



NEWSLETTER No. 50

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**Chairman's Notes
from Malcolm Rowson
(Tel: 01926-491785)**

**e-mail
rowson@donax.demon.co.uk**

50th Newsletter

This is the 50th consecutive edition of the WSO Newsletter. The first one appeared in October 1998 and contained a warm thank you to the list of sponsors who advertised in the programmes. Over the years the sponsors have changed but interestingly four of the original ones still remain – Daffern & Co Accountants, Wall's TV, The Anchor Inn and Torry's DIY. We are grateful to all our sponsors past and present for all the support they have given.

Hopefully the information in the newsletters will be of help to the writer of the next instalment of the History of the WSO from 2000 onwards!

WSO Jubilee Dinner

Another special anniversary also occurs this season. We are holding our 25th Annual Dinner at the Kenilworth Golf Club and players, friends and supporters are most welcome. There is a three-course menu with excellent choice of dishes and at the very good price of £20.00 per head. Any one wishing to join us should contact me by email or phone.

Merry Christmas

The Christmas tree on display at the Guy Nelson Hall on 12 December for the Family Concert has been kindly donated by Home Base of Myton Road, Leamington Spa. The WSO thanks all its supporters and wishes them *A Very Happy Christmas!*



A Trio of Titans for 5th March



Gustav Mahler



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Boyan Ivanov

Two great works, each titanic in its own right, are programmed for the WSO's next concert at the Guy Nelson Hall on Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm.

The first is Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622* written in 1791 for the composer's long time clarinettist friend, Anton Stadler of the Vienna Court Orchestra. It was also one of Mozart's final compositions and was first performed in Prague on 16 October 1791, two months before the composer's death. Widely accepted as the greatest clarinet concerto ever written, it even features in present day culture with its slow movement popularised in the film *Out of Africa* and is said to be one of Pope Benedict XVI's favourite pieces. The soloist with the WSO will be Boyan Ivanov, born in Yambol, Bulgaria in 1983 and now based in London. He is one of the most promising young clarinettists of today who in January 2010 was awarded the *Making Music Philip & Dorothy Green Award for Young Concert Artists* and a few months later won the Woodwind Section First Prize in the Ealing Music Festival.

The second great work is *Symphony No. 1, The Titan* by Mahler. It derives its name not from its huge scoring, with quadruple wind, seven horns, four trumpets and two sets of timpani, but because it was originally conceived as a tone poem based loosely on a novel by the German born writer, Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, who adopted the name of Jean Paul. Mahler's symphony was

written between 1884 and 1888 while the composer was still under thirty and was premiered at the Hungarian Royal Opera House in autumn 1888. Because it contained many elements which strayed from the norms of contemporary music, the first performance was largely a failure. Mahler revised the symphony and performed it five years later in Hamburg, where it was much more of a success. The opening of the third movement features a double bass soloist performing a variation on the theme of "Frère Jacques", distinguishing it as one of the few symphonic pieces to use the instrument in such a manner.

Please put the date in you diary it's a concert not to be missed!

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He Shall Have Music Wherever He Goes!

A snapshot impression of WSO violinist Christopher Voss

Fascination with music began early for Chris Voss, he vividly recalls at the age of 5 being taken to the Hamburg Opera for a performance of Mozart's *Magic Flute* and being bowled over by the first entrance of the Queen of the Night. His father knew the principal bass singer and Chris went back stage during the interval where he proudly remembers, "I got to play Papageno's pipes." No surprise then, three years later, when offered the opportunity at school of learning the violin he was very keen to start and has never looked back! His education took him to Bedford School and then on to Imperial College, London. He has always played in orchestras – notably the Kettering Symphony, the Imperial College Students Orchestra and the Kensington Sinfonia whose conductor, Roy Budden, Chris fondly remembers as a remarkable entrepreneurial and avid music collector. Roy had set up a music library at the bottom of his garden which housed over 5,000 sets of orchestral and operatic pieces acquired from Europe as well as the UK. The music came in all shapes and sizes and in different degrees of legibility – a challenge to all the players in the Sinfonia!

Work at the London Business School and later at Warwick University involved Chris in many visits to foreign countries, particularly Canada and Australia, and during one five month stay he became a member of the Waverley Orchestra at Bondi Beach. His connection with Australia had strengthened when in London he met his future wife Carolyn who came from Canberra. Their happy relationship began through a mutual friend who was a cellist. In 1985 they moved to Warwick when Chris became Professor of Business studies at Warwick University and this time another cellist was involved, Tristram Besterman. Serendipitously Tristram, a leading cellist in the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra cellos, was moving away from Leamington and his house was available for purchase, thus Chris and Carolyn discovered not only a pleasant place to live but also the WSO.

Some five years later Chris returned the London Business School, taking up another chair, but remained a Leamington resident. Incredibly, despite his travels he has managed for 25 years to organise his work so that he is free on Wednesday evenings in order to attend WSO rehearsals. His contribution to the orchestra has however not been just as an important 2nd violin, but also with Carolyn he has given hospitality to many of the soloists who come from all over the country and sometimes beyond. He has enjoyed having at different times Stradivarius and Guarnerius instruments brought to the house and hearing them being practised. He is a little wary at times because he recalls a story about his grandparents who were great friends of the Léner String Quartet before the war and during a convivial meeting his grandmother accidentally sat on their Stradivarius cello causing damage which fortunately was able to be repaired.

Chris and Carolyn are passionately fond of opera, especially the production side and Chris claims to have visited every major, international opera house except for La Scala in Italy. This interest he feels he possibly inherits from his father who founded the East Midlands company of Opera da Camera in the 1960s.

Personal highlights in Chris' orchestral experience have been numerous. He played in the first *Messiah from Scratch* at the Albert Hall in 1974 – "I was first to arrive, and alone on stage was an amazing

feeling, especially when I saw television cameras. I was on desk 22 of the second violins." He led the second violins with the Kensington Sinfonia in a Mozart violin concerto with Nigel Kennedy, a performance where the soloist raised the standard of the orchestra beyond all expectation. With the WSO his most memorable moments have been playing Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* and accompanying Ruth Palmer's superb performance of the Elgar *Violin Concerto*.

Chris somehow also finds time for other activities such as tennis, skiing and book collecting. For the WSO he is working with flautist Kathy Bly on programme ideas for future concerts. He claims to be in *semi retirement* but there seems no real evidence of this!

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Beyond the Stave!

In his book *I am a Composer* [1951] Alfred Honneger described music as 'Geometry in time' and of Pacific 231 he wrote, 'Starting from objective contemplation ... the speed increases steadily and reaches lyrical ecstasy at seventy-five miles an hour, with 300 tons hurtling down the track.'

