

A vibrant photograph of a field of yellow daffodils in full bloom. The flowers are the central focus, with their bright yellow petals and green stems clearly visible. The background shows a clear blue sky with some light, wispy clouds. The overall mood is bright and cheerful.

South East London Orchestra

Sunday 11 May 2014, 4pm

Conductor: David Smith

Welcome

We have three pieces today that all look back, in one way or another and for one purpose or another, to times gone by. Their tones are quite different, however, with the dark and brooding overture giving way to the lighter serenade, before a fizzing and frolicking symphony carries us home.

Thank you for being with us for today's concert. I know we have a large number of audience members who are regular, repeated attendees, and we're delighted and honoured that you keep coming back to hear us.

Make a special note of our final concert of this season, which marks a departure for us by being on a Saturday evening and in another venue. On the evening of Saturday 5 July you can hear us in Christ Church Beckenham, in a programme that will include the peerless Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 – not to be missed!

David Smith
Music Director

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Programme:

BEETHOVEN - Egmont Overture

DVORAK – Serenade in D Major, Op. 44

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Interval

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BIZET - Symphony in C

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Thanks must be given to the committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes and Natalie Cole) 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.



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 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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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827) **Overture to Egmont (1809 - 1810)**

Beginning darkly in its home key of F minor, Beethoven's *Egmont* overture is a dramatic masterpiece. It was written as part of the incidental music to a play based on the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish tyranny in the 16th century, when a certain Count Egmont led resistance. It is music that reflects this strife and occasionally looks back in style towards an earlier time. One can hear the turmoil as well as the plaintive pleas for Egmont's life in the softer music of the woodwind from the opening bars.

After the introduction, the central section of the overture builds to Egmont's execution, where, with the fall of a fourth from C to G, the violins swing the sword. But then the coda heralds another dramatic masterstroke – the increased speed, the harmonic switch to the tonic *major* and the gradual crescendo from *pianissimo* over the note C (the dominant) generate such tension that when Beethoven releases it with the arrival at F major in full-throated *fortissimo* we are left in no doubt that Egmont's example will live on and his people will one day be free.

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Antonín Dvorák (1841 - 1904) **Serenade for Wind (1878)**

- I Moderato quasi marcia
- II Minuetto
- III Andante con moto
- IV Finale: Allegro molto

Dvorák's second major Serenade (the first, for string orchestra, is another fine piece) is unashamedly nationalistic through its use of Czech folk music, but also draws upon the Classical style in places. It took Dvorák only two weeks to compose this four-movement work for two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, three horns, a cello and a double bass. Dvorák shows his understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the wind ensemble by including the two low stringed instruments to balance the lower end of the harmony.

The first movement is march-like, and quite serious in tone – this can be taken literally or as a parody. The second movement – Minuetto – presents two Czech dances, beginning with the 'sousedská' (a folk dance associated with elderly neighbours!) and then switching to the 'furiant' for a contrasting middle section.

Following this is the 'Andante con moto' third movement – the indication means 'at a walking pace, with motion', making it the slowest and most substantial movement of the Serenade. The clarinet and oboe share the main theme, whilst the gentle syncopated rhythms of the horns help provide much of the motion in this, the emotional core of the piece. Dvorák's fourth movement concludes matters in high spirits and more than a hint of the 'polka'.

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INTERVAL

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Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875) **Symphony in C (1855)**

- I Allegro vivo
- II Adagio
- III Scherzo: Allegro vivace
- IV Allegro vivace

For 80 years this work was lost, locked away in a collection of Bizet manuscripts in the possession of the composer Reynaldo Hahn (a close friend of Bizet's son, Jacques). Only in 1933 was this collection handed to the Paris Conservatoire, whereupon the Symphony was discovered and brought it to the attention of the conductor Felix Weingartner who directed the premiere in Basle in 1935.

Considering that this Symphony is the work of a very young man of 17, it is a remarkably accomplished score. It is most definitely a youthful piece, shown throughout by a certain charming naivety and a tendency towards the Classical style, but there are amazing moments where the music could be by Brahms or another composer of the Romantic era. Bear in mind that whilst a great deal of the piece may sound like it was contemporaneous to Haydn and Mozart, by 1855 Berlioz had completed all of the works he labelled as symphonies, as had Schumann (who was to die a year later). Borodin and Bruckner were only a few years away from beginning their series. Brahms was writing his first piano concerto, a major orchestral work of some 45 minutes.

Within this historical context, then, consider this dashing, virtuosic Symphony is the work of a child prodigy. Its first movement opens with an energetic upward-leaping motif, providing much of the principal theme of the movement. There is a contrasting second theme, much broader, and introduced by the oboe.

The oboe features prominently again in the second movement, with slightly more exotic harmonies than the first. It is a languid and slow piece in 9/8, and it's here that the hints of the later, Romantic composers can be heard most clearly. Following this is the rustic third movement, complete with bagpipe-like drones from the low strings in its central section. Like the first and third movements the finale is rapid, the violins spinning out the opening stream of notes to be answered by the wind with a march theme, before the expressive second subject from the strings. The development of these themes is wonderfully inventive and exuberant.

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra

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Next Concert Details:

Date & Time: **Saturday 5 July 2014 at 7:30pm**

Programme: **Vaughan Williams: The Wasps Overture**
Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor
Soloist: Fenella Humphreys
Mahler: Blumine
Mozart: Symphony No. 35 in D, 'Haffner'

Venue: **Christ Church, Fairfield Road,
Beckenham BR3 3LE**

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Orchestra members:

Violin I

Alan Titherington
Lise Retat
Heather Hall
Yean Chooi
Dorian Kartalovski

Violin II

Naomi Fenton
Penny Davies
Fi Woodworth
Claire Rutland

Viola

Stephen Cadywold
Jane McLauchlin
Catriona Cooper

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Sue Ardley
Rachel Allen
John Alderson

Double bass

Malcolm Healey
Jane Healey

Flute

Hanna Barriga
Sarah Harington Hawes

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Michael Clegg-Butt

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Sarah Shipton

Bassoon

Denis Daniels
Ken Bennett-Hunter
Shane Underwood (Contra)

Horn

Jo Towler
Ben Mason
Natalie Cole
Rosie Merriman

Trumpet

Kat Mason
Nathaniel Rodwell

Timpani

Oliver Patrick