



South East London Orchestra
Sunday 28 September 2014, 4pm

Conductor: David Smith

Welcome

This afternoon's concert is the first event of our third season and we are delighted to have you with us today.

The four pieces that make up today's programme can be linked and divided in numerous ways, though one thing binds them all – none were originally written as orchestral concert pieces, which is quite a shock when one considers the two American works in the second half in particular.

We have two pieces from France in the first half, and two from America in the second. Both French works and Copland's score look back in time for their inspiration. Dance also plays an important part in these three pieces. Both Delibes' and Copland's suites were originally written directly for the stage as well.

We hope you enjoy the concert, and that you can join us again on 30 November for our next event, featuring British music of the twentieth century by Lennox Berkeley and Joseph Horowitz, plus Mozart's astonishing 'Jupiter' symphony.

David Smith
Music Director

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Programme:

DELIBES ~ Le roi s'amuse: Airs de danse dans le style ancien

RAVEL ~ Le Tombeau de Couperin

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Interval

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BARBER ~ Adagio for strings

COPLAND ~ Appalachian Spring

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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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Léo Delibes (1836–1891)

Le roi s’amuse: airs de danse dans le style ancien

- I Galliarde
- II Pavane
- III Lesquercarde
- IV Passepied
- V Final: Reprise de la galliarde

Delibes’ music for Victor Hugo’s play *Le roi s’amuse* received one performance before censors banned the production for supposedly containing insulting references to King Louis-Philippe.

Translated as either ‘The King amuses himself’ or ‘The King has fun’, the play depicts the escapades of Francis I of France, a 16th-century monarch, and it is to the popular dances of that century that Delibes turns for his incidental music. The music, whilst composed three centuries later, definitely carries us back in time with these familiar forms.

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Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Le tombeau de Couperin (1914–19)

- I Prélude
- II Forlane
- III Menuet
- IV Rigaudon

A ‘tombeau’ is a title meaning a piece written as a memorial – though the title of this piece literally translates as ‘Couperin’s tomb’. Originally a six-movement work for piano, Ravel created this orchestral version of *Le tombeau* in 1919. As with Delibes’ suite above, it is inspired by earlier music, in this case the music of the Baroque keyboard suite, and there is debate as to whether or not François Couperin himself is the subject of the homage.

The four movements Ravel selected to orchestrate in 1919 are the prelude and three dances. Each movement of the original work has been dedicated to a friend of Ravel’s (or the husband of a friend) who died in World War I; he himself served as a truck driver in the war.

The *Prélude* was written in memory of First Lieutenant Jacques Charlot, who transcribed Ravel’s *Ma mère l’oye*. The *Forlane* (an Italian folk dance) is dedicated to the Basque painter First Lieutenant Gabriel Deluc.

After his own demobilization, Ravel recuperated at the home of Jean Dreyfus, the dedicatee of the *Menuet* (a French social dance). The *Rigaudon* (a French Baroque dance) was written in memory of brothers Pierre and Pascal Gaudin who were childhood friends of Ravel, and it is the boisterous music of childhood we hear in this exuberant finale to the suite.

* * *

Interval

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Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

Adagio for Strings (1936)

For all its familiarity, Barber's Adagio remains one of the standout pieces of music from the twentieth century. Its simple stepwise harmonic movement and direct melody have helped to make it a firm favourite, but it is the emotional depth and regular on-screen associations that have etched it onto the minds of so many.

Modern audiences are used to the *Adagio for strings*, and normally a large number of them at that. It is worth remembering that this short piece was originally one movement of Barber's String Quartet, Op. 11. When played by four players there are naturally some changes from a performance by a string section of 60. Today's performance will be given by something inbetween those figures – perhaps the best of both worlds?

* * *

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Appalachian Spring (1944–45)

In 1944 Copland's ballet suite (for thirteen players) was created for a commission by the dancer/choreographer Martha Graham, and a year later he was commissioned again to create an orchestral suite incorporating most of the music from the original.

Appalachian Spring takes its place amongst Copland's ballet scores that defined the 'sound' of American frontier life. The open harmonies and striking melodies have an honesty to them.

Notes in the score quote the description of the ballet, which concerns "a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly-built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last [19th] century. The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbour suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house."

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra

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Thanks must be given to the committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes and Natalie Church) 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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Next Concert Details:

Date & Time: **Sunday 30 November 2014 at 4:00pm**

Programme: **J Horowitz:** Fantasia on a theme of Couperin
L Berkeley: Sinfonia Concertante
Mozart: Symphony No. 41 in C, 'Jupiter'

Venue: **St Barnabas Church, Perth Road
Beckenham BR3 6NG**

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Orchestra members:

Violin I

Alan Titherington
Lise Retat
Yean Choo
Elsa Tatevossian
Claudia Fuller

Violin II

Claire Rutland
Penny Davies
Sara Trepte
Fiona Woodworth

Viola

Jane McLauchlin
Eleanor Beamond-Pepler
Gemma Rickwood
Catriona Taylor

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Rachel Allen
Katie Halley

Double bass

Morven Main
Mimi Poon

Harp

Tamara Young

Piano

Nicolas Mumby

Flute

Hanna Barriga
Sarah Harington Hawes

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Bruno Bower

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Philip Broadley

Bassoon

Peter Harris
Val Currie

Horn

Natalie Church
Brian Newman

Trumpet

Stuart Jenkins
Nathaniel Rodwell

Trombone

Ross Lumbard
Alex Williams

Timpani

David Coronel

Percussion

Richard Maillardet
Steve Horan

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