

Elgar Strings 2009

2009 was another good year for Elgar Strings with a nicely balanced orchestra of 27 players. As one of our violinists is a keen recorder player, we held a joint concert with 'Consort', the Southampton recorder group and Nyanjura shuttled between the two. The Latin American piece, La Bamba, played by everyone together made a great finish and Consort have asked if they can join us again at the end of this term.

In March we played our part in the very rewarding Pyramid concert. It means such a lot to our more junior orchestras to play to a big audience in a proper concert venue and we continue to be grateful to the Friends for organising this great occasion. Elgar played a little set of pieces by Susato followed by a set of American Indian Chants arranged for string orchestra. I was delighted with their orchestral discipline and the commitment of their performance.

We finished the year with our usual concert held jointly with our feeder orchestra, Purcell Strings. For once we managed to get the timing about right and had a good mix of orchestral pieces and solos from both orchestras.

We had a lot of pupils, 11 in all, move on to SYS this year. We are now left with a rather small band of only 16, but what they lack in quantity they are making up for in quality. We are being able to work on all sorts of technical issues: section balance, bow management, and intonation, that I would normally only touch on. Hopefully the concerts will reap the benefits.

We continue to be grateful to the Friends for their support and additional funding. It is such a help being able to buy music when one comes across it. I was in Oxford in 'Blackwells' over half term and thought I'd just check through their string ensemble section. One of the Elgar members had commissioned me to look for 'Pirates of the Caribbean'. I did not expect to find it, but there it was, conveniently arranged for Easy String Orchestra. I was also able to pick up a second and slightly harder volume in a series we are already using successfully. Both books should get their first outings later on this year. Many thanks.

Christa Porter