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SELO
SOUTH EAST LONDON
Orchestra



SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2025

WELCOME

David Smith, Music Director

Welcome to our end-of-year concert, a real celebration of the dramatic music of Russia!

Borodin's grand opera *Prince Igor* provides a fabulous orchestral showpiece through the *Polovtsian Dances*, music of the nomadic tribe and enemies of the title character. It's a thrilling opener - and full of wonderful tunes!

We're thrilled to be working with cellist Yoanna Prodanova once again on the exciting, if rarely-performed, second Cello Concerto by Dmitry Kabalevsky - a work full of the influence of Shostakovich and other Russian greats. Yoanna is a wonderful performer and we have loved rehearsing with her.

And then we have *Pictures at an Exhibition* - a great work for piano or orchestra! The tour of the exhibition really shows off what an orchestra can do (thanks to Ravel!). But I also like to think of the relationship between Borodin and Mussorgsky, colleagues and friends, connecting this entire programme.

PROGRAMME

Borodin, Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances

Kabalevsky, Cello Concerto No 2

- soloist Yoanna Prodanova

Mussorgsky (Ravel), Pictures at an Exhibition

THE ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Chloë Meade (Leader)
Claire Rutland
Mike Bradburn
Philip Curry
Russ Anderson
Heather Hall
Harriet Bill
Ying Keilo

Violin II

Louise Esaias
Penny Davies
Keith Hide
Wendy Albuquerque
Geraldine Lowery
Rosamund Sykes

Viola

Maeve Lynch
Lucy Mackintosh
John Hinchcliffe
Natalia Wierzbicka

Cello

Hilary Wood
Tony Albuquerque
Will Albuquerque
Ed Langford
Richard Thorn
Philippa Bradburn
Gillian Wood
Sue Ardley
Poppy Smith
Charlotte Davidson

Double bass

David Wright
Stephen Davies
Mariana Bakewell

Flute

Pauline Savage
Nim Dirci
Olivia Chester

Oboe

Catherine Smale
Frances Slack
Anisha Parma

Clarinet

Charlotte Woolley
Phil Broadley
Chris Jeffery

Alto Sax

Kara Settle

Bassoon

Claire Goddard
Vale Currie
Caroline Whitehead

Horn

Steph Jeffery
Stuart Lynn
Ben Mason
Brian Newman

Trumpet

Ben Whalley
Issac Rutt
Edward Sykes

Trombone

Richard Tighe
Graham Winter
Kieran O'Neill

Tuba

Dan Mackintosh

Timpani

David Coronel

Percussion

Ben Martin

Harp

Christopher Clarke



BIOGRAPHIES



David Smith | Music Director

David has extensive experience as an orchestral trombonist and timpanist, with rare forays into the world of the double bass. He read Music and a Masters in Musicology at the University of Southampton, where his tutors included David Owen Norris and Michael Finnissy. He studies conducting with Robin Browning, and previously studied with Denise Ham. When not conducting, David is Head of Assessment Services at ABRSM (the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, inspiring musical achievement around the world), coaches junior age group cricket, and enjoys debating small details with his two young children.



Chloë Meade | Leader

as a soloist has performed the Bruch Violin Concerto at St. John's, Smith Square. In 2020 & 2022 she was Concertmaster for the Jesus College Cambridge Bach Festival. Chloë is Principal Second of the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra. She plays with the Brixton Chamber Orchestra and Scherzo Ensemble, and performs folk, tango and classical music with accordionist Ben de Souza as part of 'Duo Fisarco'.

David is passionate about conducting contemporary music alongside the more recent 20th-century music and the great masterpieces of the classical repertoire. David is the founding Music Director of South East London Orchestra. He was Music Director of City of London Symphonic Winds (2011-2017) and has been a regular guest conductor with London Repertoire Orchestra, many orchestras across the south of England and in London. As an instrumentalist



Yoanna Prodanova | Soloist

Yoanna studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the Royal Academy of Music, where she was a Bicentenary Scholar. In 2025, she was awarded an Associateship of the Royal Academy of Music. She has also received awards by the Tunnell Trust, Kirckman Society, Musicians' Company and Sylva Gelber Foundation, and has made recordings for Linn Records, Orchid Classics, Genuin and Berlin Classics.

Yoanna is the cellist and a founding member of the acclaimed Barbican Quartet, who were first prize winners at the 2022 ARD competition in Munich and perform internationally. She plays on a cello by Giovanni Gagliano generously loaned to her by the Canimex Group, Drummondville. An avid trail runner, Yoanna has completed several ultra marathons, most recently the Epona 100 miles in the Black Mountains in Wales.



Yoanna Prodanova was born in Bulgaria and lives in London. She enjoys a dynamic schedule as a chamber musician, soloist and occasionally, orchestra principal, and performs in such halls as the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus Berlin, Wigmore Hall and Montreal's Salle Bourgie among many others. She has also appeared in numerous festivals such as OCM Prussia Cove, Rencontres de violoncelle de Bélaye in France, Siete Lagos in Patagonia, and the Montreal Chamber Music Festival.

ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833 – 1887)

Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances (1875)



Born in Saint Petersburg, Borodin studied chemistry and later held a professorship at the city's Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy. Despite being a "Sunday composer" in his own words, he became a member of the "Mighty Handful," a group of nationalistic composers which included Balakirev (Borodin's teacher), Rimsky-Korsakov, César Cui and Mussorgsky. In 1869, Borodin started working on the opera *Prince Igor*, which depicts the Russian prince's military campaign against the invading

Polovtsian army led by Khan Konchak. The *Polovtsian Dances*, written while Borodin was on holiday in Moscow, are provided as lavish entertainment for the prince while being held captive by the Khan. They showcase the composer's ability to combine lush melodies, driving rhythms and vibrant orchestration to thrilling effect, and remain one of the best loved excerpts from the unfinished opera, latterly being incorporated into the opening ceremony of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

DMITRI KABALEVSKY (1904 – 1987)

Cello Concerto No. 2 in C minor (1964)

– soloist Yoanna Prodanova

I Molto sostenuto – Allegro molto e energico

II Presto marcato

III Andante con moto – Allegro – Molto tranquillo

Kabalevsky was one of the most important contributors to Soviet musical education during his lifetime, with compositions encompassing children's piano pieces, songs and anthems for youth organisations, and a trio of concertos, for piano, violin and cello, dedicated to young performers. Unlike these earlier concertos, his second cello concerto was composed for the virtuoso Daniil Shafran, a contemporary of Mstislav Rostropovich, and strongly influenced by Nikolai Myaskovsky, his composition teacher at the Moscow Conservatory. The concerto is unusually structured slow-fast-slow, similar to Myaskovsky's cello concerto that was written some twenty years earlier, with the movements linked

seamlessly together by cadenzas. The piece opens with the solo cello playing an extended pizzicato passage, followed by an emotive melody that builds to a peak before dying away. The stillness is suddenly interrupted by fierce chordal patterns in the solo cello which are subsequently developed by the orchestra. The earlier mood of melancholy returns, before a passionate cadenza segues directly into the energetic middle movement, introduced by a sardonic saxophone solo. The driving rhythms propel the movement towards a second cadenza, which is used as a bridge to the tranquil opening of the finale. Motifs from the opening movement are used to create an unsettling atmosphere here before the music fades away peacefully.

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839 – 1881)

Pictures at an Exhibition (1874 orch. Maurice Ravel 1922)

Mussorgsky's piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* was inspired by the artwork of his friend Viktor Hartmann, whose early death in 1873 deeply affected him. Hartmann's sketches and designs, some from Mussorgsky's own collection, were displayed in a retrospective exhibition, with ten pieces (some now lost) as the basis for the piece. A recurring 'Promenade' represents a visitor (Mussorgsky himself) ambling through the exhibition, reflecting on the artworks. Although unpublished and unperformed during his lifetime, Mussorgsky's suite gained recognition through many arrangements, notably Ravel's extraordinarily rich orchestration, which will be played today.

The opening *Promenade* theme leads into *The Gnome*, depicting a nutcracker in the form of a gnome with musical twists and turns, and grotesque outbursts. The second version of the *Promenade* leads to *The Old Castle*, where a melancholic troubadour's song on saxophone evokes an Italian castle. Another *Promenade* introduces the light-hearted *Tuileries*, where children play excitedly in the Parisian gardens, with a short central respite. In a complete contrast *Bydlo* ('cattle') depicts, through ponderous, bass-heavy music, a trundling oxcart.

A further *Promenade* leads directly into the *Ballet of Unhatched Chicks*: child ballet dancers in canary eggshell costumes are represented by cheeping woodwind. Two portraits, *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, loans from Mussorgsky to the exhibition, are contrasted: prosperous Samuel by a dignified, confident theme and poor Schmuyle by a plaintive trumpet motif. The quarrelsome, gossipy atmosphere of the *Market Place at Limoges* is conveyed by overlapping octave runs and lively melodies.

Sombre trombone chords evoke the sepulchral atmosphere of *Catacombs (Roman Tomb)*, whose second part, *Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua* ('with the dead in a dead language'), is a transformation of the *Promenade* theme into a reflection on mortality. For this Mussorgsky envisaged skulls lighting up from inside and he continued the macabre atmosphere in *The Hut on Hen's Legs* (a clock design), featuring its malevolent resident, the witch Baba Yaga. The finale is celebratory with Orthodox chants and clanging bells representing the *Great Gate of Kiev*, an architectural drawing of a proposed, but never built, city gate for Kyiv.



ABOUT US

South East London Orchestra is one of South London's leading amateur orchestras with a reputation for exciting, high quality concerts and a genuine connection with our community.

WE ARE RECRUITING!

We are on the lookout for new members and have specific vacancies in upper strings and brass. If you're around Grade 8 standard and are interested, we'd love to hear from you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Programme notes by Tony Albuquerque (Borodin and Kabalevsky) and Morven Leese (Mussorgsky). © 2025: South East London Orchestra

Image credits

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Mussorgsky: Pexels, Pixabay

NEXT CONCERTS

Sunday 22nd March 2026, 4.30pm

St Michael and All Angels, Beckenham

MacCunn, The Land of the Mountain and the Flood

Bruch, Scottish Fantasy
– violin soloist Fenella Humphreys

Thea Musgrave, Loch Ness

Arnold, Four Scottish Dances

Sunday 17th May 2026, 4.30pm

St Michael and All Angels, Beckenham

Adrian Sutton, A Fist Full of Fives

Haydn, Symphony No. 55

Beethoven, Symphony No. 5

Saturday 4th July 2026, 4pm

All Saints, West Dulwich

Elgar, The Music Makers, *in collaboration with the London Concert Chorus*

Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 2, A London Symphony

More details about the orchestra, our concerts, how to buy tickets and much more can be found at our website, or via our social media links.

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