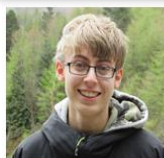




Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter....

We must say a very big thank you to all those who came to our very first Sunday afternoon concert in February. The absolute delight all the members of the orchestra felt at the most welcome sight of the William Aston Hall being so full is something we shall all remember for a long time. An audience of around 500 was treated to a wonderful concert of music from West End and Broadway stage productions and from some of the most popular films of recent decades. It was a huge encouragement to see so many people and their families come and enjoy one of our concerts. Then, just 2 weeks later, we learnt that our Mahler Charity project, through which we raise money for organisations who support those suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia, has been shortlisted in the health category in the prestigious national Arts and Business Cymru 2016 Awards programme. We are thrilled that Arts and Business Cymru have chosen to recognise the value of our collaboration with Betrinac Limited in this way. The Awards ceremony takes place at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff on Saturday 14th May and we shall let you know how we get on in our summer newsletter, which will be published when we perform Mahler's 5th Symphony on Sunday July 3rd. This is another unavoidable programme date change which is due to a pop concert at the Racecourse Stadium on the Saturday evening, that we only learnt about a few weeks ago. Thank you for joining us this evening; we hope you will enjoy reading the updates in this newsletter and our concert, as we welcome Nicholas Simpson and Teleri-Siân as our guest conductor and soloist respectively.

"In Conversation with..."



Louie McIver is one of the youngest members of the Orchestra. He started to perform with us in 2013, the year he won the prestigious Inspire Young Composer of the Year award at the BBC Proms in the Junior category. Louie talks to Orchestrate about his interest in music and the hopes he has for his future career both as a musician and a composer.

Louie, please share with us how you first got into music? 'My grandmother encouraged me to start to learn to play the piano when I was 5. Since then I have passed grade 8 piano, violin and music theory exams with distinctions, sung with the Chester Music Society Youth Choir and been a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and the North Wales Youth Orchestra. Music has become very much part of my life.'

As you developed your interest in music, who has had the most influence on you? 'Initially, during lessons with my first piano teacher, Julie Fryer, I also developed an ability to improvise by experimenting on the piano. She thought that I would become a composer. My composing skills and capabilities have been guided under the tutorage of Michael D Williams and Nic Fallowfield has been influential with The Four Counties String Orchestra in North Wales, because of his interpretations of the music we have played.'

You play the violin in the WSO – how did your interest in this particular instrument start and then develop? 'I was introduced to the violin during year 4 at primary school and invited to give it a go, so I did. I took to it straight away and liked its versatility to create different sounds and effects. I joined the Flintshire Intermediate String Orchestra and this helped consolidate my appreciation of orchestral string playing.'

At what point did you start to take an interest in composing music and what was your very first piece? 'I started by 'tinkering' on the piano and wrote my first composition 'Joyful Birds' when I was 8. During a young composers' workshop in Venue Cymru, I worked with Owain Llwyd, adapting one of my early pieces called 'Autumn and Winter', which portrays these seasons. A choral composition based on the Mock Turtle's poem in Alice in Wonderland, 'Beautiful Soup', was performed by the Alumni Choir of the Chester Music Society Youth Choirs in 2012. I really enjoy composing orchestral and choral pieces.'

In 2013 you won the prestigious 'BBC Proms Inspire Young Composers' Competition' (Junior Category) – can you please tell us about the piece of music you composed to win the competition? 'I composed 'Circle' for a chamber orchestra and it has five sections. The first points to changes and activity occurring beneath the ground as spring arrives. The 2nd and 3rd sections represent a sudden rush of warmth and new life. The fourth section shows the breaking or interruption of the cycle, with heavy snow falls and blizzards. Before this, various plants and flowers had begun growing, and other signs signaled winter was over. However, the snow falls were harsh in 2012 and winter returns. Section five shows the triumph of nature and spring, as life emerges again, sometimes cautiously then gloriously, following the end of winter. 'Circle' was performed by the Aurora Orchestra and broadcast on Radio 3. My prize was a commission by the BBC to

compose a piece based on one of the stories from the Arabian Nights. My piece is called 'The Cat and The Crow', which was also broadcast on Radio 3.' **In 2014, the WSO performed one of your compositions – please tell us a little about it?** 'Glenys Pearce was a former member of the Orchestra who had written a poem called Afon Ro which she then set to music for the violin and cello. Afon Ro is a babbling stream in the Berwyn Mountains where she lived. The orchestra commissioned me to use the music she had written in some form to produce my own composition. 'Fantasia on a Theme by Glenys Pearce' is an orchestral 'fantasia' which incorporates the themes from her music. The piece was performed during the July 2014 Mahler concert as a tribute to her love of music and contribution to the WSO over some 14 or so years. It was an honour to be asked to compose this piece for the Orchestra and it offered me the opportunity to develop different variations on and interpretations of the themes that Glenys had developed in the original score.'

How has your time with the WSO helped to develop your playing and performing abilities? 'WSO member Judith Sammons encouraged me to join the Orchestra 3 years ago and I saw this as a great opportunity to develop my performing and playing capabilities. I like the range of music that the WSO performs in its concerts and being a member has helped me to develop my sight reading skills. I particularly appreciate the way that Mark Lansom interprets the music.'

Looking to the future, how do you envisage your career in music developing over the next period or so? 'Once I have completed my formal education, I would like to undertake a Music degree at University and I would then wish to complete a Masters degree specialising in Composition at a leading music college, such as the RCM. I would also like to do orchestral conducting.'

Which favourite pieces of music do you have and what is it about them that you particularly like? 'There are a couple which come to mind. Firstly, Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring'. I like its rhythm (which was considered groundbreaking when it was written) and the ways it fuses chords together. It is also a very interesting and dynamic piece of music. I also like John Adams' 'Short Ride in a Fast Machine' for its energy and drive.'

Finally Louie, who is an inspiration to you in today's music world and how do they inspire you? 'I do like the way that John Adams' compositions are often relevant to today's world, including themes such as political relationships (i.e. 'Nixon in China'). I am also inspired by the Dutch composer, Louis Andriessen, whose work draws inspiration from the jazz, classical and popular styles of music.'

Louie, thank you for taking the time to talk with Orchestrate and we wish you every future success as you continue to develop your talents and career in music. We look forward to seeing how your career progresses in the future.

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 our Friends email address (overleaf)

Future Dates for your Diary

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

Sunday 3rd July 2016 @ 3.30pm

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

Saturday 26th November 2016 @7.30pm

Mendelssohn – Ruy Blas Overture
Schuman – Cello Concerto
Brahms – Symphony No 1

Conductor: Nic Fallowfield
Soloist: Timothy Gill (Cello)

Saturday 25th February 2017 @7.30pm

Elgar - In the South
Grieg - Peer Gynt Suite No. 1
de Falla - Spanish Dance No 1 from "La Vida Breve"
Nielsen - Symphony No 3 "Espansiva"

Conductor: Mark Lansom

The WSO Mahler Charity Project with Betrinac has been shortlisted for a major Welsh award in 2016

In 2010, with the support of Wrexham based medical research company, Betrinac Limited, we embarked on a groundbreaking and ambitious long-term charitable project to perform all of Gustav Mahler's symphonies and through this project to raise funds for organisations which provide support to those in our local and regional communities who are affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. In May 2015, we took this project to the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester for our debut concert at this iconic international venue, performing Mahler's 2nd Symphony, 'Resurrection', to wide critical acclaim and raising over £6000 for our charitable project. This money has been split between the Alzheimer's Society of North Wales and the Wrexham Maelor Hospital Memory Clinic.

We are delighted that the project has been recognised by Arts and Business Cymru and shortlisted in the health category of their national prestigious awards programme in 2016. Reflecting on the shortlisting, **Chairman Matthew Ellis** comments 'When we learnt that our Mahler Charity Project has been shortlisted for the prestigious 2016 Arts and Business Cymru Awards programme we were all thrilled. We have been able to make a significant difference in our local and regional communities and this recognition is a wonderful testament to all the hard work which has enabled us to raise a total of £11,000 through the Charitable Project to date. **Neil McCaddon, a director of Betrinac**, is excited by the recognition that their collaboration with the WSO has achieved and comments 'When we agreed to support the WSO Mahler Charity project we had little idea that we would be able to take the Mahler project to Bridgewater Hall for a widely acclaimed performance of the Resurrection Symphony, and to have the value of this project recognised by Arts and Business Cymru is a wonderful achievement and one we are very proud to be supporting.'

The 2016 Arts and Business Cymru Awards ceremony is being held at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff on Saturday May 14th when the winning entries will receive their awards and a specially commissioned work of art. Follow our Facebook page and Twitter feed for news of how we get on. We shall provide an update on the awards ceremony in the summer edition of Orchestrate.

Here are some exciting ways you can follow us, keep involved, support and help us

Website and Social Media Communications

You can keep up to date on all WSO news and events through our website at www.wrexhamorch.co.uk. You can purchase tickets for our concerts through the website. Orchestrate is also available as a download from the website.

We also have a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/wrexhamorch), a Facebook group and a Twitter feed @wrexhamorch.

A Friend of the WSO enjoys a great benefits package

You can support the Orchestra and be guaranteed tickets for all our WAH concerts by becoming a Friend of the WSO. Our new, simplified Friends of WSO scheme provides you with four tickets and programmes per person (one for each of the 2016/17 season's concerts) for the price of three. Friends of WSO packages (per person) for the 2016/17 season are £30 for concession tickets, £36 for stalls and £42 for the balcony. Existing Friends of WSO and new people interested in applying for membership can contact us at friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk. You can also apply for membership by writing to us at WSO C/o 32 St David's Terrace, Saltney, Flintshire CH4 0AF.

Here are some news updates from a couple of our Affinity partners

The **Chester Music Festival** takes place between the 8th and 18th June and offers a wonderful and varied programme of music to suit all tastes. You can get close to the music you love by picking up a leaflet at tonight's concert or going online to www.storyhouse.com and downloading the entire festival concert programme. Information is also available from Chester Tourist Information Centre in the Town Hall, from where tickets for all the concerts can also be purchased.

The next production in **Grove Park Theatre's** 90th anniversary season is the hugely popular comedy of errors by Britain's Master of Comedy, Alan Ayckbourn, 'Bedroom Farce'. Trevor and Susannah, whose marriage is on the rocks, inflict their miseries on their nearest and dearest: three couples whose own relationships are tenuous at best. The production runs from 19th to 28th May and tickets can be purchased from either their Box Office or online at www.grovetheatre.co.uk. Parking is available in Island Green.

Our next Newsletter will be published in time for the WSO Mahler Charity concert on July 3rd and will also be available through our website and Facebook page. If you have any comments about the Orchestra's concert programme or if you have any suggestions for items you would like to see in Orchestrate, please speak with us at a concert or send an email to friendsofwrexhamsymphony@yahoo.co.uk. We would love to hear from you.