



WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday 16 March 2019

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7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grammar School

Compton Road

Wolverhampton

WV3 9RB

Conductor: Peter Morris

Leader: Ros Rayner

Soloist: Philip Handy

TICKETS: £9

Available on the door

All students in full time
education enter free

Ravel

Bolero

Walton

Cello Concerto

Franck

Symphony in D Major



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Saturday March 16th 2019

Bolero – Maurice Ravel

Cello Concerto – William Walton

Soloist - Philip Handy

Symphony in D minor – César Franck

Conductor – Peter Morris

*This concert is given in memory of Glyn Davies,
for many years a valued cellist in WSO and a friend of many of
tonight's players.*

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. The orchestra has also accompanied a number of local choral societies.

The orchestra is financed through subscriptions, affiliated to *Making Music*, and has a partnership arrangement with the city's Music Education Hub.

Peter Morris – Musical Director has conducted the orchestra for the last 15 years. He is an A-level Chief Examiner, Borough Organist of Walsall Town Hall and chairs Wolverhampton's Music Education Hub. He has degrees from Durham and Keele Universities as well as fellowships from Wolverhampton University, the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors and the Royal Society of Arts. He was awarded the Medaille d'honneur de la Confédération Musicale de France in 2000.

Ros Rayner – Leader studied the violin at the Royal Academy of Music and was appointed leader of the Symphony Orchestra in 1996. She teaches at Wolverhampton Girls' High School and tutors the first violins in Wolverhampton Youth Orchestra.

Philip Daish-Handy - Soloist has entertained audiences across the world. Philip came to prominence after winning the prestigious Music at Beaulieu Competition in 2005. This led to solo performances at the Wigmore Hall; Steinway Hall; Adrian Boult Hall; Coda Hall; and Symphony Hall. Other notable competition successes include the Birmingham Strings Prize, the Rollason Award, the Sylvia Cleaver Chamber Prize, the Ludlow Philharmonic prize, and second prize in the 2010 Delius Competition. He then went on to win the prestigious Symphony Hall Recital Prize in 2010.

As a solo artist, Philip has played all the major cello concertos with orchestras throughout the UK. He holds several important teaching positions for the West Berkshire Cello Academy, the National Chamber Music Course and Yorkshire Young Sinfonia.

Philip has released several CDs, including 'The Romantic Cello vol I and II', on VIF Records, receiving outstanding reviews. Recently he has released two encore CDs with Martin Penrose and a celebrated performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto. Future recording releases include the Haydn Concertos. Philip regularly performs as a soloist on the Queen Mary 2, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth for the Cunard Line. 173

PROGRAMME

Boléro

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)

Ravel was among the most successful composers of his age and brought to French Impressionist style of Debussy an exotic Spanish flavour which can be traced to his birth in the Basque town of Biarritz, close to the Spanish border. It has been pointed out that he was, internationally, the most celebrated French composer of the 1920s and 30s.

He was a pupil at the Paris Conservatoire, where his teacher Fauré regarded his work highly. In his turn, as he became famous, he taught Ralph Vaughan Williams.

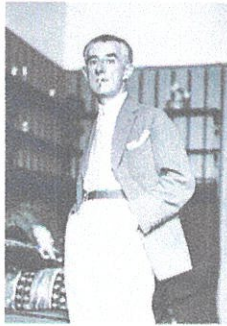
During the period from 1910 to the outbreak of war he composed two operas and 3 ballets, and was present, with Debussy, at the first performances of *The Rite of Spring*, by Stravinsky, who said that Ravel was the first person to understand this difficult work.

The war took its toll on him. He enlisted as a lorry driver and during the war period he was also deeply affected by his mother's death. He fell into what was described as a "horrible despair", as a result of the distress he felt at the suffering endured by France during the war.

Much of his work after the war comprised brilliant orchestrations of his own piano music, or other people's music – such as Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Jazz became increasingly important to him in the 1920s.

In 1928 came *Boléro*, which was written for Ida Rubenstein's Parisian ballet company. He described it as "an experiment in a very special and limited direction ... a piece lasting seventeen minutes and consisting wholly of orchestral tissue without music." The work, he said, was "one long, very gradual crescendo. There are no contrasts, and there is practically no real invention except the plan and the manner of the execution – the themes

are altogether impersonal" He also said, with typical self-deprecation, "I've written only one masterpiece – *Boléro*. Unfortunately there's no music in it." The photo shows Ravel in the year of *Boléro*.



Cello Concerto (1956)

William Walton (1902 – 83)

Sir William Walton was born in Oldham (now part of Greater Manchester) and at the age of 10 became a chorister of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. At the age of 16 he became an undergraduate at Oxford University, but left in 1920 without a degree. For the next ten years, he spent much of his time with the famous Sitwell family, including Edith, the writer Osbert and poet Sacheverell. This opened up a whole world of opportunity and composition which led to such works as the *Façade Suite* of 1923, *Viola Concerto* of 1929, *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931). There followed 2 symphonies and much film music (including Shakespearian films of *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*).

The Cello Concerto dates from 1956 and was written for, and dedicated to, the famous cellist Pyatigorsky. It was written in Walton's home on Ischia, an idyllic island near Sorrento.

1. *Moderato*

The movement begins unexpectedly with a gentle and expressive cello melody over a quaver pizzicato accompaniment, both of which elements dominate the movement. There is a secondary theme, marked *tranquillo*, which has descending patterns of semiquavers over the quavers and eventually the first theme returns over a woodwind accompaniment. The movement ends with 10 quiet bars of C major.

2. *Allegro appassionato*

The key of the second movement is more ambiguous and the music moves much more quickly. The movement has been described as "a typically Waltonian firework display". It is a scherzo - the most substantial and highly organised of the three movements as well as its emotional core.

There are two unaccompanied cadenza-like sections before the orchestra re-enters and the movement evaporates quietly over a rising virtuosic cello phrase.

3. *Tema ed improvvisazioni*

The music returns to C major for this finale. It has a theme with four "improvisations" loosely based on elements of the theme, and an extended coda. There is an elaborate theme for high cello over a string pizzicato section, followed by a link for the solo cello taking us into the first improvisation. Here the outline of the theme is given in the strings with exotic interventions from xylophone, celesta, and harp. Against this is a cello counter-melody in triplet rhythms. The second improvisation is a virtuoso display for the soloist alone, marked *briso* (vivaciously). This section serves as the usual concerto cadenza. The third improvisation has been described as "a brilliant orchestral toccata", without the soloist. The fourth improvisation is also for unaccompanied cello, is marked "rhapsodically" (*rapsodicamente*), and has wide fluctuations of speed; it ends with high trills, which merge into the final coda.



Sir William Walton

INTERVAL

Symphony in D minor

César Franck (1822 – 90)

How do you solve the problem of a symphony?

The history of the symphony, stretching from Haydn and his contemporaries to the present day, has been a curious journey with many differing destinations. The classical symphony of the 1750s, with 3 movements (Fast, Slow, Fast) expanded firstly through the addition of a dance movement (Minuet, then Scherzo), then through the standardisation of the opening Sonata form movement with its repeated exposition, development and recapitulation. Beethoven then added an extra movement in No 6 and a choral finale in No. 9. Through the 19th century, Berlioz and others moved towards linking movements by using the same thematic material, and Franck was among the innovators of the form. His only symphony (1888) was held together by the device of using related material in each of its (only) three movements. Many of Franck's other works also use this "cyclic form", a method used to achieve unity across multiple movements.

The first movement begins with a slow theme consisting of 2 short phrases and a continuation. This forms the basis of the whole piece. Soon, there is a ferocious version of the opening material, followed again by a transposed repetition of the opening. From these fragments the whole architecture of this movement is derived.

There follows a beautiful slow movement, with the opening cor anglais theme, accompanied by pizzicato strings. The textures are very reminiscent of Brahms, and the harmony of Wagner, but much of the solo tone is reminiscent of the tone colours of organ stops. There is a feeling of a gentle scherzo here too, where the clarinets and cellos play an allegretto theme, followed by descending woodwind chromatic themes which re-appear in Franck's organ Chorales of 1890.

The Finale, largely in D major, has a number of references to themes we have already heard. There are canons reminiscent of the violin sonata finale (the best canon of them all!) and just before the end a section which again refers to his Chorales – identical in texture and harmony.

From a very compact group of themes, an expansive and frequently exciting symphony emerges.



César Franck

Forthcoming WSO Concerts at Wolverhampton Grammar School

Saturday June 22nd

Vaughan Williams *The Wasps*
Canteloube *Songs of the Auvergne*
Mahler *Symphony No. 4*
Soloist: Naomi Berry

Saturday Nov 23rd

Bernstein *Overture, Candide*
Warlock *Capriol Suite*
Elgar *Overture: In the South*
Rakhmaninov: *Symphony No. 1*

Saturday March 14th 2020

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 1*
Hummel: *Trumpet Concerto*
Soloist Cameron Chin-See
Mendelssohn: *Symphony No 5:*
The Reformation

Saturday June 27th

Grleg: *Peer Gynt Suite*
Kodaly: *Hary Janos Suite*
Prokofiev: *Symphony No 5*

Other Concerts

Saturday 13th April

Wombourne Choral Society
City of Wolverhampton Choir
St John's-in-the- Square

Verdi *Requiem*

Saturday 13th July

Wombourne Choral Society
90th Anniversary Gala Concert
Wolverhampton Grammar School

Saturday 15th June

Wolverhampton Chamber Choir
St John's-in-the- Square
Bach: *Magnificat*
Cantatas Nos 6 and 11

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1	Viola	Flute	Horn
Ros Rayner	David Cope	Jane Eminson	Sara Shepherd
Jonathan Harper	Alain Anderton	Di Manasseh	Jill Brittle
Suzanne Barrett	Sharon Bayley-Kitts	Piccolo	Percy Cotterell
Susan Bellingham	Michael Clement	Claire Lakin	Robin Hopper
Francis Bunch	Elizabeth Fleetham	Oboe	Joe Clarkson
Margaret Mascarenhas	Rory Freckleton	Rachel Orotayo	Trumpet
Caroline Meads		Marion Holland	Chris Cumming
Stephen Shelley	Cello	(+ Cor Anglais)	Cameron Chin-See
Sarah Wynne	Ian McCarthy	Lyndall Bausor Harris	David Rutt
	Margaret Bell	(+ Oboe d'amore)	Trombone
Violin 2	Sarah Carter	Clarinet	Mike Griffiths
Hilary Hurd	Sheila Moore	Lynn Curtis	Laurence Hopper
Jenny Bailey	Ian Sumner	Ros Jacom	Bernard Moses
Joanne Bircher	Jean Waller	David Beacham (Bass)	Tuba
Barbara Bostock		Bassoon	Joe Barnett
Claire Clarkson	Double Bass	Michael Darke	Percussion
Anne Forster	Sharleen Jones	Sean Massey	Ian Richards
Ken Hawkins	Holly Anderson	Contra Bassoon	Nathan Smith
Zoë Morris	Guillermo Arevalos	Chris Long	Jake Allen
Holly Sides		Saxophone	Matthew Monaghan
Philip Ward	Harp	Joanne Bircher	Celesta
	Lizzie Peacock	Liz Jenkins	Tony Pinel