

Walter conducting the Dorset Chamber Orchestra at one of their concerts at St Mary's Church in Dorchester



Star Chamber

As the Dorset Chamber Orchestra marks its 30th anniversary, Tim Smithers reveals the orchestra's reputation for working with rising stars of the classical music scene

THIS autumn Dorset Chamber Orchestra (DChO) celebrates 30 years of live classical music performances in the county. DChO was founded by violinist and conductor Robert Jacoby in 1987 and rapidly established a reputation for a high standard of music-making, with a particular emphasis on authentic musical performance. In 2015 Robert handed the baton (literally) to the current Music Director, Walter Brewster.

“One of the orchestra’s main aims, championed by Robert, has been to support the careers of young professional soloists,” says Walter. “We have been privileged to provide a concerto platform for more than 80 young musicians, some of whom are pursuing distinguished professional careers.”

Walter’s association with DChO goes back to the inaugural concert, as a clarinettist. He has been a concerto soloist with the orchestra on a number of occasions and he has performed with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Walter is also an accomplished pianist and worked for Dorset Music Service



Walter Brewster, Music Director of the Dorset Chamber Orchestra

for over 25 years, which included directorship of the Dorset Youth Orchestra. He is therefore well qualified to develop DChO’s agenda of supporting the careers of young professional soloists, offering opportunities for talented young players to gain orchestral performance experience, and making classical

Natalie Clein first performed with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra at the age of 15. The following year she won BBC Young Musician



Classical guitarist Alexandra Whittingham performing with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra last May



PICTURE BY NIGEL APPERLEY

music accessible to a younger audience.

One of DChO's first soloists in 1987 was Rebecca Gilliver, who is now principal cellist of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO). Rebecca returns to Dorchester as soloist for the first event in DChO's Anniversary season, a Gala Concert on 30th September to perform the wonderfully lyrical *Cello Concerto* by Dvořák. The concert opens with one of the most exciting overtures from the 19th Century, *Le Roi d'Ys* by Lalo, and concludes with Sibelius's most popular *Symphony No. 2*.

Natalie Clein, cellist and artistic director of the Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival, made her debut with DChO at the age of 15 and, the following year, won BBC Young Musician and Eurovision Young Musician of the Year competitions. More recently the orchestra has performed with violinist Jennifer Pike, the youngest-ever winner of the BBC Young Musician competition (in 2002), Cordelia Williams, Piano Winner of BBC Young Musician 2006 and cellist Laura van der Heijden, BBC Young Musician 2012.

Dorset's music-lovers may also have an early sighting of classical stars of the future. Alexandra Whittingham, a student at the Royal Academy of Music, performed the *Guitar Concerto No 1* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra last May. She will perform her first US concert dates next February.

Walter says, "The legacy of DChO is a powerful one. The future life of the orchestra will support the next generation of young soloists and also work to bring home the message that the best music has a continuing and essential relevance within a fast-changing society,"

One of the highlights of DChO's calendar is the Music for Youth concert. This has been

supported for many years by the actor Martin Clunes OBE. "Martin is not just our Patron, he also performs with us," Walter says. "In 2017 a capacity audience, including over 100 young people, was enchanted by Martin's narration of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. The concert also featured a debut solo performance by a young local trumpeter Tom Stevens, and the first performance of an orchestral piece by young Dorset composer Sam Watkins."

Martin will be joining the DChO for a special Concert for Youth event on 10 March 2018 as the narrator of Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, featuring a number of young Dorset musicians and a young star soloist. "The concert will also include a new work written by a young composer," adds Walter, who is keen to continue with the orchestra's ethos of encouraging both young musicians and young composers.

Over the last three decades there have been many highlights for the orchestra and their audience, including performances of all the Beethoven Piano Concertos over two days by the DChO President, John Lill, and performances of the complete cycles of the Beethoven and Schubert symphonies. The final concert of the season on 12th May 2018 celebrates the quality of soloists from within the orchestra, featuring no less than eight! The season closes with a performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*.

DChO is already planning for the 2018/19 season and for the next 10 years, presenting a repertoire that will excite, challenge and engage an audience, especially young people.

So, head to St Mary's Church, Dorchester at 7.30pm on 30th September to share the unique experience of live classical music performance with a world class soloist. It's an experience not to be missed. ♦

"One of the orchestra's main aims has been to support the careers of young professional soloists"



Rebecca Gilliver last played with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra when she was a teenage cellist living in Dorchester. She is now Principal cello with the London Symphony Orchestra and will perform the Dvořák *Cello Concerto* at a special gala concert

DORSET CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON 2017 – 2018

30 SEPTEMBER 30TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CONCERT

Overture Le Roi d'Ys - Lalo
Cello Concerto - Dvorák
Soloist: Rebecca Gilliver
Symphony No. 2 – Sibelius

10 MARCH CONCERT FOR YOUTH FEATURING MARTIN CLUNES

Martin Clunes narrates *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saëns at this afternoon concert.

12 MAY FINAL CONCERT OF THE SEASON

Overture The Fair Melusine - Mendelssohn
Concerto for 4 violins - Vivaldi
Sinfonia Concertante for 4 Winds and Orchestra - Mozart
Symphony No. 7 - Beethoven

TICKETS: All concerts at St Mary's Church, Edward Road, Dorchester DT1 2HL. October, November & May Concerts £12.50 in advance, £13.50 at the door. Music for Youth Concert £11. Under-18s: £1. Advance tickets dorsetchamberorchestra.org or from Harmony Music, Dorchester 01305 260360. Season Tickets: £35 exclusively available to Friends of Dorset Chamber Orchestra. More at dorsetchamberorchestra.org.

25 NOVEMBER

Duncan Honeybourne 40th Birthday Concert

Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream - Mendelssohn
Piano Concerto in A minor - Schumann
Variations on a Theme of Haydn - Brahms
Piano Concerto in F minor - Henselt



Duncan Honeybourne is celebrating his 40th birthday playing two concertos with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra

Dorset-born international pianist Duncan Honeybourne celebrates his 40th birthday by performing two concertos, Schumann and Henselt, at DChO's 25th November concert. "The Robert Schumann *A minor* is one of my favourite piano concertos, and the first one I ever played in public, 25 years ago. So it's a joy to be playing it with the DChO this autumn. But I was even more excited and curious when Walter suggested he'd like to couple it with the Henselt *F minor*. This - along with her husband's own concerto of course - was one of Clara Schumann's favourite piano concertos. I think Walter's idea to put the two together is a brainwave of programming. I've always fancied playing two big concertos in the same programme, and when better to do that than to mark my 40th birthday in my own county town!"

Martin Clunes, Patron of the Dorset Chamber Orchestra, with pupils from Cerne Abbas First School at a Youth Concert. Also in shot are Jane Bultz and composer Liz Sharma

