

MARCH 2009

## WORDS from Chairman Bob

It's 2009! A new year and new opportunities and challenges for Stoneleigh - concerts, a mini-tour and possibly a trip to the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Our Spring concert on 29 March will be in the inspiring LSO St Luke's Hall in central London. The programme will be quite different and pushing boundaries not just for SYO but for classical music in general. Lindsay will be conducting her own arrangement of two pieces by rock band MUSE. This is a world first and who knows, with the right promotion, may find its way right across the world! Alex Main-Ian will be back with us, featuring the marimba in a rare concerto. Then Adrian will lead us on a musical walk through London via the composition of Vaughan Williams.

I am very excited about the potential trip to Birmingham on 11 July to perform in the finals of the Music for Youth festival. We are intending to combine the Training and Main Orchestras, add several old members and create a 100-strong orchestra which will blow the judges out of their seats! I do not have many details yet but should our place be confirmed I will keep everyone up to date.

As you already know, we are planning a 'mini-tour' this year, to take part in the Edinburgh Festival in August. We are proposing to stay in student accommodation at Stirling University and playing two evening concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow. So why not think about combining a trip to the Festival and supporting our orchestra as well?

A few members of the committee stood down at the recent AGM. I would like to thank Bill Main-Ian, Richard Braithwaite and in particular Nick Lock who has done a sterling job as Treasurer for the past two years. Out with the old and in with the new! I would like to welcome new committee members Mike Bishop (Treasurer), Maria Semple (joint Secretary), Elspeth Campbell, Adrian Hughes and Julian Hardwick (Training Orchestra). I thank them for volunteering.

At the recent AGM I singled out a few people to thank them for their help. I forgot to name all those behind the scenes, so would like to make amends by mentioning Tim Humphries who puts in a huge amount of work recording each SYO concert.

## LETTER from Adrian



### Onwards and upwards to the Schools Prom!

Towards the end of 1975, shortly after my return from the Competition in Berlin, itself a moment of 'street credibility' for SYO, a committee member drew my attention to a three year old event entitled the National Festival for Music for Youth. I had been Music Director for three years as well and the Stoneleigh Orchestra was expanding. Entering entailed in those days attending a Regional Festival in Surrey in the spring of 1976 and we duly took part and embarked on our first tour to .... Woking!

The Finals were in those days held in the Fairfield Halls Croydon, a week long event in July, competitive, and including very much the

standard groups of youth music making one might expect in the '70s. Music centre wind bands were prevalent and there was little if any ethnic music. Lots of good jazz, as I recall, as a major sponsor of the Festival was the *Sunday Times* and their jazz critic was an adjudicator. I remember that when we went to the Prom, Humphrey Littleton was a guest artist! However, I jump the gun!

We heard after the Easter that year that we had been accepted for the said Finals in Croydon and in 1976 on a hot July Saturday we took part. In those days SYO still rehearsed in the Scout Hut in Dell Lane just off Stoneleigh Broadway! With the entire membership of Stoneleigh we rehearsed that morning in our hut. We then left for Fairfield!

Our concerts in those days were in Ewell Bourne Hall, Rutlish School, etc. The big event was Wimbledon Town Hall, now demolished. (Not our fault!) We were to play complete the Finale from the Dvorak 'New World' Symphony. Well, to go from a hut that just held the band to a fabulous acoustic, with no platform rehearsal, was a beautiful challenge.

There were about ten other orchestras and the air was rife with competition! Most were County efforts - Hampshire, Southampton, often larger! Our suspicious rivals were there, Surrey Youth! Many too were conducted by rather dull music advisers in those days! If I sound unkind, for years afterwards Stoneleigh had to bear, because of our success, the outright hostility meted out to any youngster who dared to join us from Surrey. There was even the threat of removing grants!

Well, that was all to come. Our day was happy and splendid. We were on last and all Open Orchestra Class Youth Orchestras then adjudicated. To our delight, some surprise, we won it!! Yes, in those days we were allowed to win something!! Joy was unconfined!

Margaret was with me and we had with us a dear elderly Bruce Smith (and his formidable wife) as secretary. It was late afternoon and we just went back to their house in Esher after a visit to the River Thames and had an improvised dinner. A bit Spartan I remember, sincere, but we had dreadful packet dried, then cooked, 'Surprise Peas'!!! The things you recall!

By 1976 we were now 'on the map'. We were invited to the last of two nights at the School's Prom. It was thrilling, being televised for broadcast at Christmas. We were on last playing the Dvorak again and then SYO finished the evening with Pomp and Circumstance for which I had to hand over to regular 'star' and guest conductor Anthony Hopkins! Lovely man, great musician, no beat! I was denied my big moment. Have I ever recovered? My father was furious! Sanyo sponsored the Prom and I was given a large ghetto blaster radio/cassette as a gift!!

For the next 15 years off and on we were invited to take part and some years down the line my Harrow Young Musicians Philharmonic took part in the Festival and both SYO and that fine group took part in the Proms in the same week. 1986! It was a celebration of Malcolm Arnold's music and now, not well, he came onto the Albert Hall platform with me to take applause and proceeded to grab the baton and wanted to conduct it all again himself! I had to do some nifty footwork.

The Proms have got noisier, that is true, and now there is an astonishing array of musical genres. It was, though, trailblazing in those days; many diverse groups took part. It was all due to the vision of Larry Westland, the director for 37 years. He has only just retired and was/is a good loyal friend to Stoneleigh. It's all now called Music for Youth but the Prom pattern is very much the same. Youth Orchestras now for logistical reasons send in CDs of performances for entry. There are a total of 63 Regional Festivals around the country for all groups from Sax quartets to Ukulele Bands!

I have for four years been part of the adjudicating team though with the new director we are called Music Mentors and we recommend who goes to the Birmingham stage.

The whole enterprise was the 'making' of Stoneleigh and our continued success went hand in hand with regular Prom appearances. My reputation for youth work was helped in many ways including a link up with Warwickshire County Youth and Blue Peter for a BBC Studio session.

We attracted many new members, as 'bush telegraph' is still the best recruitment agency. It is fun, stimulating and exciting to see and hear other groups and, having conducted in many grand places, going on stage at the Albert Hall is still the best 'feeling' for a musician on Earth.

That's why we must do it again after all these years. But it really is the taking part in the competition that counts. It can only be done as a full team. With a bit of luck I might fulfil my father's desire to conduct that Elgar March in the Prom after-all!



## INTERVIEW with Lindsay

*Lindsay Ryan, our new Associate Conductor, has a BMus (French Horn) as well as a Bachelor of Teaching from the University of Melbourne, Australia.*

Okay, Lindsay, first things first, what is your favourite colour?

Definitely purple.

And your favourite food?

Well, I love pretty well all food and cooking...

And if pushed...?

Pancakes for breakfast!

Have you always played the horn?

I started learning the horn when I was about 8 at primary school, one of those tenor E flat horns that you have to hug, but then when I got to high school, I moved on to the French horn, joined lots of bands and orchestras, eventually went to a specialist academic school with an excellent music program, and just kept going.

Did you ever consider doing anything apart from being a musician?

I did think about doing something with maths and science, but now I think 'What on earth was I thinking?' I did a teaching degree at the same time as my music degree, and it has been the best thing ever - travelling, teaching and seeing the world.

Are you likely to be in the UK for some time?

Yes! Despite my accent, I have a UK passport, my parents are Scottish. My husband Patrick is Australian too. He is a technical manager so he's very handy to have around doing the sound and lighting and so on for my musical events.



Tell us more about Music from Muse that we're going to hear at LSO/St Luke's.

The idea behind it is to give teenagers access to classical music in a new way. It gives them the chance to play some contemporary rock music; something a bit different from standard orchestral repertoire. At the beginning of one of the pieces, there is a need for improvisation and this introduces the element of creativity and individuality into rehearsals and performances.

I hope that by talking about Music from Muse to their friends outside the orchestra other kids may be interested and come along to the concert – it's a way of putting the Stoneleigh name out there. It is a way to show that this orchestra is looking forward to the future.

If anyone wants to find out more about the sort of thing to expect, what should they listen to?

Any of the big rock bands, such as Kiss (Kiss Symphony), Metallica (Symphony and Metallica), even something like the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper. The music of Muse is really quite tuneful, and the lead singer Matthew Bellamy, from Devon, is a classically trained pianist, not just a three chord man. Muse has had sell-out concerts at Wembley, and their most recent world tour lasted two years. This is a really big deal for Stoneleigh – for a classical youth orchestra to have got sole permission from one of the world's most famous contemporary rock bands to adapt and play their music.

Thank you very much, Lindsay! It's great to have you with us at Stoneleigh, and we'll look forward to hearing something completely different on 29th March!

## TO NEWS

The TO continues to go from strength to strength under Dan Shilladay's excellent conducting. The orchestra has recently performed some challenging pieces - including the first movement of Mozart's 'Haffner' Symphony and Britten's Courtly Dances from Gloriana - and is currently preparing Vaughan Williams' 49th Parallel and English Folk Songs Suite for the Spring Concert.

This term, we have introduced a refreshment break twice a term in the middle of the rehearsal to enable

the players to get to know each other better. Although numbers have fallen slightly to 33 players, almost all the losses were due to promotions to the MO - testimony to the success of the TO as a training ground for the senior orchestra. As always, the TO is on the look out for new players, particularly brass, oboes, bassoons, violas and double basses, so please send any potential candidates our way. Susannah Hardwick (leader) and Charles Ashie (violin) are the TO player representatives this year, and if anyone has any suggestions to improve the orchestra, please talk to one of them.

*Julian Hardwick*

## Joiners

A warm welcome to all our **New TO** since September Nadine Assam, Yaz Ozten and Alexander Semple, Violin Bethany Reeves, Hannah Simpson and Rowena Taylor, Cello Hannah Puleston, Flute David Wolber, Clarinet Alex Mackinder, Bassoon William Haddock, Trumpet

**NEW MO** since September (excluding TO promotions) Henry Burke and Mark Kahn, Violin Imogen and Lizzie Cheetham, Cello Eleanor Kahn, Flute James Buckley, Clarinet Charmaine Zetlein, Horn Caroline Haddock, Trumpet Larissa Zetlein, Trombone

## KEY DATES

29th March  
Spring concert at LSO St Luke's

11th July  
Birmingham Symphony Hall (tbc)

12th July  
Summer concert at St Paul's

24th to 29th August  
Tour to Scotland

5th/6th September  
auditions and re-auditions

13th September  
Autumn term starts

13th December  
Concert (venue tba)

## Players' reps

(MO) In Young Kim, Sophie Reid and Ben Bernard

(TO) Susannah Hardwick and Charles Ashie

**Don't forget** to look at our website, especially the members' section which includes details of the schedule, chaperone duties, orchestra seating, buddies and handbook. (Password available from Committee Members)

Remember: if you aren't able to attend a rehearsal please let Sarah Herrick (MO) or Julian Hardwick (TO) know as soon as you can, and certainly before lunch on the day. sarah@christopherherrick.org 020 8546 8966, julian\_hardwick@hotmail.com 020 8946 5096

For change of phone number or other details, contact Beverley Smith on b.starkey@btinternet.com 020 8878 3578

## Helping to boost the Stoneleigh coffers

Stuck for ideas for Mothering Sunday/Easter/birthdays/etc? Why not go on to the Easyfundraising site, find a nice gift and raise money for SYO at the same time.

Go to [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) (please note org.uk, not co.uk, which is a different site), and 'register as a user'. Under 'charity', search for 'Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra' and choose it. Then complete the registration form with your email address and chosen password. That is all you need to do. Then each time you are thinking of buying online, remember to log in through this site.