

Acknowledgments

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Bob Thomas for providing some of the programme notes.

Birmingham Music Library for the free loan of the music parts.

Arden School for the loan of the timpani.

Claire Thompson for her efforts in managing the concert.

Anne Thompson for fixing extra players for tonight's orchestra.

Kevin and April Boyd for designing and producing the

Marie Curie Cancer Care

This concert is being organised with the support of the Marie Curie Cancer Care, Established in 1948, it is now one of the UK's largest charities, providing care to around 25,000 people with cancer as well as offering vital support to their families. A percentage of ticket sales through charity shops will go to the charity, and there will be a collection after the concert.



Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Saturday 30th June
7.30pm

Shirley
Methodist Church

Martin Leigh - conductor

solo cello:
Richard
Jenkinson

Solihull Symphony Orchestra is
affiliated to Making Music.

www.solihullsymphony.org.uk



About The Orchestra

Solihull Symphony Orchestra is Solihull's own symphony orchestra, proudly serving the Borough since being founded in 1990 as Knowle Sinfonia. Entirely voluntary, it is supported by a loyal audience at its concerts, and by membership subscriptions. It is keen to increase its links with the community through local events, opportunities for young local musicians and sponsorship by local enterprises. Capable players who would be able to attend regularly are always welcome to enquire about joining the orchestra. It rehearses regularly on Tuesday evenings in term time at its base at St. Ninians Church, Solihull.

One concert per year showcases local young talented musicians, who are invited to play movements of a concerto with the orchestra. It is always entertaining, and we are glad that the young talent in the Solihull area is getting better year on year.

If you would like to join, contact any member of the orchestra at a concert, telephone (0121) 745 5548, or the E-mail info@solihullsymphony.org.uk

The Solihull Symphony Orchestra is a Registered Charity, Number 1118720

Friends of Solihull Symphony Orchestra

For only £30 a year (£50 for families or couples) you can become a Friend of Solihull Symphony Orchestra and receive complimentary tickets to all performances for a year. If you work for a local company, why not consider becoming a Business Supporter - for £100 a year, you'll receive complimentary tickets, advertising in concert programmes and a link on our increasingly popular web site. Please contact us for more details.

friends@solihullsymphony.org.uk

www.solihullsymphony.org.uk

Solihull Symphony Orchestra

First Violin

Sarah Sasse
Vivienne Brown
Gail Kirby
Trisha Moore
Debbie McCoshan
James Timperley
Claire Thompson

Second Violin

Ruth Jenkins
Philip Clare
Jessica Harris
William Hawthorne
Annette Jackson
George Newns
Mollie Routledge

Viola

Kelvin Farge
Evan Charles
Norman Cole
Julia Lawley
Josephine Sands
Alan Thompson

Cello

Helen Atherton
Sheila Armstrong
Claire Cunningham
Claire Dolby
Fiona Heath-Brown
Louise Ryder

Double Bass

David Evans
Bill Gale
Sue Hawthorne

Flute

Anne Thompson
Vyvyan Jones

Oboe

Andrew Wilson
Sarah Vaughan

Clarinet

Victoria Rex
Karen Bannister

Bassoon

Matthew Morgan
Simon Gates

Trumpet

Bill Sands
Tom Jones

Trombone

John Geddes
Jim Newbie
Jim Rothnie

Tuba

Paul Jones

Horn

Kevin Boyd
Claire Greenwood
Tim Overton
Graeme Burhop

Timpani

Roger Clift

Would you like to write about Solihull Symphony Orchestra?

We're looking for someone who would be willing to write regular, short reviews of our concerts for the local papers - the *Solihull Times*, the *Solihull News* and the *Arden Observer*. All that would be required is about 200 to 250 words and even though we'd like you to write nice things about us, we obviously expect criticism when it's deserved.

No particular qualifications are required, other than some knowledge and appreciation of music, and the ability to deliver copy by the Tuesday following a weekend concert. In return, you would get two free tickets to each of our concerts. If you might be interested, please contact David Evans on david@dfte.co.uk or telephone 01564 777605.



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 and Handel.

As part of his recent association with symphonic ensembles of the University of Birmingham, he has conducted such works as Mahler's Symphony no.5, and the second suite from *Daphnis et Chloé*. Their performance of *Le sacre du printemps* was described by the Birmingham Post as 'exhilarating and rewarding' and 'something of a triumph'.

His interest in unusual and neglected repertoire has resulted in performances of Korgold's violin concerto; the music of Paul von Klenau and Franz Schmidt; as well as less-familiar

works by Sibelius, Nielsen, Smetana, and Rachmaninov.

Martin Leigh has a growing reputation for nurturing and developing ensembles. Under his guidance the Halesowen Orchestra's performances have been praised for 'overwhelming evidence of thorough and purposeful preparation', and 'marked professionalism'.

He is music director of the Birmingham Chamber Orchestra (of which he is co-founder), the Solihull Symphony Orchestra, the Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Halesowen Orchestra. As a guest he has conducted the Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra and the Oxford Sinfonia, and has directed from the keyboard concertos by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. The Birmingham Chamber Orchestra is distinguished by its specialism in opera. In conjunction with the National Lottery and the Arts Council, this ensemble engages young professional soloists with the aim of bringing full-scale concert performances of opera to areas and venues not served by professional companies. Plans are well advanced for a third opera tour in the Summer of 2006. Martin is also music director of Opera Festa and an active participant in the company's educational programme.

As assistant conductor to Sir Charles Mackerras, he has 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, and Libor Pesek, and he is now tutor in conducting at the University of Birmingham.

In July 2005, he was invited to participate in the final stages of the Eighth Leeds Conductors' Competition.

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

You can read more about Martin Leigh at www.martin-leigh.com.

Solihull Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 30th June 2007, 7.30pm

Shirley Methodist Church,
Shirley

PROGRAMME

Veit - Concert Overture

Shostakovitch - 'Cello Concerto
Solo cello: Richard Jenkinson

INTERVAL

Dvořák - Symphony No. 5

Conductor: Martin Leigh

Wenzel Heinrich Veit (1806-1864)

Concert Overture in D minor, Opus 17.

This work is receiving its first British Performance tonight

Nineteenth-century Czech music bristles with composers whose lives and works have sadly vanished from the radar of popular awareness. It is the first misguided rule of art-appreciation to recognize genius and to use that as a yardstick for measuring the worth of seemingly lesser mortals. This scattergun approach leaves a trail of devastation, composers once highly regarded and whose works enjoyed considerable acclaim are often consigned to unworthy oblivion. In the Czech lands, this situation was made worse through subsequent decades of nationalist and communist control of the arts and of social history. Czech art music was ruled to have begun in earnest in the 1860s with the so-called "Father of Czech Music", Smetana, and centered upon Smetana, Dvorak and Fibich. Many other individuals, offering half a century's worth of earlier musical endeavour in a land then regarded as the Conservatoire of Europe, were simply passed over and dismissed.

Among the most important of these composers-in-limbo was Wenzel Heinrich Veit. The son of a minor landowner, born in a small village in north Bohemia, by the age of 10 he had begun to write music and was already an accomplished pianist, organist and violinist. While studying law and philosophy at Prague University he supported himself by means of his considerable musical talents and embarked upon a career within the state judiciary. He continued composing, taught and performed, and soon carved out an impressive reputation. He was unquestionably the most inspired nineteenth-century Czech composer of chamber music before Dvořák; his works in that genre were popular in Prague concerts and soirées. His Symphony in E minor of 1859 ranks among the most accomplished Czech Romantic symphonies to that date. He wrote songs, choruses and piano pieces that were bought by foreign publishers. His works were admired by Schumann. Smetana knew, and performed, a number of his string quartets. The Concert Overture in D minor was chosen and conducted by Mendelssohn for inclusion in a concert of the Leipzig Gewandhaus. By the 1840s Veit was acknowledged by Prague critics as one of the leading Czech composers.

Yet Veit's creative legacy did not fit with late nineteenth- and twentieth-century polemics of Czech music history. He was deemed insufficiently patriotic despite the fact that he was an active supporter of the Czech nationalist cultural movement, that he attempted as a German speaker to master the Czech language, that he wrote a number of the century's most popular Czech choruses and strikingly incorporated native folksong themes and characteristics into several of his works. He was deemed insufficiently progressive being the composer of a sarcastic even though imaginative pastiche on Berlioz's music named an *Episode in the Life of Tailor* after the Frenchman's *Symphonie Fantastique (An Episode in the Life of an Artist)*, despite the fact that he withdrew the work soon after composition because he felt such caricature was small-minded. As a lawyer-cum-composer he did not have the time to turn out sufficient works or appear so frequently in Prague concerts as to establish himself as a seminal figure in the city's musical life. His social class and bourgeois career were anathema to later communist sensitivities. Perhaps most compromising to the long-term survival of his creative legacy was Veit's modesty, humanity and lack of self-centered ambition. With many nineteenth-century composers creative success derived from their possession of an inflamed ego or a flawed



Richard Jenkinson was born in 1971 and studied with Florence Hooton, Raphael Wallfisch and William Pleeth. In 1994 he was awarded the coveted Gold Medal by the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and followed this up with a top prize in Vittorio Gui Chamber Music Competition in Florence, Italy. After gaining scholarships from the Countess of Munster, Martin and Muriel Taylor Trusts he continued his studies with various professors including Yfrah Neaman, Peter Wallfisch and Aldo Parrisot at Yale University.

In 1994 Richard was appointed principal 'cello with the Irish Chamber Orchestra. Whilst in Ireland he performed many concertos with the orchestra including Haydn (C & D major), Boccherini, Vivaldi and Lutoslawski. It was also during this time that he played his first solo Wigmore Hall (1995), his South Bank Debut (1993) in London and played concerts and recitals in Dublin, New York, Florence and Caracas. In 1994 he left the ICO to join Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra as principal cello. Richard has also been invited to guest lead the Philharmonia, Halle, Northern Sinfonia and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestras and also plays regularly with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG).

Since joining the CBSO Richard has combined his commitments with the orchestra with solo and Chamber Music. These activities have included founding a string Chamber Ensemble who have played (since their formation in September 2002) at the Wigmore Hall, London, recorded their first CD which was Classic FM's CD of the week and also has been featured and broadcast on BBC Radio 3. The group was also featured on BBC4. He has played concerto performances in UK, Ireland and South America with orchestras including the BBC Concert, CBSO, Irish Chamber, Innovation Chamber Ensemble and the Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra. Solo cello concerts have included the complete Bach Suites at St James, Piccadilly, St John's Smith Square, Birmingham's Ikon Gallery, Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Scotland, Wales and Malta. Richard has made several recordings including Sonatas and Variations by Martinu, Cello works by Czeslav Marek for Koch International, String Trios by Berkley, Dochanyi and Guildfoyle, a solo disc of works by Bach, Camilleri and Kodaly's Solo Sonata opus 8 and a disc with the Innovation Chamber Ensemble where he plays concertos by Boccherini, Da Vinci and Robert Farnon's Song of Scandia.

Recent radio and T.V. appearances have included Live performances on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 2, Classic FM, Saga FM, 'the Selina Scott Show', 'World Wide TV', BBC4 with the Innovation Chamber Ensemble and at the invitation of Sir Georg Solti's widow, on BBC television.

Future performances this summer include concertos by Elgar (Worcester), Shostakovich (Birmingham & London) Tchaikovsky and Colin Twigg's Echoes of Eternity with ICE at the Deal Festival. Other performances include a recital of works for cello & organ, many performances with the Frith Piano Quartet as well as much Chamber Music in St Davids, Shropshire, Deal, Birmingham, Leamington and at the Fishguard Festival.

Richard plays on a cello made by G B Grancino (Milan 1697)

Austrians - partly for political reasons - harboured a degree of anti-Czech feeling. The eminent conductor Hans Richter had tried to get the new work premiered by the Vienna Philharmonic, but there was too much resistance, so its premiere was given by a lesser orchestra in Prague.

But it was not only gratitude that tied Dvorak to the pro-Brahms rather than the pro-Wagner camp. It also suited his musical purposes. His older contemporary Smetana had been trying before him to marry Bohemian nationalism with contemporary serious music, which to him had meant Wagner and the music of dramatic presentation. In *Ma Vlast* (composed 1872-9), parts of which SSO presented in their concert last November, the “Bohemianisms”

- mainly snatches of polka - seem to be stuck on like badges, mere incidental scenes within the dramatic tales being told. The benefit Dvorak gets from following Brahms's symphonic based approach shows right from the first movement.

The symphony opens with a broad theme, spreading out like a fair landscape, which contrasts with a more agitated music suggesting heroic aspiration. The second subject is sprung with the lively rhythms of folk dance, contrasting with the more tranquil musings of folksong. Unlike Smetana, these musical “Bohemianisms” are not mere references to Nationalist symbols. Dvorak is interested in the characteristics of Bohemian song and dance in themselves and for their own musical merits. They are not merely stuck on, but woven into the very fabric of a mighty structure.

Just as with Brahms's own symphonies, between two towering outer movements come two movements of lighter, serenade-like weight. In the slow movement a thread of unpretentious melody, that could almost be folksong, wells up into passion and evaporates, as if into the air, while remaining true to the honest soil.

For a scherzo Dvorak supplies what in effect is another of his Slavonic Dances - themselves an idea borrowed from Brahms's Hungarian Dances. This one is a Furiant, a vigorous men's dance, whose contrasting middle section seems to evoke some graceful dance for the ladies.

The whispered, close-worked scurrying which opens the enormous finale sounds more like Brahms than anything else in the piece - a knowing nod, perhaps, to recognise the master. As theme follows theme he succeeds in his ambitious aim of integrating national character into true symphonic writing as few composers ever have, before or since. A final step-up of gear brings about the triumphal conclusion. Czechoslovakia would gain independence from Austria only after the First World War, soon to be given to Hitler, then taken by Stalin. But still this a real triumph, which the composer's technical achievement richly deserved.

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personality. With others it stemmed from endurance of a life of adversity and struggle that stoked the fires of individual creativity. In the case of Veit the latter was very true. Worn out by his profession, wracked by tuberculosis, suffering a series of devastating personal catastrophes, he composed for pleasure and often as a means of personal expression and release. All his works bear the seal of creative honesty. He wrote as an artist for himself, he never sought fame or fortune through his art, and he never looked to impose himself upon local musical life. In an age when egotism, eccentricity and ambition were the most useful means of long term artistic survival, his works were already at a great disadvantage.

The Concert Overture op.17 was written in 1840, six years after Veit achieved his first public successes with a series of chamber works. It was first performed in Prague on 19th December of that year and enthusiastically received by audience and critics alike. A year later it was given in Leipzig, published by the firm of Hoffmeister, and over the next 20 years featured in a number of important Prague concerts. The piece stands somewhere between programme music and a rousing opera prelude. Veit attached lines from Wieland's fairytale poem *Oberon* to the published score describing a progression from darkness to light and from despair to hope, and later probably sanctioned (being present at the performance), a title of '*Noci k svítlu* [From night to light].' The piece is indeed just that. A long introduction whose opening chromatic gropings are in similar mould to Haydn's darkness at the start of the oratorio *Creation* gives way to a lyrical sunrise melody gradually climaxing through repetition in different orchestrations. A trumpet fanfare then heralds a festive major-key Allegro half reminiscent of mid-century Italian opera and half pointing the way in ebullience, vitality and irrepressible spirit towards the *Bartered Bride*. For the first major orchestral work of any composer it was an impressive achievement. In 1851 the critic of the Prague newspaper *Bohemia* remarked that the work 'thoroughly refutes the opinion of hard-nosed critics in... Germany that “musical talent in Bohemia is to be found only in the fingertips [i.e. as performers and not composers].” To us, Veit's Overture seems to be a brilliant novelty of the first rank.' Particular attention was drawn to the slow introduction progressing from an opening pathos to a 'gorgeous Andante' climaxing with repetitions of a lyrical theme in different orchestrations, and to the Allegro whose 'splendid lyricism, rhythmic and harmonic interest and beautiful form maintains our attention and enthusiasm right up to the closing chords.'

Programme Note courtesy of Karl Stapleton

Dimitri Shostakovitch (1906-1975)

Cello Concerto No.1 in E flat, Opus 107

Solo Cello: Richard Jenkinson

First performed October 1959 in Leningrad, solo cello Mstislav Rostropovitch.

I Allegretto

II Moderato ...

III ... Cadenza ...

IV ... Allegro con moto

The great Soviet cellist Mstislav Rostropovitch, who died aged 80 last April, commissioned, inspired and cajoled composers to create more important works for his instrument than probably any other artist in history. For many, this is the jewel in the crown. Even in an era well blessed with great cellists, his heroic, dynamic and ruthlessly driven playing and seemingly limitless technique made him stand out, and inspired his hero, admirer and friend Shostakovitch to create the perfect vehicle for him. To give the cello room to sing he omitted all the brass except for one horn, which becomes almost a co-soloist. An immediate success in Russia and world-wide, it is now a classic of the cello repertoire for any player bold enough to tackle its formidable demands.

In his musically perceptive review for Moscow News of the first performance, the great Soviet conductor Kiril Kondrashin spoke of “the joy of being present at the birth of an important new work of art which will have a long and glorious life.” He concluded “in my opinion this is real symphony music, dialectically affirming victory through struggle.”

A month later, in the composer's presence, Rostropovitch performed the work again in Philadelphia, then recorded it for CBS with Eugene Ormandy's famous orchestra. There is a story behind that American exchange, which brought this masterpiece to the world's attention.

1959, when the work was produced, in between Symphonies no.11 (“The Year 1905”) and no.12 (“To the memory of Lenin or The Year 1917”), was in the middle of the Krushchev years. Shostakovitch was 53, Rostropovitch was 32. In the USSR Stalin's abuses had been denounced, and the nobler principles of Lenin's Revolution had been officially re-asserted. And there was a desire on both sides to defuse the Cold War. As some will remember, in January Soviet Vice Chairman Mikoyan made an exploratory visit to America. Then British PM Harold MacMillan went to Russia, and in July US Vice President Richard Nixon opened an American Exhibition in Moscow, all building up to Chairman Krushchev's visit to President Eisenhower in September. Despite deep mistrust, there was wary hope in the air for an honourable truce between the ideologies based on a degree of mutual respect. As part of this initiative, the best of Soviet music was sent to the West as a cultural embassy for a way of life, and so Rostropovitch joined America's best orchestra in the brilliant new Russian concerto.

The music speaks so eloquently of struggle and triumph, resolve and anguish, that it is natural to wonder what it is meant to be about. Shostakovitch never specified a story behind the piece, but if we need one the programme of Symphony no.12, which he would already be

planning, fits like a glove. In that case, if the first movement shows the causes and development of Lenin's idealism, the slow movement and cadenza would recall his anguish (mythologised in Russia into something like Christ on the Mount of Olives) in hiding before launching the revolution, rewarded in the finale by the enthusiasm of the people - complete with a vigorous sailors' dance - as they take up his struggle.

Alternatively, in the fashionable view (which I do not share, but you can buy it if you wish) of Shostakovitch as a closet dissident whose utterances are all a topsy-turvy code meaning their exact opposite, it might (like all his music, in this view) represent the resentment of the people against their Soviet masters and their hopes for future freedom.

Whichever is the real interpretation, would it matter to us if the composer had been driven by a cause we may not necessarily sympathise with? It need not. When we enjoy the fruits of Dvorak's Czech nationalism we do not have to sign up to his particular cause and endorse all the extremist acts, etc. which made the Austrians unsympathetic to it. We respond to his passion, the joy, pain, pride and shame that he feels, irrespective of the particular dogma that inspired it.

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Interval (20 minutes)

Refreshments will be served at the rear of the church

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Opus 60

Composed 27th August - 15th October 1880. First performance 25th March 1881 in Prague. Formerly known as Symphony No. 1, Opus 58.

I. Allegro non tanto

II. Adagio

III. Scherzo (Furiant): Presto

IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

Would it be going too far to describe this work as Brahms's Second Symphony translated into Czech? Perhaps, but there would still be some truth in it. The Brahms work, in the same key and sharing some features, had come out two years earlier. When he was younger Brahms had identified Dvorak as a talent worth encouraging. Although the 39-year old Dvorak had already produced much worthy music, he still relied on the support of Brahms and his circle to make his name, helping him to get performed and published in a difficult and fiercely partisan musical world. At this period leading musical opinion in Vienna had polarised into opposing camps between those who saw Wagner as the way forward and those who followed Brahms.

This work was the sixth symphony Dvorak had completed, but the first one to be published (hence it used to be known as his Symphony no.1) and in Berlin, not Vienna (then the musical capital of the world and the home base of the Brahmsians) where many of the