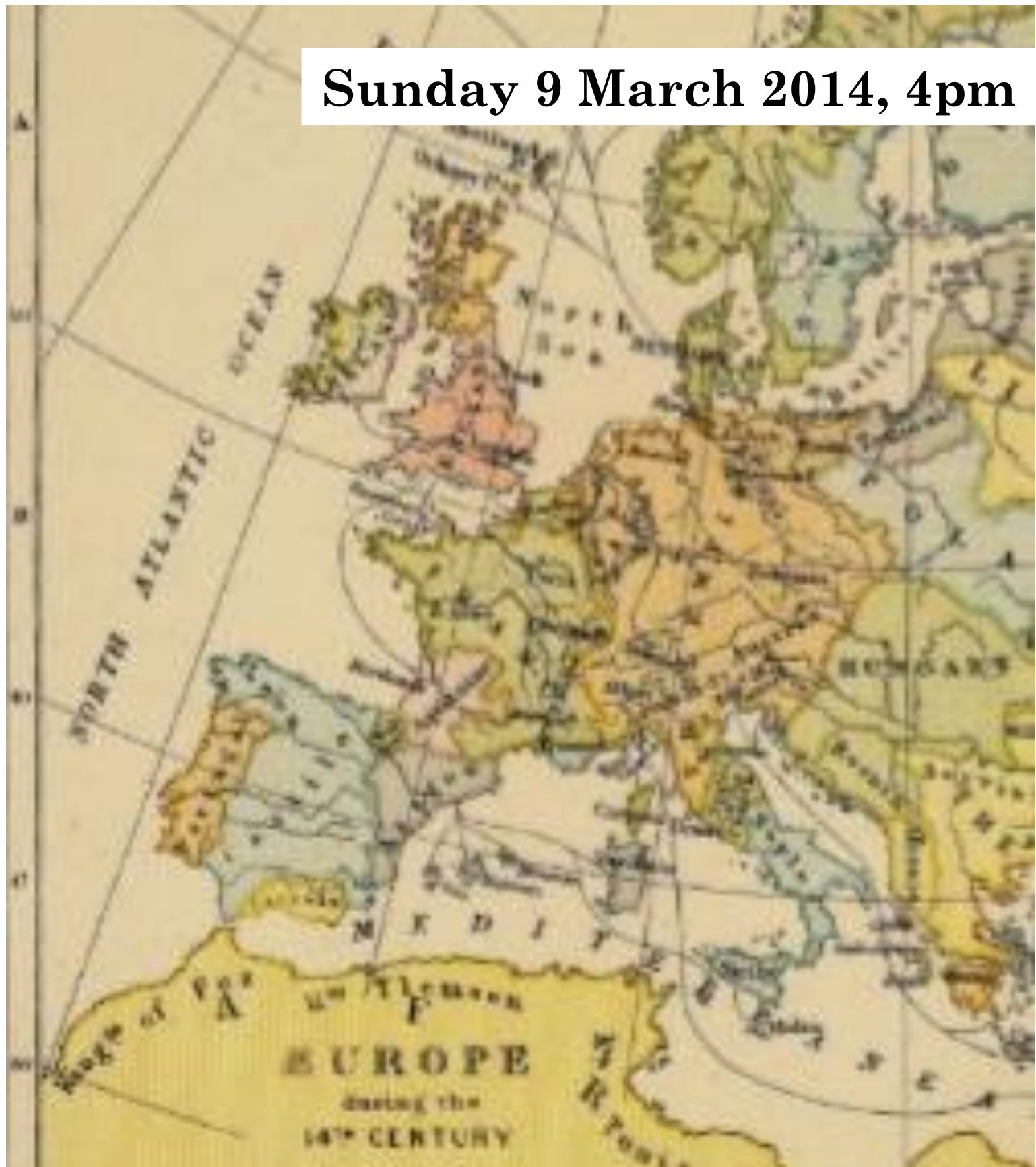


South East London Orchestra

Sunday 9 March 2014, 4pm



Soloist: Sarah Denbee
Conductor: David Smith

Welcome

Today's concert may not represent the full Grand Tour but it's still a fair old trip around Europe in the hands of three composers (and one orchestra!)

Our overture 'in the Italian style' by Schubert – an Austrian – is closely followed by the English composer Berkeley's four songs to texts by a Spanish saint. One of the most famous symphonic 'impressions' of a place completes the programme as we see/hear Scotland as envisaged by Mendelssohn (German).

We're delighted to welcome Sarah Denbee to perform Berkeley's *St Teresa* songs with us, and offer our thanks to the Lennox Berkeley Society, whose financial support has helped make this performance possible. Berkeley's music stretches from songs to symphonies and these songs are some of the finest pieces he ever wrote. We hope you enjoy them.

David Smith
Music Director

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Programme:

SCHUBERT - Overture in C major, in the Italian style

BERKELEY - Four Poems of St Teresa of Avila

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Interval

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MENDELSSOHN - Symphony No. 3, 'Scottish'



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

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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 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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Mezzo Soprano: Sarah Denbee

Sarah gained a Masters in Performance with Distinction from Trinity Laban Conservatoire in 2012, generously supported by the Kathleen Roberts Scholarship. Whilst at Trinity, she was awarded the Wilfred Greenhouse Allt Prize for Oratorio & Cantata, and she won the 2012 Roy Pleasance Competition. Sarah recently performed at the Isabelle Bond Gold Medal at Kings Place, Trinity's most prestigious award for solo performance, and was a Director's Prizewinner.

Sarah enjoys balancing a mixture of opera, oratorio, recital and choral singing. Opera credits include Fanny Price in Jonathan Dove's 'Mansfield Park', Marcellina (Figaro) in Germany, roles at the Tête à Tête Opera Festival, Tilly in the UK Premiere of Stephen McNeff's 'The Secret Garden', Dorabella (Cosi), and the Sorceress (Dido). Other highlights include a masterclass with Ann Murray (Wigmore Hall) and with Steuart Bedord on Britten's 'Phaedra', European tours with the Monteverdi Choir (Sir John Eliot Gardiner), soloist in the London Handel Festival, and a mentor scheme with the Royal Opera House Chorus.

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Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Overture in C major, in the Italian style (1817)

A charming and wholly entertaining concert opener, this C major overture is one of a pair (the other in D major) that Schubert wrote, possibly as informal tributes to the Italian Gioachino Rossini, whose operas had caused a stir across Europe. Whilst not a pastiche of Rossini there is enough of his character mixed with the Austro-German tradition of Schubert's regular style. After a slow introduction comes a happily bouncing main theme and gentler second subject. The overture ends with a thrilling, faster *presto* section.

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Lennox Berkeley (1903–1989)
Four Poems of St Teresa of Ávila (1947)



- I If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong
- II Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!
- III Let mine eyes see Thee
- IV Today a shepherd and our kin

Lennox Berkeley was one of the leading British composers of the mid-twentieth century. The work of the Lennox Berkeley Society, galvanised by his centenary year in 2003 and a series of new recordings on the Chandos label around the same time have led to a new wave of performances of his works, including the remarkable international success of his opera *A Dinner Engagement*.

St Teresa of Ávila (1515–82) was a Spanish Carmelite nun and mystic, whose four poems (translated by Arthur Symons) are intense and border on the erotic in places. The first song is a dialogue with God; the third a remarkably powerful and emotional core to the cycle – Berkeley's son, Michael (also a composer) has described it as 'just a perfect little piece of music'. The second and fourth songs are of a different character and place us amongst the shepherds.

First performed by Kathleen Ferrier in London for a BBC broadcast in 1948, these songs are now lauded as some of Berkeley's finest music – a fine place to start in exploring his output.

This concert is supported by the Lennox Berkeley Society
(www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk)

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INTERVAL

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Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847) **Symphony No. 3 in A minor, ‘Scottish’ (1842)**

- I Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato
- II Vivace non troppo
- III Adagio
- IV Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

The genesis of Mendelssohn’s third symphony (actually his last, of five numbered symphonies and the string symphonies of his youth) is connected to the theme of this entire programme – he travelled extensively around Europe as many well-to-do young men did at the time. In 1829 he travelled through Scotland, including a stop at Holyrood House:

‘In the mists of twilight today we went to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved ... everything there is crumbling and decaying; the roof is open to the sky. I think today I may have found the beginnings of my Scottish Symphony there.’

But those beginnings took many years to come to a conclusion. Distractions such as travels to Italy, the writing of his Italian Symphony (No. 4), and appointments in Leipzig and Berlin. Eventually the symphony took shape and was in fact completed quickly. It is not ‘programme’ music (i.e. following a narrative), but is much more impressionistic in nature.

Its structure is standard, being made up of four movements, however Mendelssohn instructs the performers that these movements are not separate or complete in themselves, but must be performed without breaks to create one large, interconnected piece. The four movements can, nevertheless, be easily distinguished.

The London premiere, conducted by the composer, took place on 13 June 1842 in the Hanover Square Rooms to an audience that included Queen Victoria herself, who granted Mendelssohn permission to dedicate the work to her.

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra

Next Concert Details:

Date & Time: Sunday 11 May 2014 at 4:00pm

Programme: Beethoven: Egmont Overture
Brahms: Variations on a Theme of Haydn
Bizet: Symphony in C

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, Natalie Cole and Michael Clegg-Butt) and Tim Hide, for their ongoing support and excellent organisational skills.

Thanks additionally to the Parishes of 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
Robert McIlveen
Heather Hall
Elsa Tatevossian

Violin II

Naomi Fenton
Penny Davies
Fi Woodworth
Maggie Houlgate
Ambroise Desplechin

Viola

Stephen Cadywold
Jane McLaughlin
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler
Gemma Rickwood
Catriona Cooper
Naamah DiRicci

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Wendy Dickinson
Rachel Allen

Double bass

Morven Main
Sophie Roper

Flute

Hanna Barriga
Sarah Harington Hawes

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Bruno Bower

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Sarah Shipton

Bassoon

Peter Harris
Val Currie

Horn

Jo Towler
Ben Mason
Natalie Cole
Brian Newman

Trumpet

Kat Mason
Nathaniel Rodwell

Timpani

David Coronel