



One Amazing Night at Bridgewater Hall

'Our performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony was one of the musical highlights of my life. It was a pleasure and a privilege to conduct Wrexham Symphony Orchestra and a chorus of 140 voices'

Richard Howarth



Saturday May 30th 2015 will go down in the history of the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra as one of those evenings that its members will never forget. Three years in the planning, the evening witnessed a performance of Gustav Mahler's 2nd Symphony, 'Resurrection' in one of the most iconic concert venues in Europe. Together with a chorus of 140 voices, the Orchestra enjoyed, in the words of Conductor Richard Howarth, 'a life changing experience'. The Bridgewater Hall concert was one of the concerts in the orchestra's long term Mahler project through which it raises funds to support the work of The Alzheimer's Society in North Wales and the Borderlands. WSO Chairman, Matthew Ellis comments 'Our debut concert at the Bridgewater Hall concert was an outstanding performance by the orchestra and chorus. To experience the thrill of performing one of the great symphonies in such a world class venue is something none of us will ever forget. It marks an important step forward in the 46 year history of the orchestra and now that we have raised the bar, our challenge will be to continue to demonstrate that our performances in the future will continue to match that of Bridgewater Hall. I must pay a special tribute to the contribution that Manchester Chorale, Altrincham Choral Society, Buxton Music Society and Wrexham's Sirenian Singers made to our Mahler concert. They combined their talent into a wonderfully, powerful Chorus, under the leadership of Chorus Master Jill Henderson-Wild'. We are dedicating this special commemorative edition of *Orchestra* to the Bridgewater Hall concert and we hope that you will gain a sense of the occasion and the impact it had on both performers and audience. Enjoy reliving the memory with us as we share anecdotes, pictures and comments from those who took part in the concert. Thank you for your support during our 46th concert season and we look forward to seeing you all again when we open our 47th season on Saturday November 21st 2015 at the William Aston Hall. Details of the 2015-16 concert programme and other WSO news can be found on the back page of this edition of *Orchestra*. In the meantime, sit back and enjoy our final concert of this season as we perform Dvorak's 9th Symphony and Joseph Durnin's performance of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No 1.



Richard Howarth and Jill Henderson-Wild share their Bridgewater Hall concert experiences with Orchestrate



Richard Howarth conducts the orchestra for the third time in a row on July 4th in the concert which draws the 46th season to a fitting climax with Dvorak's 9th Symphony. Reflecting on his experience at Bridgewater Hall, Richard comments *'Our performance of Mahler's the Resurrection Symphony was one of the musical highlights of my life. It was a pleasure and a privilege to conduct Wrexham Symphony Orchestra and a choir of 140 voices at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. Add two wonderful soloists, Rebecca Afonwy-Jones and April Fredrick, and the recipe is assured. The experience for everyone to perform in one of the best concert halls in the country would have been sufficient reason for all the hard work in organising such a massive event. An experience it certainly was, but it was more than that; the result in musical terms was outstanding. The reaction from the audience, who gave us a standing ovation, was a sign that we'd managed to hit the spot. I was thrilled that after all our work the whole performance gelled into such a musically convincing experience. There was a moment in the last few bars during which I really didn't want the piece to finish so I held on to the penultimate bar a tad longer than perhaps I should! But then I could because I was in charge! Life-changing? Yes. Life-enhancing? most certainly'*. Chorus Master, Jill Henderson-Wild who worked closely with Richard Howarth reflects on her experience with the Orchestra in BWH and comments: *'It has been a delight to work with such a lovely group of singers, who really gave their all in a splendid performance as, of course, did the orchestra. It was a privilege to be invited to be part of the WSO Mahler project concert at Bridgewater Hall and I look forward to the opportunity of working with them again in the future'*.



Orchestra Leader Mark Lansom shares his Bridgewater Hall concert experience with Orchestrate

The orchestra embarked on its ground breaking Mahler project in 2010 with the support of COBALZ Limited, a Wrexham based medical research and development business. The Bridgewater Hall concert was a most significant milestone in its long and rich history and Mark Lansom, the leader of the orchestra, explains how the BWH opportunity came about. Peter Davison, who is the Artistic Director of the Bridgewater Hall, joined our conductor, Kenneth Woods, to give a talk about Mahler when we performed Mahler's 6th in 2011. He stayed for the concert and liked what he heard, suggesting we should take the orchestra's Mahler project to the Bridgewater Hall. May 30th 2015 was the day this happened. Speaking about his experience of BWH, Mark comments: *'Especially for players like myself who have been with the orchestra over thirty years, a lot of the day was spent reflecting on the history of the orchestra and how far we had come. It was the biggest day in the history of the orchestra and of course the best. The feeling of pride throughout the orchestra was one I'll not forget and I enjoyed every second of it'*.

Next up is Mahler's Symphony No 5 in July 2016 and the orchestra is already thinking about a possible return to Bridgewater Hall to perform Mahler's mighty Choral Symphony, the 8th, in 2018. Orchestrate will keep you up to date on the WSO Mahler project – so sign up NOW to ensure you receive all the information.



Guest Soloists April Fredrick and Rebecca Afonwy-Jones share their Bridgewater Hall concert experience with Orchestrate



May was a 'Mahler month' for April Fredrick. Earlier in the month she performed Mahler's 4th Symphony with the Warsaw Philharmonic in Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall. Making her second appearance with the WSO, April captures her reflections on the BWH experience: *'I found it incredibly precious to perform Mahler's 2nd Symphony and share its richness with players and audience alike. I've always been deeply impressed by the dedication and achievement of the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra, but they outdid themselves that night. Each player, and each singer in the combined chorus, lived the music in all its pathos, ferocity and delicacy. I sat on stage filled with the emotion of this very special occasion.'*

Rebecca was making her fourth appearance with the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra and she was thrilled to be part of their BWH debut concert. She comments *'The performance by WSO at Bridgewater Hall would confound every naysayer in their tracks. It was a privilege to participate and perform alongside each of these artists - a more committed and determined group of musicians would be hard to find. By the final 'Aufersteh'n' I found myself feeling very reflective. The orchestra provided my first opportunity to sing with a full orchestra back in 2008, in Berlioz's 'Les Nuits d'Été'. I look forward to a long association with WSO. Their enterprising nature, unfailing enthusiasm and swelling numbers will ensure their longevity.'*

Here is a selection of pictures together with the thoughts and comments of some of the members of the Orchestra who took part in performing Mahler's 2nd Symphony - 'Resurrection'

The performance was magnificent, matching that of a professional orchestra, of which the audience must have agreed due to the standing ovation afterwards! This has been one of the most magical experiences of my life!
Andy Marshall

A magnificent start to a wonderful evening - you were all fab
Ange Penny

Last night was the most amazing musical experience of my life
Charlotte Crosbie

This was one of the musical highlights of my life and such a special moment to share the stage with so many close friends
Lucy Arch

Truly Amazing - a quite memorable night
Chris Eardley

It is a privilege to play such a monumental piece in such a renowned venue - but great fun as well
Nick Billington

Photographs by Geraint Wyn Jones and Mark Carline to whom we are grateful for their permission to use them in this commemorative edition of Orchestrate

And finally... the thoughts of our Mahler Project Sponsor and a Commercial Supporter



Andrew McCaddon, who is a member of the orchestra, has been instrumental in inspiring and supporting the WSO ground breaking Mahler project. He shares his BWH experience of performing Mahler 2 with Orchestrate: *'Performing at Bridgewater Hall was a truly amazing experience! The acoustics were remarkable. Being able to clearly hear your own instrument, together with all others in the orchestra, really helped our musical 'ensemble.'*



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Simon Griffiths, of Guy Walmsley - a WSO Commercial Supporter, joined the concert at BWH and shares his experience with Orchestrate: *'Mahler 2 was brought alive by the WSO in a stupendous performance combining orchestra and chorus. A magical evening of the highest quality and big, big congratulations to all involved.'*

Here is some more general news about the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra including information about the 2015-16 concert season, an exciting partnership with The Lemon Tree Restaurant in Wrexham, the WSO Affinity programme and an update on our Friends Scheme

47th Concert Season 2015-16 Dates for your Diary

Saturday 21st November 2015
William Aston Hall, Wrexham @7.30pm

Rachmaninov - Isle of the Dead
Prokofiev - Piano Concerto No 1
Elgar - Enigma Variations
Conductor: Jonathan Small **Soloist:** William Bracken

Saturday 27th February 2016
William Aston Hall, Wrexham @7.30pm

A selection of popular Screen and Stage music from
Bernstein to Williams

Conductor: Mark Lansom

Saturday 7th May 2016
William Aston Hall, Wrexham @7.30pm

Sibelius – Pohjola's Daughter
Rachmaninov – Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Shostakovich – Symphony No 5
Conductor: Nicholas Simpson **Soloist:** Teleri-Sian

Saturday 2nd July 2016
William Aston Hall, Wrexham @7.30pm

The WSO Mahler Charity Concert
Mahler: Symphony No 5
Conductor: Richard Howarth

Tickets for all our concerts can be purchased through the
Glyndwr Box Office (01978 293293) or from the Wrexham
Tourist Information Office in Queens Square (01978 292015).
They can also be purchased on the door.



You can keep up to date on the news and events on the WSO Facebook pages and our Twitter feed. We post regular updates about our activities, details of our concerts and news items which will be of interest to members, friends and our audience. There are two Facebook pages and these can be accessed using these links:

www.facebook.com/groups/19734345848/

www.facebook.com/wrexhamorch

[Twitter Feed @wrexhamorch](https://twitter.com/wrexhamorch)



New For Concert Season 2015-16

Wrexham Symphony Orchestra is pleased to announce that it has established a partnership with The Lemon Tree Restaurant and Hotel in Wrexham for a special pre-concert supper menu to be available on concert days. Attractive seasonal menus will be prepared and the set menu prices are £19.95 (3 courses) and £16.95 (2 courses) and include a glass of Prosecco, house wine or a soft drink of your own choosing. Supper will be served from 4.30pm. You can book a table by phoning 01978 261211, quoting 'WSO Concert Menu'. Last orders will be taken at 5.30pm to ensure you will be able to make it to the William Aston Hall in time for the start of the concert.

WSO Affinity Partner Programme

One of our key initiatives has been to develop an Affinity Partner Programme which seeks to establish mutually beneficial relationships with like-minded organisations. The programme is in its infancy and is one we will be looking to develop further over the next couple of years. At the present time we have the following Affinity partners: National Trusts in Wrexham, Chester and Dyffryn, Maelor Music Club, Rhyl Music Club, Oswestry Recorded Music Society, University of the 3rd Age (Wrexham) and Gresford Retirement Club. We are hoping to finalise agreements with the Welsh National Opera, Chester Performs and Friends of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod for 2015-16. We are keen to extend this programme further, so please let us know of organisations you think might be interested in joining our Affinity Partner Network. There is no fee and partner members benefit from reductions on the full price WSO concert tickets at the William Aston Hall.

The WSO Friends Scheme

Become a Friend of the WSO and be one of the first to receive updates and news about our concerts and events. Friends of WSO also receive discounts on concert tickets and there are additional concert evening benefits too. Four Friend categories are available: Gold, Half Gold, Silver and Bronze. For more information speak to one us at a concert or send an e-mail request to friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk. You can write to us at: WSO Friends Secretary, 32 St David's Terrace, Saltney, Flintshire CH4 0AF.

We can also be contacted by e-mail at: wrexhamso@gmail.com

In our next Newsletter: An interview with Mark Lansom on his career in music and thoughts on the 2015-16 concert programme ; updates on our Mahler project and the WSO Friends Scheme... and much more besides. Sign up today to guarantee your copy of Orchestrate, Autumn 2015 by e-mail to: friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk or writing to the Friends Secretary (above).