

2016-17 Year in Review

The Southampton University Symphony Orchestra has had a truly outstanding year, with record audiences, fantastic performances and a full social calendar to compliment. This year saw the orchestra joined by new Music Director, Susanna Riddell, who was appointed in March 2016 from an all-member vote. The committee have also worked hard on researching the orchestra's history, and implementing structural changes for the year ahead.

'A Winter's Eve'



On the 26th November, SUSO returned to Central Hall for a programme titled 'A Winter's Eve', including performances of Tchaikovsky – Symphony No. 4, Prokofiev – Winter Bonfire Suite and Glazunov – 'Autumn' from 'The Seasons'. The children from St Anne's Catholic School and Beechwood Primary School brought Prokofiev's Winter Bonfire Suite to life, beautifully singing the part for children's choir. An encore of Pas de Deux from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker rounded off what was truly a spectacular evening. Susanna's debut with the



The queue outside Central Hall 10 minutes after the concert was due to start.

orchestra was marked by a record audience, of 430 guests. The concert was so popular that the start was delayed by 20 minutes as the queues were so large outside of the venue. We were also delighted to welcome members from the University's Executive Team to the concert. Feedback from the concert was excellent, and some very successful recordings have been made.

'A Gala Concert'

On the afternoon of Sunday 19th March, SUSO performed their 2017 Gala Concert in Turner Sims. It was an extremely exciting moment for the orchestra when the concert sold out during the morning rehearsal, the first time in living memory a SUSO concert in the venue has sold out. An enormously challenging programme involved Shostakovich – Symphony No. 10, Britten – Four Sea Interludes and Britten – The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra. Members took on this electrifying programme

with relish, and the recordings show that under the guidance of Susanna they created one of the finest performances SUSO has ever achieved.








A Gala Concert

The Young Persons Guide
To The Orchestra
Benjamin Britten

Four Sea Interludes
Benjamin Britten

Symphony No 10
Dmitri Shostakovich

Southampton University Symphony Orchestra

Sunday 19th March 3:00 pm
Turner Sims, Salisbury Road, Southampton, SO17 1BJ

Conductor Susanna Riddell Assistant Conductor Rosie McNeil Leader Kath Roberts
Adults £12 Concessions £10 Students £8
Box Office www.turnersims.co.uk 023 8059 9551

'The Last Night of the Proms'

Southampton University Symphony Orchestra

The Lark Ascending
Vaughan-Williams

Romanian Rhapsody
No. 1
Enescu

Bolero
Ravel

Pomp & Circumstance
March No. 1
Elgar

Including works by:
Wagner, Bizet, Mussorgsky, Marquez, Strauss, and Wood



SUSO Presents
The Last Night Of The Proms

3:00 pm
Saturday 10th June

Turner Sims Concert Hall, Southampton

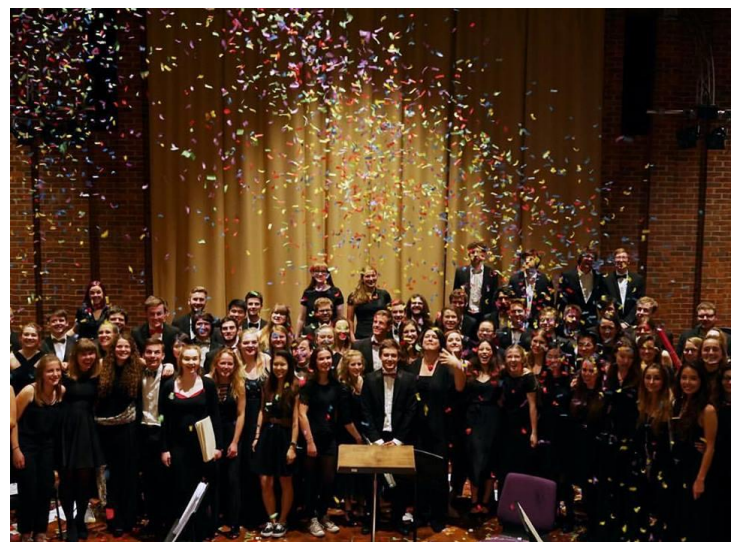
Conductor | Susanna Riddell
Assistant Conductor | Amy Wardle
Leader & Soloist | Kath Roberts

Adults £12 | Concessions £10 | Students £8
Tickets available from the Turner Sims Box Office
www.turnersims.co.uk 023 8059 9551




Saturday 10th June brought the final performance of the season in Turner Sims. A lighter programme was a result of a vote in the 2016 annual survey, where members wanted to find a better balance between exams and SUSO during the summer term. The programme therefore consisted of: Wagner - Overture to the Meistersingers, Vaughan-Williams – The Lark Ascending, Enescu – Romanian Rhapsody No. 1, Ravel – Bolero, Mussorgsky – Introduction and Hopak from Sorochinsky Fair, Strauss – Champagne Polka, Bizet – Extracts from Carmen, Wood – Fantasia on British Sea Songs, Elgar – Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1 and Marquez – Conga Del Fuego. We welcomed Amy Wardle as Assistant Conductor for the term; she settled into the role very quickly

and guided the Mussorgsky and Strauss. The Leader for the past two years, Kath Roberts, expertly showcased her talent with a stunning rendition of The Lark. Party poppers, giant confetti streamers and a variety of mischief in the Wood added to what was an extremely fun afternoon for the sold-out audience.

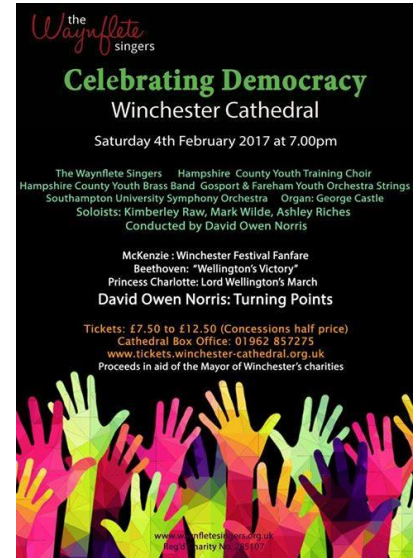


Other Performances

SUSO also took part in two external projects this season. On the 20th November the orchestra travelled to Blandford to take part in a concert celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

Conducted by choir master Rob Dishington, the orchestra accompanied a massed community choir, made up of the Briantspuddle Singers and friends, in a performance of Mozart's Requiem. This very moving event generated a large amount of money for ABF, the Soldier's charity.

Saturday 4th February took SUSO to Winchester Cathedral in a concert titled 'celebrating democracy' organised by David Owen Norris. The orchestra performed Beethoven – Wellington's Victory and David Owen Norris – Turning Points (which the orchestra premiered in September 2015). Members enjoyed performing in such a large venue, to a sold out cathedral!



Tuition

Susanna and the committee were delighted to be able to reintroduce sectionals as an integral part of the rehearsal process. Having been a member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra for over twenty years, each string section spent an hour with Susanna prior to a rehearsal in the first two terms. In the first term the brass section spent half a rehearsal with Tom Rainer, a trumpeter who plays regularly with all the major London orchestras. In the second term the brass spent a full rehearsal with former Principal Horn of the London Symphony Orchestra, Hugh Sennan. The wind spent a full rehearsal in the first term with Barbara Brown, who works extensively with Welsh National Opera and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. In the second term Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra oboist Holly Randall put the wind players through their paces. Matt King, Principal Percussionist in the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra worked with the percussion section in the second term. Each of the tutors was outstanding and made a huge difference to the section sound and the final performance. As an orchestra we thank them for working with us, and Susanna for sourcing the wind, brass and percussion tutors.

An Outstanding Society



The orchestra was delighted to win the 'Outstanding Society' at the Performing Arts Ball in April 2017. This is a testament to the committee's, Susanna's and the member's hard work and dedication to quality music making over the year. President Thomas Kidman and Vice President Gemma Wills were delighted to accept the award on behalf of SUSO.

History

Over the year, President Thomas Kidman has used skills gained in his history degree to investigate SUSO's past. At the start of the year very little was known and it turns out SUSO turns 98 years old in

September 2017! This extensive research project has involved using archives in Hartley Library, as well as contacting a number of past conductors, presidents and members. Most of the programmes the orchestra has played since 1919 is now complete, and can be seen here:

<http://susosusu.org/index.php/researching-our-history/>. The orchestra now has an exciting few years ahead as they look forwards toward the centenary year. Researching the orchestra's history is still a work in progress, and it is hoped there will be a book produced for the centenary.

Socials

The orchestra has enjoyed the most varied social schedule in living memory, thanks to the efforts of this year's Social Secretaries, Daisy Stephens and Bethan Lloyd-Thomas. Activities this year have included: a campus treasure hunt, a bar crawl, a Sunday roast, 4 after-parties, a trip to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, a night out at Bedford Place, many night outs at Jesters, watching LOPsoc



perform *The Mikado* at the Nuffield Theatre, a film night on campus, and a visit to the New Forest Aqua Park. The wide variety of types of activity, in particular the variation between those where alcohol is available and where there is not, has been very well received by the members. In addition the weekly pub trip has been reintroduced after each rehearsal, and the crowds that went to the pub grew throughout the year. This resulted in a very friendly communal atmosphere in the orchestra over the year.

Outreach



In November 2016 a smaller sized orchestra performed at the Humanities Family Festival on Avenue Campus. The visitors greatly appreciated having an orchestra on-site, and the children responded with great enthusiasm. We have strengthened our relationship with the Southampton Music Hub this year, building on the Baby SUSO schools tour by reaching new schools for the first time. Throughout February and March the Baby SUSO visited 5 schools, displaying the magic of an orchestra and introducing the students to the different instruments. On

the 20th May, Baby SUSO performed at the Encore Arts Festival in Hedge End (picture above), helping to raise funds for a new arts department. All of these events were expertly organised by the Outreach Projects Manager, Serena Evans.

Berlin Tour

In mid-June a touring orchestra travelled to Berlin, where three concerts were performed under the batons of Susanna and Amy. The second concert, joint with the Collegium Musicum Berlin, was a chance for the orchestra to join forces with a slightly older and more experience orchestra, for a massed performance of Wagner – Meistersinger’s Overture and Elgar – Pomp and Circumstance March No. After the concert, we enjoyed a beer garden with our German friends. Each concert was well attended, and averaged an audience of approximately 200. As with any tour a large amount of sight-seeing was undertaken, as well as the odd trip to the pub! Tour Secretary, Patrick Rusk, worked tirelessly throughout the year to make the trip a resounding success.



Membership

Attendance at rehearsals has been the highest seen for many years. This has been due to the implementing of red rehearsals (where all members have to attend the rehearsal prior) and a minimum of 70% rehearsal attendance to ensure their participation in the concert. These are clearly outlined in membership guidelines, issued at the start of each term. Members have risen to the raised expectations we now hold of them. Numbers in the orchestra have stayed steady at around 90 members, and many sections have seen increases throughout the year. After a horn shortage last year (where we only had 3 horns), we are delighted to now have a full section of 6.

Surveys

The committee have decided to implement an annual survey, designed to ascertain opinion on orchestral matters, gather repertoire suggestions and make general improvements to the running. After concerning results in the June 2016 annual survey, an improvement plan was drawn up and the decision was made to hold an end of term survey in December 2016 to measure improvements made. This showed excellent progress has been made. Last June 51% of the orchestra disagreed or strongly disagreed that ‘the committee has represented the views of the orchestra’. In December not one respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed, whilst the proportion who strongly agreed increased by over 35%. Whilst the question that the orchestra has been well led and managed gathered a 100% agree or strongly agree response, up from 36% in June. Improved outcomes were seen over all questions in December 2016, and it is hoped these excellent results will be maintained and improved in the June 2017 annual survey. These surveys form a vital part in driving improvement in the management of the orchestra, and are useful to compare year-on-year.

Committee 2016/17

President: Thomas Kidman

Vice President: Gemma Wills

Orchestral Manager: Henrietta Cooke

Treasurer: Beanie Barnard

Publicity Officer: Joe Roberts

Outreach Projects Manager: Serena Evans

Tour Secretary: Paddy Rusk

Social Secretaries: Daisy Stephens and Bethan Lloyd-Thomas