



WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday
18 November 2017
7.30pm

Conductor: *Peter Morris*
Leader: *Ros Rayner*

Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue

Soloist: Alastair Moseley

Finzi: Clarinet Concerto

Soloist: Anton Clarke-Butler

Brahms: Symphony No. 1



Wolverhampton Grammar School

Compton Road, Wolverhampton, WV3 9RB

TICKETS: £9 FULL | Available on the door

All students in full time education enter free

Email: info@wolsymorc.org.uk Tel: 07977 122768 (Ian Sumner)

For further information visit us on our website: www.wolsymorc.org.uk

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Saturday November 18th 2017

Rhapsody in Blue – George Gershwin

(Soloist Alastair Moseley)

Clarinet Concerto – Gerald Finzi

(Soloist Anton Clarke – Butler)

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 1 - Johannes Brahms

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WSO was formed in 1973. Membership is around 55 players and is drawn from keen amateur musicians, students and teachers in Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas. The orchestra meets weekly during term time and produces around 4 concerts a year, as well as an annual play-day focussing on a major work and attracting musicians from far and wide. We have also accompanied City of Wolverhampton Choir in recent concerts.

We are financed through subscriptions and are affiliated to *Making Music*, and have a partnership arrangement with the city's Music Education Hub.

WSO is very grateful to Wolverhampton Grammar School for their help with the use of Instruments.

Peter Morris – Musical Director

Peter has conducted the orchestra in more than 50 concerts since 2004. After Chetham's School in Manchester and a Durham Music degree he came to Walsall in 1969 as Director of Music at Blue Coat School. He has a Master's degree in History from Keele, a Medaille d'honneur of the French National Association of Music, is an Associate of the Royal College of Organists, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors. Last year he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of Wolverhampton University for services to music.

Peter is Director of Music at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton, Chair of Wolverhampton Music Education Hub, Organist and curator of the organs of Walsall Town Hall and Darlaston Town Hall, Organist for the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Visiting Practical Examiner for A-level Music, Chief Examiner for A-level General Studies, Principal Examiner for GCSE General Studies and a Moderator for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

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 Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra in 1996.

Ros teaches at Wolverhampton Girls' High School and tutors the first violins in Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra.

Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)

This piece is best known for its fusion of jazz rhythms with classical music and premiered on February 12, 1924, as part of bandleader Paul Whiteman's "An Experiment in Modern Music" concert in New York. The composition, perhaps Gershwin's most famous, is one of the most performed of all American concert works, and its opening clarinet glissando is one of the most recognized musical passages in the world.



George Gershwin, working on the score for *Porgy and Bess*, 1935.

Legend has it that Gershwin completely forgot that Whiteman had commissioned a work from him. It is said that Ira, George's brother, read in a newspaper that Whiteman would soon put on a concert of works by Victor Herbert, Irving Berlin, and a jazz concerto by George Gershwin. When Ira asked his brother about the new piece, George was astonished. He remembered talking with Whiteman about a concerto, but he had not realised that it was expected for performance at that concert. Gershwin had only five weeks left before the premiere. He began composing the new concerto immediately. Because he needed to travel to Boston for the opening of his newest musical, the main theme of *Rhapsody in Blue* was actually written on the train from New York. The composer later claimed: "It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang that is often so stimulating to a composer (I frequently hear music in the very heart of noise) that I suddenly heard—and even saw on paper—the complete construction of the *Rhapsody* from beginning to end. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America - our vast melting pot, our unduplicated national energy, our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had the definite plot of the piece."

Gershwin worked quickly, sketching out the ensemble parts of the piece at the piano, then handing over the score to Whiteman's arranger, who orchestrated it. Thanks to their team effort, the band's parts were ready in time, but the solo piano

part was not yet on paper. It existed only in the composer's mind, and at the first performance Gershwin played it from memory. Regardless, the concert was a triumph. An American classic was born.

Alastair Moseley – Piano Soloist began playing piano at the age of 5 and was only 6 when he gave his first public piano duet performance. Not long after starting piano lessons, Alastair took up the clarinet and these two instruments have been of equal importance in his musical career ever since. Alastair gave his first concerto performance with the Redditch Orchestra in 1984 with Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto. His subsequent piano concerto performances have included Mozart Concertos and Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Beethoven's 1st and 3rd Concertos with the Sinfonia of Birmingham, Mozart's Concerto No 21 and Mendelssohn's 1st Concerto with the Knowle Sinfonia and Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with Junction 10 Orchestra. In 2005 he was soloist in both Rhapsody in Blue and Copland's Clarinet Concerto in the same concert with WSO, commemorating American Independence Day. Other piano concertos with WSO include Shostakovich's 2nd concerto, Mozart K491 and Gershwin's Concerto.

Alastair is Principal Clarinetist with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of St John. He is also a trustee of two competitions that enable young musicians to develop their performance skills. His 'day job' is as a civil engineer and consultant on water and environmental management; he is well known in the Water Industry as a speaker and author on water and environmental management affairs.

Concerto for Clarinet and Strings

Gerald Finzi (1901-56)

1. Allegro vigoroso 2. Adagio ma senza rigore 3. Rondo.



Gerald Finzi was one of those composers of the generation of Vaughan Williams and Butterworth who wrote with a distinctly English accent. It is to do with their melodic and harmonic gifts, their affinity with the English language, and above all their love

for folk music and the glories of Tudor music. So many of the cadences in Finzi's music reflect the clashes between lines which also appeared in the music of Tallis, Byrd and Gibbons. The composer's official website says "*The Clarinet Concerto, Finzi's most widely performed and recorded orchestral work, shows his particular empathy for this solo instrument. Here the clarinet's equal facility for sustained legato melody and rapid virtuosic figuration is supported by and interacts with his ever-imaginative writing for strings. The concerto breathes an air of fresh spontaneity, moving through baroque-inflected pastoralism, aching Elgarian echoes and lively folk-inspired melody.*"

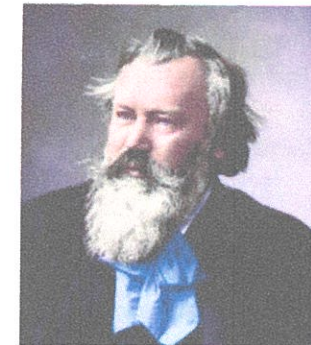
Anton Clarke – Butler - Clarinet Soloist is in his final year at Birmingham Royal Conservatoire. Anton has played several times with WSO and he has also played with the CBSO, Welsh National Opera, and Birmingham Royal Ballet as part of the Conservatoire's Training Schemes. He has appeared as the soloist in the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, and Bernstein's Prelude, Fugue and Riffs. He describes himself as a "Passionate Pedagogue".

INTERVAL

Symphony No 1 in C minor, Op 68

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

1. Un poco sostenuto. Allegro 2. Andante sostenuto
3. Un poco allegretto e grazioso 4. Adagio. Allegro non troppo, ma con brio



Brahms completed the First Symphony in September 1876. It was first performed on November 4 that year and Brahms himself conducted it in Mannheim three days later. Brahms was first compared with Beethoven in a review of his music by Schumann. Beethoven had died 6 years before Brahms was born. As a result, Brahms felt he should compose a symphony and he started to work on a possible piece. He

lacked the confidence to produce a large scale orchestral piece and it was not until 22 years later that the composer completed the Symphony in C Minor.

Why did it take Brahms so long to finish a symphony? The answer lies in the influence of Beethoven. The figure of Beethoven loomed over the entire 19th century. He was studied, admired, misunderstood, emulated and canonized, not only by every composer, but also by other artists. The image of Beethoven, as the great liberator of art from the constraints of classicism, became a rallying cry for the self-consciously free spirit of romanticism. In 1870 he had said, "I shall never compose a symphony! You have no idea how the likes of us feel when we hear the tramp of a giant like him behind us."

Brahms has been called the only composer who really understood the balance of classic and romantic in Beethoven. He knew what others failed to realize—that writing a free-spirited symphony was not a profound response to the implications of Beethoven's music. Brahms would not allow himself superficial emulation of the Bonn master. It took him all those years to find a way to cope with the implications of his predecessor, to keep classicism and romanticism in balance and yet to remain original.

When the C Minor Symphony was first performed, conductor Hans von Bülow dubbed it "The Tenth," thereby declaring Schumann's prophecy fulfilled. Bülow recognized the affinity between the two great composers who, reaching across the intervening half century of romanticism, established contact as romantic classicists.

The First Symphony, for example, works on a tightly constructed musical logic, which is never quite spontaneous. Brahms was too self-critical to be spontaneous. A further aspect of romanticism that could not fail to touch Brahms was its brooding melancholy. Thus the First Symphony contains restless music, especially in its first movement.

The symphony opens with a powerful slow introduction, in which several fragments of themes are presented, but part-formed, indistinctly in the swirling clouds, as it were. These form the basis for the main themes of the allegro proper, in which the tunes stand out hard and stark, like jagged mountain peaks. The development of these themes is complex and subtle, passionate and stormy, but there is a surprise at the end - the movement closes with a coda in the calm sunlight of C major, all passion spent (for the time being).

The slow movement which follows is in the distant key of E major, and begins with a long melody at first on the violins, later taken over by the oboe. This movement is really a long song, which rises to several soaring climaxes, where both strings and woodwind offer new angles on the melody. Towards the end a solo violin both shares the melody and adds its own distinctive decoration.

The gentle allegretto, though it rises to quite a climax in the middle, is largely a respite from the drama so far.

The drama is resolved in the magnificent finale which, like the first movement, begins with a slow introduction which presents shadows of the themes which are to form the real argument. After a stormy C minor section, we reach C major with a glorious horn melody, echoed by the flute. A solemn chorale on the trombones (Brahms has kept them in reserve for this moment) leads into the main allegro section, whose noble melody bears a passing resemblance to the "Ode to Joy" theme from Beethoven's Choral symphony. The material is developed richly and with power and energy. Towards the end the tempo accelerates, and is only interrupted by a reprise of the trombone chorale - this time fortissimo on full orchestra - in its drive to an exultant conclusion.

Forthcoming Events

March 17th 2018 [Wolverhampton Grammar School](#)

Ernest Tomlinson: Suite of English Folk Dances

Another work – to be confirmed

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade

June 23rd 2018 [Wolverhampton Grammar School](#)

Music for the Dance

Arturo Marques: Danzon no 2

Amilcare Ponchielli: Dance of the Hours

Igor Stravinsky: Firebird Suite

Johann Strauss: Blue Danube Waltz

Carl Maria von Weber: Invitation to the Dance

Alexander Borodin: Polovtsian Dances

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1	Viola	Flute	Horn
Ros Rayner	David Cope	Jane Eminson	Sara Shepherd
Jonathan Harper	Alain Anderton	Di Manasseh	Jill Brittle
Susan Bellingham	Sharon Bayley-Kitts		Percy Cotterell
Francis Bunch	Michael Cooper	Oboe	Robin Hopper
Jo Jordan	Elizabeth Fleetham	Rachel Orotayo	
Jennifer Lewis	Rory Freckleton	Jane Gledhill	Trumpet
Margaret Mascerenhas	Rhiannon Watts-Robinson	Ella Pearson	Chris Cummings
Caroline Meads			Cameron Chin See
Stephen Shelley	Cello	Clarinet	
Sarah Wynne	Sarah Tulley	Lynn Curtis	Trombone
	Margaret Bell	Ros Jacom	Mike Griffiths
Violin 2	Sarah Carter		Laurence Hopper
Claire Norden	Michael Crockett	Bass Clarinet	
Jenny Bailey	Fiona Daniel	Huw Daniel	Bass Trombone
Suzanne Barratt	Janey Harold		Bernard Moses
Joanne Bircher	Sheila Moore	Saxophone	
Sarah Chatterley	Natalie Reynolds	Michael Cooper	Tuba
Claire Clarkson	Ian Sumner	Caitlin Lacey	Joe Barnett
Michael Clement	Jean Waller	Joanne Bircher	
Anne Forster			Percussion
Ken Hawkins	Double Bass	Bassoon	Stephen Plummer
Hilary Hurd	David Charlesworth	Michael Darke	Jerome Blackburn
Emma Micklewright	Holly Anderson	Sean Massey	
	William Hollands	Janet Riley (Contra)	
Philip Ward	Aron Jakob		