



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



REPORT FROM HARSH MEHTA, DEPARTING SCHOOL ORGANIST

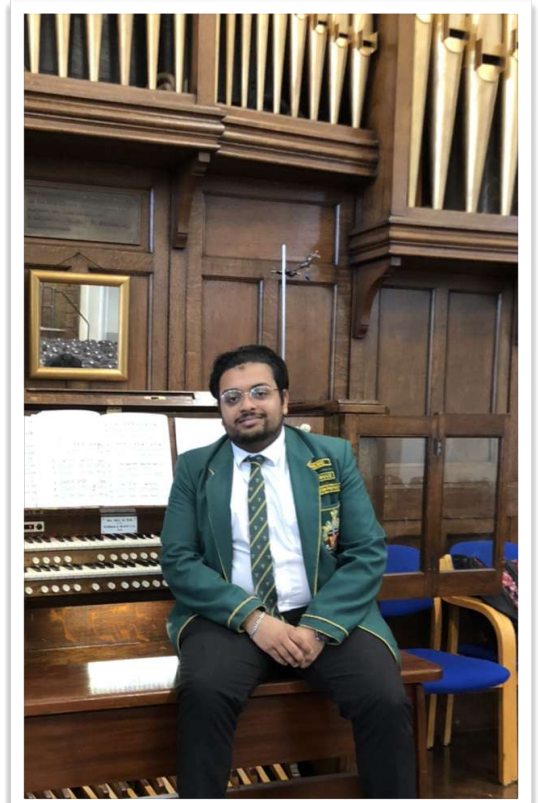
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Having joined SHSB in Year 12, I had no previous exposure to the school organ. However, as I sat in the Main Hall in my first ever assembly, the beauty of the grand instrument captivated me. There are not many words to describe my feelings, as I gazed up at the immensity of the pipes. When Mr Worth showed me video of Dr Symes performing Nimrod from Elgar's 'Enigma Variations', I was in awe at the rich depth of sound and emotional quality of the instrument, as well as its sheer versatility. It was in that moment that I decided I wanted to learn to play the organ.

In truth, I did not have an auspicious start to organ lessons – I found it very difficult to use the pedals and I missed the sustain pedal on the piano! However, and after a number of lessons with Dr Symes, I began to see the organ in a new light, very different from the piano and I grew to adore the instrument's sound and capabilities.

As I began Year 13 as a Senior Prefect, Dr Symes approached me and asked me if I would like to play whilst pupils and staff entered the Main Hall prior to assembly. This was possibly the most daunting experience of my time at the school – to think that 500 people would listen to me stumble my way across the organ was utterly mortifying. Nevertheless, and over the course of the year, I performed twice each week and became more at ease when playing in public. Playing the school organ was something I grew to love and is now an experience that will live with me forever, as I move on to study Music in Higher Education.

As part of my A-level studies in Music, I was required to compose as part of the coursework, and it was with great confidence that I decided to write a Fugue for the organ. As Dr Symes and I collaborated, he taught me so much about registrations (stop choices) and, ultimately, I composed a Fugue, which impressed Mr Worth. I am forever grateful for the opportunity Dr Symes and the school afforded me and I am proud to say I served as School Organist at SHSB.



*Harsh Mehta (Sparta, 2020 – 2022)
School Organist, 2021 – 2022*