

# South East London Orchestra



**Saturday 23 February 2013,**

**at 4pm**



**Conductor: David Smith**

E: [seorchestra@gmail.com](mailto:seorchestra@gmail.com)

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*Today* we present a programme infused with the innocence and energy of youth. Strauss's Serenade is a work from the very start of his career - his opus 7 - and uses the wind and horns of the orchestra to beautiful effect. With Elgar, things take a different turn - this is a wistful, longing memory of the innocence of childhood - which is a theme that continues in this orchestral version of Debussy's Children's Corner. Dedicated to his daughter, the six movements evoke childhood memories and the toys in his daughter's collection. And Mendelssohn's fourth symphony closes the concert in a swirling rush of musical energy - one of the most youthful pieces from this perennially youthful composer.

David Smith  
Music Director

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**Programme:**

*R. STRAUSS: Wind Serenade in E flat, Op.7*

*ELGAR: Dream Children, Op. 43*

*DEBUSSY: Children's Corner*

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*MENDELSSOHN: Symphony No. 4, Op. 90 'Italian'*

## 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 Music Director of the City of London Symphonic Winds and of Barnes Concert Band.

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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## Guest Leader: Cathal Garvey

Cathal Garvey hails from Ireland where he made his name first as a violinist and then as a choral and orchestral conductor.

Cathal began violin and piano studies in his native Cork at an early age, continuing at the Cork School of Music and later reading music at University College Cork. After completing his Masters Degree in Conducting he studied for two years at the prestigious College of Moscow Conservatory.

Cathal's principal instrument is the violin; he was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland and he has played professionally with many orchestras including the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the German-based Philharmonia of the Nations. In London, he now plays with London International Orchestra, Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra and I Maestri. This is his first concert with SELO.



As a chorister, Cathal has sung and toured with many large choirs and chamber choirs, among them the Irish Youth Choir, University College Cork Choir, Madrigal '75, the College of Moscow Conservatory Choir and Pegasus Choir (London).

Cathal moved to London in April 2009 to take up the post of Chorus Master with Grange Park Opera. Since his arrival, he has conducted Southern Sinfonia, London International Orchestra, London Repertoire Orchestra, London Medical Orchestra, King's College London Symphony Orchestra and he is a tutor of Conducting in the Royal Academy of Music.

Newbury Choral Society was delighted to appoint him Musical Director in September 2009.

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**Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)**  
**Serenade in E-flat major, op. 7 (1881)**

**Orchestration:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns

Richard Strauss had just turned seventeen when he composed his Serenade for 13 wind instruments. By this time, he had already published a string quartet, a piano sonata, some shorter piano pieces, an orchestral march, and a catalogue of unpublished compositions included a full-length symphony – thus earning his status as prodigy.

As son of Franz Strauss, the Munich court orchestra's principal horn player, Richard already lived in a world saturated with music. Strauss Senior was decidedly unsympathetic when it came to "new" music, and no one was newer in late-19th-century Munich than Wagner. Stories abound about clashes between Franz Strauss and Wagner, with the horn player criticizing Wagner's music while also playing it with incomparable skill and beauty. Even Wagner was forced to admit of Strauss Senior that "when he plays his horn, one cannot stay cross with him."

The beauty of Franz Strauss' horn playing certainly influenced his son's writing for winds in the Serenade, which utilizes four horns along with double woodwinds and contrabassoon (or double bass depending on the available resources). This work represents the young Strauss' filtering and distillation of influences from Mozart and Mendelssohn, into something remarkably original.

The Serenade is a single movement in sonata form, which was an innovation of the classical era of Mozart and Haydn. The horns play the first theme with great warmth, which surely must have put a smile on Father Strauss' face. The music is melodic and lyrical, with the second theme revelling in the rich, full sound of the 13 wind instruments. The development section starts with the oboes over a series of sustained notes played by the horns and the double bass. A rising figure in the lower instruments creates a sense of anticipation as the development approaches the recapitulation, which begins with what is perhaps the most evocatively beautiful moment in the Serenade.

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**Sir Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)**  
**Dream Children (1902)**

These two pieces were written in 1902, when Elgar was approaching the peak of his fame and popularity. Unusually for Elgar they were not written to any commission. They are not complete symphonic movements but it was Elgar's practice to work in small sections and then put them together into a whole.

The pieces are inspired by 'Dream-Children; A Reverie', one of the Essays of Elia by Charles Lamb published in 1822, and Elgar inscribed on the score an excerpt from the essay. The essay is in one paragraph over four pages: the writer imagines telling his 'little ones' called Alice and John, some tales of their great-grandmother and her house and of his own courtship with another Alice in hope and eventual despair. The story mysteriously ends with:

*"We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name."*

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## **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)** **Children's Corner (1908-1911)**

Children's Corner is a six-movement suite for solo piano. It was published in 1908, and was given its world première in Paris by Harold Bauer on December 18 of that year. In 1911, an orchestration of the work by Debussy's friend André Caplet received its première and was subsequently published.

It is dedicated to Debussy's daughter, Claude-Emma (known as "Chou-Chou"), who was three years old at the time. The pieces are not intended to be played by children; rather they are meant to be evocative of childhood and some of the toys in Claude-Emma's toy collection.

### Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum

The title of the first alludes to Muzio Clementi's collection of instructional piano pieces, Gradus ad Parnassum ("Steps to Parnassus"). The "Gradus ad Parnassum" was one of the most frequently-used exercise books in France at the time, similar in sound to the Czerny exercises such as the "School of Velocity". In the middle, the music slows down and Debussy tries his material in other keys as if on the piano for exercise. The music gets wilder toward the end and finishes off with a bang!

### Jimbo's Lullaby

This work describes an elephant, Jumbo, who came from the French Sudan and lived briefly in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris around the time of Debussy's birth. The misspelling "Jimbo" betrays the Parisian accent which often confuses the pronunciation of "um" with "im". It is a beautiful lullaby with some dark moments and whole-tone passages in the middle.

### Serenade of the Doll

This piece is marked Allegretto ma non troppo (moderately fast, but not too fast). It is a description of an Oriental porcelain doll and features the Chinese pentatonic scale throughout.

### The Snow is Dancing

Thanks to the composer's remarkable color effects, this piece manages to describe snow - not rain - and muted objects seen through it.

### The Little Shepherd

The Little Shepherd depicts a shepherd with his flute. There are three solos and three commentaries which follow.

### Golliwogg's Cakewalk

At the time of its composition, Golliwogs were in fashion, due partly to the popularity at that time of the novels of Florence Kate Upton. They were stuffed black dolls with red pants, red bow ties and wild hair, somewhat reminiscent of the black-face minstrels of the time. This is a ragtime piece with its syncopations and banjo-like effects. The second section of this dance is interrupted on several occasions by the love-death leitmotif of Richard Wagner's opera Tristan und Isolde, marked *avec une grande émotion* (with great feeling). Each quotation is followed with banjo imitations. The cakewalk was a dance or a strut and the dancer with the most elaborate steps won a cake ("took the cake").

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Interval

Please join us for refreshments.

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**Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)**  
**Symphony No 4 in A major, Op 90, 'Italian' (1833)**

- I) Allegro vivace
- II) Andante con moto
- III) Con moto moderato
- IV) Saltarello: Presto

Mendelssohn's 'Italian' symphony was the major product of his second 'grand tour' of Europe, undertaken at the age of 21. Savouring, as he put it, the "supreme delight in life" displayed by the Italians, he vowed to pay symphonic homage to their vivacity. The result, he declared, was the most cheerful piece of music he had yet composed, though he insisted that it was far from being a piece of nineteenth-century musical landscape painting.

What is easy to identify is the instant sunshine of the first movement of the 'Italian' and the southern swirl of the finale, which Mendelssohn took pains to entitle Saltarello, in tribute to the leaping Italian dance it relentlessly evokes. In comparison, the source of the slow movement is surely the allegretto of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, another study in the relationship between A minor and major. As for the elfin grace of the third movement – a Mendelssohnian evocation of a classical minuet – its poetic trio section, filled with magical horn calls, could easily come from A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Strangely, Mendelssohn never really liked his Italian symphony and substantially revised three of its four movements, changing the colouring of the andante, adding fresh touches of poetry to the third movement, and considerably extending the finale. But if these were his last thoughts, they were never acted upon and have only recently been issued in an optional performing version. Though they seem unlikely to replace the original they shed interesting light on a masterpiece which Mendelssohn himself, because of his incomprehensible lack of faith in it, conducted only once.

*Programme notes © South East London Orchestra*

*Performers:*

**First Violin:**

Cathal Garvey  
Heather Hall  
Bonnie Pal  
Helena Ruinard  
Katarina Djordjevic

**Second Violin:**

Penny Davies  
Hannah Fletch  
Maggie Houlgate  
Flora Robertson

**Cello:**

Cat Bee  
Laura Brown  
Ed Langford

**Viola:**

Stephen Cadywold  
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler  
Catriona Cooper  
Gemma Rickwood

**Double Bass:**

Michael Healey  
Charlie Francis

**Harp:**

Keziah Thomas

**Flute:**

Hanna Barriga  
Sarah Harington Hawes

**Oboe:**

Catherine Smale  
Michael Clegg-Butt

**Clarinet:**

Steve Clark  
Charlotte Woolley

**Bassoon:**

Peter Harris  
Val Currie

**Trumpet:**

Nathaniel Rodwell  
Nick Walkley

**French Horn:**

Natalie Cole  
Andy Currie  
Sabrina Pullen  
Matthew Sackman

**Percussion:**

David Coronel  
Adam Payn

*Next Concert Details:*

**Date & Time:** Saturday 27 April 2013 at 4pm

**Programme:**

*Beethoven:* Coriolan Overture

*Vaughan Williams:* Lark Ascending

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*Boyce:* Symphony No. 2 in A

*Mozart:* Symphony No. 31 in D, 'Paris'

Keep an eye on our website for updates on the concert.

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***Fancy a pint?***

Please join us at the Oakhill pub on Bromley Road for a celebratory drink after the concert. It'll be busy, the rugby's on!

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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' Churches, for allowing us to use their wonderful churches and halls.