



South East London Orchestra
Conducted by David Smith

Sunday 20th of March
St. Barnabas Church

southeastlondonorchestra.com

Welcome to our first concert of 2016, and a series of musical journeys.

Dvorák's offering 'From the New World' in which he had taken up a new musical post late in his career is a confluence of nostalgia for his native Czechoslovakia and the inspiration he was taking from music discovered in his new home. 65 years previously, however, the young Mendelssohn was taking a more dashing trip across the ocean and displaying all of his youthful promise in a dramatic overture.

The overture and symphony bookend this afternoon's concert, which has a very new work at its centre, again with the idea of a journey behind it. Fung Lam is a composer I have known since our days studying together, and it has been my privilege to conduct several of his works and watch his professional career develop so successfully. *In Search Of* originally included a soloistic part for a suona – a Chinese double reed woodwind instrument, distinctively loud and high-pitched. In the spirit of the musical journeys and exchanges of ideas within today's programme, Fung has prepared a new version of this part for the E flat clarinet. We are delighted to give the UK premiere performance of this work today.

Regular attendees will be aware of our new Friends Membership, launched this season, inspired by members of our audience who wanted to support the orchestra's development. Today's performance of *In Search Of* is supported by an anonymous patron within that membership, and if you would like to support a future part of this season – or the next – then do speak with us today or make contact after the concert.

We thank you for being with us today, and look forward to seeing you again at our next concerts!

David Smith
Music Director

Programme:

Mendelssohn: Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage
Fung Lam: In Search Of

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Interval

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Dvorák: Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, 'From the New World'

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Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage (1828)

Mendelssohn packed a huge amount into his short life, and started young, but just stop for a moment to consider his age at the time he composed this overture. Think also about the supposed fact that he had not so much as set foot on a boat (and had apparently only seen the sea once) before composing such a descriptive piece of programme music.

Mendelssohn took inspiration from two poems by his friend and confidante, Goethe. They were described as friends despite the large 60-year gap in their ages – first meeting when young Felix was but 12 years old – and Goethe thought Mendelssohn greater than the young Mozart at the same age. Goethe's *Meeresstille* ('Calm at Sea') and *Glückliche Fahrt* ('The Prosperous Voyage') set up an obvious musical narrative – a still 'lull' as the ocean sleeps, followed by the successful journey and the approach of land. The poems, whilst not 'set' to music in this piece, are printed below.

Mendelssohn was following in the footsteps (or, more appropriately, the wake) of Beethoven in setting these two poems, and the two works share many characteristics, including their home key. Just knowing the title tells you the structure, making this a wonderfully accessible work that also hints ahead to one of Mendelssohn's great masterpieces, the Hebrides Overture.

GLÜCKLICHE FAHRT	CALM SEA
<i>Die Nebel zerreißen, der Himmel ist helle, und Aeolus löset das ängstliche Band. Es säuseln die Winde, es rührt sich der Schiffer. Geschwinde! Geschwinde! Es teilt sich die Welle, es naht sich die Ferne,</i>	<i>Calm and silence rule the water, motionless the ocean lies, and the sailor's anxious gaze finds glassy flatness far and wide. Not a breath of air is stirring! Fearful, deathless stillness reigns! On the infinite expanse not a single wavelet moves.</i>

MEERSTILLE	PROSPEROUS VOYAGE
<i>Tiefe Stille herrscht im Wasser, ohne Regung ruht das Meer, und bekümmert sieht der Schiffer glatte Fläche ringsumher. Keine Luft von keiner Seite! Todesstille fürchterlich! In der ungeheuren Weite reget keine Welle sich. schon seh' ich das Land!</i>	<i>The mists are rent, the heavens shine, and Aeolus loosens restraining ties. The winds now are whistling, the sailor bestirs himself. How swiftly; how swiftly the waves part before us, the distance draws near; and now I see land!</i>

Fung Lam (born 1979)
In Search Of (2014) – UK premiere
Laurence Scott *E flat clarinet*

The depiction of spiritual journey in Buddhism is the common theme that permeates much of my serious musical output. Therefore my music often aims to portray the search for and attainment of enlightenment. In this work, while it follows a similar idea, the goal is more ambiguous, leaving it open to interpretation. Opening with the shadowy voices of the cellos and bassoon, the work traces a path from darkness to light. Along the way, there are glimpses of what is to come, and certain recurring musical motives become major signposts along this journey. Even when the goal is seemingly attained, its blunt and abrupt end perhaps makes one question whether it was real or indeed just a hallucination.

In Search Of was commissioned and premiered by the Collegium Musicum Hong Kong at the Carnegie Hall in New York in 2014.

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Described by The Independent as a composer who “has a distinctive voice”, Dr Fung Lam holds the distinction of being the youngest Chinese composer and the first Hong Kong composer ever commissioned by the BBC. He has to date written over ten orchestral works, including three commissions for BBC Radio 3 and two commissions for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 2012, *Endless Forms* was premièred by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo at the BBC Proms, taking his music to a global audience. An excerpt from Evening Standard's review reads, "... Lam, working with a carefully constructed minimum of material, shapes his musical world with dreamy individuality."

He was the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Composer-in-Residence with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2015, *Quintessence*, written in celebration of the orchestra's 40th anniversary, was taken on tour and performed in several major European cities, under Jaap van Zweden.

Other performers of his music have included the London Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Concert, Tokyo Philharmonic, New Zealand Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Hong Kong Sinfonietta.

Born in Hong Kong, Lam studied composition with Martin Butler, Michael Finnissy and Michael Zev Gordon at the Universities of Southampton and Sussex in UK, and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in composition from the latter in 2012.

In the same year he received the Young Artist Award from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

www.funlam.com

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Interval
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Antonín Dvorák (1841–1904)

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, ‘From the New World’ (1893)

- I Adagio – Allegro molto
- II Largo
- III Scherzo. Molto vivace
- IV Allegro con fuoco

In 1892 Dvorák set sail for New York and his position as director of the National Conservatory of Music, which he would hold for nearly four years. The next year he wrote this, the last and best-known of his symphonies.

Any notion that Dvorák ‘borrowed’ any native music for the work were dispelled by the composer in a letter to a pupil: “That nonsense about my having made use of ‘Indian’ and ‘American’ themes – that is a lie ... I tried to write only in the spirit of those national American melodies.” There is, in fact, a large dose of nostalgia in what is essentially still a Czech work, albeit with glorious hints of African-American spirituals. Apparently the title, ‘From the New World’, was only added at the last moment, before sending off the score.

The symphony is cyclic, in that the horn theme of the first movement returns dramatically in each of the following movements. The first movement itself sets up the grand scale of the work and the emotional impact to come. In the second movement, the world-famous Largo, we hear the wordless song, tinged with nostalgia, longing and perhaps even sadness, inspired in character by African-American spirituals.

The third movement more than hints towards the corresponding movement in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, and the finale brings together all of the principal themes of the preceding movements alongside new material. The symphony received a tremendous reception at its 1893 premiere in New York, after which the critic W.J. Henderson raved – quite accurately: “It is a great symphony and must take its place among the finest works in the form produced since the death of Beethoven.”

Mendelssohn and Dvorák programme notes © South East London Orchestra 2016
Lam programme note © the composer, 2016

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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.

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Orchestra:

Violin I

Alan Titherington
Katherine Savage
Kirsten Shepherd
Heather Hall
Mike Bradburn
Steph Fuller

Violin II

Claire Rutland
Penny Davies
Sara Trepte
Fiona Woodworth
Keith Hide
Rosamund Sykes
Rachel New

Viola

Eleanor Beamond-Pepler
Jane McLauchlin
Frances daly
Andrew McAlpine

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Sue Ardley
Charlotte Wright
Richard Thorn
Phillipa Bradburn

Double bass

Morven Main
Mimi Poon
Russell Killick

Flute

Hanna Barriga
Sarah Harington Hawes
Jennifer Raven

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Catherine Parkinson
Juliette Murray-Topham
(cor anglais)

Clarinet

Philip Broadey
Charlotte Woolley

Bassoon

Claire Goddard
Val Currie
William Gough (contra)

Horn

Rosie Merriman
Ben Mason
Sabrina Pullen
Richard Slater

Trumpet

Ben Reeve
Matt McLavy
Micheal Hartley

Trombone

Tom Woodcock
Richard Tighe
Matt Gray

Tuba

David Young

Timpani

David Coronel

Percussion

Tom Lee

Thanks must be given to the Orchestra Committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes, Philip Broadey, Hilary Wood, Claire Rutland) 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 are glad you were able to come to our concert this afternoon, and we hope to see you at future events.

Concert Dates for the 2016 season:

Sunday 22nd May 2016

Saturday 2nd July 2016

SELO Friends Membership Scheme:

Our Friends Membership launched in 2015, inspired by support from our audience. There are two levels of annual membership which carry particular benefits:

Friend

25% off two tickets per concert, and seat reservation privileges (if booked in advance). A written credit in all concert programmes.

Patron

Associate your support with a particular part of the SELO season, be it the performance of a particular piece, the appearance of a soloist, or more (see below). In addition you will receive two half-price tickets per concert, seat reservation privileges (if booked in advance), a written credit in all concert programmes and a verbal acknowledgement in the appropriate SELO concert.

Patron opportunities for the 2016 season, with remaining availability, are:

- Support guitarist Darren Ellsmore's Rodrigo Concierto appearance - **Available**
- Support the SELO leader's position - **Available**
- Support mezzo soprano Sarah Denbee's Mahler song cycle appearance - **Available**

All Friends and Patrons will be listed in concert programmes and will receive regular updates about SELO's concerts and activities.

Friend: £50 / year

Patron: from £150 / year

Local business sponsorship proposals are very welcome. Please contact us to discuss any recommendations.

To join the SELO Friends Membership please contact us at seorchestra@gmail.com.

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