

## SYO Leavers' Concert Saturday 6 September in Romsey Abbey

It is always a pleasure to perform in Romsey Abbey where there is proper staging and a lovely acoustic. 'Music in Romsey' also do a wonderful job of advertising to their regular attendees, so with the added sponsorship of the Rotary Club of Southampton Clausentum and lots of parents, we had a good audience.

When we met in the afternoon it was the first time we were together



since we came home from the Czech Republic and it was a job to get the rehearsal started, because everybody had so much to say to their friends.

This year we said goodbye to 20 members. All are sadly missed, but we wish them well at University, in the GAP years and in their future careers. We hope they continue to enjoy making music for the rest of their lives.



### Southampton Youth Concert Sinfonia

It is with great sadness that SYCS say goodbye to Martin Felton. Martin retired this summer after directing the orchestra for 10 years. He says "it has been wonderful fun all the way through". Highlights include amazing performances of Tchaikovsky's 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony and Stravinsky's Firebird and abseiling off a railway viaduct in the Peak District. Martin took the orchestra on tour every year and conducted concerts in numerous churches, an aircraft hangar, a golf club, and a Mediterranean biome. Many young people have fond memories of their time in 'the party orchestra'. Thank you Martin for all your hard work and enthusiasm.



### What next?

SMS have advertised for a replacement MD but in the meantime Sue Edmonds has taken up the baton.

Plans are also going ahead for next February's annual residential. The orchestra are planning a visit to Derbyshire where they will be staying at Ravenstor Youth Hostel and performing in Ashbourne. If you have not yet signed up please get your deposits in asap.

*Sue Edmonds*



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## The Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

Registered Charity No. 283789

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Autumn 2014

**Letter from the Chair.** What a lot has happened since the last newsletter, when we had just done the Pyramid concert and SYCS were just back from their tour to Shropshire! There has been much music making at all levels and some excellent summer concerts. There was the Summer movie magic day in June at which members of SYO, SYCS and SYS joined together to rehearse and then perform, all in one day, a selection of popular film music; and there was a very successful SYO tour to Prague including four concerts and sightseeing in and around Prague

I also attended a concert at Springhill primary school at which the new ensemble which we are supporting with funding played to great effect. We are funding extra tuition or extra ensemble work in four primary schools with a view to achieving our goal of producing extra string players who reach grade 3 or 4 before leaving primary school. A shortage of such players is a threat to the continuing success of the top orchestras in 3 or 4 years' time.

There has recently been a Welcome to SYO day when the new people who have gone up into it can get to know the players already established there. If anyone has any ideas for more fun things for orchestras to do please let us know.

On a sadder note SYCS have had to leave Regents Park after more than 20 years. We thank them for their hospitality for that long time, and for the convenience of their storage which we have found difficult to match! Also we have had to say farewell to Martin Felton who has conducted SYCS for more than 10 years. He has been an inspiration to many, and many children now grown up have much to thank him for. We wish SYCS well in their new home, at their new time, under their new conductor.

We urgently need volunteers to take on the committee roles of Secretary and Membership Secretary. We could also do with someone to look after publicity, someone to get us noticed in the papers and on the radio in Southampton, and somebody to lead in the liaison with schools work. We are grateful to Rob Curry, who has taken on the FSYO website. Do take a look – Rob has been refreshing it and it is up to date and gets ever more informative. There is also an Easyfundraising link which if you use it to go to your on-line shopping sites, such as Amazon and John Lewis and thousands more, results in us getting a donation from the retailer. You have to create an account, you don't have to have their "remember to donate" toolbar, you do have to log onto them and then click through to the retailer when you shop on-line. There's a button which you click to have all explained.

Welcome to all those joining the orchestral pyramid this autumn and welcome back to everyone else. We wish everyone a happy and successful year making music.

*Tim Edmonds*

**FSYO Annual general Meeting 2014: 10-11.30 am at Richard Taunton Sixth  
Form College, Hill Lane, Southampton. Coffee from 9.30am.**



## SYO Tour to the Czech Republic

This tour was a real success and I don't think I heard a single complaint. No, wrong! – There were some quite strange meatball things floating in the soup one evening which provoked some adverse comment.....That was the limit of the grumbling.

About the most difficult thing we had to manage was getting through the security at a very busy Heathrow. We all made it through the scans and were on board and on our way. Ready to meet us in Prague was our delightful host Marketa. She had spent much time and thought in making this tour run smoothly, and throughout our stay, she was always one step ahead checking that everything was ready for SYO to arrive. The first hotel was in Prague and the second in Plzen (Pilsen to us). Both were really good and many were perfectly happy in Prague, not particularly wanting to move – until they saw the hotel in Plzen which had the wow factor with enormous rooms, terrace and lovely swimming pool.

This was an intense tour with a concert on each of the four full days as well as much sightseeing as we could cram in. There were two half days in Prague covering a walking tour from the castle and Cathedral down to the old town, and then another exploring the old town. On the first of these days we then took a coach up into the mountains to the north of Prague to a town called Jablonec which has a beautiful theatre often used for opera performances. It has been restored to its former Austro-Hungarian glory and was a lovely venue. Here Sikun Chen gave the first of his performances as soloist in the Grieg piano concerto, and we as an orchestra began to notice how much audiences loved it when we played Czech music. Our second concert was in the Czech Museum of Music in the centre of Prague. This is an old, very high building with galleries around an open space. It has served many purposes in its history but today houses a collection of historical orchestral instruments and keyboards. We took time out to visit. Thanks to our concert being part of a concert series, we had a very good audience (including some SYO parents who had come out for a weekend break!). In this concert Mike Huang was the soloist in the Elgar cello concerto, and in that resonant acoustic, his soulful playing was very emotional. Vltava by Smetana, in the second half of the concert, moved an audience member to tears (in a good way). 'Job done' said Barnaby! That day was rounded off with a dinner cruise on the actual Vltava River enjoying good company and the sight of the city all lit up. Beautiful.



The next day we checked out of the hotel in Prague and drove a couple of hours to visit the pretty spa town of Mariánské Lázně. Here, in the hills, there is a central park surrounded by villas, hotels and spas. It was a beautiful day and we enjoyed a picnic and then were enthralled

with the so-called 'singing fountain' which plays music every other hour on the hour. Briefed by Marketa, we were ready to play our concert immediately the fountain had finished in the evening, so the crowd that had gathered there moved along to the 'bandstand' and stayed to listen to us. Over a hundred stood there for about an hour while we regaled them with Slavonic Dances and the inevitable Vltava. By this time the whole orchestra was looking to see if we'd managed to make anyone cry!



Afterwards we drove back about an hour to Plzen and checked into the (posh) hotel. Evidently this is a business hotel for most of the year, but in the summer, with no conferences, the room rates plummet. In the morning we were lucky to enjoy some leisure time in the sunshine by the swimming pool with our lifeguard, Lucy Anderson and other staff firmly in charge. Juri, Iveta, Sue, Peter and I went shopping and were able to serve another picnic lunch by the pool.

Now it was time to go to the Mestanska Beseda concert hall, another beautiful Austro-Hungarian type building which reminded me of the style of the Musikverein in Vienna. In all my years of SYO tours, I have never been anywhere before where staff were provided to unload the van and haul the heavy instruments up the stairs. The weather turned thundery, but that didn't stop us getting a really good audience who loved Sikun's second performance of the Grieg piano concerto, were enthusiastic about our English music and thrilled that we played Czech music to them. It was a fitting last tour performance.

Massive thanks are due to all the tour staff – Sue Edmonds, Paul Swindale, Jon Visanji, Juri Papay, Iveta Papayova, Lucy Anderson and especially to Peter Gosney and Roger Munford who packed and drove the instrument van half way across Europe. Finally - to SYO who really cared about the quality of the music they played, were great ambassadors for Southampton and were also wonderful fun to be with. Thank you very much.

*Jane Higgins*



### Who's Who 2013-14

Chair	Tim Edmonds
Treasurer	Uli Munford
Secretary	Sarah Ormerod
Committee	Anne Downer (SYO) Paula Curry (SYCS) Therasa Livingstone (SYS) Fleurette Waldron (ex SYO) Yoriko Jones (SYCS/Elgar Str)
Music Library	Sue Edmonds
SYO transport	Peter Gosney
Newsletter	Claire Robinson
Membership	Claire Thompson
SYO	Jane Higgins
SYCS	Vacant / Sue Edmonds
SYS	Christa Porter
Elgar	Zoe Hunting
Acorn	Anca Campanie