

# **South East London Orchestra**

**Conductor: David Smith**



**Sunday 9th October 2016**

**St. Barnabas Church, Beckenham**

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

**Good afternoon and welcome to the first concert of our 2016/17 season, the orchestra's fifth year since inception.**

In our very first concert in September 2012 we dipped our toes into Russian music with Anatoly Lyadov's The Enchanted Lake, but since then we haven't returned to those shores. All that changes this afternoon, using The Enchanted Lake to connect us to Russia once more, and pairing it with another tone poem by the work-shy Lyadov.

Tchaikovsky's heavyweight Fourth Symphony is the cornerstone of the programme, and is the most well-known of the pieces we'll play today. The most overtly Russian-sounding music today may well be Rimsky-Korsakov's overture to his opera The Tsar's Bride; not an especially well-known opera in the UK, but an established repertory piece back home.

We have an exciting year ahead, with the Elgar Cello Concerto on the 4th of December; Korngold Violin Concerto on the 26th of March (with returning soloist, Fenella Humphreys); our first young people's concert on 21 May; and Brahms' magnificent Fourth Symphony (a personal Desert Island Disc for me!) on the 16th of July, all here in Beckenham.

Thank you for coming today and we hope to see you again over the year.

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

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### **Rimsky-Korsakov – The Tsar's Bride Overture**

#### **Lyadov – The Enchanted Lake**

#### **Lyadov – Baba Yaga**

\* **Interval** \*

### **Tchaikovsky – Symphony No. 4 in F minor**

E: seorchestra@gmail.com  
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Thanks are 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 efforts.

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 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**

Seat reservation privileges (if booked in advance) and a written credit in 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 seat reservation privileges (if booked in advance), a written credit in concert programmes and a verbal acknowledgement in the appropriate SELO concert.

Patron opportunities for the 2016/17 season, with remaining availability, are:

- Support Sarah Westley's performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto – **Available**
- Support Fenella Humphreys' performance of the Korngold Violin Concerto – **Available**
- Support Jake Muffett's Mahler Song Cycle appearance – **Available**
- Support the SELO leader's position – **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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## The Orchestra

### Violin I

Alan Titherington  
Katherine Savage  
Philip Curry  
Mike Bradburn  
Christopher Rutland  
Claudia Fuller

### Violin II

Claire Rutland  
Keith Hide  
James Langridge  
Louise Esaias  
Jane May

### Viola

Eleanor Beamond-Pepler  
Jane McLaughlin  
Andrew Perry-McAlpine  
Gemma Medcalf  
Nim Di Ricci

### Cello

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

### Double bass

Mimi Poon  
Jack Cherry

### Flute

Jennifer Raven  
Sarah Harington Hawes  
Jennifer Sutton

### Oboe

Catherine Smale  
Catherine Parkinson

### Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley  
Philip Broadey

### Bass Clarinet

Steve Clark

### Bassoon

Claire Goddard  
Val Currie

### Horn

Rosie Merriman  
James Allen  
Andy Currie  
Jo Kemsley

### Trumpet

Ben Reeve  
Katherine Mason

### Trombone

Tom Woodcock  
Richard Tighe  
Matt Smith

### Tuba

Richard Lovett

### Timpani

David Coronel

### Percussion

Jon French  
Tom Hollister  
Fabian Edwards

### Harp

Tamara Young

## Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

### The Tsar's Bride Overture (1898–99)

The Tsar's Bride is perhaps best described as a lurid melodrama, bringing together love, jealousy, magic potions, the class war and good old-fashioned murder – not that you'd be able to tell much of that from the overture itself.

At the time of composition, Rimsky was "classicing" his style and this overture is a simple sonata form structure: two main themes are presented, then put through development/alteration, before being returned to at the close. The music is highly attractive and unmistakably Russian; appropriate, given that the Tsar in question is Ivan IV – Ivan the Terrible – and he is looking for a new bride. The complicated tale of love potions and mistaken identities does not end well for many.

## Anatoly Lyadov (1855–1914)

### The Enchanted Lake (1909)

Not an overly well-known composer, if there's one thing people know about Lyadov it's that he had a flexible understanding of deadlines. He never succeeded in applying himself to his work for any great length of time, even finding himself expelled from Rimsky-Korsakov's composition classes at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (because he rarely showed up). He was admired as a pianist, editor and conductor (leading the premieres of Scriabin's First and Second Symphonies), as well as a composer.

His procrastination cost him the chance to write The Firebird for Diaghilev, which might go down as a missed opportunity. His list of completed works is therefore rather small, and hardly anything could be described as a large-scale work.

All the same, what there is in his catalogue is remarkable. The Enchanted Lake was intended for an uncompleted opera, and alongside two other descriptive orchestral pieces based on Russian fairy tales (Baba Yaga and Kikimora) is one of his best-known works. Describing a peaceful, lakeside scene with fairies and sprites as the inhabitants, this short tone poem has distinct echoes of Debussy, and in its quiet, unhurried way transports you to the world of ageless fairy tale.

## Anatoly Lyadov

### Baba Yaga (1905)

Baba Yaga, a terrifying old lady with huge appetite and iron teeth, is a character who permeates eastern European folklore. She remains skeletally thin, lives in a frightening hut in the forest, travels by broom and is "announced" by a wild wind disturbing the trees.

Lyadov's very short tone poem takes us with Baba Yaga on her journey through the forest. Opening with shrieks, she quickly gathers herself into flight, speeding through the woods with the wind rustling around her. She vanishes, not quite in a puff of smoke, but certainly into nothingness.

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

## Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) Symphony No. 4 in F minor (1877–78)

- I Andante sostenuto – Moderato con anima – Moderato assai, quasi Andante – Allegro vivo
- II Andantino in modo di canzone
- III Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato. Allegro
- IV Finale. Allegro con fuoco

Much has been written and discussed about Tchaikovsky's state of mind, his manic-depressive tendencies, and the unfortunate circumstances in his personal life that predated the writing of the Fourth Symphony. Tchaikovsky was the infatuation of his student, Antonina Milyukova, who threatened suicide if he rejected her. In accepting her approaches, he set in chain a series of events that forced him to confront his own homosexuality, a moment that would turn his life upside-down. Their marriage was less than nine weeks old when he fled to Switzerland in despair, and then on to Italy, where he would complete this symphony.

Less is written about Milyukova's fate following this traumatic period; she herself was as much a victim as he, and she outlived the composer by more than twenty years. In a letter to his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote: "We cannot escape our fate, and there was something fatalistic about my meeting with this girl."

This notion of 'fate' is at the heart of the Fourth Symphony, and given actual musical form as a motif in the opening bars by the brass and woodwind. Tchaikovsky wrote a 'program' of his symphony, not meaning for audiences to read it – here in abridged form:

*"Of course my symphony has a program, but of a kind impossible to formulate in words... Was it not the purpose of the symphony as a musical form to express that for which there are no words, but which surges from the soul and demands expression? Basically, my symphony is patterned after Beethoven's Fifth. Not Beethoven's musical ideas, but his fundamental notion... The Beethoven Fifth has a program. There can be no doubt what he wishes to express. The same idea underlies my own symphony, and if you have not understood me, then the only conclusion to be drawn is that I am not a Beethoven, which I myself have never doubted. I will add only that there is not a single line in my symphony which I have not felt deeply, and which does not echo true and sincere emotions."*

Whereas Beethoven takes fate by the throat and bends it to his will, here it seems the other way around; that Tchaikovsky is the one being buffeted and forced in directions he would not otherwise take. The first movement – almost half of the entire work – is structured around the fate motif (it signposts the ends of the three main sections of the movement). We hear it at the very opening, from where it morphs subtly into the first subject of the movement, twisting and turning. The second subject, introduced first on the clarinet, is a slinky, seductive counterpart, though this is very much pushed aside throughout the dramatic development section in the heart of the movement, in favour of the first. Towards the end of the conflict-ridden development section, fate collides with the first subject and in their exhaustion they leave space for the second subject to return in full, prior to the coda.

The song-like second movement is more straightforward, but no less emotional, tinged with uncomfortable memories and regret. By contrast, the Scherzo lightens the mood immeasurably – a dance-like spectacle that features all sections of the orchestra in a scampering chase.

Anyone lulled into a gentler state of mind by the end of the middle movements will be roughly awakened by the finale: variations structured around a whirling main theme. It is joyous, rumbustious music, though fate returns, perhaps when least expected. This time, however, it does not destroy or exhaust us; instead we allow it to pass, and pick up with the festival atmosphere, jubilant in a moment of triumph over fate.

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra 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 Bělohávek. 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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