

From Tim Edmonds – Chair of FSYO

This year has been even busier than usual, with all the normal concerts, String playing days, SYCS tour and an SYO tour but also the [50th Anniversary Concert!](#)

This will be at the Guildhall on July 4th – there's more information elsewhere in the newsletter and on the fsyo.org.uk web site but do please come and see what has become of previous SYO players who have grown up and moved on. There's two orchestras composed of past players so I hope they are all at least as good as they were when they left!

Pyramid Concert The pyramid concert was a great success, as usual; the Mayor enjoyed it very much and the raffle raised very nearly £1000. But best of all was to see significantly increased numbers in the lower orchestras. Let's hope that this is the beginning of getting back to having 300 or even 400 players in the pyramid. Performing music together is great fun, very satisfying and a wonderful thing to share with others, as the enthusiasm of past members to return and play again at the 50th Anniversary testifies.

The photos from the Pyramid concert are now available on the [Gallery page](#) of the website. I think they are a good lot but please let us know what you think. There's a [Contact Us page](#) on the fsyo website.

Congratulations go to **Kevin Withell** and **Anna Robinson** on the success of their first concert as conductors of SYCS. Also thanks to Sue Edmonds for the excellent December concert and for stepping up when Martin Felton retired. SYCS have had an eventful year but are going well. Long may it continue!

Funding News FSYO continues to fund some work in Primary schools to encourage faster development of String players and it is partly due to this work that numbers are increasing in Acorn and Elgar. It's also due to the hard work of SMS of course! We have extended the work from four to now six schools and we're using the run up to the 50th Anniversary concert to see if past players would be willing to help us support this work, so we hope to extend it further next year.

FSYO Web site The FSYO website continues to improve, through the expertise of Rob Curry. Please use the [Contact Us page](#) if there are any suggestions you have - we'd love to hear ideas for fun things for orchestras to do. A brand-new feature is the [Parent Updates page](#) which can keep you up to date quickly using your mobile. Plus do visit the [50th Anniversary pages](#) to look up old memorabilia. Go to the [Please Donate page](#) and find out about using the Easyfundraising link to visit your on-line shopping sites, such as Amazon and John Lewis plus thousands more and how the retailer then donates to us at no cost to you. Create an account today, then next time you shop online using Easyfundraising you can effortlessly donate to us. Find out more on the fsyo.org.uk web site.

Tim Edmonds, Chair

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SYO is 50! 1965 - 2015



If you haven't already done so, do book your tickets for the 50th Anniversary concert on Saturday 4th July at the 02 Southampton Guildhall. They are on sale at the box office already and we expect to sell out.

Southampton Youth Orchestras are celebrating 50 years since the legendary **Peter Davies** recruited one of the first youth orchestras in the country to be formed after the Second World War.

To help make this a big SYO family party we have invited past members to come back and perform on stage in two Alumni orchestras as well as the current SYO. The first Alumni orchestra features people who were in the orchestra between 1965 and about 2000 and the second, those who were in SYO from 2000 – 2014. I picked these dates fairly randomly hoping that the balance between the two orchestras in terms of player numbers would be about right. It also ties in approximately with when **Keith Smith** retired from conducting the orchestra (from the beginning of 1979 to the end of 2003).

FSYO booked the Guildhall, in an act of faith, over a year ago and we started to publicise the date. Facebook was a big help in getting the word spread and I was astounded and delighted at the quick and very positive response from literally hundreds of people within a very short space of time.

We now have two orchestras with about 86 people in each. **Keith Smith** will conduct one and I will conduct the other, as well as the current SYO. Rehearsals for the Alumni orchestras will be just 'on the day', so we will find out at that point how 'in practice' people are. I know for a fact that we have some very fine and eminent professional musicians coming, including **Graham Sheen**, a founder member of SYO and the principal bassoon of the BBC Symphony Orchestra for most of his professional life. There are other younger musicians too, not long out of the music colleges and establishing themselves as young professionals.

Emails have come in from all over the world. I have discovered we have members who are currently living and working in China, Dubai, New Zealand and Canada, just to mention a few. Many people tell me that they still play in amateur orchestras and chamber groups and how much they value the experiences they had in SYO. Some of these have addresses that tell me they are doctors, academics, vets or working in business somewhere.

Comments on Tours are frequent and these are definitely formative experiences for teenagers. A very eminent local musician told me with a hint of bitterness recently that he resented the fact that his sisters both got to go on Tour to Germany whereas he never got further than Scotland when he was in SYO!

FSYO has sent invitations to the concert to former conductors, to influential tutors, current tutors, to former Chairs of FSYO, the Southampton Schools Music Association and former tour staff as well as MPs, civic dignitaries and Southampton Music Services staff.

The concert will be compered by **Emma Vardy** (now well known as a BBC reporter on South Today) who played percussion in SYO in the late 90s.

In the foyer of the Guildhall there will be an exhibition of artefacts from 50 years of SYO. This is being assembled by **Sarah Ormerod** and **Joy Tricklebank** and I would very much also like to acknowledge the huge contribution made to the Anniversary celebrations by **Rob Curry** who not only designs logos and posters but is also compiling a wondrous archive on the overhauled and remodelled FSYO website. This includes a list (compiled by me from card indexes, hand written, typed and computer lists and old concert programmes) of everyone who has ever been in SYO. If you know someone else who has been omitted then do send a message to info@fsyo.org.uk.

It should be quite a party on 4th July and for me, personally, I will be thrilled to make music again with old friends, some of whom I haven't seen for ages.

Jane Higgins

Strings Playing Day

Saturday 31 January 2015

SYS, Elgar and Acorn strings joined forces on Saturday 31 January for a day's music making at Richard Taunton's Sixth Form College.



Anca Campanie with Christa Porter fire up the SYS, Elgar and Acorn strings players on the day!

The Friends of the Southampton Youth Orchestras very kindly sponsored the day and children (and parents) were able to take advantage of the opportunity completely free of charge. **Zoe Hunting** had put in the hard work of organising the day but was then poorly so I ended up running the day, ably supported by **Anca Campanie** and **Chris Nichols**. Acorn Strings normally rehearse for just 45 minutes a week and Elgar for only an hour – they were in for a long day!

We started with an hour's rehearsal to get to know the music. I was delighted to find that we had made a good selection of pieces that were feasible but challenging. Following our first break, we went to visit the Southampton Youth Orchestra who were busy rehearsing 'Night on a Bare Mountain' to experience a symphony orchestra in action. They made us welcome and invited us right inside the orchestra to see and hear what was going on.

We then went to watch the first part of the DVD of the BBC 10 Pieces project. This gave us another view of 'Night on a Bare Mountain', plus 'Mars', 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' and 'A Short Ride in a Fast Machine', this time introduced and explained by various celebrities and played by the National Orchestra of Wales.

After having a go at our own version of this piece, we broke for lunch which was coupled with music quizzes – for prizes! – with a tie-breaking Haiku challenge, some of which are included here.

After lunch, **Chris Nichols** introduced us to the world of folk fiddling and taught us a Breton Folk Dance. This allowed us to dispense with notation and work aurally for a change. **Anca Campanie** then took off the SYS violins to work over the couple of harder parts that we needed ready for the concert. By the time we came to our final hour of rehearsal, some of us were beginning to wilt and whenever I focused upon the Elgar violins, I would look round to find Acorn violins stretched out on the floor sleeping peacefully! However, they always woke up cheerfully enough when it was their turn to play. By 4 pm we were ready to play to our audience of parents. Owing to lack of space, there were no chairs for our audience but this ensured that we received a well-deserved standing ovation at the end of the afternoon.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this thoroughly positive and enjoyable day.

Christa Porter

Haiku Challenge!

◀ About SYO:

Lots of people playing
Instruments of every shape and size
Who wouldn't want to listen?

(Denise and Samantha)

◀ About 10 Pieces:

We listened to music
In the Hall of the Mountain King
Grunting evil trolls

(Isabelle, Angel, Esme)

◀ About Chris Nichols:

Clever and great
He teaches the violin
He's the best of all

(Harry and Henry)

SYO on Tour in Germany

July 23 – 29 2015

I wasn't planning to go away on tour this year! However the demand from parents and the orchestra was overwhelming and when **Uli Munford** offered to put together an orchestra tour in Germany, it was too good an offer to resist. The Brass Band is also going away this year, but there is not very much overlap in terms of personnel with SYBB. When the Wind Band goes away, it is a bit more difficult as many of the best players play in both SWB and SYO.

Because Uli has done all the work normally undertaken by a tour company, this tour is about £200 cheaper than it would have been. It also helps enormously that, as a registered charity, we can reclaim tax on donations. The money saved means that no member of the orchestra is unable to go on tour because of the cost. Help is available from FSYO. Parents, please note how important it is to support FSYO in any way you can.

We are going to stay first in the modern youth hostel in [Mannheim \(Map\)](#), right on the banks of the Rhine. From here we will travel out to give concerts in [Neustadt an der Weinstrasse \(Map\)](#) (Friday 24), [Landau \(Map\)](#) (Saturday 25) and [Heidelberg \(Map\)](#) (Sunday 26). Landau and Heidelberg are both historic cities and we will get chances for sightseeing as well as making music. In Heidelberg our concert is taking place in the enormous church in the main square and will be part of the annual Bach festival. We are also providing a small group of instrumentalists to accompany a Bach cantata sung by the Church choir.

From Heidelberg we travel south to the Black Forest to the market town of [Freudenstadt \(Map\)](#). Here we plan a musical jam session with the school big band as well as our concert in the town theatre. There is also a [very nice swimming pool](#).

The last day will be spent relaxing at the [Europa Park](#) – one of the biggest theme parks in Europe - before we drag them away in order to drive home overnight.

Hopefully they will all arrive home safely with good memories to last a lifetime.

You can find all you need to know about the visit on the [Parent Updates page on the FSYO web site](#)

Jane Higgins



2009-07-26-01 Germany Heidelberg Heiliggeistkirche by www.Gernot-Keller.com. Our venue in Heidelberg.



Photo courtesy of Europa Park

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