



An untimely end to our 51st Season...BUT the memories linger on...

One of the enduring themes amongst classical music composers is a tendency for there to be an 'unfinished symphony'. Our experience has been an 'unfinished season' and an 'unfinished Mahler journey'. Little could we have known at our President's concert on February 29th, we would not be able to complete our season and experience, what surely would have been the highlight of our Mahler cycle, performing his majestic awe-inspiring Choral work – Symphony No 8 at the iconic Bridgewater Hall. Our 2020 Proms in the Park concert (May 23rd) as well as our July 18th concert, became victims of the coronavirus. We were so looking forward to welcoming Ellena Newton and her trombone for Rimsky Korsakov's Trombone Concerto and to have concluded our season with Shostakovich's 'The Gadfly'; surely 'Romance' is one of the most loved pieces of music. On July 18th we will upload the entire concert programme to the WSO and The Virtual Concert Hall Facebook pages for you to enjoy at your leisure. For those who on our email circulation list we will share the links with you electronically.

WSO Chairman, Matthew Ellis, reflects on the highlights of a curtailed season '*Despite the disappointments, we can look back on our 51st season and three wonderful concerts. The high spots have to be the young soloists we welcomed. Having Tom Blomfield (November) return to the orchestra and play the Strauss Oboe Concerto amongst friends before recording it in London was special. It was always clear that Tom has a special talent and to share the stage with him was amazing! What you might not know is that you were party to an exceedingly rare performance – Strauss didn't like the original ending of the concerto and re-wrote it. The original version is NEVER played and for some reason, the publisher sent the original score rather than the later version that we needed. Tom learnt the original ending and so we were able to present a rare performance of the ORIGINAL version of Richard Strauss' Oboe Concerto! Sophie Rosa's wonderful performance of the Lark Ascending was also a highlight - her performance was special and beautiful, and we are so lucky to have musicians of that quality and capability wanting to play with us. It was great to play in front of a packed house in January with the Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra. I know that some people wanted and expected more Harry Potter, but, come on! How anyone could not have enjoyed that vibrant, exciting, educational showpiece of orchestral music is beyond me. Then, to follow that up with Luke Jones' (February) performance of Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto – wow! Local talent at its absolute best.*



Clockwise (L to R)

Sophie Rosa

Russell Gray, Matthew Ellis,
Tom Blomfield, Maria
Hinfelaar, Sophie Rosa, and
Rebecca Griffiths

Tom Blomfield

Rob Walsh, Luke Jones, Maria
Hinfelaar and Claire Taylor

WSO in January 2020

Luke Jones

Our President and Chairman have a special message for us...

At these difficult times, I am more conscious than ever of how important partnerships are for our university. Our links with Wrexham Symphony Orchestra are a good example of that. Music has the power to lift spirits and bring people together. One of my fondest memories is the joint Gala Concert in February 2018, when we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our university and the 20th year for WSO as our Orchestra-in-Residence. We had students and staff involved in the production of promotion materials, and visuals on stage. But that memory was emulated by the recent pre-lockdown concert last February featuring our own Luke Jones as a solo performer, and the sheer exuberance and dark drama of *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz. I am so looking forward to a return of normality, with plenty of music!

Professor Maria Hinfelaar – Honorary President

Uncertainty surrounds our 52nd season, but we are busy making plans. We are hoping to bring Dvorak's 9th Symphony "From the New World" to you on the 29th November with Stephen Threlfall, before a change of pace in February with Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto with Will Bracken when we also perform Sibelius' popular and spacious Symphony no. 5. May sees a new face to the podium with Mareika Gray for a Bank holiday Spectacular of music before we draw to a close with Leon Bosch guiding us through an exhibition of artwork with Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* in a concert which we hope will see the return of Fenella Humphrey's, performing Korngold's Violin concerto.

We all feel short-changed this season, but we will be over-flowing with even more music next season!

Matthew Ellis - Chairman

Our successful project in a collaboration with Pendine Park

Arts
& Business
Cymru



Parc Pendine
Gofal Goleuedig



Throughout 2019 we have been supporting the Pendine Park Care Home Enrichment programme in a collaboration which has been supported by Arts & Business Cymru and Cobalz Limited, the sponsor of our Mahler Charitable Concert Series. WSO Member Jacqui Blore, supported by a number of musicians, has presented a series of themed creative and performance workshops, bringing the residents own stories to life with appropriate music and songs. We were invited to submit the project for consideration in the Arts & Business Cymru 2020 Awards programme. Jacqui comments, *'It's been a fantastic project and is something I really hope we can continue to develop in the future'*. Sarah Edwards, Artist in Residence at Pendine Park is equally keen for the work to continue, *'The response we had from the residents is amazing and we have had full engagement by them and the staff at Pendine'*. We were delighted that Rachael Priamo undertook some research into the programme as part of her PhD work at Bangor University which was well received and greatly appreciated. We are now waiting to learn if we have made the short list in the Health category. Keep watching this space – the awards ceremony is in October in Cardiff and subject to the ongoing issues around Covid 19. Below is a selection of photographs from the workshop sessions.



WSO Concert Diary – 52nd Concert Season

Please note: All concerts subject to the Covid 19 Situation

Sunday November 29th, 2020 William Aston Hall 3.30pm	Sunday February 28th, 2021 William Aston Hall 3.30pm	Saturday July 17th, 2021 William Aston Hall 7.30pm
<p>Whole Family Concert</p> <p>Programme Korngold: The Sea Hawk Barber: Knoxville 1915 Dvorak: Symphony No. 9 (New World Symphony)</p> <p>Conductor Stephen Threlfall Director of Music at Chethams School of Music Manchester</p> <p>Soloist: TBC</p>	<p>President's Annual Concert</p> <p>Programme Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4 Sibelius: Symphony No. 5</p> <p>Conductor Jonathan Small Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra</p> <p>Soloist William Bracken (Piano)</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE STILL FINALISING CONCERT DETAILS FOR SATURDAY MAY 1st 2021</p>	<p>Music for a Summer Evening</p> <p>Programme Mussorgsky Night on the Bare Mountain, Glazunov Violin Concerto Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition</p> <p>Conductor Leon Bosch</p> <p>Soloist Fenella Humphreys (Violin)</p>

What have we been up to since the impact of Covid 19, back in March?



We may not have been able to rehearse or perform concerts but that does not mean we have not been busy. Before the lockdown was official, we launched a new Facebook page called The Virtual Concert Hall with the aim of sharing a wide range of music and entertainment. Each day a full schedule of links is provided for followers to enjoy between 8am and 10pm and we have built a membership of nearly 700. We have also been on a virtual holiday to parts of Europe and Asia enjoying some of the 'local' music and history.

We have continued to support Ty Pawb's exciting and innovative Arts at Home initiative through providing occasional Live Music Showcase concerts virtually. A number of local musicians have provided You Tube items for us to share.

The Holroyd Community Theatre at Moreton Hall School was scheduled to open officially in Spring, and we have supported the HCTogether team create and develop a virtual offering of entertainment ranging from musical theatre, choral events, performance theatre and chamber music. Future plans include singer songwriter events and some live streaming performances in the autumn.

Llangollen 2020 went virtual and we have been supporting their efforts to bring the Virtual Llangollen Eisteddfod 2020 alive to a wider audience through sharing their competition. During the Eisteddfod week we shared the daily programmes broadcast through their exclusive You Tube and Llangollen TV channels.

These initiatives form part of our wider community engagement programme.

Our Andrew Lansom Young Musicians of the Year - Where are they now?

David Pfeiffer

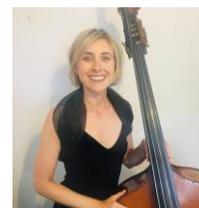


2003 - Violin

'Bethan, our children (Owen (9), Gwennan (7), William (6) and Ffion (3)) and I live in Cheltenham and have done for the past 8 years. We moved there for me to begin work in pastoral ministry, and I am now the minister of Whaddon Road Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Despite having lived in England for the last 17 years, you will see that I have maintained our Welsh roots in the names of our children! I loved my time with Wrexham Symphony Orchestra. The highlight was playing Shostakovich's 5th Symphony and I credit my time with the orchestra as the beginning of my enjoyment of his work. I was able to play the violin in three small groups at Cambridge and we are encouraging all our children to enjoy and play music. Bethan runs a children's choir which has grown significantly in the last few years. May the work of WSO go from strength to strength!'

Laura performed with the Orchestra in the Double Bass section and began studying the bass aged 17 with Richard Lewis of the LPO. During her undergraduate Music degree at the University of Nottingham, she studied with Thomas Millar (CBSO), following which she studied a Master's with Kevin Rundell at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Laura subsequently enjoyed a year in Southbank Sinfonia, and went on to participate in the Hallé/RNCM String Leadership Scheme. She had a successful freelance career before joining the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in 2018, and then becoming a member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in February 2020. Laura comments about her time with the Orchestra *'Needless to say, the WSO was there at the start of my journey into music. I am so glad the orchestra is still going, and I do hope it continues to go from strength to strength beyond these current circumstances.'* Laura likes getting outdoors with hiking, rock climbing and mountaineering always hitting the spot.

Laura Murphy



2006
Double Bass

Iolo McGregor



2005 - Cello

Following university at King's College London, achieving a BA(Hons) in History, Iolo has worked for Denbighshire County Council for ten years and now has the role of Strategic Planning Team Leader. *'Last year I married my partner of then 6 years, an American PhD student of Medieval Studies at Leeds, Natalie Anderson. Together we have spent four years renovating a small house in the countryside outside of Cynwyd, south Denbighshire, where we live very happily with our cat, Algernon. The time given to building (breaking the little finger on my right hand during the process), has meant that I have not been able to pick up the cello or play the piano with any enthusiasm for some time now. However, music has remained very important to me (Do many builders listen to symphonic and operatic works as they work?), and I hope once our little home and gardens are complete, I will have more time for my instruments. I often think back fondly to my time with the WSO and am always pleased to hear a piece of music on Classic FM that I once performed with the orchestra.'*

Rob progressed his musical journey at the RNCM and, together with his brother Jonathan, established NEW Sinfonia, engaging fellow students in orchestral and chamber music performances. They encourage new developments in music and through new settings, reaching out to new audiences. Their Landscape programme in Wrexham Library along with their collaboration with Golden Fable in Focus Wales. have been ground-breaking initiatives. NEW Sinfonia are the Orchestra in Residence at the NWIMF, held annually in St Asaph Cathedral. Rob combines his professional conducting work alongside being a concert presenter and artistic director, with an educational role at Manchester University where he is Director of the elite undergraduate conducting programme, Head of Choral Programmes and Director of Ensembles. Rob married Heather in 2019 and they live in Manchester. He remembers his time with the WSO as foundational in encouraging him to pursue an enriching career in music and shares *'My first concert with the WSO was Mahler 1. It switched me on to classical music and was an amazing experience to be involved in. WSO nurtured a love for symphonic music and I know so much repertoire thanks to my time with the orchestra. Mark Lansom was incredibly supportive to young people in Wrexham and I am very grateful for his support. It has had huge impact on my career'*.

Rob Guy



2006 Violin

You can find out more about the orchestra from its website www.wrexhamorch.co.uk and Facebook pages. Please search for Wrexham Symphony Orchestra. We also have a Twitter feed @wrexhamorch. We welcome feedback, comments and suggestions about our concerts and events. Please either speak to one of us at a concert or send them in an email to wrexhamso@gmail.com. You can also write to us at 11 Eaton Avenue, Handbridge, Chester CH4 7HB.