

The Observer, Thursday March 23, 2006

The Entertainer

Special piece opens concert

SOLIHULL Symphony Orchestra's Spring Concert will feature a work specially composed for the orchestra – "A Solihull Ceilidh" by Peter Cowdrey.

The work was commissioned through the orchestra's award from the Performing Rights Society Foundation for New Music.

Conductor Martin Leigh explained, "We wanted a lively work to open our concert, and the idea of the ceilidh came through Peter's engagingly eclectic approach to musical styles".

Peter Cowdrey won music scholarships to Winchester College and Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied compo-

sition with Oliver Knussen. After leaving Cambridge he helped to start the performing arts department at a University in Tonga where he developed an interest in world music. As composer his commissions include Land of the Prophets, for flute and strings, premiered in the Royal Albert Hall by Wissam Boustany, and A Garden amidst Flames, the result of a year long project working with Turkish Classical musicians, commissioned jointly by the Istanbul Festival and the British Council and performed in a basilica in Istanbul. As a pianist he played Charles Ives' first piano sonata on tour in South America, and he recently organised an Ives evening at Birmingham Conservatoire. He

is also Music Director for Opera Anywhere.

The concert also features the second appearance this season by the orchestra's Artiste in Association, the celebrated violinist Madeleine Mitchell. Madeleine will be playing Michael Nyman's suite for violin and orchestra, 'On the Fiddle' based on music to some of Peter Greenaway's films. The concert concludes with Symphony No 2 by Borodin.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Shirley Methodist Church at 7.30pm on April 1, are available from the orchestra's website www.solihullsymphony.org.uk, the box office on 0121 704 6962 or at the door. The orchestra is supported by the Solihull Rotary Clubs.