

FOUNDING FATHER

Conductor Scott Ellaway discusses the creation of his first orchestra at the tender age of 26

When Scott Ellaway was 11 years old, he felt an urge and decided to go with it. At rehearsal one day, the conductor didn't show up. Ellaway, a trumpet player at the time, seized the opportunity and conducted the other students. 'It felt right,' he recalls. 'It's quite instinctive. I hope I've improved since then!'

Now 26, Ellaway has used his enthusiasm for conducting and training to create an ensemble of 72 musicians, all still in full-time higher education, called Orchestra Europa (OE). 'We're really looking after that crossover, which is crucial,' he notes. 'So for instance, we'll take on a postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music that might be on a two-year course, and you're able to stay with the orchestra for up to three years, so he'll do two years at the academy and then do one year out on the road.'

Ellaway was inspired while still a student at Oxford, when he attended a talk by Michael Tilson Thomas. Upon graduating, he took a spur-of-the-moment trip to San Francisco in the hope that Tilson Thomas would meet with him. In fact, the maestro invited him to spend time at the New World Symphony (NWS), his music academy in Miami (see opposite). Back in the UK, Ellaway realised that there wasn't a similar programme in the UK or mainland Europe. His chance to set one up came in 2006 after a meeting with businessman Andrew White.

Accepting students from 21 to 28, OE started as a chamber orchestra of 40 players and gave two pre-season concerts in January and April of 2008 as a chance to showcase their wares and get some investors. OE has now expanded to 72 musicians, half of whom are British. The other half come from across Europe, most of them postgraduates studying at British



Scott Ellaway
Photo: © Clive Barda
Interview: Annemarie Kropf

conservatoires. Students focus on learning the core repertoire of an orchestra.

'If there's anybody thinking about Orchestra Europa for contemporary music, that just wouldn't be the case,' Ellaway says. 'We have to make sure our musicians are best equipped, that when they go into the LSO and Beethoven comes up, they can absolutely play that.'

Students are also required to take part in the music outreach programme. Partnering with King Solomon Academy in London, the musicians give workshops three times per term, lend ongoing support to music teachers and give hands-on tuition to students as young as four.

'I never expected it to be this huge, never expected it to gather this huge momentum,' Ellaway reflects. 'I mean, originally, when I thought about it, it was going to be a chamber orchestra type group with a few performances. Now it's a symphony orchestra, we're working with some of the world's greatest artists, we're performing all over Europe, we have a huge education outreach programme [...] It's just vast – where has this come from?'

Orchestra Europa concludes its inaugural season with a candlelight concert for the Chichester Festivities on 10 June

Pavel Baleff's contract with the Baden-Baden Philharmonic Orchestra has been extended for a further five years, until the end of 2015. The Bulgarian-born conductor has been with the orchestra since 2007, before which he was general music director at the Halle Opera House. He has conducted more than 40 orchestras in Germany, and over 50 different operas.

The Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra has announced that **Andrew Constantine** has been appointed its seventh music director. His full-time tenure will



Constantine

begin in the 2010-11 season, while he will serve as the orchestra's music director designate until that time. Constantine's appointment ends a two-year search for a successor to Edvard Tchivzhel, who left at the end of the 2007-08 season. The UK-born maestro, who won the first Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in 1991, has been associate conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and in 2007 was appointed music director of the Reading Symphony Orchestra in Pennsylvania.

The Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) has announced that **Paavo Järvi's** contract as music director will be extended for a further three years. The Estonian maestro will be staying with the orchestra until the 2012-13 season. Järvi, 46, who has been with the FRSO since 2006, has led the orchestra on

tours of China and Japan, and recorded works by Bruckner, Brahms, Mahler and Dvořák on labels such as EMI/Virgin and Sony BMG.

UK pianist, composer and broadcaster **Steve Race** died on 22 June. He was 88. Race was possibly best known as the long-serving host of BBC Radio 4 music programme *My Music*, which he presented from 1967 to 1994, also providing the piano accompaniment for the panel game's many rounds. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, Race was also a writer of advertising jingles, crossword compiler and author of several music-themed books.

Peter Spuhler is to be the new general manager of the Badischen Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, Germany. He will begin at the start of the 2011-12 season, when current intendant

Achim Thorwald is due to retire. Since the 2005-06 season, Spuhler has been general manager of both the theatre and philharmonic orchestra of the city of Heidelberg, having previously worked as a dramaturg at the Vienna Schauspielhaus and director of the Tübingen Landestheater.



Photo: © Chris Christodoulou

Paul Watkins has been named as the music director of the English Chamber Orchestra (ECO). The 39-year-old will take up the role at the start of the 2009-10 season, initially for a three-year term – which will include the ensemble's 50th anniversary year in 2010-11. Having performed with the ECO for more than 10 years, and been its associate conductor since 2007, Watkins has also had experience conducting the London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Philharmonia orchestras among many others.



Photo: Marco Borggreve.jpg

German violinist **Antje Weithaas** has accepted the post of music director of the Camerata Bern. She will succeed Erich Höbarth, who has been the group's artistic director since 2000. Weithaas, winner of the 1988 Leipzig Bach Competition and 1991 International Joseph Joachim Violin Competition, has also taught at the Berlin University of Arts and the Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik. Höbarth will continue his association with the ensemble, continuing to conduct its series of Bach concerts with Andrés Schiff, and performing with the

group at subscription concerts and on tour.

John Willan has been appointed to the board of governors of the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). An honorary associate of the RAM, from which he also holds a diploma in piano, Willan has been chairman of the International Artist Managers' Association since January 2006 and is chairman and finance director of artist manager Hazard Chase (HC). Willan has also worked as a classical producer for EMI and established BBC Music Publishing in the 1990s, before leaving in 1999 to focus on HC.

Niklas Willén has been named chief conductor of the Norddeutschen Philharmonie Rostock, as of the start of the 2009-10 season. The Swedish conductor is also to be general music director of the city's Volkstheater. Willén will conduct



Photo: courtesy Patrick Garvey Management

six of the orchestra's 10 concerts in his first season, as well as supplying the musical direction for new productions of *La Traviata* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. The 47-year-old has been principal guest conductor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, chief conductor of the Sønderjyllands Symphony Orchestra in Denmark, as well as principal conductor of the Sundsvall Chamber Orchestra.

Kathleen G Wilson has been appointed interim executive director of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra (CSO), stepping in while a permanent successor to Jan Newcomb is found. Newcomb announced in April that she would be stepping down, soon after the resignation of resident conductor Scott Terrell. Wilson has been with the CSO as one of its principal harpists for 22 seasons, has sat as a member of the City of Charleston Council, and will report directly to the CSO Board of Directors. She is also the first person from her state to swim the English Channel.