

Initial feedback by email from the 2014 Roman River Festival

This year has been the most magnificent achievement for Roman River Music. I sincerely hope that you take time to be proud of what you have created for our pleasure. The eclectic mix of music on offer this year was amazing and gave much pleasure to so many people. I only wished that I could have attended every concert. But I look forward with eager anticipation to next year. (Judy Kimmance)

What an incredible two weeks it was again. We are all incredibly fortunate to have such a range of amazing performances - and wonderful music which I'd never heard before - the Messaien and the Rachmaninov Vespers both particular highlights but in such a special atmosphere. I had ecstatic accounts of Tom Poster and Jennifer Pike's concert, and also of the Marian consort in Copford. I would like to say how brilliant the staging at the back of Stoke church was. It gave a wonderful view and great sound. (Gay Edwards)

We wished to congratulate you on a wonderful Festival. We consider ourselves most fortunate indeed to have been able to hear such music in such venues. Really quite inspiring and raising emotions which will endure. Thank you. (John Longdon)

A huge thank you for the festival. Wonderful variety, quality and quirkiness that has made many of our friends envious of our move to deepest Essex. (Giles Job)

It was the hugest pleasure to be involved with the festival, as ever. At a time when so many events seem to be struggling for audiences, it's absolutely brilliant to be part of such a positive, thriving festival - bravo for making it all happen. (Tom Poster - performer)

I only moved to Essex 2 years ago, and have sometimes lamented the lack of concerts in the area. The Roman River festival was amazing, with such a range of performers and venues, and amazing quality. Including my school trips, I ended up making it to 7 concerts, and had a fantastic time! My personal highlights were Vive, the Old time music hall children, and Brahms' Requiem, but it was all great, and I'm so glad to have discovered it this year. (Martha Taylor)

I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful week in Essex. We only caught the second half of the Festival but loved every minute of it. The whole experience was, for us, just brilliant. I particularly liked the programming. The highlight for me was Wivenhoe Church and it sort of epitomised what the festival does so well. Stunning, world class artists who gave their all, a wonderful church in a magical location, the romantic D minor trio followed by an absolute amazing Messiaen. What is more the audience loved it, I mean really loved it. (John Paton)

What a feast of wonderful music you have treated us to, you must be delighted. Best wishes and congratulations on another marvellous Roman River experience. (Mike Menzies)

I can truly say they were some of the most enjoyable and engaging experiences of my year, so thank you for providing them! (Rebecca Truscott - performer)

Congratulations on an outstanding festival this year. I enjoyed every concert I went to and was sorry to have missed any, as I usually heard the next night how good they had been. (Richard Spooner)

There have been so many highlights this week I cannot think where to praise highest. Last year was incredible and I hoped for similar but already it has exceeded all expectations. The children mixing with the professionals, magic and their sheer delight, what a treat for them [and us] but more so as the experience must be overwhelming and such an influence for their futures.. The school children too, especially when they were all jolted upright in the Firebird and clung to every note! (Plep Johnston)

What a wonderful series of concerts – and here's to next year! All five that I attended were marvellous, but the Messiaen/ Mendelssohn/Turnage one was out of this world, as far as I am concerned. (Tim Torry)

Thank you for organising such a marvellous Roman River Festival. For me, someone who is still exploring the huge range of serious, quality music available, what you provided was an opportunity to hear music, performed by world class musicians, that I would never have known about. In the usual run of things I

would have had to travel to London for such performances, so to have them on my doorstep was, well, quite marvellous. I am not sure what I enjoyed the most, but perhaps the the Marian Consort's *An Emerald in a Field of Gold*, performed in Copford Church would count as my favourite. The term 'divine' to describe the singing is probably overused but that is the best I think that I can use. Beautiful. I would like to take the opportunity to thank your producer, who must have had an enormous task on her hands managing the logistics of the Festival. She helped ensure that the Festival banners were miraculously in place at every venue. Just little things can count to ensure perfection. (Jonathan Pearsall)

A testament to programming: an undisputed success - in spite of being much bigger! More and more people are realising what an amazing thing is happening in our midst. Schools projects - A combination of content and hard work: a great success. Venues - a marvellous disparity of place, each one creating its own context and character. (Hana Loftus)

I'd like to thank you for all the wonderful concerts you put on. You make a real difference to music in North Essex/Suffolk. It is a pity it is only for 2 and a half weeks! We look forward to next year. (Sarah Greatorex)

Just a quick note to congratulate you all on a wonderful concert last night – enthralling music and beautifully staged. (Emma Judd)

The festival has achieved a superb amount in a short time. (Leslie Olive)

I was delighted to perform for the festival, and I know that we all felt very privileged to give this year's final festival concert on Sunday. What a beautiful church - a veritable oasis. (Julian Perkins)

The whole festival was a triumph. Copford Church looked great and the Marian Consort were wonderful. The evening was magic. Under the direction of Brian and Wendy Bolton the lighting, although simple, was enormously effective and during the concert the timbre of the wall paintings glowed and charmed. The music was stunning consisting mostly of Pre-Reformation compositions (Byrd, Tallis, Mundy, Stogers) some sourced from library treasures at Christchurch College, Oxford. The Marian Consort is a 7-voice ensemble and the audience reaction was one of rapture. I had wondered if the fare wouldn't be too academic; I was wrong. The music was beautiful. I heard numerous people comment that they had no idea that our Church existed nor that it was quite so beautiful inside. My two over-riding impressions are that this was a truly beautiful event, and that the warmth with which the "Church People" embraced the challenge was welcome and fortifying. (Marcus Gregson)

The Festival was a TRIUMPH. The quality of the music was the best ever, and my many guests were blown away. Jennifer Pike's recital was the best recital I've ever been to. (Harry Anderson)

I went to the Oyster Boy performance with my family at the West Mersea Packing Shed last Sunday. We had a lovely experience - the little ferry ride and the music and stories were very enjoyable. Thank you for organising a lovely day. (Ellen Peterson)

Many thanks, Lindsay, you have been brilliant. And to everyone concerned with this year's festival of music, I'd like to say what a treat it has been. The *Emerald in a Work of Gold*, *Winterreise* and the *Vespers* were particular highlights for me. Many thanks to you all. (Dominic Joame)

I just wanted to say how much I appreciated the opportunity to sing with the Roman River choir for the Brahms's Requiem. It was a wonderful and special experience to be taught and guided by different brilliant musicians, Paul Brough as well last Monday was inspirational. I was impressed how much care and effort everyone put in with the German language, and it was so particularly moving for me to be part of a group of mostly non-native speakers singing such a deeply meaningful composition so expertly in my mother tongue, especially when it all came together on the evening of the concert with the absolutely stunning orchestra, just intensely focussed on the music-making with the rest of the church in total darkness, quite a humbling experience and I nearly felt I shouldn't really be there, so beautiful. A very big thank you, what a privilege! (Claudia Nehmzow)

I would like to thank and congratulate you and all the team involved for the most wonderful Festival. It has been great to discover new favourites like the Cello Counterpoint on the Nonclassical Clubnight and the Shostakovich Quartet which was so full of despair and anger. It has also been lovely to rediscover old

favourites like the Lark Ascending which was so sublime in its execution that the tears streamed down my cheeks. I thought that James Redwood did an amazing job with the schools and I am so proud to have been involved, albeit in a small way, and want to confirm that I will help sponsor the education programme again next year. Please let me know as soon as next years dates are confirmed so that I can put them in my diary. (Julia Havis)

My son is not a natural performer and was a little nervous but he did enjoy it and realises it was a brilliant opportunity. Dominic was obviously very good at inspiring the children. Also, my eldest son was privileged to see Vive vocals perform at his school (The Gilbert), as he is taking GCSE music. He said they were cool – a massive compliment from a teenage boy! So “thank you” again, especially for all the work you are doing with the youngsters. (Jo Banks)

What a lovely event at Layer Marney Tower - the songs were beautiful, the singer exquisite, and it was a great great setting for a concert. (Tom Lennon)

Thank you to you and all your volunteers for creating this extraordinary and exciting series of events. (Rosalind Mays)

‘The Oyster Boy’ at the Packing Shed was a huge success. Everyone, young and old, was absolutely entranced by captivating and charming storytelling by two charismatic performers - accompanied by the ferry trip to the island, sun shimmering silver off a thousand wavelets, a wild shell island to explore and the evocative old fisherman’s shed in which the performance took place, against a backdrop of gnarly old nautical artefacts. And to cap it all, we were so lucky with a perfect early autumn day - magical. (Adrian Biggs)

Yesterday’s concert was fantastic, I’m so pleased we came! It really was inspiring to see you working with the school kids so enthused and both the singers and instrumentalists enjoying themselves so much. (Tessa Bartlett)

Thank you for transforming those couple of hours with the most sublime music-making - please could you pass on the warmest appreciation? (Mary Durlacher)

We and many others have attended some outstanding events in truly unique locations; Orlando Jopling's solo cello concert in Peake's House on Wednesday evening being the stand-out among several really remarkable events. Having been aware of the Festival for some years, we have attended much more of it this year in its town centre venues. The quality of the music is tremendously high and the whole Festival has a feel of "taking off". (Sara Humphreys)

Congratulations on the fantastic programme this year. I've already been to two events, both of which were exceptional. (Bojana Petric)

I have to say that all the concerts I attended were terrific, and Roman River is going from strength to strength. Just hugely impressive. (Lynn McKay)

The overall standard of Roman River Festival was spectacular and it is so great to involve youngsters and give them the opportunity to work alongside pros. I am determined to get to more of the concerts next year! Well done! Paul Brough was an complete inspiration and got the absolute best out of the choir whilst also restoring our self-esteem. It was both amazing and very interesting to see the skill he put into his leadership. I am beginning to appreciate what an art this really is. (Joanna Bisdee)

Selection of twitter comments

sherri singleton @mistleykitchen Oct 5 East, England
@RomanRiverMusic Manningtree High scored big time when the @marianconsort came for a most amazing singalong! #talent

Julia Abel Smith @juliaabelsmith Oct 2
Magical evening @romanrivermusic concert in sitting room @ #PeakesHouse #Colchester, Julian Perkins played clavichord

The Marian Consort @marianconsort Oct 2
Great concert this eve @RomanRiverMusic Felt very welcomed by all. Here's the amazing venue:

Hana Loftus @hanaloftus Sep 30
Utterly fantastic Quartet for the End of Time tonight @RomanRiverMusic @PosterTom.

Alan Critchley @AlanJCritchley Sep 28
Wonderful concert @RomanRiverMusic tonight. Elgar, Stravinsky and primary school children doing music hall songs. Fantastic mix!

Colchester Classics @ClassicalCDs Sep 29
. @RomanRiverMusic Utterly awe inspiring brilliant choir rehearsal last night.

Kate Charlton-Jones @KatesThinking Oct 2
@RomanRiverMusic wonderful concert in unique venue #CopfordChurch tonight. A huge treat.

Wendy Bryant @DrWMB Oct 3
@RomanRiverMusic what a wonderful evening last night with Natalie Clein and Sergio Tiempo, thank you.

Nigel Dyson @nigelgardenshow Oct 4
@RomanRiverMusic Savitri Grier was a wonderful violinist at the concert today at Little bentley

Anne Jenkin @Baronessjenkin Oct 4
@bernardjenkin singing his heart out in the grand finale Brahms Requiem @romanrivermusic in Stoke by Nayland Church. Amazingly successful.

Geoff Whittaker @WhittakerGeoff Oct 4
Well that was good! Schumann Cello & Brahms German Requiem with @RomanRiverMusic. Great bunch of people and great music!

Claire Driver @CDriver4 Sep 28
@RomanRiverMusic Thank you! Feel lucky to have joined you for Oyster Boy today in such an exciting place for magical music and stories

David Jack @DJack_Journo Sep 28
Stunning venue for today's @RomanRiverMusic concert - The Oyster Boy in The Packing Shed, Mersea

The Landmark Trust @LandmarkTrust Sep 28
Explore the #history of #PeakesHouse, currently home to @RomanRiverMusic, in the historic market town of #Colchester <http://ow.ly/BRjmh>

Tom Poster @PosterTom Sep 27
So happy to be back at the brilliant @RomanRiverMusic last night with @ViolinJenny and look forward to Mendelssohn/Messiaen on Tues!

Orlando Jopling @OrlandoJopling Sep 24
Playing Bach in a C15 half-timbered townhouse in Colchester as part of @RomanRiverMusic - doesn't get much better than this.

VisitColchester @VisitColchester Sep 23

Cast your eyes over the astonishing performances still to come @RomanRiverMusic Festival - wow! <http://romanrivermusic.org.uk/events/event>

lawsontrio @lawsontrio Sep 21

We all loved trip to @RomanRiverMusic! Thanks to all who are making it happen-good luck this week!
Delectable curating from @OrlandoJopling

Wendy Bryant @DrWMB Sep 21 @OnyxBrass @RomanRiverMusic thanks for great music tonight, all very absorbing. Really loved the Couperin.

Tymperleys @Tymperleys Sep 21 Colchester, East

Wonderful concert from @OnyxBrass for @RomanRiverMusic

The Minories @CI_Minories Sep 21

Truly excellent concert today as part of @RomanRiverMusic Festival. Thank you to all the performers.
#RavelPianoTrio #Colchester

Stephen Wiles @musictheoryguy Sep 21 Colchester, East

I'm in Colchester looking forward to hearing @lawsontrio at @RomanRiverMusic An early start but worth it to hear Ravel, Knotts & Ireland.

Chris Glynn @chrisglynn00 Sep 20

@RomanRiverMusic Loved playing for @bastianboytg and his puppet in this unique & inventive #Winterreise. Brilliant festival too.

Wendy Bryant @DrWMB Sep 20

What amazing music. I didn't want the evening to end. Stunning. @Wearefirefly @RomanRiverMusic

Hana Loftus @hanaloftus Sep 20

the most fantastic new sounds I've heard for ages from Firefly Burning in a disused church this evening.
@RomanRiverMusic is the best!

Thomas Guthrie @bastianboytg Sep 20

So enjoyed singing #winterreise with @chrisglynn00 for @RomanRiverMusic - fab audience, brilliant venue @LiquidColchest, and great support..

FlatfordNT @FlatfordNT Sep 20

Strongly recommend Luke Elwes exhibition <http://ow.ly/3rA4f5> @CI_Minories @RomanRiverMusic Great talk this morning about his work.

Geoff Whittaker @WhittakerGeoff Sep 20

Brilliant evening @RomanRiverMusic yesterday. Many thanks to @vivevocals - stunning a capella. See what else is on at <http://romanrivermusic.org.uk/>

David Jack @DJack_Journo Sep 19

Beautiful vibe, beautiful sound, beautiful people @vivevocals @RomanRiverMusic

Gabriel Prokofiev @gprokofiev Sep 19 Colchester, East

Our green room for tonight's gig is a 16th century @LandmarkTrust town house -only at @RomanRiverMusic festival

Nathan @Eg_Nathan Sep 19

@RomanRiverMusic @vivevocals I was there, second row, behind beatbox kids at Thomas Lord Audley :) it was amazing guys!!! :D

Peter Gregson @petergregson Sep 19 Colchester, East

Just arrived in Colchester w @gprokofiev - tonight we make our Essex debut at the @RomanRiverMusic

Percius @Perciusonline Sep 19

3) Sparkling Schubert Die Winterreise, complete w puppet: @bastianboytg @chrisglynn00 for @RomanRiverMusic tmrw <http://romanrivermusic.org.uk/events/event/schuberts-winterreise/> ...

St Mary's Colchester @stmaryscolch Sep 19

20 St Mary's musicians are looking forward to a concert today by @vivevocals at #Colchester County High School, part of @RomanRiverMusic

Hana Loftus @hanaloftus Sep 18

.@romanrivermusic launch this evening - such an exciting buzz for this year's fest!

Feedback on the GCSE Insight concert from pupils at East Bergholt High School

"Watching the performances was very engaging. I learnt a lot of new musical techniques and the musicians were extremely talented. The music performances left everyone with chills. It was such a good experience."

Abigail Westley-Lawes

"I enjoyed listening to lots of genres of music" – Ollie Hawkins

"I enjoyed seeing a professional demonstration and getting a chance to explore some classical music" –

Tom Davies

"I loved the pianist and the man playing the viola was really good too" – Topaz Ladbrooke

"Interesting pieces, and lots of new words learnt" – Ryan Austin

"The performances were good, and I learnt interesting new words" – Harry Dedhar

"There was a great range of pieces and lots of information" – Toby Osment

"The musicians were very talented and the pianist was amazing"

"Orlando was very passionate about the music"

"The music was extremely good, as the individual musicians were very talented. They were all very passionate about the pieces."

"The musicians were very talented. I learnt so much about terminology and techniques."

"I thought the musicians were professional and extremely talented. I learnt more theory."

"A good, informative experience. I enjoyed learning about the history of the instruments." – Chris Thomas

"Friday was a good experience for me. I learnt all about the different types of instruments. I learnt about the French horn and the older hunting horn. He explained a lot of words to do with music." – Robbie Pleasants