



Stroud Symphony Orchestra

Information for members/ prospective members

General: we don't have a mission statement. Broadly speaking we aim to play to the best of our ability under encouraging and supportive direction, and have as much fun as possible doing it.

The SSO is a registered charity (No 293456) and we welcome support from individuals and organisations.

Our website: the SSO website, www.stroudsymphony.org.uk, is regularly updated and useful to both members and potential members. It includes our planned future programmes and our past programmes.

Rehearsals: we meet weekly during school terms on Wednesdays from 7.45 to 9.45 with a short drinks break. We rehearse in the music block of Marling High School, Downfield Road, off Cainscross Road, Stroud. The turning is close to the AAS Vets building and No. 134 hotel. The centre is at the far end of this (dead end) road on the right and there is plenty of parking on both sides of the road or in school car parks which are normally open. The centre is wheelchair accessible.

It is really helpful if anyone unable to attend a rehearsal lets their section leader/other member know.

There are occasional sectional rehearsals.

Concerts: we give three concerts year, usually in March, June and November. Our regular venue is Holy Trinity Church Stroud, next to the hospital. Final rehearsal is usually 2pm, on the day, in the church, and concert start time is normally 7.30.

Concert Dress: all black with an optional splash of red;

Our concert manager co-ordinates the logistics necessary to ensure concerts run smoothly.

Retiring collections at concerts: we take pride in supporting local or national charities by selecting an organisation to give a very brief interval talk and take a retiring collection at the end of each concert. Over the years many thousands of pounds have been raised. Members are periodically invited to nominate suggested charities and the committee will then make the selection.

Our piano: our Yamaha grand piano was bought in 2011 by the orchestra with additional contributions from individual members and others. It is housed in Holy Trinity Church. This acquisition has enabled us to tackle major piano works without the cost and logistics involved in hiring a grand piano.



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Music: we play “standard” repertoire pieces with a few additions, e.g. new work by local composers. Concerts will usually comprise a major work, symphony or concerto, with various other pieces designed to give a balanced programme. We have been lucky enough to be joined by super soloists enabling us to play some major concertos. Members knowing of potential soloists should talk to the musical director.

Members are asked to make suggestions for future programmes which are then considered by an annual open-to-all programme planning meeting. Final decisions rest with our musical director. One of his considerations is always to ensure that all programmes include parts for every section of the orchestra. Only rarely will we perform a strings-only piece, for example.

Sheet music is available (usually one part for each member) at rehearsals and may be taken away for private practice. All music must be returned to the librarian before or at concerts.

Members: players should be competent sight readers and willing to spend some time practising outside rehearsals. There are no auditions: we feel that individuals will be able to make decisions about their own standard and if the SSO is right for them by attending one or more rehearsals or talking to the musical director. Wind players should be aware that they might be playing virtual solo parts and prepared to do this before applying to join.

Joining: whilst string sections are almost always able to welcome new players there may be limited vacancies in the wind/brass sections. The musical director, in consultation with section leaders, will make final decisions about this. Otherwise, if a player feels the orchestra is right for her/him it's, as it always is, a matter of paying subs and giving details to the membership secretary. Members who know of players who might like to join can put them in touch with any committee member or bring them to a rehearsal.

Subscriptions: can be paid termly or annually. There are concessions which can be discussed with the membership secretary and apply to, e.g., students. Members who pay tax can give gift aid at no additional cost to them, which benefits the orchestra. Subscriptions are intended cover our fixed costs which include some honoraria and the hiring of the rehearsal venue. We aim to keep subs as low as is consistent with covering expenditure.

Member contact information: members are invited to make their contact details available to all other members. There is no assumption that anyone will be willing to do this and members must give express permission for it to be done, likewise they may specify that only part information may be shared, e.g. email. The objective is



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both practical, to enable information to be shared, and social. For example, members may wish to contact others to make up a chamber group, or offer information about concerts/events.

Our committee: this comprises our musical director, chairman, leader, treasurer, secretary, librarian, membership secretary, concert manager and “ordinary” members. All officers are elected at the AGM (see below) or when a vacancy arises. Any member of the orchestra wishing to get involved with running the orchestra is welcome to approach a committee member or stand for election, or offer a specific service to the orchestra as delegated by the committee.

The committee meets three times each year, normally on the 1st Tuesday after the start of term. If any orchestra member has anything s/he would like the committee to discuss, or has a proposal to make, or wishes to attend a committee meeting to support a proposal, s/he should talk to the chairman or secretary in good time for the next committee.

The committee also has a mini-meeting at the end of the evening rehearsal a few weeks before the concert to ensure everything is in place for the event.

Committee meeting minutes are available to all members on request to the secretary.

Your current committee: Committee members are listed in the AGM minutes and on the website. Please contact the secretary (or any other committee member) if you have any queries.

AGM: the AGM is usually held at or after the end of the summer term and all are welcome. The venue may vary as hospitality is offered by an orchestra member. Its agenda includes all the usual basic matters and elections, as well as any issues raised by orchestra members (with advance notice via the secretary). Business is concluded as swiftly as possible to enable members to share a bring-a-dish supper.

And finally

The SSO wants all members to feel they can have a say in the running of the orchestra. All contributions, even – or especially – preparing mid rehearsal refreshments are very important.

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