



NEWSLETTER No. 54

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www.wso.org.uk

Chairman's Notes
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Guy returns

We are delighted that Guy Woolfenden is back to conduct our December concert after his swift recovery from his short spell in hospital. His experience and inspiration is greatly valued for our special family concerts which he has devised and introduced over many years.

WSO Dinner

This season our annual dinner has a new venue, The Leamington & County Golf Club at Golf Lane, Whitnash on Friday 20 January 2012. We have the added attraction not only of a mouth watering menu but also reminiscences and anecdotes from our leader Jeremy Ballard about his days as principal second violin with the CBSO. It is open to supporters and friends of the orchestra as well as players and further details are available from me by email at chairman@wso.org.uk or by phone to 01926 491 785.

Nick Welch

Our principal double bass player, Nick Welch, who suffered a stroke in September, is convalescing in the Leamington Rehabilitation Hospital at Heathcote and we continue to send him our very best wishes.

Musicians2play.com

This is a new web site created and set up by WSO Secretary, Raymond Joyce. On this site, <http://musicians2play.com> players can register availability to play, find other players, promote their concerts, search for concerts and discuss hot topics. As the site grows it will be possible to sell instruments, music and CDs. It is up and running and is **free**.

Americana and Concerto dal Sapone!



Ruth Palmer

For some years now the WSO has been hoping to programme the Samuel Barber *Violin Concerto* and this season we have succeeded. The concerto further popularised fairly recently by the virtuoso soloist, Joshua Bell will be performed at the Guy Nelson Hall on Saturday 3 March by our very popular, international soloist and Brit Award winner, Ruth Palmer. Ruth returns to the WSO for the fourth time, having previously given memorable performances of the Elgar, Korngold and Britten concertos. Barber's *Violin Concerto* was his first major commission and sponsored by Samuel Fels, manufacturer of *Naptha Soap*, for his adopted son, the violinist Iso Briselli. When the soloist was shown the first two movements he rashly said they seemed "too simple, not brilliant enough," so the composer wrote a third which required a virtuoso technique. This time Briselli said it was unplayable and Samuel Fels withdrew his commission, demanding a refund of the money already paid. The latter was not possible because Barber had already spent it! However some two years later in 1941, the concerto had its première with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy with Albert Spalding as soloist. In view of its

history in connection with a soap magnate, the composer is said to have subsequently referred to it as his *Concerto dal Sapone!*

The concert opens with *An American Overture* by Benjamin Britten, written during the composer's stay in America between 1939 and 1942 and is followed by the Barber *Violin Concerto*. A rousing second half is heralded by the WSO brass playing Copland's *Celebration Fanfare* written in 1969 for the centennial of the New York City Metropolitan Museum and not to be confused with the *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Then follows the rarely heard *American Suite* by Dvořák, written in 1894 while the composer was in New York. It began as a suite for piano and was later orchestrated by Dvořák but not performed until 1911, seven years after his death. The final work in 'Americana' is Copland's four episodes from his ballet *Rodeo*. The hugely successful ballet was written in 1942 and the following year the four episodes were performed by the Boston Pops orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. The movements are all on the 'cowboy theme', *Buckaroo Holiday*, *Corral Nocturne*, *Saturday Night Waltz* and the energetic square dance *Hoe Down*.

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12 Years of Viva Italia mit Deutsch

A profile of Derrick Parker, WSO bass trombone

Born a Doncaster Yorkshireman and into a staunch Salvation Army family meant that Derrick was bound to encounter music from an early age and this he did with relish. He began playing recorder, violin and cornet at the age of seven and even though string playing continued throughout his time at school, he nevertheless was drawn principally towards the brass instruments moving via euphonium to his eventual destiny - the bass trombone.

Derrick notes that he was fortunate not only on account of his family roots but also because, at his local grammar school, he had good support in practical music making and was surrounded by a group of musical contemporaries some of whom eventually entered the music profession.

At the age of 14 he gained a place in the School's Music Association Orchestra and encountered a wonderful, almost life changing experience, by playing with over a hundred fellow instrumentalists and a massed choir at the Albert Hall under the baton of a well known trumpeter and young composer, Malcolm Arnold. Two years later he gained a place in the National Youth Orchestra, endured the discipline of the daunting Ruth Railton, and enjoyed concert experiences conducted notably by Rudolph Schwartz, Øivin Fjeldstad and Malcolm Sargent. He reflects that he was about the only trombone player there who did not take up music as a career. He had also acquired a special Boosey & Hawkes Bb/F trombone which could be converted to allow him to move easily to and from concert pitch A 440 and Salvation Army pitch A 452.

On leaving Doncaster Grammar School he went on to Leeds University to study mechanical engineering which eventually led to a post with the David Brown Company in Huddersfield and a subsequent return to university to take a masters degree in the arcane study of tribology – friction, wear, lubrication and bearing design! During this time his unquenchable thirst for playing was fairly well satisfied because he was much in demand for playing in local bands, orchestras and quartets.

In 1969 Derrick moved to Maidenhead and GKN Vandervell in the Product Research Department where he also joined the well known Hanwell Band during its period of high success under Eric Bravington. In 1970 they gained 3rd place in the National Brass Band Finals with Gordon Jacob's *Pride of Youth*



overture. Derrick was also part of the band when it provided the backing for the Peter Skellern hit single, *You're a Lady*.

The work with Vandervell led to collaboration with Fiat and necessitated another move for Derrick, this time an international one in 1972 to the Italian town of Bruneck in the South Tyrol. His expectation was to have to learn Italian but this challenge was compounded by the fact that the area was German speaking. No doubt the language barrier was opened somewhat through the music tradition in that there were five or six bands in the region and you either joined one of those or the fire brigade! This all meant that during the day he was in contact with Italian speaking colleagues and customers and during the evenings and week ends with 70 or so German speaking brass players. In 1974 he must have heaved a huge sigh of relief when, Joan, a young lady fresh from Hull University in England, arrived to teach English to Italians and they had a chance encounter which later blossomed into marriage. While Joan was also confronted with the surprise task of having to learn German, Derrick was raising his profile in the Bruneck Band to the height of Assistant Bandmaster: on one occasion he, an Englishman, leading a German speaking Italian band on tour to France!

The stay in Italy lasted until 1984, when with two young sons, the Parkers returned to England, initially back to Maidenhead and subsequently to Ayr in Scotland when his firm Vandervell amalgamated with Glacier. It was during these years up to 1997 that Derrick not only resumed his activity with local symphony orchestras but also became very active as a member of the British Trombone Society. He furthered his music arranging skills and discovered the passions of Big Band playing.

In 1997 Derrick & Joan moved to Rugby for Derrick to take up a research and development post and discovered the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra – a great gain for the WSO. Given his enormous number of contacts and his cool efficiency Derrick has been able regularly to fix the trombone sections. During his time in the Midlands he has become deeply involved with two flourishing groups: he founded the Bourton Trombone Choir and is Musical Director of The Coventry Consortium Big Band. The Big Band, primarily a rehearsal ensemble of around 20 quality players, meets weekly at the Unicorn Club in Holbrooks, Coventry.

For Derrick, as for so many keen amateur musicians, music has been a deeply satisfying complement to the 'day job' throughout working life and since 2005 almost a career in retirement. He has of course had the odd moment for reflection. He remembers an incident in his school days when he strayed from the classical routine into Jazz and played *Midnight in Moscow* with a group of school friends and the event was reported in the local press. This was a blow to the Salvation Army Citadel; and his family, especially his grandfather, were not pleased.

When asked what was his most memorable concert to date with the WSO, he replied, "The one which included the Janáček Sinfonietta with its twenty five brass instruments!"

Beyond the Stave!



Of Benjamin Britten, Stravinsky allegedly said, "He's not a composer – he's a kleptomaniac."

Waldteufel conducted with a stick and not the customary violin bow.