



## Welcome Back to Live Music in Wrexham....

Despite some nervous moments over the last few weeks, we are thrilled to welcome you back to the William Aston Hall, our home for nearly 25 years and to a live Orchestral performance. Few would have believed that our last concert would have been in February 2020 when Storm Jorge made its presence felt as we shared an evening with Wrexham born pianist Luke Jones in our President's Annual Concert 2020. If this is your first WSO concert, we extend a special welcome to you. We hope that you will be encouraged to come again and join us for the remaining concerts in the 2021/22 concert programme, details of which are on the reverse page of this newsletter.

Today's concert programme gets us all further into the Christmas spirit and mood as we share some popular festive music and songs. We would have loved to include more of the festive songs for you all to sing along to, but given the ongoing Covid situation, we felt this was a step too far and so perhaps, we can look forward to a more 'singful' concert next Christmas.

We are pleased to offer this concert as a FREE to attend concert as a thank you for your ongoing support during the last 20 months or so. However (and we understand that you knew this was coming) we would be pleased to welcome any donations you are prepared to make. As you leave the Hall after the concert, mainly through the doors to either side of the Hall, members of the Orchestra will be there with buckets - please do place any donations you are happy to make in them. Once we have covered the costs of the concert, the remaining sum will be donated to local charities, and we will share the amount donated and the Charity (ies) in the February edition of Orchestra.

We are delighted to welcome back Rachael Marsh as our guest soloist today. Rachael has performed with us on a number of previous occasions, most notably in our 'Night at the Opera' concert in 2018 and at the Proms in the Park concerts in 2018 and 2019, held at the British Ironworks Centre near Oswestry.

Rachael is continuing to develop her singing through a Master's degree in Advanced Vocal Technique at the Wales International Academy of Voice, which she has completed this past week. Today, she will be singing 'O Holy Night' in a programme that includes Mel Torme's wonderful 'The Christmas Song'; with '*Chestnuts roasting on an open fire and Jack Frost nipping at your nose*'. Also in the programme is music by Leroy Anderson, Prokofiev, and the suite from the popular Christmas film, 'The Polar Express'. There is also a work by Samuel Coleridge Taylor whose music is becoming increasingly popular and Robert Sheldon's 'A Most Wonderful Christmas'.

We simply are unable to express the joy we feel at being able to perform for you all again and today is an occasion we have looked forward to for such a long time. Never before in our 53 years of making music, have we been unable to perform our concerts and we are excited to be able to look forward to resuming our usual pattern of live music concerts here in the William Aston Hall in 2022. We are very hopeful that our full concert programme will resume in February 2022, when we perform our Annual President's Concert featuring the 'Symphony From the New World' by Anton Dvorak, made popular through the Hovis bread adverts. Once again, Rachael Marsh will be our special guest artist along with a return of conductor, Stephen Threlfall. We are planning for the Foyer bar to be open again in February along with the resumption of our popular Friends and Supporters pre-concert reception.

All that remains for us to do is to thank you for sharing today with us and we hope you will enjoy the concert. We wish you and your family a blessed and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year, one which we hope will see us continue to return to a more normal pattern of living after the disruption and heartache of the last 20 months or so.

# WSO Concert Diary – 53<sup>rd</sup> Concert Season

**Please note: All concerts remain subject to the Covid 19 Situation**

Sunday February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 William Aston Hall 3pm	Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2022 William Aston Hall 7.30pm	Saturday July 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 William Aston Hall 7.30pm
<p><b>President's Annual Concert</b> Concert Programme Korngold - The Sea Hawk Barber – Knoxville: Summer of 1915 Dvorak - Silent Woods Dvorak - Symphony No. 9 "From the New World"</p> <p><b>Conductor:</b> Stephen Threlfall <b>Soloist:</b> Rachael Marsh (Soprano)</p>	<p>Concert Programme Mussorgsky - Night on a Bare Mountain Glazunov - Violin Concerto Mussorgsky arr. Ravel - Pictures at an Exhibition</p> <p><b>Conductor:</b> Leon Bosch <b>Soloist:</b> Fenella Humphreys (Violin)</p>	<p><b>Music for a Summer Evening</b> Concert Programme Dukas - Fanfare from La Peri Berlioz - Roman Carnival Overture Rimsky-Korsakov - Trombone Concerto Brahms - Variations on a Theme by Haydn Shostakovich - Gadfly Suite</p> <p><b>Conductor:</b> Richard Howarth <b>Soloist:</b> TBC</p>

## Wrexham is listed as a contender for the UK City of Culture 2025



UK CITY OF CULTURE

A change in the criteria for the UK City of Culture has extended the reach to regions and towns and Wrexham has made the first cut longlist for 2025. Coventry is the 2021 UK City of Culture, a status which previously has been held recently by Hull, Glasgow and Liverpool. From an initial list of 25 applicants, Wrexham County Borough is one of 8 locations remaining including Bradford, Cornwall (County), Southampton, Armagh, Stirling and Derby. The next deadline is February 2<sup>nd</sup> when the supporting bids are due and a decision on a final shortlist

of 3 contenders is expected in April or May 2022.

There are a number of activities and initiatives planned for the next few months to engage local communities in the bid process. Funding is provided by Central Government to enable bids to be developed and prepared. The Centre piece for Wrexham's bid will be a FREE to attend multi-venue, multi-cultural event in January held across the County Borough. Work is presently being done to create a colour scheme and imagery to reflect the cultural diversity of the County. Specially commissioned and livered 'Culture' buses will be deployed to tour the County to raise awareness of the bid and encourage local communities to get involved. Music makes such an important contribution to our local cultural heritage, and this will be reflected in the events programmes. The Orchestra has raised its hand to contribute by supporting the Wrexham bid. The benefits from the award are significant in terms of tourism, economic impact, and the further development of Wrexham's cultural traditions. It is considered that the bid process alone will reveal a significant number of cultural activities that take place 'under the radar' and which will receive greater prominence through it. Please keep a watch in local media and across the social media platforms to learn more about the Wrexham County City of Culture Bid 2025 and please do support it.

### Friends of WSO Scheme

Our Friends Scheme offers benefits of a 25% reduction in the cost of season tickets for our concerts and a complimentary pre-concert drink. You also receive advance information about important events and concerts. **So, sign up today!!!**

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.