1876 and 1877 he won the Austrian State Prize for composition and came to the attention of Brahms and the influential critic Edouard Hanslick. His Slavonic Dances further enhanced his reputation and he became known abroad, taking up a commission for a *Stabat Mater* at the Royal Albert Hall in 1880 and conducting concerts in London, including the commissioned work *Symphony No. 7*.

He became a professor at the Prague Conservatoire in 1891, in which year he also came to Birmingham for the premiere of his *Requiem* and said 'I am here in this immense industrial city, where they make excellent knives, scissors, springs, files and goodness knows what else - and besides these, music too! And how well! It's terrifying how much the people here manage to achieve.'

In 1892 Dvořák became Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City and in the following year was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to write *Symphony No. 9 From the New World*. The Conservatory was enlightened enough to admit black musicians and women as well as white men and Dvořák was fascinated by Native American music and the African-American spirituals he had heard in the USA. An African-American student, Harry T. Burleigh, later a composer himself, who sang traditional spirituals to him said that Dvořák had absorbed their 'spirit' before writing his own melodies. Dvořák stated:

'I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States. These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them.'

In fact Dvořák went on to reveal that he had 'not actually used any of the [Native American] melodies. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, counterpoint, and orchestral colour. It was another of his students, William Fisher, who later turned the famous spiritual-like theme of the second movement into a new spiritual song about *Going Home*. Dvořák returned from the United States in 1895 and died in 1904

The symphony is remarkable for a number of features. The differences between Czech and American folk song are blurred. Many of the themes betray as much mid-European influence as American. What is particularly interesting is the way Dvořák combines the various elements he has chosen to use, so that various melodies and their accompaniments or harmonic progressions recur throughout. For instance, after the slow introduction the two main themes of the first movement—the upward-thrusting theme on the horns that begins the *Allegro molto* and the later, spiritual-like melody (solo flute) are heard. Both are recalled in the movements that follow. In the second movement, both themes are placed in counterpoint with the *Largo*'s own theme in a striking fortissimo climax; in the third movement, the themes from the first movement appear in the transition between sections and, most notably, in the coda. In the stormy finale, which develops its own severe new theme (horns and trumpets), melodies from all three previous movements are recalled at the end of the development section, and saturate the coda, to the point that the finale becomes a kind of synthesis or grand summary of the whole symphony.

The emotional centrepiece of the "New World" Symphony is certainly the *Largo*, which, despite its fame, still sounds fresh and original. Its pastoral and elegiac tone and almost heartbreaking poignancy evoke unforgettably America's vast, desolate prairies, in which Dvořák found not only beauty but also sadness, even despair. Throughout the *Largo*, Dvořák's orchestration offers one extraordinary texture and sonority after another.

The third movement is a kind of scherzo and trio, which begins with a Beethoven-like flourish and goes on to include dance music reminiscent of the Viennese *Ländler*, so beloved by Mahler. As outlined above the fourth movement sums everything up in a wonderful riot of sound.

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jonathan Harper
Anne Forster
Ty Rowley
Jo Jordan
Jennie Lewis
Susan Bellingham
Sarah Wynne
Caroline Meads
Sharleen Jones

Violin 2

Claire Shaw
Hilary Hurd
Ken Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Michael Clement
Philip Ward
Adria Dongo-Munoz
Amy Price

Viola

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

Cello

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

Double Bass

John Davies
David Charlesworth

Flute

Kathryn Russon
Diana Manasseh

Oboe

Rachel Orotayo
Jane Gledhill

Cor anglais

Jane Gledhill

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Lynn Curtis

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Jan Riley

Horn

Sara Shepherd
Jill Brittle
Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper

Trumpet

Chris Cumming
Paul Dyson

Trombone

Laurence Hopper
Mike Griffiths
Bernard Moses

Tuba

Joe Barnett

Timpani

Matt Firkins

Percussion

Nathan Smith
Peter Rayner

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.