

South East London Orchestra

Saturday 5 July 2014, 7:30pm



Conductor: David Smith
Soloist: Fenella Humphreys

Welcome

We have reached the end of our second season with the South East London Orchestra and are delighted to welcome you to this celebratory concert!

Four hugely popular pieces await you tonight, dominated by the powerhouse Violin Concerto No. 1 by Max Bruch. That said, I know that you will find the other three pieces just as charming, entertaining and moving.

For the many of you that have been to our previous concerts you will know that holding this event on a Saturday evening, in Christ Church, is a new venture for us as well. We will be back at St Barnabas, Beckenham, on Sunday afternoons for more concerts next year. Meanwhile, we are delighted to play in a new venue and would be glad to hear your thoughts on tonight's format.

So, please enjoy tonight's concert – particularly the performance of our fabulous guest soloist, Fenella Humphreys – and I hope it is one of the highlights of your summer!

David Smith
Music Director

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Programme:

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS ~ The Wasps Overture

BRUCH ~ Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor

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Interval

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VAUGHAN WILLIAMS ~ Fantasia on 'Greensleeves'

MOZART ~ Symphony No. 35 in D Major, 'Haffner'



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 regularly conducts the 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 23 years, Alan is also the second longest-serving member of the Dartington

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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, 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: Fenella Humphreys

Fenella performs widely as soloist. Her first concerto recording, of Christopher Wright's Violin Concerto for Dutton Epoch with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Martin Yates was released in 2012 to great critical acclaim, including selection as 'Orchestral Choice CD' in a 5 star review in the BBC Music Magazine.

Fenella has collaborated with artists including Alexander Baillie, Pekka Kuusisto and Martin Lovett, and is regularly invited by Steven Isserlis to take part in the prestigious Open Chamber Music at IMS Prussia Cove. Konzertmaster of the Deutsche Kammerakademie, she also enjoys guest leading and directing. A number of eminent British composers have written works for Fenella both in her own right and as a former member of the Lawson Trio. During 2014/15 she will premiere a set of 6 new solo violin works by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Gordon Crosse, Sally Beamish, Adrian Sutton, Piers Hellawell and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

Fenella studied with the great Sidney Griller CBE, Itzhak Rashkovsky, Ida Bieler and David Takeno at the Purcell School, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule in Düsseldorf where she was awarded the highest attainable marks both for the 'Diplom' exam and the 'Konzertexamen' soloists' diploma.

Fenella plays a beautiful violin from the circle of Peter Guaneri of Venice, kindly on loan from Jonathan Sparey.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
The Wasps: Overture (1909)

Vaughan Williams' first venture into incidental music (he was to later write much for theatre, film and radio) was for *The Wasps*, a caustic satire on the Athenian judiciary by Aristophanes. The 'wasps' of the title are the jurymen who have an obsession with litigation.

The music Vaughan Williams wrote does not reflect ancient Greece, but is more a good-humoured English score. This overture has become one of Vaughan Williams' most often heard pieces, famously beginning with the angry buzzing comments of the jurymen. There are two main themes, the second of which is a superbly lyrical melody of great beauty.

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Max Bruch (1838–1920)
Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor (1866)

I Vorspiel (Allegro moderato)
II Adagio
III Finale (Allegro energico)

For one of the most famous and popular concertos in the repertoire, it seems strange to think that after the first performance in 1866 Bruch began to have doubts about its quality. He sent the score to his colleague, the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim (who had a profound influence on composers of the romantic era) and asked for advice on specific points.

Bruch did make some changes based on Joachim's suggestions, they met to play through the piece together, and following further revisions, the first performance of the piece in its final form was given on 7 January 1868 with Joachim as the soloist. Bruch dedicated the work to Joachim 'in friendship'.

The first movement (Vorspiel – 'prelude') opens softly and draws the audience in through stages. Bruch's balance of orchestra and soloist is superb, and reserves the ensemble's full power to great effect at the climaxes. The movement ends as it began, with soft, chordal orchestral playing framing cadenza-like explorations by the soloist, before leading seamlessly to the slower, wonderfully lyrical second movement. The third and final movement could be used as a definition of 'exuberance', and it is here that the fireworks are truly released.

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INTERVAL
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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)
Fantasia on ‘Greensleeves’ (1934)

One of the most famous melodies in England, ‘Greensleeves’ first came to Vaughan Williams’ attention through William Ballett’s lute book of 1584. Vaughan Williams included it as an entr’acte in his opera Sir John in Love (1929). This orchestral version is an expansion of that entr’acte, made by Ralph Greaves, who added a middle section quoting the folksong ‘Lovely Joan’, also used in the opera.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Symphony No. 35 in D major, ‘Haffner’ (1782–83)

I Allegro con spirito
II Andante
III Menuetto – Trio
IV Finale (Presto)

The Haffners were friends of the Mozart family from Salzburg. This symphony began life as a serenade, requested by his father to give to the Haffners – Mozart had already completed a first serenade for the 1776 marriage of the daughter Elisabeth to a shipping agent. The new serenade was to accompany the festivities at the house of this businessman who was celebrating his ennoblement.

Mozart delivered the serenade in stages, working under immense time pressure due to other compositions. Months later he asked for the music back, and, pleasantly surprised at its quality given the hasty composition, began transforming it into a symphony by deleting movements and adding the flute and clarinet parts to the first and fourth movements.

‘The new Haffner Symphony has really surprised me,’ he wrote to his father, ‘because I had totally forgotten it; it’ll certainly have a good effect.’

The first movement is dominated by a titanic main theme that spreads across two octaves. The rest of the movement (and the symphony as a whole) cannot escape its presence, as this theme affects the secondary motifs and the very short development section.

The slower second movement is a flowing andante, and the third a strict minuet and trio – quite a steady dance. The composer instructed that the finale was to be played as fast as possible, and the effect is thrilling.

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra

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Next Concert Details:

Date & Time: Sunday 28 September at 4pm

Programme: *Delibes:* Le roi s'amuse: Airs de danse dans
le style ancien

Ravel: Le Tombeau de Couperin

Barber: Adagio for strings

Copland: Appalachian Spring

Venue: St Barnabas Church, Beckenham

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Thanks must be given to the committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes and Natalie Cole), Gary Church and Tim Hide, for their ongoing support and excellent organisational skills.

Thanks additionally to St Barnabas and St Edmund, Christ Church and St George, for allowing us to use their wonderful churches and halls.

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Orchestra members:

Violin I

Alan Titherington
Lise Retat
Heather Hall
Steph Fuller
Ambroise Desplechin

Violin II

Naomi Fenton
Penny Davies
Claire Rutland
Maggie Houlgate

Viola

Jane McLauchlin
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler
Gemma Rickwood

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Sue Ardley
John Alderson
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler

Double bass

Sophie Roper

Harp

Alicia Griffiths Turrillas

Flute

Hanna Barriga
Sarah Harington Hawes

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Marissa Pueschel

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Philip Broadley

Bassoon

Peter Harris
Val Currie

Horn

Natalie Cole
Ben Mason
Richard Slater
Brian Newman

Trumpet

Kat Mason
Deborah Sewell

Timpani

Oliver Patrick

Percussion

Katherine Pett
Felicity Hindle