Sheffield Chamber Orchestra appoints Sarah Fox as new Chairman

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Experienced violinist and long-standing orchestra member takes the helm, with ambitions to grow audiences and nurture young musical talent

Sheffield Chamber Orchestra
(SCO) has appointed Sarah Fox as its new Chairman, following the retirement of Julie Ryan, who led the orchestra for nine years.

A violinist who has played with SCO for 13 years, Sarah brings extensive musical experience, a deep understanding of the orchestra and a strong commitment to its future. Having served on the orchestra's committee for eight years and become a trustee of its charity, she is already well acquainted with the work involved in keeping the organisation thriving.

Sarah's musical journey began at the age of nine, and she has since enjoyed a varied performing career with orchestras and chamber groups across the country. She currently leads the Lindsey Chamber Orchestra in North Lincolnshire and also plays with the Greenwich Chamber Orchestra and Boyce Orchestra when commitments allow. Alongside her orchestral work, she performs regularly with a number of string quartets and other chamber groups.

Her earlier performing experience includes leading the Rochford Ensemble and playing with ensembles such as Lincoln Pro Musica, Lincolnshire Philharmonia Orchestra and Grimsby Symphony Orchestra, as well as numerous other groups. Her early musical development included leading the Scunthorpe and District Schools Orchestra, playing with Hull Youth Orchestra and attending courses organised by the National Association of Youth Orchestras.

She joined Sheffield Chamber Orchestra 13 years ago and has particularly valued its friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to perform a varied repertoire alongside fellow musicians.

As well as playing with the orchestra, Sarah has made a substantial contribution behind the scenes, helping to produce concert publicity and programmes, writing programme notes and supporting the orchestra's return to rehearsals and performances following the Covid pandemic.

She also brings considerable professional leadership and organisational experience. Before retiring, Sarah enjoyed a long career in the NHS, working in both clinical and managerial roles as a Consultant Radiographic Practitioner. Having led an imaging team for many years, she believes the skills she developed will be valuable in her new role.

“After having led an imaging team for many years I will be able to transfer the organisational and leadership skills learnt to help me coordinate all the necessary aspects of the running of the orchestra,” she said.

Looking ahead, Sarah is keen to build on the orchestra's recent development, raise its profile and encourage more people to experience the excitement of live orchestral music.

One of her particular priorities is supporting young musicians. She is a strong advocate of SCO's annual *Accent on Youth* concert, which provides young performers with the opportunity to perform in front of an audience.

“I want to build upon that change to promote the orchestra, to increase the number of people that come to the concerts and especially to nurture the next generation so that music making can continue for many years to come,” she explained.

Sarah also sees an exciting opportunity for the orchestra to play a more prominent role in Sheffield's cultural life, particularly as the city bids to become UK City of Culture.

“Now that Sheffield is in the running for the City of Culture, I would like to be able to promote SCO as part of that and show the city and beyond what a wonderful orchestra we have.”

She is keen to make the orchestra accessible to everyone, including people who may never have

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attended a classical concert.

“For those who haven't been before I would say: ‘Come along and listen, we play some fantastic music which sounds so special when played live. Come along and listen and meet the city's friendly chamber orchestra.’”

Sheffield Chamber Orchestra looks forward to the next chapter under Sarah's leadership, building on the contribution made by Julie Ryan during her nine years as Chairman and continuing to bring high-quality live orchestral music to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The orchestra’s next concert, “New Voices”, takes place at 7.30pm on Saturday 5th December at Ecclesall Parish Church and features a programme of music including works by Mendelssohn, Louise Farrenc, Handel and Dvo?ák with guest conductor Gina Hazell.

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