

Working to improve access to performing arts venues in Farnham

Patrons: Simon Russell Beale, CBE and David Whelton OBE, MD Philharmonia Orchestra

Performers Together is a Community Interest Company

An OBE for our patron

For his services to music, our patron, David Whelton was granted an OBE in June. This is wonderful news and we are absolutely delighted for him and his family. He has successfully helmed the Philharmonia Orchestra as its Managing Director for 27 years now.



The Farnham Herald quoted him, "I am delighted to receive an

OBE for services to music in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List, which is also recognition of the

remarkable contribution that the Philharmonia Orchestra makes to British and international musical life."

He then continued, "As a patron of Performers Together in Farnham, it is a pleasure to live in a town which has such strong tradition to the arts".

Congratulations to David on this excellent news; we do know that he and the orchestra travel all over the world on many tours and this is recognition of that amazing programme. Our thanks too, for remembering Performers Together in his message.

GET TOGETHER to *SHARE IDEAS* and *OPPORTUNITIES*

Following our email in the Summer, we now have everything set up for the next

PERFORMERS TOGETHER Get Together

The date has had to change for a couple of reasons but is now

Thursday 8th October

at 7 for 7.30pm

The Princess Royal, Guildford Road, Farnham GU10 1NX



The Princess Royal
at Runfold, Farnham

We have news and information to pass on, and some rather interesting ideas to put to you - which may be game-changing. In your turn, please bring your own performing news and information, and requests, to share.

It would be good to see representatives from all our member groups, from any groups who have an interest in performance in our area, individual performers as well as Friends.

So please come, or make sure someone else from your group comes along if you can't.

Meet other groups and performers.

Find out more about your fellow makers.

Joe Michel
speaking at
an earlier
Get Together



An RSVP, response to this, or on Facebook, will help us get a picture of how the evening will shape up.

SEE YOU THERE!!

New Performing Arts venues in Farnham

All Hallows School

What about this for an auditorium! This recently completed concert venue located in All Hallows School amply demonstrates the amazing facilities being provided for many schoolchildren today.



The plush seated and raked auditorium to seat 340.

For refreshments, a cafe is available and may be set to serve alcohol provided due notice is provided. To further increase the audience's experience of comfort and quality, they can flow out onto a large, long balcony with views across the green fields to trees all around.

There is plentiful parking available; the school able to provide attendants to oversee people's parking.



For details of hire and availability contact the Bursar, Caroline Antrobus on 01252 331109.

This is a fresh and large facility, completed in late 2014. With its raked, fixed seating, its capacity is 340. It is clearly an amazing facility for the school to offer for its own music performers. And being specifically designed for music, the performance area is flat and easily able to hold a full orchestra, as can be seen from the photo. The hall also features modern lighting and sound systems, exactly as you would expect. Modular staging is available if required. A lighting/sound expert is available for hire.

Four community projects already use this hall:
Voices Together, a community choir (approximately 100 members)
Farnham Youth Orchestra
Violins Together
Cellos Together



The generous stage being readied for another concert

All Hallows School also offers a traditional school hall for hire, this with a proscenium arch and wing space.

What news of the Maltings and improvements to the Great Hall?

Work is under way right now and due for completion this Autumn! The current seating will be replaced by a new single block of 230 bleacher seats with aisles down the sides. Seats will be larger, and there will be more leg room. The current main entrance to the Great Hall will be blocked, and a new entrance constructed to stage right of the seating. A new Technical Box will be suspended on the back wall. There will be a new back entrance to the auditorium.

A curtain will be hung some distance in front of the current stage, enabling a reduction of the size of the space, and allowing for performance on the floor in the

space in front of the seating. Good quality, removable dance flooring will be used for this performance area. For larger shows, the stage will still be used, and more seating can be placed on the flat floor in front of the seating – maximum capacity in this formation will then be 400.

New lighting bars will be able to be lowered significantly reducing the focus and plotting time.

New lighting will be LED, obviating the need to use gels, and increasing versatility.

The heating system will be replaced.

Already, improvements have been made to the back-stage areas, including dressing rooms, toilets (including disabled facilities) and a rehearsal space.

ENDEAVOUR, TALENT & SUCCESS: PROUD CHAMPIONS of the EUROPEAN CHOIR GAMES

Farnham Youth Choir, a choral organisation started in 1984 by music teachers David and Gillian Victor-Smith, was once described as 'The jewel in Farnham's crown'.

In 1992, the first time the choir won the coveted title of Sainsbury's 'Choir of the Year', the whole contest (of successive rounds) was broadcast by BBC Television, trailed often, advertised in the Radio Times and, as a result, was followed avidly by residents of Farnham who were caught up in the unfolding drama of their very own children's choir reaching such dizzy heights of national fame!



2007: FYC and the men of St John's College Cambridge at the Royal Albert Hall by invitation of the RPO, with John Rutter conducting.

Front page articles appeared in the Farnham Herald; Blue Peter appearances followed as did news items on South Today. Jeremy Paxman and Anne Robinson included extracts from the winning programme on Newsnight and Points of View.

The playwright J. P Donleavy selected a track from the choir's first CD, 'The Water of Tyne' as one of his eight favourites for Radio 4's Desert Island Discs. These were heady days during which time the public profile of the choir as a successful choral organisation, and the private battle each September to select sufficient new singers to maintain the standard, ran side by side.

The youth choir expanded to 3 Junior Choirs and a four part Chamber Choir, and it was to become a model for choral organisations across the country. By 1997 when the youth choir won the Choir of the Year title for a second time, FYC's musical director David Victor-Smith was described by Howard Goodall as 'Legendary'...and



Australia and Singapore Tour in 2003

that year he was appointed MBE by HRH The Queen. All this was nice, but the real educational work of taking successive generations of young singers, some quite raw and inexperienced in the art of choral singing, was just as challenging each September when a new 'Vintage' of FYC needed to be melded into the sound so beloved by its audiences far and wide. The educational brief was unchanged since the choir's formation: to give to children who sing the same opportunities for performance as those on offer to young instrumentalists through the network of country orchestras.

One such experience was to undertake the discipline of recording, each member being given the chance to make at least one disc in his or her choir career. FYC now has a discography of twelve repertoire CDs that, apart from pleasing the performers, has also provided inspiration to youth choir directors across the world.

The choir has also increased the repertoire by commissioning new music from respected contemporary composers such as Jonathan Dove, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and James Macmillan, the thrill of bringing brand new music from page to listener providing unique challenges for inexperienced young singers.

When the choir travels, as it does every year, its hosts invariably introduce it as 'Farnham' and the name has been taken to China, Singapore, Australia, America and many European countries. Similarly, many choirs from The States, Canada, Australia, Russia, the Czech Republic and many European countries, are all familiar with Farnham as being a centre for excellent choral singing for young people.

But locally, the saying 'familiarity breeds contempt', has never been truer. Despite its ever-changing personnel, Farnham Youth Choir has managed to maintain an impressive track record of success at national

and now international level that spans 23 years - which is no mean feat, not always finding eye catching headlines in the local paper as used to happen! Old news, perhaps?

But this summer's achievement capped it all: at the European Choir Games held in Germany in early July, the Farnham Youth Choir was declared the European Choir Champions of 2015, beating similar top children's choirs from as far afield as Canada, Russia, Germany and Denmark. The challenging 20 minute programme had to follow rules: the programme had to include ...



Christmas concert in 2009



Prince Charles meets Farnham Junior Girls' Choir at St James' Palace in 2004.



Jubilation at the European Choir Games, 2015

Choral music from the Renaissance era, something from a contrasting culture to the performers' own in a foreign language and a composition by a living composer from the choir's country of origin - and only one item could be accompanied by piano.

Farnham's young choir, forty singers ranging in age from 11 to 18 years and between them representing some 20 schools from a 15 mile radius of Farnham, returned home triumphant with not one but two European Gold Medals, having also qualified to compete in the Grand Prix of Nations where they met choirs from Taiwan, Canada and Russia

- European, in this contest, meaning where the competition was held rather than from where the competitors originated.

This is important. As all arts groups understand full well, publicity is the oxygen that supports the recruitment of new members (and encourages new audiences, too). It is a never ending uphill struggle for non-profit-making educational groups such as FYC to compete against the big players, the businesses such as Stage Coach and Rock Choir.

This summer, the FYC audition day failed to attract

more than a handful of young singers with aspiration to join the organisation that offers outstanding musical education through the medium of choral singing, despite a 450 mailing into schools and giving brochures to every peripatetic music teacher whose details we could glean from our current members. Our expert tutors who really do come with outstanding credentials, will be working

with such low numbers that the economic viability of the organisation is threatened.

But the most heart-breaking aspect is the number of young people who will be denied the opportunity to participate in experiences that enable them

to 'dip their toes' into the professional world of the performer. Where next for the Jewel in Farnham's Crown?



Farnham Youth Choirs: proud champions at the European Choir Games

A story of remarkable endeavour, talent and the achievement of enormous success over very many years! Surely members of Performers Together can help in identifying new young singers for audition? Contact details are on the FYC website.

What has the Board been up to since the last Get Together?

Good question, and we'll be telling you about this at the next one, on October 8th at the Princess Royal.

Some of the Board's activity has been featured in the newsletters, so you'll be aware of our tracking of developments relating to the Redgrave site, as well as visits to scope out potential performance venues – The Maltings and All Hallows School feature here, and there was also Weydon earlier in the year.



Kate Napier leading one of the discussions, exploring the changing scene in Farnham, at a previous Get Together.

We've recently reviewed the possibilities for developing what Performers Together might provide to its member groups, and are hoping it will be possible to develop a centrally-available database with and for Members to provide information about resources, including those held by Members, to facilitate co-operative access to equipment, facilities – even people.

We're also planning to explore the possibility of preferential rates for some key services for members. We'd like to improve benefits for Friends – the Loyalty Card idea hasn't gone away, it's just been sleeping!

There's development around online ticketing, too. And we have a new Big Idea to share with you.

Performers Together only makes sense, though, if there's a busy membership staying in touch with each other. We're hoping that you will bring your production and performance news with you – with fliers to pass around if you have them – so that you can get the word around to potential audiences amongst other companies. There will also be a chance to say if you are looking for anything which it's possible other members may be able to help with. **See you there!**

What's happening at Brightwells?

Although there has been much 'harrumphing' about Crest Nicholson making a start on their development at last - all they have done is to demolish the tennis club pavilion and made a hole in the river bank and poured some concrete into it. That presumably is all they can afford to do!



Where the tennis pavilion once stood

The likely outcome for the foreseeable future is that CNS don't need to renew their planning application which would have been required

had they not notionally 'started' on the Brightwells site. The other probable outcome is continuing inactivity as they do not yet have control over all the land they need and as we say, don't have the finances in order.

And each month that goes past, the proposed development gets ever hoarier and more out of touch with people's needs.

A stalemate thanks to the combined machinations of Waverley Council and Crest Nicholson where absolutely no-one wins.



The hole in the ground and some concrete, not yet looking like the start of a bridge.

BOX OFFICE

We ran a Box Office service for our Group Members and now plan new and valuable improvements to that special facility.

If your Performing Group would like to offer a fully professional online booking service for your customers then don't wait ...but contact us. We're progressing our offer and will shortly bring you more detail.

BOX OFFICE

Your Publicity

Make the most of the publicity opportunities we create for you!

To remind you to get copy to us for the **Events Diary** in the Lion and Lamb Yard, Farnham and to update your details on the **Performers Together website**, we will arrange to send a reminder email on a regular basis to prompt your action.

Any posters – get them to us as soon as you can- we have invaluable access to a central Farnham display space with much pedestrian traffic moving past and catching details in our windows. Be part of it with your Company's details.

PLEASE SEND YOUR DETAILS IN GOOD TIME

Email to

mike.silver@performerstogether.org.uk

To deliver posters, the best way is to simply drop them into :

27 Alfred Road, Farnham, GU9 8ND

and we'll ensure they are displayed in the Lion and Lamb shop.

Make the most of the publicity opportunities we create for you!



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