

The Newsletter of
Maidstone Orchestral Society
promoting Maidstone Symphony Orchestra
mso.org.uk

crescendo!

Spring / Summer 2020

From Peter Colman / Chair MOS...



It is now 3 months since our February concert with Emma Johnson. What a wonderful memory...

As rehearsals for our March concert progressed, it became more and more clear that we would likely have to cancel. In my unused "From the Chair" piece for *Crescendo*, I advised the reader on how to sneeze and how to wash their hands. How simple that all seems now. And yet, how revolutionary it was, that we had been advised to do these things by government! Once we took the decision to cancel the March concert, it was almost a relief - at least it brought some certainty of purpose.

The trials of finding a last-minute replacement for John Lill (last November) turned out to have been a useful dry-run in handling the cancellation of the March concert with just a week to go. We notified season-ticket holders (members of the society) by email where possible, or by phone. Those who had bought tickets in advance through TicketSource were contacted directly by "the system". TicketSource also handled the refunds automatically, although it took a little longer than we might have wished, as they were swamped by cancellations of many events of many different types. Over the next week, we were able to collect most of the music that was in players' possession - the rest came to me by post or by other means. In all of this, I was struck by the dedication of the committee members - and many other helpers - who selflessly gave time and effort in spite of their own changing circumstances and family concerns.

Our treasurer, Harriet, has been extremely supportive throughout this period. Her spreadsheets and clear insight have enabled us to keep on top of our financial situation, understanding what might or might not be feasible and to what extent and when we will likely need help from the Friends of MOS. Not for nothing do we refer to them as our financial lifeline.

We were going to launch the new season at the March concert. Instead, you can see our plans in this edition of *Crescendo*. One thing is now clear: it will continue to be difficult to hold a public concert for some time. For example, the question of distancing for audience in all areas of Mote Hall, and for players on stage and in rehearsals, is just one of many issues to be resolved before we can reasonably rehearse and produce a concert. So, whilst we live in hope of our October concert going ahead, it does seem unlikely at the moment.

To conclude in a happier vein, we are all delighted that David King recently celebrated his centenary. David was, for many, many years, the driving force behind Maidstone Orchestral Society and, hence, MSO. We still intend to celebrate face-to-face at some point; but we don't yet know when that can be. Enjoy this special edition of *Crescendo* - and please do everything you can to keep yourself and others safe. And, in spite of the current pandemic, please spread the word that classical orchestral music will be back, alive and well, here in the middle of Kent!

MSO's plans for the 2020-21 Season ...

2020-21 Concerts

mso MAIDSTONE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

110th Season
2020-21



Five exciting concerts at
Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre
Maidstone ME15 7RN

MSO in concert -
October 2019

"After the interval we had Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* released upon us
in all its magnificent opulence and virility" - larkreviews.co.uk

mso.org.uk   **TICKETSOURCE**

mso MAIDSTONE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



Brian Wright *conductor*



Saturday 10 October 2020
Rob Burton
alto saxophone

Copland - Fanfare for the Common Man
Bernstein - Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"
Paul Creston - Alto Saxophone Concerto
Dvořák - American Suite
Gershwin - "Porgy and Bess": A Symphonic Picture



Saturday 28 November 2020
Benjamin Baker
violin

Beethoven - Violin Concerto
Bruckner - Symphony No.4 "Romantic"

Season Tickets: £116, £96, £56
Single Concerts: £29, £24, £14
Students £5, 18s & under FREE!

07817 429143 or on the door
Single Concert Card payments (booking fees apply):
0333 666 3366 mso.ticketsource.co.uk

Steve Migden presents Free Pre-Concert Talks
before each concert from 6.40-7.10pm

110th SEASON 2020-21
Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre
Maidstone ME15 7RN at 7.30pm



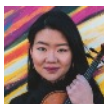
Saturday 6 February 2021
Isata Kanneh-Mason
piano

Brahms - Academic Festival Overture
Rachmaninov - Piano Concerto No.2
Shostakovich - Symphony No.10



Saturday 27 March 2021
Ben Goldscheider
horn

Schumann - Overture, Scherzo & Finale
Richard Strauss - Horn Concerto No.2
Schubert - Symphony No.9 "Great"



Saturday 22 May 2021
Mayumi Kanagawa
violin
The Choristers of
Rochester Cathedral Choir

Falla - Three Dances from "The Three-Cornered Hat"
Glazunov - Violin Concerto
Holst - The Planets

mso.org.uk   **TICKETSOURCE**

Music Director Brian Wright introduces the new season...



We've a terrific set of concerts planned for you in 2020/21.

Our solo line-up includes two finalists from the 2018 *BBC Young Musician* competition, saxophonist Rob Burton and horn player Ben Goldscheider. There's pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason - Sheku's sister - and two superb violinists, the Japanese-American Mayumi Kanagawa and New Zealander Benjamin Baker, who's delighted us in three previous seasons.

Their repertoire spans nearly 150 years from Beethoven, through Rachmaninov and Glazunov, to Richard Strauss and the American composer, Paul Creston.

MSO will be busy, nailing wonderfully diverse musical styles from Shostakovich, Bernstein and Gershwin, back through Falla, Bruckner, Dvořák and Brahms, to Schumann and Schubert. We're also delighted to be joined by the vibrant young voices of The Choristers of Rochester Cathedral Choir - both boys and girls - for the glories of Holst's *The Planets*.

Truly I think there's "something for everyone" in the season. But of course it's an impossibly difficult time, particularly in trying to judge when MSO/MOS might be able to restart operations.

In the meantime, thank you for your support and looking forward to when we resume, please help spread the word of the quality of our concerts far and wide.

Our Season Ticket arrangements for next season...

Usually, the launch of the new season is the trigger for sales of season tickets.

We are very conscious that, whilst we have reimbursed those who bought tickets for individual concerts, our season ticket holders are still waiting to hear from us.

I'm glad to say that you should see our offer to you alongside this edition of *Crescendo*.

Given the uncertainty about next season, we advise you **NOT to attempt to renew your season ticket at this time.**



An appreciation of David King on his 100th Birthday, 27th April 2020

Nine years ago, the Maidstone Symphony Orchestra (MSO) celebrated its Centenary and it is now recognised as one of the leading Community Orchestras in the country. The Conductor and the players usually receive all the credit for their wonderful performances, but we also wish to celebrate the Centenary of David King, who has contributed more to the Maidstone Orchestral Society,

which promotes the MSO concerts, than the huge number of other people who have been involved over the years.

David was born into a musical family and his love of music was apparent from an early age. He was given a small clockwork gramophone when he was 6, and his favourite record was Dvorak's Humoreske, which led to Dvorak being one of his favourite composers. He also started to play the piano at age 6, but chose to change to the violin a year later and made good progress, but when he was 9 went to boarding school where there were no violin teachers. According to David, although he kept playing, he picked up bad habits without a teacher! He did eventually have some more lessons, but the teacher did not attempt to correct all his bad habits. Aged 16, David joined the Tunbridge Wells orchestra and sat at the back desk of the 2nd violins. However, he joined the Auxiliary Air Force at the start of the war and ended up in Delhi, where he created a music group for 13 officers using a wind-up portable gramophone. Later, in Rangoon, he gave gramophone recitals to about 750 troops. When David returned to the UK after the war, he tried to play his violin, which according to him "sounded dreadful" and he never went back to playing.

MSO concerts in the Corn Exchange were a major part of David's life and he joined the MOS Committee in 1964, becoming Secretary in 1966 when the orchestra moved to Oakwood Park and started giving 3 concerts a year. Later the Maidstone Orchestral Society included 2 other concerts in the season, from Kent Sinfonia and the London Mozart Players (much later on all 5 of the season's concerts were given by MSO). To help with the finances, David worked hard to increase the audience for concerts and to get grants from the Maidstone Borough Council, the National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS), the Arts Council and other organisations.

As Secretary of MOS, David saw the need to build up a larger team to run the concerts, including Membership Secretaries, a Concert Secretary, an Orchestral Secretary, etc. He became the link between the MOS Committee and the MSO, by frequently attending MSO rehearsals as well as playing the leading role in all the administration required for the Society to operate.

When there were financial difficulties, David set up the Friends of Maidstone Orchestral Society to provide a buffer for future problems, such as when snow or the hurricane deterred the audience. David also became the link with the Maidstone Area Arts Council (MAAC) and the National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS). He was also on the committee of every other organisation involved in the arts in Maidstone, Kent and the South East; worked with Kent Seen to act as a photo journalist to prepare a series of articles on the Arts in Maidstone; and took part in an interview on BBC Radio Kent promoting a forthcoming MSO concert.

David became Vice Chairman of MOS in 1983 and then Chairman in 1988. His commitment to MSO continued with fund-raising, audience building, and he introduced adverts in the MSO programmes and brochures. David's book on "The Gentle art of fundraising" was written following a questionnaire sent to all NFMS members, and it was ultimately published by the NFMS. David's organisational flair was always evident and his unflappability was a great asset in all his various roles.

After Béla de Csilléry retired in 1990 as Conductor of MSO, David was instrumental in finding and appointing Brian Wright who has taken the orchestra to its current professional standard over the past 30 years. David retired as Chairman of MOS in 1993, when he was elected as a Vice President, a role he still holds and he continued to be very active in that role until well into his 90s. Congratulations to David on his 100th Birthday and particularly for all his achievements and tremendous efforts that have made a such major contribution to the success of MSO as we enjoy it today.

Janet Ash / Vice President MOS



Janet Ash presenting a photo of MSO to David King for his 90th birthday in 2010

MSO in lockdown...

Pianists have a huge repertoire of great self-contained music they can work on by themselves if necessary. But for those of us who play orchestral instruments in MSO, while there is some solo repertoire available, much of the music we normally play involves others, whether an accompanist, a small chamber group, a bigger band or a full-size symphony orchestra. Of course we can still practise our instruments in lockdown (if only because our Thursday evenings are now free of MSO rehearsals) but playing together with musical friends and colleagues is effectively suspended.

Those of us who are music teachers have been doing their best to keep their students going using Zoom, Skype or FaceTime for lessons, though some students have preferred to wait until face-to-face lessons are possible again. We hope they are still practising in the meanwhile!

Zoom has proved a wonderful online tool for meeting family and friends remotely. Unfortunately it doesn't work for playing music together in real time, as transmission delays get in the way, so some of us have been experimenting with a more specialised music application called Jamulus which works better, though only for small groups.

Another way of playing together online is for each player to record their own part separately while watching an online conductor or listening to a background track to keep everyone in time. The individual recordings are then uploaded to a central point where they can be edited together into a complete performance. A number of amateur groups have been trying this, and the results can be good, though it can be quite challenging to play your part well without being able to hear what everyone else is up to! I particularly liked Camden Voices' version of "Here comes the Sun" (perhaps because we used to live there) while Michael Ball's cover of "You'll Never Walk Alone" with the remarkable Captain Tom and a choir of NHS care workers made number 1 in the singles charts on Tom's 100th birthday - you'll find both on YouTube.

Of course professional musicians have been doing this too. Along with all the classical offerings, if you watched the BBC's "Big Night In" recently in support of Children in Need, the song "Times Like These" put together by Radio 1 was an excellent example of how neatly it can be done, even with lots of individual contributors - this reached number 1 in the singles charts too, the week after Captain (now Colonel) Tom.

In terms of listening to classical music while there are no live concerts, there is a huge amount of material out there on the internet. Several major orchestras are putting free archive material online - for example, the London Symphony Orchestra is putting out two full concerts a week on their YouTube channel (details at www.lso.co.uk/alwaysplaying). Covent Garden currently have a two-hour performance of La Traviata on their website. Many individual performers have been doing similar things, either on YouTube or their own sites. There is lots of material on BBC Sounds, Spotify and other music apps too. For those without internet access, Radio 3 is also putting out plenty of archived material, and of course Classic FM is there too as usual.

What about MSO itself? Traditionally we have not made recordings of our performances, for a number of practical reasons, but this is clearly something that we may need to consider doing at least selectively for the future.

Right now it is not possible to predict when we will be able to resume rehearsals and concerts. As long as social distancing is required it will be impractical for us to rehearse together as an orchestra, and clearly we could not consider resuming concerts with a live audience until it is safe to do so. But the time will come eventually, and we look forward to seeing you again then!

Lyn Parker / Secretary MOS

MSO's lockdown Quizzing...

A lot of fun has been had with online Zoom quizzes for the players, brilliantly organised, compiled and presented by John and Julie Moore. After the second one, on 7 May, John reported -

Thanks to all those who took part in this evening's quiz. Particularly nice to see the US President (*John & Julie in Donald & Ivanka Trump masks - Ed*) taking time out of his busy schedule to pay us a visit!! There were some very close scores today, no-one embarrassed themselves (other than us), and we have new winners this time.

1. Lyn, Jane & David - 50 (or 48!)
2. Emma, Annabel & Paul Beniston - 47
3. Jonathan & Rosemary Cane - 46

Congratulations to Lyn, Jane & David who displaced the Canes into 3rd spot. Well done to the Benistons for an ultra consistent performance in coming 2nd again. And thanks to EVERYONE for joining us tonight - it really does make a difference seeing you all and having a quick catch-up chat. We're missing you all.



A final big “thank you” for your continued support of MOS and MSO in these troubled times.

Of course, we’ll let you know when we can restart concerts.

In the meantime, stay safe and try to keep cheerful..!



Damien Hirst, Butterfly Rainbow, 2020 ©Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2020

Recently created by the artist Damien Hirst in support of the NHS, this beautiful “Butterfly Rainbow” has been made freely available for “not-for-profit” reproduction. A limited edition of the work is also being produced which will be sold with all profits donated to the NHS. Further details are on Damien Hirst’s Instagram.

MOS/May 2020