

Friends of the Philharmonic

June 2015 | www.brightonphil.org.uk

DEAR FRIENDS,



“ Following a hugely successful 90th season, during which we saw a growth of 6% in audience numbers, we are looking forward to an exciting 91st season which I am delighted to introduce to you in the enclosed season brochure. We are joined by an array of talented soloists and, as he confirmed at the

Friends' reception in March, we are fortunate that Barry Wordsworth, our Conductor Laureate, is conducting six of the eight concerts, including the ever-popular New Year's Eve Gala. The season features old favourites by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Schubert as well as lesser-known works by Kalinnikov, Bruckner, Bernstein and William Alwyn. Please review the enclosed season brochure for full details.

We are most grateful for your continued support, as a result of which the orchestra is thriving. As you know we depend on individual donations for our programming. Opportunities still exist to sponsor individual musicians or whole concerts which help to ensure that we can continue to present interesting and attractive programmes to our expanding audience. For information on how to make a donation or support us in other ways, please see the "Support Us" page on our newly re-designed website: www.brightonphil.org.uk

We are once again producing two part-season programmes which cover several concerts each, at a cost of £3.50. You can order these in advance on your Early Bird booking form, and we will post Programme 1 out to you before the start of the season and Programme 2 before the New Year's Eve concert.

As a Friend of the Philharmonic you can once again take advantage of our priority season ticket booking period using the enclosed Early Bird booking forms. Please note that the deadline for all ticket applications is **Friday 3 July**. Public booking via Brighton Dome opens on **Tuesday 1 September 2015** so you can secure your seat two months before the general public. Season tickets will be posted out by the Dome at the end of August. For confirmation that your form has been received at the BPO office please enclose a SAE.

Ticket prices have risen slightly, but we have tried to keep the increases commensurate with the price bands to which they apply, thus tickets in the Premium

and A bands have seen a greater increase, whilst those in bands D & E have increased by much less. You will note that Brighton Dome's charge for printing and posting tickets has increased (from £2.75 to £3.30) – their actual fee has stayed the same but the increase covers the VAT charged on top.

If you are already a season ticket holder, we have pre-populated your application form with your details and season ticket seat numbers. If you wish to retain the same seats, you only have to return your form with the appropriate boxes completed and enclose a cheque, adding a donation if you wish. If you wish to move seats, it is important that you provide a telephone number so we can contact you to discuss available options.

If you have any questions about the booking procedure please phone Catherine Stead, General Administrator, at the BPO office on **(01273) 622900** or email: catherinestead@brightonphil.org.uk.

Having read the fascinating article by Peter Back later in this newsletter, I hope you will be inspired to come along to the Pre-Concert Interviews at the Dome where Peter talks with the soloist and/or guest conductor before the concerts. The talks really do provide a relaxed and informative insight into their musical world.

Once again we are running the popular "Friend of a Friend" scheme and we have identified the four concerts for you to select from on the Early Bird form. If you already know at which concert you would like to use your "Friend of a Friend" ticket(s), please indicate your choice on the form and the tickets will be posted to you with your season tickets. If you have not decided by the time you send in your application, we will include a form in the September newsletter for you to complete and return with your choice. "Friend of a Friend" tickets booked in this way will be available for collection from Brighton Dome Ticket Office on the day of the concert for which they have been requested.

If you cannot wait until October to hear our musicians perform, we are again presenting "Brighton Connections", our Summer Season, in Brighton Unitarian Church between June and August, featuring works by local composers, as well as chamber music by Haydn, Schubert and Frank Bridge.

With best wishes and many thanks for your continued support. ”

Nicolas Chisholm

Nicolas Chisholm, MBE
CHAIRMAN OF BHPS

PETER BACK, BPO'S PROGRAMME NOTE WRITER & PRE-CONCERT INTERVIEWER



“ The highly colourful and lavishly illustrated programme booklets that were introduced last season have, I hope, enhanced your Sunday afternoon concert experience. A young nephew of mine once cruelly remarked that programme notes are “the bits no one bothers to read”! Certainly we all go to concerts to *hear* the music, not to *read* about it. But surely all of us who enjoy listening to music are intrigued by the personalities of those who created it and the reasons why and how a particular piece came into being. Of course no one can tell someone else how to listen to music, but even a brief mention in the notes of a work’s interesting or unusual features can in some small way attune our ears to what lies ahead. Some of you have told me that you prefer to read the notes after the concert, at home. Whatever your approach, and however well you may know the music, my advice is to treat each performance as a voyage of discovery. The joy of live music is that for musicians and audiences alike every performance is unique, with the possibility of revealing fresh, new perspectives on what may be a much-loved favourite.

My own musical awakening as such came from singing in my local church choir in King’s Lynn. The town’s summer Festival of Music and the Arts enabled me to hear live music performed by great musicians for the first time. At the festival in July 1970, Sir John Barbirolli conducted the Hallé Orchestra in a revelatory performance of Beethoven’s *Symphony No.7* – it was to be the last work he conducted in public. He died a few days later. The previous

evening he had conducted an all-Elgar programme, including the *Symphony No.1*, a performance that led to my life-long love of the composer’s music, and of English music in general. Barbirolli was also a fine interpreter of Vaughan Williams’ music, which often featured in festival programmes. Strange to think that just behind the glorious medieval chapel where the Hallé’s performances took place stands the pub where VW listened to, and transcribed, the sea songs of the local fisherman, which had such a profound influence on his musical language. I like to think that my home town has played a not insignificant part in the development of what is recognisably an English sound in music.

An inspirational music teacher of mine sparked an interest in early music, which was further encouraged when I had piano lessons with Christopher Hogwood, a noted harpsichord player and founder of the Academy of Ancient Music. At the University of East Anglia I played harpsichord in performances of early music while concentrating largely on music from the Baroque era. The University had a close association with the Aldeburgh Festival through Philip Ledger, later Director of Music at King’s College Cambridge, one of the most brilliant all-round musicians I have ever encountered. I assisted Imogen Holst, daughter of Gustav, at the Festival and experienced some wonderful first performances of music by Benjamin Britten, even getting to meet the great man himself.

Teaching training followed and then many years of enjoyable music-making with children and young people for whom I wrote quite a considerable amount of music. When I was asked to write programme notes for the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra’s concerts I readily agreed. Immersing myself in the scores and delving into the background of each piece has increased my own enjoyment of the music enormously. I hope that some of this conveys itself to you through the notes.

Getting to meet and greet the guest soloists at the Pre-Concert Interviews has been a most enjoyable part of what I do. Being able to ask questions that help reveal something of the person behind the instrument is a great privilege. And with the prospect of glorious music to follow, I can think of no better way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Peter Back

In 1997 Peter began writing programme notes for the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra’s concerts. He combined this with a series of illustrated talks called *Behind the Notes*, firstly at the Connaught Education Centre, Hove and later at the Parish Room, All Saints Church, Hove. In 1999 *Behind the Notes* also became a series of shorter pre-concert talks, initially at the Brighton Unitarian Church in New Road, and, from 2003, at the Dome itself. From 2007 onwards *Behind the Notes* was replaced by the present thirty-minute *Pre-Concert Interview*.

GREGG ISAACSON, MSTAT MMUS BPO'S ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE TEACHER



"Gregg's keen interest in and detailed knowledge of human anatomy and musculature aids and clarifies his explanations, unfolding the complexities of the

body. He has a quasi-instinctive recognition of the cause of one's problems. One leaves with a better sense of well-being with much to think about and put into practice. He is quietly inspirational."

Christine Messiter, Principal Flautist,
Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra

“ Just over three years ago a member of the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra suggested I come along to the morning rehearsal before one of the concerts and offer some Alexander Technique sessions to the orchestra during the break. The musicians who came for a session with me said that it was a welcome relief to have some hands-on help, easing away built-up stress and tension from their bodies and minds. I came back for the next rehearsal and by the following season I was the resident Alexander Technique teacher for the orchestra!

What is Alexander Technique?

Alexander Technique is a practical tool that can help release pain, stress and excess tension from the body while learning how to prevent it from occurring in the future. Simple movements such as walking, bending or sitting tend to be done habitually - we don't usually think how, we just do them. Often our

habitual ways of moving cause us to make more effort than we need, gradually leading us to suffer unnecessary wear and tear on our muscles and joints. By gently guiding us through subtle movements, an Alexander Technique teacher can give an experience of moving with greater freedom; helping us become more aware of excess tension we are carrying, and simply to let it go.

How Alexander Technique helps musicians

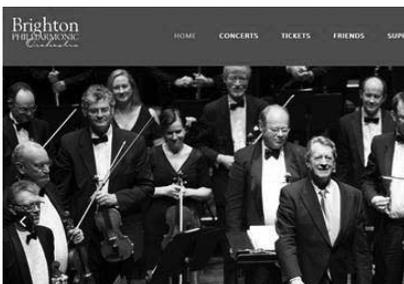
Watching a distinguished orchestra such as the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra perform, people may wonder how the musicians have achieved such talent; words such as patience, skill and sensitivity may come to mind. In general, people tend not to immediately think of the job of a musician as one that is physically demanding.

Playing a musical instrument requires hours of practice; often in twisted or asymmetrical positions that put the body under a significant amount of strain - and that's before you take into consideration the weight of the instrument often being supported. Add this to the high levels of coordination, dexterity and control required in these positions, while holding their instruments, and it may become apparent why a significant proportion of professional musicians suffer from debilitating pain at some point in their careers. The Alexander Technique can help musicians sustain a lifelong career and a lifetime of enjoyment playing music by helping them learn to recognise, and thereby minimise, the effort they are making and to maintain balance, poise and composure while playing their instrument.

Gregg is pleased to offer a 10% discount on Alexander Technique lessons to Friends of Brighton Philharmonic

For more information on Alexander Technique please visit www.thinkinginmotion.co.uk or get in touch at gregg@thinkinginmotion.co.uk or 08754 917 202

NEW WEBSITE UPDATE



www.brightonphil.org.uk and we welcome Friends' feedback on the new look and feel of the site.

Particular thanks go to our designer Mark Attwell and Dorothy Sulzmann of D-Zine Lounge for the work they have undertaken over the past six months, and to the BPO's photographer David Gerrard (and his wife Jean) who have contributed many new images for use online.

Work has been continuing on the new BPO website and we are delighted to report that it is due to go live on **Monday 1 June 2015**. The address is the same as before:

AUDIENCE NUMBERS 2014/15 SEASON

We are delighted to be able to report that there has been a 6.6% increase in audience attendances this past season (2014/15) compared to the previous season (2013/14). Average attendances have returned to 2010 levels and almost 9,000 people attended the BPO concerts at Brighton Dome, with every concert attracting over 1,000 people. It is also very encouraging to note the number of younger audience members, which we are now able to track for the first time. The final concert of the 2014/15 season attracted 84 young people (children, under-18s & students), accounting for 7.26% of the audience, including four families who had attended the open rehearsal that morning. On average 4.6% of our audiences last season were made up of young people.



SUMMER SEASON

Brighton Connections, our summer series of early evening chamber music concerts, takes place on four Sundays over the summer in the Brighton Unitarian Church. The programmes feature music by well-known Brighton composers - both living and dead - alongside some wonderful pieces by Haydn and Schubert.

Howard Blake is not only the featured composer for our first concert on 21 June but he is also our pianist, joining members of the BPO and Peter Adams (cello) with whom he will perform *Pennillion for Cello & Piano*. Howard's *Early Piano Trio* is a re-working of an as-yet-unpublished piece that he wrote as a schoolboy (whilst attending Brighton Hove & Sussex Grammar School, now BHASVIC) and this will be its first performance since its re-working.

Pianist Jeremy Young (who played Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 12* so beautifully last summer) returns on 5 July to join the quartet in local composer Frank Bridge's *Miniatures for Piano Trio*. This programme also features Haydn's "*Emperor*" *String Quartet*.

On 19 July we welcome back Peter Copley, whose *String Quartet No. 2* was performed last summer, with his *Partita for Piano Quartet*, for

which Rachel Fryer is the pianist. The piece started life as a commission by the Schubert Ensemble which Peter later developed, encouraged by his friend and fellow composer Paul Carr. This programme also includes Haydn's "*The Lark*" *String Quartet* & Schubert's *Quartettsatz in C Minor*.

In our final concert on 9 August we focus on local composer Barry Mills with a performance of his *String Quartet (2007)* in a programme that also includes Jonathan Price playing Gordon Jacobs' *Suite for Bassoon and String Quartet*. Haydn's "*The Rider*" *String Quartet* completes the programme.

Concerts start at 5pm with doors opening at 4.30pm. Tickets are £12 for Friends of the Phil – either show your membership card or quote promotional code: **FBPSS15** to receive the discounted rate.

Tickets are available via Brighton Dome Ticket Office in person, by telephone (01273) 709709 or online at: www.brightonticketshop.com. Subject to availability tickets will be available on the door from 4.30pm.

EDUCATION WORKSHOPS UPDATE



BPO cellist Matthew Forbes writes about his recent visits to local primary schools:



As part of the orchestra's revitalised initiative to take our music into the city, I have been leading music presentation workshops in three primary schools around Brighton in the last two weeks: Carden School, the City Academy at Whitehawk and

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School. These sessions were kindly supported by the Fonthill Foundation, and were organised to encourage schoolchildren to come to our rehearsal of Holst's *The Planets* on 22nd March, and to hear the strength of a full orchestra in its "Sunday Best" for the first time.

I showed the children many aspects of music-making, both with my cello and through rhythm games which they all participated in with enthusiasm. We explored the idea of learning music corporately, of sharing a pulse but playing different rhythms simultaneously, and also the idea of metre. Tying in with the bass line of "Mars", from *The Planets* (which is one of the BBC's *Ten Pieces*), we set up a 5-beat rhythm along with a more familiar 4, and saw what happened when they combined!

In addition, I spent as much time as I could playing solo cello music to them; both classical and non-classical (using Middle Eastern, traditional Irish and Texan Bluegrass pieces as well as standard repertoire) to demonstrate the colour palette of the instrument. There was always time left for questions, which ranged from "How difficult is it?" (itself a difficult question to answer) to "Can you play the bit from *Lord of the Rings* which goes...?"

I wanted to engage and enthuse. Music belongs to everyone. I think it was "Mission Accomplished", and I hope there will be many more opportunities to make further visits like this.



Feedback from the children and their teachers on all six workshops was universally positive and can be summed up by a St John the Baptist Primary School teacher, who said of their workshop (presented by percussionist Donna Maria Landowski):

"A fantastic experience and opportunity for our pupils to learn more about different instruments and take part actively in a very well delivered workshop. Thank you"

STOP PRESS:



We are delighted to report that following another successful funding application, the Fonthill Foundation has granted us a further £900 to run music workshops in local schools. Combined with recent generous donations from Friends and retired educators toward the same purpose, this means we will now be able to hold workshops at the remaining 12 primary schools who were on our waiting list during the Autumn term.



FRIENDS' POST-CONCERT RECEPTION: SUNDAY 22 MARCH

Friends and players mingled in the Dome's Mezzanine Bar after the final concert of the season to hear the Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Brian Fitch, and our Chairman Nicolas Chisholm, MBE, pay tribute to Barry Wordsworth for his 26 years' service to the BPO as Music Director and Principal Conductor. By happy coincidence the Mayor was elected to his first term of office in 1989, in the same year as Barry joined the BPO. Generous donations from Friends and players resulted in Barry being presented with his very own framed blue plaque commemorating his MD/PC role with the Brighton Phil, a bottle of champagne and a cheque for over £1,000.

Barry has now become the BPO's first Conductor Laureate and in a short speech of thanks he stressed that recent reports in the local press suggesting he was retiring had been grossly exaggerated – he is in fact conducting six of the eight BPO concerts next season, and fully intends to continue to conduct two or three concerts each season after that.

The BPO are most grateful to Mr & Mrs Pelling for kindly sponsoring the reception. A number of photos were taken at the event and can be viewed on the BPO's website:

www.brightonphil.org.uk

Earlier in the day there had been a presentation on stage at the end of the rehearsal by Trevor & Ruby Bolton, where Barry received a copy of his own 'Book', recording his career with the BPO, followed by a speech by Ronald Power, MBE, Chairman of the Board in 1989 and champion of Barry Wordsworth's appointment at the time.

OPEN REHEARSAL FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN



Following the six workshops undertaken in local primary schools by BPO musicians in conjunction with the BBC's *Ten Pieces* project, nearly 80 children and their parents attended the open rehearsal on the morning of Sunday 22 March. A number of Friends of the Philharmonic kindly gave up their Sunday morning to act as stewards/ushers for this event for which we are most grateful. The choir stalls were soon packed, and latecomers spilled over into the main stalls. Barry Wordsworth made a point of including the children in the rehearsal, with a few lucky individuals being invited to join the percussionists on stage. You could see from their faces how much the children were enjoying their experience of live classical music, particularly during the loud brass and percussion sections in "Mars" from Holst's *The Planets* suite. A number of parents signed up to be kept informed about future events by email, and several came up to the *Friends of the Philharmonic* stand in the Dome foyer afterwards to say how much they and their children appreciated the opportunity. It was anticipated that most children would only stay for the first half of the morning, when the Lord Berners and Holst were being rehearsed, however a surprising number remained in place until the end of the rehearsal some three hours later. Four families even returned for the concert in the afternoon, taking advantage of the offer of free child places and discounted rates for accompanying adults. A number of photos were taken at the event and can be viewed on the BPO's website: www.brightonphil.org.uk



SPONSORS' RECEPTION AT THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR



We were delighted that Nicholas Menges, son of Herbert, & local composer Howard Blake were able to join Sponsors, Personal Donors and Patrons of the BPO at an early evening reception in the Mayor's Parlour on Tuesday 14 April.

Our hosts, the Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Brian Fitch, and his wife Norma, thanked them for their support of the orchestra and spoke about the important place it holds in the cultural life of the city.

A tour of the Council Chambers followed, with the Mayoress proving to be a most entertaining, knowledgeable and informative tour guide.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TRUSTEE OF THE BHPS?

The Trustees oversee the work of the Brighton & Hove Philharmonic Society, meeting every two months at the BPO office in George Street, Brighton. Our constitution allows for nine Trustees at any one time and each member is elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Society. Trustees have a range of skills to ensure that all aspects of the running of the Society are scrutinized.

One of the Trustees will be retiring at the end of this year and we are looking for a volunteer who wishes to help the Society with business skills and connections, or marketing and fundraising experience.

If you would like to be considered, please contact the Chairman, Nicolas Chisholm, at the BPO office.

RECENT LEGACIES

It is with sadness that we report the deaths of several Friends of the Philharmonic over the last 14 months. We are very grateful to them for the legacies they have left to the BPO in their wills: **Robert (Bob) Gunnell**, a long-standing member who was Chairman of the BHPS from 1973-79, founder manager of BBC Radio Brighton and the founding Chairman of B&H Arts Council, **Roland Hunt**, a Friend of the Phil since 1974, and **Margaret Sharman** (perhaps better known as the actress Perlita Neilsen), who had been a member since 1981, all passed away in April 2014. More recently **John Maxwell Stuart**, a Friend of the Philharmonic since 1974, died in February 2015.

OBITUARY: PROFESSOR SIR DAVID WATSON



It is with great sadness that we report the death of a former long-serving Board member of the Brighton & Hove Philharmonic Society, Professor Sir David Watson (1949-2015) who passed away in February after a short illness.

Sir David read History at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was a Choral Exhibitioner and Open Scholar, graduating with first class honours. His academic interests were in the history of ideas and in higher education policy and he became one of the UK's leading higher education academics.

Sir David was a member of the Dearing review of higher education in the 1990s, and was knighted in 1998 for services to higher education.

Sir David was Director of Brighton Polytechnic (1990-1992) and Vice Chancellor of its successor, the University of Brighton (1992-2005). The University of Brighton has announced that a new academic building and library on its Circus Street site will be named after Sir David. He was Professor of Higher Education Management at the Institute of Education, University of London (2005-2010) and became the principal of Green Templeton College, Oxford, in 2010.

A keen musician and talented pianist, he was active in the musical and cultural life of the city of Brighton, serving on the Boards of the Brighton Festival Society (1999-2005), Brighton Dome (2002-2005) and our own Brighton & Hove Philharmonic Society (1996-2003, having been co-opted onto the Board in 1994). Jackie Lythell, OBE, Chair of BHPS at the time writes: "Sir David was an invaluable, wise member of the Board. The Society benefitted greatly from his knowledge of music and outstanding intellect. On a personal level, David's support to me as Chair was always both generous and thoughtful." He also found time to be an occasional guest conductor with the Brighton Youth Orchestra and leader of the Universities Association of Lifelong Learning Jazz band.

Sir David is survived by his wife Betty Pinto Skolnick, his son Michael and daughter Sarah, and his granddaughter Lila. A celebration of his life and work will take place in Oxford in June.

WORLD PREMIERE OF NEW WORK AT BRIGHTON DOME BY BFC



On Thursday 11 June the Brighton Festival Chorus will be performing a family-friendly evening of music, song and readings on the themes of liberty and justice to mark the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. The choir will be joined by the Brighton Festival Youth Choir and 125 young performers from local schools to perform a new choral work *Invictus - Cantata for Liberty*, an accessible, inspiring piece, sung in English, about the signing of the Magna Carta and its impact on the laws of the land. The work celebrates universal themes of freedom and self expression and uses text from Kipling to Emily Dickinson. After the interval Brighton Festival Chorus will perform Mozart's world famous *Requiem*.

FRIENDS' TALK BY NICOLAS CHISHOLM, MBE



"A very enjoyable afternoon learning about a most interesting talent."

That was the verdict of one of the Friends who attended the talk in Brighton Museum on Sunday 19 April. On a beautiful sunny afternoon our Chairman Nicolas Chisholm presented a fascinating talk about Yehudi Menuhin, his life and work, punctuated with

amusing anecdotes from their time working together at the Yehudi Menuhin School and illustrated with an array of photographs and historic musical extracts.



MALCOLM'S MUSICAL GATE

Friends and volunteer programme sellers Malcolm & Penny Crawley came across this musically decorated gate on a walk near Birling Gap and wondered if anyone knows which Malcolm the gate is named after?



springboard

brighton & hove performing arts festival

SPRINGBOARD FESTIVAL WINNERS

You may recall that the BPO awards two prizes in the Concerto category of the annual Springboard Festival. We are delighted to announce the winners of this year's *Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra Award* are Ursula Eastwood (Grade 8 Trumpet) and Luca Hallam (Grade 7 Flute). Each will receive two season tickets to the BPO's main orchestral season at the Dome, and will be invited to attend a rehearsal and meet the orchestra.

Further information about Brighton & Hove's longest established performing arts festival which, like the BPO, celebrates its 90th anniversary this year, can be found at:

www.springboardfestival.co.uk

BPO NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL



If you would like to receive future copies of this newsletter by email, please send an email to mail@brightonphil.org.uk with the subject EMAIL NEWSLETTER, including your name and membership number if possible.