

Music Making in Alton!

As you know, this is my first issue of a now long-standing and well-established orchestra magazine. I am trying out a number of new ideas, and would welcome your thoughts – what works and what doesn't – as well, of course, as your contributions. The previous issues are a hard act to follow, I am sure you will all agree. However, I have very much enjoyed myself putting this one together, not least because it has put me in touch already with more members of the orchestra! As you will see, I have featured the Brass Section in this issue.

(Ellie)



While the financial world crumbles before our very eyes, it's a relief to know that the future for the orchestra remains secure. We should all consider ourselves lucky that we are part of such a positive and fun-loving group, which can operate at such little on-going cost.

The standard of playing continues to improve,



thanks mainly to the fact that we are growing in size and that each and every one of us is getting better individually at what we do. We must keep this up as the rewards are becoming ever greater. The performance in the Maltings in December was outstanding and the result of some very hard work. Finlandia was superb – I could not have asked for more! I think we can be very proud of our contribution to an event that raises so much for the supported charities.

Our 'community' work was extended this month with our concert at Wootey's Junior School. It all seemed to go really well and, as Les commented, who knows what musical seeds were sown in the minds of the young audience. Mind you, I think the choir stole the show and I was delighted that they did!

Onwards now to the main programme this year. We have ambitious plans for concerts in May and July that will require serious, concerted effort from everyone. I hope you will all share my excitement and enthusiasm as we tackle pieces by Rossini, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Gershwin, Suppé, Elgar and Parry. Let's just make sure we play to plenty of people at both events so that our hard work gets the audience it deserves. Enjoy!

(David)

A Wonderful Christmas Warm-up

The Alton Maltings, looking rustically festive, was filled to capacity on Saturday 20 December when three musical groups combined to recreate 'The Wonder of Christmas', a charity concert in aid of Home-Start and the Harvest Church Youth. Alton Concert Orchestra, under David Budd, Alton Choral Society with their new Conductor, Christopher Gardner and Mac Newton's Ancora Female Voice Choir, ably abetted by Tanya Holmes-Jefferd's accompaniments, put together a varied, entertaining programme, including a healthy tranche of audience participation.

Leroy Anderson's 'Sleigh Ride' made a lively start to the proceedings, and the excellent Orchestra bore the brunt of the evening's work, accompanying carols as well as giving enjoyable performances including Sibelius' *Finlandia* (suitably dramatic) and 'Winter Wonderland' (engagingly laid-back). Anne Bradley bravely exchanged her trombone for the conductor's baton for the atmospheric 'Dream Pantomime' from Humperdinck's opera *Hansel and Gretel*.

There was no less variety in the carols we heard: there were exciting accounts of Mathias's 'Sir Christmas' and Britten's 'Wolcum Yole' from the Choral Society, and of 'Gaudete' from Ancora. Particularly effective too, were 'Bethlehem Down', where the crystal clear diction helped convey the carol's poignancy, Malcolm Williamson's 'This Christmas Night', wending its way seamlessly through distant keys, and Britten's 'There is no Rose', where Ancora, with harp accompaniment, captured the carol's hypnotic quality beautifully.

For many of the audience, however, the highlight of the evening was their own, unexpected participation. Christopher Gardner has the good fortune to be the son of composer John Gardner, and he soon had the audience under his jocular thumb as he cajoled them into learning some of his father's carols. Whilst the Choirs sang 'I saw three ships', the audience added 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?' in lusty counterpoint; and as a finale, they managed a three-part canon for 'The Holly and the Ivy'! It was an evening greatly enjoyed by all, and both the music and the splendid mulled wine and mince pies inspired generous donations amounting to £1,513.00 to go directly to the charities Homestart and the Harvest Church youth groups, to support their work for the families of Alton.



The Forum for Debate

Having asked people for ideas for Coda, I thought I would share with you some of the ideas which cropped up, on which it would be good to get some feedback.

- ♪ Should we have a Social Secretary? (Any volunteers?)
- ♪ Is there a way we could introduce more chamber music into our repertoire, perhaps having more sectional rehearsals?

Repertoire

- ♪ Is there any opportunity to do a combined concert with a choir performing a major choral work such as Handel's *Messiah*? 'The Trumpet Shall Sound' would be good at Christmas. (Reg)
- ♪ This year Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn and Purcell are all celebrating their anniversaries. How about Handel's music for fireworks at our next Prom! He does water music as well, but that may be already booked! (Les)
- ♪ *Espana* by Chabrier. *Marche Slave*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky. Beethoven symphonies 3 to 8. *Rhapsody in Blue* by Gershwin. Handel's *Messiah*. (Barry)

Instrument repairers and dealers

Strings

As for local violin sellers/repairers, I only use Bridgewood and Neitzert in Stoke Newington Church St, they're (for me) the best, most competent, most competitively priced, and generally all-round nice guys - especially Gary Bridgewood. The work they've done on any of my instruments has been exceptionally high. (Sim) Another, more local dealer whom many have recommended is Restalls.

Bridgewood and Neitzert

146 Stoke Newington
Church Street
London N16 0JU
Tel: 020 7249 9398
www.londonviolins.com

Restalls Ltd

5 River Ground Stables
Cowdray Park, Midhurst
West Sussex, GU29 9AL
Tel: 01730 716336
www.restallsviolins.com

Woodwind

For an excellent if somewhat idiosyncratic experience, go to Stephen Howard. He is first and foremost a sax man, but is equally at home with the other woodwind instruments. He has a very informative website and works in the Petersfield area. He likes you to email him first to make contact and if you arrange to visit he will explain how to find him.

He can be elusive so let Coda know if you have seen him recently! (Chris and Ellie)

Stephen Howard

at www.shwoodwind.co.uk
showard@shwoodwind.co.uk

Meet the Brass Section!



Les Packett (horn), Martin Patey, Lainch Gurung, Tony Willman, Suzannah Boardman (trumpets), Richard King (trombone) and Helen Gardner (euphonium)

Helen Gardner is a retired special needs careers adviser who has recently moved to Alton. She took up playing the euphonium in retirement as her first opportunity to learn a musical instrument. She cannot remember who suggested the instrument to her, but is very grateful to them as she has grown to love it. Apparently the name euphonium comes from a Latin word meaning 'beautiful sound', so she is working on it!

Lainchkumar Gurung comes from Nepal. He joined in the British Army in 1986 and served for 22 years. He started to play the trumpet when he was 19. He retired from the Army in February 2008. Soon after that he came to live here in Alton where he, his wife and three children are very happy. At the moment he is working at Laleham Healthcare. His hobbies are listening to music and playing the trumpet. He also likes all sports.

Barry Hatton is a Building Surveyor and also a Noise Engineer. He particularly enjoys solving building problems, e.g. mystery damp ingress, noise transfer. He started learning the trumpet at school in south London. His early post-school playing was in local symphony orchestras, which was superseded by big bands and concert bands for a long while, only returning to symphony orchestras in the late 1990s. Barry joined ACO last September after he moved to the Surrey/Hampshire border area the previous year, although he still belongs to a concert band in Hampton.

Indulging a life-long interest in motorbikes, Barry has recently bought a race replica 250cc Honda, and has a classic 900cc Ducati awaiting refurbishing! He also enjoys knockabout table tennis and tennis, swimming, and walking his wire fox terrier.

Richard King is a retired airline pilot who took up the trombone when he retired. He has recently moved to East Meon from Worcestershire, and joined the orchestra with his wife, a cellist, last summer.

Les Packett says that he does not believe in a god, but that music is his religion, about which he is devout. He always tries to pass on what little he knows about it to those willing to learn. Paradoxically, he says that for him the most important ingredient in music is the silence, which is quite something, coming from a brass player!

Martin Patey, was 11 when he started playing the bugle in the Boys' Brigade band. This made him want to learn the trumpet and so he started having private lessons. He also plays the cornet in a local brass band. He enjoys ten-pin bowling, seeing the latest films and is keen to do more travelling to other parts of the world.

Tony Willman returned to playing the trumpet in 2008 after an absence of 46 years. As a church musician he spends most of his musical time as an organist and choirmaster. However, David Budd (bass extraordinaire) urged him to take up the horn again and join the ranks of the Alton Ragtime Band. Now retired, he has loads of time (no excuses now) to practise and get that embouchure up to scratch. He finds the brass section suitably anarchic, with some good, bolshie trumpeters. He is particularly pleased to team up with fellow ex-Army trumpeter Lainch Gurung.

Brass instrument repairer

Try Stuart Harvey, Phone 01420 82646

Small Ads

Sim Jones, local teacher, has some spaces available for violin and guitar tuition.

Tel. home: 01420 521001

Tel. mob: 07939 504257

Chamber music request

Are there any members who would like to play duets, trios etc., for concentrated practice and enjoyment? I have plenty of music and I badly need the piano practice!

Les Packett

New orchestra needs musicians!

A group of musicians from the Portsmouth area feel that it is high time Portsmouth had its own amateur orchestra. After a false start last year, the group have now appointed Spencer Bundy of Chichester University music department to be the new conductor. They contacted me and asked if I could pass the message on and ask you all to do the same.

Rehearsals will take place on Sunday evenings starting on 1 March 2009, from 7.30–9.30. At St Swithun's Church Hall, 105 Waverly Road, Southsea, PO5 2PL. They aim to play for 10-week terms and give musicians of all abilities the opportunity to play in an orchestra. Interested? For more information contact Anne White - 02392 731122 or drannwhite@yahoo.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Conductor

David Budd
(Principal Conductor)

Violin 1

Mac Newton *(Leader)*
Reg Charlick
Barbara Dawkins
(Minute Secretary)
Nadine Farris
Sim Jones
Christine Meers

Violin 2

Elinor Cowan*
Nora Dobson
Rebecca Kiff *(Treasurer)*
Megan Russell
Lindy Wiltshire

Viola

James Chattock
Chris Collins
Tony Smith

Cello 1

Grace Croft
Helen Harvey
Rachel Pritchard

Cello 2

Hannah Folkes
Tricia King*
Anna Lang
Fiona Turnbull

Flute 1

Cynthia Buchanan
Katharine Child
Jane Lacey
Fiona Lathey
Alison Stickland
(Membership Secretary)
Judith Stradling*

Flute 2

Charlie Bentley
Sarah Main
(Publicity Manager)
Miranda Whiteman

Piccolo

Alison Stickland

Oboe

James Cullum
Chris Leggett *(Chairman)*
Ellie Rivers *(CODA Editor)*

Cor Anglais

Chris Leggett

Clarinet 1

Alex Bate
Rachel Boardman
Debbie Hobbs
Alison Luckhurst

Clarinet 2

Evelyn Cooper
Colin Harnett
Jean Piper
Trish Privetti
Peter Treacher
Margaret Willoughby

Bass Clarinet

Graham Cross
(Conductor Laureate)

Bassoon

Anneliese Handley
Tamsin Seymour

French Horn

Aaron Chattock
Les Packett
(Committee Member)
David Price

Trumpet 1

Barry Hatton*
Martin Patey

Trumpet 2

Suzannah Boardman*
Adam Denman*
Lainch Gurung*
Tony Willman*

Trombone

Richard King*

Euphonium

Helen Gardner*

Tuba

Jonathan Hodgetts

Sop Sax

Sue Coulson

Alto Sax

Ellie Duddridge*
Suzanne King*

Harp

Mair Cross

Percussion

Mervyn Poore

* Joined in 2008

Thinking of Joining Us?

**Rehearsals take place every Wednesday in term time
in the Drama Studio of Amery Hill School, Alton, from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m.**

The cost of joining is £5 for students and £10 for adults, per term. We always welcome new players to the orchestra – there is no audition and we do not insist on you attending every rehearsal, although we like to encourage a regular attendance. If you are thinking of joining then please contact one of the following:

Chris Leggett (Chairman) **01730 893032**

David Budd (Conductor) **01420 549146**

Go to our website at: www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

Mission Statement

The Orchestra exists to serve the local community and to provide a forum for all musicians who enjoy playing in an ensemble. We have a policy of welcoming anyone without the requirement of an audition and we maintain no restrictions on section size within the orchestra. However at the discretion of the Musical Director, we may occasionally have to operate a waiting list for certain oversubscribed instruments.

The music we typically play will require someone of at least Grade 3 standard but exams are not expected. The age range of players encompasses year 9 school musicians to retired members. We offer the opportunity for school players to stretch their playing ability. Our music repertoire is wide and varied to suit all tastes and ranges from classical symphonies to show music incorporating big band and swing. The string section plays together and we are developing the wind section into a separate ensemble. Whatever your musical taste it should be well provided for.

The Orchestra is run by a chairman and committee and the involvement of members in organisation is encouraged and welcomed. We have social evenings from time to time and produce concerts 3 to 4 times a year. Members pay a termly fee to cover music cost etc. We pride ourselves on our friendly, hardworking approach to our music making.

We are fortunate in enjoying a close community relationship with Amery Hill School and are very appreciative of their support with rehearsal accommodation.

Come and see for yourself.

We welcome opportunities to perform locally in aid of community causes.

Coda: The Next Edition

If any orchestra member wants to submit anything for inclusion in the next edition of Coda, please email it to Ellie at riversmohan@btinternet.com – or on a piece of paper at a rehearsal, or in the post to 5 Furzedown Road, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1PN.

Membership

1. **New Members** If you have joined the orchestra in the last 12 months, or so, and would like to tell us about yourself, please send something in!
2. **Section Profile** The next issue needs a section to profile – the **Clarinet** section (including saxes) springs to mind – complete with a group photo!
3. Any members who can offer other **musical skills** (e.g. other instruments you play, whether you can transpose, compose, arrange music), or if you can offer music tuition, or are seeking a teacher, do please let Coda know.

Members' Forum

1. Lift share – anyone interested in sharing lifts to rehearsals, or can offer a lift to someone else, please give your name, location and how to contact you.
2. Details of forthcoming concerts that you want to advertise – bearing in mind that Coda only comes out two or three times a year, these will have to be well in advance.
3. Details of useful musical shops, instrument repairers etc. in the area.
4. Any top tips/queries about technique (which can be anonymous if you wish!).
5. Are you looking for other players to join you in smaller groups – for chamber music, or an accompanist, or even a singing group?
6. If you want to advertise something – i.e. an instrument/old music for sale, here is the place.

Suggestions Box

1. If any one has any suggestions for music the orchestra could play, then let Coda know.
2. Other suggestions might be ways we could all help with the smooth running of the orchestra – from having a rota to help with setting up and clearing away after concerts, to what members want from Coda!

Dates for your diary – concerts, etc.

Last rehearsal before Easter – 1 April
First rehearsal after Easter – 22 April
Half term – 27 May
Last rehearsal of summer term – 15 July

Concert in Four Marks – Sat 9 May 7:30

Rehearsal – Sat 9 May pm

Last Night of the Proms – Sat 11 July

Rehearsal – Sun 5 July 2–5, Maltings

Thanks

I think we would all like to thank Sarah for the gift of her calendars at the start of the year. I have also enjoyed looking at their website at www.mcfе.org.uk and look forward to their farm open day on Easter Monday (13 April). Make a note on those calendars now that the provisional deadline for the next issue of Coda is 15 May 2009! Photos on p.1: copyright Phil Collins. Thanks to Alison for taking p.4's photo, and Sarah for p.2's!

**Alton
Concert
Orchestra**
