

THE PRESS

Academy of St Olave's: Children's concert, 10.30am; Summer Concert, 8pm, St Olave's Church, Marygate, York, June 20

11:23am Friday 19th June 2009

By Charles Hutchinson



John Hastie, in the far right of the picture, rehearsing with the Academy of St Olave's.

MUSICAL director John Hastie will conduct the Academy of St Olave's for the last time tomorrow evening.

After 12 years with the York chamber orchestra, he is to retire from his post at the age of 70 and will finish the academy's 2009 season with the traditional double helping of concerts in St Olave's Church, Marygate.

A morning concert for children will start at 10.30am and last just under an hour, followed later in the day by the Summer Concert at 8pm.

Reflecting on his 12-year directorship, John says: "It has been a remarkable period during which the orchestra has grown in confidence and assurance. We've explored a wide repertoire, which includes the last symphonies of Mozart and Haydn, most of the Beethoven symphonies, the violin concertos of Beethoven and Mendelssohn and some fascinating French music of the early 20th century."

Picking out highlights, John says: "There was the occasion when my friend and organ teacher, Naji Hakim, came to give the opening recital on the newly rebuilt organ at St Olave's and asked that the string section of the academy play in the first UK performance of his third organ concerto. A great honour!

"Another set of highlights was the two free concerts we gave, the first of them being John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil* in which Christina Waldock was the soloist, followed a year

later by Messiaen's fantastic piece *Et Expecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum* for wind and percussion.

"An orchestra that can play music of such complexity is very special. As a result, audience numbers have grown, a trend that it is hoped will continue."

John's finale tomorrow begins with the children's concert of incidental music from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"This music brilliantly captures the spirit of Shakespeare's drama, and to help to explain the magical story, Ian Small and Clive Goodhead, complete with Bottom's head, will be the narrators," says John.

"In the evening, the programme will of course include Mendelssohn's incidental music – very appropriate as we approach Midsummer's day – and, equally appropriate, two beautifully evocative pieces by Delius, *On Hearing The First Cuckoo In Spring* and *Summer Night On The River*."

The evening will end with Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*.

"Do come! Bring your children in the morning," says John. "They will spend a magical hour hearing wonderful music and learning about this amazing story from Clive Goodhead and Ian Small, who will tell it memorably. Come in the evening. You will hear an orchestra in fine fettle playing a wonderful programme."

Admission for the 10.30am concert is £1 for children, £2 for accompanying adults; 8pm concert, £9, concessions £8, student stand-by £3.

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