

Shrewsbury School Music
presents



Shrewsbury
School

GALA CONCERT

Friday 26th April 2024, 6.30pm

Alington Hall

Welcome to Our Gala Concert 2024

The programme this year is certainly a lively one and has been chosen in collaboration with our students which has become the norm. The entire programme this evening features irresistible, infectious motifs, many of which captivate the essence of rhythmic drive.

Bookended with two pieces of exhilarating film music, there really will be something for everyone. The first half features our wind and brass musicians in Concert Band and Wind Orchestra. Dark Rain by Andy Scott provides a concerto opportunity for two of our U6th saxophonists, Natalia and Oliver to showcase their musical talents and expertise in this fiendishly difficult, yet overtly interesting piece.

Performances by the String Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra will fill the second half, culminating in the energetic Dances from Rodeo by Aaron Copland and the Star Wars Orchestral Suite by the iconic John Williams.

The students and staff have been amazing to work with as always and I am entirely grateful to them for their dedication and enthusiasm this year. To have the opportunity to perform such complex and varied repertoire is only possible due to the incredible talent and willingness of our fabulous musicians.

As ever, I would like to thank you for your continued support, and I hope you will enjoy the concert this evening as much as we will enjoy performing it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. McKenzie', with a stylized, wavy line extending to the right.

Maria McKenzie
Director of Music

Encanto - Lin Manuel Miranda (b. 1980)

Concert Band – Conducted by Katy Landon

Dark Rain - Andy Scott (b. 1966)

Saxophone soloists: Natalia T and Oliver C

Wind Orchestra - Conducted by Maria McKenzie

Goddess of Fire – Steven Reineke (b. 1970)

Combined Wind Orchestra & Concert Band- Conducted by Katy Landon

Interval

Serenade for Strings in E minor - Antonin Dvořák (1841 - 1904)

i. Moderato

iv. Larghetto

String Orchestra - Conducted by David Joyce

Four Dances from Rodeo - Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

i. Buckaroo

iii. Hoe Down

Star Wars Suite - John Williams (b. 1932)

i. Main Title

ii. Princess Leia's Theme

iii. The Imperial March (Darth Vader's Theme)

iv. Yoda's Theme

v. Throne Room & End Title

Symphony Orchestra - Conducted by Maria McKenzie

Encanto - Lin Manuel Miranda (b. 1980)

Rooted in Latin music the soundtrack to Disney's animated film *Encanto*, by renowned composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, is a medley of the most popular and memorable pieces from the film arranged for Concert Band. The medley includes pieces such as: *The Madrigal Family*, as seen in the opening scene of the movie, focusing on the upbeat brass, which takes the melody; and the movie's two most recognisable songs, which are the Latin numbers, *We Don't Talk About Bruno* features a short solo for both alto saxophone and trombone, playing the first verse that Aunt Pepa and Uncle Felix sing as a duet; and the lively pop song *Surface Pressure*, sung originally to express the tremendous effect of stress caused by family heritage on young adults.

In contrast to these more vibrant pieces, a sweeter section, the award winning *Dos Oruguitas* (Two Caterpillars) is also seamlessly weaved into the medley, featuring a light flute solo, and flowing accompaniment from clarinets and saxophones that utilise a combination of crescendo and diminuendo to build up to a grand, bright trumpet duet further on in this section. To conclude the piece, the outro of the melody utilises the upbeat, positive tone of the entire band, to deliver a sweet conclusion to the medley. This medley, filled to the brim with simple, yet catchy rhythmic and melodic ideas, along with a driving tempo, and contrasted dynamics, drives its success. This is the prime reason why the *Encanto* soundtrack is recognised as one of the most popular pieces of film music of the 20th century.

Remus Y (O)

Dark Rain - Andy Scott (b. 1966)

Originally composed specifically for well-known saxophonists John Harle and Rob Buckland, Dark Rain is perhaps one of the most difficult pieces of repertoire to play. It is written for two soloists, one doubling on alto and soprano saxophone and the other on alto and tenor - and makes full use of the capabilities of all three instruments.

It is a continuous movement of a broad range of styles including a very dramatic contemporary opening cadenza, classical, bebop, fast Charlie Parker- inspired big band swing and slower melodic sections.

The title comes from a rather harrowing source, referring to the black droplets that fell over Hiroshima in 1945 - which people thought were rain but were in fact radioactive and lethal. Andy Scott has said it is not specifically a war or peace concerto but instead an exploration of 'an overall yearning for peace'.

Natalia T (EDH)

Goddess of Fire – Steven Reineke (b. 1970)

Goddess of Fire is a piece written by renowned conductor and composer Steven Reineke for wind orchestra inspired by Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes and fire. In Hawaiian mythology, it is believed that there is a cyclic nature to the way in which Pele's volcanic eruptions both destroy and create land. This is represented in the piece by an exhilarating recurring motif in 10/8 time which depicts the chaos and destruction brought by a volcanic eruption, as well as a quieter theme which represents the goddess' powers of creation and beauty.

James W (O)

Serenade for Strings in E minor - Antonin Dvořák (1841 - 1904)

Dvořák composed this Serenade in May of 1875, and only took him two weeks to create. The piece was premiered in Prague on the 10th of December 1876, and is still one of his most popular works to this day.

The piece is comprised of 5 movements, the 1st movement *Moderato* has a lyrical theme introduced by the second violins which is then passed around the other sections of the orchestra. Whereas the 4th movement, *Larghetto* is a slow movement which is rueful and tranquil with flowing melodies.

Con W (Ch)

Four Dances from Rodeo - Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Rodeo is a ballet composed by Aaron Copland. The ballet consists of five sections: *Buckaroo Holiday*, *Corral Nocturne*, *Ranch House Party*, *Saturday Night Waltz* and *Hoe-Down*. In what is considered one of the earliest examples of a truly American ballet, Rodeo combines the exuberance of a Broadway musical with the disciplines of classical ballet.

Buckaroo Holiday opens with a grand fanfare; the woodwinds then introduce the Cowgirl's theme. This quiet theme continues until the Rodeo theme begins presenting a highly rhythmic motif that evokes the trotting of horses. As the cowgirl seeks the attention of her quarry, she mimics the surrounding cowboys, reflected in the heavy use of the tune "If He'd Be a Buckaroo" in this section. The theme is repeated by various solo instruments before being realised in triple canon by the full orchestra.

Hoe-Down is one of America's most recognisable pieces of music. It opens by vamping the first bar of William Hamilton Stepp's interpretation of the fold turn *Bonaparte's Retreat*, which becomes a major theme of the section. After a repeat of the Rodeo theme, the theme proper begins in the strings, as the horns play a simple counterpoint. Instead of building to a climax, this section segues into *Miss McLeod's Reel*, performed by various solo instruments. Copland briefly introduces the Irish theme *Gilderoy* in the clarinet and oboe.

Joanna C (QE)

Star Wars Suite for Orchestra - John Williams (b. 1932)

The "Star Wars Suite" is a thrilling musical journey through the iconic and beloved universe created by George Lucas. Composed by the legendary John Williams, this symphonic masterpiece brings to life the epic adventures, heroic characters, and galactic battles that have captivated audiences for generations.

Divided into multiple movements, the suite encompasses the most memorable themes and motifs from the Star Wars saga, spanning across the original trilogy, the prequels, and beyond. Each movement transports listeners to different worlds within the Star Wars universe, evoking a range of emotions from exhilaration to introspection.

The suite opens with the triumphant Main Title, instantly recognizable by its bold brass fanfare and sweeping strings, symbolising the grandeur of the Star Wars saga. This iconic melody sets the stage for the epic journey that follows.

As the suite progresses, listeners are taken on a thrilling adventure through themes such as The Imperial March, capturing the ominous presence of the Sith Lords and the might of the Galactic Empire. Conversely, Princess Leia's Theme and Yoda's Theme offer moments of tenderness and nostalgia, reflecting the bonds of friendship, love, and family amidst the chaos of war.

Other highlights include the majestic Throne Room and End Title, celebrating the triumph of the Rebel Alliance and the hope for a better future.

Throughout the suite, John Williams demonstrates his unparalleled ability to craft melodies that resonate deeply with audiences, enhancing the storytelling and immersing listeners in the rich tapestry of the Star Wars universe. From epic space battles to intimate character moments, the Star Wars Suite for Orchestra showcases the enduring power and universality of music to convey emotion and inspire imagination.

Ranen C (I)

Natalia T - Soprano & Alto Saxophones

Natalia T is an Upper Sixth Music Scholar studying Maths, Physics and English. She began practising music when she picked up the flute age 8 and a few years later the saxophone. Since coming to Shrewsbury she has achieved her flute and saxophone Grade 8 ABRSM as well as her ATCL diploma on saxophone. She has also immensely enjoyed tripling on flute, saxophone and piccolo for Shrewsbury's trip to the Edinburgh fringe festival to perform our original musical *Gatsby* (written by John Moore and Helen Brown) in 2022. This led her to audition for and perform on these instruments in another original musical, *The Boy Who Sailed the Ocean in an Armchair* with the National Youth Music Theatre last summer.

These endeavours, in conjunction with her other sporting co-curriculars, have earned her a place across the Atlantic at Harvard University where she will continue to foster her musical ambitions at the end of this summer.

Oliver C - Alto & Tenor Saxophones

Oliver C is a current Upper Sixth Music Scholar studying Chemistry, Biology, Maths and Further Maths. He joined Shrewsbury in the 3rd form, where he took his grade 8 at the age of 14 and ATCL diploma only a year later, achieving distinction in both exams.

Ollie also plays piano to diploma level, as well as playing in the Shrewsbury School Big Band.

His love for jazz saxophone led him to discover *Dark Rain* which is a perfect blend of all the genres of music he loves.

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