

Supporting SELO:

We would like to thank Peter Main and two anonymous donors for their financial support of the Orchestra this season. We are also very grateful to the Parishes of St Barnabas and Christ Church for allowing us to use their halls and churches to rehearse and perform in.

If you would like to support our activities, there are several ways help:

- **Attend our concerts**

We're fortunate to play to friendly audiences at St Barnabas, receiving a warm welcome whenever we're here. Thank you for coming today, we have a mailing list if you'd like to keep up to date on our concerts and activities - fill in a feedback slip or email us (seorchestra@gmail.com) to join.

- **Play with us**

If you play an instrument and have experience of playing in orchestras, we'd love to hear from you. We're particularly keen to recruit some more violins and violas - more details on our website: southeastlondonorchestra.com/contact-us/joining/

- **Eat Cake!**

The interval "indoor picnic" has become a fixture of our concerts, enjoyed by audience and orchestra members alike. Many thanks to all who share their bakes, we're always very grateful for these contributions and for any donations given.

- **Easyfundraising**

If you shop online, you can help good causes at the same time through donations from many retailers. It's very easy to do and we have a page set up to support SELO here: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/selo/

SELO is a registered charity, no. 1175395. Do get in touch at seorchestra@gmail.com for any further information.

Next concerts:

**Sunday 14 October at 4.00pm - St Barnabas, Beckenham
and**

Thursday 18 October at 7.30pm - St Bartholomew, Sydenham

Schumann: Genoveva Overture

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto

Elgar: Froissart

Smyth: Serenade in D

Featuring the welcome return of the 2018 BBC Music Magazine award-winner Fenella Humphreys as soloist in Tchaikovsky's famous Violin Concerto

Sunday 9 December at 4.00pm - St Barnabas, Beckenham

A Christmas Festival!

Featuring Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite and other seasonal favourites!

South East London Orchestra

Conductor: David Smith



Sunday 8 July 2018

St Barnabas Church, Beckenham

southeastlondonorchestra.com

Welcome to the final concert of South East London Orchestra's 2017/18 season.

In what is perhaps not a particularly summer-like theme, doomed relationships abound in today's music. Carmen and Don José, Tony and Maria, Shostakovich and... well, read on into the programme notes to find out about the various layers to his Fifth Symphony!

These three pieces are works of great popularity as well as technical ambition, and it is the orchestra's aim to continue to grow in terms of size, ambition and reach. If you would like to be a part of our future activity - as a player or supporter of any sort - then please do speak with us today or after the concert.

Today marks the end of the orchestra's sixth year, and the musical development across this year has been particularly exciting. I want to extend my thanks to all members of the orchestra for their commitment and musical talent, to Alan Titherington for his ongoing musical support, and to the orchestra's committee who are putting us on a secure footing for an exciting future together.

Finally, thanks to you all for your support both today and throughout the years. Having a dedicated audience inspires us and makes all the hard work worthwhile! We wish you a happy summer, and look forward to seeing you again in October.

David Smith
Music Director

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Bizet – Carmen: Suite No. 1

Bernstein – Symphonic Dances *from* West Side Story

Interval

Shostakovich – Symphony No. 5

The Orchestra

Violin 1

Alan Titherington
Katherine Savage
Mike Bradburn
Matthew Burgess
Peter Hoyes
Robert McIlveen
Philip Curry*
Heather Hall*
Stephen Lock*

Violin 2

Claire Rutland
Penny Davies
Louise Esaias
Keith Hide
Geraldine Lowery
James Langridge
Alice Curry*
Rosamund Sykes*

Viola

Lucy Stephenson
Jane McLauchlin
Calum Moulton
Catriona Cooper
Hannah Gostling
Cyrus Lyons

Cello

Hilary Wood
Tony Albuquerque
Anna Gillespie
Sue Ardley
Dan Kellett
Charlotte Wright
Richard Thorn
Philippa Bradburn

Double Bass

David Wright
Morven Main
Owen Harris

Harp

Glenda Allaway

Flute

Jennifer Raven
Sarah Harington Hawes
Jennifer Sutton

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Alice Hardy
Juliette Topham-
Murray (Cor Anglais)

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Philip Broadey
Chris Jeffrey (Bass
Clarinet)
Laurence Scott (Eb
Clarinet)

Alto Saxophone

Trevor Blanchard-
Conner

Bassoon

Claire Goddard
Val Currie
Grace Watts
(Contrabassoon)

Horn

Andy Currie
Steph Jeffrey
Ben Mason
Lottie Orr

Trumpet

Ben Reeve
Nathaniel Rodwell
Pete Mycroft
Steve Edwards

Trombone

Tom Woodcock
Mark Douse
Alex Williams

Tuba

Dan Mackintosh

Timpani

David Coronel

Percussion

Jonathan French
Tom Hollister
Fabian Edwards
Jude Carlton

Piano

Paul Gardner

*Violin 3 in
Shostakovich



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. He is the founding Music Director of South East London Orchestra.

He has conducted many orchestras in London and across the South of England, including Aylesbury Symphony Orchestra, Brent Symphony Orchestra, Kingston Philharmonic, London

Repertoire Orchestra, Northampton Symphony Orchestra, Sidcup Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonia Tamesa.

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, and participated in conducting courses led by George Hurst. Alongside his conducting career and trombone playing, David is a senior manager at ABRSM, the UK's largest music education body.



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 to allow time to continue musical pursuits.

Alan was for 25 years a 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.

Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)

Carmen: Suite No. 1 (1875)

- 1 Prelude – Aragonaise
- 2 Intermezzo
- 3 Seguedille
- 4 Les dragons d'Alcala
- 5 Les Toréadors

Bizet's famous opera deals primarily with the jealous love of Don José towards Carmen, a gypsy factory girl. Don José is drawn away from his duty as a soldier and his beloved Micaëla, but when Carmen tires of him and turns her attention to Escamillo, a bull-fighter, tragedy ensues. Don José stabs Carmen, who dies in Escamillo's arms.

This suite – one of two – was prepared after Bizet's death by Ernest Guiraud, who also created sung recitatives for the opera. The movements selected are full of fantastic tunes, but also serve to provide an overview of the main characters and themes from the opera.

The *Prelude* is the original prelude from the opera, featuring the tragic motto associated with Carmen's premonitions of her own death. The *Aragonaise* is a lively Spanish dance, lifted from the opening of the fourth act and directly linked to the *Prelude*. The *Intermezzo* is a nocturne and serves as the prelude to act three. The *Seguedille* is Carmen's song of seduction to entrance Don José – a quick dance in three-time. *Les dragons d'Alcala* is a militaristic march tune concerning Don José's platoon. *Les Toréadors* (bull-fighters) was originally used as the overture to the whole opera, as well as the procession to the bullring in the final act.

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990)

Symphonic Dances from West Side Story (1957, 1961)

Prologue – Somewhere – Scherzo – Mambo – Cha-Cha – Meeting Scene – Cool – Fugue – Rumble – Finale

In creating *West Side Story*, Bernstein and his artistic partners – Arthur Laurents (book), Stephen Sondheim (lyrics) and Jerome Robbins (director/choreographer) – produced a work that drew from the best of musical theatre and operatic art forms.

The universally known Shakespearean tale of Romeo and Juliet that underpins this modern retelling (casting white Americans with immigrant Puerto Ricans as the warring 'households') provided a clear thread for audiences to follow, but the show made a significant break with the lighthearted past of Broadway. That 'break' from the lighter productions of the past is picked up in David Patrick Stearns' liner notes to Bernstein's 1984 studio recording of *West Side Story* (with Kiri Te Kanawa and an almost certainly miscast José Carreras):

'As with the reception that first greeted Bizet's *Carmen*, critics asked why such prodigious theatrical talent had been put at the service of such unsavoury

characters.' But it was those unsavoury characters, in their life-like scenarios, that inspired this outstanding show.

The 'so-called' *Symphonic Dances* ('so-called' was Bernstein's own expression in a documentary made about his studio recording) are superb arrangements of some of the best-known items. Bernstein had worked with Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal to complete the original orchestration of the Broadway show, and turned to them again to rework the various numbers for this orchestral selection.

Ramin (to whom the *Symphonic Dances* are dedicated) wrote in 1992 that: 'the order in the suite is based on "feel" rather than on the plot of the show ... after the *Rumble*, Lenny inserted a flute solo unique to these *Symphonic Dances*, which makes a dramatic and beautiful change to *I Have a Love* ... and which is the only music in the suite that is *not* a dance in the show.'

In just over 20 minutes of music, we experience the highs and lows, the joy and despair, of this truly operatic story, told first through the Broadway stage and now the orchestral concert hall.

**** Interval ****

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975)
Symphony No. 5 (1937)

- I Moderato
- II Allegretto
- III Largo
- IV Allegro non troppo

The Fifth Symphony was composed in the aftermath of Shostakovich's public denouncement by Stalin in the pages of Pravda (the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in January 1936. It was apparent to all that the article - 'Muddle Instead of Music' - was penned by Stalin himself, and it declared Shostakovich's recent opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* as 'coarse, primitive and vulgar'. It made clear that things could end badly for the composer unless he wrote in a less avant-garde style.

Shostakovich immediately became a figure to avoid. It was dangerous to be around him, as some of his close family discovered to great personal cost. He withdrew his Fourth Symphony immediately given its dark and tragic character and modern musical language. The Fifth's wry, unofficial subtitle - 'A Soviet artist's practical and creative response to just criticism' - is usually ascribed to Shostakovich himself, though some state it was suggested to him by a journalist.

Further context for the symphony is that the work is replete with references to Bizet's *Carmen*. The second theme of the first movement references "*Amour*,

amour" from the "*Habanera*", and further significant resemblance can be found between the martial motive at the beginning of the Finale and Bizet's "*Prends garde à toi*" ("Beware, beware"). On the surface, it seems a bizarre source for Shostakovich to draw material, though the reason has been identified as Elena Konstantinovskaya, who had an affair with the composer in 1934-35, went to Spain and married the Soviet photographer and filmmaker Roman Karmen. For Shostakovich, Elena became his own personal Carmen who then rejected him.

The Fifth Symphony was premiered by the Leningrad Philharmonic under its music director, Yevgeny Mravinsky on 21 November 1937. Many listeners wept openly during the elegiac third movement, and the work concluded with an ovation lasting 40 minutes.

The first movement begins with a dramatic, physical opening motif, soon to be answered by the tender second theme (mentioned above). Later, after much development and acceleration of tempo, Shostakovich reverses the order of the themes in the recapitulation and winds down the tempo again to create an immense arch of a movement.

The gruff and short Ländler (a folk dance) second movement is ironic, bitter, charming and elegant in equal measure. The third movement was composed in just three days, and is an extraordinary depiction of loneliness, terror and fear. Remember the weeping audience at the premiere - thinking about their family and friends taken away at the peak of Stalin's Great Terror.

The Finale repeats the structural ploy of the first movement, with a gradual ratcheting up of the tempo from the opening brute of a D minor march theme (quoting Bizet: "Beware, beware"). Various musicologists have identified quotations from Bizet and Shostakovich's own music, as well as from Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* (both of which contain musical descriptions of public executions).

The final section of the movement has had a confused performance history, and is an unremitting passage of music, with 252 repeated 'A's hammered out by strings and woodwind over the brass march theme ("Beware, beware"). On the face of it, the now D major version of the theme could be considered triumphant, but listening to the hammered 'A's and the screams of C natural and B flat high in the register from the trumpets and trombones, we have to consider if the music is instead depicting fear, suffering and despair.

Shostakovich's music in general is open to so much discussion and debate, with some commentary of vague and uncertain provenance muddying the waters. This context is part of what makes listening to the music so fascinating, but the music itself is also extraordinary, powerful and moving in its own right.

The Party treated the work as a successful turnaround in Shostakovich's career.