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**WANTED: your view of
the ACO's first 25 years!**

2016–17 will be our 25th Anniversary season! We would like to celebrate with a selection of articles, photos and reflections on the orchestra's highlights over the past quarter of a century.

Please submit your one-liners, full articles, photos, or anything else to Helen Harvey (cello) at rehearsals or electronically: helenandpeteharvey@btinternet.com



BOOKERS & BOLTON
SOLICITORS

As a result of an initiative by Sophie Barton, our Publicity manager, we have secured £500 annual sponsorship for the orchestra from Bookers & Bolton, Solicitors, in Alton. In return we will offer them publicity on our web and social media sites and in our concert programmes. They are genuinely looking forward to working with us, and we intend to spend the money on purchase and hire of music.

Articles or feedback can be submitted to the Editor by email: helenandpeteharvey@btinternet.com or find me, Helen Harvey, in the cello section at rehearsals.



Conductor's Podium

Since the very first 'Last Night of the Proms' concert back in 2007, the event has always been a great occasion for the orchestra to let its hair down in front of a very appreciative and annually growing audience. Now, for the Latin American themed 10th LNOTP concert, some of us, including me, have a little less hair, but we do have more excuse than ever to enjoy ourselves and get into the party spirit.

I'm grateful to Alton Town Council for proposing this year's upbeat theme. It has given us the opportunity to seek out pieces such as the fiery *Conga del Fuego Nuevo*, the smooth *Jamaican Rumba* and the gymnastic *Danzas Cubanas*. These, together with the very melodic *Spanish Dances* and the frantic Bernstein *Mambo*, are surely bound to keep our audience entertained.

I'm not sure how many of our pieces would be classified as Hispanic, but it's music of this genre that reminds me of my study year in Spain when I joined the local 'Armonía' (always think that sounds better than 'wind band') of Arganda, a town about 20 miles south east of Madrid. I was no stranger to wind bands, but my experience up to that point had been, shall we say, a little more sedate. Each rehearsal with the armonía was a full on sprint, minimal attention to detail, blast until you drop affair. There was no slow stuff. It was all Presto or Prestissimo (even if it was marked Andante) and, so far as I remember, mainly written in semi-quavers. Fortunately we had Pepe (it seemed everybody was called Pepe or Paco regardless of their actual first name) who had clearly practised quite hard and could actually play all or most of the notes. Unfortunately, Pepe didn't always make it to rehearsals.

After a few weeks, I discovered they were limbering up for a TV competition called *Gente Joven* (young people), a sort of low rent talent show that went out on Saturday mornings. Nevertheless, they took it very seriously and I had to be measured up for a uniform to take part. We all turned up suitably attired, hung around for hours, played frenetically for 5 minutes, failed to impress the judges and went home. Great stuff!

The best times by far were Sunday morning bandstand gigs playing fandangos and the like to enthusiastic locals. It never seemed to matter how badly we performed the beginning and middle of the piece; all you needed was a final flourish for the crowd to go mad. That said, Pepe (or was it Paco?) did fire out some brilliant solos and I was highly amused when given lavish praise by a not so discerning member of the audience for one of his more flamboyant performances.

I'll be thinking of my 'Armonía de Arganda' days when I step up to conduct on 9th July. I await a spirited, flamboyant performance from the orchestra and expect the crowd to cheer, but if anyone offers me lavish praise, I'll try to remember it's really for the orchestra.

David Budd



*Our Facebook and
Twitter profile picture*

We need your likes! – creating a social media presence

As you may have noticed the orchestra has been gradually increasing its use of social media. We have an active Facebook account and we're increasing our followers on Twitter! Contact via these networks can help us to publicise events, share interests, community endeavours and ensembles.

Social media allows rapid contact with a large, varied audience and an electronic flyer shared on a social network can reach a far wider public than a poster on a noticeboard. We can use Twitter to make contact with potential sponsors, source charity and fundraising opportunities or just tweet about things that matter.

If you are not a member of Facebook or Twitter but would like to follow the 'feed' now and then, both are visible on the welcome page of the website:

www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

How you can help the orchestra...

We welcome interactions with other local groups and opportunities to share news. Next year will be our 25th Anniversary and we hope to celebrate this event by engaging with the local community.

The website is updated on a regular basis and this year we hope to upload past images of concerts and workshops into the Gallery section. Please send in any clips or pictures that you may wish to share!

Feel free to post your comments and messages to the Facebook page '@AltonConcertOrchestra', there is always someone available to reply. Equally if you would like to share any news, events or community projects please use our page!

If you use Twitter, please retweet to share news and add 'handles' to express thanks to a particular person. Our Twitter handle is @AltonOrchestra which can be quoted in tweets. You can use # to make keywords searchable.

Sophie Barton

Alton Music Matters – the Eggar’s perspective

As many of you may be aware I am Head of Music at Eggar’s School and have been in position for the past 15 years! I think my connection with the Alton Concert Orchestra goes back as far as this as well, to the days that Graham Cross was conductor and his wife, Mair, was my colleague at school. How time flies! Nowadays I enjoy helping out with the orchestra whenever I can and regularly see David Budd in the brass quintet we both play in, so there is no escaping the regular invites to help out with ACO.

Recently of course, the links between Eggar’s and the orchestra got closer when, as a school, I was given the exciting opportunity to offer pupils the experience of a workshop playing a selection of works from the BBC 10 Pieces. I remember the original idea coming from David many months before the event and received an email in the Autumn Term confirming the pieces. When I next saw him at a quintet rehearsal he felt the need to warn me about the Shostakovich, saying that “it really is a great piece but I think the pupils mind find it a bit strange!”

Preparations for the workshop then began and I recall spending what felt like an eternity at the school photocopier getting together the pieces for the pupils who had signed up to take part. When handed to the players it came with 4 simple instructions: 1) listen to a professional recording of the piece, 2) please look at the music before the first rehearsal, 3) please make sure you are at both rehearsals, & 4) make sure you are at the workshop day.

The first rehearsal arrived and we gathered at Amery Hill to see what we had all let ourselves in for. David reassured the pupils that he was not expecting to get through everything and that he was not expecting perfection (not yet anyway!). This helped



to settle nerves and we successfully played through most of the pieces and it gave the pupils a really good idea of how the pieces should sound. This was followed by a second rehearsal with the ACO orchestra joining us in what soon became a very cramped school hall, as it dawned quite how many people would be in the final orchestra for the workshop day.

So arrived the Saturday workshop and instantly the guest conductor, Graham Wili, made us all feel at ease and from the word go seemed to get the best from the pupils in the orchestra. He certainly worked us all very hard and used praise brilliantly to reward the hard work of all the pupils and players alike. When lunch arrived, it was certainly well earned! Several hours later the pieces were up to scratch and at this point I would like to apologise for the poor players sat in front of the trombones (for which I take partial responsibility) as we got rather carried away by the 'fff' dynamic in the Shostakovich!

The whole day, including the performance to a very impressed audience, was well planned and superbly executed and I know provided young players with an excellent experience they will remember for a very long time. I would like to thank all members of the orchestra and of course David for his efforts in making this happen, and I look forward to the next opportunity when young players from our school can once again collaborate with such a worthwhile project.

Final thanks go to Graham Wili who very kindly put me onto some free tickets to see the English Philharmonia play Verdi's Requiem at the Royal Festival Hall, to which I took a group of school pupils. What a concert it was!

Matt Farris



Proms



Alison Lewis

Alison began her musical studies at the age of six and started singing lessons at the age of nine with Michelle Roszak. Alison competed regularly in both the Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks Performing Arts Festivals and by the age of 17 had achieved ABRSM grade 8 in both singing and piano, with Distinction.

Alison read music at Southampton University, with voice as her principal study under the tuition of Keith Davis and Christine Page and graduated with First Class Honours in 2012. Performances include;

Handel: Messiah, Dixit Dominus, Vivaldi: Gloria, Purcell: Dido and Aeneas and Finnissy's completion of Mozart's Requiem. Alison is continuing her vocal studies under the tuition of Rebekah Abbott and currently is Choral Director of the Welsh Guards Military Choir.

Soloists



Daryl Kellie

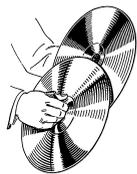
Daryl Kellie is one of today's finest acoustic guitarists, citing influences from Metallica to John Coltrane. He has a unique style, rich in unusual techniques rarely seen on the guitar.

Eager to learn guitar from the age of 8, Daryl finally got his chance 4 years later when the Kellie family moved house and he found an old acoustic guitar in the attic. Enthused by the prospect of emulating his heroes, he would spend hours working out how to play Nirvana and Hendrix riffs. A year later, his parents bought him his first electric guitar, an inexpensive Squier Stratocaster.

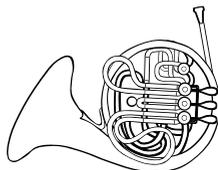
Jamming blues, rock and modal jazz with friends proved to be a valuable training ground for Daryl. He was completely self-taught until the age of 15, when his music teacher at school arranged free guitar lessons. Formal musical education brought with it the opportunity to learn proper technique and the various rudiments of music theory.

Since then, Daryl has seized every opportunity to jam or have mentoring sessions with many amazing guitarists, including jazz legend Martin Taylor and guitar genius and author Richard Chapman. By 2006, he was working as a session guitarist and bassist with a few different acts and working behind the scenes for legendary producer Andy Gill and his band Gang of Four.

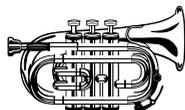
In 2008 Daryl began to experiment using the guitar as a percussive instrument, achieving 'drum-like' sounds to accompany the more conventional pitched notes. This technique has since become one of the central elements of his playing style.



Alton Concert Orchestra

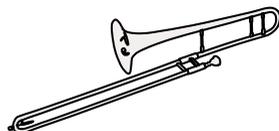


Concert Season 2015–16



Concert at Wootey Juniors

Wednesday 14 October
Wootey Junior School, 7:30pm



Wonder of Christmas

Saturday 19 December
Alton Maltings Centre, 7:30pm



Alton Music Matters: Young Musicians Perform a Selection from BBC 'Ten Pieces'

*In collaboration with Eggars
and Amery Hill Schools
Conductor: Graham Wili*

Saturday 23 April
Eggar's School, 5:00pm



Last Night of the Proms

Saturday 9 July
Alton Public Gardens, 7:30pm
*Rehearsal Sunday 26 June, Alton Maltings, 2pm
and afternoon rehearsal on Saturday 9 July*



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