

# SOUTH EAST LONDON ORCHESTRA

Saturday 4 July 2015 at 7.30pm

Conductor: David Smith

Soloist: Natalie Church



Welcome to this evening's concert, the last of our third season.

The music tonight was all written within a short 12-year period of the Romantic era. Whilst they may be similar in age and enjoy a shared harmonic language, all four pieces have strong identities of their own, from the Czech sounds of Dvorak to the England of one of Elgar's most popular concert pieces.

As I wrote above, the orchestra is now at the end of its third season of concerts in Beckenham, made possible by the strong relationship with our audience here at St Barnabas. More than three years ago, the South East London Orchestra was merely an idea in the minds of Natalie Church and myself, and as a result of her leadership and ability to bring people together, today we have an established orchestra that is set to continue long into the future.

In a few weeks' time, Natalie is returning to her homeland, Australia, with husband Gary – another fixture at our concerts, manning the front desk with singular charm! – and their young daughter. We will miss Natalie enormously for her fabulous playing, straight talking and those homemade cakes that have graced every rehearsal. We were delighted that she accepted the invitation to perform as soloist with us tonight, which is the perfect way for us to say thank you, and for her to sign off!

I hope that you enjoy this evening's concert, and wish you well for the summer ahead. We'll see you back here in October!

David Smith  
Music Director

\* \* \*

Programme:

*Brahms: Tragic Overture*  
*Elgar: Serenade for Strings*  
*Saint-Saëns: Morceau de Concert*

\* \* \*

Interval

\* \* \*

*Dvorák: Symphony No. 8 in G major*

E: seorchestra@gmail.com

W: www.southeastlondonorchestra.com



## **Music Director: 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 in the music education sector.

\* \* \*

## **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.

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

W: [www.southeastlondonorchestra.com](http://www.southeastlondonorchestra.com)



## Soloist: Natalie Church

Those regulars in our audience will recognise Natalie as our principal horn. She helped to start up the orchestra in 2012, with David. Although more experienced with orchestral playing, we are excited to invite her to perform solo with the orchestra before she leaves us to return to her homeland of Australia.

Natalie began playing the horn at the age of 12 continuing her musical education, and moving on from piano and singing in her local choir. She played 3rd horn with Melbourne Youth Orchestra from

1992-1999, and went on tour in North America with them in 1998, where she got to see back-stage in Disneyland (she may have even taken a sneaky picture). She completed a Bachelor of Music at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1999, and played with numerous ensembles and musicals in Melbourne, the highlight playing with a double brass ensemble in top of Flinders Street Station at the stroke of midnight on New Years Eve 1999.

She arrived in London in 2000 and quickly developed a playing career with the West London Sinfonia, Kew Wind Orchestra and Kensington Symphony Orchestra, as well as small ensembles performing at weddings, park bandstands and summer fairs. She has performed Schumann's Konzertstück for 4 horns on two occasions, and the London Horn Sound's Titanic Fantasy (unfortunately just the once - listen to it, it's awesome).

When Natalie isn't busy organising the orchestra, she spends time with her husband, their 24 month old daughter and had a boring office day job. Natalie and her family are preparing to relocate to Sydney, Australia, in August. She is very sad to say goodbye to SELO and wishes them the best of luck in the future.

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

W: [www.southeastlondonorchestra.com](http://www.southeastlondonorchestra.com)

## **Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)**

### **Tragic Overture (1880)**

Brahms's two concert overtures – this, and the Academic Festival – were both written in 1880, and the titles of both have no particular narrative meaning, but instead express moods. The *Tragic Overture* is a magnificent counterpart to its more popular sibling, full of drama and intent, and perhaps drawing some inspiration from Beethoven's *Coriolan*.

One of Brahms's great abilities is a mastery of form, and here he brings that to bear through a classic sonata form structure of three parts – exposition, development and recapitulation – with its inherent, inexorable trajectory, plus a significant twist. Two hammer blows open the proceedings, immediately followed by the first group of themes in D minor, softly at first but swiftly unleashing great energy. After two or three minutes (and a shimmering transition) Brahms introduces the second theme, in F major, a broad, expressive violin melody.

The return of the hammer blows indicates the start of the development section, where the previously presented material is varied and explored in different ways. Brahms slows the pulse to half-speed and turns the music into a march and a short fugue, before moving to the recapitulation section, where we would expect a return of the first theme – but Brahms subverts the form and does away with the first theme, instead landing us straight back at the shimmering 'transition' music, the second subject, and thrillingly taut and dramatic coda.

## **Edward Elgar (1857–1934)**

### **Serenade for Strings (1892)**

- I Allegro piacevole
- II Larghetto
- III Allegretto

Elgar's mastery of orchestration shines through even in this early score 'just' for strings; there's such richness to his writing (particularly in the second movement) that it elevates the *Serenade* from mere diversion to a higher level. Elgar himself often referred to the *Serenade* as one of his favourite works.

The origins of the piece are believed to begin in *Three Pieces for Strings* (1888), but the manuscript has been lost. The first performance of the *Serenade* was given by Worcester Ladies' Orchestral Class in 1892, conducted by Elgar. The first professional performances came years later: 1896 in Antwerp, 1899 in New Brighton, and the London premiere at Bechstein Hall (now Wigmore Hall) was given in 1905, again conducted by Elgar. What is now a staple of the string repertoire took a long time to become established.

There's a lightness to the outer movements (the first is indicated "merry/lively, agreeable") in contrast with the mature and passionate central movement. Elgar uses the device of recalling the opening music at the end of the last movement to bring unity to the work.

## **Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)**

### **Morceau de concert (1887)**

Natalie Church *horn*

A mere *morceau*? Hardly – this ‘Concert Piece’ puts the horn soloist through their paces with technical passages, long lyrical lines, and a range of styles to perform in a short space of time.

Written in October 1887 (originally for horn and piano, orchestrated a month later), the piece is in turn a thrilling sequence of variations, contrasting slow middle section and a fast, final section that links back to the opening. In all, it’s a celebratory work to showcase a soloist – and a lot of fun to boot.

\*       \*       \*  
Interval  
\*       \*       \*

## **Antonín Dvorák (1841–1904)**

### **Symphony No. 8 in G major (1889)**

- I     Allegro con brio
- II    Adagio
- III   Allegretto grazioso
- IV   Allegro ma non troppo

The year 1889 was an important one for Dvorák and his output – the ‘Dumky’ Trio, the Requiem and this symphony among the highlights. He was a composer at the peak of his powers, and he deemed this bucolic symphony as one that was ‘different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way.’

Dvorák was a great melodist and it’s easy to hear this natural facility in the eighth symphony, which was composed quickly overall – barely four weeks to compose, and another six to orchestrate. Dvorák wrote it in his country home, away from the pressures of life in the city, including arguments with his publisher over the fee that led him to assign the rights of this new work to the London-based Novello & Co.

So, this bright, optimistic and pastoral symphony (listen for the birdsong) in G major begins with an opening theme in G *minor*, rather unexpectedly. This opening section functions as an introduction to the movement as a whole, but also returns to signpost the start of the development and recapitulation sections.

The second and third movements provide emotional contrasts to the thematically-linked outer sections. The Adagio is rhapsodic and wistful – the true pastoral heart of the symphony, perhaps evoking Dvorák’s country home where the piece was written. Following this is a lilting, radiant waltz with a theme recycled from one of his comic operas, *The Stubborn Lovers*.

The trumpets call everyone to the dance that is the final movement. This is a well-worked theme and variations that travels through various extremes – for example a flute solo and a march in the minor key – but eventually fades away gently. Dvorák cannot leave it at that, however, and adds a final ebullient coda to round off the piece in style.

*Orchestra members:*

**Violin I**

Alan Titherington  
Lise Retat  
Naomi Fenton  
Alex Postlethwaite  
Jane Park

**Violin II**

Claire Rutland  
Maggie Houlgate  
Rosamund Sykes  
Christopher Rutland

**Viola**

Eleanor Beamond-Pepler  
Jane McLauchlin  
Tina Taylor

**Cello**

Hilary Wood  
Ed Langford  
Becki Hartley  
Sarah De Winter

**Double bass**

Sophie Roper  
Jack Cherry

**Flute**

Sarah Harington Hawes  
Abigail FILL IN

**Oboe**

Catherine Smale  
Catherine Parkinson  
Felicity Cliffe (cor anglais)

**Clarinet**

Charlotte Woolley  
Phil Broadey

**Bassoon**

Claire Goddard  
Val Currie

**Horn**

Natalie Church  
Andrew Currie

**Trumpet**

Michael Hartley  
Isabelle Draper

**Trombone**

Tom Woodcock

**Harp**

Aileen Henry

**Timpani**

David Coronel

\* \* \*

## Concert Dates for 2015/2016 season:

### Sunday 4th October 2015

**Nielsen:** Helios Overture

**Dvorak:** The Noon Witch

**Elgar:** Enigma Variations

### Sunday 6th December 2015

**Schubert:** Overture in D major

**Mozart:** Clarinet Concerto in A major

**Boyce:** Symphony No. 8 in D minor

**Haydn:** Symphony No. 94 in G major, 'Surprise'

### Sunday 20th March 2016

**Mendelssohn:** Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage

**Fung Lam:** In Search Of

**Dvorak:** Symphony No. 9 in E minor, 'New World'

### Sunday 22nd May 2016

**Mendelssohn:** A Midsummer Night's Dream

**Rodrigo:** Concierto de Aranjuez

**Beethoven:** Symphony No. 4 in B flat

### Saturday 2nd July 2016

**Smetana:** Vltava

**Mahler:** Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

**Vaughan Williams:** Symphony No. 5 in D

\* \* \*

Thanks must be given to the committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes, Philip Broadey, Hilary Wood, Claire Rutland 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.

\* \* \*

SELO wishes you a good weekend, and we look forward to seeing you at our next concert.

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

W: [www.southeastlondonorchestra.com](http://www.southeastlondonorchestra.com)