

As we approach the final concerts in our 48th concert season, we start to look forward to the future and we have a couple of very exciting concert seasons in prospect. Our 49th concert season will see us celebrate the 20th anniversary as Orchestra in Residence at the William Aston Hall, which also coincides with the 10th anniversary of Glyndwr being granted University status. We are well advanced in planning a very special joint celebration Gala concert 'A Night at the Opera', when we will welcome our guests, North Wales Opera Studio to the William Aston Hall. We are still developing our final concert programme but you can be sure this will be a very special occasion and we would strongly recommend that you mark the date in your diary – Saturday 24th February 2018 – to ensure you are present at this special concert. We then head towards our 50th concert season and we are working on a wonderful programme of very special concerts which is likely to include a concert supporting the national and regional commemoration marking the centenary of the ending of World War 1, as well as our own special 50th Anniversary Gala Concert. Before all that we have this evening's concert with Jonathan Small and William Bracken. Those of us who were present in November 2015 will not forget Williams' wonderful performance of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto and we are sure this evening's performance will be just as memorable. Finally don't forget our brand new venture, Picnic Proms in the Park concert on June 10th at the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry. We will be performing a wonderful and varied programme and it promises to be another special night in the life of the Orchestra. We hope you will be there to share that experience and you can reserve purchase your tickets for the Proms in the Park concert this evening.

High Fives... with Conductor, Jonathan Small - Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra



This evening we welcome back to the conductors podium Jonathan Small, who is a member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. In a conversation with Orchestrate, he shares about himself, his family and his passion for music.

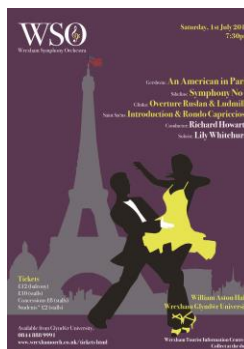
Please share something about yourself and your family: 'I sense we are a little unique as a family in that we are musicians and engineers across a number of disciplines. My mother was an accomplished pianist and choral singer and my sister is a fantastic flautist/saxophonist and music therapist. We are Londoners but have lived in a several parts of the country, with Merseyside becoming my family home since the mid 1980's. I met my wife MaryAnn whilst we were both members of Scottish Opera Orchestra in Glasgow. She played the harp, and continues to do so today, mainly for pleasure. We have two sons, Michael who is a composer and Edward, an electronic engineer'.

Can you please describe your life journey in music: 'My mother started me off, learning to play the piano from age 7. While we were living in Gosport, Hampshire, I began learning the oboe; I was captivated by its plangent, expressive colourful sound, and by the challenge of mastering it!. At 14, I decided to take it up professionally, and went on to study at the Royal College of Music in London. Shortly after I graduated in 1979 I was appointed principal oboe with the orchestra of Scottish Opera in Glasgow. Then in 1984, I was appointed principal oboe with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra where I have remained. It is a wonderful orchestra, with a great hall and loyal audience. I have been fortunate to have performed and recorded under a large number of internationally recognised conductors such as Marek Janowski, Libor Pesek, Vernon Handley, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Simon Rattle and of course now Vasily Petrenko. There are many highlights and fond memories, tours to the USA, Far East, all over Europe, but one never to be forgotten occasion was performing Smetana's Ma Vlast at the 1993 Prague Spring Festival. These are Czech music's most important days each year, and this performance was in the presence of President Václav Havel, whom I had the opportunity of meeting. Music has given me many wonderful memorable experiences and thrilling opportunities which no other career pathway could have matched'.

What are your future hopes, plans and ambitions in music? 'Conducting has always been a hidden desire inside me and once I started to conduct regularly about ten years ago I knew I had to do more. Since then I have been privileged to have been able to conduct ensembles, orchestral sections and full orchestras in many places at home and abroad. I am a strong advocate of music in the community and my work, both with the Wirral and Wrexham Symphony Orchestras and other orchestras in our region, has enabled me to share with others a lot of what music has given me. My approach here is to bring a professional approach to community musicians and encouraging them to attempt more challenging works. In my experience orchestras and musicians such as ours have abilities and skills they aren't always aware of and my task is to lead, coach and inspire them.

Tell us about your involvement with Wrexham SO and tonight's concert programme: 'This will be my third concert with the orchestra and once again I am thrilled that William Bracken will be returning to perform Tchaikovsky's wonderful Piano Concerto No 1. Will is a tremendously talented young pianist, with huge potential and I am honoured to be able to afford him the opportunity to perform and develop his repertoire and experience; I know that we are in for a fabulous treat this evening. We have performed a Rachmaninoff work in our two previous concerts together, and this time we are playing perhaps his most challenging, the Third symphony. This music exposes us to a very wide range of emotional aspects of the composer's life in exile (USA and Switzerland) from his Russian homeland. Keep an ear out at the start of the work - the initial motto theme is a quote from Borodin's Prince Igor, to which the text is 'May the Lord grant victory over our enemies' and the whole symphony is thematically based on this. Again at the start of the 2nd movement we hear another version of this theme on horn and harp, redolent of the history of travelling bards who would tell historical stories. The Third Symphony shares the love of his lost homeland, his defiance and anger at the state of things - and yet also faith in the future, love and optimism coupled with nostalgia. What more could you want? I think this must be why Rachmaninoff is one of my favourite composers. We open the concert with a truly delightful work by Anatoli Lyadov, The Enchanted Lake; a gentle, serene, colourful fantasy which will immerse us all in one of those memorable still moonlit nights. The lake is home to the Vodnik, the water-dweller, a popular legendary figure in slavonic cultures. There may be one sitting next to you: but you can only tell by the drop of water which falls from his coat, once in a while....

Finally, which composers are you particularly fond of and a contemporary composer you admire? 'It would be easier to say which I don't like - very few. But if you push me I'd have to say Mahler, Strauss, Sibelius, Beethoven (who can leave him off their list!?) and as an unusual choice, Josef Suk whose tremendous scores I discovered in our great days with Libor Pesek. In terms of contemporary composers, well, my son Michael has recently introduced me to British composer Julian Anderson's work, and I also greatly admire the American Steven Stucky, who sadly died in 2016 at the early age of 66.



Next up for us is George Gershwin's classical jazz work 'An American in Paris' which has just transferred from New York's Broadway to London's West End. Richard Howarth returns to lead us and Lily Whitehurst will be our guest soloist. Our programme also includes the sublime Sibelius Symphony No 1. Mark the date **Saturday July 1st at 7.30pm**. Be here for another amazing evening of live, high quality music!!!

Future Dates for your Diary

(All our concerts start at 7.30pm and are performed at the William Aston Hall, Glyndwr University, Mold Road, Wrexham LL11 2AW unless otherwise stated)

Saturday 10th June 2017 @6.30pm
(Gates open at 5pm)

Picnic Proms in the Park & Fireworks British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry

A summer evening concert of popular classical and contemporary music and songs including works by Gershwin, Grieg, John Williams and Elgar. The evening will close with the traditional Proms songs and spectacular fireworks.

Conductor: Richard Howarth
Soloist: Lily Whitehurst (Violin)
Special Guests: Clwyd Clippers

Saturday 1st July 2017

Glinka – Overture ‘Ruslan & Ludmilla’
Saint-Saens - Introduction and Rondo
Capriccioso

Gershwin – An American in Paris
Sibelius – Symphony No 1

Conductor: Richard Howarth
Soloist: Lily Whitehurst (Violin)

Sunday 5th November 2017
3.30pm

A Sunday Afternoon Family Concert
supporting the
50th Anniversary of the
Wrexham Hospital League of Friends

‘Classics at the Movies’

Conductor: Mark Lansom



We are just 18 months away from our 50th concert season and we are already starting to think about the ways we can celebrate this remarkable achievement in some amazing concerts. It is a wonderful milestone and we are delighted that local historian Dr. David Jones has kindly agreed to compile a brief history of the orchestra's first 50 years. Over the next 12-15 months David will be gathering information about how the Orchestras has evolved since it started out as the Clywedog String Ensemble in 1969. We need your help to make sure we have access to as much information as is possible about the Orchestra over its first 50 years – copies of concert programmes, photographs, memorable occasions and anecdotes and so on. So would you please look in your lofts, storerooms, filing cabinets and those unique safe places where you store important documents and see what you can find that will help us compile an interesting and informative profile of our first 50 years. We shall look after all you give us and make sure we return the items to you once we have made use of them. Please help by handing items to us at a future concert.



We are getting very excited about our Picnic Proms in the Park concert at the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry on Saturday June 10th and which is now just over a month away. During this evening you can place an order for your tickets using the ticket reservation form and we will arrange for the tickets to be sent directly to your home address. You can also purchase tickets on line at www.britshironworkcentre.co.uk, by phone on 01691 610952 or by calling in person at the Ironwork Centre alongside the A5 to the east of Oswestry.

It will be a wonderful summer evening and joining us for this very special occasion will be Lily Whitehurst and Mold Harmony Barbershop Chorus, more commonly known as the Clwyd Clippers. The concert programme is a delightful mix of favourite songs, popular classical pieces, music from several blockbuster films and will conclude with the traditional Proms music and songs with a spectacular fireworks display.

The gates will be open from 5pm and the evening's programme will commence at 6.30pm. So bring your picnic chairs and tables and set yourselves up for a wonderful night of music in a fantastic 90 acre Borderlands parkland setting. We do hope that you, your family and friends will join us for this very special concert occasion and enjoy a truly memorable summer evening with Wrexham Symphony Orchestra and friends.

Our Mahler Charitable



Concert Series

Treasurer, Karen Pearson recently visited the Wrexham Memory Clinic at the Maelor Hospital as part of our ongoing support for their work through our Betrinac supported Mahler Charitable Concert Series. During her visit, Karen presented a WSO cheque for £1500, which our July 2016 Mahler 5 concert raised to support their valuable work. Speaking about the support which the WSO Mahler Series provides, Rowenna Spencer, Memory Service Lead comments: *'The Living Well with Dementia Group is a six week education and support group for people newly diagnosed with dementia and their supporters run by the Memory Service. As part of the programme we discuss therapeutic interventions to maintain health and well-being. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy is one such intervention which has a strong evidence base and following generous donations from the orchestra we were able to purchase individual manuals. This allows us to provide group members with a manual each for ongoing use. These have been very much welcomed by group members and feed-back we have had has been very positive so far, with group members telling us that using the manuals has been enjoyable, simple to follow and provides a good structure for meaningful therapeutic activity'* Pictured with Karen and Rowenna are Lisa Wright, Service Manager and Dr. Sharmi Bhattacharyya, Service Consultant.

Glyndwr Wrexham
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UNIVERSITY

SCA
Ysgol y Celfyddydau Creadigol
School of Creative Arts

We wish to express our thanks for all the votes we received during the February concert in response to the students creative design work. 140 voting forms were submitted and there were clear preferences. We invited 4 of the students to progress and present their ideas for the promotion of our July 1st concert. Laura King, Wendy Yeung, Vicki Jones and Ryan Jones (not related) were briefed and last week we received their presentations. We have decided to review all the submissions and have commissioned one student to finalise the design of our promotional material for the July 1st concert... and this student is.... Well you will have to wait until the concert when we will announce the choice we have made. We can share how delighted we have been with this collaborative project which has exceeded our expectations and we will be able to use a lot of their excellent work in the future. So **A GREAT BIG THANK YOU** to all the students and the tutor team at the School of Creative Arts.

Our next Newsletter will be published in time for the July 2017 concert and will also be available through our website www.wrexhamorch.co.uk from where you can obtain information about our future concerts. Like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/19734345848/ and follow our Twitter feed. If you have any comments about the Orchestra's concert programme or have any suggestions on how we can grow our audiences please speak with us at a concert or send us an email to wrexhamso@gmail.com.