



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

NORTHERN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON

The second half of the Northern Chamber Orchestra's 2022-23 season is now underway, following a very successful start. We were joined by guest soloists **Jennifer Pike** (violin), **Sophie Rosa** (violin), **Guy Johnston** (cello) and **Magnus Johnston** (violin) at The King's School in Macclesfield, and also welcomed conductors **Jamie Phillips** and **Delyana Lazarova**. After some issues with acoustics, the staff of King's School leapt into action to replace the ceiling tiles, "creating a much lighter, brighter, resonant acoustic, defining a more contrasted dynamic range and displaying varying and differing musical sonorities and tonal colours" (Nichola Hunter, flute). We would like to thank King's School for their swift response to our feedback.

The second half of the season features a musical setting of the *Stabat Mater* sequence directed by **Christopher Jones** and sung by soprano **Caroline Taylor** and countertenor **Ralph Thomas Williams** (March 11, St Michael's Church); and a concert devoted to the NCO's outstanding wind section and directed by principal oboe of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, **John Roberts** (April 1). Closing the series on Saturday 6 May, Spanish violinist **Jorge Jimenez** directs the orchestra in three of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos alongside two 20th century works, Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* and Alfred Schnittke's *Suite in the Old Style*.

We have seen an increase in our new attenders since changing venue from The Heritage Centre, along with a marked increase in our young attenders, following the launch of our NCO Futures scheme and our link up with Macclesfield Music Centre. We look forward to welcoming more young people to our concerts in future.

We would like to thank Stockport software company **CDL** for their support of our season. To discuss how you might support the NCO, please contact our Chief Executive Charlie Rowley: charlie@ncorch.co.uk, 0161 247 2220.



We gratefully acknowledge that our Macclesfield season and associated education programme is additionally supported by The Scops Arts Trust and the Ashley Family Foundation.

COMPOSITION PROJECT IN STOCKPORT

In January and early February, we completed our annual composition project with schools across Stockport. Stockport School along with Dial Park, St George's and Great Moor Primary Schools were involved in several days of intense music composition work with our composer in residence James Manson, our principal horn Naomi Atherton, and our



Artist in Association Matthew Sharp. The workshop resulted in a piece of music inspired by Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, which the students of Stockport School performed with members of the NCO at the culmination concert at the school on Monday 13 February. The primary schools also worked on their own interpretations of Bartok's *Romanian Dances*.

Of the project, James Manson said, "for some years now, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Stockport technology company CDL, the NCO has conducted composition workshops in a number of schools in Stockport. At Stockport School this year, James and Naomi spent a day in January showing some composition techniques students from across the school. Collecting in all the ideas which they generated on that day, James has strung them together and orchestrated them to create a Rondo, a form which is used by Mozart in his clarinet concerto, a current GCSE set work." Director of Music at Stockport School, Rachel Didcote, added "Once again it was an inspiring day for the students and what a moment to hear the new Stockport School Rondo piece 2023 come together. It is always a highlight of the year having the NCO come in to school".

The work was also performed at our concert in Romiley on Sunday 19 February, this time by the full NCO orchestra. We thank CDL for their ongoing sponsorship of our Education programme.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND SUCCESS

We are thrilled to announce that we have been successful in our application to Arts Council England to produce a series of concerts in Wirral and Chester in 2023 and 2024. The series will include concerts at Chester's Storyhouse and Port Sunlight's Hulme Hall, along with education and outreach work with schools, libraries, dementia care homes, dance groups and elders groups. Further information about this project will be available soon. We would like to thank Arts Council England for their support.

BUXTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

We are also excited to reveal that we will once again be part of the Buxton International Festival. Taking place between 6 - 23 July this year, we will be the house orchestra for the performances of Bellini's exhilarating opera *La sonnambula*, Mozart's *Il re pastore* and the world premiere of Michael Williams's *The Land of Might-Have-Been*, inspired by the songs of Ivor Novello. Tickets are on sale from buxtonfestival.co.uk from 4 April.

