Feast your eyes and ears on this

Epsom Choral Society and The Barnes Choir, two amateur choral groups renowned for their passion and dedication to musical excellence, are set to entertain audiences with a grand performance of Sir William Walton's epic masterpiece, **Belshazzar's Feast**, on Saturday 13th July 2024, at **Cadogan Hall** in London. Under the baton of their Musical Director, Julian Collings, and featuring acclaimed baritone soloist, Philip Tebb, this event promises to be an unforgettable evening.

The work will be performed by an 80-piece professional orchestra, including two additional brass bands as called for in Walton's score, complemented by a combined choir of over 160 singers. Such a collaborative effort shows the commitment of both choirs to showcasing the exceptional standard of amateur choral singing prevalent in this country.

The programme will also feature a selection of other notable works, including Vaughan Williams' evocative Five Mystical Songs, Parry's majestic I Was Glad and stirring Blest Pair of Sirens, as well as Elgar's enchanting Serenade for Strings.

"We are thrilled to bring together the talents of Epsom Choral Society and Barnes Choir for this ambitious performance," said Julian Collings, Musical Director of both choirs. "Through our dedication and passion for choral music, we aim to inspire and uplift audiences, showcasing the extraordinary level of artistry that exists within the realm of amateur choral singing."

Tickets for this event are now available from Cadogan Hall box office, offering audiences the opportunity to experience the power and beauty of choral music at its finest. Don't miss this exciting collaboration.

Event Details:

Date: 13th July 2024Time: 7:30 PM

• Venue: Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ

For ticketing information and enquiries:

Please visit www.cadoganhall.com or contact the box office on 020 7730 4500 or online https://cadoganhall.com/whats-on/belshazzars-feast/book/912634/

Northern Lights up Epsom

At their "Mass in Blue" concert Saturday 29th June, St Martins Church, Epsom, the Epsom Chamber Choir succeeded once again in enhancing their reputation for exciting performances of adventurous programmes.

The evening kicked off with "Northern Lights" by the contemporary Latvian composer, **Ēriks Ešenvalds**, and saw the choir placed unusually in the chancel, rather than in their customary position nearer the audience in the transept. This meant that their entrance was not greeted by the usual applause, as the audience hadn't realised that they had arrived! After a vigorous opening, the reason for this placing became apparent as the piece employs tuned wine glasses and chimes which need to be supported – the choir stalls being ideal.

Ešenvalds uses this unusual instrumentation to produce a sustained shimmering sound which underscores the choir particularly effectively in the quieter passages. A timely work for us in the UK, having recently been treated to magical displays of the Northern Lights!

The choir returned to their normal positions for "Stargazer" by the contemporary British composer, **Alec Roth**. His style recalls Holst's and Britten's – especially the Flower Songs – and the choir showed some wonderful legato singing in the shifting harmonic colours.

Vocalist **Maddie Martin** and the **LJ Jazz Trio** then provided us with a jazzy interlude, and the first half of the concert concluded with another contemporary British composer, **Jonathan Dove** and his "The Passing of the Year". These seven, contrasting partsongs – stunningly accompanied by choir member, virtuoso pianist **Stephen Ridge** – gave the choir the chance to display their convincing mastery of complex and quirky rhythms, and cool and hot tone clusters.

The second half of the concert was given over to "Mass in Blue" by a third contemporary British composer, Will Todd. While not a personal favourite, this exciting setting of the mass has gained huge popularity across the choral world. The blues scale permeates the whole work but the choir immediately seemed fully "in the groove", secure and quite at ease with the challenging

blues harmonies and rhythms.

At times, some were unable to resist the urge for spontaneous swaying! Singing almost as a complex backing group to the jazz trio and vocalist, the choir was able to show off its skill with sensitive phrasing and highly effective dynamic contrasts. A convincing performance of a welcome addition to the repertoire.

Nick Landauer

Photo: ©Edward Webb

Two antidotes to politics coming up in Epsom

Need a welcome break from election campaigning, canvassing and TV debate political bickering?

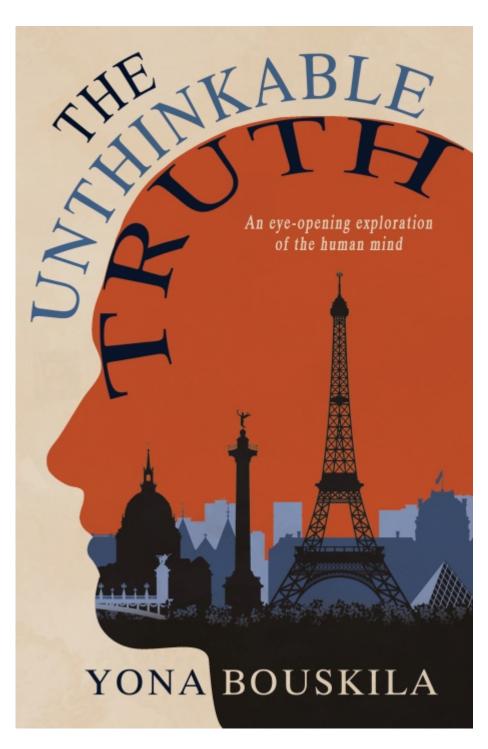
In the heart of Epsom classy professional live jazz comes to the Comrades Club, The Parade Epsom on Thursday 27th June at 7.30pm. Epsom Jazz Club presents Allison Neale and an evening of West Coast jazz with Colin Oxley, Jeremy Brown and Matt Fishwick. Click here for details. Flat rate ticket price of £20 buys you a comfortable seat at a cabaret table and bar. Compares with £30 for Ronnie Scotts and you don't have to commute to London.

On Saturday 29th June at the Epsom Methodist Church an evening of Ukrainian music: brass ensemble, violinist, opera singer and Ukrainian refugee choir and more. Entry is FREE. The evening opens at 6pm with a finger buffet (you may bring a plate to share) and the entertainment begins at 7pm ending about 8.30pm. Come and support professional Ukrainian musicians and enjoy first class music. Ashley Road, Epsom. Epsom Music (a charity) comes together with partner local charities The Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network and Surrey Stands With Ukraine in organising and supporting this event.

Epsom author thinks the unthinkable

Published on 28th May 2024, **The Unthinkable Truth** by **Epsom** based author **Yona Bouskila** is a gripping thriller that delves into the depths of the human mind and explores how real and seemingly innocent scientific discoveries can spiral into global dystopia.

With the authorities set to rob people of their freedom of choice, in order to create a perfectly obedient and mindless society, The Unthinkable Truth questions whether free will is simply an illusion, and whether our own human nature could be the catalyst to our downfall.



Making use of his extensive background in neuroscience, the author expertly transports us into a world where a team of scientists, other experts and a characterful AI are tasked with solving the most baffling question about the human mind, creating a gripping narrative that will appeal to all.

Yona Bouskila ticks all the boxes for fans of both thrillers and intellectually stimulating reads, but most importantly, readers aren't required to know the first thing about science to enjoy his compelling and thought-provoking novel.

In the hope of distracting himself from his heartache, George Bennet, a mild-mannered professor of theoretical physics, accepts an invitation by UNESCO to join an eclectic multidisciplinary team of experts, tasked with unravelling the enigma of the human mind.

As this seemingly innocent academic investigation twists and turns, George suspects that they are being duped into aiding a sinister plan, which threatens to shatter the very foundations of society. When the unthinkable truth emerges as their final conclusion, and the plan is exposed, George and the team must be silenced. No matter the cost.

What is the unthinkable truth? Will George survive to reveal it? Only one thing is certain: humanity will never be the same.

Drawing on solid scientific research, The Unthinkable Truth is a compelling and intricate thriller that will make readers question their own human nature.

A scientist by training, a thinker by nature, and an author by passion, Yona Bouskila has a particular fascination with the human mind in all its aspects. This enduring passion, together with his penchant for thrillers, served as the driving force behind his novel, The Unthinkable Truth, which he describes as a thought-provoking thriller that culminates in an eye-opening revelation on the mind and humanity. He studied biology (with philosophy) and received a PhD in neuroscience from UCLA.

He is involved in medical research and development. Before that, he conducted brain research at several institutions in the US and Europe. He writes short stories, often with a humorous slant, and his debut novel will be published in May 2024. He lives in Epsom with his wife and pets, where he enjoys the Surrey countryside and contemplating life.

A book promotion will end on 10th June (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Unthinkable-Truth-Yona-Bouskila-ebook/dp/B0CW1N2JTJ)

Picture this house in the centre of Epsom!

After much anticipation, **Epsom Picturehouse** — a six-screen cinema, café, and bar at the heart of Epsom Square — will be opening its doors on Saturday 01 June.

The latest addition to the Picturehouse Cinemas family, Epsom Picturehouse is set to encompass all the best that the world of film has to offer. Tickets are on sale now for Furiosa, George Miller's epic Mad Max prequel starring Chris Hemsworth and Anya Taylor-Joy, and film lovers will be able to book soon for new releases including the horror thriller A Quiet Place: Day One and Marvel Studios' Deadpool & Wolverine.

There'll also be chances to catch this year's wonderful family titles, Inside Out 2 and Despicable Me 4 – and don't forget to ask for the discounted Family Ticket! Film fans can also catch up with a wide range of classic movies from directors such as the Coen Brothers and Stanley Kubrick – perfect to revisit on the big screen.

The fun doesn't stop there: we're pleased to announce our Summer Outdoor Cinema season. Enjoy alfresco cinema under the stars as our pop-up screen comes to Bourne Hall in Ewell from Friday 05 July. Bring a blanket for the perfect way to spend a summer evening, with crowd-pleasers like Mamma Mia, Twilight, and Back to the Future!

Find out more at: picturehouses.com/epsom

Clare Binns, Managing Director of Picturehouse Cinemas, says: "We're thrilled to be opening the doors and welcoming the people of Epsom into Picturehouse's 28th cinema – at long last! Our cinemas are shaped by their communities, and with six screens, a bar and a restaurant, this beautiful new venue will be a perfect space for bringing people together to relax, enjoy delicious food and drink, and soak up all the magic of the big screen."

Book a private screening to give your clients, colleagues, or employees a big-screen experience that blows them away, or enjoy a night of gaming in our specially-created event screen.

As part of our nod to local history, we've even dedicated one of our screens to Epsom's first-ever cinema, The Electric Theatre, which opened its doors to the neighbourhood's cinema lovers in 1910. We're proud to continue its legacy by honouring this jewel in the community, where people queued up for hours for silent films, newsreels, and live piano accompaniment.

Epsom Picturehouse Founder Membership is on sale now. The first 1000 customers who purchase an annual Membership for the new cinema will get their names installed in the building, on a specially commissioned Founder Members' Wall. The Memberships will also include an additional 2 free tickets to use when the cinema opens its doors. Learn more and sign up at picturehouses.com/epsom-membership.

About Picturehouse Cinemas:

Picturehouse is an award-winning UK film company incorporating cinema, distribution and home entertainment, formed in 1989 to challenge the multiplex model. Its flagship cinema Picturehouse Central is situated in the heart of London's West End, with the

rest of its 28 venues located across England and Scotland.

Picturehouse's architecturally unique cinemas sit in the heart of local neighbourhoods and cater to a diverse and wide-ranging audience. They provide bespoke food and drink offerings across their cafés, bars, restaurants and members' bars. The programme is curated to champion films made for all ages and backgrounds, from quality mainstream film through to foreign-language and documentary features, as well as live event cinema and in-person events and Q&As when available.

Follow the latest news on Ealing Picturehouse on social media:

Twitter: @Epsom PH

Instagram: @EpsomPicturehouse Facebook: @EpsomPicturehouse

Picture House press release.

Epsom Derby week read?

A tale of triumph and tragedy, dreams and disasters aptly describes the life of Bernard Dillon, as detailed in a new book by Stephen Fernane. This captivating biography delves into the extraordinary journey of Dillon, who won the prestigious Epsom Derby in 1910 on Lemberg. The 2024 Epsom Derby takes place on Saturday 1st June.



Dillon on 1910 Derby winner Lemberg Agence Rol - Gallica Digital Library Public Domain

For the first time since Bernard's death in 1941, a book captures his astonishing rise to success and his subsequent fall from grace due to heavy drinking. From a talented apprentice to a shrewd professional, Bernard Dillon won the Epsom Derby and the Grand Prix de Paris, epitomizing a life of sporting triumph and human tragedy.

In 1901, at the tender age of thirteen, Bernard left Kerry with dreams of becoming a jockey in England. Remarkably, within three years, he had become the most popular sporting personality in both Britain and Ireland.

Stephen Fernane reveals that his fascination with Bernard's sporting achievements and the overshadowing sadness of his later years inspired him to write this book. The fact that Bernard's story is not widely known also motivated him.

As reported in the Irish Independent on 25th May the author said;

"Discovering Bernard's career and learning about all he achieved is what inspired me to write it. The inner demons that led to his demise in later life are just as fascinating. To think that very little is known about someone as colourful and complex as Bernard Dillon is astonishing," Stephen said.

The book, titled *The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby*, nods to Bernard's birthplace at Caherina in Strand Road, Tralee, in 1887.

"I want to bring Bernard home for the book launch. To bring his story back to where it all started, and present it to people who might not know about him. That is the best tribute I can give him. Bernard is a 'Narie' for sure, which is why the Kerins O'Rahilly's GAA Club is the appropriate venue. It's his spiritual home as he was born only a few yards from the clubhouse," Stephen explained.

Bernard Dillon's journey from 1901 to 1911 was anything but smooth as he grappled with celebrity and adversity. Sadly, his downfall included domestic abuse and the mistreatment of his wife, the famous music hall artist Marie Lloyd.

Bernard and Marie met in 1905 and began a turbulent relationship. They were Edwardian England's first celebrity couple, with Marie eighteen years older than Bernard. However, notoriety came at a cost. Bernard's downfall began when he lost his jockey's licence in 1913 over gambling allegations, marking the end of his reputation as a superstar.

Stephen believes it was essential to write Bernard's story due to the fragmented way it exists in the archives. With Marie Lloyd being the more famous personality, information about Bernard's life is usually viewed through the lens of Marie's biographers rather than Bernard's perspective.

"He wrote his memoir in 1922 which has largely been ignored until now. While he does not explain the more violent side to his personality in the memoir, I was able to solve this by reading through many court sittings he appeared before," Stephen said.

"Even though the court charges are upsetting to read, my aim is to show Bernard's opposing sides – not just him as a famous jockey. There are examples of closeness and intimacy between the couple that have never been written about before now," he added.

"There is a chapter about Bernard and Marie being incarcerated at Ellis Island in 1913 because they were unmarried. It's staggering to imagine two of the most famous people in Edwardian England being detained with hundreds of immigrants.

"They were the Posh and Becks of their time, for sure. As for Bernard's active service during WWI, a judge accused him of engaging in more violence in London than on the Western Front! Nothing was ever straightforward in Bernard's life from the time he left Tralee in short pants," Stephen explained.

Stephen sums up Bernard's life as 'totally unorthodox' and emphasizes that the book is about more than just horseracing.

"I wouldn't want anyone to get the impression the book is solely about horses. Significant though they are in Bernard's life, there is an undertone to the book that symbolizes a tragic love story between two people trying to deal with fame and infamy," he said.

"This is a global story that started in a quiet Kerry street and extended to far-off places like America, South Africa, and the Middle East. I just felt it was time for Bernard's story to be told in his own words. I think the book is fair to him and shows that no matter how successful we are in life, we are vulnerable to self-destruction." Stephen said.

The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby will be launched on June 6.

The book is priced at €15 and is available at www.buythebook.ie/bernarddillon.

Top image: By Leslie Ward - Published in Vanity Fair, 12 September 1906, as "Men of the Day" Number 1031. Public Domain and background By Hywel Williams, CC BY-SA 2.0

How amiable are thy tabernacles?

Jane Pickles reviews Saturday May 18th's Ashtead Choral Society concert at St Martin's Epsom.

If you live in north Surrey, you are lucky to have such a busy and vibrant music scene with so many concerts given by so many different groups at so many different venues.

Quantity is one thing but Ashtead Choral Society's Brahms concert on 18 May in Epsom highlighted the sheer quality and professionalism we also have available locally. Kent Sinfonia set the tone for an emotional evening with Brahms Tragic Overture. From Dr Andrew Storey's first down beat we knew that the orchestra was as one in committing to Brahm's journey of light and dark. Being a church St Martin's does not have great sight lines for all seats, but the monitors allow the audience to observe up close what is going on, and it felt like Storey was able to give Kent Sinfonia space to play stepping in to only to encourage and finesse at key moments.

That brought us to Brahm's German Requiem. We knew Kent Sinfonia were up for a night of high emotion, and the choir were not to be outdone with their first haunting 'Selig sind' (blessed are they) which developed into two wonderfully evocative movements delivered by choir and orchestra. The well-known second movement – 'Denn alles Fleisch ist wie Gras' (All flesh is a grass) – was delivered with purpose building to promised 'joy and gladness'. Talking of quality, it was good to see the baritone, Daniel Tate, and soprano, Eleanor Pennell-Briggs back in Epsom for this event. Tate's appearance saw him work his intonement, 'Lord, make me to know mine end', building with the orchestra and choir to a long, glorious final fugue from Storey into which players and singers flung themselves.

After a welcome glass of wine, the choir eased us back into Brahms' journey with the motet-like 'How amiable are thy tabernacles' before Pennell-Briggs gave us the comfort promised by the fifth movement with mesmerizing tenderness and simplicity. Tate's return portended more drama, and the choir did not disappoint with cries of 'death where is thy sting?' from which Storey set up a triumphant 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power.' This might have been a fine hopeful and triumphant end to the work, but Brahms gives us a final seventh movement ending as he starts with a reprise of the tender 'selig sind' motif from which Storey eased us to final 'rest from our labours' as Brahms' epic melted into peace.

ACS is commemorating Remembrance Day in Epsom on 9 November and I have no doubt their assembled forces will provide another great evening of quality music with their programme of Hadyn's Nelson Mass and Faure's Requiem.

Jane Pickles

Related reports:

Ashtead Choral Society give a lesson in three Rs

Ashtead Choral Society celebrated Surrey's Vaughan Williams.

Image: Flickr. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 DEED

Spanish fiesta came to Epsom

Epsom Symphony Orchestra - Epsom Playhouse - 4th May - Review by Sarah Haines.

What an uplifting and colourful music evening put on by Epsom Symphony Orchestra. Their May concert at Epsom Playhouse was a rich and colourful Spanish Fiesta overseen by Musical Director and Conductor Darrell Davison.

A wonderful start to summer with its promise of outdoor living. Our party had pre performance tapas and spirits which nicely set the stage for what was to come. Chabrier's Espana captured the Spanish way of life in music. Full of character, and contrasting themes including parts that were really powerful and tempestuous. Elsewhere light and springy with happy harp playing. Ending in fantastic fanfare.

Turina's Procession of the Lady of the Dew was a charming little piece: a fantastic soundtrack to a fiesta in Seville. We listened to music from a procession – sedate and respectful; building to a joyful and jubilant end: trumpets playing the Spanish national anthem – this one really was like a film score overture.

Richard Scholfield then treated us to two wonderful pieces playing the solo saxophone (supported by the Orchestra). The first was Ravel's Pavane (arranged by Darrell Davison) – a slow Spanish dance. This was superb playing – soulful and light, a silken sound,

romantic, demonstrating the repertoire of the saxophone.

The second was Borne's marvellous Fantaisie Brillante on Themes from Bizet's Carmen – a demanding soloist piece played beautifully and with flair – it was phenomenal, at times racy, playful, a powerful Tango, rapid scales with wonderful percussion joining at the end. At points it was like listening to a horse race.

The second half began with de Falla's Three Cornered Hat Suite 2. This piece depicted melodies from cafes, bars and street musicians. A throbbing intensity from the cellos and double basses interspersed with movements of lightness from the violins and violas and augmented by colourful music from the brass and woodwind. This really caught the essence of Spanish life.

Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espangnole was joyful piece: containing two morning songs, a gypsy song and a Fandango (animated Spanish dance). So many wonderful solo parts throughout the orchestra as they played this colourful piece.

The concert ended with the unforgettable Ravel's Bolero – an extremely popular piece. The familiar tune gradually built and built as more members of the orchestra came in. Two snare drummers stood like sentinels either side of the stage, reminiscent of Torvill & Dean's legendary gold winning ice-skating performance at the Sarajevo 1984 winter Olympics.

Sarah Haines

Surrey Arts appointed to lead Surrey Music Hub

Surrey Arts, part of Surrey County Council has been appointed by Arts Council England to lead the Surrey Music Hub from September 2024, as part of an ambitious national programme to provide high-quality music education for all children and young people.

Surrey Arts will receive £1.42 million in funding from the Department for Education to coordinate music education in the local area, plus an additional £469,000 to invest in new musical instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of children and young people in Surrey, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Surrey Arts will deliver high quality music education accessible to all children and young people in Surrey through diverse partnerships between educational, creative and community organisations in the local community and throughout the country.

The appointment is part of a major investment in a new generation of the nationwide network of Music Hubs. This investment will help to deliver the Government's National Plan for Music Education, and give all children and young people the opportunity to develop their musical interests as far as they wish, including helping them to begin careers in the music industry.

Denise Turner-Stewart, Surrey County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities said: "We are delighted that Surrey Arts, part of Surrey County Council will be able to continue its work in leading the music hub in Surrey. The music hub is a network of music organisations and schools working together to bring musical opportunities to young people. This funding will ensure that we are able to continue championing music and support thousands of young people across Surrey to experience the joy and pleasure of participating in musical activities."

Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, said: "Music education is enormously powerful – it can enrich young people's lives, help them connect with the people around them, and start them on the pathway to fruitful and fulfilling careers. We are excited to announce this investment in a new generation of Music Hubs, which will support the brilliant work of our dedicated music teachers across the country, and help bring high-quality music education to even more children and young people in every part of England."

Visit www.surreymusichub.com to find out more.

Notes to Editors

Surrey Music Hub is a network of music organisations and schools working together to bring more musical opportunities to children and young people in Surrey, both in schools and in the wider community. Led by Surrey Arts, the county council's arts service, the Hub will act as an advocate for music education, encouraging participation in music across the county. They will work to ensure that children and young people from all backgrounds receive music education that is high quality, wide ranging, sustainable and accessible to all and that there are clear routes for progression. https://surreymusichub.com/

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in **Let's Create** that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. We invest public

money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

Epsom UCA alum praised by Taiwan President

Leo Tsao graduated from UCA in 2017 with a BA (Hons) in Fashion Atelier.

He has just won season 16 of RuPaul's Drag Race as his banana-themed glamazon Nymphia Wind.

Chip Harris, Programme Director in Fashion at UCA, who taught Leo for the entirety of the course and helped manage his final collection, said: "Leo developed a great range of skills on the course and as a very conceptual thinker, he was always ambitious and individual in his approach. Leo's graduate collection epitomised this, which demonstrated an exceptional technical and creative skillset that was also selected to show at Graduate Fashion Week.

"I am not surprised to see his ascension within the RuPaul's Drag Race universe, and it is good to see that he used his skills to showcase amazing costumes, styling and visual narratives."

UCA President & Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Jane Roscoe**, added: "The whole of UCA, and especially our School of Fashion and Textiles, is celebrating the unique and incredible talent of Nymphia, and her victory in RuPaul's Drag Race. As 'America's Next Drag Superstar', we are so excited to see what she does next!"



Among the high-profile people congratulating Nymphia on her win, was the **President of Taiwan, Tsai ing-wen**, who said: "Congratulations to you, Nymphia Wind, for being so accomplished in the difficult art form of drag, and for being the first Taiwanese to take the stage and win on RuPaul's Drag Race. Right after being crowned queen, you said 'Taiwan, this is for you'. Taiwan thanks you for living fearlessly."

Top Image: Nymphia Wind in her finale outfit. Credit: Entertainment Weekly/Mettie Ostrowski

Left image: Leo Tsao, pictured for his final collection shoot at UCA in 2017.