

Updates from partner organisations, the Southeast Hants Youth Orchestra and Southern Music Project CIC

From the Podium

Jonathan Butcher

We are so hoping to see you this coming Sunday at Oaklands - a 2.30pm start!

It's a really super programme, concluding with Dvořák's, ever-popular, Symphony - 'From the New World.' I think it's the first Symphony I ever heard in concert - at the Fairfield Hall's in Croydon, not far from where I now live. It was also one of the major works to be studied, when I was a student at the Tanglewood Summer School in the US.

It's a perfect piece, with non-stop appealing melodies, which you will be humming on your way home, if not for several days after the concert. Apologies for that! The themes have been used in adverts, musicals and in films, but they really come into their own in the Symphony itself - of course. So, we hope that you enjoy our performance. We've certainly enjoyed preparing it. Many of the HSO have played the New World before, but it's always fun and interesting to explore it anew. There are, inevitably, new surprises to be found, which one has missed on previous outings of the Symphony. I lose count of the number of times I have conducted it, and yet there's always something new to be discovered.

Our Concerto is the virtuosic masterpiece by the Armenian composer, Khachaturian - his Violin Concerto. Concertos are often referred to as having fireworks, and this work certainly has them in abundance (particularly in the first and last movements), as you will find out. Joo Yeon Sir returns as our soloist and I feel certain that this is *her* piece, where fireworks are concerned. She is a fabulous player!

Mussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain* opens the concert - conducted by our new Bursary recipient, Enyi Okpara, and I hope he and the HSO will have you on the edge of your seats with this, somewhat, scary piece, though it does end peacefully!

See you on Sunday - JB.

In conversation with Enyi Okpara

You're conducting the orchestra for Mussorgsky's 'Night on the Bare Mountain', can you tell us more about the story behind this piece?

Yes absolutely! Mussorgsky's *Night on a Bare Mountain* takes inspiration from Nikolai Gogol's short story *St John's Eve*. The story sees witches gathering on Bald Mountain near Kyiv to party all night. They continue to party until Mussorgsky himself, describes "the sounds of the far off bells of the little church in a village... disperses the Spirits of Darkness." The most famous adaptation of the story is for the 1940 Walt Disney film *Fantasia*, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski writes his own arrangement, heavily influenced by the Rimsky-Korsakov arrangement you'll hear today, but the animated story is very similar to Mussorgsky's own re-imagining.

If you have a question you would like to ask, or anything you would like to include, write to: secretary.havantorchestras2023@gmail.com

Listening Tips

Gordon Egerton

Mussorgsky – Night on a Bare Mountain

Gurzenich Orchestra of Cologne, Dimitrij Kitaienko (c/w Songs and Dances of Death and Prokofiev Alexander Nevsky). Oehms OC459 £11

Khachaturian – Violin Concerto

Sergey Khachatryan, Sinfonia Varsovia, Emmanuel Krivine (c/w Sibelius Violin Concerto). Naïve V4959. £13.50

Dvořák – New World Symphony

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Marin Alsop (c/w Symphonic Variations). Naxos 8.570714 £11.25

Invitation to our Open Rehearsal

If you are a member of the HSO or SHYO, a non-playing member or season ticket holder, you are warmly invited to join us at our 'Open Rehearsal' on Friday 15th March at 7pm at The Pallant Centre, Havant – either as a member of the orchestras or to watch us rehearse and then perform an informal concert. Please click on [this link](#) to RSVP to our invitation.

In conversation with Enyi Okpara cntd.

Much of Mussorgsky's work played and listened to today, are reorchestrations and reworkings of his original music. What are the key musical ideas we can listen out for?

The version we're playing today is Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration, so expect lots of contrast! There are several moments in the music where the dynamics shift almost immediately from piano to fortissimo in a very short space of time, to convey the wildness and ferocity of the Witches' Sabbath. The ending as well is entirely Rimsky-Korsakov. From the moment the bells enter, that's entirely his composition.

How do you work with the orchestra to build the tension and the atmosphere of this piece?

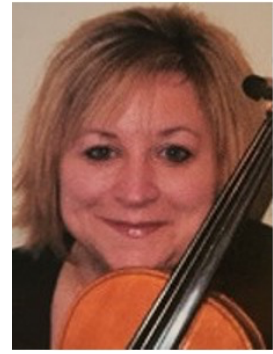
We've spent a lot of time thinking about the sound world, and how to produce the sound that really conveys, not only the ferocity of this music, but also the more intimate side. A lot of the music requires us to be quite disciplined with dynamics, so not getting too loud too soon, whilst also paying particular attention to the articulation and the character of the music. In the strings, we've paid particular attention to bow distribution, how much bow to use in places and which part of the bow to play with to get the right sound.

Your passion for ensuring accessibility of music is evident through your founding role with Elysium Music. Can you tell us a bit about Elysium Music's outreach and education work?

Yeah absolutely. Elysium is a charity I started which aims to provide musical opportunities to young people, particularly those from low participation networks, and by giving them the chance to be involved in side-by-side projects with young professionals, inspiring them to become musicians themselves. Last year, we had two concerts – one on African American music, where we got Year 7 and Year 8 students from two schools who had never played in an orchestra before to play the Djembe drums for Florence Price's First Symphony. The second concert was a side-by-side choral project where we got children from a range of schools to sing with young professionals in a joint project. This year, we have a big composition project in the works and are looking forward to seeing where the organisation goes next!

Thoughts from the Chair

Hello Everyone,



The Havant Chamber Orchestra (HCO) held their first concert of the year in February which was a huge musical success, ably helped by the wonderful performance of our violin soloist, Alexandra Peel.

Our comprehensive survey was expertly created and collated by a member of our viola section, Pip Langdown. She worked diligently to make sure all the queries and suggestions we'd received were acknowledged in both the survey questions and results, and you may be able to see some of these ideas actioned in this newsletter, at our concert on Sunday, and definitely in the future. Thank you all for taking part in such an informative process and thank you, Pip, for your expertise and accomplishment.

Apart from our final scheduled concerts this season, HCO on Saturday 18th May and Havant Symphony Orchestra (HSO) on Saturday 13th July, the society has also been asked to take part in two other events. Members of both orchestras will perform in Haydn's 'Creation' at St Mary's Church, Portsea on Sunday 12th May at 5pm, and again, this time as part of the Waterloo Music Festival (WMF), playing an evening of string music at St George's Church, Waterloo on Tuesday 11th June at 7.30pm. More details will be added to our website but if you live in Waterloo, tickets for our WMF concert can now be bought in many of the local shops. If you are able to join us, it will be wonderful to see you at any or all four of the concerts.

If you haven't already bought your tickets for our concert on Sunday, they will be available on the door or can be bought in advance using this web link: [Havant Symphony Orchestra - SUNDAY AFTERNOON SPRING CONCERT at Oaklands Catholic School \[Waterloo\] event tickets from TicketSource](#). Although our Bursary Conductor, Enyi Okpara, has been rehearsing with the HSO since the beginning of the season, this will be the first time he has conducted us in a concert. We have enjoyed our rehearsals with him and wish him every success on Sunday.

We have been given some wonderful raffle prizes, including Easter Eggs and Prosecco, from generous local businesses and friends. If you are joining us on Sunday and would like to take part, please bring £1 to buy 5 raffle tickets and thank you for your support.

It is an honour to become the chair of such a highly regarded society but I am always humbled when I remember a 'moment' which happened at a local festival in Portsmouth. As a member of the committee, I was once asked by a 5 year old pupil who had read the identity badge I was wearing (which said 'chair' on it) whether my title meant that I put out the chairs! After all these years as a musician and teacher, my honest answer is still, 'YES'!!

I hope you are able to join us this Mothering Sunday at the Oaklands School Concert Hall at 2.30pm. Please bring your family and friends and we'll fill the hall with wonderful live music, just for you. Thank you and very best wishes,

Becky Hill, HADOS Chair

Notes from our friends



Southeast Hants Youth Orchestra

In our last newsletter, we introduced Southeast Hampshire Youth Orchestra (SHYO) - a brand new orchestra for students in full-time education inviting Grade 6+ orchestral musicians in the Portsmouth, Havant, Waterlooville, Chichester, Fareham, and Petersfield areas to join!

After the SHYO inaugural rehearsal and informal concert on Sunday 28th January, their conductor, Joe Joliffe wrote:

I am very pleased to have conducted the inaugural rehearsal of Southeast Hampshire Youth Orchestra. It was wonderful to facilitate young musicians making music together and I was amazed with the standard we produced with only two hours' rehearsal, culminating in a short performance for parents and the Mayor of Havant, which was very well received.

We enjoyed rehearsing Bizet's Carmen Suite No. 1, and Sibelius' Finlandia, and I'm looking forward to conducting a full day of rehearsals on Sunday 24th March. We will be rehearsing Dvorak's 9th Symphony, 3rd and 4th movements, followed by an informal performance in the evening.

SHYO are being supported by the Southern Music Project CIC.

The orchestra aims to provide the opportunity of orchestral playing to an area underserved by youth orchestras, and to young musicians whose schools/colleges may be too small to offer orchestral opportunities.

Southern Music Project CIC

The Southern Music Project CIC was incorporated in May 2023 and is a new not-for-profit social enterprise created to support music education in Havant and Waterlooville communities in Hampshire.

Whether you're a beginner, wanting to work towards a personal music goal, or perhaps are looking to get back into singing or playing an instrument after a break; they aim to offer inclusive, supportive and affordable access to music.

Having graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama as an orchestral trumpet player in 2015, founder Adam Denman has had an expansive career as a freelance trumpet player as well as a brass teacher and ensemble director for various music services and schools. Whilst undertaking a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership, Adam created the Southern Music Project with support of the University of Portsmouth after noticing the limited access to music in the area.

Within its first year of launching, the Southern Music Project now offers weekly Brass, Piano and Voice lessons at the Waterlooville Library and the Pallant Centre in Havant, with aims to grow and expand our portfolio to include Woodwind and String tuition in the future.

In addition, the Southern Music Project has formed partnerships with many local community groups and ensembles to highlight their services and work together on joint projects.

Adam Denman

www.southernmusicproject.co.uk

[Facebook!](#)

A Song for Eve: Revising Haydn's Creation

HSO will support the University of Portsmouth Choir in a special version of Haydn's *Creation* to be performed at **3pm on Sunday 12 May** at St Mary's Church, Portsea. *The Creation* has long been considered one of the greatest of choral works ever written and the orchestra features prominently in Haydn's wonderful orchestration, depicting birds, whales and even a tiger, as the Book of Genesis story of creation is told. Haydn was inspired to write *Creation* after experiencing a massed performance of Handel's *Messiah* at Westminster Abbey during one of his visits to England in the 1790s. He left London with a wordbook, which was reportedly offered to Handel but never set by him. On returning home to Austria, Haydn had the text translated and he set it in German but, because many of the subscribers to the first published edition of *Creation* were English-speakers, Haydn included an English setting and produced the first ever bilingual score in order to please everyone. However, once Haydn's score reaches subscribers in England, the English setting was found to be clumsy and incomplete in parts. One of those subscribers was Anne Hunter, a Scottish poet who had written a set of canzonettas with Haydn while he was in London. She took it upon herself to produce a new text for *Creation* in around 1804 but her libretto was left undiscovered until 1993, when it came to light in the archives of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS). It was there because Anne was the wife of John Hunter, a founder of modern surgery. His Hunterian Collection of specimens can be viewed at the RCS to this day.

Although a performance of Hunter's version of Haydn's *Creation* was staged by a chorus and orchestra of doctors in 1993, her text was poorly fitted to the music in places and an additional but critical song that she inserted in the work was left out. That song comes in Part 3 of *Creation* which draws on Milton's *Paradise Lost* to depict Adam and Eve enjoying the sublime and unspoiled nature of Eden and their love for one another. In Haydn's score, Eve is not given a solo aria at all but sings almost entirely in duet with Adam. Hunter obviously felt Eve needed more of a voice of her own and so she inserts a three stanza 'Song Intended for Eve' in Part 3, albeit without any indication of what music should be used. Gayathri Khemadasa, a composer from Sri Lanka has been commissioned to set that song for the performance in May and a completely new edition of *Creation* has been prepared in order to better fit Hunter's poetry. The concert also marks 20 years of direction of the University of Portsmouth Choirs by George Burrows, Professor of Music and Theatre at Portsmouth and also a viola player in HSO. Choir alumni will swell the ranks of the 80-voice choir for what promises to be a grand and unique performance marking the culmination of a practice-research project to address how Hunter's words are best fitted with respect to Haydn's music and the implications of that exercise.

Tickets will soon be able to be purchased from the University of Portsmouth's online store via this link: <https://onlinestore.port.ac.uk/product-catalogue/music>

Further information can be obtained from music@port.ac.uk