

THE PETERSFIELD ORCHESTRA FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends of Petersfield Orchestra

The committee and members of Petersfield Orchestra would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for your continued support. Without your generous donations and enthusiastic attendance at our performances, we would simply not be able to put on the concerts in the way that we do. With the aim of keeping alive your interest in the orchestra, we will be sending you a newsletter like this one, three times a year, at around the time the Friends preferential booking period opens for each concert. I hope you enjoy hearing a little more about the orchestra and its players, and of course take the hint to book your tickets for the concert!

With best wishes, Matthew Clark

Acting Chair, Trustee and Concert Manager

November 20th Concert Programme

Weber: Overture, The Ruler of the Spirits, op. 27

Bruch: Violin Concerto in G minor, op. 26

Soloist: Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux

Bruckner: Symphony no 4 in E flat

Born in France, violinist Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux was the 2021 grand prize winner of the Young Classical Artists Trust (London) and Concert Artists Guild (New York) international auditions. Nominated as a 2022 'Rising Star' by Classic FM, she made her debut with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in 2023 and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 2024.

In 2024 Charlotte became a member of the award-winning Chiaroscuro Quartet who perform on historical instruments, with whom she has numerous upcoming international performances.

In 2022 Champs Hill Records released Charlotte's debut solo album 'Ostinata' to critical acclaim, with Gramophone magazine describing her as "....an artist with something of her own to say". Her latest album, featuring works by Schubert alongside her duo partner Joseph Havlat, was released in May 2025 with Delphian Records, for which she was praised as a "soulful" and "excellent" young violinist (The Times, 2025).



An avid chamber musician, Charlotte performs widely throughout the UK and mainland Europe, including recent returns to the Wigmore Hall, Britten-Pears Arts, Konzerthaus Berlin and Radio France among others. Upcoming highlights include a trio concert with Joseph Havlat and Jonathan Leibovitz at Amici Della Musica in Padova and tours of the UK and Europe with the Chiaroscuro Quartet. Keen to inspire the next generation, Charlotte has recently been named as an ambassador for the London Music Fund.

Charlotte enjoys playing a wide variety of repertoire, including more rarely heard solo concertos by Panufnik, Vasks and Joachim, the latter which she has performed, alongside Bernstein's Serenade, with

the Budapest Concerto Orchestra conducted by András Keller.

Charlotte has a rich history of collaborative performance with concerts at the Wigmore Hall, a BBC Prom with the dynamic 12 Ensemble, and a performance of the Franck Piano Quintet at the Gstaad Festival with Alina Ibragimova, Lawrence Power, Sol Gabetta and Bertrand Chamayou. She has also participated in prestigious festivals across the world such as the Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove, the Australian Chamber Music Festival, and the Bendigo Chamber Music Festival near Melbourne, and was named as the Artist-in-Residence for 2025 at the Thaxted Festival.

Charlotte completed her Master's at the Royal College of Music in London with Alina Ibragimova, having previously studied in Montpellier, and with Natasha Boyarsky at the Yehudi Menuhin School. Additionally, she has participated in masterclasses with world-renowned teachers including Ana Chumachenko, Zakhar Bron, Pavel Vernikov, Maxim Vengerov, and András Keller.

Charlotte currently plays a Giovanni Battista Rogeri violin, and an Edwin Clement bow kindly loaned to her by the Swiss Foundation Boubo-Music.

Reviews

"...For all the fireworks and superbly executed technical devilery, there is a feeling here of essential calm, which is shattered by the vehemence of the following Fuga, played with textural clarity and a great sense of line...Ysaÿe's Fourth Sonata is a wonderful mixture of technical rigour and emotional flexibility, with Saluste-Bridoux bringing lyrical flow and tonal beauty to even the most complex passages of multiple-stopping..."

Tim Homfray, The Strad / Champs Hill Records Ostinata / June 2022

"...This sensitively recorded debut presents an artist with something of her own to say, and something worth hearing...while the five works are all in their own ways folk-informed, technically taxing virtuoso vehicles, they are also strikingly diverse in terms of stylistic and emotional expression...An attention-grabbing debut..."

Charlotte Gardner, Gramophone/ Champs Hill Records Ostinata / June 2022

Petersfield Festival Hall Update

The many Friends who came to the summer concert will have noticed the work currently under way at the hall, which involves mainly the Council Chamber side of the building, but also on the main lighting rig in the hall. This is planned to be completed for our next concert on 20th November (see above).

A major refurbishment of the building is currently scheduled to start in Jul 2027, lasting up to two years. However, I understand that a number of hurdles, including funding, have yet to be cleared before that date is certain.

When the major refurbishment happens, we will need to find another venue in which to perform – we will keep you informed as things develop.

Orchestra Centenary 2027

Petersfield Orchestra will be 100 years old in 2027! We are planning to mark this 'big birthday' during our 2026- 2027 season, with a focus on the March 2027 Music Festival concert and with a celebration drinks reception for Friends, members and former members in the summer of 2027.

We will let you know how the plans develop in future editions of this newsletter.



Summer 2025 Concert Report - from the back of the violins



The orchestra performing in March this year. Your reporter (Matt Clark) is at the back of the violins, just in front of the French Horns.

A warm summer's evening on Thursday 19th June saw a capacity audience assemble once more at the Petersfield Festival Hall for the summer concert. The afternoon rehearsal had proved encouraging, especially when the exuberant Beethoven drowned out the noise of the scaffolders' electric spanners working on the above-stage lighting rig. All was well in the green room backstage as the players prepared themselves and their instruments, and the soloist for tonight's concerto, virtuoso violinist Charlotte Spruit, had finally made it to Petersfield after two delayed trains on her journey up from Plymouth, where she had performed the Tchaikovsky violin concerto the previous evening.

Unfortunately, all was not going so well front of house. An administrative mix-up meant that the programmes for the evening were still in the now closed and locked Petaprint workshop and not in the hands of the programme sellers. Not a disaster though, as conductor Robin Browning would break his customary silence to introduce each piece. Many of the audience said afterwards how much they valued this additional introduction to the works, and so we have asked him to do it again at the next concert. We will make sure there are programmes available too!

The sombre F minor opening chords of Beethoven Egmont overture took us into the powerful allegro and then on to the galloping final section in the major key, where at the back of the strings it was quite a challenge to keep one eye on Robin's baton and the other on the music. Charlotte Spruit then delighted the entire hall with her performance of the Dvorak violin concerto, drawing a magnificent sound, by turn strident, lyrical and euphoric from her 'Strad'.

The second half of the concert was made up of the six movements of Brahms' Serenade No1 – his first work on a symphonic scale. It was during the vigorous second scherzo that the eye that I had Robin's baton saw the baton itself fly out of my field of vision. I then heard a distinct 'tock', which what I later found out to be the sound of the baton striking leader Helen's violin on its way to the front row. Both conductor and leader responded to this rare and unexpected event with consummate professionalism, missing neither a beat nor a note. Thanks to the audience member who passed the baton back to Robin for the 'rude high spirits' of the rondo finale. Helen's violin now bears a small but noticeable battle scar, but the baton itself was unharmed.

Interview with Piers Burton-Page

Usually nestling at the back of the cello section, a possibly familiar figure is to be seen, peering somewhat short-sightedly at his music. Audience regulars may recognise Piers Burton-Page who has done time as the Orchestra's chair and as secretary of the Friends, and still sits on the repertoire sub-committee. We caught up with him at his home in Buriton.

Q: You must feel like part of the furniture!

A: Actually, I don't! Partly because there is always some coming and going in any such group – people change jobs and move house, or even fall out of love with music – and there are of course plenty of members who have been there longer than I have. Our leader Helen Purchase, for example; she had been leader for some years before I joined. And still is, I'm happy to say.

Q: When did you join?

A: We moved to Buriton in 2004, and my late wife Maggie was delighted to discover that the orchestra here was conducted by the same person who was in charge of the orchestra she had played in in London. Robin Browning was conductor of both Petersfield Orchestra and the Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra. Viola players being in short supply, it was easy for her to transfer allegiance.

Q: What about you?

A: That was more of a challenge! I'd not been playing the cello for very long, only for a couple of years in fact. I only started playing the cello when I was – (whisper it!) – 55 years old and when we came to Hampshire, I was still having lessons. It was two or three years before my teacher, Sue-Anne Emerson, suggested I think of joining an orchestra.

Q: It can't have been a totally unfamiliar environment, surely? Did you have a musical background?

A: Yes – my father studied the French horn at the Royal College of Music, and my mother was a good pianist – I remember begging her to play Mozart sonatas. And my two younger brothers both went to music college as well. I was the odd one out, studying languages at university but spending a lot of time in musical circles including a lot of singing.

Q: What did you do for a living?

A: I couldn't think what to do at first. Eventually I decided to apply to the BBC – the radio was always on in our house! I was lucky enough to be taken on as a studio manager, sort of backroom boy cum sound technician, and I was lucky enough to work on the music side. The 'Beeb' was a great place to work because it offered endless variety,



and so thirty years later I found myself running the Radio 3 announcers department. And doing some presenting myself.

Q: But you'd never run an orchestra

A: No – so it was a baptism of fire when the previous chair, Allison Price, persuaded me to take over her role. I did that for seven years before twisting the arm of my successor, Steve Bartholomew. It's a job that involves oversight of every aspect of the orchestra's life, from the smallest details upwards. The present incumbent has a major task, ensuring that we are in the best state for our centenary, in 2027. One hundred years! It seems scarcely credible, doesn't it? I hope I'll be there to celebrate.



Piers (2nd from right) playing in the March performance of Shostakovich's 10th symphony

Petersfield Orchestra's forthcoming concerts

Thursday 19 March 2026

Bernstein: Overture, *Candide*

Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F, Soloist: Karen Kingsley

Rachmaninov: Symphonic Dances, op. 45 Thursday

18 June 2026

Smetana: Overture and 3 Dances, *The Bartered Bride*

Reinecke: Flute Concerto in D

Dvorak: Slavonic Dances, op. 46

Forthcoming concerts where our players also play

Some members of Petersfield Orchestra also play with other local ensembles, and we list here concerts in which they will be performing in the next few months:

Haslemere Symphony Orchestra is performing at 7.30 pm on Saturday 11th October 2025, at St Christopher's Church, Weyhill, Haslemere. The programme is:

Fanny Mendelssohn: Overture in C

Bruch Violin Concerto no.1 in G minor (soloist Elfida Su Turan)

Felix Mendelssohn Symphony no. 3 (Scottish)

Tickets via <https://www.haslemerehall.co.uk>

Farnborough Concert Orchestra, November 15, 7.30pm, at St Andrew's Garrison Church, Aldershot. The programme is favourites from Classic FM Hall of Fame including Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue (soloist: Firoke Madon, keyboard finalist BBCYM 2022)

Tickets via From the Classic fm Hall of Fame - Farnborough Concert Orchestra

The award-winning St Cats Wind Ensemble Wind Band is performing at 7.00pm on Sunday 23 November at the Rose Theatre, Barton Peveril. The programme is:

Satoshi Yagisawa, Hymn to the Infinite Sky

David Maslanka, Traveler

Johan de Meij, Summer

Lisa De Spain, The Bicycle Shoppe

Julie Giroux, Carnaval!

Jose Rafael Pascual-Vilaplana, Yakka (Pasodoble)

Fergal Carroll, Song of Lir

See their website for more detail:

<https://stcatsensemble.co.uk/about>

South Downs Camerata in performing at St Mary's Church, Liss, at 3.30pm on Sunday 23 November.

Holst St Paul's Suite, Vivaldi Concerto, Dory Macaulay Home, Piazzolla Seasons with the Young SouthDowns Strings and a Sing-Along of Vivaldi's Et in Terra Pacem

Tickets at door £10, students £5, children free

Haslemere Symphony Orchestra and Choir is performing at 7.30 pm on Saturday 6th December 2025 at Haslemere Hall. The programme is:

Rossini: Overture, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*

Saint-Saëns: Suite Algérienne Op. 60

Tchaikovsky: Scenes from *The Nutcracker*

Haydn: Little Organ Mass in B-flat

Rutter: Candlelight

Carol Osgood: I Saw Three Ships

Gardner: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

Tickets via <https://www.haslemerehall.co.uk>

The Gemini Consort will be performing Saturday 6th December at 7.30pm in St Peter's Church, Petersfield, Benjamin Britten's iconic 'A Ceremony of Carols' with local harpist Kate Ham, along with other winter delights.

The Gemini Consort is a small, all-female choir based in Petersfield and directed by Lucy Humphris. They specialise in varied, innovative programmes and raise money for the Rosemary Foundation, Hospice at Home. No need to book a ticket, just come along on the day and leave a donation if you can.