



Damian Iorio
**Artistic
Director &
conductor of
the Senior
orchestra**



A lot has happened since our last newsletter and NYSO has gone through some changes.

The Intermediate Orchestra grew to the point where we were able to split it into two orchestras, and this year we started our youngest orchestra, the Sinfonietta, for 7-10 year olds. Alongside this, the Senior Orchestra has been going from strength to strength and has performed in important festivals in the UK.

Expanding NYSO has allowed us to have the numbers needed to cement a relationship with Stamford School, which has now become our base at Easter and Summer. The school is able to offer the rehearsal spaces that we need for each orchestra, as well as comfortable accommodation and good food (always important!). We have established a good relationship with the staff there and it is lovely to return to a place we are familiar with.

“NYSO really inspired and motivated me to focus on my technique, and to think about aspects of my playing, developing acute listening skills and collaborating with the other musicians for a collective sound.”

“I loved the whole concert experience. I thought we all played our best, and it was so enjoyable being on stage. I also didn't feel too nervous, which comes down to the excellent preparation and coaching.”

– 2023 members



The expansion of NYSO has succeeded thanks to the hard work of many people, and I would like to thank in particular Rachel Erdos for her hard work and vision with the intermediate orchestras. They have now been renamed as the Sinfonia and Camerata orchestras; we have a clear identity for each orchestra, and Rachel continues to oversee both as Orchestra Director, as well as conducting the Sinfonia. The growth of the Sinfonia and Camerata orchestras has also given us the opportunity to bring in new tutors and conductors. Suzie Collier

returned to the Camerata last year after stepping in at short notice in 2021. Suzie is a wonderful educator and conductor and brought with her lots of energy and ideas. This year Leon Bosch, who was the NYSO bass tutor for many years, returned in the role of conductor, bringing with him his extensive experience and knowledge of string playing.



The Sinfonietta is the latest part of the plan to develop NYSO into a strong and wide reaching organisation. I am very happy that Monica Wilkinson (who has been our resident Dalcroze teacher) agreed to become Orchestra Director, and she has brought in a highly talented and experienced team. The first year has been a big success and I would like to thank them, as well as board member David Woodhead, for creating a fun, creative and interesting experience for these young musicians.

The Senior Orchestra had a big year which culminated in a fantastic performance at Snape Maltings, the home of Benjamin Britten. Our programme was Britten's Simple Symphony, Anna Clyne's Stride, an arrangement of Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata by the American composer Jeffrey Briggs, and Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony. The Easter residency, as always, was mainly focused on sectional rehearsals with a few full rehearsals dotted in between. I like to use the Easter workshop to show parents how we rehearse and also to explain and illustrate the music, giving parents and players more of an insight into the pieces and the composers. This time I gave a lecture about the Shostakovich with recordings of the original music he quotes from. It is a complicated and personal work which has many layers, and I wanted to give the players a deeper understanding and insight into the music.



During the summer residency we had the pleasure of a visit by founder Viviane Ronchetti, who also attended the concert at Snape Maltings. This was the first time Viviane has returned to observe since stepping down in 2012 and it was a lovely to see her again and to show her just how well her creation is thriving!



The first concert the Seniors performed was at Stamford School, in front of the students from the other orchestras as well as some Stamford locals who heard about our concerts at the school. The following day we recorded the whole programme on audio and video with the help of Tomo Kimura, who is now our media guru as well as a Pastoral Team member. We later watched and analysed it together and then rehearsed what we all felt needed improving. It was a great learning exercise for everyone and perfect preparation for the highlight of the year - our debut at Snape Maltings. We travelled to Suffolk the day before the concert, and enjoyed a lovely evening walk along the River Orwell. Snape Maltings has probably the best acoustics in the UK for a string orchestra. It was a joy to perform there and our concert was a big success; it had sold well and we had a good audience. The orchestra played at a very high level and enjoyed performing in the wonderful acoustics that the hall offers, and it was especially exciting for them to perform Britten in his own hall! Performing in such prestigious venues is part of the valuable experience that NYSO offers.

“I have been able to play repertoire and pieces by amazing composers which I didn't think would be possible until much later in my musical journey.”

It is important to mention, as always, the people who work tirelessly to make this all work. None of this would happen without the effort and energy given by our wonderful Administrator Carol Parker, supported by Anne-Marie Norman. The board, headed by Charles Clark, is a great support and has facilitated the various changes we have implemented over the years. The Pastoral Team, headed by Rowena Taylor, are just amazing and create a unique atmosphere. The team now consists mostly of ex-members of NYSO which is quite special! Last but not least, I would like to thank our fantastic music team, who are fundamental to the musical success of all four orchestras.

I end with the news that Carol Parker has sadly decided to step down as Administrator. We have worked closely together for 11 years and it is hard to express just how important she has been to NYSO. Carol won't disappear completely and will continue to help a little behind the scenes, but I want to take this opportunity to thank Carol for everything she has done. NYSO wouldn't be where it is now without her!

We are fortunately blessed to have found her successor very close to home. Rowena Taylor, current Head of Pastoral and a former member of NYSO herself, has agreed to take over from Carol. Rowena has been part of NYSO for a long time and I couldn't imagine a better person to continue the great work that Carol has done.





Rachel Erdos – Director of Camerata & Sinfonia orchestras, Sinfonia Conductor

Over the years, one of the most exciting things about directing the NYSO Sinfonia and Camerata residencies has been to watch young people join the NYSO family at age 8 or 9, and to grow and develop as highly skilled, sensitive, intelligent, and articulate musicians, often all the way into adulthood. Many even come back as pastoral staff, and it is a joy to spend time with them all. As this is the first year of NYSO Sinfonietta, we now have the pleasure of following the journey of our young musicians from an even more formative stage.

Central to our ethos of learning from one another (no matter whether we are older or younger, more or less experienced musicians) is the opportunity for all the orchestras to live together, and to watch and listen to each other. To this end, Camerata and Sinfonia orchestras also prepare a work to perform together. This summer they performed the 'Northern Sketches' by Carse. We also had one further side-by-side experience, as Sinfonietta members prepared a tango with Sinfonia; a great addition to the summer concert!

2023 saw us spend two intensive and happy residencies together; a shorter preparatory residency at Easter and a longer summer residency. The variety of music studied builds an understanding of different styles and techniques. Sinfonia's repertoire ranged from renaissance to romantic, with works by Purcell, Haydn and Glazunov. We were delighted to welcome Leon Bosch to conduct Camerata. They studied a fascinating programme of lesser-known music; a symphony of the classical composer Sperger, Armenian composer Arutiunian's exciting sinfonietta, and Bloch's 'Nigun' (with Camerata leader, Gabriella Kohler, as soloist).

"Best course out there!"



All the playing is supported by Dalcroze work and musicianship; through singing linked to the repertoire, plus Holger's daily choir rehearsals, enjoyed by students, tutors and pastoral staff alike. Always a great moment to make music together. Now we look forward to NYSO 2024!



The string orchestra remains one of the most effective mediums for learning the art of musical collaboration; most of the distinguished orchestral players that I know credit participation in string orchestras during their formative years as the deciding factor in their own musical success.

As a young musician I too was lucky enough to participate in an excellent junior string project, at the South African College of Music of the University of Cape Town, run by the violinist Noel Travers. His exemplary training, and membership of the groundbreaking Archi Ensemble – a 12-piece string ensemble – provided me with a foundation secure enough to sustain a decades-long career at the pinnacle of the music profession.

But now, having left The Academy of St Martin in the Fields after 20 years as the orchestra's principal double bass, I have been entrusted with imparting some of that wisdom to the musicians of the NYSO Camerata, from the podium.

Meaningful musical collaboration and fulfillment is not possible without the requisite technical, intellectual, and aesthetic skills, and teaching the complex ingredients of coherent musicianship to young musicians at the start of their respective musical journeys is a privilege and challenge.

The developmental route I have chosen for the musicians of the Camerata embraces a judicious blend of standard repertoire, excellent works by neglected composers, and unknown works by mainstream composers. For the summer residency, our programme of compositions by Johann Matthias Sperger, Edvard Grieg, Ernst Bloch and Alexander Arutiunian proved to be challenging and enjoyable in equal measure.

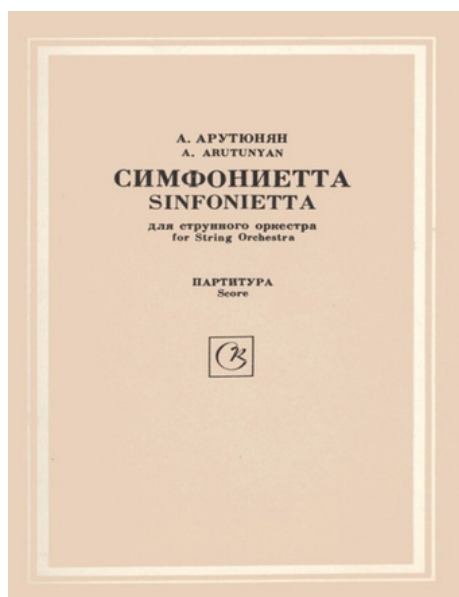


Mastering the classical idiom is a stern challenge for any orchestra: flawless and almost nonchalant technical mastery must be allied to unimpeachable musical integrity. The String Symphony in F major by Haydn's contemporary Johann Matthias Sperger (1750–1812) proved infinitely more challenging than everyone had initially envisaged, and though we made excellent headway, developing supreme virtuosity in the first violins, dynamic inner parts, and sensitive bass lines, remains a work in progress.



Grieg's well known Holberg Suite represented the Camerata's foray into standard repertoire, and our objective was to find effective solutions to the problems inherent in the music: reliable rhythmic accuracy in the opening Prelude proved elusive, but the ensuing movements embodied the requisite elegance, charm and pathos, and the nimble violin and viola solos of the final Rigaudon presented an excellent opportunity for the orchestra's leader and principal viola - Gabriella Kohler and Hannah Wigdahl - to shine.

Performing as soloist with an orchestra, as opposed to merely playing with piano, requires far greater projection and flexibility, and this is a skill worth learning early on. The Camerata's leader, Gabriella Kohler, enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to perform an excellent arrangement of Bloch's Nigun for solo violin with string orchestra. Accompanying what is in effect a poignant improvisation for solo violin required consummate levels of concentration from the Camerata musicians, who had the additional and heightened responsibility of an orchestra accompanying one of its own members.



Arutiunian - Sinfonietta Score

The final piece on our programme was Alexander Arutiunian's Sinfonietta for Strings. This vibrant Sinfonietta is an instantly captivating piece of music that is as much fun to play as it is to listen to. Although technically challenging in a myriad of ways, it was immediately popular with all the members of the Camerata, who found it enormously inspiring and rewarding to play.

They performed it with utter abandon and looked upon it as THEIR piece!

And now I face the challenge of finding an equally life affirming composition for the NYSO Camerata's next residency.



"I love the friends I have made at NYSO. During free time we played a lot of pool and table tennis in the common room, and during games I loved playing football and rounders. I also thought it was great that the pastoral staff joined in with a lot of things like rugby, rounders and just general conversation. Staff vs pupils rounders was so much fun! I love NYSO and hopefully can come back next year."



This year, NYSO has welcomed a new family member. Sinfonietta was set up for children aged 7 – 10 with the aim of building the foundations of musicianship and string playing, which are harder to teach in individual lessons.

The Easter residency was a carefully planned 52-hour (not that any of us were counting...!) experiment. We were delighted with the result and were able to build on this for the summer residency.

Unlike the residencies for more experienced players, the repertoire and focus of Sinfonietta is self-contained within each mini residency. Working without sheet music, the music is learned away from instruments through listening, singing and movement. It was noticeable at Easter that many of the youngsters were rather flummoxed by this approach, but they all learned to play *The High Road To Linton* by the time of the Workshop. However, in the summer, as soon as they'd learned to sing the Congolese folk song *Si Si Si*, many of them were immediately able to play it by ear. Kim Vaughan (lower strings coach) and I had to hold our jaws up!

Creativity and communication lies at the heart of Sinfonietta. The third member of our teaching team (Adelaide Carlow at Easter and Anita Memmott this summer) is responsible for leading the children in more singing activities and creative work based around stories. Some beautiful poems were produced at Easter, and no one will forget the African folk tale that was acted out with musical improvisations this summer. *Awongalema!*

Several of the members of Sinfonietta will be auditioning for Sinfonia this year. The successful applicants will arrive understanding that successful and meaningful music-making is about so much more than the notes on the page.



Monica Wilkinson
–
Sinfonietta Director



“This was a great residential experience for my daughter, and she would do it again.”

Charles Clark – NYSO Chairman

I always enjoy my visits to the NYSO residencies. As chairman of NYSO I believe it is important to spend a few days experiencing it all at first hand. It is also a great pleasure. The determination, collaboration, enthusiasm and talent of every single person is so invigorating.



I feel spoiled to see and hear such wonderful live music all day long! Sitting in a rehearsal is fascinating to see how the sound can change in just a few minutes.

This year saw the addition of our fourth orchestra, the NYSO Sinfonietta, for our youngest players with (given the age range) three day residencies at Easter and Summer. I am immensely grateful to Monica Wilkinson and David Woodhead for their work in devising and bringing this from drawing board to reality. Monica's description of it in this newsletter cannot be bettered.

The combined concert by the Camerata, Sinfonia and Sinfonietta orchestras in Stamford was a joy to attend as were the senior orchestra concerts in Stamford and at Snape Maltings. At Snape it was a

great pleasure to welcome in the audience our founder Viviane Ronchetti and her husband Roger Garland, who both coached the violin sections for many years.

Ensuring that all players who merit a place in NYSO can attend regardless of family circumstances has always been a central part of the NYSO ethos. We recognise that times are increasingly harder for everyone. Despite rising costs we will keep the fee levels for next year at the same rate as this last year. We also offer bursary funding where appropriate to help with the fees.

I would like to end by paying particular thanks to Carol Parker, our Administrator who has done so much for NYSO and our players over so many years. Carol has decided that now is the right time to stand back from this role and I am delighted that Rowena Taylor will be our new Administrator. Rowena is a former NYSO cellist and is also our Pastoral Director. Carol will still remain involved with NYSO but without the day to day responsibilities.

“I shall be very sad to move on from NYSO, it's been a huge and much-treasured part of my life. The current NYSO formula is something I really believe in. Here's to future years of fantastic concerts, it's been a pleasure.”

– Jude Chandler, NYSO member of 9 years

Carol Parker – NYSO Administrator 2012 – 2023

Time to say goodbye!



After more than 11 years of NYSO administration it is time to hand over the reins to someone new.

Having been involved with NYSO for some 19 years, when my son was a member, NYSO has developed and expanded, and I have been privileged to have been a part of this.

Watching members become wonderful, caring human beings, growing in confidence and making long lasting friendships has been a real highlight for me.

Wishing NYSO all the best going forward.

Rowena Taylor – NYSO Administrator & Pastoral Director



Having been a part of the NYSO family for many years (initially as a cellist in the senior orchestra, then as a Pastoral Assistant, and this year as Pastoral Director), I can honestly say that NYSO has been one of the biggest highlights of my life so far. As a player, I saw the residencies as a core experience in my musical learning – experiences from which I am still benefitting today. When I was invited back as a Pastoral Assistant, I had no idea that a few years down the line I would be taking on not only the role of Pastoral Director, but also the duties of Administrator. Carol has set the bar very high with all the fantastic work and effort she has put into NYSO over the years. I hope to do her proud.

As a NYSO member, something that set NYSO apart from other music residencies was the sense of family and inclusion that it fostered. I always felt like a valued part of the team, perhaps partly due to the smaller orchestra size, but mainly due to the wonderful environment that was created by the Pastoral Team and other players. Now as Pastoral Director, it has been my privilege to oversee all four orchestral residencies this year, where it was my priority to ensure that everyone who came to NYSO had as enjoyable an experience as I did!



With many of our Pastoral Assistants being ex-members of NYSO, we know how intense the days of rehearsals are, and this year worked to provide an array of downtime activities including rounders, swimming and a Ceilidh (organised by Senior Double Bass player Jude, with a live Ceilidh band featuring several Pastoral Assistants!).

I am excited to continue working with our ever-growing family of fantastic musicians, and look forward to hearing the music they dive into in 2024...



2023 Summer residency Pastoral Team (Senior, Camerata & Sinfonia Orchestras)

A huge thank you to the whole NYSO 2023 team!

Music Coaches

Senior Orchestra: Enrico Alvares, Jonathan Barritt, Diana Cummings, Benjamin Russell, Gillian Thoday & Alex Thorndike

Camerata & Sinfonia: Sally-Anne Anderson, Holger Aston, John Crawford, Cathy Elliot, Vanessa Gaidoni, Rebecca Leyton-Smith, Daisy Spears, Rebecca Spencer, Rafael Todes & Monica Wilkinson

Sinfonietta: Adelaide Carlow, Anita Memmott & Kim Vaughan

Support Team

Anne-Marie Norman - Co-ordinator of external engagements

Jane MacArthur - Accountant

Tomo Kimura - Social Media Manager & Photographer

Pastoral Team

Seniors: Lara Agar & Tomo Kimura

Camerata & Sinfonia: Stephen Nurse (Team Leader), Caroline Blair, Charlotte Howdle, Isabel Irvine, Laura Massey, Non Morgan, Callum Sherriff & Cai Waverley-Hudson

Sinfonietta: Ellie Church, Adam Cubitt, Elizabeth Edwards, Maxim Del-Mar, Harry Nim & Francesca Pringle

Music Assistants: Theo Vinden & Emma James

A special thank you to
NYSO's Trustees, Patrons and
Sponsors for their continued
support.