



Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Newsletter.....

We follow our ground-breaking concert season in 2014-15 with another exciting series of concert programmes which has something for everyone – from the mature concert-goer, to families and the first timer. In this edition of **Orchestrate** there is a new feature “In Conversation with....” where we invite a key person to share some insights with us and we also share news about what we have been busily doing during the ‘close season’. We were thrilled that our Bridgewater Hall concert in May raised a magnificent £6000 for charities who support those suffering with dementia, which has doubled the total sum we have raised through our Mahler project. Thank you for all the support you gave us for this ground-breaking venture.

We are working hard to build our audiences and we shall be asking you to help us through a series of new initiatives during the concert season. We would be pleased if you could pass on a copy of the newsletter to friends and acquaintances in your own network and encourage them to join us for one of the concerts in the current season. Thank you for your loyal support and interest in the Orchestra. **Matthew Ellis, Chairman**

“In Conversation with...”

The first of an occasional series of conversations with key people connected with the WSO ... first up..... Mark Lansom, Leader and Conductor.



The Lansom family has a long time connection with music, stretching back several generations. Shortly after Andrew Lansom moved his family to Wrexham in 1969, he joined the newly formed Wrexham Orchestra as principal flautist, and eventually became its conductor. His son Mark took to the violin and decided to make his career in music. Today, he is one of the Orchestra’s driving forces, and in the first of a new series of “In conversation with.....”, Mark shares about his passion for music, his commitment to the Orchestra and some thoughts for its future.

Mark, music seems to be in the family genes then? ‘Yes, I was very lucky; my parents were both musical and met in the Manchester Youth Orchestra. They went on to play together in the Gorton Philharmonic, where my grandfather was principal flute and my great grandfather had been leader. They both had a great interest in orchestral music and joining the Wrexham Orchestra was a natural step when the family moved to Wrexham. From an early age, I knew I wanted to study music and get a job in the music profession somewhere and I’ve been very happy teaching violin in Wrexham for the last 21 years’.

Looking back on your career in music, what have been some highlights for you? ‘The initial realisation that I was potentially very good at something was a feeling I’ll always remember. The first notes of my first full rehearsal in the Clwyd Youth Orchestra and being part of a full symphony orchestra sound, was the best thing I’d ever heard.

I have had many highlights, almost too many to single just a few out. I have met hundreds of talented people who have also become lifelong friends and in one very important instance I met my wife, Annabel through our interest in music. I get a great sense of fulfilment helping children play the violin and seeing them go on to great careers, even not necessarily musical ones. Conducting WSO for the first time was another big highlight for me; the biggest one of all was leading the orchestra earlier this year playing Mahler 2 at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester! Most recently, my daughter joined her first orchestra, and seeing her enjoy that was a real high’.

Looking forward to the new concert season, what stands out for you? ‘I’ve really enjoyed the current programme and I feel certain the audience will too. The Rachmaninov is a very powerful and absorbing work, the Elgar enjoyable to play and very popular, and the Prokofiev is wild and very engaging. William Bracken, our piano soloist, is a star in the making. In February, I take over on the podium for a film concert, which I’m really looking forward to. The first half is actually all musicals and there’s a piece in

there I’m arranging myself. The programme includes music from such favourites as West Side Story, Les Misérables, A Little Night Music and Lord of the Rings. The last film concert went down really well in front of a large audience and I feel this one could be even better. I’m also looking forward to working with a new conductor to us in the May concert. Nick Simpson comes very highly recommended and I look forward to more Rachmaninov and Shostakovich’s spellbinding fifth symphony. Then finally, we continue our Mahler series with one of my favourites, the ever popular fifth, conducted by Richard Howarth who memorably conducted the second symphony with us in Bridgewater Hall’. We are all excited by the variety of music we shall be performing for our audiences over the next nine months’.

You said at the time that the Orchestra’s debut concert at Bridgewater Hall was ‘an experience you will never forget’; what’s next on the agenda for a concert at an ‘away from home’ venue?

‘One of the main reasons we don’t play “away from home” that often is how comfortable and well treated we are here at the William Aston Hall. It’s always a treat to have a day out of course though. I hear we have had an offer of playing an outdoor venue sometime in the near future but maybe I’m not at liberty to say too much about that yet! We are, however, very much hoping to return to the Bridgewater Hall in 2018 to continue our Mahler cycle with his eighth, his “Symphony of a Thousand”, which would eclipse even Mahler 2 as a spectacle.’

Finally Mark, how do you see the future development of the Orchestra as it approaches its 50th concert season in 3 years’ time?

‘Maintaining high standards is a big challenge in itself but we are always striving to raise the Orchestra to the next level. We have achieved lots already with great support from Glyndwr University and also sponsorship from Betrinac for our Mahler Charitable Concert series.

We also have the incredible commitment of the orchestra members, their families, the committee and its loyal audience which all bode well for the future of the Orchestra. We are always seeking to welcome new members and have a particular passion for helping young people nurture and develop their talents with the Orchestra. It is also so rewarding when a younger member of the orchestra chooses to take their career forward to one of the leading music institutions.

Wrexham Symphony Orchestra is known about and respected nationally and, through the internet, internationally. We are working hard to build our home audiences and I’d love more people from the town to know more about us and to come and share in our future success. I would appeal to our regular, loyal audience to help us during the concert season to build the numbers by inviting their neighbours, family and friends to come and join us for our concerts.

Mark, thank you for taking the time to help us launch the new “In Conversation with...” series and we wish you and the members every success for the new concert season.

Orchestrate is published periodically during the concert season to provide up to date information about the Orchestra. For more information please visit our website www.wrexhamorch.co.uk or send an email to friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk

Future Dates for your Diary

(All our concerts are performed at the William Aston Hall, Glyndwr University, Mold Road, Wrexham LL11 2AW)

Sunday 28th February 2016 @3.30pm

Music from Stage and Screen

A selection of popular Stage and Screen music for all the family from Broadway to Hollywood: from Bernstein to Williams

Conductor: Mark Lansom

"A great family occasion"

Please note new date

Saturday 7th May 2016 @ 7.30pm

Sibelius – Pohjola's Daughter
Rachmaninov – Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Shostakovich – Symphony No 5

Conductor: Nicholas Simpson

Soloist: Teleri-Siân

Saturday 2nd July 2016 @ 7.30pm

The WSO Mahler Charity Concert

Mahler: Symphony No 5
Sponsored by Betrinac

Raising valuable funds for those who are affected by dementia

Conductor: Richard Howarth

We've had a very busy summer with lots happening... read about what we've been doing.....

Firstly, Our New Website



Go online and take a look at the new WSO website at www.wrexhamorch.co.uk. Several improvements have been made, we've added new features and you can now buy tickets for WSO concerts through the website.

Secondly, our pre-concert supper package

We've partnered with **The Lemon Tree Restaurant** to offer our concert-goers a pre-concert supper on concert days from 4.30pm. Sam Regan and his team are excited by this new venture and will prepare seasonal menus using locally sourced ingredients. 2 and 3 course options are available for £16.95 and £19.95 including a drink. Call 01978 261211 quoting 'WSO Menu' to book your table.

Thirdly, our Commercial Supporters

We've been able to attract a number of commercial supporters who provide valuable resources which enable us to invest in the future. A big thank you to Williams Financial Planning, Guy Walmsley, Caldecott Funeral Services, Vivid Floral Design, Hi Speed Tyres, PW Hale, Bowen Son & Watson, Denbighshire Travel, FirstLady Bridal, Black Country Metal Works, Clear Black Wine and The Lemon Tree for their generous and valuable support.

Here are some exciting ways you can follow us, keep involved and help us grow our audiences

Social Media Communications

We have a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/wrexhamorch), a Facebook group (<http://tinyurl.com/na9rt dv>) and a Twitter feed (@wrexhamorch) which enable you to keep up to date on all that is happening with the Orchestra and with our coverage in the local and regional media.

Will you please help attract new audience members?

Over the last 12 months we have been working to build our audiences who regularly attend our concerts. The most effective form of marketing is through a personal recommendation and we would be thrilled if you would help us realise our goal. We will be launching new schemes and initiatives in 2016, but would you please invite people from your own circle of friends and family to join you for a WSO concert?

History and Memories are made over time... what memories do you have about the WSO?

Musicians tune up for concert the past...



These photographs are of (1) the Mold String Orchestra and (2) Wrexham Orchestral Society in the 1970's and got us thinking about the history of the Orchestra as we approach the 50th anniversary year in 2019. One idea we are considering is to collect WSO memorabilia to include photographs, images, anecdotes, testimonials to former members, press clippings and details of memorable events etc. If you have any items that might be of interest can you please share them with us so we can include them? Keep a look out in **Orchestrates** for more information as we develop our ideas.

Our next Newsletter will be published in time for the February 27th concert and will also be available through our website and Facebook page. Please do let us know what you think, have any comments about the Orchestra or if you have any suggestions for items you would like to see in Orchestrates. Speak with us at a concert or send an email to friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk