

South East London Orchestra  
*The Lark Ascending*



**Saturday 27 April 2013,**

**at 4pm**

**Conductor: David Smith**

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*The Lark Ascending* holds the distinction of being voted the nation's *second* favourite piece of classical music by Classic FM listeners for the past three years. I'm sure after today you will all vote for it to top the charts next year! But it's just one of four wonderfully communicative pieces in this programme.

Furious, tragic Beethoven and Mozart's music for Parisian high society frame a concert that includes music by two of England's finest composers.

We do hope you enjoy the concert – come talk to us during the interval and afterwards to let us know what you think.

David Smith  
Music Director

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**Programme:**

*BEETHOVEN* Coriolan Overture

*VAUGHAN WILLIAMS* Lark Ascending  
Soloist: Anna Smith

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*BOYCE* Symphony No. 2 in A

*MOZART* Symphony No. 31 in D, 'Paris'

## Conductor: David Smith



David enjoys working with a number of ensembles in London, programming pieces from unusual corners of the repertoire, alongside the great classics. In addition to his work with SELO, he is also Music Director of the City of London Symphonic Winds.

He also regularly conducts London Repertoire Orchestra and has worked as guest conductor with many orchestras in London and across the South of England, including Brent Symphony Orchestra, Kingston Philharmonic, Sidcup Symphony and South Bank Symphony (now Sinfonia Tamesa). Concert venues have included Trinity College of Music, Hampton Hill Playhouse, the Landmark

Arts Centre, Teddington, and St James's Park, as part of The Royal Parks series.

Work abroad has involved concerts at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw, Poland, and in Italy as part of the International Festival of European Youth Orchestras.

David studied Music, and subsequently Musicology, at the University of Southampton, where his tutors included David Owen Norris and Michael Finnissy. He studied conducting with Robin Browning and Denise Ham. Alongside his conducting career and trombone playing, David works as a marketing director in the music industry.

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## Leader: Alan Titherington

Alan studied music in Huddersfield in the 1980s, where he was taught by Herbert Whone, immersing himself in as much contemporary music as possible, and over the years has worked closely with composers such as Witold Lutoslawski, Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies, John Cage and Michael Tippett.

He began freelancing following a year at The National Centre for Orchestral Studies (based at Goldsmith's College) and early engagements included extra work with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and a short stint in the original Miss Saigon production in the West End. Playing mostly around the South East, other career moves such as joining the army, classroom music teaching and testing financial software have always been flexible enough in allowing time to continue musical pursuits.



After 22 years, Alan is also the second longest-serving member of the Dartington Festival Orchestra and has been privileged to have worked with some of the most respected and influential orchestral conductors, including Diego Masson, Charles Groves, Vernon Handley, Edward Downes, Richard Hickox, Ilan Volkov and Jiří Bělohlávek. A recent highlight of the Dartington years was a performance of Haydn's 'Creation' with Sir Charles Mackerras on his first visit to the Summer School in almost 40 years.

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## Soloist: Anna Smith

Anna Smith read music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge and then continued her violin studies as a postgraduate scholar at the Royal Academy of Music, where she studied with Erich Gruenberg and graduated with the prestigious Dip RAM. She has also won awards from the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. Anna is a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Violin section of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the violinist of the Elgin String Trio. She is currently on trial for the Principal Second Violin position in the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

For five years, Anna was the violinist of the Lawson Piano Trio, who were Leverhulme Junior Chamber Music Fellows at the RAM and with whom she performed regularly in recitals and masterclasses nationwide, as well as at the Kuhmo International Chamber Music Festival in Finland where they won the Kees Wiebenga Diploma for the best performance at the festival. She now performs chamber music with the Elgin Trio, with whom she has recently returned from a tour of Northern Norway, and as a guest with many other ensembles. Recently she has been guest leading the Berkeley Ensemble in many of their performances, and in March she travelled to Canada, performing and giving masterclasses in and around Toronto as part of the Tippett Quartet.

Aside from the BBCSO, Anna has worked with many of the country's finest orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Philharmonic and Concert Orchestras, Northern Sinfonia, Bournemouth Symphony and Ulster Orchestras and the Orchestra of English National Opera. She has performed as guest Principal 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Concert and Northern Ballet Theatre Orchestras, as co-leader of the London Gala Orchestra, and as leader of the Presteigne Festival Orchestra, Christchurch Sinfonia and Sinfonia Cymru. She has been the leader of the Jersey Chamber Orchestra since 2008.

She is also very interested in pursuing projects outside of classical music and has recently performed in a number of live recordings for BBC Radio 1 with groups such as *The Kooks*, *We Are Scientists* and *Cajun Dance Party*, as well as participating in improvisation projects with folk music groups from Iran, Morocco and Turkey and the tango group *Tango a 3*. She also works regularly with the BBCSO education department, conceiving and delivering family pre-concert workshops at the Barbican Centre.

Anna plays on a violin by Joseph Gagliano, thanks to a generous loan from the Abbado Trust.



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)  
**Overture: Coriolan, Op. 62** (1807)

The sheer fury that begins this overture reminds us that Beethoven was a man of wild emotion himself – but in this instance the music depicts the anger of another. Gaius Marcius, the hero of Corioli in the fifth century BC, took the name Coriolanus from his victory there, but after an unjust exile by Rome he leads the nearby Volsci people against his former empire.

His vengeance, will and fury are what we hear at the opening, but the flowing second theme represents the pleas of the general's mother and wife, asking him to end this attack on his own people. At the final return of Coriolan's fury, Beethoven leads the music suddenly down a tragic path. The general has been persuaded to make peace, but is put to death by the Volscians for his betrayal.

Written for Heinrich von Collin's drama *Coriolan* (the same basic story as Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*), the overture was given its first performance in March 1807 at Prince Lobkowitz's residence in Vienna.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)  
**The Lark Ascending** (1914–21)

To hear the free, flowing solo violin in *The Lark Ascending* you would think that the poem that inspired Vaughan Williams would be of similar character. Instead, the words of George Meredith are weighed down by almost clunky rhyming couplets, but it is the impression of the bird in flight and the song that it sings that the disconnected extracts of this poem create, and which led to this perennial concert favourite:

*He rises and begins to round,  
He drops the silver chain of sound,  
Of many links without a break,  
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.*

\* \* \*

*For singing till his heaven fills,  
'Tis love of earth that he instils,  
And ever winging up and up,  
Our valley is his golden cup,  
And he the wine which overflows  
To lift us with him as he goes.*

\* \* \*

*Till lost on his aerial rings  
In light, and then the fancy sings.*

Begun in 1914, Vaughan Williams completed the piece – labelled a 'Romance' for violin and orchestra – after the First World War and brought a romantic, idealistic (unreal?) pre-war England to life by doing so. He dedicated the piece to Marie Hall, a violin pupil of Elgar who gave the first performance of the orchestral version, conducted by Adrian Boult.

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## Interval

Please join us for refreshments.

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William Boyce (1711–1779)

### **Symphony No. 2 in A, from Op. 2 (1756)**

I: Allegro assai

II: Vivace

III: Presto allegro

At the time Boyce wrote his symphonies, the symphonic form was still connected to the Italian operatic overture (or 'sinfonia') – the terms 'symphony' and 'overture' were interchangeable. John Walsh, a leading music publisher in London in the eighteenth century, put together an edition of eight Boyce symphonies, seven of which had previously served as overtures to operatic or choral compositions.

Symphony No. 2 was in fact the overture to the Ode for the King's Birthday, and was (chronologically) one of the last of the eight symphonies to be composed. Lasting all of seven minutes, it conforms to the Italian sinfonia form of three movements: fast – slow – fast, but Boyce had a liking for lively second movements. Full of life, it still serves as a brilliant overture, written, we believe, in the year Mozart was born.

\* \* \*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

### **Symphony No. 31 in D, K297, 'Paris' (1778)**

I: Allegro assai

II: Andante

III: Allegro

The pressures and challenges of writing a piece to commission have changed very little over the centuries. Mozart's 'Paris' symphony, written in 1778 for Joseph (Jean) Le Gros and the *Concert spirituel* series, has no minuet movement (as was the fashion in France at the time), was the first of his symphonies to include clarinets in the woodwind section (as the ensemble he wrote for had them available), and required certain compositional decisions to be made.

It is reported that Mozart removed several passages from the piece that he thought would be too difficult for a Parisian audience's superficial expectations. He wrote to his father: 'I cannot say whether it will be popular – and to tell the truth, I care very little, for who will like it? I can answer for its pleasing the few intelligent French people who may be there – and as for the stupid ones, I shall not consider it a great misfortune if they are not pleased. I still hope, however, that even asses will find something in it to admire – and, moreover, I have been careful not to neglect *le premier coup d'archet* – and that is quite sufficient. What a fuss the oxen here make of this trick!'

*Le premier coup d'archet* – 'the first stroke of the bow' – was an effect used in Paris at the opening of a symphony, where the strings emphatically played the first notes together, demonstrating their excellence as an ensemble. Mozart was writing to order, pleasing his

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audience, no matter how disdainfully he wrote of them. He makes a virtue of having to use this effect, anchoring the first movement around the dramatic unison notes and rising scale that begin the piece.

The first movement makes up half of the symphony, and conforms to the standard sonata form of the day - but with a difference. Mozart writes a multitude of little 'themes' in two groups, but just when the audience would expect an extended section in the middle of the movement to develop or expand on those themes, it's over in a flash. Perhaps this is Mozart not taxing the Parisian audience by cutting down on the clever development section.

The second movement also caused some consternation with his commissioner, who labelled it 'too long'. Mozart didn't agree but did write an alternative, saying 'each is good in its own way'. Uncertainty reigns over which was the original second movement, but the version performed today is thought most likely to be Mozart's original.

For the finale, Mozart clearly knows, yet plays with, the audience's expectations. A strong unison opening would be expected again, but Mozart gives us a hushed violin-only introduction, before delighting the Parisians with an unexpectedly sudden *forte*. The second theme is developed as a fugue – the theme is stated successively by different instruments, one after the other – finally allowing Mozart to show just how clever he was.

*Programme notes © South East London Orchestra*

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*Next Concert Details:*

**Date & Time:** Saturday 6 July 2013 at 4pm

**Programme:**

*Elgar:* Chanson du matin

*Delius:* On hearing the first cuckoo in spring

*Ravel:* Pavane pour une enfente defunte

*Elgar:* Chanson de nuit

*Beethoven:* Symphony No. 6, 'Pastorale'

**Venue:** St Barnabas Church, Beckenham

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*Performers:*

**First Violin:**

Alan Titherington  
Heather Hall  
Benjamin Hebbert  
Guy-Noel Sylvio Clarisse

**Second Violin:**

Sara Trepte  
Penny Davies  
Claudia Fuller

**Cello:**

Hilary Wood  
Ed Langford

**Viola:**

Stephen Cadywold  
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler  
Catriona Cooper  
Gemma Rickwood

**Double Bass:**

Marissa Alcock  
Morven Main

**Flute:**

Hanna Barriga  
Sarah Harington Hawes

**Oboe:**

Catherine Smale  
Michael Clegg-Butt

**Clarinet:**

Charlotte Woolley  
Laurence Scott

**Bassoon:**

Peter Harris  
Val Currie

**Trumpet:**

Nathaniel Rodwell  
Nick Walkley

**French Horn:**

Natalie Cole  
Matthew Sackman

**Percussion:**

David Coronel

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Thanks must be given to David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes, Anthony Fawkes, Natalie Cole and Tim Hide, for their ongoing support and excellent organisational skills.

Thanks additionally to the Parishes of St Barnabas and St Edmunds and Christ Church, for allowing us to use their wonderful churches and halls.