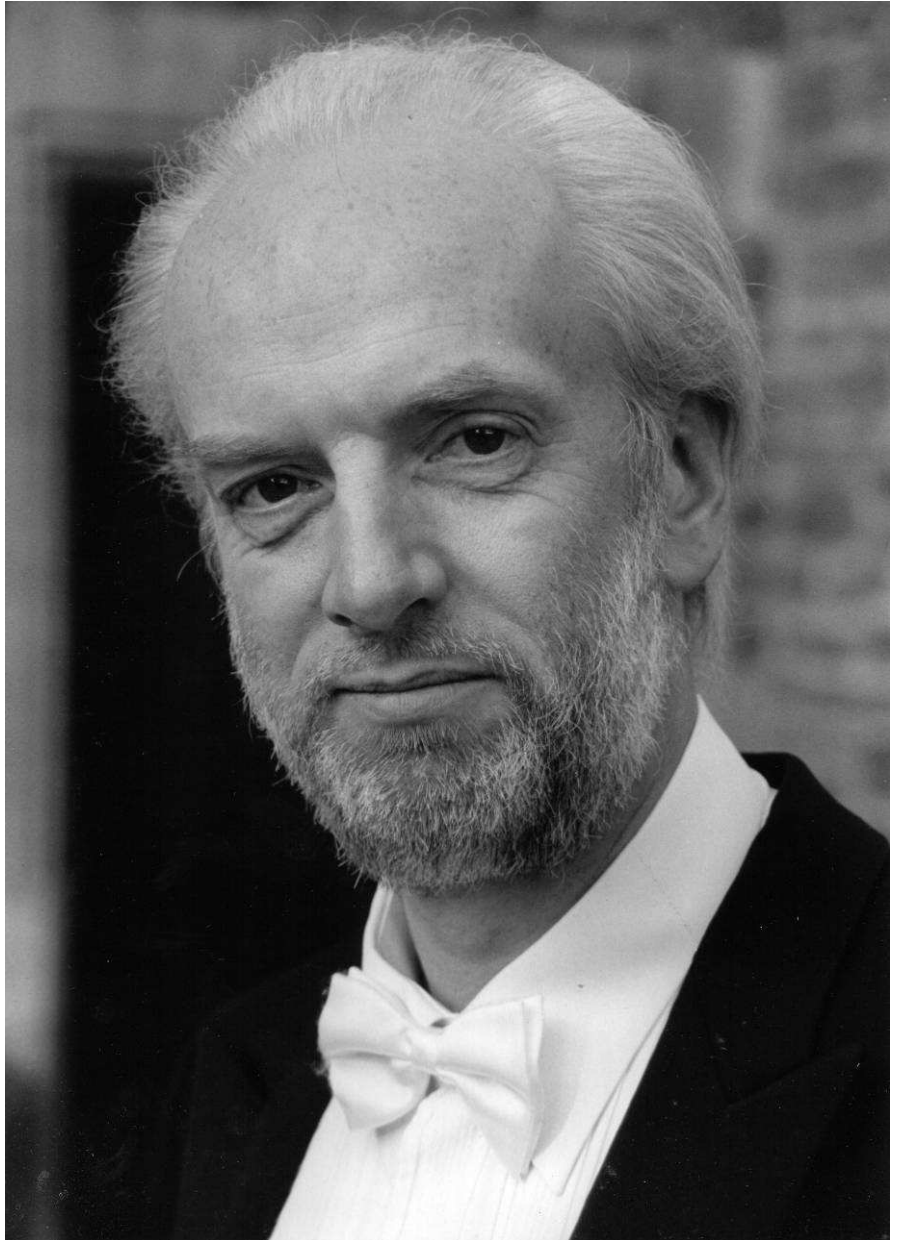


THE JOHN FORSTER YEARS

At tonight's concert we bid farewell to John Forster at the end of his 26th season as Music Director of the Farnborough Symphony Orchestra. John was the orchestra's first professional conductor, taking over from John Cotterill at the start of the Diamond Jubilee Season in 1981. He steered the orchestra through times of considerable change in the latter part of the last century and has made an immense impact on the quality of the orchestra's musicianship and reputation. His enthusiasm, humour and gently challenging approach will be greatly missed.

John is a highly accomplished pianist and violinist and was associated with the Royal College of Music for many years, both as a student and, initially under Sir David Willcocks, on the teaching staff (in fact being the youngest professor ever appointed). He has also worked extensively with the



Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, as violinist, pianist and conductor. However, aside from his professional credentials, it was his passion for working with amateur musicians and his commitment to 'training' that made him the best choice as conductor of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) Symphony Orchestra.

In his first season with the orchestra, John's influence was immediately felt in the improving standard of music-making. The concert programmes were exciting, combining popular classics such as the Beethoven Violin Concerto and Brahms' 1st Symphony with more unusual pieces such as Vaughan-Williams' Tuba Concerto. However, the end of the season also saw the departure of the leader of the orchestra, Neil Henderson, who moved away from the area. His replacement was Robert Perry, who was a longstanding member of the orchestra and who, as leader, has worked alongside John for 25 of his 26 seasons.



Conducting a concert in the Princes Hall

Although musically the orchestra went from strength to strength under John, politics impacted the orchestra throughout the 1990s. The association with the RAE, which had continued on more or less a similar basis for 70 years, came to an end with the demise of that organisation and the orchestra was renamed first the DRA Farnborough Symphony Orchestra and ultimately the Farnborough Symphony Orchestra. The transition to FSO, which coincided with the establishment of charitable status, took place in the orchestra's 75th anniversary year and the anniversary concert, over which John presided in April 1997, was a great success, including in the programme Schubert's Unfinished Symphony and Brahms' Violin Concerto.

Aside from his time as conductor of the FSO, John Forster's musical career away from the orchestra had also blossomed. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal College of Music (FRCM) and worked alongside names such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Sir Colin Davis and Sir Charles Groves at the National Centre for Orchestral Studies. He also broadcast on radio and television, appeared at the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican, and gave concerts with the Bournemouth Symphony and Ulster Orchestras. His work was increasingly taking him all over the world and, in 1998, he took up an appointment as Chief



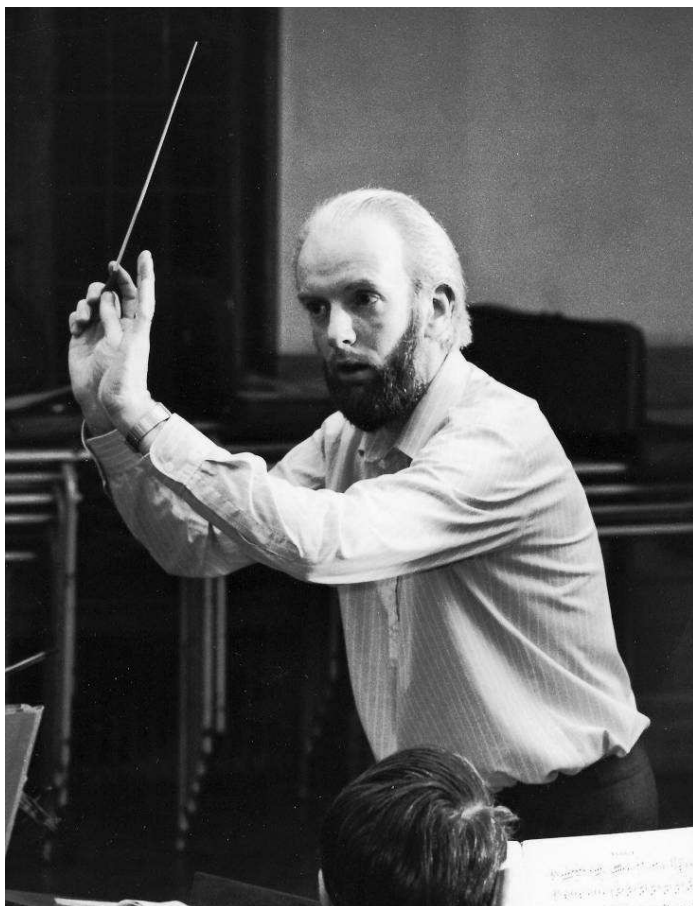
Rehearsing the orchestra in 1982

Conductor of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra. This made attendance at FSO rehearsals and some concerts somewhat difficult and, at John's recommendation, the orchestra used a number of guest conductors. Overall this proved an enriching period for the orchestra but it was with great enthusiasm that John was welcomed back full time at the start of the 2001/02 season.

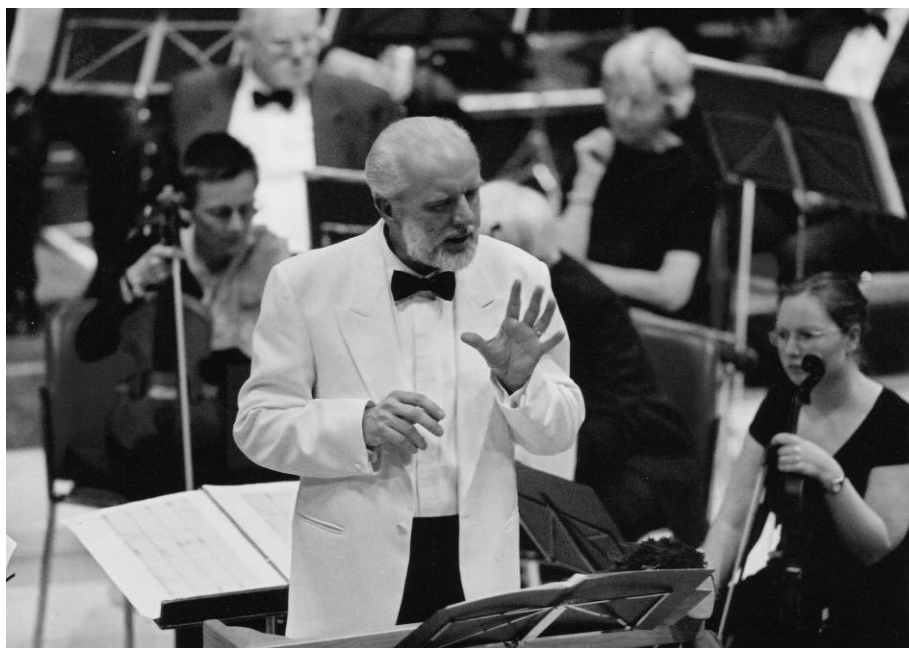
Over his musical career, John built up a large number of contacts, particularly through his work at the Royal College of Music. As a result, the orchestra has enjoyed not only soloists of the calibre of Hugh Bean and Peter Katin, but also a significant number of young, up-and-coming instrumentalists at the outset of their careers. Notable amongst these was Romanian violinist, Corina Belcea who, as founder of the Belcea quartet, has gone on to establish a significant reputation with a number of recordings to her name. Another violinist, Eloisa-

Fleur Thom, a local girl who attended Calthorpe Park School in Fleet first performed with the orchestra at the age of 12. A later performance of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto during the 2004/05 season was a sell-out and her recent rendition of the Dvorak violin concerto (excerpts of which can be heard on the orchestra's website) demonstrated musical maturity beyond her years.

Over recent years the orchestra has increasingly sought to build a relationship with its local audience, identifying itself as 'their orchestra'. John was at the forefront of this initiative with his characteristic introductions delivered at the beginning of concerts. Although initially reluctant to introduce the music in this way, John soon warmed to the task and many will remember his informative and humorous anecdotes which helped him build a rapport with audiences.




In action in the 1980s



Addressing the audience at a concert in 2002

One of John's favourite stories concerned a concert where an off-stage trumpeter was required. In rehearsal both conductor and player decided that the best effect was achieved when standing in the lift with the doors open. Unfortunately, during the performance, someone pressed the button for the lift!

John's tireless service spanning 26 seasons will long be remembered as a golden era for the orchestra and his consummate musicianship has been appreciated by audiences, soloists and orchestral players alike. John's contribution to the FSO was epitomised in the January 2006 concert by his masterful performance and direction from the keyboard of Mozart's 24th Piano Concerto (a particular favourite of John's) in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. His will definitely be a hard act to follow.



R.A.E.
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

FARNBOROUGH, HANTS

Leader: NEIL HENDERSON

Conductor: JOHN FORSTER

Proudly presents its

Diamond Jubilee Season 1981 - 82
sponsored by
Society of British Aerospace Companies

Tickets will be obtainable for a period before the date of each concert from:-

The Hon. Secretary and all members of the Orchestra.

FARNBOROUGH RECORD CENTRE, Camp Road, Farnborough (Tel: 43241).
HEMMINGS HI-FI CENTRE, 44 Kingsmead, Farnborough (Tel: 47095).
BOOSEY & HAWKES LTD., Station Road, Aldershot, (Tel: 27654).
CLARK & CO. (Radio & Sports) LTD., 160 Fleet Road, Fleet (Tel: 4012).
BEACON BOOK SHOP, 218 Fleet Road, Fleet, (Tel: 29219).

Hon Secretary:
Mrs. L. Preece
Eastrop Cottage, Up Natley,
Basingstoke, Hants.

Anyone interested in joining the orchestra or becoming one of its patrons is invited to communicate with the Hon. Secretary.

Affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies.

DIAMOND JUBILEE SEASON

Saturday, 17th October, 1981, 7.30 p.m.
Oak Farm School, Farnborough
Soloist: **DAVID LEE** (Horn)

Symphony No. 103 in E. Flat *Haydn*
(Drum Roll)
Horn Concerto No. 3 in E Flat. *Mozart*
Simple Symphony *Britten*
Czech Suite, *Dvorak*
Tickets £2.00 and £1.25

Saturday 28th November, 1981, 7.30 p.m.
R.A.E. Assembly Hall, Farnborough.
Soloist: **BRADLEY CRESWICK** (Violin)

Overture Oberon *Weber*
Violin Concerto in D *Beethoven*
Symphony No. 1 in C Minor *Brahms*

Tickets £2.00 and £1.25

Saturday 20th February, 1982, 7.30 p.m.
Oak Farm School, Farnborough
Soloist: **FRANK WIBAUT** (Piano)

Overture: Land of the Mountain and *MacCunn*
the Flood
Variations on a Nursery Song *Dohnanyi*
Ballet Suite: Sleeping Beauty *Tchaikovsky*
Bolero *Ravel*

Tickets £2.50 and £1.50

Saturday 24th April, 1982, 7.30 p.m.
R.A.E. Assembly Hall, Farnborough
Soloist: **CLIFFORD BEVAN** (Tuba)

Symphony No. 2 in D *Beethoven*
Tuba Concerto. *Vaughan Williams*
Spitfire Prelude and Fugue. *Walton*
Enigma Variations. *Elgar*

Tickets £2.00 and £1.25

John's first season with the orchestra