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New art fair comes to Epsom

14 September 2023



A new contemporary art fair is coming to The Duchess Stand, Epsom Downs Racecourse, 6 – 8 October 2023.

Art Surrey opens on Friday 6th October with a Preview Evening and a complimentary glass of fizz from 6pm to 9pm and opens over the weekend on Saturday 7 October 10am-6pm and Sunday 8 October 10am-5pm.

This inaugural art fair, curated by Art Surrey and **Ewell** based Art Adviser and Gallery, **Caiger Art**, offers art lovers and collectors the chance to browse and purchase artworks from over 80 of the most exciting contemporary and traditional artists selling today, many of whom are Surrey based artists.

As final preparations get under way, Carol Caiger, Director of Art Surrey, is understandably very excited about this new Epsom venture, “Being one of the largest art fairs within the south east of England, this new contemporary art fair will the perfect place to find artwork to start your art collection, or add to your collection if you are already an art enthusiast!”

There will be over 3000 works of art to see, paintings, drawings, prints, digital art, mixed media art, photography, sculpture, glassworks and ceramics. With all artwork ranging from £50 to over £3000, there will be something for everyone.

This year the invited showcase is Surrey Sculpture Society, who will be showing a selection of their artists sculptures for sale.

Carol Caiger adds, “The bonus is, as well as awesome artwork, the Caiger Art and Art Surrey Team are on hand to give expert advice on the best artwork to buy for your home, too.”

Weekend facilities include a bar and café serving teas, coffee and food throughout Saturday and Sunday, so you can easily spend a whole day there! The venue has ample onsite parking and is wheelchair accessible.

You can have see the limited edition art fair brochure here: https://artsurrey.co.uk/brochure-2023/.

Tickets are available to buy for the Friday Preview Evening, Saturday and Sunday from https://artsurrey.co.uk/tickets/

World class live-jazz returns to Epsom

14 September 2023



Epsom Jazz Club returns this Tuesday 12th September for another three highly anticipated world class jazz concerts, beginning with their first intimate duo show.

The wondrous pair of Cuban Jazz violinist **Omar Puente** and Italian pianist and composer **Ilario Ferrari** have performed their “**Mediterranean meets Cuba**” show numerous times in London to sellout crowds and now Epsom Jazz Club has encouraged them to bring it to our Borough to launch the new Season. Omar can often be seen leading his own sextet in venues such as Ronnie Scott’s and upon many a Jazz Festival stage. Ilario is equally busy, having just released his third album as band leader, a work for piano and string quartet that combines Classical music, contemporary Jazz and Indian rhythms. They promise to take the audience on a journey from Cuba, the shores of south Italy and back, exploring the common ground and new possibilities that come from the encounter of the Afro-Cuban Jazz tradition and the Mediterranean Culture.

Next month, on Tuesday 10th October Epsom Jazz Club plays host to an all-star Saxophone Quartet led by swing and the straight-ahead focussed **Fraser Smith**. In-demand pianist **Rob Barron** makes his return to Epsom after his visit in August (with vibes player Nat Steele), alongside revered bassist **Simon Read** and stalwart jazz drummer **Steve Brown**. Swinging sax quartets are often so popular with audiences and these four musicians are amongst the best. Following Fraser’s album release in April this year, the band has been gigging all over the UK showcasing much of the music from “TipTop!” as well as hard bop / bebop arrangements of popular standards.

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And finally, on Tuesday 7th November arguably one of the world's best jazz clarinettists, **Giacomo Smith**, will be performing on the Oaks Room stage. Born in Italy and raised in upstate New York, Giacomo leads many great projects (including Kansas Smitty's, Hot Five, Trav'lin Light) as well as being in demand all over the world as a soloist and collaborator. He's produced recordings for Jamie Cullum, rising star Jas Kayser and the debut album from actor Damian Lewis alongside performing regularly as a featured soloist with Gregory Porter the Southbank Sinfonia and other international orchestras. His writing, production and collaborations have garnered 10m + streams and counting. Alongside New Zealand born jazz guitarist and banjo player **Alexander 'Honey' Boulton**, and US born (and Manhattan School of Music and Royal Academy of Music graduate) double bassist **Will Sach**, Epsom Jazz Club has booked a phenomenal trio for their Autumn Season finale!

Tickets for all these concerts are on sale now and available to buy in advance either via their website **EpsomJazzClub.com** or by going directly to the **ticket site**.

http://twitter.com/EpsomJazzClub

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Epsom's outdoor theatre going great guns

14 September 2023



On Monday 31st July we went to see **Annie Get Your Gun** at the **Lavender Theatre** – a recently erected outdoor space amongst lavender fields in Reigate Road, Epsom. A new venture for Mayfield Lavender.. the owners of the family-run lavender farm in Banstead. Fortunately, it was a lovely evening and the setting perfect. We were welcomed into the theatre after passing through the stunning shop with beautiful gifts including 'lavender chocolate bars' – outside one could buy drinks and enjoy delicious eats before the performance.

The show included celebrated stars from the music world – SuRie (represented the United Kingdom in the Eurovision Song concert in 2018) as Anna, Charlie Mccullagh (Frank) and many other wonderful performers including three children.

We were enthralled by the magic of this open-air show, tapping our feet to the famous tunes including "no business like show business" and 'Doin' what comes natur'lly'.

I can honestly say it was one of our best evenings out! Huge congratulations to Director **Simon Hardwick** and his team.

Tickets are still available until the show ends on Saturday 5th August!

On sale today at lavendertheatre.com.

As locals we hope that this innovative exciting venture will continue – another jewel for our area.

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Biggins departs for good conduct

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This was **Mark Biggins**' last concert in charge of **Epsom Chamber Choir**. He may return some day as a guest. The conductor Chamber Choir have shared with English National Opera moves on to take a post with the Grand Théâtre de Genève, a bit too distant to combine.

Auditions for a replacement happen this autumn. Conductors leave their impression on this choir. For two decades **Michael Stevenson** worked on refinement and blend such that you needed to be very close to pick out individual voices from the ensemble. His successor, **Piers Maxim**, liked to entrust choir members with solo spots instead of hiring outside soloists. Mark Biggins has brought an added experience of the opera house, so the timbre has gained energy and exuberance, especially among higher voices, that would do justice to a larger venue even than **St Martin's Church, Epsom**.

All these influences were on show in Saturday's concert (24th June at St Martins Church, Epsom). The ensemble retains its refinement, between singers well used to listening to each other. The big and difficult tenor solo in the choral dances from Britten's Gloriana was skilfully handled by **Dominic Morris**. **Neil Thomas** took the baritone spotlight in the folksong arrangement The Lark in the Clear Air. The Britten choral dances, from Gloriana, were straight out of the opera house, with fast tempi and committed dynamic variations creating an aural spectacle.

There were over a dozen separate items, showcasing an eclectic range of repertoire, mostly on a theme of summer but with one bizarre Christmas piece apparently left over from an earlier programme, Jonathan Dove's Wellcome All Wonders. Covid may have cancelled the date when it should have been sung but the choir were not to be denied the chance of demonstrating their prowess tuning its complicated discords.

The audience got invited to sing a refrain in the title number, the mediaeval tune Sumer is Icumen In. A cuckoo has been known to visit Epsom Common. If you encounter it and were at this concert, you know now how to address it.

Instead of more Britten, Flower Songs were furnished by Eric Whitacre. His trademark use of dissonance is more velvety and luxuriant. I have heard it compared to chocolate cake. The choir tuned all the clusters confidently and allowed their audience to wallow in the rich sonority.

Steve Ridge played for the one jazzier piece, by Bob Chilcott, that needed a piano. The other accompanied items employed a harp, more exotic and less percussive and played by **Mared Pugh-Evans**. She was kept busy, in the Britten dances, in a mystical upper-voices song Summer by Gustav Holst and in two euphonous folk-song arrangements by **John Bawden**. He was singing tenor with Chamber Choir last time I heard these settings but has now gravitated to bass. He composes with a calm facility combined with a lifelong immersion in choral idiom. Hearing these songs was as refreshing as being handed a long, cool drink.

Mared Pugh-Evans switched from subtle accompaniment with hints of ancient bucolic tradition to virtuoso display for her solo item, Rhapsodie, by Marcel Grandjany. Composed by a harpist, it let her demonstrate a vast range of impossibly rapid ripples and resonant chords, sometimes at the same time, while always giving the impression that this is what harpists do for fun.

Epsom clarinettist **Zoë Humphries** joined her for the Victorian Kitchen Garden Suite by Paul Reade, a piece chosen to entertain rather than dazzle. They played with appealing, never forced tone, passing the tunes from one to the other and radiating serenity around the building as the evening started to cool. We heard a Monteverdi madrigal and two joyful, sparkling partsongs by Fanny Hensel.

Then Mark Biggins' valedictory item, a nod to his past studies in America, was Stephen Paulus' The Road Home, which was encored affectingly.

Nigel Williams

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Set amidst rolling lavender fields, the **Lavender Theatre** will open for its inaugural summer season this July in **Epsom**. The theatre is located at 139 Reigate Road, Epsom KT17 3D

The 250-seat open air theatre will be home for an annual season of plays and musicals with a truly elegant backdrop. Based at Mayfield Lavender in Surrey, the theatre has been co-founded by director **Joe McNeice** (producer/director of 'DIVA: Live From Hell!'), Mayfield owner Brendan Maye and Jonathan Muir.

The inaugural season will open with Irving Berlin's classic musical '**Annie Get Your Gun**' from July 17, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, original book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields as revised by Peter Stone, with new direction and choreography by Simon Hardwick ('My Fair Lady').

The launch of the theatre will see the completion of a significant investment into the Epsom site, which already boasts a coffee bar, shop, and a full service glasshouse restaurant due to open alongside the theatre this summer.

"This will be more than just a visit to a theatre," commented Joe McNeice, "Audiences will be able to grab a picnic to enjoy among the blossoming rows of lavender as the sun begins to set, before taking their seats in our covered auditorium to watch a show under the stars."

Since opening in 2006, the Mayfield Lavender Farm in Banstead has grown into a major summer destination for tourists and locals in South London, and this year the team are opening the gates to a theatre at their sister location in Epsom.

Lavender Theatre Artistic Director **Joe McNeice** worked behind the scenes at London's immersive 'Great Gatsby', and was Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's Visitor Services Manager until 2022, after graduating from the University of York in 2018.

"The whole place looks incredible, just walking about the site is a real treat for all the senses," McNeice added, "so our shows have to compliment their surroundings and match the sophistication that the natural landscape has set for us."

Speaking of his plans for 'Annie Get Your Gun', **Simon Hardwick** said: "The show will be a rip-roaring staging of the well known Broadway musical in a very raw and kinetic production that evokes the energy of Buffalo Bill's original touring celebrations of the Wild West. The Lavender Theatre will be a dream destination; an environment in which to enjoy a West End-standard production under a hazy summer sky."

The theatre, privately funded and managed by **Lavender Productions Ltd**., will produce its own shows with plans to see the summer season expand year on year with diverse and engaging programming.

McNeice said: "With no public funding or grants to help us achieve this mammoth project, we are relying solely on our Box Office income to build the Lavender Theatre into a profitable business, but we believe that creating a new producing theatre, a proper landmark location for the arts in Surrey, is something worth the investment, for both the local community and the wider industry.

"I'm really passionate about developing new shows, particularly musicals. The location is perfect because it's actually very close to London, but far enough away to have its own identity, which will give us the opportunity to develop work without the vast expense and pressure that comes with opening new shows in the capital. It's an incredibly exciting opportunity."

Tickets for the inaugural season are on sale today at lavendertheatre.com.

A Midsummer's Night's Dream in Cheam

14 September 2023



Epsom Choral Society gave us a night to remember at St Andrews Church in Cheam last Saturday. Their programme was an unusual and attractive coupling of works by **Constant Lambert** and **David Fanshawe**. In *The Rio Grande*, Lambert sets a poem by Sacheverell Sitwell for choir, two pianos and percussion, while in *African Sanctus*, written following visits to Africa in 1969, Fanshawe combines African sounds, both human and natural, with live musicians and a Latin Mass.

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The concert got off to rousing start with the choir in fine voice, with plenty of rhythmic verve and effective dynamic contrasts throughout. It's worth remembering, however, that in very soft passages articulation needs to be even crisper. I did also wonder whether there might have been slightly more sway and swagger in phrases such as "… they dance in the city, down the public squares…". These are minor quibbles; the performance was as accomplished as one might expect.

Marion Lea, the choir's regular accompanist, took the solo piano role, with its virtuosic cadenzas, while **Peter Jaekel**, a regular visitor, took the 'orchestral' part. Both pianists dealt expertly with the technical demands, and they displayed an excellent rapport. This was also apparent as two pianos became one for the three lollipops from Walton's *Façade* suite, namely Polka, Popular Song and Foxtrot, hugely enjoyed by the sizeable audience. The first half ended with a brief introduction to *African Sanctus* by the late composer's widow **Jane Fanshawe**. During her very informative words and photographs, conductor **Julian Collings** was presented with one of David Fanshawe's trademark caps.

The second half of the concert was heralded by a mighty roar of "Sanctus" from the choir, accompanied by a full percussion ensemble. Having conducted this work myself many moons ago, I recall just how tricky it was to get all elements perfectly aligned – I wish I had had professional sound engineers such as the excellent team on Saturday! A mesmerising muezzin's call to prayer got the next movement under way. Here the gorgeous blend of the voices produced some exquisite singing with perfect intonation. Other qualities such as stamina and staying power presented themselves in the next two movements. The call of the muezzin translates into the key of D, and as any soprano will tell you a very high D lies well out of the comfort zone so full marks to the sopranos here.

Following the Credo came Love Song, a tender and moving episode in which a cattle boy in East Sudan sings about a girl called Abdha. At the start of the movement, we hear a recording of a mother ringing tiny bells outside her tent in an ancient custom signifying the birth of a baby son. In the context of the mass this signifies the birth of Jesus Christ, and as the sound of the bells gently faded the effect was intensely poignant.

The Crucifixus is described by the composer as the "heart of the work" and it features a fearsome mix of war cries, rainstorms and dances, resulting in a dramatic and menacing texture. I wondered for a moment whether the percussion was slightly overpowering here – the war cries from South Sudan, for example, were not easily picked out. A belated mention here of the excellent soprano soloist, **Lisa Swayne**, who managed the wide jagged leaps with great style and aplomb.

The gentle Lord's Prayer which followed drew a lovely gospel feel to the singing, although I did feel that the lead guitar was slightly over-amplified. After a movement of chants and a superbly effective Agnus Dei – with the soloist once again shining in her three consecutive cries of Jesu Christe – a thrilling, exhilarating and exuberant finale brought this unique work to a close. Rapturous applause followed, leading to an encore – a repeat of the Lord's Prayer – during which Julian Collings, fittingly I thought, wore the cap presented to him earlier.

Martin Seath

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Epsom choristers go south for the Summer

Epsom Choral Society opens its centenary celebration 2022

Photo credit: Clive Richardson

Epsom and Ewell's refugee talent

14 September 2023



Celebrating World Refugee Week (19th – 25th June) Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network has been celebrating the talents and success of refugees the charity has supported.

Nataliia Zadorizhna is a concert pianist who started playing the piano at the age of 4. She graduated from the Glier Kyiv Academy of Music and also has a PhD in Linguistics. She arrived here in May to flee the war in Ukraine.

Natalia has been appointed as a peripatetic piano teacher for Surrey Arts and also gives private piano lessons. She has formed a Ukrainian choir in Epsom and is a top-class musician who has played in several concerts in and around Epsom.

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Ksenia Bugrimova is an award-winning film producer and creative director who has made many films and tv programs in Ukraine. Since arriving in the UK, she founded Talented U – https://talented-u.com/en – a Ukrainian-British Association of screen industry professionals. Here is an example of her much acclaimed work https://youtu.be/ayVgCK-3f00

Samira is a 17-year-old Afghan girl who came to the UK in summer of 2021 and moved to Epsom in May 2022. She is a gifted artist and doing a dressmaking course at college. EERN provided her with a sewing machine and one of our volunteers helped her learn how to use it (as she had never used an electric machine before). Within 2 weeks she had made 4 traditional Afghan dresses and she hopes to become a professional tailor.

Samira has been working very hard at her English, supported by EERN, and was very pleased to pass her driving theory test first time!

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Helin Konyar was studying singing at Kiev Municipal Academy of Circus and Variety Arts when, at the age of 20, she had to leave Kyiv last May. When she arrived here, she auditioned for the famous Laine Theatre Art College in Epsom and was awarded a 3-year scholarship. This week she appeared in her first show at Epsom Playhouse.

Yuliia Komyshan is a professional bandura player from Poltava, Ukraine (a bandura is a Ukrainian plucked-string folk-instrument). She has degrees from Poltava Professional College of Arts and from Glinka Dnipropetrovsk Academy of Music and a PhD in Educational and Pedagogical Sciences.

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Yuliia came to the UK when the war started in Ukraine. She dreams of introducing people all over the world to the interesting and rich Ukrainian culture and traditions. She loves giving people the opportunity to listen to the bandura and to connect with Ukrainian musical culture, both traditional and modern. She performs at concerts whenever she can.



Yuliia says that she is very grateful to the government, sponsors, volunteers and new friends for the support which she has received here.

For more information about the work of Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network visit their website. https://epsomrefugeenetwork.org

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Epsom choristers go south for the Summer

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This year, **Epsom Choral Society**'s summer concert will take you on a journey of discovery with two exciting British 20th century works on Saturday 24th June 2023 in St Andrew's Church, Cheam.

From green and leafy Surrey, Epsom Choral Society travels firstly to **Brazil** to enjoy the jazz rhythms and sparkling piano of **Constant Lambert**'s popular 1927 work The Rio Grande.

In the second half, the singers cross the Atlantic to **Africa** with **David Fanshawe**'s African Sanctus (1972), a work which combines the traditional Mass with an original soundtrack of African music recorded by the composer during his travels up the Nile.

Jane Fanshawe, David's widow, will attend the concert and will give an introduction and her personal memories of African Sanctus. David Fanshawe (1942-2010) was an English composer and self-styled explorer with a fervent interest in world music. His best-known composition is his choral work, African Sanctus, written in 1972

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African Sanctus features soprano soloist, Lisa Swayne, and the soloist playing the fiendishly virtuosic piano solo in The Rio Grande is ECS's very own Marion Lea, a formidable pianist who next year celebrates 50 years as the choir's accompanist! Marion will also be joined by Peter Jaekel for duets from Walton's Façade. The concert will be conducted by Epsom Choral Society's Musical Director **Julian Collings**.

Chairman **Isobel Squire** said: "This is an exciting end to our season, and we look forward to transporting our audience from a gentle English summer to the dynamic rhythms of more southerly climes."

The concert takes place at St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam on Saturday 24th June 2023 at 7.30pm.

Entry is £18, or just £9 for students and under-18s.

Tickets are available via Epsom Choral Society website www.epsomchoral.org.uk/tickets

Epsom Choral Society has been singing for 100 years with around 90 singers. It puts on at least four concerts each year which attract a loyal following. Epsom Choral Society is a friendly choir – it does not require auditions but does aim for high performance standards. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings under the baton of their Musical Director, Julian Collings.

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“Oh Fate” fills lofty Epsom Church

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Ashtead Choral Society – review of its concert on 13th May **St Martins Church, Epsom**. The evening began with Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana. Written in 1936, this secular work has remained a favourite of many choral societies as it is great fun to sing and encompasses a wide range of musical genre and emotion.

The choir began with the punchy accents we know so well of the ‘**O Fortuna**’ (Oh Fate), filling the space of St Martin’s full of grandeur. The first male-only entry was strong and confident, as was the lamenting unison passage to follow. Then we heard the first of the fantastic Baritone soloist Rupert Pardoe, who shone with his clarity of lyric and tone. The choir returned to sing with great joy and spirit, aptly reflecting the ‘welcoming of spring’ in the text. The Tanz, or dance, gave the Kent Sinfonia a moment in the spotlight, with especially lyrical pizzicato from the strings and the first of many incredible flute solos, again beautifully reflecting the tone and content of this meadow dance. Now into the ‘Floret Silva Nobilis,’ the sopranos tackled those pianissimo high notes with tremendous grace – I know how hard those are myself! Both choir and orchestra injected some energy into the ‘Swaz Hie Gat Umbe,’ before switching to a more calming and melodic timbre, again supported and balanced by the flute melody.

The energy returned, and the choir sang regally on ‘Were diu welt all min,’ leaning in on the outrageous storytelling about the Queen of England, and what a great ‘Hej!’ at the end of the passage! Speaking of storytelling, what a performance from the countertenor, Richard Decker! Aside from the fantastic singing, the facial expressions of the soon-to-be-roasted swan told us of the dread and terror (and slight comedy) of the situation! On to the men’s time to shine, in the Tavern, which they sang very well with clear diction and gusto, and finally we were joined by the soprano soloist Ana Beard Fernandez. Her projection was especially impressive in the pillared setting of the church, and the duet with the flute was a particular highlight. ‘In trutina’ is widely considered the most beautiful moment of the work and Fernandez’s rendition definitely lived up to this claim. The energy began to return for both choir and orchestra in the drive up to the finale, finishing with the reprise of the ‘O Fortuna’ with the same energy and punch as at the start.

In the second half of the evening, the choir sang ‘The Armed Man’, by Karl Jenkins. He is known for a wide range of work, recently having composed for the King’s Coronation, but this piece is his most widely-sung setting, originally written for the millennium, and subtitled ‘A Mass for Peace.’

It began with a strong drumbeat to set the military scene, and a wonderful folk-style piccolo solo. The choir came in strongly in unison, and moved on to a fantastic canon section, really giving them space to shine as it was unaccompanied. The call to prayer was then given by Mr Noor Sheikh from Baitul-Futuh Mosque in Morden, which was a huge highlight, and really gave light to the range of religions and genres this piece calls upon. The ‘Kyrie’ then began with some moody strings and a gentle melodic soprano line, with the choir overall sombre and well balanced. Another strong male entry complimented the flowing scalic passages, and the choir handled the chromaticism with ease.

The Sanctus was great in spirit with especially clear consonants, accompanied by the sweeping cinematic writing in the orchestra. Towards the end of the Charge is some quite unique musical writing, where in the score it says ‘convey horror!’, and the choir did just that! The Last Post, usually always surrounded by silence, was this time played with some eerie string accompaniment at the end and this painted a similarly haunting scene. The altos then had a very strong solo line, and everyone came together for another excellent chromatic passage. The Agnus Dei was a really beautiful sing, with sweeping melodic lines and really great harmonic resolutions. It was at this point especially I felt that the choir was really enjoying their singing, which added an extra something special to the performance. The penultimate section, the Benedictus, was another spotlight on the orchestra, with a great cello solo. To finish off the piece, the final section is broken up by a really fantastic piccolo solo – to get such clarity on a piccolo and at such speed is really impressive! The choir then interjected with the repeated word ‘Ring!,’ very effectively passing the melody between the parts. They really did sound like bells, ringing out for peace, as I imagine the composer intended!

Overall a thoroughly enjoyable performance, with two great showcases of popular choral works. I look forward to seeing what ACS produces next.

Lizzie McCaffrey

Ashtead Choral Society is one of the leading choral societies in Surrey with around 90 singers giving three concerts a year with professional orchestras and soloists.

It is a non-auditioned choir and welcome new members. For more information visit wwww.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk.or contact secretary@ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk

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Ewell film festival ends with a bang

14 September 2023



The **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** wrapped up its 4th edition with a bang on Sunday, closing out this year's event with a thrilling taiko drumming performance.

Festival founder **Chris Hastings** told us: "We'd wanted to end on a high note and we couldn't have hoped for a better festival. Having shifted from the delayed Picturehouse in Epsom, we had no idea whether or not **Ewell and Bourne Hall** would embrace indie cinema but this has been our most successful season ever.* The venue and the community really pulled together to support us. There was a buzz about this year's event which made it something truly special."

One audience member noted "I'm no film buff, I just enjoy a good film and the quality here was really exceptional. I will be thinking about the films I saw for days to come."

In addition to a packed programme of short films, feature films, documentaries and animation, audiences came in large numbers to meet Johnny 5 from Short Circuit, ED209 from Robocop, get a photo in the Back to the Future DeLorean and take their seat in the Iron Throne, while Spiderman thrilled the children who had arrived for free animation screenings.



The drummers of Aber Taiko and Gongming collect the opening award of the festival on behalf of documentary Finding Her Beat which walked away with the Jury Prize

Following three days of World, European and UK premieres and a host of Oscar winners and nominees, the festival wrapped up with a stunning live show by Aber Taiko and Gongming which literally made the ground vibrate! Followed by a sold-out workshop attended by many of the audience, one participant declared that the event was "absolutely epic, the best thing to ever happen in Ewell, I can't wait for next year"!

The full list of the festival's award winners will be announced this week with details available at www.satisfiedeye.com for those attendees eager to discover if their favourite film walked away with any prizes.

*Previous highest box office for SEIFF 88% (in 2019) compared to 92% ticket sales for this 4th season.

The Epsom and Ewell Times was very happy to have sponsored this great community event in our Borough

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Picture the opening.....

14 September 2023

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The 4th **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** (26th to 28th May) has opened its doors in **Bourne Hall** Ewell.

There was a sense of anticipation in the air as people gathered to celebrate and enjoy the best of what cinema has to offer, and there was a feeling of camaraderie among the festival-goers.

One of the visitors who were at previous festivals shared with us that he returned as he wanted to see more different films, styles and types. The festival started with the people's choice selection. Two films from France, "A Travers", a very touching story about a couple who needs to terminate the pregnancy in the seventh month and "The Censor or Dreams". "An Irish Goodbye", this year's Oscar winner, tells us a story about two brothers who reunite after their mother's death and another Oscar nominee, White Eye, from Israel, where a man finds his stolen bike and struggles to remain human.

"The buzz has been very special, we haven't seen it before and long may it last", shared with us **Chris Hastings**, the founder of SEIFF.

Among great films, you can enjoy sitting on a Game of Thrones Throne, letting Johnny5 Replica chase you around The Flying Sauce Cafe.

Please check the schedule below; there are a lot of Oscar-nominated films on Saturday and Sunday to be seen.

Find out more about the tickets here:

https://www.tickettailor.com/events/satisfiedeyeinternationalfilmfestival

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Epsom and Ewell's Satisfying Film Festival begins

14 September 2023



Led by Epsom resident and professional producer **Chris Hastings**, this years **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** is hosted in the iconic flying saucer shaped **Bourne Hall** in **Ewell**. The Festival is sponsored by The Epsom and Ewell Times.

Starts tomorrow (Friday 26th May) through to Sunday. There is something for everyone. Here is a synopsis of the main action:

List of events …

Friday 26th May: 7.30 People's Choice (our best films as selected by local judges) (already sold out)

Saturday 27th May

12.30 Amazing Animations (our best animated shorts)

1.45 All Blood Runs Red (selection of shorts celebrating diversity)

3.15 Stranger than Fiction (selection of documentary shorts)

4.30 Still Working 9 to 5 (full length documentary that looks at the cultural impact of the 80s movie starring Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin)

6.15 The Darker Side (a selection of twisted shorts)

Sunday 28th May

12.30 Best of British (a selection of our best home grown films)

1.45 The Lighter Side (a selection of comedy shorts)

3.15 Sobs, Sniffles & Smiles (a selection of shorts focusing on the human condition)

4.30 Wonder Women (a selection of our best shorts directed by women filmmakers)

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6.00 Finding Her Beat (full length documentary about the attempt to put on the world's first all female taiko concert)

There are also a number of additional events:

Saturday and Sunday 12.30-4.30 Free Kids Animation

All weekend, several photo ops including The Iron Throne, Back to the Future DeLorean, a working Johnny 5 from Short Circuit



Sunday 7.30 a live taiko drumming performance and workshop (Finding Her Beat ticket holders only)

See

www.satisfiedeye.com

The Satisfied Eye International Film Festival (SEIFF) returns to Epsom for its 4th season this May.

SEIFF, which rated in the top 100 festivals in the world within its first year, returns with a selection of the best independent features, shorts, documentaries and animation from around the world; as well as free animation screenings for children.

With a high-quality programme including Oscar and BAFTA nominees and winners, premieres, familiar faces ranging from Hollywood legend Jane Fonda to A list regular Oscar Isaac, comedies and cartoons, horror and sci fi, world cinema to the best of British, there is guaranteed to be something for everybody.

Tickets are £5 per screening or a full festival pass costs £25 allowing full access to the entire festival (festival passes at the Early Bird price of £20 until the end of April).

Full event details and tickets at www.satisfiedeye.com/tickets

Related reports:

Spotlight on Epsom's Film Festival

The Times to award film festival passes has come (tickets already won).

The Times to award film festival passes has come

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Epsom and Ewell's own international film festival is coming. The **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival**, now in its fourth season and consistently rated in the top film festivals in the world, is already acknowledged for its high quality programme. This year, due to Co-Vid delays, the Festival has two year's worth of submissions from over 50 countries; so the organisers could cherry pick even more for an extra high quality programme.

SUPPORT EPSOM AND EWELL TIMES AND WIN TWO FREE FILM FESTIVAL PASSES

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To celebrate the first year of **Epsom and Ewell Times** donors supporting our advertisement free quality news service can choose to be entered into a draw for two full free film festival passes. Click HERE to donate.

The Festival takes place at Ewell's **Bourne Hall** in Spring Street between **Friday 26th and Sunday 28th May.**

There will be more Oscar nominees than ever before, with European and UK premieres and some of the best up and coming directors, producers and other talent from around the world.

The People's Choice screening this year (Friday 27th … films chosen from the programme by local filmgoers) is probably the strongest they have ever had, with an Oscar nominee, an Oscar winner and a real battle to see who picks up the People's Choice award.

The Festival is part of the sci-fi rebranding of Bourne Hall this year so there will be some extra fun treats in store for film and TV fans.

https://youtu.be/F1_L0f-_MJ8

Anyone who likes a good photo op can come and have their picture taken in the Game of Thrones' Iron Throne, get a selfie with the Back to the Future DeLorean and a whole lot more during the festival.

And there's scheduled to be a live performance after the screening of **Finding Her Beat**. The film is a joyous, uplifting documentary that follows the struggles to launch the first concert for women taiko drummers … something reserved normally only for men.

There will be free screenings for children throughout the weekend at Bourne Hall, Spring Street.

This year sees the first ever **Emily Davison Award** for Best Female Director. The association with Epsom and Ewell being obvious with the statue to the famous suffragette in Epsom's Market Square.

Epsom author says hearing is believing –the inside story

14 September 2023



Once Upon a Lunchtime, several years ago, a group of friends were reminiscing about the exciting lives they lead as young female journalists working on top selling pop and women's magazines in the '60s, '70s and '80s.

It all came flooding back, the incredible interviews, the ground-breaking features, the photo shoots, the dramas, the drugs, the creativity, the opportunities, the freedom, the glitz and the glamour and the sheer excitement about being part of the explosive magazine world in the most crazy and attitude-changing decades.

'We should write a book', they said. And they did.

Top photo: The Magazine Girls left to right: Penny, Linda, Shirley, Sandie and Jan.

The Magazine Girls took six years from possibility to publication, during which time they saw four Prime Ministers, battled with Brexit and struggled with Covid, losing loved-ones along the way, but overcame the trials and particularly the distance and time difference between them, being scattered between Epsom and Sutton, London and Loughton, Herefordshire, Hampshire and Montreal, where co-author Jan Iles-Kaluza has lived and raised her family for many years. Now in their '70s, the seven authors of The Magazine Girls-The inside story, are still firm friends and celebrated the launch of their book with bubbles, nibbles and sparkling repartee at a signing event in **Waterstones Epsom** on Sunday 23rd April.

'None of this would have been possible without learning that essential new skill – Zooming –says co-author **Jan Collier**. 'It kept us on track and united in our determination as we made important democratic decisions, which to be fair weren't always easy and we did have our differences at times.'

One of the greatest bonuses for the girls, says Jan, who volunteers with **Epsom and Ewell Talking Newspaper** for the blind and visually impaired, was learning about and working with Calibre-Audio. The national charity started in the 70s and brings the written word to life via audiobook, free of charge, for those members who are visually impaired or have any form of disability that makes reading print difficult. 'We are so pleased and proud that members of **Calibre-Audio** will soon be able to hear our 'inside story' and hope it will bring back happy memories of those iconic decades to all who lived through them.'

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Former Editor of Rave Magazine who worked with the girls in the late ‘60s, esteemed comedy writer **Colin Bostock-Smith** adds ‘’The magazine girls made my life mad –and magical. They were sweetly feminine and tough as old boots. Stunningly sane and frequently quite cuckoo. They were a riot. And judging from this great book, they still are.’’

Further information: www.calibreaudio.org.uk
The Magazine Girls is available in bookshops and online at www.troubador.co.uk
Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper https://eetn.org.uk

Spotlight on Epsom’s Film Festival

14 September 2023



Romy Sustar In conversation with the father of The Satisfied Eye International Film Festival (SEIFF), **Chris Hastings**:

When discussing film festivals, one thinks of the famous five festivals: Venice, Cannes, Berlin, Sundance and Toronto. However, you might not come up with Epsom when thinking about film festivals in England.

Q: Is there a film festival in Epsom?

A: **The Epsom Film Festival** is also known under the name **The Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** (SEIFF), and it was launched in 2018. The festival attracted international attention, and in 2020 SEIFF took place at the Odeon in Epsom just a week before the lockdown. 2021 was a year of uncertainties and lockdowns, so the team decided to plan ahead, especially after the **Picture House** announced its arrival in Epsom 2022. Unfortunately, unpredicted delays took place, and there is still no sign of Picture House opening its doors soon. The good news is that **Bourne Hall** kindly agreed to host the film festival, and we are grateful to be part of their exciting rebrand and relaunch between the **26th and 28th of May**.

Q: Why do you think Epsom needs a film festival?

A: In our first year, we carried out an audience survey to discover local likes and habits. Apart from finding out that Epsom’s two most desired things were a Primark and fewer potholes, we found that many people travel to Wimbledon, Kingston and Guildford for entertainment. I grew up in Hastings, like living in an episode of The Last of Us. The town completely reinvigorated and reinvented itself through arts and culture. Many towns and cities have done the same, with arts and culture driving regeneration. When you ask what Epsom is famous for, most people say Epsom Salts or the Derby. And nobody is coming to Epsom for the salts, and the Derby is one weekend yearly. So to have any sense of sustainability and to battle ever-changing shopping habits, there need to be events and attractions that draw people in. After our first year, we were rated in the top 100 festivals in the world so that we could be a part of that cultural change.

Q: Please share with us a few past SEIFF insights.

A: The festival always finishes with our gala red carpet awards ceremony, our chance to enjoy glitz and glamour. The awards ceremony is open to everyone, so we always get a mix of our filmmakers and festival goers and local people. It’s an excellent chance for anyone who has been to any of the screenings to come and meet some of the filmmakers and for the filmmakers to talk to their audiences. Generally, the audiences like to dress up for the occasion, and filmmakers, like I, dress down! They’re our mini Oscars with all the awards you’d expect and a few particular to SEIFF. We also have a People’s Choice award, which goes to the best film chosen by local people who are part of our judging panel. The People’s Choice is always the first event of the festival, where we screen 90 minutes of the most popular short films as voted by local filmgoers, and for instance, this year includes one of this year’s Oscar winners.

Q: How can Epsom support the Film Festival?

A: SEIFF is an entirely voluntary event run wholly by local volunteers, and local people’s excitement and enthusiasm help keep it growing. So, the most important thing is bums on seats and volunteers! We’re lucky to have a loyal following, but we want to grow because that will allow us to do more events and bring more fun and excitement to the borough!

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: Every year, some of our films end up at the Oscars or go on to secure big deals. While these are all independent shorts, feature films, documentaries and animation, the quality is phenomenal, and you’ll see some of the best films you’ve seen in your life. That’s why a festival like the Satisfied Eye International Film Festival exists. So, save the date and meet us in Bourne Hall, Spring St, Ewell, Epsom KT17 1UF, between the 26th and 28th of May.

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Q: How would you describe Epsom with one word and why?

A: Prospect. Epsom is a bit like a rookie footballer or boxer. There's huge potential and the possibility to be something special. It simply needs everyone to come together and help make that happen.

Q: Where can we find out more about the Epsom film festival?

A: The best thing to do is follow our FB group at https://www.facebook.com/satisfiedeye.

BUY TICKETS HERE

About Chris:

Chris Hastings is a multi-award-winning writer, director and producer. He has become a familiar name at festivals around the world. He is the CEO of 1066 Productions, an independent film and television production company based in London.

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Passion in the heart of Epsom

14 September 2023



Epsom Chamber Choir performed "**Music for Passiontide**" in Epsom's **St Martin's Church** on Saturday 25th March in a varied programme of singing and playing. Passiontide is a name for the last two weeks of Lent, and the repertoire for the concert, which was directed by guest conductor **Jack Apperley**, had been carefully chosen to reflect the emotions and suffering of this time.

The central work was **Dieterich Buxtehude**'s Membra Jesu Nostri, a Passion-meditation for Holy Week, which consists of a series of seven cantatas. On this occasion, the cantatas were performed over the course of the evening, interspersed with other a cappella anthems and motets.

For the Buxtehude, the choir was joined by the **Chamberlain Ensemble**, an early music group of 9 members, including violins, a violone (a large viol), viols, theorbo and organ, along with four excellent soloists (Lily Platts – soprano, Pete Dockrill – alto, Dominic Edwards – tenor, and Fionn Ó hAlmhain – bass). I was particularly moved by Lily's aria in the third cantata, "Ad manus" (to the hands) and I very much enjoyed the well blended trios with alto, tenor and bass in the later cantatas.

The accompaniment by the Chamberlain Ensemble enhanced the variety of moods, often reflective and sombre but sometimes uplifting, and the sound became even more intense when 5 viols joined in the sixth cantata for orchestra and soloists alone. Each member of the ensemble added to the texture and brought out the beauty and sensitivity in the music. An extra special mention needs to be made here to one of the viol players, **Helen Williams**, who is also a long-standing member of the Chamber Choir.

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But what of the **Epsom Chamber Choir** themselves? They obviously knew all the music very well and maintained good contact with the audience throughout. Dynamics, diction and storytelling were beautiful and well executed, and the blend and balance between the voice parts (as many as 9 in **Paul Mealor**'s Ubi Caritas) was clearly heard.

The anthems and motets were all unaccompanied and ranged from the 16th to the 21st centuries. I had two particular favourites. To begin the second half of the concert, the choir processed to the back of the church, formed a semi-circle using the full width of the building, and sang **Antonio Lotti**'s 8-part Crucifixus (written around 1718). The sound was fuller in this configuration, as if surround sound had been switched on… The
suspensions were spine tingling, and the emotional intensity exceptionally powerful representing the agonies of the Crucifixion. You could have heard a pin drop at the end.

My other favourite was Crux Fidelis, (Faithful Cross) with music by **Sarah MacDonald** (born in 1968) and set to words written by **Emilia Lanier** (1569 – 1645) and **Emily Dickinson** (1830-1886). The piece is not as complex from a musical point of view as some of the others we heard, but you could tell that the choir were fully engaged in
delivering its message, with the meditative refrain of "Crux Fidelis" underpinning the excellent storytelling.

Jack Apperley, the Guest Conductor for this concert was in fine form, giving clear direction throughout. His energy, his explanations of the music in between items, and his obvious enjoyment of the performances, completed the experience for everyone.

Anne Ridge

Legally Blonde at Epsom Playhouse

14 September 2023



The Epsom Players performance at the Epsom Playhouse on Tuesday 21st March is reviewed by Nigel Dams for Sardines and reprinted with permission. It runs till Saturday. Tickets from Epsom Playhouse box office

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Until I spoke with one of the cast members (the leading cast member actually, the glorious Lydia May Whiteside) after the show, I thought this was a professional production.

When the curtain went up, I thought, hang on, amateurs can't afford a set like this. And then when the dancing began, I thought, hang on, amateurs can't afford dancers like this. Same with the singing.

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So I decided they must be pros, and settled back to be more and more entertained as the evening went on.

Let me get the minor niggles out of the way first. I couldn't always make out the words the singers were putting across. This was sometimes because the band, especially the horns, were just a shade too loud, sometimes because the lead was not cutting through the chorus, and sometimes because the vocal frequencies blended too much with the band's. But this was only in the beginning, really, and got better as the show progressed.



Also, when the stage crew flew in various bits of scenery, they sometimes hung suspended and swinging an inch above the boards, which was pretty distracting. It seemed to me that another inch would have grounded them, and eliminated that.

But the rest was great, and kept getting better and better.

Right from the opening number I kept thinking how sharp the choreography was – kudos to Della Bhujoo – and how fit and well-drilled the dancers were. I have great respect for people who can do intense cardio and sing at the same time. They were singing very well too, all of them. Harmonies were crisp and close, high notes and belt notes all well struck, all very impressive. I must make special mention of the eye-popping opening number in Act 2. The entire troupe were skipping (sorry, jumping rope) in time to the music, with great vigour, while singing, led by Millie Shields as Brooke. Max respect. Especially because Ms Shields had to speak shortly afterward and you could barely tell she'd been working out.

It seems unfair to single anyone out from the cast, because they were all excellent, but I must mention Imogen Smart-Steele as Paulette (excellent accent, great singer), Akhil Gowrinath likewise and Ms Whiteside, who led the whole show, playing an enormous part with total confidence, swagger and beguiling blondness. Oh, and the two dogs who were obviously classmates at RADA.

A final special mention to the whole cast for the 'Gay or European?' number, which was …. perfect, and very funny.

I have to say again, I can hardly believe that this show was done by amateurs (am I allowed to use that word any more?) it was so slick, so tight, so well done. My humble and sincere congratulations to Director Chris Malone, Musical Director Dan Francis and the entire cast, band and crew. Superb.

Nigel Dams

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