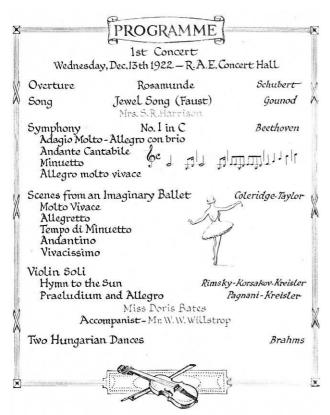


A SHORT HISTORY

Inception

The Farnborough Symphony Orchestra has a long history which, for most of the twentieth century, was intimately interwoven with the fluctuating fortunes of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), the largest employer in the area. Towards the end of World War I, the Royal Aircraft Factory, which had manufactured many aircraft during the war years, changed its name to the Royal Aircraft Establishment. This re-titling was primarily to avoid a clash of initials with the newly formed Royal Air Force, but it also reflected a move from building aircraft to research, test and evaluation activities. Although the workforce reduced from the wartime figure of 5000 to 1316 in mid-1922, the Establishment built a strong reputation for aeronautical excellence and was attracting some of the best academic brains in the country. Many of these people had diverse interests beyond their profession, and several clubs and societies associated with the RAE sprang up in the early years after the war. Among these was the RAE Orchestral Society, which came into being on 6th March 1922.



The RAE Orchestral Society was formed under the presidency of the Chief Superintendent of the RAE, Sydney Smith, with its aim being "the performance of good orchestral music". The original conductor was Ben Lockspeiser who, in addition to a long and distinguished scientific career which culminated in his being



Ben Lockspeiser

awarded a KBE, remained a patron of the orchestra until his death in 1990 at the age of 99. As well as Ben Lockspeiser, the original committee was made up of: Harry Garner (later Sir Harry), another eminent scientist who filled the post of treasurer and whose son is serving in that capacity 85 years later; P J Pearsall, leading flautist, who was initially secretary; and W W Willstrop, the principal cellist. J W Barnes is

recorded as taking over as secretary in 1923.

The first concert was given on 13th December 1922 in the RAE Concert Hall, a building which stood on the site of the later RAE Assembly Hall opposite the junction of Boundary Road and Farnborough Road. The programme included Beethoven's 1st Symphony and Schubert's Rosamunde Overture as well as the more unusual "Scenes from an Imaginary Ballet" by Coleridge-Taylor. The leader for the occasion was Miss Doris Bates, a professional violinist who played with Henry Wood's New Queen's Hall Orchestra and who performed two solo pieces in the concert. She was accompanied by W W Willstrop, who exchanged his customary cello for the piano.

Initially the society gave one or two concerts a year and members were also encouraged to give ad hoc chamber music concerts, a tradition that has recently been revived. Such was the commitment of the society to improving the standard of orchestral music in the area in these early days that it recommended "that schemes should be thought of to urge parents in the neighbourhood to have their children taught stringed instruments in preference to piano"!

The Pre-War Years

Until the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Ben Lockspeiser remained conductor of the orchestra. His dedication was recognised by the the members of the Society in 1936 when he was presented with a book recording the details of all the concerts over the first fifteen years. It was conferred "as a mark of esteem and high regard" and, as it stated in the foreword, "The Society's existence is largely due to Mr Lockspeiser's enthusiastic and tireless labours". For some of the early concerts, he was joined by his wife, Elsie, an accomplished pianist who is recorded in the programmes as playing tambourine.

In the first decade, it was normal practice to engage a professional leader for the concerts but, in 1932, Mrs E Gilbert, who had been a founder member of the orchestra, was elected leader, a capacity in which she served until the war. Programmes would typically consist not only of purely orchestral works, but also of a concerto and solo works (with piano accompaniment as appropriate) performed by the concert soloist.

Once the orchestra became established, it began to attract soloists of international repute. One of these was Victor Hely-Hutchinson, who was the soloist for a performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto in April



Beatrice Harrison with Sir Edward Elgar

1933. Hely-Hutchinson is now probably best known for composing the "Carol Symphony", often heard on the radio at Christmas, but then he was a big name in the formative era of the BBC, and was later to become the corporation's Director of Music. Another renowned soloist was Beatrice Harrison, who was a close personal friend of Delius and who was the soloist for the orchestra's performance of the



Victor Hely-Hutchinson

Haydn Cello Concerto in 1937. She also has the distinction of having given the first radio performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto (conducted by the composer himself).

Closer to home, the orchestra benefited from a considerable amount of talent amongst its RAE members. One of the viola players, L B Booth, composed a symphony which was given its first public performance by the orchestra at the February concert in 1932, with the composer himself conducting. Like many of the RAE scientists of the time, he was a man of many talents and is also known for his invention of novel telephoto lens systems in 1915 and his work on the bubble sextant (an artificial horizon system for aircraft navigation). Another eminent inventor was Maurice Hancock, who was Secretary of the Society and Principal 2nd Violin during the mid-thirties. He was responsible for the development of a novel gyroscopic gunsight which was still being installed in RAF aircraft in the 1980s. Maurice was a dedicated musician and lived next door to the author until his death in 2006.



The RAE Orchestral Society with Ben Lockspeiser in Farnborough Town Hall, 27th January 1931

By the 1930s, the first step in the gradual integration of the orchestra with the local community began when, due to the cost of maintenance, the RAE Concert Hall was demolished and concerts started to be held in Farnborough Town Hall. The first concert in the new venue is shown above, the soloist for the occasion being Miss Antonia Somervell who sang arias by Mozart and Purcell. The harpist was one R F J Buckmaster, who doubled as a French Horn player when a harp was not required. These events proved popular at a typical ticket price of 2 shillings each, and it is recorded that 267 tickets were sold for the last concert before the war.

The outbreak of war brought the burgeoning musical activities of the RAE Orchestral Society to an abrupt halt. In 1940 Farnborough Town Hall was designated as a Civil Defence Centre and many members became heavily involved in the war effort. Amongst these was Ben Lockspeiser himself, who is credited with developing the triangulation altitude system for the bouncing bomb used in the Dambusters' raids! The regular concert season was discontinued and, apart from sporadic opportunities to accompany the Farnborough Singers, little orchestral performance took place.

Post-War Turbulence

The decade following the war was a difficult time for the society. Although an extraordinary general meeting was convened in November 1944 to elect a new committee, the orchestra reverted to two concerts per season and, for several years, operated predominantly as a string orchestra, hiring wind players when necessary. The considerable reduction in staff and the evolving role of the RAE from war to peace-time also impacted the orchestra, with as many as four elected officers leaving in one season. In the climate of change at the RAE, the aim of the society became "the study of great music and the encouragement of amateur talent" and some evenings were devoted solely to listening to gramophone records!

However, there were reasons for optimism. The RAE Assembly Hall was built during the war next to the RAE North Gate on the Farnborough Road and this was adopted by the orchestra as the regular concert venue. With the change of concert hall, the practice of positioning the second violin section on the conductor's right was also discontinued. A new conductor also emerged in the shape of David Kettle, another RAE scientist. Although until 1948 he shared the responsibility with Robin Lock, David Kettle



John Thomas

quickly became established as the regular conductor, a role in which he was to remain for a further 17 years. Several other names became prominent during this period. Kenneth Honick, who



David Kettle

first joined the orchestra before the war, became leader and president of the society. Another violinist, John Thomas, was treasurer, whilst also finding time to play with the old Farnborough Light Orchestra (a precursor of the Pelly Concert Orchestra) and to organise and lead orchestras for the RAE Operatic Society. Nicknamed 'Tommy', he was later to become the orchestra's first honorary member in recognition of his long service.

In the mid 1950s, the practice of performing full orchestral concerts was reestablished. However, with an increase in subscription to one guinea (considerably more than the original two shillings in 1922), membership declined to a mere 26. Nonetheless, affiliation to the National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS) brought financial support and stability. In this more secure financial climate, the November 1959 concert attracted a capacity audience of 450 for the performance of Brahms' Violin Concerto by Frederick Grinke, who, in the previous year, had performed the Bach Double Concerto at Vaughan-Williams' funeral.



Frederick Grinke

Crisis and Constitutional Change

On several occasions during the 1950s, David Kettle fell ill and was crucially prevented from conducting concerts. For these performances Geoffrey Stark, who was variously principal viola and principal second violin, stood in as conductor, thereby earning himself the title of associate conductor. In this role on a happier occasion in May 1957, he conducted the orchestra when David Kettle himself was the soloist for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23. However, when a sudden



David Kettle conducting a rehearsal at the RAE Assembly Hall c.1950

sickness suffered by David Kettle rendered it impossible for him to conduct the second concert of the 1964/65 season, the issue of deputy/associate conductorship was brought to a head. Under the chairmanship of Julian Bradshaw, the principal flautist who had served on the committee in various capacities since 1945, the May 1965 AGM debated the benefits and difficulties of formally implementing such a role. Issues such as sharing rehearsals and concerts, writing of programme

notes and other organisational difficulties were discussed and it was resolved that "some effective form of deputy conductorship be devised". The conductor (David Kettle) and associate conductor (now Arthur Alsey who had succeeded Geoffrey Stark in 1960) were asked to retire while the meeting discussed ways of implementing the motion. An involved and complex discussion then took place during which it emerged that fewer orchestra recruits now came from within the RAE than from outside and that an "outside conductor with an outside following would broaden the base of the orchestra". Whilst the possibility of electing non-members of the RAE to committee posts had been debated as early as 1954, the appointment of a non-RAE conductor was a radical proposition which was to prove pivotal in the evolution of the orchestra from RAE society to town symphony orchestra.



Arthur Alsev

The meeting continued with the holding of a ballot which came down 9:6 in favour of appointment of an outside conductor. However, it was unanimously agreed that, notwithstanding the desirability of such an appointment, David Kettle and Arthur Alsey would be offered the joint conductorship. Following this decision, the two conductors were recalled to be told the outcome of the debate and the meeting was adjourned for them to consider their response to the offer. Six days later the adjourned meeting reconvened and the secretary read a letter from David Kettle resigning as conductor. He was warmly thanked for his past service and the wish expressed that he would return to play a piano concerto. Arthur Alsey, however, continued to play the violin with the orchestra and ultimately succeeded Kenneth Honick as leader. As for the issue of the deputy conductorship, a motion was finally passed that "the committee, with the conductor, should decide the best way to achieve a fail-safe system". It was probably considered that enough controversy had been generated and it was time to let the dust settle!

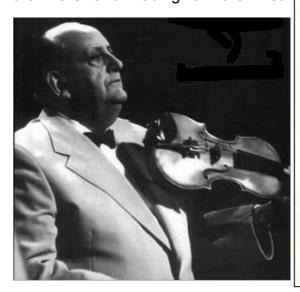
The John Cotterill years

For the 1965/66 season, John Cotterill, who was founder of the Farnham-based Waverley Singers, was invited to take over as conductor of the orchestra and became the first non-RAE member to hold that post. Membership of the orchestra grew, reaching 45 in 1970, and Julian Bradshaw's initiative towards constitutional change culminated in a revision of the stated aim of the society to place increased emphasis on playing and performance. The formal objective became "the study and practice of orchestral music and the enjoyment of playing such music by means of public performance". In association with this change, the society was appropriately renamed the RAE Symphony Orchestra in 1969.



John Cotterill

Under the baton of John Cotterill, the orchestra thrived and, from 1967 onwards, began to give four performances each season. For a period, alternate concerts were given at local schools, including The Salesian College and Oak Farm School, and the practice of having a "celebrity" concert was introduced. Many of these appear to have been highly memorable, but the performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto in November 1969 by Alfredo Campoli was a particular triumph. The soloist, who had become a household name between the wars and had given the first



Alfredo Campoli

ORCHESTRA

(Led by ARTHUR ALSEY)

Conductor:

JOHN COTTERILL

with

DIANA BEEKEN: Piano

Programme:

Overture: The Mastersingers . Wagner Piano Concerto in E Flat . John Ireland Symphony No. 1 in C Minor . Brahms

at

THE SALESIAN COLLEGE

FARNBOROUGH

Entrance in Reading Road, off Farnborough Road A325

LARGE CAR PARK

on

Saturday, 27th April, 1968

at 7.30 p.m.

TICKETS 7/6 and 5/- available from

The R.A.E. SHOP, Farnborough (Tel. Aldershot 24461, Ext. 3500). Messrs. BROOKERS (Farnborough) LTD., 71 Lynchford Rd., Farnborough (Tel. 42377), and 2 North Parade, Farnborough (Tel. 43265). FARNBOROUGH RECORD CENTRE, Camp Road, Farnborough (Tel. Farnborough 43241). The Hon. ORCHESTRA SECRETARY, 32 St. Michaels Road, Farnborough (Tel. 43260)

or at the door if available

Belgfave Press (Slough) Ltd., 110, London Road, Camberley, Surrey



The orchestra performing under John Cotterill in the RAE Assembly Hall in 1967

performance of the Bliss Violin Concerto (which was actually written for him), had an international reputation and the concert was a sell-out with over 450 people in the audience. Besides the RAE Assembly Hall in Farnborough, which continued to be the main concert venue, the reach of the orchestra expanded with performances being given in other places including the Princes Hall in Aldershot (which was built in 1973), Farnham Maltings and The Redgrave Theatre.

After many years of stability in the key positions of the orchestra, 1971 brought some significant changes. Dietrich Küchemann, an eminent aerodynamicist at the RAE and the orchestra's principal cellist, retired after 25 years. Also, Kenneth Honick, whose views on the role of leader had become increasingly controversial, retired as leader (after more years in the role than any other leader to date) to be replaced by Arthur Alsey, who combined this responsibility with his continuing role as associate conductor until his respective retirement in 1978.

In the late 1970s, escalating costs also became a problem for the orchestra. Although the annual subscription had climbed to £5 by 1979 and concert ticket prices were £1 and the cost of promoting a concert disproportionately from about £60 in 1965 to £460. In addition to the generous support of its patrons, the orchestra needed to seek sponsorship in order to remain solvent.

The R.A.E. Symphony Orchestra FARNBOROUGH, HANTS

Saturday, 19th October, 1974, 2.30 p.m. R.A.E. Assembly Hall, Farnborough

CONCERT FOR SCHOOLS

under the auspices of Hampshire Education Committee (North East Hampshire Area) Music by Berlioz, Grainger, Johann Strauss, Sibelius, Prokofiev and Copland.

Saturday, 23rd November, 1974, 7.30 p.m. R.A.E. Assembly Hall, Farnborough

Soloist: MALCOLM DAVIES (Piano) Overture: The Merry Wives of Windsor

Symphony No. 9 in C ("The Great")
Schubert

Tickets 70p and 50p*

Saturday, 8th February, 1975, 7.30 p.m. R.A.E. Assembly Hall, Farnborough

Soloist: IRIS BOURNE (Soprano)

Mozart Symphony No. 4 in D minor.....Schumann

Tickets 70p and 50p*

Saturday, 26th April, 1975, 7.30 p.m. Princes Hall, Civic Centre, Aldershot

CELEBRITY CONCERT

Soloists: RALPH HOLMES (Violin) MORAY WELSH (Cello)

Overture: The Wasps ... Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 4 in B flat Beethoven Suite of Ancient Airs and Dances ... Respighi Double Concerto for Violin, Cello, and ... Brahms Orchestra .

Tickets £1, 80p and 50p*

*Prices may be subject to variation L.64/6/74

Fortunately the orchestra received the support of such bodies as the newly formed Borough of Rushmoor and the Southern Arts Association (through NFMS). Over the ensuing decade, sponsorship from the aircraft industry, local companies and the Society of British Aerospace Companies (SBAC) enabled the orchestra to continue.

By 1981, John Cotterill had been conducting the orchestra for 16 years and he decided that the time had come to step down both from that responsibility



Rehearsing in the RAE canteen in 1975

and his role as conductor of the Waverley Singers. His final concert, which included Vaughan-Williams' "Sea Symphony", Mozart's 40th Symphony and Walton's Coronation Te Deum, took place at the Princes Hall and, fittingly, was a joint performance with the Waverley Singers. His parting legacy was a recommendation to appoint a professional musician as his successor.

The Diamond Jubilee Season

the RAE Symphony Orchestra.

After the departure of John Cotterill, the post of conductor was advertised and, of the 22 applicants who responded, John Forster was considered the most appropriate for the job. He is a highly accomplished pianist and violinist and has been 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 also worked extensively with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, as conductor, pianist and violinist. 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 first professional conductor of



John Forster

John Forster's appointment coincided with the diamond jubilee season for the orchestra and his 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. John Forster's first season with the orchestra, however, also proved to be Neil Henderson's last as leader. He had taken over from Arthur Alsey only four years previously but his



Robert Perry receiving an award from Charlotte Dunham for 10 years as leader

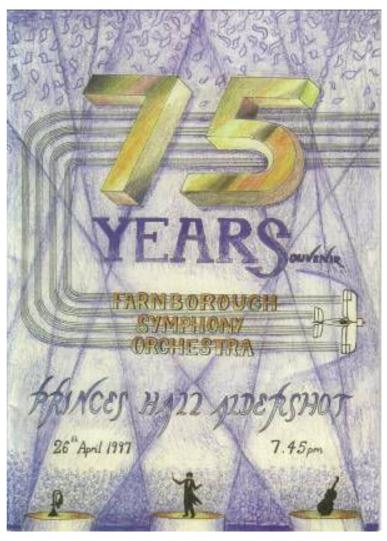


Concert at the RAE Assembly Hall

move away from the area meant that the position of leader was once again vacant. Robert Perry, a stalwart of the Hampshire Music Service and a member of the orchestra since 1969, took over the position and ultimately was to lead the orchestra for 25 years.

Politics

Musically the orchestra went from strength to strength under John Forster but, in 1992, the agenda of the government of the day began to have an impact operationally. The association with the RAE had continued on more or less a similar basis for 70 years and the orchestra still numbered two Directors of RAE amongst its patrons. However, under Margaret Thatcher's 'Next Steps' initiative, the RAE was closed down and the capability became part of the Defence Research Agency, along with several other research establishments around the country. The orchestra was accordingly renamed the DRA Farnborough Symphony Orchestra but the strong support and good communication which the orchestra had always enjoyed with the RAE gradually diminished. In January 1996, a letter was written to DRA informing them that the orchestra would be severing its links with the government organisation. The minutes of the AGM in May 1996 record that it was considered "a sad step to take" but the right decision. The



The 75 year Souvenir Programme

orchestra thus completed its transition from RAE society to town orchestra and, in its 75th Anniversary season, became the Farnborough Symphony Orchestra. With such a significant change, there was some debate about whether to retain the aircraft in the orchestra's logo but it was decided that, in recognition of the long association with RAE and Farnborough's reputation as the home of flying, the aircraft should stay!

With the demise of the RAE, the future of the RAE Assembly Hall, the main concert venue for the orchestra since the war, also became uncertain. In December 1995 the orchestra held its last concert there and, after a few years standing empty, the building was finally demolished as part of the development of the old RAE 'factory' site – stark symbolism for the passing of an era.



The FSO performing in the Princes Hall in 1996

Farnborough Symphony Orchestra

The transition to the Farnborough Symphony Orchestra (FSO) brought a change to the constitution. The aim became "to advance the aesthetic education of the public by the study and practice of orchestral music and the public performance of such music" and membership formally became open to anyone with the appropriate musical ability and commitment to regular rehearsals. When the orchestra was accepted as a registered charity, the constitutional changes were fundamental, particularly the removal of the conductor from the committee (except by invitation) where, as trustee, he would have been debarred from financial remuneration. The orchestra's first year as an independent organisation was successful, although less so in financial terms despite the benefit of claims for gift aid under its new charitable status. Considerable effort was made on the part of the committee, and particularly the chairman, Charlotte Dunham, to find sponsorship but nothing had been available from industry sources since the 1990-91 season. Regular support from the Southern Arts Association, Rushmoor Borough Council and Hampshire County Council continued, but the orchestra made a loss for the year, largely as a result of low audience figures which, in the modern era, is a challenge associated with the staging of live classical music throughout the UK.

On a happier note, the 75th anniversary concert in April 1997 was a great success, including in the programme Schubert's Unfinished Symphony and Brahms' Violin Concerto. A special souvenir

programme was produced for the event, with a feature on major figures in the orchestra, past and present. One of these was John Thomas ('Tommy'), the last pre-war member still playing with the orchestra. He joined the RAE Orchestral Society in June 1934 and had witnessed many changes over the intervening decades.

Guest Conductors

During his time as conductor of the FSO, John Forster's musical career away from the orchestra had 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 Conductor of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra. This rendered him unavailable for FSO rehearsals and some concerts over the ensuing few years and the orchestra had to get used to a series of guest conductors, including Mark Fitz-Gerald, Sam Laughton, Malcolm Hicks and Adrian Brown (who also put in sterling service as rehearsal conductor). Of these,



Mark Fitz-Gerald

Mark Fitz-Gerald, Music Director of Kentish Opera and a graduate of the Royal College of Music, was particularly popular and was asked to conduct several concerts in successive seasons. Overall this proved an enriching period for the orchestra but it was with great enthusiasm that John Forster was welcomed back full time at the start of the 2001/02 season.

The FSO in the New Millennium

The new millennium has seen the FSO thriving as it has responded to the challenges of being a society committed to the practice and performance of music to a high standard. The 2004/05 season proved profitable and the orchestra has increasingly sought to build a relationship with its local audience, identifying itself as 'their orchestra'. Nevertheless, the first six seasons of the millennium have recorded average losses per concert of about £900. A notable exception, however, was the second concert of the 2004/05 season which was held at High Cross Church in

Camberley. Eloisa-Fleur Thom, a local 16 year old girl who had attended Calthorpe Park School in Fleet, performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto. Not only did she exhibit poise and musical maturity beyond her years, but the audience also exceeded the number of printed tickets and the event yielded an unprecedented profit of over £1200.

At the end of the 2005/06 season, playing membership of the orchestra stood at 58 (many of whom are professional musicians) and, whilst players increasingly come and go because of job demands, the high reputation that the FSO has established enables it to attract good players from a wide area. However, there are still several long-standing

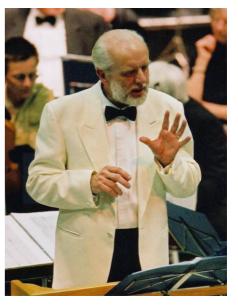


Gerald Moss (1968)

members. In 2005, Gerald Moss, an RAE aerodynamicist who joined the orchestra in 1945, finally retired. He had served as chairman of the society for about ten years and had played in both the first and second violin sections, the latter as principal for many years.

End of an Era

At the June 2006 AGM, it was announced that Robert Perry would be standing down as leader at the end of the 2006/07 season, although continuing to play with the orchestra. This was followed in September 2006 by the news that the 2006/07 season would be John Forster's last as conductor and music director. These two figures had been hugely influential in the development of the orchestra at the turn of the millennium, not only in terms of their musicianship but, just as importantly, through their commitment to the members. Their tireless service of 25 and 26 years, as leader and conductor respectively, will long be remembered as a golden era for the orchestra. Few will forget John Forster's masterful performance and direction from the keyboard of Mozart's 24th Piano Concerto in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth in January 2006.



John Forster (2002)



Members of the orchestra in 2002

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A Fresh Start

At the start of the 2007/08 season, the orchestra welcomed Mark Fitz-Gerald as its new Music Director. He first conducted the orchestra in the late 1990s during John Forster's absence in Oman and, during that time, rapidly commanded the respect of the members. A graduate of the Royal College of Music where he studied under Norman Del Mar, Mark Fitz-Gerald is a highly accomplished conductor. He became Music Director of Kentish Opera in 1986 and has many successful productions to his name. He came to the FSO fresh from his debut conducting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the orchestra's audience and players alike appreciated his fresh and exciting approach.

Shortly after Mark Fitz-Gerald's arrival, Tessa Welford was appointed Leader in succession to Robert Perry, with whom she had shared the front desk for many years. Also in his first season, Mark Fitz-Gerald's active involvement in the music world brought the Orchestra an exciting and

unique opportunity. Throughout his time in Germany, Mark had developed an interest in performing the very specialized task of accompanying silent films live with an orchestra. This led to his working with Mrs Irina Shostakovich, widow of the composer, and Krzystof Meyer to restore the complete score to a Trauberg/Shostakovich film, "Odna". He conducted the world premiere of this score (the first Shostakovich premiere for over 20 years) and, when his recording of the work was released in January 2008, it went immediately into the top five of the Naxos new release best-selling charts. Following the success of the "Odna"



Mark Fitz-Gerald with Irina Shostakovich and Peter Bromley (of Naxos)

restoration, Mark was invited to record a newly discovered Shostakovich fragment. The score, which was in the form of a single symphonic movement, had lain undiscovered in a trunk for many years. The abandoned fragment had been played once by an orchestra in Moscow and then lost for many years. In preparing to conduct the piece, Mark felt the need to hear the work, which was scored for double woodwind and brass but with little by way of tempo and dynamic markings. He arranged for the FSO, supplemented by extra players in the wind parts, to play the fragment at a rehearsal in the Spring of 2008. Exhilaration at the strident chords combined with an awareness of the privilege of hearing the music played for the first time outside Russia to give the musicians a memorable experience. Seldom has the FSO connected so directly with the world's musical heritage!

The Future

Today many things have changed since the Orchestra's founder members first that, beyond the discovered science which had originally brought them to the RAE, they shared the mutual pleasure of orchestral playing music together. Technology advanced beyond what any of them, even as practising scientists, could have imagined, bringing limitless communication and unprecedented access to music of many different genres. Men and women experience mobility on a scale far removed



Mark Fitz-Gerald conducting the Orchestra in 2009)

from previous generations, living and working in a 'global village'. Nonetheless, although the pace of sociological and political change continues to be relentless, the FSO has a resilience which has seen it through a world war, destabilising government initiatives and various internal

controversies. The Farnborough Symphony Orchestra may look significantly different from the RAE Orchestral Society of 1922 but there remains one uniting theme for all players, past and present: a passion for orchestral music and a love of performing it to a live audience. Whatever the shape of things to come, there can be no doubt that this timeless quality, kept alive by the enthusiasm and dedication of skilled players, will guarantee the future of the Orchestra for many years.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Clifford Garner for his detailed notes on the first 60 years of the orchestra, Michael Fielder for his notes on early committee meeting minutes and other members of the orchestra for their encouragement in producing this short history.

Peter Birkett 17th September 2011



