

# **South East London Orchestra**

**Conducted by David Smith**

**Sunday 22nd May 2016**

**St. Barnabas Church, Beckenham**

**[southeastlondonorchestra.com](http://southeastlondonorchestra.com)**

Welcome to this afternoon's concert. The three pieces you will hear today are all of the highest quality, and they each have a different sort of importance in their composers' lives.

Mendelssohn's overture was (yet another) precocious, early success (at the age of 17). Rodrigo's Concierto established his national and international reputation at a far more 'normal' age, and remains the composer's calling card to this day. Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, had it been composed by anyone else, would be heralded as a masterpiece of the late Classical era – as it was, it somewhat suffers in the shadow of his world-changing greatest achievements.

We are delighted to welcome a new soloist, Manus Noble, to perform with us today, and offer our grateful thanks to our new Friends listed below, for their support of this performance today. Our Friends Membership, launched this season, has helped the orchestra to programme particular works with special soloists, and we are grateful to them all. If you would like to support a future concert then do speak with us today or make contact afterwards.

We thank you for being with us today, and look forward to seeing you again in July for our end of season celebration. Do note the date of that concert – in a change from our usual day/time, it will be on the evening of Saturday 2 July, here at St Barnabas.

**David Smith**  
**Music Director**

## **Programme:**

*Mendelssohn – A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*

*Rodrigo – Concierto de Aranjuez*

*\* \* Interval \* \**

*Beethoven – Symphony No. 4 in B flat*

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**With particular thanks to our patron Mrs Sue Raven for  
supporting this concert.**

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## **Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–1847)**

### **A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture (1826)**

Composed in 1826 – by a young man between his 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays – Mendelssohn's overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was not imagined as a prelude to any performance of the play (though he was to write much more 'incidental music' that could be interwoven into a production in 1843).

The Mendelssohn children were well educated, speaking several languages and reading voraciously. Shakespeare was apparently a favourite writer, and they acted out some of his plays, according to some reports. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would have been well-known to the teenage Felix, and many characteristics of the play are immediately apparent in the music.

There is a magical aura in the opening chords, and a spritely, scurrying fairies' dance in the upper strings. There is tender and noble music representing the lovers' true feelings towards one another. Earthy, low accented chords suggest the Mechanicals, and braying Bottom (post-transformation!) hee-haws with glee... In the central section, musical paths cross to echo the mixed-up crossing of the play's characters, before all is put right again to conclude. It is a remarkable score: music worthy of sharing the name of the play.

## **Joaquín Rodrigo (1901–1999)**

### **Concierto de Aranjuez (1939)**

Manus Noble *guitar*

- I Allegro con spirito
- II Adagio
- III Allegro gentile

The work that established Rodrigo's reputation as one of the foremost Spanish composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Concierto* is now firmly established as one of the most popular works in the repertoire.

The inspiration came from the Palacio Real de Aranjuez, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century palace and gardens built by Philip II near to Madrid. Rodrigo – blinded at the age of three by diphtheria – said that the *Concierto* “is meant to sound like the hidden breeze that stirs the treetops in the parks; it should be as agile as a butterfly, and as tightly controlled as a veronica; a suggestion of times past.” (A 'veronica' is a bullfighting term, a pass with a cape.) He also noted that it was intended to depict “the fragrance of magnolias, the

singing of birds and the gushing of fountains.” All of these sensations are those that a blind man could appreciate.

The first movement echoes the aristocratic *fandango* dance of the Spanish court. The world-famous second movement reflects, according to Victoria Rodrigo’s biography of her husband, both happy memories from their honeymoon alongside the devastating impact of the miscarriage of their first baby. Baroque-style dances return for the final movement, alongside Spanish folk songs. The delicate ending to the piece – and those of both the preceding movements – embody the succession of metaphors noted above, of breezes, fragrances and butterflies.

## \* \* Interval \* \*

### **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)** **Symphony No 4 in B flat (1806)**

- I Adagio – Allegro vivace
- II Adagio
- III Allegro vivace – Trio: un poco meno allegro
- IV Allegro ma non troppo

Undoubtedly one of the least well-known of Beethoven’s symphonies – immediately sandwiched between the supremely powerful *Eroica* and Fifth symphonies, and closely followed by the Pastoral – the Fourth Symphony is cheerful by nature, but strong and imbued with unstoppable momentum. It is without question a mature work, composed in the same year as the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto.

In the style of Haydn – still alive, but retired in 1806 – Beethoven opens with a hushed, slow introduction replete with tension and suspense that eventually bursts into life and a playful, very fast main section of the movement. The second movement similarly pays tribute to Haydn’s style of slow movement, featuring a recurring rhythmic pattern shared across the orchestra.

The third movement is definitely a “scherzo” (more joke/jest in character than the traditional minuet dance movement) though not yet in name. Structure fans will enjoy Beethoven’s subversion of the traditional by returning to the Trio for a second time, thus expanding the normal three-part structure (A-B-A) into a five-part one (A-B-A-B-A). To finish, a movement of perpetual motion – save for some mock-weariness near the conclusion – that surges with energy right to its conclusion.

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## **Soloist: Manus Noble**



Irish guitarist Manus Noble was born in London in 1988 and began studying the guitar at the age of seven. At 16 he was taught privately by Craig Ogden for two years before continuing his studies with Gary Ryan at the Royal College of Music in 2006. In 2010 he graduated with first class honours and was awarded a scholarship to do his Masters in Performance at the Royal Academy of Music. Manus Noble gave his debut performance at the Cadogan Hall, London at the age of 19. He was also given Performance Awards by the Musicians Benevolent Fund, Countess of Munster and Ian Flemming Trust, and was accepted onto the Park Lane Group Young Artist's Concert Series at the Purcell Room, London Southbank Centre. He won first prize in the Ivor Mairants Guitar Competition in 2011.

After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music with Distinction, Noble has launched his career in the UK with great success, giving recitals and masterclasses at festivals such as West Dean, Cheltenham Guitar Festival, Bath International Guitar Festival, Beechwood Guitar Course and London International Guitar Festival. He has been accepted onto the Countess of Munster for two years running, as well as the Making Music recital scheme in 2014, and is now in high demand as a performer. Recent performances include solo recitals at St Martin-in-the-Fields (London), Kings Place (London), Sage Gateshead (Newcastle) and Bridgewater Hall (Manchester). He was also awarded first prize for the Guitar Competition at the Royal College of Music before going on to the String Player of the Year Competition.

As well as writing new works for the instrument himself, Noble has developed a certain flair and passion for modern techniques and repertoire, with many composers choosing to write new works for him, including 'Hot Club Francais' by Gary Ryan. Manus Noble uses Concerto Carbon Cases, and his guitars are made by the English luthier, Stephen Hill.

## **Music Director: David Smith**

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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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# The Orchestra

## **Violin I**

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

## **Violin II**

Claire Rutland  
Penny Davies  
Keith Hide  
Rosamund Sykes  
Rachel New

## **Viola**

Eleanor Beamond-Pepler  
Jane McLauchlin  
Andrew McAlpine

## **Cello**

Hilary Wood  
Ed Langford  
Becki Hartley  
Richard Thorn  
Phillipa Bradburn  
Charlotte Wright

## **Double bass**

Morven Main  
Jack Cherry

## **Flute**

Jennifer Raven  
Sarah Harington Hawes

## **Oboe**

Catherine Smale  
Catherine Parkinson

## **Cor Anglais**

Juliette Murray-Topham

## **Clarinet**

Charlotte Woolley  
Philip Broadey

## **Bassoon**

Claire Goddard  
Val Currie

## **Horn**

Rosie Merriman  
Jo Kemsley

## **Trumpet**

Ben Reeve  
Nathaniel Rodwell

## **Tuba**

Ben Dowsett

## **Timpani**

Oliver Patrick

Thanks must be given to the Orchestra Committee (David Smith, Charlotte Woolley, Hanna Barriga, Sarah Harington Hawes, Philip Broadey, Hilary Wood, Claire Rutland, Mike Bradburn) and to Father 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.

**Please join us for our final event of this concert season:**

**Saturday 2nd July 2016 at 7.30 pm – St Barnabas Church, Beckenham**

Smetana – Vltava;

Mahler: Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen – Soprano, Miriam Sharrad

Vaughan Williams: Symphony No. 5 in D

## **SELO Friends Membership Scheme:**

Our Friends Membership was 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 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

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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](mailto:seorchestra@gmail.com).

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