

Ukrainians in tune with the hearts of Epsom

20 June 2022



On Saturday 18th June Epsom Music with Surrey Stands with Ukraine organised a very special evening with Ukrainian musicians at the Epsom Methodist Church. The evening was hosted and presented in Ukrainian. Church Minister **Catherine Hutton** welcomed an audience of Ukrainian refugees and their English hosts.

Picture above features Ukrainian pianist Anastacia Tolstonog and her musically gifted children, Maryan and Hannah.

Robin Sebastian (aka *Kenneth Williams on stage and screen*) and on behalf of Headley Parish Council presented to **Anne-Marie Carlin** of Surrey Stands With Ukraine a cheque for £6000.

Recently arrived from Ukraine, **Mariya Zhornikova**, of Kharkiv Arts University, opened the music with **Debussy's** Pagodes from the Estampes Suite for piano.



Vadym Perog and Svitlana Kosenko

Svitlana Kosenko, professor of piano at the **Yehudi Menuhin School** in nearby Cobham, accompanied outstanding violinist 17 year old **Vadym Perog**, who's technical mastery of a work by **Maurice Ravel** was spellbinding.

Anastacia Tolstonog, professional pianist and piano tutor, accompanied her recently arrived 16 years old son **Maryan van Prooijen**, who was enrolled, together with his musical 14 years old sister, **Hannah**, at the Yehudi Menuhin School. They had been studying at the **Kyiv Lisenko State Music Lyceum**. Anastacia also played solo pieces by **Scarlatti** and three works by Ukrainian composer **Viktor Kosenko**.

Many in the audience were moved to tears by the passion of the players and the beauty of their music.

Nina Kaye, of the Epsom Refugee network, recited a moving poem written by local poet **Audrey Ardern-Jones** entitled "White Roses", written in honour of Audrey's mother, who fled to England from **Lviv**, during the Second World War. You can read the poem [HERE](#) in English and Ukrainian

The evening's success was assured by the interpreting skills of **Darina Dvorinchenko**, also recently arrived from Odessa, Ukraine.

If you know of opportunities for Ukrainian pianists to perform or tutor get in touch with The Epsom and Ewell Times and we will pass your message on.

Youtube video courtesy of Cllr Steven McCormick of parts of the concert [HERE](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/WsRSI0hZG7E>

Yehudi Menuhin School's professor of piano Svitlana Kosenko accompanies violin virtuoso Vadym Perog.

"Local Pride": an evening with Epsom Chess Club

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The Epsom Chess Club was launched in 2018 by Marcus Gosling and Ravi Sharma, the successor to the original Epsom Chess Club, founded in 1929. Meeting in MccAfferty's Irish pub's function room on Monday evenings, a large group of players sit in quiet concentration in a warm room adorned with 1940s-era metal whiskey adverts, flags and old newspaper front pages, juxtaposing the battlegrounds of white and black spread through the room.

Marcus, President of Epsom Chess Club, tells me that restarting the club was, "*a Matter of local pride, really*", having lived in Epsom all his life (apart from 2 years in Russia) Marcus wanted a community based and, more importantly, community ran Chess Club the town could be proud of, "*I wanted to build something from nothing.*", and he certainly has. With nearly 50 members available for games, the club is large and bursting with talent, having won their division in 2020 just before lockdown came into effect, like all of us, the club was hit just hard by COVID.

Chess is for everyone, big, small, young, not so young, plebeian or patrician, and in the Epsom Chess Club, these groups are represented well. I spoke with one member, who at 15 was the youngest present. He was in a position most kids his age dreamt of, let into a pub with no ID and no parental supervision, but instead of drinking as many pints as he could get away with, he was beating people twice his age at the world's most sophisticated game. Matches can last minutes, hours and even seconds. In one match I counted 30 minutes before the first capture, between the cautious shifting of pawns and knights, you could almost hear the gears turning in the heads of the players. Chess can be tense, relaxed, fun and frustrating all in the space of 5 minutes, denoting how it can be so widely enjoyed by so many different people across the world.

What makes Epsom Chess Club special? Why do people keep coming back? "*It's for the love of the game*", Club Secretary David Flewellen tells me while they're setting up their session, "*It's satisfying to come here every week and end up playing a better game*". What makes the club special is that it's a place where you can relax with a drink and let chess consume you for a few hours, an escape from the problems of everyday life. When you're in there, all that matters is the board, the pieces and the person sitting opposite you, with their hand placed thoughtfully under their chin, plotting your metaphorical demise. Ego's are muted, friendly advice is given over drinks post-game and players observe each other's games stoically, before respectfully congratulating/comiserating the winner/loser. There's no gloating, no under or over estimation, just pure chess. In a place meant for drinking, revelry and out-of-tune sing-a-longs; a company of like minded men and women meet week-in week-out on a monochrome 8x8 square battlefield, if that isn't enough to show that Epsom Chess Club is special, then I don't know what is.

The atmosphere of the club is fun, friendly and familiar, with the same faces (and a couple of new ones) showing up week in week out at MccAfferty's pub. Whether they're playing a Blitz (speed chess) tournament or playing ranked games against each other, the love of the game is clear, as is the fact that we should all be very proud of our local chess club.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Epsom Chess Club are no longer able to hold their sessions in MccAfferty's pub, and are looking for a new permanent home. The Epsom Chess Club is a fun, talented and welcoming community based club, if you or anyone you know is aware of a new venue that can host the ECC, please contact Marcus Gosling via email at marcus94gosling@gmail.com or David Flewellen at davidflewellen@gmail.com.