



# The Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

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Registered Charity No. 283789

## Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

The “Friends” organisation is a registered charity, which supports the musical activities of eight orchestras comprising some 400 young musicians from Southampton and the local area.

### A letter from Sue Wilkins, Chair of FSYO

Rehearsals have started, new music tried and the journey begun towards concerts later in the term. Many of you are returning to your orchestra or moving into a new one; for others this is your first experience in the orchestras pyramid and we hope that for everyone this year will be exciting, challenging and fun.

FSYO supports the orchestras in the pyramid both financially, eg raising money for new instruments and music and subsidising tours and residential weekends, and practically, such as helping at rehearsals and concerts, providing refreshments, selling tickets, organising raffles and acting as ushers. In July we were successful in our bid for a Community Chest grant for money towards the purchase of music and to improve the shelving in the music library.

This autumn has seen some changes in the orchestras’ structure and we welcome the First Steps ensembles, as well as the new Elgar strings and SYS, in joining SYCS and SYO under the FSYO umbrella. This is of course a time of uncertainty about future government and local authority funding and it is vital that FSYO is committed to working, together with the rest of the youth music community, to retain the excellent music provision we value so much here in Southampton. I do therefore urge parents to join the Friends and take an active part in the debates and decisions that are to come. The AGM (see below) is a good opportunity to learn about what is happening as well as to celebrate the successes of the past year. We look forward to another excellent year of music making.

*Sue Wilkins - Chair FSYO*

### Notification of the AGM of FSYO

We would like to invite all parents of orchestra members to this year's AGM. It will be on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November at 10am in Room 12/13 at Taunton’s College, Hill Lane. Coffee will be served from 9.30am. This is a different venue than usual but now that SYS no longer meets on Saturday mornings there is no longer any reason to meet at Cantell School.

In the current economic climate and with the ending of direct funding to Southampton Music Services (SMS) from Southampton City Council we believe that it is more important than ever that we can demonstrate that we have a strong Friends organisation to support the orchestras. SMS are being encouraged by head teachers to prioritise music in schools over the ensembles. I would encourage you to consider whether you might be able to demonstrate your support for the orchestras by attending the AGM. If you could consider joining the FSYO too then you would also be entitled to vote. If you would like to join then you can download a membership form from the website or email [mrsct@live.co.uk](mailto:mrsct@live.co.uk).

*Claire Thompson – Secretary FSYO*



Do you want to support your children's music making? Do you want to support the future of youth music in Southampton? Do you have ideas to raise funds? Do you have IT skills? Can you give a little time?

If your answer is 'yes' to any of these, please seriously consider joining the FSYO committee.

Every year some of the committee move on as their children progress to the next stage in their education and we need new members. We are particularly looking for a newsletter editor (or 2 people who can split the editorial and technical aspects) and for committee members to represent the ensembles further down the pyramid (SYS, Elgar, First Steps).

Meetings take place about every 4-6 weeks on alternating week-nights and it is a great opportunity to support your child's music making and to "make a difference". If you would like more information please contact a committee member or email [info@fsyo.org.uk](mailto:info@fsyo.org.uk)  
If you want to help but feel unable to join the committee, help is always needed at rehearsals and concerts – your ensemble Director will be pleased to hear from you.

*SYO on tour to Barcelona in July 2010 playing Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 6 'Pathétique' in Barcelona Cathedral and sitting on the steps outside.*



We hope that foreign tours can continue to be a part of the SYO experience, as they have been for the past 26 years. SYO has travelled all over Europe and as far afield as the USA, Canada and China, giving concerts and learning something of the culture of the host country. When ex-members meet together they always reminisce about the tours they took part in.

A few examples:

2006 - Poland. Visits to the Tatra mountains, Krakow castle, the salt mines and to Auschwitz. Concerts in Bialka, Katowice and Krakow

2007 – Ischia in the Bay of Naples as the guests of Lady Walton and the Walton Trust

2008 – Vienna and the Wachau Valley. Concerts in Yspertal and the Karlskirche, Vienna and visits to the superb House of Music

2009 – Belgium and concerts in Antwerp, Bruges Cathedral and Ghent. Visits to Rembrandt's House and to the First World War Museum in Ypres

2010 – Concerts in Igualada, and Tarrega and Barcelona Cathedral. Visits to Montserrat and the city of Barcelona

## SYCS Goes West

A regular feature of the SYCS year is the residential course in February half term. We have settled into a pattern of sectional and ensemble rehearsals interspersed with social and outdoor activities that keep everyone busy for four days.

In 2012 we intend to stay in Golant Youth Hostel in Cornwall for 3 nights from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February. We will have sole use of the hostel, a grand, remote Georgian country house overlooking the Fowey estuary. There is plenty of space for rehearsing as an orchestra and in small groups.



We are arranging two performances while we are away. The evening concert will be at St Petroc's Church Bodmin where a local youth choir may join us. On Thursday we shall start our return journey with a visit to The Eden Project where we have been invited to give a lunchtime concert.

SYCS will be working with FSYO to raise money to keep the cost to participants down as we are keen that as many as possible will join the course and show SYCS at its best.

*Martin Felton – Conductor SYCS*

*Sue Edmonds – Manager SYCS*

## Committee Members Sept 2011

Chair	Sue Wilkins	SYO
Treasurer	Roger Bradley	
Vice Chair	Vacant	
Secretary	Claire Thompson	SYO
Committee	Miyuki Archibald	SYO
Website	Linnet Evans	
SYO Transport	Peter Gosney	
Library	Alan Hobley	
	Alison Niblo	SYCS
	Sarah Ormerod	SYCS, SYS
Newsletter	Vacant	
	Fleurette Waldron	SYO
	Clare Wikeley	

## **The Southampton Youth Orchestra Pyramid Re-organisation.**

As most of our readers will be aware, the Youth Orchestra Pyramid has been re-organised for this academic year. This has been part of a complete overhaul of the ensemble provision by Southampton Music Services and the reasons for it are to do with providing a service that better meets the needs of our young players in an efficient and affordable way.

Southampton Music Services provides ensemble opportunities for all its pupils and the Youth Orchestra Pyramid now consists of 8 ensembles. The beginner level is designed to take children during, or at the end of, their first year of learning. There are 4 mixed ensembles called the First Steps Ensembles spaced round the city at Ludlow Junior, Springhill Primary, Mansel Park Primary and St Denys Primary. These are designed to teach the early ensemble skills of listening to each other, following a conductor, and playing together. Once the young players reach a Grade 1 standard, they are ready for a more specialist input and may move on to an ensemble specific to their own instrument family. These are staffed by specialists and aim to give the secure foundation that will enable the pupils to acquire the skills specific to their own instruments that they will need for the rest of their ensemble playing lives.

The Southampton Youth Orchestra Pyramid is where the strings are nurtured. Wind, brass and percussion all have their own pyramids and those players temporarily leave the Youth Orchestra Pyramid to gain their specialist input. There are two string orchestras currently called New Elgar Strings which is directed by Zoe Hunting and caters for players of Grade 1-3, and Southampton Young Strings, directed by myself, Christa Porter, catering for Grade 3+ - 5. SYCS and SYO are unchanged at the top of the pyramid with SYCS catering for players from Grade 5+ and the SYO taking pupils by audition as it does at present.

Playing in a symphony orchestra is a very particular type of music making. In a symphony orchestra, wind, brass and percussion have the excitement of playing solo roles and require the type of musician who is prepared to take risks and will enjoy the spotlight. Not all players will want to do that and they are catered for within the wind and brass band pyramids. But for those players who might enjoy the orchestral experience, Southampton Music Services is planning to offer taster days for players of Grades 3-5 from all the orchestral pyramids to get them thinking about the possibility of moving over to, or adding, the orchestral experience to their musical diet once they are ready for SYCS. These taster days start with one on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011, 9.30 am – 4.30 pm. Pupils should receive an invitation from their music teachers but if you haven't, please contact Southampton Music Services to register your interest.

*Christa Porter. String Co-ordinator and teacher for SMS*