



WSO

Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: KEITH SLADE

Mendelssohn

*Symphony No 4
"Italian"*

Mozart

*Horn Concerto No 2
with soloist Jim Moffat*

Barber

*Violin Concerto
with soloist Sarah Vernon*

Saturday 11th July 2026

7.30pm

St Martin's Church, London Road, Worcester



About the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra

The Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra traces its origins back to the early 20th century, with our founders including Sir Edward Elgar. The orchestra performs several concerts a year in Worcester, and occasionally elsewhere in the county, under its inspirational conductor Keith Slade. We play with soloists of local, national and international renown, and are committed to the development of musical talent among future Worcestershire generations.

2026/27 Season

BRITTEN - WALTON - ELGAR
Saturday 7th November, 3:00pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Thursday 10th December, 7:30pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

FAMILY CONCERT
Saturday 6th February, 3:00pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

BERLIOZ - SCHUMANN - TCHAIKOVSKY
Saturday 8th May, 7:30pm
Persore Abbey, Persore

MOZART - BEETHOVEN - STRAUSS - SCHUBERT
Saturday 10th July, 7:30pm
Great Malvern Priory, Malvern

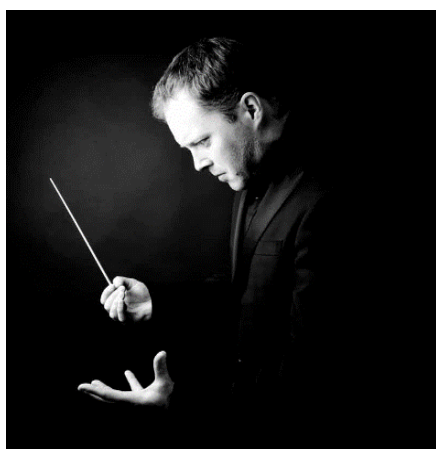
WSO

Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra
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Conductor: Keith Slade



Born in the West Midlands, Keith Slade began his musical journey learning the clarinet from the age of ten. After reaching the final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Woodwind Category, Keith graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music where he was awarded the Hilda Collens' prize. He furthered his studies under the guidance of Angela Malsbury and Nicholas Rodwell on a postgraduate degree at the Royal Academy of Music supported by the Countess of Munster Trust. At the RAM, Keith was awarded the Dorothy Grinstead Memorial Prize for the most outstanding postgraduate, the John Solomon Woodwind and Brass Prize and the Morgenstern's Award.

Keith has extensive experience as an orchestral musician and has worked with many of the great British orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the BBC Philharmonic, under Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis, Richard Hickox, Pierre Boulez and Andris Nelsons. As a soloist, Keith has performed concerti by Mozart, Finzi, Weber and Copland in venues throughout the UK.

Keith was selected to participate on the Colin Metters' International Conducting Course in 2012. Previous appointments include Head of Wind and Brass at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Junior School and Head of Woodwind at Oakham School. At present he is Head of Woodwind at Solihull School. Keith has conducted Sinfonia of Birmingham, Chandos Symphony Orchestra, The National Schools' Symphony Orchestra, The British Police Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham

Philharmonic Orchestra, St Endellion Easter Festival Orchestra and the WorldCon Philharmonic Orchestra at London's ExCeL Arena. Keith has worked with artists including James MacMillan, Mark Padmore, Roderick Williams, Sarah Fox and Mark Bebbington.

In January 2010, Keith was appointed Music Director of the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra where he has seen the ensemble grow from strength-to-strength; WSO performs several concerts each season and Keith is a regular guest on BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester promoting the orchestra and classical music amongst the local community. In 2014 WSO commissioned a new children's work in the style of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, entitled *The Magic Bojabi Tree*, which was a huge success. In 2018 WSO performed in Worcester Cathedral in remembrance of the Armistice Centenary. Continuing his passion for music education, Keith worked with primary schools in the area to create a truly remarkable concert. In recognition of his services to WSO, Keith was honoured to be invited by Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II to a private gathering to celebrate HRH's Diamond Jubilee in Worcester.

As Principal Conductor of Kimichi Symphony Orchestra, Keith received a 5 star review for his performance of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, "Slade's rehearsal technique is undoubtedly persuasive, and his beat here was clear, unhistrionic and totally effectual" (Birmingham Post, January 2018). He subsequently took the production to the Rudolfinum in Prague, and has since conducted numerous concerts with KSO which have received 5 stars: "the performance was spine tingling from the start".

In December 2022 Keith was honoured to have been invited to the Princess of Wales' Christmas carol concert for his "Services to Music". Keith also sits on the Board of Severn Arts.

Leader: Victoria Lee



Victoria began playing the violin through Dudley Schools' Music Service at the age of nine, learning with Linda Fowler and then Ken Farmer. During this time, she played in and led many groups, including the Dudley Schools' Symphony Orchestra, and was a 1st violinist in the Midland Youth Orchestra, predecessor to the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

She went on to study for a Bachelor of Music degree at King's College, University of London, studying violin with Gerhard Schmidt at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama during her degree course. During this time Victoria was co-principal of the University of London Orchestra and violinist with various King's

College ensembles including the college main orchestra, as well as the highly regarded Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra.

Victoria now performs violin extensively on an amateur and professional basis including as leader of the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra, 1st violinist and occasional leader of the Orchestra of St John, Bromsgrove, and with Kings String Quartet.

When not playing her violin, Victoria works as an independent HR Consultant and Coach.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–91)

Horn Concerto No 2 in E flat major, K417

1. Allegro maestoso; 2. Andante; 3. Rondo

Soloist: Jim Moffat



A native of Niagara Falls, Canada, Jim began playing horn in high school. Following an Hons BSc in Geology, an MBA in Marketing and working for Northern Telecom in Toronto, he moved to Cologne, Germany to study horn. For several years he played for the Deutsche Oper am Rhein. Returning to Toronto, he ran a networking technology distributor, moonlighting with the Canadian Opera, Toronto Symphony, CBC and over 700 performances of CATS. In 1989 he moved to the UK, stopped gigging and worked in software marketing for Lotus Development and IBM. In 2009 he was one of two people from the UK selected to be a member of the YouTube Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie

Hall. Led by the late Michael Tilson Thomas, it was a Google experiment to create the first orchestra solely from online auditions. While in New York, he played in a brass sextet live on Good Morning America and with the London Symphony Orchestra the following week at the Barbican. For the past 23 years he has freelanced in marketing and designed global sales training programmes. He is a WSO section player.

Programme Note

Joseph Leitgeb (or Leutgeb, 1732–1811) was the finest horn player in Vienna when Wolfgang Mozart, at the age of 27, wrote this concerto for him as a close family friend. Mozart wrote five concertos for Leitgeb though only a fragment of the fifth survives. The first concerto was not complete and was revised in later years, so the concerto you will hear tonight is Mozart's first complete one for horn. Unlike his violin and piano concertos, written for patrons and cash, the horn concertos were written out of affection. Contrary to myth, Leitgeb did not operate a cheese shop, though his wife's father sold Italian sausage and cheese.

Mozart wrote sarcastic jibes in Leitgeb's manuscripts, particularly in the fourth concerto (made more famous by Flanders and Swann in 1964, after being popularised by Dennis Brain), some of which cannot be printed in a public concert programme. Tonight's only contains one insult at the top of the work: "W. A. Mozart took pity on Leitgeb, ass, ox and fool in Vienna on 27 May 1783."

The concerto's first movement is in sonata form. Two themes are presented, developed, and then repeated. Technically, it is the most difficult piece that Mozart wrote for horn even though it lacks a cadenza. Take pity, indeed, for players then only had valveless natural horns which required the right hand to close off the bell to lower the pitch a semitone, enabling a full scale to be played. The invention of valves for brass instruments, making the performer's job easier and more versatile, was patented 35 years after this work. The second movement, an Andante, is operatic. Mozart had completed the opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from

the Seraglio), the year prior and in 1783 worked on an opera buffa, L'Oca del Cairo (The Goose of Cairo) which he never completed. Like his other horn concertos, the final movement, an Allegro Rondo, harks to the horn's origins on horseback. Though lacking insults in German, there are places where the violins mock the soloist. It's a jolly canter that accelerates into a gallop, ending in a shuddering refusal at a hedge.

Programme notes provided by Jim Moffat, July 2026

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–81)

Violin Concerto, Op. 14

1. Allegro moderato; 2. Andante; 3. Presto in moto perpetuo

Soloist: Sarah Vernon



Sarah Vernon started playing the violin at the age of six and the piano the following year. At the age of thirteen she won a place at Chetham's School of Music, where she studied with Warren Jacobs, before going on to read Music and German at Durham University. Sarah moved to Worcester at the end of 2011 and has been playing with local orchestras ever since.

Over the years Sarah has performed several violin concertos, such as the Mendelssohn, Vivaldi's Four Seasons as well as Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending. Her most recent concerto performances include the Bruch, the Bach violin and oboe concerto, the Beethoven and Mozart violin concertos nos 4 and 5.

Sarah works as a business analyst and lives in Worcester with her partner, many many sparkly shoes, and a fleet of black and white cats.

Programme Note

The *Violin Concerto*, Barber's first major commission, was sponsored by Samuel Fels, a soap magnate (manufacturer of Fels Naptha Soap—in later years Barber referred to the concerto as "*concerto dal sapone*".) Fels commissioned the work for his adopted son, the young violinist Iso Briselli. Barber began work early in 1939, and in the late summer sent the first two movements to Briselli, who found them "too simple, not brilliant enough". The composer promised a finale with "ample opportunity to display the artist's technical powers". When Briselli saw this partially completed movement, however, he declared it unplayably difficult. Fels reneged on the commission and demanded that the money already advanced be repaid. (Barber had already spent it). To rescue the commission a special demonstration was arranged. A (surely brilliant) student at the Curtis Institute was handed the pencilled violin part and given a few hours to study it, with the injunction that "it must be played very fast". The student, Herbert Baumel—who had not been told the purpose of this bizarre audition—later recalled the evident tension in the room when he entered. He gave dazzling evidence that the finale was indeed playable and was rewarded with bravos, tea and cookies. The assembled luminaries decreed that the commission

must be paid in full and that Briselli had lost his right to the first performance. The work was in fact premiered by Albert Spalding (Baumel stood in for him at rehearsals) with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy on 7 February 1941. Barber's own programme notes read in part:

"It is lyrical and intimate in character and a moderate-sized orchestra is used. The first movement begins with a lyrical first subject announced at once by the solo violin. This movement has perhaps more the character of a sonata than concerto form. The second movement is introduced by an extended oboe solo. The violin enters with a contrasting and rhapsodic theme, after which it repeats the oboe melody. The last movement, a perpetual motion, exploits the more brilliant and virtuoso characteristics of the violin."

This finale is one of the few movements in the repertoire in which *perpetuo* means *perpetuo*—from the opening the soloist plays 110 hectic bars without interruption. The young Baumel would certainly seem to have earned his tea and cookies.

Programme notes provided by John Kane, 2004 (courtesy of Making Music)

INTERVAL

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–47)

Symphony No 4 ("Italian")

1. Allegro vivace; 2. Andante con moto; 3. Con moto moderato; 4. Saltarello: Presto

Felix Mendelssohn was a great traveller. In 1830, at the age of 21, he commenced a ten-month stay in Italy where he revelled in the country's light, colour and animation, rather than the "degraded condition of Italian culture". It was in a small, sunny room on Rome's Piazza di Spagna that this inspiration gave birth to most of his *Italian Symphony*. The impetus to complete the work came in 1832 when he was invited by the London Philharmonic Society to write a symphony, an overture and a vocal piece for the handsome sum of 100 guineas. Conducted by the composer, the symphony was first performed on 13 May 1833, at a London Philharmonic Society concert in the same Hanover Square Rooms that had witnessed Haydn's earlier triumphs in England. But, in order of composition this was not his fourth symphony, for it came after his fifth, the so-called *Reformation Symphony*, and before the third, the *Scottish*. Its perverse numbering is derived from the date of publication.

The new symphony made a tremendous impression on its first audience, not least on Paganini, who was present. Rarely does the music relinquish the high spirits immediately ushered in by that famous opening chord on *pizzicato* strings, woodwind and horns. A long theme for violins, alongside energetic, pulsating wind chords, brings a leisurely pace to the *Allegro* and graceful, broad melodies, with busy accompanying figures dominate the movement.

A religious procession, probably inspired by one of the many Mendelssohn must have seen during his visit, forms the basis of the *Andante*. The opening hymn-like tune, underpinned by continuous marching figures, recurs at the midpoint and at the end where it gradually fades as the procession moves away.

Mendelssohn's romanticized idea of a minuet forms the third movement. Here all is grace and elegance in a direct line from Mozart. The soft horn calls of the trio suggest the composer's return to the music of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, evoking elfin woodland glades. As the minuet returns a literal repeat will not suffice and a number of new ideas are introduced.

A popular Italian dance, the *saltarello*, quick, and interrupted by sudden leaps, begins the last movement. Its insistent, drumming rhythm keeps up the sense of whirling motion. The continuous, running music that comes later is actually a *tarantella*, so called because it was thought that victims of a tarantula bite could be cured only by keeping them in perpetual motion. Contrasts of scoring and dynamics intensify this rhythmic *tour de force* as it builds to a final irresistible climax. The *Italian Symphony* maintains its surprises to the end, for it is unusual for a work in a major key to end with a movement in the minor right to the final bar, without reverting to the major for its conclusion.

Programme notes provided by John Dalton, August 2010 (courtesy of Making Music)

THE ORCHESTRA

1st Violin

Victoria Lee (Leader)
Jasmin Banks
Sarah Bertram
Jennie Bond
Alison Clennell
Ian Dow
Peter Jackson
Anita Porter
Sarah Vernon

2nd Violin

Lesley Jackson (Leader)
Sarah Baker
Philippa Barton
Rosemary Cameron
Jenny Fleming
Julie Greenwood
Sasha Hvidsten
Kim Ingram
Katy Kelly
Anne Mitchell
Melanie Pick
Matthew Wood

Viola

Matt Gardner (Leader)
Jo Joyce
Paul Kelly
Natalie Maynard
Paul West

Cello

Sally Alexander (Leader)
Richard Brunt
Caroline Channon
Isobel Coltman
Ruth Eyles
Amanda Furniss
India George
John Mills
Kate Moon
Kate Porter

Double Bass

Matthew Stiff
David Best
Ruth Bourne
Sarah Meadows

Flute

Jenny Argent
Rosie Edgar

Oboe

Maggie Chapman
Pat Murray

Clarinet

Rob Porter
Kay Mellor

Bassoon

Hannah Wrieden
Marcia Heidesch

Horn

Ruth Jones
Julia Burton

Trumpet

Julie Spraggett
David Gibson

Timpani

Sheila Joynes

Piano

Jennie Bond



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Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: KEITH SLADE

BRITTEN

Four Sea Interludes
from Peter Grimes

WALTON

Cello Concerto
with soloist Richard Jenkinson

ELGAR

Enigma Variations

Saturday 7th November 2026

7:30pm



Tickets £15 and under-18s free
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or on the door