



GORDONSTOUN
Plus Est En Vous

Hobart Earle

Cumming, 1979

Recognised as a dynamic and exciting conductor who, as Music Director of the Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra, uses music as a vehicle for providing peace.

Hobart (Hobey) Earle, born in Venezuela to American parents, has earned a reputation across several continents as an influential and groundbreaking conductor. After Gordonstoun, he graduated from Princeton University. He then studied at the Academy of Music in Vienna before touring Europe, North America and Asia leading orchestras in locations as diverse as California, Taipei, Denmark and Moscow.

Over the last 30 years, he has led the Odesa Philharmonic Orchestra to worldwide prominence, resulting in the region taking him to their hearts. In 2003, the Russian Cosmonaut Association named a star in the Perseus constellation after him, whilst in 2013 he became the first western citizen in history to be awarded the “People’s Artist of Ukraine”.

At Gordonstoun, Hobey was Captain of the Golf team, Head of the Fire Service, played clarinet in the school orchestra, starred in the acclaimed opera Noye’s Fludde and was one of a distinguished few among his peers to achieve his Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

Gordonstoun gave me the courage to do things differently.

As Music Director of the Odesa Philharmonic, these wartime years have presented unique challenges. We are determined not to let these events deter us, and we still travel the world - in the case of the 2022 Berlin Festival, as the only representative of Eastern Europe. I’m proud of the unique way we’ve navigated this time: from the flashmob that went viral just a day after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, to allowing my musicians the freedom to express themselves by wearing orange ribbons during the Orange Revolution in 2004/2005. Equally, we were fearless in becoming the only performers to put on a VE Day concert in Odesa, just days after violence erupted in the city, with over 50 people killed on May 2, 2014. Watching our audience of diverse political backgrounds be united by the music after such tragic violence was a very powerful moment - absolutely unforgettable. Gordonstoun gave me an innate sense of independence of spirit which has informed my career ever since.

The ability to rise to any challenge has been the most useful skill I've learnt.

When I first arrived in Odesa in 1991, I didn't speak a word of the language - and sadly the numerous European languages I spoke were of no use. The orchestra was underfunded and navigating the Soviet-style bureaucratic system was tough. I learned both Russian and Ukrainian by ear, raised the funding, created a strong bond among my musicians and grew the orchestra's profile worldwide. Recently we gave a concert in Seoul and the program included 7 Korean premieres of Ukrainian music. My orchestra has bridged the gulf between people of all different cultures and nations by using music as a common language. Yet these are skills I learned at school, where I became so used to being surrounded by different nationalities all the time, that this felt natural to me. In some ways I was tailor made to end up in Odesa - I have always been an outsider, and Odesa welcomes diversity.

My 18 year old self could never have imagined where I'd end up.

The Soviet Union was an entirely closed country back then. My life as I know it now literally didn't exist and wasn't even imaginable - it's an astonishing thought. I would say to any student: relish the opportunities you have in front of you, and make the most of all the diversity and choice you have at school. You might not know it yet, but what you are doing today could shape your entire future.

Plus Est En Vous

