

Sheffield Viola Ensemble

A new ensemble!

The newly-formed Sheffield Viola Ensemble (SVE) had its first rehearsal on Saturday 9th December and, even though wintery weather threatened to spoil their plans, ten keen violists turned up to play together and enjoy the wonderful sound created by an all-viola ensemble.

Sheffield composer and keen amateur viola player Jenny Jackson formed the ensemble after receiving an overwhelming amount of enthusiasm for the idea from local players. With support from the British Viola Society and Louise Lansdown - largely in the shape of a wonderful selection of sheet music! - the ensemble were spoilt for choice at their first rehearsal. Starting with a Brahms *Hungarian Dance* in four parts, the ensemble soon opted to tackle Gordon Jacob's fabulous *Suite for 8 Violas*, making a good stab at both the *Dedication* and *Chorale*. Other pieces included the *L'Arlésienne Suite* by Bizet and an arrangement of *Ding Dong Merrily On High*; appropriate for the season and good fun as well! A well-deserved coffee break mid-way gave an opportunity to swap viola stories and get to know one another. Afterwards, a number of players spoke about the rehearsal and the response was very positive:

I loved it! I was immediately struck by the warm, resonant sound we made, something unique and special: I've not been part of a viola ensemble before, and because we were playing four (or more) parts it felt very different to playing as a section member in an orchestra. Two hours just flew by..." Richard

"It was a friendly atmosphere and we were all prepared to have a go!" Julia

SVE is aimed at adult players who want to get together to play for pleasure, in a friendly and supportive group. Rehearsals are intentionally relaxed and informal with an ethos of helping each other and sharing technical and musical advice. There is a determination to play well and to explore both familiar and less well-known pieces written or arranged for viola ensemble, in a variety of styles and with varying levels of complexity. The ensemble is open to players approximately Grade 5 standard and upwards. It may appeal to you if you are looking for an opportunity to gain experience in ensemble playing or feel overwhelmed at the thought of orchestral playing, and is ideal for late starters who are looking for an opportunity to develop and exercise their new-found skills. It is also a great way to get back into playing for those who may not have touched their viola for a while, like Ellie:

"I haven't picked up my viola for four years but the easy-going and informal atmosphere at the SVE was a lovely way to get started again and I look forward to the next one!"

If you are interested in joining us, please follow the link to the website to find out more information. Rehearsals are approximately once a month but there is no commitment to attend every rehearsal: come when you can!

<http://www.jennyjacksoncomposer.com/sheffield-viola-ensemble>

Next rehearsal:

Saturday 17th February 2018

10:00 - 12:00

Sharrow Performing Arts Space,
Sheffield S7 1BE