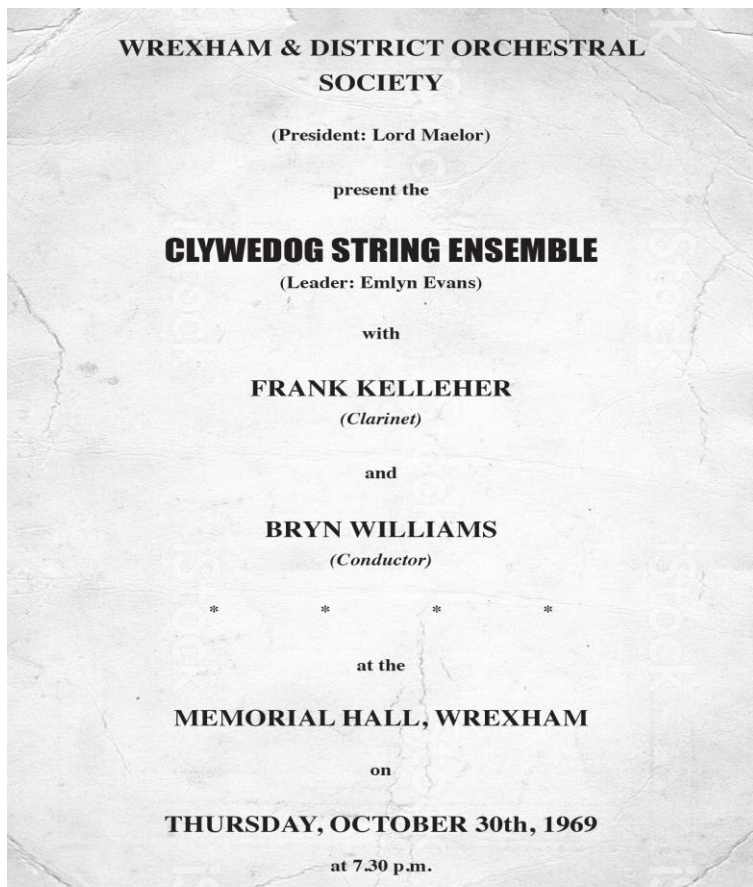


Welcome to our first concert in the new Memorial Hall in Wrexham at the start for a brand new music ensemble in Wrexham. We are pleased you have chosen to support us this evening as we bring an exciting and varied programme of music.



We extend a warm welcome to Frank Kelleher from Cardiff, our guest soloist in tonight's concert. Frank will perform two Clarinet concertos with us. In the first half, Frank will perform a work by Tartini and in the second half a new work for Clarinet and String Orchestra, written by our founder and this evening's conductor, Bryn Williams. We are also pleased to perform music by Edward Elgar and a composition by our Vice President, Arwel Hughes, his Fantasia in A Minor. We open our concert with a delightful work for strings written by George Fredrick Handel and conclude it with John Ireland's 'Concertino Pastorale'.

Thank you for supporting us this evening and we hope you will enjoy our programme. I would like to thank the musicians who have rehearsed hard over several weeks and all those who have worked in the background to make our inaugural concert possible.

Bryn Williams – Conductor  
October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1969

Arwel Hughes and his son, Owain Arwel Hughes have enriched the music scene in Wales and beyond over many years. Arwel was a first Vice President of the Ensemble in 1969. We invited Owain Arwel to write the introduction to our forthcoming publication about the history of the Orchestra and here is an edited extract.



*'The history of the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra is a story which is the very essence of legends. From the humble beginnings of a few instruments to a full symphony orchestra is an enormous achievement and speaks volumes of the hard work, dedication and absolute, unshakeable belief of so many people over the generations. The presentation of classical music has always been a challenge with so many choices and distractions year on year. Yet despite all the problems, the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra has developed into a formidable organisation, presenting the community with a vast range of superb orchestral music, from Beethoven and Brahms, through Sibelius and Elgar to the massive forces of Mahler.'*



*Studying the very first concert programme in 1969, I was intrigued by the interesting and unusual works chosen, one of them by a contemporary Welsh composer, my father, Arwel Hughes. His 'Fantasia in A Minor', an early work of his, is one I came to know as a boy. String orchestras enjoy playing it, well written for the instruments, melodious, with rich harmonies, certainly challenging for the orchestra's first concert.*

*I have full confidence that the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra has now established a formidable position in the world of music making and I sincerely hope it will have the full support of the community it has so splendidly enriched.'*

Here are some images, taken from the WSO's history books which we hope you will enjoy reading and seeing

## Wrexham's own orchestra

WREXHAM has long established choral, dramatic and art societies and recently literary and ballet groups have tentatively emerged. Now, to fill a great gap Wrexham and District Orchestral Society with Lord Maelor as its president and Arwel Hughes as vice-president, has presented the Clywedog String Ensemble in a thoroughly stimulating and satisfying concert at the Memorial Hall on October 30 (writes Irene Stone).

The society hopes eventually to offer a full orchestral — meanwhile the string section offers an opportunity to those who enjoy this peculiarly intimate form, not quite so involving as chamber music, not quite so daunting as a symphony orchestra.

The programme was beautifully balanced and constructed. The first half contained two works by classical composers and one by Elgar, whose work is acceptable to most who abhor "modern" music.

rating work, brilliantly arranged by Gordon Jacob, was also much enjoyed and by this second item the strings had warmed up and the initial reediness was dispelled.

Technique and its place in art is always a point of argument. Watching these players — students, teachers, amateurs — all serious and concerned, one realised over and over again how, although technique must always be servant, it must be mastered. Sitting so that the spine is supported, the shoulder relaxed, and holding the instrument with a hand that is free to change positions without clutched; holding the bow easily so that communication through it is full and personal — these are essential. Most of these players do all these things and relaxed, confident playing results.

The second half of the concert consisted of an attractive fantasia by Arwel Hughes, Head of Music B.B.C. (Wales), and from Rhos.

I find Elgar sentimental and bombastic but music must speak for itself and the fact that this ensemble found the greatest difficulty in playing this easy sounding serenade is significant.

Whereas during the rest of the concert the players were most responsive to the persuasive conducting of their founder, Bryn Williams, have, however clearly he shaped the musical line, the orchestra could not fill out the curves nor could they contract to the angularities.

The opening, Handel's Concerto Cross No 5, was splendidly played with a beautifully, sustained largo. After a minuet which could have been crisper, came a galloping allegro which left one eager for more. This was the keynote of the concert. Each item was short enough to be comprehensible, to invite extension.

The evening's soloist, Frank Kelleher, played the clarinet in Tartini's Concertino. This compact, exhi-

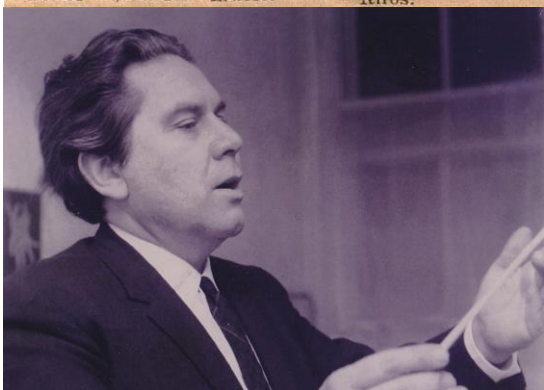
This work has broad, satisfying sweeps of sound and a totality of conception which makes it easy to take in and appreciate.

The most interesting part of the evening was the playing by Frank Kelleher and the Ensemble of Bryn Williams' Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra. This work is coherent, atmospheric and original with exciting cross rhythms, lyrical passages, concentration demanding tonal relationships and taut well balanced structure.

John Ireland's Concertino Pastorale, although not so interesting, made a good ending with its fast, tense Toccata.

This orchestra is more than welcome. It has proved in its first concert that it already has a standard of playing and what it plays arouses respect, admiration and pleasure. It will undoubtedly enrich Wrexham's musical life and deserves every encouragement from official bodies and from the ordinary citizen.

Review about the Ensembles first concert published in the Wrexham Leader — 7<sup>th</sup> November 1969



Founder, Bryn Williams, conducting the Ensemble in 1970

### Some WSO Historical Trivia

Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 in A op. 90 'Italian' was the first symphony played by the orchestra; it featured in the October 1970 concert.

The orchestra's first 'live' recorded performance was on 22 May 1971 at the Memorial Hall, Wrexham. Conducted by Keith Dawber, it included the orchestra's first performance of Haydn's Symphony No. 103 in Eb 'Drum Roll'.

During the past 50 years over 840 amateur musicians have played in the Orchestra; in excess of 180 concerts have been given under 30 conductors and 65 soloists, performing the works of 164 different composers. The WSO has raised many thousands of pounds for local charities.

And finally, Which work has been played by the Orchestra more than any other?

18 Evening Leader, Wednesday, March 27, 1965

## Conductor Eve breaks new ground in music

At 25, Eve Armitage, Wrexham and District Orchestral Society's first woman conductor, is no stranger to musical firsts. For just a few years ago when a student at the University College, North Wales, she became the first woman conductor of the student music society.

"At first there was some resistance and it was a hard fight," she admits. "It took a couple of tries to get it but I stuck at it because I knew I was competent and could do the job."



Eve Armitage conducts the string section of the Wrexham and District Orchestral Society.

## Let's give more recognition to our great orchestra

YOU have been kind enough to publish letters urging support for Wrexham Festival Club and another appreciating a musical production at Chester's Gateway Theatre. The paper and pictures are likely for a few words in praise of the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra.

The WSO celebrates this year its 25th anniversary. At the William Aston Hall on Saturday, July 3 the orchestra presented its summer concert: Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Mahler's First Symphony.

The violin soloist was the 22-year-old, Emma Hancock, whose performance was outstanding in every way. The concert was splendidly managed by conductor Lawrence Perkins and leader Mark Lanson headed an evening that even three or four years ago would have been thought impossible both in complexity and form.

Negotiations are in hand for the WSO to become recognised as the NWM's orchestra in residence. On Saturday's evening, such a development could make good sense, for

shines as never before. More than 80 musicians appeared on the stage, including seven horns and 26 violins. It is high time that it is home to an orchestra that many mature cities would envy and that all, that draws its players from the ranks of local amateurs of all ages and outlooks. Even now I trust people who do not know that the orchestra exists, it deserves far more public esteem than the size of its audience would suggest.



Wrexham Symphony Orchestra.



## Concert to support hospice appeal

WREXHAM Symphony Orchestra is performing a concert to help raise money for a hospice dedicated to the lives of terminally-ill children. The concert is taking place at the NEWI William Aston Hall, tomorrow, Saturday, in aid of Hope House Hospice, Oswestry.

Trumpeter and orchestra charity officer Mark Thomas said they were delighted to be raising money for such a worthwhile charity. He said: "We do about three charity concerts a year, and this year Hope House is our adopted charity."

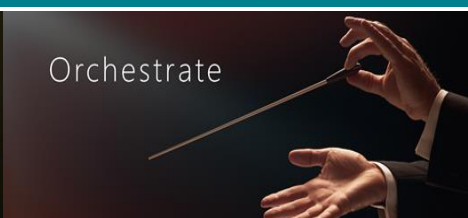
The soloist for the performance is Nigel Hughes, a blind trombone player, who learns the music by listening to tapes and reading them. Mr Thomas said: "It is remarkable, he must have near pitch perfect sound and all he does is listen to them

and he can eventually play them. He is very talented, especially when you consider he can't actually see the conductor either."

Tickets for the concert cost £2 for the balcony, £2 for the stalls, and £4 concessions and the performance starts at 7.30pm. One child will be admitted free, with every full paying adult. Tickets are available from Denbighshire Travel, The Music Place or at the door.



SOME of the members of Wrexham Symphony Orchestra. Front, from left, Stella Lawson, Christine Dean of the Hope House Hospice shop, and Annabel Scolding; back, Alan Tyson, Mark Thomas, Helen Taylor and Christine Ellis.



We are delighted to extend a warm WSO welcome to a former member and winner of our Andrew Lansom Young Musician of the Year in 2013, Tom Blomfield who shares reflections and thoughts with us ahead of his performance today.

**Please tell us at little about yourself – background, family and how you got into music in the first place.** As a family we live in Holywell and music is in our family bloodstream. My father is an organist and I was a chorister in St Asaph Cathedral. Together with my siblings, we were encouraged to take up and enjoy music. My sister Holly is a flautist in the RAF Central Band, brother Joe a Cellist (although he has followed a different career pathway) and I opted to take up the Oboe. The Oboe is a difficult instrument to get involved with and requires considerable strength in the lips. Our parents were a wonderful encouragement to us in our musical journey.

**What were your early years' experience of performing music?** I was involved in a number of local ensembles such as the Wrexham Youth Orchestra and we were all involved with the Four Counties Youth Orchestra. I also got opportunities to join the National Youth Orchestras of Wales and Great Britain and spent many hours travelling weekly to the Junior Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. I was offered a place at the Royal Academy of Music in London to study under the tutelage of oboe professors Christopher Cowie and Ian Hardwick. A particular highlight of my time with the WSO was a concert in July 2013 in which Bethan Allmand and myself were the soloists. Bethan performed Bruch's 'Romance' and I performed Francaix 'L'Horloge de flore'.

The Orchestra's Mahler Charitable Concert Series was also memorable and influential, enabling me to better understand the depth and breadth of his music. I look back on my time with the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra as an important contribution in the development of my musicianship and orchestral performance skills. I am delighted to be able to perform the Strauss Oboe Concerto during the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party and concert.

**What aspects of music are you currently involved in both performance and education?** I am the joint Principal Oboist with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Classic FM's Orchestra on Tour. My tutor at the Royal Academy, Christopher Cowie was the former Principal Oboist for the Orchestra. I also perform with the Orchestra of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, with whom I performed at the 2019 Last Night of the Proms. I also freelance guest for a number of other orchestral and musical ensembles. Educationally, I am Professor of Oboe

at the Royal Academy of Music in London and very much enjoy working with and supporting the students

**Do you have a favourite piece of music or composer?**

I particularly like the Romantic composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century such as Schumann, Liszt, Wagner and Bruckner. For me Mahler is a standout composer. The music is about life in all its facets and it is encouraging that his music is now receiving the recognition which it deserves. Swedish conductor Herbert Blomstedt has been very influential, and I enjoyed performing Beethoven's 7<sup>th</sup> symphony and Brahms 1<sup>st</sup> piano concerto under his leadership.

**Looking to the future, how would you like to see your career in music develop?**

I am not entirely sure as it is still early days and I have done a lot in a short period of time. I enjoy what I am doing at the present time and the opportunities they are giving me. I did particularly enjoy a trip to Columbia recently when I took part in an educational project with the Columbia and Phiharmonia Orchestra.

**If you were to offer any aspiring young musician a piece of advice on a career in music what would it be?** Throw yourself into every opportunity feet first; immerse yourself in masterclasses. Remember though that not everything can be learnt; so much comes from the heart and mind. Live and breathe your music; above all listen, watch and follow your own instincts.



**Violinist, Sophie Rosa** shares 'I am delighted to be coming back to play The Lark Ascending with the Wrexham Symphony Orchestra. I hugely enjoyed playing the Sibelius Violin Concerto in July.

**Are you local to this area?** I live in Northwich and grew up in Cuddington. I also went to Queen's School in Chester for part of my education.

**What advice can you give to young violinists?** Practice, Practice; Go to as many concerts as possible and play lots of chamber music.

**Can you tell us about your violin?** I play a Joseph Gagliano violin c.1795. I never take it for granted that I have such a beautiful instrument to perform with, thanks to the generous support of the Stradivari Trust.

**Who is your favourite composer?** It is impossible to decide on one, but I always enjoy playing Brahms. The violin concerto is one of my favourite pieces.

**How old were you when you started to play the violin?**

My mother took me for lessons when I was 4. I started with the Suzuki method, which was a great way to learn.

**You can find out** more about Sophie and her forthcoming concerts at [www.sophierosa.com](http://www.sophierosa.com)

# WSO Concert Diary – 51st Concert Season

<p><b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020</b>  <b>3.30pm William Aston Hall</b></p> <p><b>A 'Whole Family' Concert</b>  <b>Musical Picture Book</b></p> <p>Mendelssohn - Hebrides Overture  Tchaikovsky – Capriccio Italien  Williams – Music from Harry Potter  Britten - Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra  Kander – Chicago Selection  and a few more musical surprises</p> <p><b>Conductor: Mark Lansom</b></p>  <p>Harry Potter Themed  Light, Sound and Music Event hosted  by Techniquist Glyndwr from  2pm in the Foyer</p>	<p><b>Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>  <b>7.30pm William Aston Hall</b></p> <p><b>President's Annual Concert</b>  <b>'Classical Innovators'</b></p> <p>Berlioz – King Lear Overture  Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 3  Berlioz – Symphonie Fantastique</p> <p><b>Conductor: Mark Lansom</b>  <b>Soloist: Luke Jones - Piano</b></p> <p><b>Coming Up....Mark the Date</b>  <b>Mahler Charitable Concert</b>  <b>Series</b>  <b>Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b>  <b>Bridgewater Hall, Manchester</b>  <b>Mahler Symphony No. 8</b></p>	<p><b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020</b>  <b>7pm British Ironwork Centre</b></p> <p><b>Picnic Proms in the Park with</b>  <b>Fireworks</b>  <b>Commemorating the 75th</b>  <b>Anniversary of VE Day</b></p> <p><b>Supporting Veterans Charities</b></p> <p><b>The music programme will include</b>  <b>Popular Classics; Film and TV</b>  <b>Music; Wartime and Proms Songs</b>  <b>Spectacular Firework Finale</b></p> <p><b>TICKETS FOR THIS CONCERT</b>  <b>WILL BE ON SALE SHORTLY</b>  <a href="http://www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk">www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk</a>  and search the Events button  <b>Adult: £25 Young Person U17: £10</b>  <b>Family Ticket (2A + 2YP's): £60</b>  <b>'Early Bird' Offers to 31<sup>st</sup> January 20</b></p>
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**Calling ALL Harry Potter Fans to a Sunday afternoon concert at 3.30pm on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2020** for young and old alike; come, banish the winter blues in a programme of music that paints pictures from Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Leroy Anderson, John Williams and others, culminating in a tour of the orchestra through Benjamin Britten's 'Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra'. We are again partnering with Techniquist Glyndwr and they will be hosting a Harry Potter themed light sound and music event in the foyer. Bring your favourite Harry Potter book, wear your Harry Potter outfits and most of all, bring your special broomsticks and wands for an afternoon of fantastic delights.

## The Andrew Lansom Young Musician of the Year Award



Since the late 1980s, this occasional award has been made to a promising player under the age of twenty-one. In 2001 the award was dedicated to Andrew Lansom, our principal conductor for almost a generation.

**We have tried to discover where some of the past winner are today... here is a summary of some of them**

### Iolo McGregor – Cello 2005

Strategic Planning Team Leader with Denbighshire County Council

### Robert Guy – Viola 2006

Established NEW Sinfonia Ensemble with bother Jonathan. Holds a teaching post at Manchester University

### Rhian Davies – Percussion 2008

Data Scientist in Lancaster  
Still plays Percussion

### Alice Dunbabin - French Horn 2010

Chemistry Researcher in Cardiff  
Still plays French Horn



The cake has been designed and made by Rebecca Griffiths.



Our 50th birthday cake pays tribute to the No. 1 in the 2019 Classic FM Hall of Fame, Vaughan Williams, 'The Lark Ascending' which is being performed by Sophie Rosa in our concert.

The cake will be on display in the foyer and we are inviting members of the audience and orchestra to receive a piece of it in return for a donation to our supported charity, Global's Make Some Noise. One of their local charities, Amy & Friends, is with us today sharing about their work. Please complete the pre order sheet and collect your cake at the end of the concert. Thank you for supporting this initiative.

You can find out more about the orchestra from its website [www.wrexhamorch.co.uk](http://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](mailto:wrexhamso@gmail.com). You can also write to us at 11 Eaton Avenue, Handbridge, Chester CH4 7HB