

South East London Orchestra

Conductor: David Smith

Soloist: Fenella Humphreys



Sunday 26th March 2017

St. Barnabas Church, Beckenham

southeastlondonorchestra.com

Welcome to our first concert of 2017, featuring three wonderfully romantic works to warm the soul!

Tchaikovsky's final symphony, the Pathétique, follows its 'impassioned' subtitle to the letter, taking us on a journey from frenetic energy to total collapse; it is quite the emotional rollercoaster. Before this we present two works written at either end of the Second World War by two composers whose attractive writing still appeals to audiences worldwide.

Korngold was an Austrian displaced ~~in part~~ in the 1930s by the buildup to war, and his immensely successful career as a Hollywood film composer influences every part of this wonderful concerto. We're delighted to welcome back Fenella Humphreys to perform with us for a third time.

Our next concert on Sunday 21 May is designed as a 'family friendly' concert, i.e. full of music that everyone can enjoy. Pieces such as Peter and the Wolf, A Night on the Bare Mountain, plus Grieg's Peer Gynt are great introductions to orchestral music for all the family – who might you bring to hear their first concert?

David Smith
Music Director

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Vaughan Williams – Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'

Korngold – Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra

* **Interval** *

Tchaikovsky – Symphony No. 6 in B minor, ‘Pathétique’

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) Five Variants of ‘Dives and Lazarus’ (1939)

Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus is based on the biblical story of Dives (the rich man) and Lazarus (the poor man) in the Gospel of Luke. The melody is based on a folk melody, and Vaughan Williams added a note to the head of the score that: “These variants are not exact replicas of traditional tunes, but rather reminiscences of various versions in my own collection and those of others.”

The natural attractiveness of the melody, partnered by Vaughan Williams’ expert manipulation of the material and modal harmonies, makes for one of his most popular works. Scored for strings and harp, Dives and Lazarus was commissioned by the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City and was premiered by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall in June 1939, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

Eric Wolfgang Korngold (1897 – 1957) Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra (1945)

I – Moderato nobile
II – Romance. Andante
III – Finale. Allegro assai vivace

Fenella Humphreys *violin*

Born in Austria, Korngold was a child prodigy who went on to become one of the most influential Hollywood film composers. His career in Europe was already well established when, and he was invited to Hollywood in 1934 by the actor Max Reinhardt. This, which led to a decade of composing for film and his contributing to the establishment of the dominant style of film score.

Whilst he had left behind film scores at the time of writing the Concerto, here Korngold brought his film scores into the concert hall – the first movement opens with a theme from Another Dawn and also includes music from Juarez. The second movement draws upon music from Anthony Adverse, and the third from The Prince and the Pauper. (An excellent blog* on the London Symphony Orchestra website links to clips of all of these original film scores.)

The modern source of musical material and glittering orchestration contrasts with the more traditional fundamentals of the piece – composed in the traditional three movement structure, and in-with the home key of D major (seemingly the favourite of

all violin concertos). The extraordinary virtuosity of the solo line was encouraged by the first soloist to perform the work, Jascha Heifetz, who championed it in spite of the superficial dismissals of it as a “Hollywood concerto”. Korngold took the best of both worlds and created something extraordinarily beautiful.

* iso.co.uk/more/blog/437-korngold-s-violin-concerto-from-the-silver-screen-to-the-concert-hall.html

* * Interval * *

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) **Symphony No. 6 in B minor, ‘Pathétique’ (1893)**

I – Adagio - Allegro non troppo
II – Allegro con gracia
III – —Allegro molto vivace
IV – Finale. Adagio lamentoso

Originally subtitled a ‘Program Symphony’, the name later became ‘Pathétique’ (suggesting ‘passion’ or ‘impassioned suffering’ in its Russian context), before Tchaikovsky told his publisher to remove all subtitles. In its first posthumous performance, three weeks after the premiere and days after Tchaikovsky’s death, ‘Pathétique’ had returned and has remained in place ever since.

More than once, Tchaikovsky wrote that the symphony was: “the best thing I ever composed or shall compose.” This confidence in his creative powers runs counter to the mythology that the Pathétique might have been a musical suicide note or the final utterance of a terminally depressed individual - and the quality of the writing bears it out. That’s not to say that the theme of death is far from the work; the emotional collapse of the finale, — following the passionate, impulsive earlier movements, — demonstrates that clearly, as does the use of the Russian Requiem theme earlier. And Tchaikovsky did die of cholera days after its premiere (thanks to the most famous glass of unboiled water in music history), which has fuelled many a theory.

The symphony opens in darkness, with basses and bassoon in low registers - this slow introduction is directly elaborated in the main allegro section through a nervous-sounding theme. The second subject is one of his most famous melodies; achingly beautiful and poignant in the extreme. There is a ferocious development section, focused on the first subject to such an extent that, when the recapitulation section comes around, there is no energy left in the first subject, which is supplanted by the second.

The second movement is described as both a graceful and yet ‘lopsided’ waltz - in 5/4 time. 5/4 is inherently uneven - each bar is effectively 2 beats + 3 beats - and in Tchaikovsky’s expert hands it is a beautiful and melancholy dance. It gives way swiftly to the third movement, a staggeringly fiery march/scherzo of significant proportions.

By placing the despairing finale at the end of the symphony - in other works an equivalent movement could easily take the place of a middle movement - Tchaikovsky turns the traditional structure on its head, eschewing the normal journey towards the light and joyful celebration (as in Beethoven 5, for example) for a more painful, personal ending, paving the way for Mahler and other symphonists to follow. The Pathétique ends where it began, in the darkness with the basses, whose final heartbeats fade away to nothing.

Programme notes © South East London Orchestra 2017

Soloist: Fenella Humphreys



With playing described in the press as ‘unforgettable’ and ‘a wonder’, violinist Fenella Humphreys enjoys a busy career combining chamber music and solo work. She has broadcast for the BBC, Classic FM, and German, Canadian, Australian and Korean radio and TV.

A champion of new and unknown music, a number of eminent British composers have written works for Fenella. During 2014/15 she premiered a set of 6 new solo violin works by leading British composers including Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Sally Beamish and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, with performances at Aldeburgh, The Forge, and St. Magnus and Presteigne Festivals as well as a 2-CD recording for Champs Hill. Both discs have been released to critical acclaim, chosen by BBC Music Magazine as Instrumental disc of the month (October 2015 and January 2017) with 5 Star reviews, and Gramophone Magazine Editor’s Choice.

Concertmaster of the Deutsche Kammerakademie, Fenella also enjoys guest leading and directing. Her teachers have included Sidney Griller CBE, Itzhak Rashkovsky, Ida Bieler and David Takeno, studying at the Purcell School, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Robert-Schumann- Hochschule in Düsseldorf graduating with the highest attainable marks.

Fenella plays a beautiful violin from the circle of Peter Guarneri of Venice, kindly on loan from Jonathan Sparey.

www.fenellahumphreys.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.

Fundraising for Fairbeats A Special Mention



Today we are celebrating Give-A-Gig week, run by the National Foundation for Youth Music, and raising money for local charity Fairbeats. Youth Music is a national charity supporting music projects for children and young people facing challenging circumstances. Fairbeats is one such initiative, co-founded and directed by SELO flautist Jennifer Raven, which runs music workshops and programmes for young refugees and asylum seekers in South London. The families that Fairbeats works with face significant challenges, including destitution, homelessness and mental health illness. For many children, music has a powerful impact on their happiness and confidence. The mother of one participant said:

"The flute makes him feel like he has something, something to grab hold of that keeps him going and makes him feel like he isn't wasting away. It makes him feel like he's worth something."

The proceeds from today's tea and cake will be split between Youth Music and Fairbeats.

If you would like to find out more about Fairbeats and how to support their work please speak to Jennifer, contact them on fairbeats@gmail.com or check out www.fairbeats.co.uk

Thank you very much for your support – every little that is donated has an impact.

The Orchestra

Violin I

Alan Titherington
Katherine Savage
Mike Bradburn
Philip Curry
Robert McIlveen
Heather Hall

Violin II

Claire Rutland
Penny Davies
Louise Esaias
Fi Woodworth
Rosamund Sykes
Keith Hide

Viola

Eleanor Beaumont-Pepler
Jane McLaughlin
Andrew Perry-McAlpine
Marian Dunn
Gemma Medcalf

Cello

Hilary Wood
Ed Langford
Richard Thorn
Phillipa Bradburn
Tony Albuquerque
Sue Ardley

Double bass

Morven Leese
Mimi Poon
Jack Cherry

Flute

Jennifer Raven
Sarah Harington Hawes
Jennifer Sutton

Oboe

Catherine Smale (**Cor Anglais**)
Catherine Parkinson
Marissa Pueschel

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Philip Broadey
Steve Clark (**Bass Clarinet**)

Bassoon

John Wallace
Val Currie

Horn

Rosie Merriman
Andy Currie
James Allen
Dwight Pile-Gray

Trumpet

Ben Reeve
Katherine Mason

Trombone

Thomas Woodcock
Richard Tighe
Matt Gray

Tuba

Richard Lovett

Percussion

Jon French
Tom Hollister

Celeste

Jude Carlton

Harp

Tamara Young

Thanks ~~as ever go are given~~ to the Orchestra Committee (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.

~~We are also very grateful~~Thanks additionally to the Parishes of St Barnabas and Christ Church for allowing us to use their wonderful churches and halls.

SELO Membership Scheme:

~~We would like to thank Peter Main for becoming a Friend of the Orchestra this season. We especially thank the following people for becoming a member this season.~~

~~Friend(s): Peter Main~~

Our membership scheme 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 (~~with advance booking if booked in advance~~), ~~A a~~ written credit in all concert programmes ~~and regular updates on SELO's concerts and activities:~~

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, ~~as (see below).~~

Seat reservation privileges (~~with advance booking if booked in advance~~), a written credit in all concert programmes, ~~and~~ a verbal acknowledgement in the appropriate SELO concert ~~and regular updates on SELO's concerts and activities :~~

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

- Support Jake Muffett's performance of Mahler's Rückert Lieder
- Support the ~~O~~chestra's first concert for children
- Support the SELO leader's position

~~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.