

Music making in Alton



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Chairman's Report

I am delighted that the orchestra continues to grow in size and to provide an outlet for the energy and ambitions of musicians in the Alton catchment area. Another ten players have joined us since the start of the Autumn term and are contributing enthusiastically. The violin section has been strengthened and the cellos are back to full strength. Our joy would be complete with the addition of a first bassoonist, a few more brass players (especially French Horns), and rare viola and double bass players. Anyone out there who can offer help, or knows anyone who can, please get in touch. We need you!

Our stature in the community has been greatly enhanced by the three concerts we have put on since September last year. All are reported in this edition of CODA, and the one in St. Lawrence Church, Alton was particularly memorable for being featured in the Listen Up! Festival of Orchestras, complete with picture in a national music magazine.

We have tackled and successfully performed what is for us quite challenging music and we are managing to pack more pieces into each rehearsal as our standard improves and numbers increase.

We have welcomed Barbara Dawkins as our new orchestra Secretary, taking over from Isabel Tucker who is taking a break from playing. We shall miss Isabel, especially down at the "Eight Bells" after rehearsal. Jean Piper has kindly offered to take on the responsibility of Librarian and is gradually getting our repertoire organised.

Significantly, the Committee and members backed a proposal to apply for charitable status, which was granted by the Charity Commission on 18th January. We will also be affiliating to 'Making Music', the umbrella organisation for amateur music societies.

Chris Leggett



St Lawrence's Church Concert

October 2004

The orchestra was delighted to be asked to perform in St Lawrence church, a venue well known for its musical connections in the town, to help raise funds for the refurbishment of their Parish Centre. The date of the concert in October qualified us for inclusion as one of the many events in the 'Listen Up! Festival of Orchestras, which promoted music making nationally, and was sponsored jointly by Radio 3, the Association of British Orchestras (the professional wing) and Making Music, which is the umbrella organisation for us amateur music societies. We persuaded the organisers to dispatch us one of their only two Listen Up! advertising banners in the country for our use, and the picture on the front of this magazine, taken by your CODA editor Sarah Main, of Chairman Chris Leggett, Conductor Graham Cross and Assistant Conductor David Budd posing hard in front of it. It must have struck a chord with Making Music because they published it in their magazine, alongside some other rather less well-dressed orchestras – so ACO is now nationally recognised.

The music was a successful blend of English and American composers, with a bit of Haydn and Mozart thrown in for good measure. We began with a crisp rendering of Sullivan's overture "The Yeomen of the Guard", followed by three trumpeting stars on parade in Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday" (see picture.)

Gershwin featured in three pieces – selections from "Porgy and Bess", "Crazy for You", which is this year's AODS production, and "An American in Paris". Our cello trio played a Haydn Divertimento.

The second half opened with tidy ensemble playing in Mozart's "Magic Flute" overture followed by Vaughan Williams' "Folk Song Suite" with a haunting oboe solo in the second movement flanked by brisk outer movements. The highlight of the evening was a performance of "Party Piece" by Richard Rodney Bennett, which was a showcase for the superb piano playing of Tanya Holmes-Jefferd. Not only was this a tour-de-force for the soloist, but also for conductor Graham Cross who had to maintain eye contact with Tanya in spite of the large pillars in the nave of the church and for the orchestra in keeping up with her cracking pace.

Chris Leggett



Christmas Concert

December 2004

The orchestra joined forces with Alton Choral Society under their conductor, Richard Toll, in what is now a regular event – their annual Christmas Concert in The Church of the Good Shepherd, Four Marks. A capacity audience participated in well-known carols, and also enjoyed contributions from the choir. Controlled singing and balance marked a moving performance of “Bethlehem Down”, a carol composed by Peter Warlock while walking near Ropley, and two Rutter numbers – “Candlelight Carol” and “Shepherd’s Pipe Carol”. The orchestra joined them in Richard Toll’s own arrangement of “White Christmas” and in two lustily-sung West Gallery carols.

As well as serving up interesting arrangements of transatlantic Christmas standards, the orchestra performed the less well-known “Holy Night” canticle by Adolph Adam,

and departed from the seasonal theme with outstanding performances of Grieg’s “Peer Gynt” Suite and Liszt’s symphonic poem “Les Preludes”. The former was sympathetically conducted by David Budd who coaxed the best from his players, and the latter was a personal triumph for Graham Cross in producing a fine performance of a challenging work from the Romantic repertoire.

A quartet of flutes had organised some further entertainment for the evening and to great acclaim played two contrasting pieces – a Telemann concerto and for the ‘oldies’ in the audience an arrangement of “Nola”. A moving appeal by the vicar and a volunteer working at their twin church in Karamoja raised £800 for the children in that African village.

Chris Leggett



Andover Concert

January 2005

Two ex-Cricklade College students, Mary-Anne (Mae) Karthausser and Nia Clark were preparing to leave for India to take part in a Community project working with homeless and orphaned children. Through the I-to-I organisation they will teach English, sport, drama and music. They have funded themselves and feel this will be both developmental and character building in their gap year before university.

The Orchestra was very pleased to make the effort to help them and played the overtures to Yeoman of the Guard and the Magic Flute with a selection from Porgy and Bess and the Vaughan Williams English Folk Song Suite. We concluded the programme with the music from Phantom of the Opera.

The two girls demonstrated their considerable musical talents with beautiful singing from Mae, in solos, duets with Nia and a trio with another ex student. Nia also contributed piano and tenor saxophone solos. The music making was of a very high standard and the concert raised some £250. As a Registered Charity the Orchestra considers this kind of venture to be very much part of its annual community involvement.

In March, we received further information from Mary-Anne and Nia about how the money raised had been spent. The following comes directly from their email:

"As we are now approaching the end of our placement we thought we'd let you know how things have been going. Both Mary-Anne and I are working for the Yuvolok Foundation, a Christian based organisation, North of Bangalore.

Mary-Anne is based at the National Child Labour Project and is teaching small groups, helping children learn English and Maths. I am teaching English and Maths to a group of 8 to 12 year olds in a school and they are currently undertaking their annual exams. I also have a class for Drama once a week.

The money you helped us raise at the concert has been invaluable. It is incredible how such a relatively small amount of money to us can make such a big difference in this country. Profits from the concert have been used towards photocopying worksheets, providing basic materials like pens, pencils etc. and reading resources.

The schools are organising a summer camp. Without exception this is the first time these children will have been on 'holiday' or left the slums. They have a highly decorated collection box in which they are trying to raise the funds and it is endearing to see the children contributing the few coins that they can find. We have given the majority of our money to this cause, enabling over 20 children to experience an opportunity to escape their day-to-day situation. The camp itself is 3 hours away, where the children principally have fun. They have short 'talking' sessions with teachers if they need a form of counselling and many games and group activities.

We are both having an incredible time combining the experience of travel with the satisfaction of helping those in need. We would just like to say a sincere thank you for your support and generosity back in January."

Graham Cross, Sarah Main and Nia Clark



From the Conductor's Stand

2004 was a good year for the Orchestra with many new players joining our ranks so that, for example, we now boast four cellos. The standard of music has also improved and some difficult orchestral works are now being tackled along with our usual fare of lighter music. The Peer Gynt Suite and Listz's Les Preludes rounded the year off at our Christmas Concert. We have featured a clarinet quartet, a piano soloist and the cello quartet in our programmes to very good effect.

I have been particularly pleased with the continued development of David Budd as assistant conductor and he continues to tackle ever more demanding music. We continue to be grateful to Amery Hill School for rehearsal facilities and, now that they have obtained Music College status look forward to further developments with them.

Starting 2005 with a concert in the first week of January has maintained the impetus of the Orchestra and I would like to hear from other players who are not yet regularly taking part in music making. Music at present being rehearsed includes 'The Force of Destiny', the overture 'William Tell' (just one more cello needed), Beethoven's 1st Symphony as well as selections from 'Chicago', Duke Ellington and Dixieland. You can be assured of a warm, friendly and enthusiastic welcome on a Wednesday evening.

Graham Cross



Diary

First Rehearsal after Easter Break	7:30 pm	13 th April
Rehearsal in Main Hall	7:30 pm	27 th April
No Rehearsal, Half Term	-	1 st June
Concert at Amery Hill	TBA	TBA
Quiz Evening	7:30 pm	TBA
Summer Concert	7:30 pm	TBA
Last Rehearsal before Summer Break	7:30 pm	13 th /20 th July TBC
First Rehearsal after summer break	7:30 pm	8 th September
Christmas Concert	7:30 pm	3 rd December



Thinking of Joining Us?

**We meet in the Drama Studio at Amery Hill School every Wednesday
(except in school holidays)
from 7.30 to 9.30 pm**

The cost of joining is, £5 for students and £10 for adults, per term. We always welcome new players to the orchestra – there is no audition required to join and we do not insist on you attending every rehearsal. If you are thinking of joining then please contact one of the following:

Name	Telephone Number	Position
Graham Cross	(01420) 562234	Conductor
Chris Leggett	(01730) 893032	Chairman
Mac Newton	(01962) 773130	Secretary

Or visit our website: www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

Mission Statement

The Orchestra exists to serve the local community and to provide a forum for all musicians who enjoy playing in an ensemble. We have a policy of welcoming anyone without the requirement of an audition and we maintain no restrictions on section size within the orchestra. The music we typically play will require someone of at least Grade 3 standard but exams are not expected. The age range of players encompasses year 9 school musicians to retired members. We offer the opportunity for school players to stretch their playing ability.

Our music repertoire is wide and varied to suit all tastes and ranges from classical symphonies to show music incorporating big band and swing. The string section plays together and we are developing the wind section into a separate ensemble. Whatever your musical taste it should be well provided for.

The Orchestra is run by a chairman and committee and the involvement of members in organisation is encouraged and welcomed. We have social evenings from time to time and produce concerts 3 to 4 times a year. Members pay a termly fee to cover music cost etc. We pride ourselves on our friendly, hardworking approach to our music making.

We are fortunate in enjoying a close community relationship with Amery Hill School and are very appreciative of their support with rehearsal accommodation.

Come and see for yourself.

We welcome opportunities to perform locally in aid of community causes.

Alton Concert Orchestra: Registered Charity No: 1107683





Alton Concert Orchestra



Spring Concert

Main Hall
Amery Hill School

Date To Be Announced

For the announcement of the date visit our website:

www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

or contact the conductor

Graham Cross on 01420 562234

Concert starts at 7.30pm

Free Admission
Retiring Collection