

Easter Orchestral Society



Easter Orchestra Week 2027

Tuesday 30 March to Monday 5 April 2027

Ellesmere College, Shropshire, UK

An intensive week playing exciting repertoire in a large symphony orchestra

For experienced adult (18+) amateur orchestral players and budding professionals with excellent sight-reading skills

Free places for string/harp players (18–25)

Full-time students half price

Reduced rates for 18-30-year-olds



EasterOrchSoc.org

Registered Charity No. 1153970



Michael
Thorne
Musical
Director



Lewis
Gaston
Assistant
Musical
Director

"The conductors are absolutely wonderful: there's so much energy there."

"It's been probably one of the best weeks of my life ... genuinely ... it's been so much fun!"

EOS Scholarship Recipients



Repertoire 2027

Study works

Dmitri Shostakovich	Symphony no. 11
Alexander Zemlinsky	The Mermaid

Afternoon play-through works

Béla Bartók	Kossuth
Arthur Bliss	Colour Symphony
Michael Daugherty	Raise the Roof, for Timpani and Orchestra
Marcel Dupré Organ	Concerto in E minor
Joseph Jongen	Symphonie Concertante
Albert Roussel	Bacchus et Ariane Ballet

Evening play-through works

John Adams	The Wound-Dresser
Malcolm Arnold	Padstow Lifeboat
Bach (arr. Stokowski)	Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor
George Butterworth	The Banks of Green Willow
Niels Gade	Echoes of Ossian Overture
Ruth Gipps	Ambarvalia
Edvard Grieg	Symphonic Dances
Elena Kats-Chernin	Rainbow Promise
Franz Liszt	Les Préludes
Sergei Prokofiev	Piano Concerto no. 3
Nino Rota	Otto e mezzo Suite for Orchestra
Miklós Rózsa	Ben-Hur Suite
Camille Saint-Saëns	Danse Macabre
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Sleeping Beauty Suite
Joaquín Turina	Danzas Fantásticas
Kurt Weill (arr. Bennett)	Lady in the Dark
Grace Williams	Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes

Final morning play-through work

Camille Saint-Saëns	Organ Symphony
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The Music

- Full-scale symphony orchestra with complete string sections
- Ambitious, rarely performed repertoire alongside favourites
- Challenging, immersive rehearsals in a supportive atmosphere
- Dedicated spaces for optional chamber music

Accommodation and Facilities

- Single, twin, and double rooms (standard and en-suite options)
- Non-residential places available
- On-site BYO bar, heated swimming pool, gym, tennis courts, golf course, and free parking
- Village shops and traditional pubs within easy walking distance

Subscriptions (per person)

- Single room (shared bathroom): £600
- Single room (shared bathroom, aged 30 and under): £450
- En-suite single room: £675
- En-suite double room: £645
- Twin room (shared bathroom): £570
- Full-time Students: £300
- Under-31 rate: £450
- Non-resident: £305

Apply online at EasterOrchSoc.org



Musical Direction and Daily Routine

Rehearsals are directed by conductors Michael Thorne and Lewis Gaston, with two experienced leaders alternating at the front of the orchestra. The week concludes with an informal performance of the principal works.

- Morning: Intensive rehearsal on principal works
- Afternoon: Free time, chamber music, or exploring Shropshire
- Late Afternoon: Full orchestral play-through of a major work or large-scale symphony
- Evening: Lighter play-through repertoire, followed by socialising in the on-site "Bring Your Own Beverage" bar

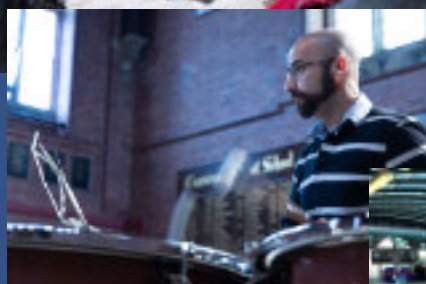
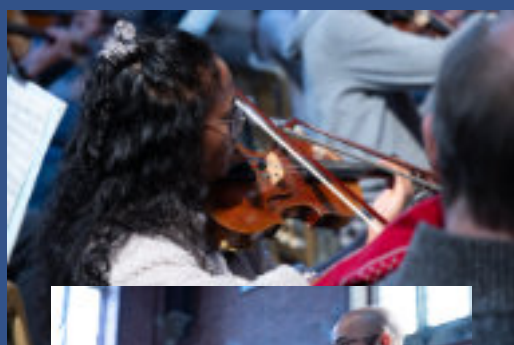
Player Standard and Applications

Places are suitable for players of Grade 8 standard or above with strong orchestral experience and excellent sight-reading ability.

- Applications open August 2026, with early booking strongly advised because of high demand (particularly for wind and brass)
- Priority booking applies to applications received before 30 September 2026 from players who attended in the previous two years
- Please do not arrange travel or external accommodation until written confirmation is received from the Secretary
- Acceptance decisions by the Musical Director are final

Discounts and Scholarships

- Scholarships: A limited number of fully funded places for string and harp players aged 18 to 25
- Student Discount: Half-price places available across all sections
- Under-31 Rate: £450 for a standard single room for players aged 30 or under on 30 March 2027



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Musical direction/conductors

Michael Thorne, Musical Director

Michael Thorne's musical journey started as a bassoonist before turning to conducting, leading the Cardiff Chamber Orchestra and City of Cardiff Symphony Orchestra through the 1980s and the New Tyneside and Tynedale Symphony Orchestras through the 1990s.

He has been Musical Director of the Easter Orchestral Society since 1992, championing modern symphonic repertoire by composers including Rautavaara, Messiaen, Lutosławski and Adès.

Co-founder and conductor of the Edinburgh Players Opera Group, he has led three complete Wagner Ring cycles alongside *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal* and major Strauss operas, and has conducted extensively for New Palace Opera and Saffron Opera Group to widespread critical acclaim (*The Guardian*, *Seen and Heard International*).



Lewis Gaston, Assistant Musical Director

Lewis Gaston conducts across the UK and internationally, combining performance, education and research. Recognised in international competitions and masterclasses, he has appeared as guest conductor with the Braşov Philharmonic, Toscana Classica Orchestra, Berlin Sinfonietta, Camerata di Fiorentina and the State Opera Rousse.

He is Music Director of Kingston Philharmonia and Guildford Opera, alongside guest conducting for numerous London orchestras and opera companies. Specialising in opera with a repertory of around 50 works, he made his Opera Holland Park debut in 2026 conducting Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* and Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*.

As a lecturer and conductor for Opera Prelude, he gave the UK premiere of Mercadante's *Don Chisciotte alle nozze di Gamaccio*.



Easter Orchestral Society

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