

About The Orchestra

The Solihull Symphony Orchestra is a welcoming and friendly group that enjoys taking on the challenge of a varied repertoire. Formerly Knowle Sinfonia, our members span an age range from under 18 to over 90. We are always open to new members, especially string players – commitment and willingness to learn are more important to us than exam qualifications. We aim to perform in different venues throughout the Borough, and welcome invitations to play at special events. Rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening from 19.30 until 21.45 during term time, with at least three concert performances each year. We are grateful to the Head and Governors of Solihull School for the use of the David Turnbull Music School as our regular rehearsal venue.



Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Summer Concert 2012

Our Next Concert

Saturday 24 November 2012, 19:30

Shirley Methodist Church

Wagner - The Wesendonck Lieder
(Five Songs for a Female Voice)

Caroline Lester (soprano)

Other works to be confirmed



*19:30, Saturday 30 June
Shirley Methodist Church
Solihull*

Martin Leigh



Martin Leigh has conducted more than 50 symphonies, including major works by Mahler and Bruckner and Beethoven's ninth; major symphonic works by Bartok, Lutoslawski, Stravinsky, and Webern; and operas by Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Bizet, Handel, and Verdi. He is music director of the Birmingham Chamber Orchestra, the Solihull Symphony Orchestra, and the Halesowen Orchestra. He has also conducted the Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra and the Oxford Sinfonia.

As assistant conductor to the late Sir Charles Mackerras, he participated in concerts in the Edinburgh International Festival, and recordings for Telarc, Erato, and EMI. He has received advice and tuition from Marin Alsop, Sir Roger Norrington, Neil Thomson, and Libor Pesek.

Martin Leigh studied at the Universities of Cambridge and Nottingham, and holds a doctorate in music.

www.martin-leigh.com

Sponsoring the Orchestra

Solihull Symphony Orchestra is grateful for the support it has received in the past from, among others, the Solihull Rotary Clubs, W E Painter Ltd, and Peters Booksellers Ltd. If you are associated with a local business, and would like to sponsor or support the orchestra financially in any way, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Business sponsors receive complimentary tickets to all events, and are mentioned prominently in programmes, on our website and in press releases.

We are also very happy to receive support from individual sponsors. Please talk to a member of the orchestra if you'd like to help, or contact us by post, telephone or email

sponsors@solihullsymphony.org.uk

SSO, 3 Stapenhall Road, Monkspath, Solihull, B90 4XX

Telephone 0121 745 5548

Solihull Symphony Orchestra

First Violins

Vivienne Brown *leader*
Vanessa Cole
Charlotte McLuskie
Louise Rhodes
Graham Smye
Bob Thomas
Melanie Tubbs

Second Violins

Sarah Letters
Jessica Harris
William Hawthorne
George Newns
Heather Thompson
Diana Turnbull
Emma Tustin
Elaine Woodward

Violas

Kelvin Farge
Norman Cole
Helen Kirkham
Julia Lawley

Cellos

Miriam Taylor
Russell Rhodes
Sheila Armstrong
Helen Atherton
Sarah McCulloch
Claire Troth
Nicola Walters

Double Basses

David Evans
Bill Gale
Sue Hawthorne

Flutes

Anne Thompson
Vyvyan Jones
Mary Wright

Piccolo

Vyvyan Jones

Oboes

Sarah Vaughan
Andrew Wilson

Clarinets

Victoria Rex
Jane Emms

Bassoons

Matthew Morgan
Simon Gates

Horns

Kevin Boyd
Stephen Mayes
Tim Overton
Matthew Franklin

Trumpets

Lynne Hodgson
Ron Barnet

Trombones

John Geddes
Tony Miller
Phillippa Donne

Tuba

Andy Johnson

Piano

Timpani

Christina Slominska



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The theory of four human temperaments or personality elements stemming, some have thought, from an imbalance of bodily fluids, has an ancient pedigree and is still with us as a descriptive classification tool in many nearly-respectable psychological theories.



But they need not detain us long, because all that Denmark's most famous composer Nielsen has really done is to find an off-the-wall way to specify the mood of each movement of his symphony. As a set of moods for a symphony's movements they are not particularly remarkable - the first movement is the struggle, the second is a relaxed intermezzo, the third is tragic, and at the end of the happy-go-lucky finale everything somehow works itself out into a satisfactory conclusion. I like to think of them as Mr. Grumpy, Mr. Gormless, Mr. Glum and Mr. Gay, but please yourself.

The psychological insight in each movement doesn't really go much deeper than that, however much he was desperate to come over as serious and meaningful. But the music itself is very Nielsen. He is notorious for musical lateral thinking. Contrasts are immense and continual - the gorgeously rich is abutted with the bleak and fragmentary, the strongly driven with the aimless.

One thing he is not is predictable. He always has something unexpected to do, or some idiosyncratic way of doing it. In fairness it is not always nice, but it is always different.

Programme

Thomas - King Fergus and the Magic Shoes

Barber - Violin Concerto Opus 14

Amy Littlewood

INTERVAL

complimentary drinks will be served

Strauss - Serenade for Wind in E flat Opus 7

Nielsen - Symphony No. 2
"The Four Temperaments"
Opus 16

Conductor Martin Leigh



Please make sure that all mobile telephones, watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched *off* before the performance.

Bob Thomas (1951 – don't think about it)

King Fergus and the Magic Shoes (1999 orch. 2005)

Pibroch on an old Gaelic legend for orchestral wind section

Rev. Canon Stephen Mayes, narrator

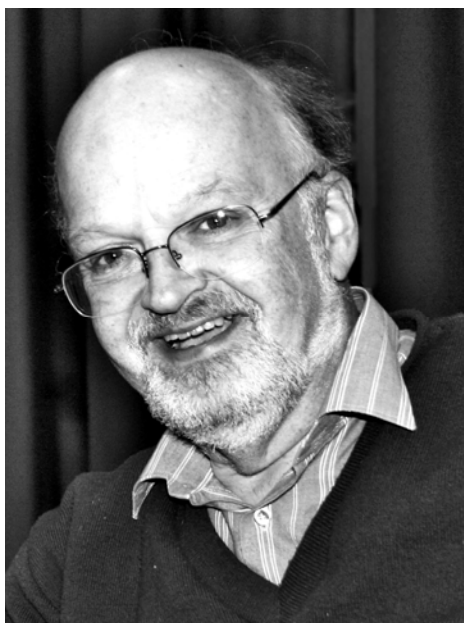
This story is found in an important 12th century Irish text of earlier tales known as the Ultonian Manuscript. (It is also the source of all the heavy legends about the Red Branch, Cuchulain, Maev, Deirdre and that lot.) The *Dramatis Personae* are:

Fergus mac Leda (or mac Léti), a bronze age hero, a historical vassal king of (South) Ulster under Connor mac Nessa around the time of Christ; his 'dun' is a fortified camp;

Iubdan, king of the Wee Folk ('small bodied' in Irish is *lúchorpáin* = leprechaun);

Eisert, royal bard of Iubdan; and

Muirdris, a fearsome sea dragon or *kelpie* (waterhorse), who lived in Loch Rurý (*Rudraige*), thought to be Dundrum harbour in County Down, 30 miles south of Belfast. Another branch of the family is in Loch Ness, and a distant cousin nearly made Tam O'Shanter give up drink.



I tell the story in the form of a 14-bar strathspey-like theme and 28½ variations, split up by the narration into 24 sections. So far as I know, this is unique – it is the only time ever that variation form has been used to tell a continuous story, so enjoy it.

The scenario is Northern Irish, but I have chosen to tell it in music with a Scottish accent. In those times the Scots were still in Ireland, and a lot of otherwise lost Irish traditions survived only in the (nearby) Highlands and Western Isles. In the early 17th century the MacCrimmons, hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Skye and traditional founders of the modern tradition of

Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)

Symphony No. 2 “The Four Temperaments”

Op.16 (1901–2)

First performance 1st December 1902 in Copenhagen conducted by the composer

I. *Allegro collerico*



II. *Allegro comodo e flemmatico*



III. *Andante malincolico*



IV. *Allegro sanguineo - Marziale*



“I had the idea for ‘The Four Temperaments’ many years ago at a country inn in Zealand. On the wall of the room where I was drinking a glass of beer with my wife and some friends hung an extremely comical coloured picture, divided into four sections in which ‘the Temperaments’ were represented and furnished with titles: ‘The Choleric’, ‘The Sanguine’, ‘The Melancholic’ and ‘The Phlegmatic’ ... my friends and I were heartily amused by the naivety of the pictures, their exaggerated expression and their comic earnestness...”

Carl Nielsen in a programme note for a 1932 concert

Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

Serenade for Wind in E flat Op.7 (1881–2)

First performance 27th November 1882 in Dresden



This one-movement work by the 16-year old Strauss is the earliest of his pieces to be regularly performed. It is not very typical of the post-Wagnerian modernist composer that was to come. The musical influences are of a conventional, old-fashioned German school owing more to Schumann and the nonentities of the Munich school than to Brahms, let alone Wagner, and the war for the soul of German music which was then being waged. But the handling of the voices and of sound masses, which would distinguish the future great orchestrator, is already secure. And it was this piece that brought the young man to the attention of the influential Wagner conductor Hans von Bülow, who took him on as a student. The rest happened from there.

Supporting the Orchestra

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mailinglist@solihullsymphony.org.uk

Pibroch (i.e. formal variations on the bagpipes) claimed to have been Irish trained. But the native Irish tradition they learnt from was soon all but obliterated by Cromwell. I mention this in case you thought I was batty.

The first ever performance, in the original version for bassoon quartet, was given in Solihull in 2000. This version for winds and tambourine was first performed at a children's concert in Stourbridge in 2005.

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

Violin Concerto op.14 (1939)

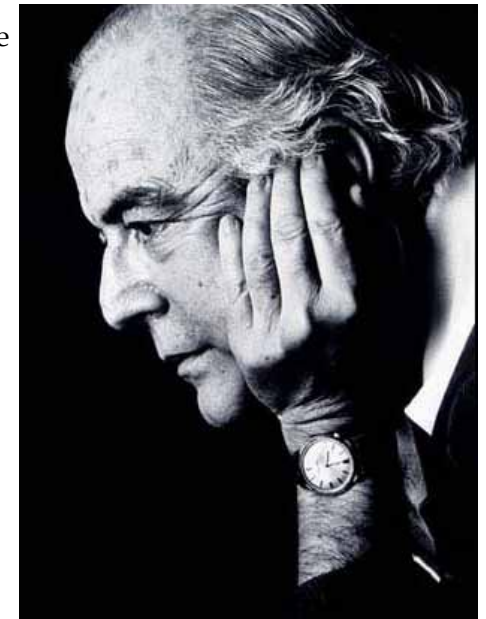
I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

The three movements could be seen as pictures of America: the homely, the spacious, and the busy. Written only a year after the premiere of the Adagio for Strings, in recent years this work has come to be regarded as one of the great "romantic" violin concertos, especially for its luscious middle movement. But this was not always so, and it has also been dogged by scandal, gossip and misinformation which were only clarified with the release of key letters and documents in late 2010. So don't believe anything you hear or read about this concerto which is more than a year old!

What is true is that it was commissioned by a patron on behalf of Iso Briselli, who had graduated with Samuel Barber from the new Curtis Institute – they were, and always remained, on friendly terms. It was to be delivered by October 1939 and premiered at a concert in Philadelphia in January 1940 which would boost both their fledgling careers. Terms were agreed. Barber was paid the \$500 advance, and went to Switzerland where



he wrote the first two movements, but returned to stateside as war loomed in Europe. Briselli loved these two movements. They weren't the problem.

What was a problem was the frantic flibbertigibbet of a finale, which Barber finished on time. It isn't true that it was too difficult for Briselli, nor that it was too easy and he wanted something flashier. Barber was pressed to re-write or at least expand it because it was felt to be too short and insubstantial for a career-launching concert, and explores only a limited range of violin technique.

But Barber would not alter it, so in the end the commission was not accepted. As properly happens in these cases, the composer kept the advance but didn't get the completion fee (another \$500) while the commissioning side gave up all claim to the premiere and other exclusive rights. Hence there is no dedication on the score.

In the end the official premiere was given in February 1941 by Albert Spalding with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, and its reputation grew, slowly at first. And for his launch concert Briselli played the Dvořák Concerto, ironically another work often criticised for inadequately substantial form. He had no wish to stir up the scandal, in which he figured badly, and so he never performed the Barber concerto himself.

Amy Littlewood

Amy started playing the violin at the age of 7. She first studied with her father Graeme Littlewood, (sub principal violin CBSO) and subsequently with Jackie Hartley (then co-leader of CBSO). In 2003 she won the Roy Heartfield music scholarship at Solihull 6th form College and in 2006 was awarded a scholarship to study violin at Birmingham Conservatoire with Nathaniel Vallois, graduating with 1st class honours in 2010.

Amy is a member of the Hepplewhite piano trio who have recently performed at the Purcell Room, London. They have given recitals across the UK and were invited to give a recital and pre concert talk before a CBSO concert at Sheffield Hall in January 2012. They have won many prizes including 1st prize in both the Sylvia Cleaver Chamber Music Competition in 2010 and the Symphony Hall/Town Hall Competition, which led to a recital in Birmingham Town Hall in February 2012. They were also the first chamber music group to reach the finals of the Ludlow Philharmonic Concerto Prize. In 2012 they will be performing the Triple Concertos by Beethoven and Martinu, and will be premiering a Triple Concerto written for them by Ivor

McGregor as well as making a recording. They were also selected to attend the highly renowned Prussia Cove – the International Musicians Seminar in April 2012.

Amy has won a number of solo violin competitions, most recently the Birmingham Conservatoire Strings Prize, the Doris Newton Prize and the Herbert Lumby Prize, and she gained a solo place in the Finals of the Ludlow Philharmonic Concerto Prize. Amy also won 2nd prize in the national violin competition - 'The Kenneth Page Foundation' and gained a place in the semi finals of the Lions Club international violin competition. In April 2008 Amy was invited to play in the Menuhin Competition masterclass at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

As soloist, Amy has performed the Lark Ascending, Saint-Saens' Havanaise, and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. In November 2010, Amy performed Prokofiev's 1st Violin Concerto with the Rutland Sinfonia and the Sutton Coldfield Orchestra, and will be appearing again with both orchestras in 2013 to perform Saint-Saens Violin Concerto no.3.

Amy is an extra player with the CBSO, holds a position in the 1st violins with the Orchestra of the Swan, is co-principal 2nd violin with the Milton Keynes City Orchestra and has been appointed co-principal 2nd violin with Orchestra Da Camera.



Interval

complimentary refreshments will be served