

Spring 2015
No. 162
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Julian Lloyd Webber *FRMS President*



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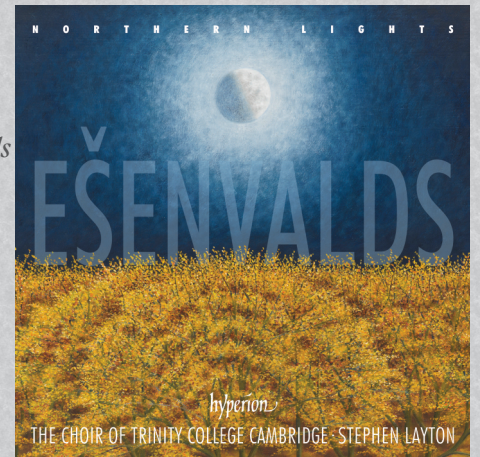
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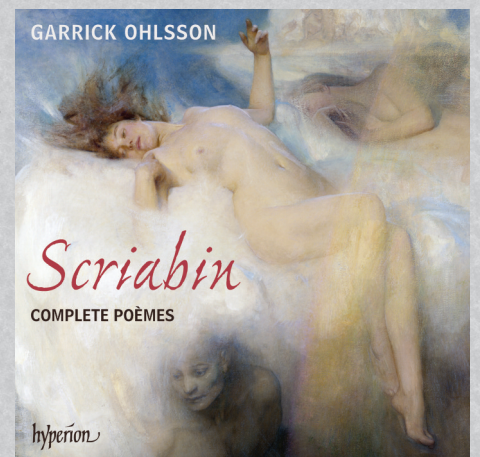
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Front cover photos: *Chloë Hanslip* by Ben Ealovega; *Julian Lloyd Webber* courtesy Edinburgh Festival

The editor acknowledges the assistance of Sue Parker (Barnsley and Huddersfield RMSs) in the production of this magazine.

For more information about the FRMS please go to
www.thefrms.co.uk

Forthcoming Events

Scottish Group Music Day, April 18th (page 10)
Daventry Music Weekend, April 24th - 26th 2015 (page 17)
West Region Music Day, July 8th (page 10)
FRMS AGM, November 7th, Redcliffe Hotel, Paignton
Torbay Musical Weekend, November 20th - 23rd

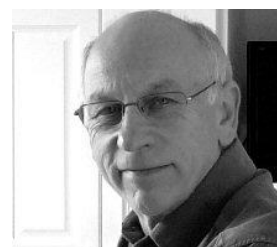
EDITORIAL Paul Astell

HAVING LOOKED BACK at my two previous editorials, I am relieved that this one can be a more positive offering. First, the Federation is delighted that, as you will have noted from the front cover, Julian Lloyd Webber has agreed to succeed Lyndon Jenkins as our President. This really is great news and our chairman has more to say on this in his column elsewhere in this magazine.

The front cover will also have revealed – if you didn't know already – that this year's Daventry Music Weekend will feature a live recital given by Chloë Hanslip, who will be joined by her equally distinguished colleague Danny Driver. The chairman has something to say on this too, as he does regarding the FRMS committee, the make-up of which was ratified at the Southport AGM. As you thumb through this issue you will eventually be confronted by something of a Rogues' Gallery, which provides an opportunity for us to share details about ourselves that we're happy for you to know about!

In my piece for *Bulletin* 160, I mentioned my experience at my one and only visit – so far – to the Berlin Philharmonie. If you enjoy concert-going from the comfort of your armchair, you might just be interested in an exciting offer, specially negotiated by this magazine with the Philharmonie, which enables computer and broadband users a free look at what their Digital Concert Hall has to offer. Happy viewing and listening!

Even in this issue, though, I do end on a rather sad note. Looking back to last year's Daventry event, we felt privileged to be joined by the eminent author and critic Michael Kennedy. Alas, Michael sadly died on New Year's Eve and his appearance at Daventry was most likely one of his last public engagements. In the last issue, I wrote some warm words about the man, and I was so pleased to read genuinely glowing tributes in the press from his fellow professionals. These appeared to reflect the fact that Michael himself rarely, if ever, maliciously bad-mouthed any particular artist when appraising their work. ●



FRMS Annual General Meeting 2014

Southport Gramophone Society were the hosts for this year's AGM held at the town's Royal Clifton Hotel, where 19 societies were represented. Report and photos: Paul Astell

FEDERATION CHAIRMAN Allan Child opened the meeting by introducing John Pugh MP, who has been the Member of Parliament for Southport since 2001. Our guest welcomed us to the town which he described as safe and sophisticated.



Tom Smith, Southport GS chairman, welcomes delegates

As an MP he gets to meet a diverse range of groups or tribes, and he was pleased to announce that his mother-in-law was a member of the Southport GS tribe. He observed that we are passionate about music and get a buzz from not only enjoying it ourselves but also introducing it to others.

When arriving at today's venue, he noted many volunteers bearing signs informing that they are 'here to help' (see photo page 15). Mr Pugh warned that the town's traffic wardens are not!

The **Chairman's Annual Report** began with Allan recalling the past year's traumas, which included the loss of President Lyndon Jenkins, chairman Colin Dancer, and vice-chairman Roger Apps. Despite these blows, Federation life goes on. Societies have to be covered for PRS and PFL licences, and we are able to offer special insurance terms for equipment. Third-party cover can also be arranged.

The Daventry Music Weekend proved to be a great success, not least due to Lyndon's and Colin's invaluable input in the weeks and months before the health of each had seriously deteriorated. Some problems had arisen with the PA system in recent times so new equipment has now been purchased. This was in use at today's meeting.

Allan expressed his thanks to the committee for their hard work and achievements. He pointed out that every member has a specific task, whether they have a fancy title or not! There are still vacancies on the committee and new volunteers would be welcome.

Graham Kiteley is standing down from the committee having given invaluable service for many years. In presenting his eleventh and final **Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report** for the year ending 31st July 2014, Graham confirmed that this has been a steady year in all respects. Regular tasks undertaken by the treasury include affiliation invoicing, insurance and copyright matters, not to mention the management of Federation finances and various forms of advice to the committee. The past eight months has seen much effort in preparing Graham's successor, Paul Corfield Godfrey, for the treasurer's role. There is little doubt that this function will be in safe hands and that the same levels of support will be afforded to affiliated societies in the

future. The day-to-day treasury tasks were handed over in August and indeed, societies will have received their re-affiliation documentation from Paul.

As he leaves his post, Graham's view of the Federation is that a hard core of societies have the energy, will and determination to carry on their activities, despite having quite small memberships and possibly having difficulties in finding people to stand as officers. Over the years our treasurer has tried to contain affiliation, licensing and insurance charges in order that there is no unreasonable financial burden on societies. Since 2006, an average of four societies a year have closed, although none is thought to have failed solely because of financial problems.

Total cash flow (receipts and payments) was down again this year at £65,000, although the Music Weekend still generated just over 25% of that figure. This year saw a surplus of almost £1,800, similar to last year. This outcome is seen as very satisfactory. The changing location for the AGM has always resulted in variable costs. The 2013 Hinckley AGM proved to be a low-cost event at just over £500. This represents just 10% of affiliation income, our usual measure. Our grateful thanks go to the host society for meeting the entertainment costs of that event.

The Daventry Music Weekend generated a small surplus, even though the overall income was again reduced, albeit largely balanced by reduced entertainment and administration costs. Plans for the 2015 event are taking shape which will hopefully restore bookings and income to former levels. A ring-fenced reserve fund provides a financial cushion towards future events in order that any adverse results should not affect general Federation finances. Graham believes that *Bulletin* remains an attractive publication for all affiliated societies, although reduced advertising and magazine sales resulted in a lower surplus than last year. Some increases in distribution costs were also a factor.

The final administration expenditure includes a donation to the local hospice organisation in memory of Lyndon Jenkins. Graham considers Federation finances to be in a healthy state with General Fund reserves continuing to be an integral part of the overall financial strategy, and necessary to cover the general funding of the Federation. He felt he had been most fortunate in creating genuine friendships while serving the Federation and as he headed to the 'back benches', he placed on record his heartfelt gratitude to committee colleagues for their wisdom, support and encouragement over the past twelve years. He also offered sincere thanks to each and every society with whom he had dealt.

Commenting on the foregoing, the chairman spoke of similar charitable donations made in memory of Colin Dancer and Roger Apps. Mick Birchall observed that the accounts were meticulous, as always, and we should be grateful that we've had an outstanding treasurer these past years.

Introducing his **Secretary's Report**, Jim Bostwick thanked everybody in attendance today for their support which gives legitimacy to all the work undertaken on behalf of societies. He paid tribute to the retiring treasurer's patience, advice and understanding and observed that the new incumbent has shadowed the role very effectively in recent months.

Various communications – which come at all times of the day and evening because the secretary doesn't enjoy office hours – indicate that very many societies have trouble filling key posts. One had a treasurer who was standing down with no replacement on offer, despite six other members serving on the committee. Some societies have an officer filling three roles, a situation that is not recommended.

A further eight affiliated societies have closed since the last AGM, but there has been one addition: the northern branch of the City of London Phonographic and Gramophone Society (who were represented at the meeting). We are currently a Federation of 176 societies and the majority of correspondents from those groups remain stoical with regard to their future; some even report increased membership numbers. One project for the coming year is to update the list of email addresses for as many societies that have that facility. This would inevitably result in reduced postage costs. Jim urged everybody to view the Federation's website at regular intervals, where many announcements and FRMS notices are posted, along with quantities of useful documentation and information.

John Hardie from today's host society attended a number of committee meetings as an observer and has since agreed to join. He will bring a number of skills to us which will prove invaluable. At this time no offers have been received from societies who might wish to host next year's AGM. It may be 12 months away but we do need to set the process in motion very soon. Any volunteers for this event, or those who want more information about what's involved, should make contact as soon as possible. Following ratification at this meeting of officers and committee members, all necessary amendments will be made to the returns to Companies House. Previously co-opted members Ron Beech, Denise Beech and Paul Corfield Godfrey will now become full Directors.

The chairman reminded us that two positions on the committee – *Bulletin* editor and technical officer – are appointments by the rest of the committee, rather than subject to election. That process would take place at the November committee meeting. Full details of the committee can be found on page 30.

Before his return to those 'back benches', a presentation was made to Graham Kiteley in recognition of his 12 years of service on the committee. During that period, Graham not only served as treasurer but was a very successful organiser of the Daventry Music Weekend. A presentation was also made to his wife, Diana, in recognition of the calls and enquiries that she would inevitably have had to field during that time. Paul Corfield Godfrey took

his place at the top table and immediately thanked his predecessor for his help during the period of shadowing. Alvin Robinson and Malcolm Pye have agreed to continue as independent accounts examiners for the short term, but Paul is looking to appoint somebody closer to his South Wales home.



Graham and Diana Kiteley receive presentations from the chairman

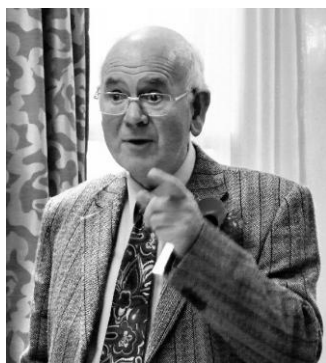
In **Any Other Business**, the Federation website and its webmaster, George Steele, were praised by Bob Drew (Kidderminster Classical Music Society). Tom Smith (Southport GS) echoed those thoughts telling us that he had spent much time, unsuccessfully, dealing with the local authority in attempting to get an internet presence for their society, but the Federation's website had provided a speedy solution. Graham Ladley (Oswestry RMS) congratulated the chairman on conducting 'a completely uneventful meeting'. There was a time when meetings were not so uneventful and Graham Kiteley had played an enormous part, along with the likes of Tony Baines and John Davies, in keeping the Federation going when it might well have foundered. Tony Baines himself – these days of Torbay RMS – also paid tribute to the outgoing treasurer. After all this, the new incumbent concluded he had a hard act to follow!

Having given brief details of the forthcoming Daventry Music Weekend, the chairman brought down his gavel on the 2014 AGM.

Presentation: Composers who fled the Nazis

To follow the main business meeting, Southport GS did us proud by offering two recorded music presentations, and very enjoyable and skilfully presented they were. First was **Stuart Elliot** from the host society who told us that there were many composers who had fled Nazi occupation during the 1930s and 1940s. He couldn't mention them all, but he settled on just three. Stuart suggested that **Bohuslav Martinů** (1890-1959) is second only to Janáček as the most important 20th-century Czech composer. Martinů was born in Polička, a small town in Bohemia which is now part of the Czech Republic. Martinů was a prolific composer who wrote for every genre, but Stuart considered that the best way to discover his

music is by way of the Sixth Symphony or the piano concertos. Martinů's talent was first spotted at school and local people were impressed enough to fund his education. In 1910 his studies took him to Prague



Stuart Elliot

Conservatory where he fared quite badly and he was eventually expelled in 1911. Back home in Polička, he composed and studied on his own and qualified as a teacher. In 1920 he was appointed second violin with the Prague

Philharmonic but, in 1923, moved to Paris to study and compose. In 1940 he wrote several works which brought him to the attention of the German secret police, not helped by his association with the Resistance. He was advised to leave the country and arrived in America jobless and penniless but found positions with some prestigious institutions, including Princeton University. In the US he wrote his first five symphonies from 1942-46.

Stuart's example of Martinů's music was *Memorial to Lidice*, the composer's tribute to the village that stood 20 kilometres north-west of Prague but which, in June 1942, was completely destroyed by the occupying Nazi forces. The performers on this recording were the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was born in 1897 in the Moravian city of Brno – this too now forms part of the Czech Republic – but the family moved to Vienna when he was two years old. Erich was a genuine child prodigy and was composing major works at a very young age. When he composed his greatest operatic success, *Die Tote Stadt* (The Dead City), he was only 23. This opera is still frequently performed, as are many of his concert-hall works. Mahler recognised his musical genius and Richard Strauss also spoke very highly of young Erich. Korngold first arrived in the US in 1934 to adapt Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* for a film score, but eventually returned back home. In 1938, Warner Bros. asked him to return to Hollywood for a new and expensive Errol Flynn picture, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Shortly after he arrived in California, the *Anschluss* took place and life for the Jews of Austria became very dangerous. Korngold, therefore, stayed in America and often spoke of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* having saved his life! John Mauceri conducted the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester in Stuart's chosen musical example, *Theme and Variations for School Orchestra*, Op. 42. It was written towards the end of Korngold's life and followed a period when, despite, or because of, his film music successes, he was no longer accepted as a serious composer.

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) learned violin as a child, and later also studied composition and conducting. He made rapid progress in German

musical circles and in 1927 was appointed Professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. In 1929 he was invited to premiere Walton's Viola Concerto. His opera *Mathis der Maler*, based on the life of the painter Matthias Grünewald, brought him to the attention of the German government. He was denounced as a Bolshevik and 'an atonal noise maker' and in 1935 the work was banned. The situation was defused when the composer was given leave from his professorship to travel to Turkey, where he was commissioned to organize that country's musical education system. In 1940, despite being a loyal German who loved his country, Hindemith decided that the political situation was such that a move, first to Switzerland and then the USA, would be in his best interests. There, he and his wife eventually became American citizens – as did Korngold and Martinů – and he became Professor of Music at Yale University in 1945. Possibly Hindemith's most popular work, *Symphonic Metamorphosis of themes by Carl Maria von Weber*, is really a mini symphony and did much to make the composer's reputation even more secure. Stuart enthused: 'Hindemith was a brilliant instrumentalist, composer and conductor and this work is a brilliant way to end this recital.' The *Symphonic Metamorphosis* was performed by the BBC Scottish SO conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

The next presentation saw **Joe Winstanley** standing proudly beside his 1936 EM Ginn 78-rpm horn gramophone that he had heroically transported to Southport. Joe brought along just a small sample of his extensive historic-record collection, and used his expert knowledge of early record production and the musicians of the time to demonstrate how things used to be in the early days of music listening.

Joe began by relating the story of how Fred Gaisberg, the Gramophone Company's first recording engineer, captured the voice of legendary tenor Enrico Caruso in 1902. Joe then played (at precisely 71 rpm) the actual record – not a copy – that the Gramophone Company's executives listened to when assessing Gaisberg's historic recording session.



Joe Winstanley demonstrates his 1936 EM Ginn machine

The processes involved in producing gramophone records, using essentially 19th-century engineering methods, progressed rapidly. Some four years after the original Caruso recordings, German engineers at the Hanover pressing plant produced discs that were markedly improved. To prove the point, we again heard Caruso in a recording from that time of an aria from *Il Trovatore*. The saying goes that ‘Caruso made the gramophone and the gramophone made Caruso’ – he gave it respectability.

There were those that thought the frequencies produced by the piano made it mathematically incompatible with acoustic recordings for the gramophone. To disprove this theory, Joe played an acoustic recording from 1917 of Chopin’s *Waltz, Op. 64 No. 2*, performed by Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

Eventually, all the top artists wanted to make recordings for the likes of the Victor Recording Company and HMV. We next heard a first-act aria from *La Traviata* sung by coloratura soprano and best-selling recording artist Amelita Galli-Curci. She was one of the most popular operatic singers of the early 20th century and in this 1916 recording, scaled the dizzy heights of top B flat with no trouble at all. An amazing recording! Joe made the point that in that era, artists really did have to sing those long, high notes. Hence the term ‘record’ – it was a true record of what took place, whereas a present-day artist could, if required, have their performance ‘engineered’.

Vasily Sapelnikov had performed Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Concerto No. 1* under the conductorship of the composer. We heard Sapelnikov in an excerpt from the concerto in a recording dating from 1922. According to Joe, no recital such as this would be complete without John McCormack. Having heard ‘O Sleep! Why Dost Thou Leave Me?’ from Handel’s 1743 opera *Semele*, Joe remarked on the tenor’s incredible breath-control, again produced without the intervention of any editing techniques.

Fred Gaisberg was great friends with Elgar and we heard a brief extract from a recording of *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 4. The Western Electric company started to produce records using an electrical microphone and soon Parlophone, HMV and Columbia Records combined to finance this new process, which was deemed necessary for them to stay in business. We then heard an example of this new and improved technique: Elgar again, this time the composer conducting the LSO in the opening of his *Symphony No.1* in a recording from around 1930.

One of the star attractions of the catalogue spanning both the acoustic and electrical eras was Rachmaninov, who recorded for Victor in the US and HMV in the UK. We heard his extraordinary pianism, albeit somewhat out of character, in *Air and variations*, ‘The Harmonious Blacksmith’ from Handel’s *Suite No. 5*.

Joe thought it appropriate to mention the Decca Records company which became prominent in the mid-1930s. They had a liaison with the German Polydor label which allowed them to sell records as cheaply as 4/6d, whilst those from the HMV Celebrity catalogue were 7/6d. We heard the Decca recording of

soprano Tiana Lemnitz singing the prayer from Weber’s *Der Freischütz*.

To finish his fascinating and expertly presented programme, Joe trusted that, like him, we would be totally entranced by Feodor Chaliapin, the Russian bass, in his version of Massenet’s *Elégie*.

Live music: Roth Guitar Duo



Roth Guitar Duo

Following an enjoyable evening meal, we were entertained by two talented young artists who had travelled from their Royal Northern College of Music base in Manchester. Indeed, guitarists Emma Smith and Sam Rodwell appeared by kind permission of the RNCM. The Roth Duo were formed in

2014 through a shared love of chamber music and have played for many different music societies and events held at the College. Sam is currently in the third year of his undergraduate degree and hopes to study for a Masters, followed by a career in music performance. Emma graduated from the RNCM after completing her Masters and a PgDip in 2014 and is currently making a living from a combination of performance and teaching in the Manchester area.

The Duo’s recital began with two Sonatas by Scarlatti: the A major and the D major. Paulo Bellinati is one of Brazil’s most accomplished contemporary guitarists and next Emma performed his solo guitar piece, *Jongo*. Agustín Pío Barrios (1885-1944) was a Paraguayan classical guitarist and composer. Emma and Sam played his Bach-inspired *La Catedral*, which was written in 1921 and widely considered to be Barrios’s best work.

Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla (1921-1992) was an Argentine tango composer and bandoneon player. The bandoneon – a type of concertina – is an essential instrument in most tango ensembles but the Duo performed Piazzolla’s *Tango Suite*, one of his most ambitious multi-movement works, on their preferred instruments.

Swedish guitarist and composer Johannes Möller was born in 1981. Sam performed Möller’s 2009 composition *Song to the Mother* and again was soloist in John Dowland’s *Fantasia No. 7* – the last of the *Fantasies* from *A Varietie of Lute Lessons* of 1610. To finish a very entertaining recital, the Roth Guitar Duo performed *Toccata for two guitars* written in 1959 by French composer Pierre Petit (1922-2000).

Thanks to Southport secretary John Hardie and his band of helpers for hosting a very successful day. ●

REGIONAL NEWS

Yorkshire Regional Group's Autumn Music Day on 18th October was held at the New North Road Baptist Church, Huddersfield. Reporter: Jim Bostwick

Rochdale Gramophone Society, the newest member of the Group, hosted the day which was attended by some 57 people, drawn largely from the nine Societies which constitute the Yorkshire Regional Group and friends.

First up was 'Simply Shostakovich' where **George Steele** played some of the composer's lighter music, as well as offering an introduction to Shostakovich's life and trials under the Soviet regime. The first excerpt was from the Piano Concerto No. 1, composed in 1933, which also features solo trumpet. The performance was by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jerzy Maksymiuk with Dmitri Alexeev (piano) and Philip Jones (trumpet).

Next was music for the 1955 film *The Gadfly*, with four selections from the score: 'Overture', 'National Holiday', 'Galop' and the well-known 'Romance'. This is music which is in turn both funny and sleazy. It was played by the USSR Cinema Symphony Orchestra conducted by Emin Khachaturian. Another film score excerpt *The Assault on Beautiful Gorky* is a particular favourite of the presenter and is from the 1951 film *The Unforgettable Year 1919*. This was played by the English Chamber Orchestra, again with Alexeev and Maksymiuk.

Tahiti Trot came next and is based on the tune 'Tea for Two' which Shostakovich arranged in 40 minutes. The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra was conducted by Riccardo Chailly with Ronald Brautigam as solo pianist.

Four excerpts from the Jazz Suite No. 2 of 1938 followed: 'March', 'Lyric Waltz', 'Dance 1' and 'Waltz 1'. This was also performed by the Concertgebouw under Chailly's direction. An English translation of 'Cheryomushki' (Cherry Town) told the story of three couples living in the new dream-town apartments where corruption is rife and, as George put it, 'language could be a bit fruity'. We heard three excerpts from the cast and Orchestra of Pimlico Opera conducted by Wasfi Kani. George concluded his 90-minute presentation with Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 which dates from 1957, played by the same forces as the Concerto we heard earlier.

Gordon O'Brien's catchy presentation title '**They Never Quite Made it to the Premier League**' was based on the premise that Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and his brother Johann Christian, Leopold Mozart and his grandson Franz Xaver, along with Fanny Mendelssohn, Michael Haydn and Clara Schumann, never quite reached the goals of their more famous namesakes. And Gordon made an excellent case for each with well-researched analysis of his musical selections.

Gordon opened with a chorus from a WF Bach Cantata, which was followed by Fanny Mendelssohn's 'October' taken from the larger work *The Year*. We then heard two movements from her Piano Trio. Next we heard the concert aria 'Ebben si vada' by the youngest of JS Bach's very musical children, Johann Christian. Then came two movements from Michael Haydn's Horn Concerto, followed by the opening movement of his Requiem Mass.

Gordon next introduced the music of Clara Schumann (née Wieck). Her father Friedrich had designs on a concert career for his young daughter and opposed the

YRG Autumn Music Day

ensuing courtship with Robert Schumann. But the couple had their way and married, although the life she led, attempting to maintain a family and a career, was astonishing. Gordon illustrated her amazing talents with Three Romances for Piano, commenting that he thought these pieces were equal to, or better than, those of her more famous husband.

A good example of father being in the shadow of son came next, and there were similarities between Friedrich Wieck and Leopold Mozart, both of whom perhaps desired some proceeds from the concert careers of their children. Gordon touched on the young Mozart's early prodigy existence, being pushed by his father to perform at the European Courts. We heard the first movement of Leopold Mozart's *Sinfonia di caccia* and the 'Agnus Dei' from Litaniae.

The youngest surviving son of Wolfgang and Constanze Mozart, Franz Xaver (1791-1844) completed Gordon's survey with the second and third movements of his Piano Concerto in E flat. For many of the audience this was a presentation that introduced them to unfamiliar music which, Gordon cogently argued, deserved to be more frequently heard.

The final presentation of the day came from Rochdale Gramophone Society's secretary, **Martin Winn**, who had joined them when the Oldham Gramophone Society had finally closed its doors. His programme was titled **R.I.P. Oldham Gram** and was essentially a revisit to the very last programme given by him to his friends in October 2013. He dedicated his presentation to their memory.

Martin's programme gave the audience the opportunity to listen to more substantial musical items. He started with Suite No. 2 'Indian' by American composer Edward MacDowell (1860-1908), written in 1892. The five movements are 'Legend', 'Love Song', 'In War Time', 'Dirge' and 'Village Festival'. It was performed by the Ulster Orchestra conducted by Takuo Yuasa. The American connection was maintained with music from the American Civil War and included songs collected by Daniel Emmett (1815-1904), Henry Clay Work (1832-1884) and J Bodewalt Lampe (1869-1929). We heard Emmett's *Dixie's Land* (1859) and Lampe's *Creole Belle* (1900), both written in the style of Mississippi river boat songs. These were followed by four Work songs beginning with the poignant *Come Home, Father* (1864), an entreaty by a child for his father to stop drinking and return to his sick family. The moral, of course, is that he arrives too late. The more cheery and familiar *Grandfather's Clock* of 1876 was followed by *Kingdom Coming* (1862) and finally *The Picture on the Wall* (1864) concluded this quartet.

20th-century American composer Meredith Willson (1902-1984) came next with the first movement of his *A Symphony of San Francisco*, played by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra conducted by William T Stromberg from Naxos's 'American Classics' series.

The afternoon visit down memory lane, for Martin and for us, ended with Janet Baker, accompanied by Sir John Barbirolli, performing 'Where Corals Lie' from Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. ●

REGIONAL NEWS

Central Region

The venue on November 1st for the Central Region's Music Day was, once again, the Quinborne Centre on the outskirts of Birmingham. The day's theme was **Extra-musical Relationships**.

Gustav and Alma: A Marriage of Convenience

Dr Jim Pritchard took on the role of both narrator and Gustav Mahler, and his wife **Alessandra** was the voice of Alma, in their fascinating exploration of the troubled relationship between Mahler and his wife. Jim was co-founder of the Gustav Mahler Society UK and edits *The Wayfarer* newsletter. We heard that Gustav was 19 years Alma's senior and the terms of their marriage would be that the young wife's musical aspirations would be set aside in favour of supporting her husband's career. We were asked to name the performer in an excerpt from the piano version of Mahler's Symphony No. 5, a work written around the time of the marriage. Nobody identified Gustav himself as the pianist in a recording taken from a piano roll. Mahler completed the original version of his Sixth Symphony in the summer of 1904, seemingly a time of great happiness for the couple following the birth of their second daughter, Anna Justina. Their first, Maria, had arrived in 1902, the year of the Mahlers' marriage. We heard the opening of the symphony's first movement performed by the Philharmonia conducted by Benjamin Zander. Mahler wrote 'Liebst du um Schönheit', from the *Rückert-Lieder*, as a gift to his wife, having left the score hidden within the pages of Wagner's *Siegfried*. We heard the song performed by Waltraud Meier, accompanied by the Bavarian RSO under Lorin Maazel.

Mahler was ever mindful that no major composer since Beethoven had successfully completed more than nine symphonies and had declined to designate *Das Lied von der Erde* as number nine. This was composed at a time of great distress for the Mahlers: anti-semitic sentiments had led to Gustav's resignation as Director of the Vienna Opera, their daughter Maria had died, and he himself learned of a heart defect. We heard 'Von der Schönheit' (Of Beauty) sung by Kathleen Ferrier, with the Vienna PO under Bruno Walter.

At the time of Mahler's death in 1911, only the first movement of the Tenth Symphony had been completed. We heard Deryck Cooke's version of the third movement *Purgatorio*, with Simon Rattle conducting the Berlin PO.

As a fine example of Alma's own composing talent, we heard 'Ekstase' from Five Songs for voice and piano sung by Charlotte Margiono.

Leoš Janáček and Kamila Stösslová

Professor John Tyrrell is the author of the definitive biography of Leoš Janáček. He is also the editor and translator of the English edition of Janáček's letters to Kamila Stösslová, the results of the rather unusual and one-sided relationship between the two, both of whom were married. We were told that Janáček had initially stalked the woman who was almost 40 years his junior; nevertheless, this association resulted in some of the composer's best work during his final decade. John featured what he described as the three main works which had been inspired by Janáček's passion for Kamila. *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* is a song cycle for tenor and piano. From Beno Blachut's 1956 recording we heard 'My Grey Oxen'.

Janáček's opera *Káťa Kabanová* is dedicated to Kamila who appears to be the inspiration for the work.

We heard an extract from the recording featuring Elisabeth Söderström with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Charles Mackerras. Janáček referred to his String Quartet No. 2 as 'our quartet' and its title, 'Intimate Letters', is the composer's own. We heard an excerpt performed by the Haas Quartet. As a parting thought at the end of his very interesting and enjoyable presentation, John speculated that when composing the *Glagolitic Mass*, Leoš imagined that he was leaving a cathedral, having been married to Kamila. We heard an extract performed by the Czech Philharmonic and Sir Charles Mackerras.

Words and Music

FRMS acting chairman **Allan Child** and his wife **Ruth** presented a sequence of music and readings, exploring the relationship between words and music. For their first item our presenters asked: 'What better coming together of words and music can there be than Franz von Schober's poem *An die Musik* (To Music) in Franz Schubert's exquisite setting? The performers were Felicity Lott (soprano) and Graham Johnson (piano). Then came an extract from *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian where, in 1939, a 9-year old evacuee is billeted with an elderly widower who has agreed to take over when the church organist is called up. The music that followed was Henry Walford Davies's *Solemn Melody* with Roger Fisher at the organ of St George's Headstone Church.

'The Double Bass' from Cecil Forsyth's book *Orchestration* preceded the poem *Concerto for Double Bass* by John Fuller. Giovanni Bottesini's Eley No. 1 for Double Bass was a suitable companion piece and was performed by Joel Quarrington and Andrew Burashko. From his memoirs, *Joys and Sorrows*, we heard about Pablo Casals discovering the cello. Appropriately enough, Casals featured in Haydn's Piano Trio in G, Hob. 15 No. 25 along with Alfred Cortot and Jacques Thibaud.

The Guitar, a poem by Federico García Lorca, was followed by Segovia's arrangement of Fernando Sor's Study for Guitar; Eros Roselli was the soloist. Having read 'Lines to a Movement in Mozart's E-flat Symphony' – a poem by Thomas Hardy from *Moments of Vision* – Allan and Ruth, naturally enough, continued with the first movement of Mozart's Symphony No. 19 in E flat, K132. This was performed by the Northern Chamber Orchestra under Nicholas Ward. The same performers were heard in Telemann's 'Don Quixote's Awakening' and 'His Attack on the Windmills' from the *Don Quixote* suite. This followed a reading from *Don Quijote de La Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes. Selected verses from Job, Chapters 2 to 6, were followed by an excerpt from *Job – a Masque for Dancing* by Vaughan Williams. The LPO was conducted by Vernon Handley. *Howards End* by EM Forster contains one of the most familiar passages about music in fiction with a description of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Following an excerpt from that narrative, we heard the third and fourth movements of the symphony in Carlos Kleiber's 'stand-out' recording with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Thanks to Mick Birchall and his team for organising a very successful and enjoyable day. **Paul Astell**

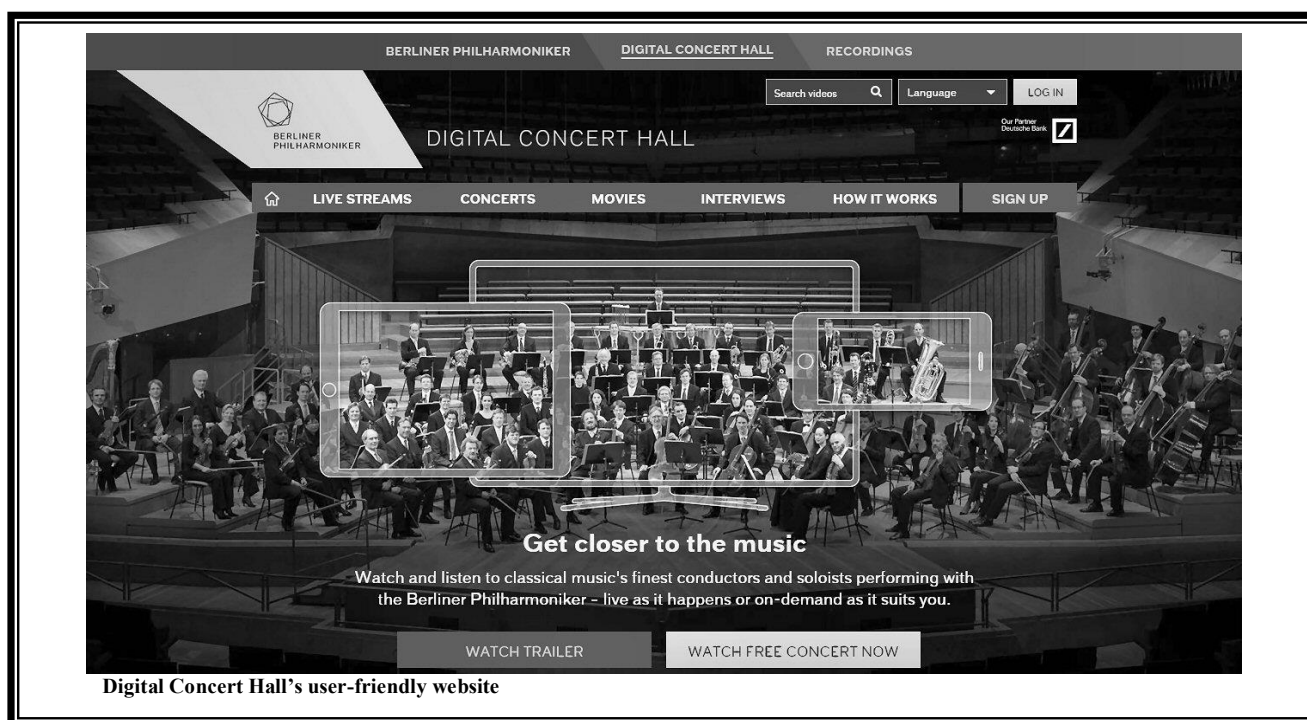
Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall

Live or on demand

In *Bulletin 159*, I enthused about the possibilities of experiencing classical music concerts from your computer. Specifically, I was reviewing the *classicLive* website where a selection of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra's output is easily accessible, and all at no cost. For this issue I have reviewed a similar, but altogether more complete, facility offered by the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall. The website describes itself perfectly: 'Berliner Philharmoniker's Digital Concert Hall video streams classical music concerts to your tablet, smartphone, smartTV or PC. The sound quality is similar to that of a CD and the picture quality similar to HD television. We offer a high-definition picture with H.264 encoding and stereo sound in AAC format with a data-transfer rate of up to 256 Kbit/s.'

spiel. Here too the experience is free of such annoyances. I also described how you might want to view those performances, but here I'll again quote the Berlin website's description: 'Experience classical music concerts at home in your living room or on the go wherever you like. The Digital Concert Hall is available on a multitude of devices – TV and Blu-ray, tablet and smartphone, Mac and PC.'

I decided to find out for myself just what the Berliners had to offer. Well for a start, you can discover whether this is to your liking by way of a free trial. (See also special offer below.) When I took advantage of this, the concert featured Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and Mahler's First, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle in 2010. At the time of writing, a second concert is on offer: Rattle again, this time conducting the first symphonies of



Digital Concert Hall's user-friendly website

The main difference between the facilities of Berlin and Lahti is one of cost. It should be no surprise that such a high quality and comprehensive offering from Berlin's much-revered artists inevitably requires a payment of some kind, and there are several options. €14.90* per month for a personal subscription (with automatic renewal that can be cancelled at any time) will provide unlimited access to hundreds of concert recordings dating from the 1960s to the present, and live streams which are quickly added to the archive. There is also the option of single-use tickets: 7 days at €9.90 or 30 days at €19.90 which can also be used as gifts. If you are really keen, how about 12 months' access for €149.00!

In addition, almost every concert performance includes interviews with the soloists and/or conductor involved, along with much useful background information. Actually, those interviews are viewable at any time without paying a penny (or cent) – they are offered free of charge.

I commented in my previous article that, mercifully, there were no adverts, pop-up windows or sponsor's

Brahms and Schumann last October. As before, I connected my laptop to the TV via the HDMI connection (I don't own an internet-ready or 'smart' model). It soon becomes obvious that the picture quality is top rate, so what about the sound? It wasn't too long into the first symphony that I realised there was a problem with occasional hesitations in the sound stream, although the picture remained perfectly stable. I soon traced this to the quality setting button on the player interface where the default is 'auto'. My high-speed broadband delivers a very useful 30-35 Mb/s (although not always) but it seems the website's 'auto' setting reacts to variations in that delivery by randomly selecting other quality options, which range from 'very low' to 'maximum'. Each time that option auto-changes, it causes the slightest of blips, which of course severely detracts from the listening experience. So now I always select the 'maximum' quality setting, and I've not suffered a problem since. You, of course, may require a different setting. Incidentally, the website offers a bandwidth test which 'measures the real data throughput between your Internet connection and us'. Once I was up and running with the

correct setting, those free Beethoven and Mahler performances proved to be a totally satisfying experience, which didn't come as too much of a surprise; from the moment you start navigating around the very user-friendly site you realise this is, as you might expect, a totally professional operation. Then of course, there's the wonderful music...

So what choices did I make from the seemingly endless goodies on offer, and does it represent good value? Selecting your ideal concert is made very easy because the search facility allows you to select by conductor, composer, soloist, season or genre. Once you navigate to a particular concert, it is easy to choose which segment of the performance you want. You are certainly not forced to view the whole concert. Having enjoyed Gustavo Dudamel's performance of Mahler Symphony No. 2 at the Proms a while back, I opted to hear the Berlin Phil's rendition of the Symphony No. 3 with Dudamel at the helm. Again, this was a wonderful experience for someone like me who thoroughly enjoys this music. On another occasion I selected Riccardo Chailly's concert from last November which featured Martha Argerich's performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto. Along with Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas* Overture, the first half of the concert I viewed consisted of splendid music-making.

I thought I would investigate something from further back in the archives. Somewhat randomly, I hit a Herbert von Karajan concert from 1978. This consisted of magnificent renditions of Debussy's *La Mer* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2. At the time I couldn't help but make unfavourable comparisons between the video productions of that time and more recent trends. There is an almost claustrophobic feel brought about by the camera work, almost always employing close-up shots with few wide-angle views. This is not helped by the 4:3

aspect ratio that was once the norm for TV, but nowadays we are more accustomed to the widescreen (16:9) experience. And then, soon after, I saw the BBC 4 documentary *Karajan's Magic and Myth*. It was emphasised there that Karajan took full control of those video productions – he is billed as director – which he considered part of his music legacy, an important aspect of which was that the camera should focus on him most of the time! Still, this is fascinating viewing and a marvellous musical offering, and there are lots more like it.

My other choices are too many to list, but I'll mention one more: Simon Rattle's 2002 New Year's Eve concert given almost three months after his inaugural concert as principal conductor. This is a wonderful occasion that (perhaps) makes you wish you had been there. Following some Bernstein and Gershwin favourites, the main part of the evening is a glorious concert performance of Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*. Alongside his more serious side, we know that Rattle revels in this kind of thing and it is clear that the performers and this particular audience did too. There is a totally outrageous finale to savour when Rattle, grinning ear to ear, reprises the show-stopper number 'Conga'. Sure enough, almost the entire Berlin audience joins the performers on their feet, some actually performing the dance, to bring a marvellous concert to a rousing conclusion.

I realise I haven't answered my earlier question: is this concert experience good value? Most definitely yes! Try it: www.digitalconcerthall.com

*At the time of going to press, one euro = £0.75.

Paul Astell

We have negotiated a free 48-hour ticket for the Digital Concert Hall, exclusively for *Bulletin* readers. Enter the following code into the yellow box accessed from the 'Sign Up' tab: FRMS48DCH The code is valid until 30th June 2015.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT Allan Child

AS I WRITE THIS, THE NEW YEAR 2015 is already almost a month old; what will the rest of the year bring for the Federation? After the sadness of the past 18 months we look for a brighter future for the FRMS. We have some good news already in that Julian Lloyd Webber has accepted our invitation to become President of the Federation. Although he has all but retired from the concert platform as a soloist he still has a busy schedule touring in his new show with his wife and fellow-cellist Jiaxin, as well as promoting music through Live Music Now and Sistema England. We feel honoured, therefore, to have him as our President. Together with Jim Bostwick and Graham Kiteley, I met Julian recently and we had a very useful discussion of how his presidency can be to our mutual benefit.

There is more good news in the arrangements for our annual Music Weekend, being held once again in Daventry. More information can be found on page 17, but let me take this opportunity to highlight the star attraction this year, made possible through the generosity of one of our regular attenders. The live recital on the Sunday morning will be by Chloë Hanslip and Danny Driver, and will include Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata.

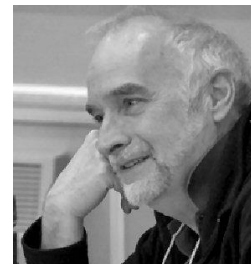
Elsewhere in this issue you will find a report of the 2014 AGM and details of the changes to the committee. We have a good team who work well together, but it is a cause for concern that there are two vacancies on the committee. Members of the committee all take responsibility for specific tasks, and in some instances may have more than one responsibility, so we would welcome offers to join us as co-opted members. If you feel you could join our team you will be very welcome at one of our committee meetings as an observer without committing yourself further. Travel and, if appropriate, accommodation expenses would be paid, and lunch provided at the meeting. Please contact Jim Bostwick or myself if you would like more information.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that the FRMS committee is keen to foster contact with and between societies, and members – me included – are willing to visit societies either as presenters or simply to participate in the meeting. ●



A VIEW FROM YORKSHIRE Jim Bostwick, FRMS Secretary

FROM TIME TO TIME, I am asked what we do by people unfamiliar with the concept of recorded music societies. Never one to let an opportunity go by, I explain the origins of the movement in the 1930s when, with a depression on, gramophone records were relatively expensive so people gathered together with a philosophy of 'I'll play you mine, if you play me yours'. Of course, depending on the age of enquirer, I now have to explain 'gramophone', or perhaps even 'records'. I may have lost them by now but if they've persevered, I go on about the pleasure of listening to music with others, without domestic interruptions and often with an interesting and persuasive presenter. 'But I've got music with me all the time on my iPod/tablet/mobile phone, etc, etc.' they say, and of course I guess this would be the response of many. 'Do you ever go to live music?' I ask. Some say they do. 'What about classical music?' Most now hope you 'have a nice day' and I'm left feeling like a dinosaur. From my teaching background, I know that music appreciation lessons are long gone, that students on *University Challenge* rarely get questions on classical music right, and on *Pointless* (the quiz before the 6 o'clock news on BBC1) it is a category never picked when on offer in the final round.



In the Winter 2014 edition of *Classical Recordings Quarterly* – of which more anon – Alan Sanders writes an article titled 'Applause in the wrong places'. This is about an increasing incidence of this phenomenon which for him and, he feels, the musicians and conductors, is a source of annoyance. I've noticed this when watching relays of the Proms – outbreaks of clapping between concerto movements. I have, like him, witnessed the problem of the third movement of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony. Can there be people who think it's finished? Some years ago, my son and I attended a charity concert at the London Coliseum for the children of the Beslan school massacre. The event was organised by Valery Gergiev and Lady Solti to raise funds to aid the survivors with music provision. Lady Solti announced at the interval that maestro Gergiev had requested there be no applause at the end of the symphony. It fell on some deaf ears. Sure enough a brief outburst at the end of the *allegro molto vivace* was quickly shushed. BBC TV recorded the event and broadcast it a week later, the offence thankfully edited out. Back live, the message had got through and the complete silence at the end of the symphony was one of the most moving experiences of my life.

What these paragraphs are about is 'education, education, education'. And it is woefully lacking in our schools when it comes to music. In one of the richest countries in the world, why can't we do what happens in Venezuela? It seems evident that young people there are passionate about music of all sorts, so why not here?

And finally, *Classical Recordings Quarterly* magazine is an exemplar of outstanding writing about classical recorded music and the musicians who make (and made) it. The list of contributors for the current edition – Jon Tolansky, Joe Winstanley (who gave a memorable demonstration programme with his EMG gramophone at last year's AGM in Southport), Tully Potter, David Patmore, *et al* – is typical. Our late President Lyndon Jenkins contributed many articles and reviews over the years. But current editor and owner of the title Alan Sanders, facing rising costs, has, in his editorial, challenged current subscribers to find other like-minded people who have a passion for recorded music to join their ranks and take out a subscription. An adaptation of the Kitchener poster has it: 'Your magazine needs you'. Well, I've done my bit, please take a look. www.crq.org.uk

FRMS West Region Music Day

Celebrating the life of Roger Apps and his love of music

Wednesday July 8th 2015 at

St Joseph's Church Hall, Stonehouse (home of Stroud Valleys Music Society and on the edge of the Cotswolds)

5 minutes from M5 Junction 13; Travelodge nearby

Presentations to include:

- June Apps with music of particular interest to Roger
- Dr Lionel Carley, President of the Delius Society

Register your interest and get full details from
Malcolm Lewis on 01285 644110
or email Lewis23@xln.co.uk

Please put the date in your diary

FRMS SCOTTISH GROUP MUSIC DAY

Saturday April 18th from midday

Kirkcaldy United Services Institute, 8 St Brycedale Avenue, Kirkcaldy (opposite the Adam Smith Centre)
About 10 minutes' walk from railway station

- **Douglas Lorimer**
 - *Sibelius and Nielsen on 78s*
- **Peter Herbert** (Stirling RMS)
 - *Two Unexplored Centenaries: The music of Vítězslava Kaprálová and Jan Hanuš*
Conference Fee no more than £15

For more information, please contact John Maidment
on 01241 853017 or email johnmaidment@msn.com

SOCIETY NEWS

Stone RMS 70th Anniversary

On a raw November evening while World War II was drawing to a close, a dozen music lovers met informally in the rooms of the Conservative Association and decided to establish a Gramophone Society in Stone.

On November 28th 1944 the first formal meeting was held and the following officers were elected: Mr H Tunnicliffe (chairman); Miss D Lovelock (vice-chairman); Mr JW Moore (treasurer) and Mr EN Bailey (secretary). Committee members were Mr Baldwin, Mr FM Nind, Miss O Matthews, Mrs LW Mercer and Mr R Stiles. An annual subscription of 2/6d was agreed.

The first recital was presented on December 8th in the Conservative Association rooms by both Mr E Chadwick and Mr Hulme; 44 members attended. Over the years the membership grew with one recital attracting an audience of 60. In common with many similar organisations, membership has dwindled in recent times and for the last 5 years has stabilised at about 26, with average attendances of 18.

A variety of venues have been used during the Society's history and we are now based in a room at the rear of the Walton Community Centre site. Our current officers are Diana Hill (President/chairman), Bill Cornes (vice-chairman), Mike Eccles (treasurer) and Geoff Owen (secretary). Michael Harding is programme secretary and the committee members are Sheila Howells, Annie Russell, Stan Russell and Janet Stewart.

Programmes are presented by our own members and visitors from neighbouring societies in Newcastle RMS, Stafford RMS, Walton (Stafford) RMC and Stoke RMS. Each presentation (recital) comprises short pieces of music, mainly classical, but not exclusively, along with dialogue about the composer, performer or some event which led to the item being selected.

On December 19th 2014, the 70th anniversary of the Society was celebrated by 26 members with a delicious finger buffet provided by The Secret Kitchen of Stone, followed by a selection of short pieces of recorded music that had been chosen by members. The selection included music conducted by Leonard Slatkin, who was born in the year our Society was founded, along with other music from that year.

Our President/chairman, Diana Hill, in closing the meeting recalled that when she joined the Society in 1978, some of the founders were still active members. She was sure they would have been delighted with the way that the current members had celebrated the 70th anniversary of their enterprise.

Geoff Owen, hon. secretary

West Wickham Recorded Music Society

2014 proved to be another very active and successful year for the West Wickham Recorded Music Society in the London Borough of Bromley. In addition to the regular fortnightly meetings, the year contained a series of events – opera and concert visits, a musical

holiday and social occasions – that kept the continuity moving along from month to month.

The first event was our annual coffee morning in February, with sales of home-made items, CDs and books which raised over £350 towards Society funds for future events. In March, for our buffet-supper and concert, we invited back Gonzalo Acosta (violin) and Caroline Jaya-Ratnam (piano), very popular artists at our 2013 event, to give the recital. Gonzalo is leader of the ENO Orchestra and strings tutor at the Royal Academy of Music. Caroline has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. Their excellent programme included Mozart's Sonata for Violin and Piano, K301, Eugène Ysaÿe's solo Violin Sonata Op. 2, Debussy's Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor, Béla Bartók's *Romanian Dances*, and *Old Viennese Melodies* by Kreisler.

Our annual Musical Weekend – the 51st in the series – was held in mid-April in the Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne. The theme chosen was a survey of the music heard by Society members during the 24 years of musical holidays at home and abroad. There were five sessions presented by way of CDs, and also DVDs projected onto a large screen. These recalled a very wide range of music covering 17 different venues, the first at the 1990 Bath Festival which featured Manuel de Falla's *El amor brujo*, through to the Cardiff Summer Proms of 2013 which ended in a cavalcade of Welsh songs, with the audience filling in all the parts. Among the festivals visited at home during those 24 years have been Cheltenham, King's Lynn, Lichfield, Buxton and Newbury, and abroad at Aix-en-Provence, Bratislava, Lucerne, Torre del Lago and Munich.

The main event of the year was the musical holiday at the Verona Opera Festival, held in the vast Roman amphitheatre. The five-day holiday in early July by air from Gatwick to Venice, then by coach to our hotel on the outskirts of Verona, covered three operas with tours each day. The first day of touring took the group to Lake Garda, with a walking tour of Sirmione, a visit to the 13th-century stronghold Rocca Scaligera, a glimpse of Maria Callas's house and a boat trip on Lake Garda itself. In the evening the group attended Verdi's *Aida*. Sadly, only two acts of four were heard; rain fell after the 'Triumphal March', and the performance was then abandoned.

The second day dawned brightly allowing for a memorable visit to Padua and the Scrovegni Chapel, which contains one of Giotto's most famous works. This is a series of 14th-century frescoes depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin and the life of Christ, all in a fine state of preservation in an air-conditioned environment. We also visited the early 15th-century Basilica of Saint Antony.

The second opera attended was *Turandot* by Puccini, with fabulous Chinese scenery extending across the wide stage of the arena. Again, only two acts were heard; after the great aria 'In questa reggia', rain again fell and the orchestra and artists hurried for cover as the performance was terminated.

A visit to Venice, including a guided tour in and around the Piazza San Marco, occupied the third day. Here the group had special entry to the Basilica and saw the 10th-century jewel-encrusted gold altar piece comprising 150 panels. That evening there was success at last in the arena. The group heard all of Bizet's *Carmen* which included prancing horses on stage. The final act outside the bullring was a blaze of traditional costumes worn by a huge chorus. Before flying back on the final morning, the group had a walking tour of Verona and its interconnecting squares, and there was an opportunity to photograph Juliet's house and famous balcony.

One of the most popular events is the annual Musical Day Out, which included a cruise on the Thames followed by an orchestral concert. In June, the Society embarked at Boulter's Lock below Maidenhead, and cruised downstream on the magnificent two-deck *Queen of the Thames*. From Runnymede our coach conveyed the group to the Barbican Hall for an all-Beethoven programme by the London Symphony Orchestra under the Greek conductor and violinist Leonidas Kavakos. The concert started with Beethoven's Overture *Prometheus* which was followed by the Triple Concerto played by Kavakos, Italian pianist Enrico Pace, and principal cello of the LSO Tim Hugh. The Day Out ended with Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'.

Once again the Society was fortunate in obtaining 10 second-tier boxes, each holding five people, for a BBC Promenade Concert in August. The Royal Albert Hall was sold out for a concert given by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gianandrea Noseda. The programme commenced with Alfredo Casella's *Elegia eroica*, dedicated to the Unknown Soldier and a commemoration of World War One. Benjamin Grosvenor, still only 22 and a former BBC Radio New Generation Artist, then played Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1, and after the interval returned with César Franck's Symphonic Variations for piano and orchestra. The concert concluded on a high note with Saint-Saëns's Symphony No. 3 in C minor, 'Organ'.

In spite of the huge demand for tickets, the Society managed to get a coach-load to the Glyndebourne production of Verdi's *La Traviata* in October. It proved to be a five-star production with Irina Dubrovskaya brilliantly singing the part of Violetta Valéry, Zach Borichevsky played Alfredo. Tom Cairns directed the production and David Afkham conducted the Glyndebourne on Tour Orchestra, which was on fine form.

The final visit of the year was to a pre-Christmas concert at the Royal Festival Hall to hear the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by David Zinman. The overture was from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, a thrilling performance with sweeping strings and glorious Pilgrims' Chorus theme. The concerto was Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with the 24-year-old virtuoso soloist Behzod Abduraimov, who received a rousing reception from a packed hall for his performance. The final work was Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 for which a standing

ovation was given. David Zinman impressively conducted the whole concert without a score.

West Wickham's regular fortnightly meetings have included guest presenters Terry Barfoot on Sibelius, Robert Matthew-Walker with the subject 'The Crown Imperial – Music for Royal Occasions', and Peter Lymbery from the Torbay Music Weekend on French romantic music. Brian Mare gave an appreciation of Claudio Abbado (1933-2014) and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Richard Strauss was marked by Gerald Brinsdon's account of the composer's life and music. There have also been two DVD evenings, presented on a large screen, covering ballet, opera and orchestral music. The Christmas lunch was again successfully held at Le Château, Shirley, and an enjoyable and well-attended Christmas party with a great selection of seasonal refreshments ended a year full of activity. Membership is currently just over 100. At the AGM in May, Eileen Taylor stood down from the committee after 27 years, for 24 of which she was vice-chairman. A card and cheque were presented to her as a token of the Society's appreciation of her long and distinguished service.

Phillip Cox, chairman

90th birthday at Ightham and District MS

Joyce Thomas is now 90. She has been the indefatigable prop and mainstay of the Ightham and District Music Society for many years, both in various roles on the organising committee and as a frequent and valued presenter of individual programmes at monthly meetings. These are always made more interesting by her first-hand knowledge of the musicians involved in the performances of the works chosen, and her ability to bring to life the composers by giving us unexpected details of their lives and works. All within the Society are so grateful for her abiding, thoughtful, and generous presence at our meetings. She really does deserve a gold star!



Tony Theaker, chairman

Torbay Music Weekend

2013 saw the Weekend take a leap forward with increased numbers and a well-received programme. The 2014 event's presenters had residents and day visitors coming away feeling that the Weekend was better than ever. Two-thirds of the audience responded to questionnaires and 96% of them indicated that they 'enjoyed all that they had heard and seen'. 76% 'enjoyed very much' and many wrote in eulogising tones about the presenters.

So, who was there? **Pat Strevens** is a retired professional French horn player who started out in 1948 as the youngest member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He gave a scintillating view from the inside, describing the great characters, and



The good folk of Southport GS are ready to help at the 2014 AGM, held in their home town. Photo: Paul Astell

their demands, that produced the wonderful orchestras of that era. Like no other capital city or country, we are now benefiting from that. His narrative was interspersed with many recordings of historic performances.

A sparkling talk given by **Susanna Riddell** had people stirred both musically and emotionally in her masterly presentation of her work with the Wessex Youth Orchestra (WYO). She is also a cellist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and has taken over the WYO which was started by her father. Recordings of their playing demonstrated the incredibly high standards being achieved. Her presentation finished with video recordings from the WYO's end of season concerts.

Very professional presentations were given by **Julian Williamson** on the life and times of Hans von Bülow (most enlightening); **Professor Jeremy Dibble** from Durham University on the topical subject of English composers during World War One; and our own **Ted Pezarro** who informed us of 'That Jewish Strain' – the remarkable number of Jewish musicians across the musical spectrum.

The support over many years that we get from the **Nimbus** record company is invaluable. They not only provide a spread of CDs in abundance at bargain



Susanna Riddell (top) and Pat Strevens
Photos: Paul Miller

prices, but this time Antony Smith and his team – Amy Verheyden and Rhys Ward – also gave a presentation on their reading of the future of recorded music, and the media by which it will be consumed. With many tracks from their extensive catalogue, this was another inspiring presentation using the media-marketing methods they thrive on.

Other Weekend presenters of distinction included **Roger Vignoles**, the internationally renowned pianist and accompanist; former BBC Radio 3 presenter **Sandy Burnett**, who talked about the sheer genius of JS Bach; and **Arthur Boyd** who used his encyclopaedic knowledge to draw on new aspects of Cole Porter that was post-watershed material in some respects! He demonstrated this with many excerpts of great music from the genius, providing the night birds among us with much to enjoy. **Peter LyMBERy** regaled us with Richard Strauss (on his 150th

anniversary), the man and his music. And there was also another late evening presentation, 'Bedtime Baroque', from our own in-house committee members **Lesley Orson** and **Maureen Greenhouse**.

Next year we will again be at The Palace Hotel, from November 20th – 23rd. See you there?

John Isaac, chairman

Lyndon Jenkins Mainly for Pleasure

A tribute concert

September 25th 2014

ARRIVING FROM WALES in the early 60s, Lyndon Jenkins had wasted no time in celebrating Birmingham's unique status and he was a driving force behind the creation of two world-class concert halls there. Therefore, to paraphrase the words of Julian Lloyd Webber, it felt absolutely right to be toasting his memory at the city's historic Town Hall.

For classical music audiences in Birmingham, Lyndon was regarded as being the public face of both Symphony Hall and Town Hall and so it was equally fitting that there should be a near capacity attendance for this special tribute concert. The Federation was well represented at the event along with many significant local musical organisations.

The concert was introduced by Lyndon's long-time friend, Julian Lloyd Webber, and featured several artists who have appeared recently for the Federation's Music Weekend. Given the nature of the concert, it would have been unreasonable to expect the whole of the CBSO to have given their services free, and so the bias was very much towards individual performances with many of them solo pianists. Some of the artists had been generously mentored by Lyndon in their early careers; others could be counted as professional colleagues.

John Lill started proceedings with the Brahms Rhapsody in B minor, followed by the performance by Polish violinist Alicja Smietana of Poulenc's very contrasting Bagatelle in D minor. She was accompanied by John Lenehan. Chinese pianist Di Xiao displayed much maturity in her playing of the Sibelius Impromptu, Op. 5 No. 5, and Schubert's Impromptu in G flat.

An interesting stylistic change came with Danish soprano Signe Asmussen singing three delightful songs by Carl Nielsen, her appearance at this concert

reflecting Lyndon's great interest in her country's music. Miss Asmussen had been accompanied by Rebeca Omordia who has the unusual pedigree of being half Romanian and half Nigerian. She now came into her own with fine performances of John Ireland's *Columbine* and *The Scarlet Ceremonies*.

At this point, appropriately in a pre-recorded contribution, radio producer Brian Savin introduced an illuminating selection of Lyndon's broadcasting output, giving the audience the opportunity of recalling his inimitable vocal tones. John Lenehan returned to the stage to accompany violinist Tasmin Little in one of Delius's less-known pieces, *Légende*.

Mark Bebbington, who made his Carnegie Hall debut in October 2014, reprised the performance he gave in the Liszt Bicentenary celebrations of 2011 with an outstanding rendition of *Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este*.

The concert was to have concluded with Jiaxin Lloyd Webber playing the Prelude and Gigue from Bach's Suite No. 1 in G, but to everyone's delight and surprise, her husband Julian, who had been forced through injury to retire from concert

performances, was presented with a borrowed cello from the Conservatoire which enabled him to accompany his wife in a Vivaldi Double Concerto. Julian explained that he had 'bagged' the easier bass lines whilst Jiaxin performed the other virtuosic parts with great panache.

It was testament to the warmth and affection in which Lyndon was held that so many wonderful musicians gave their time and talents so generously in what was a truly delightful tribute to a much-loved gentleman. Those who were privileged to be there will remember the occasion with much pleasure.

Graham Kiteley

Photos: Alan Wood for THSH



From left: John Lenehan, Alicja Smietana, Mark Bebbington, Tasmin Little, Signe Asmussen, Di Xiao, Jiaxin Lloyd Webber and Rebeca Omordia. Front: Julian Lloyd Webber



Julian Lloyd Webber and John Lill

FRMS Music Weekend

Daventry

April 24th – 26th
2015
*Daventry Court
Hotel*



Ben Ealovega

CHLOË HANSLIP
and **DANNY DRIVER**
in performance



Richard Haughton



Malcolm Crowthers

MARTIN JONES pianist



MARTIN CULLINGFORD
editor, *Gramophone*

*... and much more, including
conductor Adrian Brown, Terry
Barfoot from Arts in Residence,
and freelance author and
teacher Nigel Simeone*

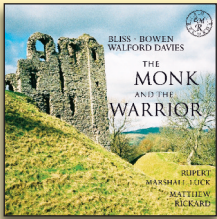


RICHARD BLACKFORD
composer

*Cost: £174 per person (two people sharing). Single occupancy £196.
Conference fee £40 per person. Day visitors welcome.*

*Further details from Jim Bostwick on 01484 717865
or email: secretary@thefrms.co.uk*

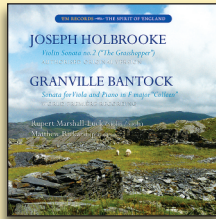
EM RECORDS



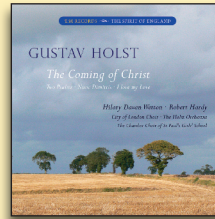
BLISS: Violin Sonata
WALFORD DAVIES:
Violin Sonata in A major
YORK BOWEN:
Violin Sonata in E minor
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)
Matthew Rickard (piano)
EMR CD001



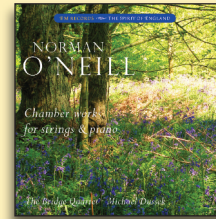
ROGER QUILTER:
Complete Piano Music
David Owen Norris (piano)
EMR CD002



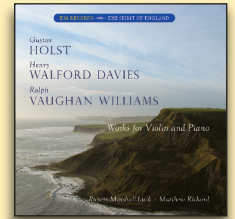
HOLBROOKE:
Violin Sonata in F Major
BANTOCK:
Viola Sonata "Colleen"
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin/viola)
Matthew Rickard (piano)
EMR CD003



GUSTAV HOLST:
The Coming of Christ
and other choral works
City of London Choir
The Holst Orchestra
Hilary Davan Wetton (conductor)
Robert Hardy (reciter)
EMR CD004



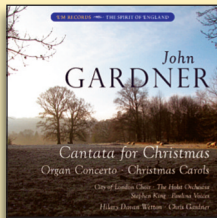
NORMAN O'NEILL:
String Quartet in C major,
Piano Trio in one movement,
Piano Quintet, Theme and
Variations for Piano Trio
The Bridge Quartet
Michael Dussek
EMR CD005



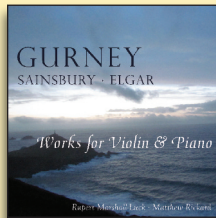
HOLST: Five Pieces
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:
Violin Sonata
WALFORD DAVIES:
Violin Sonata
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)
Matthew Rickard (piano)
EMR CD006



VIOLA SONATAS:
Idylls & Bacchanals
Works by Bax, McEwen,
Maconchy, Jacob, Rawsthorne,
Milford and Leighton
Louise Williams (viola/violin)
David Owen Norris (piano)
EMR CD007-08



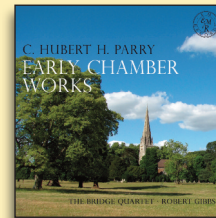
JOHN GARDNER:
Christmas Cantata
Christmas Carols
Organ Concerto
City of London Choir
The Holst Orchestra
Hilary Davan Wetton
EMR CD009



WORKS FOR VIOLIN & PIANO:
IVOR GURNEY:
Sonata in E-flat;
SAINSBURY: *Soliloquy*;
ELGAR: Sonata in E minor
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)
Matthew Rickard (piano)
EMR CD0011



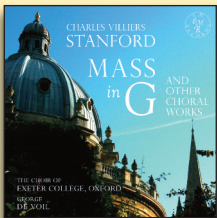
E.J. MOERAN:
The complete solo
piano music
and works by his English
and Irish contemporaries
Duncan Honeybourne (piano)
EMR CD0012-13



C. HUBERT H. PARRY:
Early Chamber Works
String Quartet no.3 in G Major
String Quintet in E-Flat Major
The Bridge Quartet
Robert Gibbs (viola)
EMR CD016



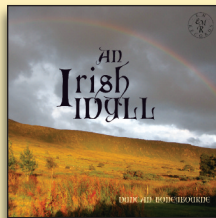
HERBERT HOWELLS:
The Complete Music
for Violin and Piano
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)
Matthew Rickard (piano)
EMR CD019-20



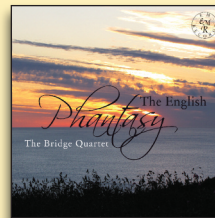
CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD: Mass in G
and other Choral Works
The Choir of Exeter College, Oxford
The Stapeldon Sinfonia
George De Voil (director)
EMR CD021



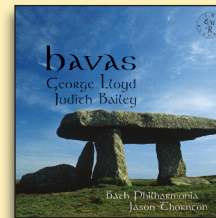
THE FIRE THAT BREAKS FROM THEE:
Stanford and Milford
Violin Concertos
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)
BBC Concert Orchestra
Owain Arwel Hughes (conductor)
EMR CD023



AN IRISH IDYLL:
The piano music of Archy
Rosenthal and works by
Charles Villiers Stanford
and Arnold Bax
Duncan Honeybourne (piano)
EMR CD024



THE ENGLISH PHANTASY:
Phantasy quartets by
Bridge, Holst, Goossens,
Howells, Holbrooke
and Hurlstone
The Bridge Quartet
EMR CD025



HAVAS:
Music by George Lloyd
and Judith Bailey
Bath Philharmonia
Jason Thornton (conductor)
EMR CD026



AUDITE FINEM:
Sacred choral music
from Purcell, Byrd and
Wesley to Bainton, Stanford
and Maxwell Davies
Charter Choir of Homerton College
Daniel Trocmé-Latter (conductor)
EMR CD027

SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR FRMS MEMBERS:

Single discs £10 (RRP £14.99) • Double-disc sets £15 (RRP £18.99)

To take advantage of this offer please send a cheque made payable to 'EMF Endeavours' for the price of the relevant discs, adding £2.50 P&P for a single disc, or £5 P&P for more than 1 disc, citing 'FRMS offer'. Please ensure that you specify clearly which disc(s) you would like and include your address and phone number / email address in case of problems and send to: Em Marshall-Luck, Director, EM Records, The Red House, Lanchards Lane, Shillingstone, Dorset DT11 0QU.

www.em-records.com



Arts in Residence

CULTURAL BREAKS IN BEAUTIFUL PLACES

Enjoy music more by meeting other music lovers at a weekend or midweek house party. Arts in Residence offers themed musical events discussing and exploring the music of the great composers while staying in characterful houses and hotels, with lectures illustrated by music examples on excellent hi-fi equipment.

Tuesday 28th–Thursday 30th April: Dumbleton Hall Hotel, Vale of Evesham

The **Dumbleton Hall Hotel** is a splendid and traditional 19th-century manor house set in 19 acres of private gardens and woodland with a private lake.

‘Debussy and Ravel’ with Terry Barfoot and Peter Rhodes

We will explore the varied repertoire of these two great French composers, the leading figures of their generation, in piano, vocal, chamber and orchestral music, and in opera. There will also be a recital on Kathleen Ferrier’s piano.

Friday 5th–Sunday 7th June: Abingworth Hall Hotel, Storrington, West Sussex

Abingworth Hall occupies a country estate that dates back some seven centuries and stands beside its own lake in seven acres of parkland within the tranquil Weald.

‘Exploring English Music’, with Terry Barfoot and Andrew Burn

We will explore the varied repertoire of **English Music**, highlighting Sussex connections and including masterpieces by some of our greatest composers, including Elgar, Bliss, Holst, Ireland, Bridge and Walton.

Price: £289.00 per person (twin/double rooms), £315.00 (single rooms) to include all meals, wine with dinner, course fees and accommodation.

For further information and booking contact:

Arts in Residence, 25 Mulberry Lane, Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 2QU.

Telephone: 02392 383356

www.artsinresidence.co.uk

email: info@artsinresidence.co.uk



FRMS Committee Profiles

Allan Child FRMS Chairman Society: Jubilee Music Circle (Derby) (secretary)



Background A Yorkshireman by birth, Allan has lived in the Midlands for most of the past 60 years. Most of his career was in research related to civil engineering for British Rail and a successor company before retirement as a materials consultant. Allan is married with a son and daughter and two grandchildren.

Other activities Secretary of his local Baptist Church and plays tenor recorder in the church music group. Member of a group learning Welsh. Enjoys travel in the UK and Europe, particularly by train.

Secret skill? Cooking - but nowhere near *Come Dine With Me* or *Great British Bake-off* standard!

Music choices Haydn, Schubert, Berlioz, most (but not all) 20th-century British composers, Prokofiev and Shostakovich among many others, as well as jazz and related forms.

Ron Beech FRMS Vice-Chairman & Daventry Music Weekend Organiser Society: Solihull RMC



Background A solicitor and former judge, Ron has been practising law for longer than he cares to remember, but his lifelong passion has been music and the recording medium including hi-fi.

Other activities Since winding down during their sixties, Ron and his wife Denise have travelled widely and seen most parts of the world, especially the United States and Latin America.

Secret skill? Piano playing, and maintaining an elderly Porsche.

Music choices Mostly 19th and early 20th century, all the Russian composers, particularly Rachmaninoff whose music Ron has been addicted to since early adolescence. He and Denise were privileged to know the composer's grandson Alexandre who entertained them at his grandfather's villa 'Senar' on the banks of Lake Lucerne.

Jim Bostwick FRMS Secretary Society: Barnsley RMS (secretary) and Huddersfield RMS



Background Jim qualified as a teacher in 1970, teaching in Barnsley, Huddersfield and Dewsbury, rising to the exalted heights of secondary headship before retirement in 2004. Son Tim has maintained the education tradition whilst daughter Kate manages a manufacturing company.

Other activities An early morning swim during weekdays, cycling and walking whenever and wherever possible, trying to keep the car in the garage. Many activities associated with recorded music and recording – too numerous to mention.

Secret skill? Perfect Yorkshire-pudding maker – Auntie Bessie should weep!

Music choices All the usual suspects plus the 'Bergs', Britten, Casken, Tippett. Pop music and musicians of the 60s and 70s (e.g. Beatles, Queen, ELO, Status Quo). Opera and music drama, especially Wagner and Strauss whose 'Beim Schlafengehen' (*Four Last Songs*), sung by Gundula Janowitz, 'I hope to have in my ears as I eventually shuffle off'.

Paul Corfield Godfrey FRMS Treasurer Society: Cardiff RMS



Background Paul was born in London but after a period in Ireland settled in South Wales in 1971. Before retirement in 2009 he was branch secretary at the Public and Commercial Services Union with some 3000 members. Since 2009 he has devoted his time entirely to music, both as a composer, conductor and as a writer and critic. He lives in a small village in the Welsh mountains together with his partner and their dog. As a composer his works include four symphonies, a number of operas and dramatic works, including a cycle based on Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* (the most substantial work written in Wales in the twentieth century). Also, *The Dialogues of Oisín and Saint Patric* and *Arcturus*, both staged in Cardiff and elsewhere. His music has also been performed throughout the British Isles, in America, Hungary, Australia and New Zealand. Much further information is available on his website sites.google.com/site/paulcorfieldgodfrey/home.

Paul reviews concerts, operas, CDs and DVDs for MusicWeb International and over 300 of his reviews can be viewed.

Other activities Paul is Secretary of Cyfansoddwyr Cymru/Composers of Wales, the body representing living Welsh composers in the Principality.

Secret skill? Won the final of Radio 4's music quiz show *Counterpoint* in the days when Ned Sherrin was host.

Music choices British 20th-century composers from Parry, Stanford, Holst and Vaughan Williams to the present day. Also operatic works since Wagner and choral music from all over the world, as well as late romantic orchestral.

Paul Astell FRMS Bulletin Editor Society: Oswestry RMS (chairman)



Background: Paul hails from London and worked as an engineer for 40 years with BT (and its predecessors) in data- and tele-communications and computing, retiring in 2007 as a project manager. Paul relocated to Shropshire in 1977, is married with two daughters and two granddaughters.

Other activities: Involved with Talking Newspapers for the Blind. Enjoys travelling in Europe, often by way of car and caravan. Keeping fit. Has been a member at Oswestry RMS for 35 years.

Secret skill? Salsa dancing, and now attempting ballroom! Also an advanced driver and IAM member.

Music choices: Mahler, Beethoven, Elgar, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Rachmaninov, Gershwin and Malcolm Arnold among many others. Also British light music, film, musical theatre, Big Band (swing), Sinatra at his peak, the Great American Song Book, as well as the very best of popular music from the past 70 years or so.

Philip Ashton FRMS Technical Officer Society: Radlett RMS and Letchworth RMS (committee)



Background Philip became an RAF apprentice in 1953, training as an air radio fitter and became a guided-weapons fitter. Appraised air-to-air guided weapons systems at RAF Boscombe Down. Three years in Germany with XI Sqn, and was demobbed after 12 years' service. Worked at Hawker Siddeley, English Electric Computers (later ICL), Philips Business Systems and DEC. From 1994 he spent a time working as an airline internal auditor, specialising in credit card fraud.

Other activities Licensed radio amateur (call sign G0DCS) and a keen interest in audio engineering. Member of the Sibelius and Dvořák societies. Co-ordinator of two music groups at Luton U3A. Advanced Driver and IAM member.

Secret skill? Philip works as a driver at a local Hospice. One time Radio Instructor with a local ATC Sqn. Club and membership secretary of a caravan club.

Music choices All Scandinavian and Czech-Slovak composers, Berlioz and most other composers. All chamber music.



Denise Beech *Daventry Music Weekend Organiser* Society: Solihull Recorded Music Circle
Background Retired teacher and special needs consultant, although Denise first qualified in law.
Other activities Now involved in local politics and school governorship. Recent retirement has enabled Denise and Ron to travel widely. They now regard it as one of their hobbies! Denise takes great pride in having introduced many children to the joys of classical music. She is a member of the English Music Festival.
Secret skill? Wine connoisseur and victualler.
Music choices 18th century onwards but particularly Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Rachmaninoff is another favourite.



Mick Birchall *Minutes Secretary; FRMS Central Region secretary.* Society: Hinckley RMS (secretary), Northampton RMS and Spalding Music Club.
Background Hails from rural Lincolnshire. Served an apprenticeship in heavy industry and spent time as a shipyard welder in Arctic Norway. Served for 25 years as elected member in local government – Parish and District Councils.
Other activities U3A music and discussion groups. Spends time visiting museums, art galleries and theatre, listening to Radio 4 and reading (including *Private Eye*), and doesn't own a TV. Admires all things Italian and enjoys real ale and wine. Member of International Martinů Circle and Dvořák Society.
Secret skill? If he revealed it, it wouldn't be a secret!
Music choices Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Verdi and Janáček. Also English Tudor music, Renaissance and Baroque Italian music, Central European of the Classical period, as well as good (in his judgement) music in all genres.



George Steele *FRMS Website manager* Society: Rochdale GS
Background After taking early retirement as a chartered engineer in government service, George became a business consultant until retiring again at 70! Took on the role of FRMS webmaster in 2007. Completely redesigned the FRMS website making it a valuable source of information for affiliates and members.
Other activities George joined the FRMS committee in 2006 as events photographer. He has been a member of Rochdale GS for 17 years and a former chairman. He regularly gives music presentations at his own Society and others. Also a keen photographer, lecturer and judge of photographic competitions and has twice been President of Bury Photographic Society.
Secret skill? Manipulation and repair of digital photographs.
Music choices Beethoven, Schubert and Berlioz.



John Hardie *Bulletin Distribution* Society: Southport GS (secretary)
Background John was brought up in London but has been happily exiled in the north-west for 45 years. Spent 37 inspiring years at Liverpool University as an administrator. He is married with a son, daughter and two granddaughters.
Other activities John is an avid collector, or as his wife would have it, hoarder. Countless books and 25,000 LPs (which presumably he has counted) can be added to the many examples of discarded turntables and speakers upon which John lavishes some much-needed TLC.
Secret skill? Better with dogs than humans!
Music choices Heartbroken when The Beatles broke up in April 1970 but then discovered the Third Programme [which coincidentally was renamed Radio 3 that same month - *Ed*]. John doesn't specify any particular composer(s) but is happy listening to chamber and orchestral music, always ready to try something new. Trad jazz is a journey of discovery.

Has your Society an anniversary or special occasion to celebrate?

Do you have any burning issues you want to share with our readers?

Do you have something to say?

You may wish to submit an article relating to a special interest in a particular composer or musical genre.

We are keen to hear from you. Contact details can be found on page 30.



Sibelius addicts

The anniversary coin is available from www.mint.fi

In honour of the 150th anniversary of the birth of composer Jean Sibelius

Jean Sibelius collector coin

Normal value	10 €
Metal	Ag 500
Mintage	10 000
Designer	Kersti Tappin

The collector coin's launch date is 30 January 2015. Mint of Finland will mint a silver Sibelius collector coin with a nominal value of EUR 10 and a gold coin with a nominal value of EUR 100. The collector coins are available to advance order from Mint of Finland online shop, www.mint.fi, or by calling +358 9 8943 4343 (call price: local network charge / mobile phone charge).

MINT OF FINLAND www.mint.fi

FRMS Presenters Panel

Societies are invited to recommend successful presenters for inclusion in this section. Please note, there is a modest charge of £10 per entry per annum for presenters who charge a fee (as distinct from reasonable expenses). A free entry on the FRMS website is also offered. This supplement is intended to be a general guide to programme planning. Reasonable care is taken to ensure accuracy of the details given but neither the FRMS committee nor the editor can accept responsibility for any circumstances subsequent on the use of the supplement. Thanks go to Allan Child who maintains this list.

Officers and committee members of the FRMS are experienced presenters and – if not listed here – can be contacted at the addresses at the back of the Bulletin.

LORD ABERDARE – The Berlioz Society

16 Beverley Road, London SW13 0LX

Tel: 020 8876 8398; mobile 07768 397190

email: alastair@aberdare.co.uk

Talks with visual and music illustrations include: Berlioz from B to Z: an overview of the composer's life and works. A Berlioz Musical Miscellany: some personal favourite Berlioz pieces. Berlioz in England: his five visits from 1847-55. The Musical Madhouse: on my translation of Berlioz's book *Les Grottesques de la Musique*

Expenses only; willing to travel

KENNETH ALWYN, FRAM

Horelands, West Chilton Lane, Broadford Bridge, Billingshurst RH14 9EA

Tel: 01403 741348 mobile 07403 892415;

email: FilomusicUK@aol.com

website: www.impulse-music.co.uk/kenneth-alwyn.htm

Conductor of recordings with the LSO, LPO, RPO, Philharmonia and Bournemouth SO;

1998 Gramophone award winner.

Talks include: The Hiawatha Man – Bryn Terfel as Coleridge-Taylor's hero, A Baton at the Royal Opera House, Friday Night is Music Night – is Auntie still breaking records?; Tchaikovsky – the Myth.

Reasonable expenses and accommodation (where applicable) negotiable.

TERRY BARFOOT

25 Mulberry Lane, Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 2QU

Tel: 0239 238 3356

email: terrybarfoot@artsinresidence.co.uk

Author, contributor to leading music periodicals and to the New Grove; presenter/lecturer at conferences and other musical events, many organised by his own company, *Arts in Residence*.

Reviewer for the Musicweb International website.

Regular presenter at societies in southern England.

Recent presentations include studies of Dvořák, Elgar, Mozart and Richard Strauss. Repertoire list on request.

Fee and expenses negotiable.

GEOFF BATEMAN ACIB Cefa

'Eroica', 1 South Road, Bradford BD9 4SU

Tel: 01274 783285

email: geoffbateman@blueyonder.co.uk

Chairman of Huddersfield RMS and secretary of former Bradford RMS. Wide variety of programmes including artist and composer profiles. Most programmes feature audiophile recordings. No fee, minimal travel expenses only.

BBC MIDLAND RADIO ORCHESTRA

(Contact details as Dinmore Records - see below)

An evening of light music presented by former MRO member Paul Arden-Taylor, who has compiled a large archive of surviving MRO recordings.

No fee, expenses requested over 50 miles. CDs for sale.

IAN RUTLAND BOUGHTON BA (Hons) DipMus

25 Bearton Green, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1UN

Tel 01462 434318 Mobile 07703 584152

email: Boughtontrust@btinternet.com

website: www.rutlandboughtonmusictrust.org.uk

Under the title Rutland Boughton: Beyond The Immortal Hour, Ian gives talks on the life and music of his once famous grandfather. Expenses only.

MAGGIE COTTON

57 Elmfield Crescent, Birmingham B13 9TL

Tel; 0121 449 3196

email: maggie.cottonbeat@hotmail.co.uk

First professional female percussionist in a UK symphony orchestra. CBSO 40 years (18 with Simon Rattle). Author of: *Agogo Bells: friendly guide to schools percussion; Wrong Sex, Wrong Instrument – an autobiography*.

Her presentation, Red Light District, lifts the lid off recording sessions - warts and all!

Fee £60 plus negotiated travel expenses.

THE DELIUS SOCIETY

Speakers from the Delius Society or Delius Trust are available to give presentations. No fee, expenses only.

Contact one of the following or see the Society's website, www.delius.org.uk

Martin Lee-Browne, Chester House, Fairford, Glos GL7 4AD. Tel 01285 712102;

email: chairman@thedeliusociety.org.uk

Lionel Carley, Old School House, Sheepscombe, Stroud, Glos. GL6 7RH Tel: 01452 812735; email:

l.carley@yahoo.co.uk

Mike Green, 4 Caxton Close, Beeston Regis,

Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8SY. Tel: 07833 300450

email: michael.heather.green@gmail.com

DINMORE RECORDS

11 Romsley Hill Grange, Romsley

Halesowen B62 0LN. Tel/fax 01562 710801

email: paularden@virgin.net

Small, independent classical record label with its own location recording and post-production facilities, run by a professional musician.

Contact Paul Arden-Taylor for a presentation with music from the current catalogue. CDs for sale

No fee, but expenses requested over 50 miles.

THE DVOŘÁK SOCIETY

Promotes the music of all Czech and Slovak composers. Members give talks and lectures to societies at various locations. Enquiries to: David Roberts, Hon Sec, The Dvořák Society, 13 Church Lane, Knutton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST5 6DU; Tel:01782 631274. email: secretary@dvorak-society.org; website: www.dvorak-society.org
No fee but expenses might be requested.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

Branch Secretaries in several areas of the UK can arrange a speaker from the Society. In the first instance contact the General Secretary who will forward enquiries as necessary: Helen Petchey, 12 Monkams Drive, Woodford Green, IG9 0LQ.
Phone 0208 504 0295; email hon.sec@elgar.org

DR DAVID FLIGG

Email: david.fligg@rncm.ac.uk
Website: www.rncm.ac.uk/people/david-fligg/
Tutor in Academic Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, Visiting Professor at the University of Chester, Lecturer in Classical Musicianship at Leeds College of Music. Member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians. Various and wide-ranging topics. Contact by email in the first instance to discuss availability, fees and your Society's requirements.

JOHN GILKS

The Old School, High Street, Nawton, York YO62 7TT Tel: 01439 771273
Programmes include: There's Magic abroad in the air; Music of Saint-Saëns; Music of Grieg; Dancing through the years; C is for Composer; Cylinders to CDs; Songs my father taught me; Vive La France! Expenses only.

JOHN HUMPHRIES

10 Drovers, Bolney Street, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5PT. Tel: 01444 881887
Subjects include: Charles Villiers Stanford - arguably Britain's greatest all-round musician; teacher of many early C20th British composers, and tireless promoter of British music. William Yeates Hurlstone - outstandingly gifted pupil of Stanford, who might have rivalled Purcell and Elgar had he lived longer. Unknown British - but still with a tune! Expenses: negotiable. Will travel anywhere.

MIKE LUNAN

15 Castle Gardens, Barrock Street, Thurso KW14 7GZ 01847 890911 email: mikelunan@btinternet.com
Membership Secretary of the Havergal Brian Society. Offers presentations on three subjects: Britten's music; James MacMillan's music; Havergal Brian's music.
No fee. Travel and accommodation expenses negotiable.

DR JOHN MALPASS

4 Carlton Road, Kibworth Harcourt, Leics LE8 0LZ, email: jrm@le.ac.uk; Tel: 0116 279 2557
Former Trustee and Membership Secretary of the Rachmaninoff Society. Currently one presentation is offered: 'Sergei Rachmaninoff - his life and music'. This is a Powerpoint-based presentation covering Rachmaninoff's personal and musical development and includes many historical photographs. The many musical examples concentrate on less well-known compositions and include significant recordings of his songs, choral

music, chamber music, and piano works (some with the composer at the piano) together with selected orchestral excerpts. No fee; reasonable expenses.

EM MARSHALL-LUCK MA (Oxon) MCIJ New Entry

EM Records / English Music Festival, The Red House, Lanchards Lane, Shillingstone, Dorset DT11 0QU Tel: 07808 473889; email em.marshall-luck@em-records.com or em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk
Director of EM Records and Founder-Director of the English Music Festival - can give talks on both subjects. In the EMF talk, illustrated with music and visuals, she covers the aims, objectives and achievements of the Festival - her mission to put English music back on the map. And with her husband, violinist Rupert Marshall-Luck, she delivers a presentation on EM Records, covering the *raison d'être* of the record label, as well as topics such as how repertoire and venues are chosen, what takes place at recording sessions (exploding bows and mysterious noises), how works are edited for recording, and what is involved in the running of a label. With musical excerpts.
Reasonable expenses and a modest fee requested.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

16 Melbourne Road, Halesowen B63 3NB
Tel: 0121 550 4482. email: cfmorley47@aol.com
Chief music critic of Birmingham Post; Midlands correspondent for Classical Music and other music publications.
Illustrated programmes include, among others: Confessions of a music critic; Changing critical attitudes to Elgar; The Symphonies of Gustav Mahler; Composers on record; The problem of bespoke music; Rachmaninov and plainchant; Beethoven the Bounds-Breaker; European Composers in America.
Fee negotiable.

JAMES MURRAY

44 Victoria Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4QD
Tel: 01726 71714 / 07989 398782
email: james.murray47@tesco.net
Manager, Kernow Classics.
Subjects: Emmanuel Chabrier; Music in Germany 1918-45 (with emphasis on Werner Egk & Eduard and Evelyn Künneke); Jerome Kern; George Gershwin; Albert Lortzing; The post-war Vienna State Opera; The Mozart-da Ponte Operas. I would consider any operatic subject or evenings about historic singers (German, French or Austrian preferred).
Fee: usually £75 plus reasonable expenses over 50 miles.

NIMBUS RECORDS

Wyastone Leys, Monmouth NP25 3SR.
Tel: 01600 890007 email: marketing@wyastone.co.uk
We love travelling to societies but find it increasingly difficult, so we have created a VIRTUAL PRESENTATION introduced by Nimbus Directors Adrian Farmer and Antony Smith. They guide you through the company's history and introduce selections from the catalogue. Your pack is completely free and contains a pre-recorded programme with supporting information including vouchers and special offers.
For more information or to order your pack please call Amy Verheyden on 01600 890 007.

DR GEOFF OGRAM, Secretary Stafford RMS
6 Silverthorn Way, Wildwood, Stafford ST17 4PZ
Tel: 01785 663423 email: geoff.ogram@talktalk.net
A number of recital programmes, with a significant content of C20th British music. My specialist composer is Gordon Jacob, whose music I discovered in 1956. We became friends and I have just completed a book on his music. The recital on his work is entitled Seventh Son. No fee required, just minimal travel expenses.

PROFESSOR ANTHONY OGUS, CBE, FBA New Entry
Woodland House, Midgeley Lane, Goldsborough, N.Yorks HG5 8NN Tel: 01423864099
email: Info@anthonyogus.co.uk, Website: <http://anthonyogus.co.uk/index.php>
Opera fanatic and author of book 'Travels With My Opera Glasses'. Talks on and around opera and opera-going: composers, performers, productions, opera-houses, audiences, 'calamities'.
No fee. Travelling expenses negotiable.

SIVA OKE LRAM
13 Riversdale Rd, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0QL
Tel: 020 8398 1586; email: soke@somm-recordings.com
website: www.somm-recordings.com
Former professional musician, veteran of the record industry and owner of SOMM recordings, a well-established label with a wide-ranging and interesting repertoire. Somm enchanted evening: music from current catalogue. No fee, but expenses requested over 50 miles.

LYNNE PLUMMER
52 Judkin Court, Century Wharf, Cardiff CF10 5AU.
Tel: 02920 489332; email: lynne@lynneplummer.co.uk
Professional career as a broadcaster with the BBC and other stations. Illustrated talks with interviews on the following topics: instrument-making; performing; how children get started in music; whether we really need conductors; the intricacies of preparing an opera for performance; the vital role of the double bass.
Will travel. Fees negotiable + expenses.

TONY POOK
1 Lower Friargate, York. YO1 9SL.
Tel: 01904 642407; email: tpook@talktalk.net
Presentations are from the lesser-known but tuneful repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries. Particular interest in American, British and Czech music. Other programmes of Belgian, Finnish, Russian, Slovakian and Spanish music. Featured composers include Uuno Klami, Amy Beach, Mieczysław Karłowicz, Gottschalk, Borodin, Dyson, Dvořák, Fibich, Smetana and Suk.
Travel expenses only.

DR JIM PRITCHARD
15 David Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BG
email: jimjprmusic@gmail.com; website: <http://seenandheard-international.com/tag/pritchard-jim/>
Former chairperson of the Wagner Society and the Gustav Mahler Society UK (www.mahlersociety.org), editor of 'The Wayfarer' and online music magazine reviewer. Many very successful previous presentations and now concentrating again on his Wagner talk - 'The Ring Road to Bayreuth' and a new talk about the great British tenor, Alberto Remedios, 'From the Mersey to the World'. No fee; reasonable expenses; date and travel never usually a problem.

MISS JOY PURITZ
149E Holland Rd, London W14 8AS
Tel: 020 7602 4187; mobile 07867 698175
email: jepuritz@btinternet.com
Granddaughter of Elisabeth Schumann and translator of her biography (written by the singer's son, Gerd Puritz). Illustrated presentation entitled *A Portrait of the Soprano, Elisabeth Schumann* has been well received by the Friends of Covent Garden, the National Sound Archive and many recorded music societies. Fee negotiable.

PETER WALDEN
2 The Drive, Colletts Green, Powick, Worcester WR2 4SA.
Tel: 01905 830592 Mobile 07890 728556
email: peterwalden@hotmail.co.uk
36 years as oboe player and solo cor anglais with CBSO, and freelancing with major symphony orchestras. Presentations cover all aspects of full time symphony orchestra oboe/cor anglais playing. Titles include: All in the Mind; Changing Gear; Metamorphoses; You can see the Notes, but not the Air; Still Hooked; Mother married an Oboe Player. Will travel. Fees negotiable + expenses.

CLIVE WILKES
70 Filching Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8SD.
Tel: 01323 724916.
Programmes include: George Gershwin - Crazy for you; Sergei Prokofiev - the Prodigal Son; The Golden Age of Film Music; Aspects of opera in the 20th Century; Dmitri Shostakovich – the great survivor; Rimsky-Korsakov and the Mighty Handful; The Golden Age of Russian Opera; PLUS for two 2013 bicentenaries: Viva Verdi; Wagner and Liszt – an uneasy friendship.
Further details on request. Expenses only.

CATHERINE WILMERS
The Brew House, Radwell, Baldock, Herts SG7 5ES.
Tel: 01462 730490. email: cwilmers@hotmail.co.uk
website: www.cwilmers.co.uk
Professional cellist. Recorded award-winning CD. A Cello Century of British Women Composers 1884-1984 features anecdotes about the composers and the making of the CD. Also, The Not so Silent Minority: examples of late C19th/early C20th chamber music by women composers, including Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, and Ethel Smyth. Travels countrywide. Fees negotiable + expenses.

The above listings, subsequent updates, and much more can be found on the Federation's website: **www.thefrms.co.uk**

Collectors Corner

I am 65 years old now and it was in my college years that I became a classical record collector. At first it was to learn the great classics and my choices were based on cost above all else. I soon came to realise that there were two types of cheap records. The first were nondescript recordings of nondescript performances. However, the second were reissues of great performances of the past and I became aware that there was a golden legacy of recordings available to be explored. I became a regular reader of *Gramophone* and *Record Review* magazines and this further excited my curiosity. One day it suddenly occurred to me 'why not have both Toscanini and Furtwängler recordings of Beethoven symphonies in my collection?' In time I also became interested in recording and sound quality and the various labels that were available. All these years later I am still collecting – although not at quite the same rate!

The purpose of these reminiscences is to enquire via *Bulletin* if there are any other record addicts like me in the Federation, and if so, to find out what you collect and why. In time I could report my findings to this magazine and perhaps we could have an occasional slot. (By 'records' I mean any recorded formats.)

Whatever the outcome, I would be happy to hear from anyone who may be interested in this subject. You are welcome to write to me at 35 Elmfield Gardens, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4XB or email me at shepherdted@sky.com

Ted Shepherd, Newcastle upon Tyne RMS

Sibelius One

I have recently returned from the annual Sibelius Festival in Lahti, Finland, held in early September, largely in the world-class Sibelius Hall. This is situated on the shores of Lake Vesijärvi and the festival features the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Okko Kamu, its principal conductor and festival director.

2014 witnessed the birth of a brand-new organisation called Sibelius One. Its objective is to spread the name of Finland's greatest composer to the entire world, especially as 8th December 2015 sees the 150th anniversary of Sibelius's birth. The inauguration of Sibelius One took place, appropriately, in Sibelius's house 'Ainola', where he lived from 1904 until his death in 1957, set in woods near the town of Järvenpää by Lake Tuusula. The management of Ainola allowed us to be the very first to use a basement room, unknown to us all, called 'Hesan kamari', which is to become a small conference venue.

The assembled group was made up entirely of Sibelius enthusiasts and after discussions about its objectives – to be democratic, accountable and relevant – five people were individually and unanimously elected to manage Sibelius One. The driving force behind the project is Britain's leading authority on Sibelius, Andrew Barnett, whose 2007 book on the great composer is second to none. Mr

Barnett has also been heavily involved in the 13-box, 68-CD Sibelius Edition on the Swedish BIS label, which covers every note composed by the composer. Brighton-based Andrew Barnett was elected as our general manager and our secretary is Paul Greenwood from Barnham, Bognor Regis. The treasurer from Newcastle-under-Lyme is Janet Abbotts and our international co-ordinator and website wizard, based in Singapore, is Leon Chia. I am absolutely thrilled to have been elected President. In that role, two days later at a reception in the foyer of the Sibelius Hall in Lahti, I was privileged to announce the formation of Sibelius One to the world at large.

At the end of December, the management of BBC Radio 3 invited me by email and phone to kick off the Sibelius 150th anniversary year by being interviewed live on the breakfast programme by Clemency Burton-Hill. This took place at 8.10 am on January 1st and was, I assure you, a very special moment in my musical life. I was asked what piece was quintessential to me; I chose



John J Davis (right) and Osmo Vänskä

my personal slice of Sibelius utopia, the Nocturne from the *King Christian II Suite*. I described this piece as having a big memorable tune, outstanding orchestration with cantabile strings, woodwind in pairs (like the start of the second movement of the Violin Concerto) and brass-orientated climaxes. For me, that is 'a goose-pimple extravaganza'! (This description delighted Clemency). I chose the recording by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä, having heard them perform it at the 2003 Lahti Sibelius Festival. By chance, we came face to face with Vänskä the next day and we discussed the merits of the score in detail.

In conclusion, please may I ask everyone to log onto sibeliusone.com. There you will find our details and how to join us. Alternatively, contact me at: 'Rakastava', 17 Beechwood Avenue, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4LJ.

John J. Davis, deputy chairman, Torbay RMS

In Defence of Massenet and Litloff

In the previous issue I was defending Tchaikovsky; now I turn to Massenet. I recently gave a presentation to my Society and included Massenet's Piano Concerto. It was composed in 1902 and was his only work in this form. As a commentator had said at the time of the recording, the piece is very rarely heard. At the conclusion of playing my recording, the audience wondered why this should be so. In my next programme I shall be including two of the Concerto Symphonies by Litloff, the Third and Fifth. The scherzo from the Fourth is often heard, and the complete work occasionally. I consider the Third and Fifth to be far superior and will consider if I'm right by the reception it receives from my audience.

Brian Smith, Treasurer Croydon RMS •

Computer-Based Hi-Fi for Beginners

A personal view from Dr John Allen, Rustington RMS

I RECENTLY DECIDED to upgrade my ten-year-old music system, so I took the opportunity to look into developments in computer-based hi-fi. Unlike some audiophiles, I have no great nostalgia for vinyl records. Cherished records have always tended to attract dust and occasionally an irreplaceable one gets scratched. Even with scrupulous cleaning procedures, there is always a background noise and occasional annoying clicks. CDs are a great advance but they too can become damaged. They have also been around for over thirty years now, so it seemed a good time to consider newer technology.

Computers have the ability to store vast amounts of information whilst occupying very little space. I don't have a particularly large CD collection; it probably numbers about 300. However, such a modest collection takes up a significant amount of space. Having to add storage space as a CD collection expands eventually becomes something of a chore and the opportunity to store a whole collection in a laptop's memory has a lot of appeal.

Another advantage of computer-based systems is the ease with which new albums can be added to one's collection. Just surf the Internet and you can find dozens of classical music websites that sell digital music downloads. You can either search for a particular recording, or choose a new release, and have it downloaded ready to play on your computer literally within a few minutes.

A third advantage of the computer-based approach stems from the fact that it is easily possible to play tracks from different albums in any order you choose. The list of tracks is called a 'playlist', and once constructed, it's easy to change both the content of a playlist (the tracks) and the order in which the individual tracks are played. The use of playlists really comes into its own when compiling music presentations for a recorded music society. Physically sorting a pile of CDs, labelling them and loading them into a CD player becomes a thing of the past. In fact, there is no need to take a single CD to the meeting, just as long as you don't forget to take your laptop!

Finally, computer-based systems offer the opportunity of improving the sound quality you hear from your hi-fi system. The technical side of this soon becomes quite complex, but significant technical advances have been made in audio technology in recent years. However, you need a computer-based system to take advantage of most of them.

The most basic computer-based system involves using the media player software that comes with your computer. The most commonly installed media players are Windows Media Player and iTunes. Using either of these, it is an easy matter to convert all your CDs into files on your computer where they will be safely stored and available for playback at any time. The operation of copying CDs to your computer is called 'ripping'. Ripping a large collection can take some time, but it only has to be done once. If money is no object there are companies which will rip your whole collection for you, but be prepared to pay a hefty price. Once ripped, you can play your music by plugging a lead from your

computer straight into the input sockets of your hi-fi amplifier. A much better arrangement, though, involves using a device known as an external digital-to-analogue converter (DAC). These can range from a little box costing £200 up to a large device about the same size, and price, as your CD player or amplifier. Computers do come with DACs installed but they are generally designed to drive the computer's mini-speakers and are not able to offer the sound quality achievable by using an external DAC. Using a good quality external DAC can result in a significant improvement in sound quality. Thankfully the best of the small, less expensive, DACs are capable of producing very high quality audio, so it's not necessary to spend a fortune.

One added advantage to such a set-up is that, providing you are happy to listen over a pair of high quality headphones, you can carry your hi-fi and music collection wherever you go. All you then need is a quiet



A typical DAC from Cambridge Audio

place to enjoy the fruits of your efforts, but I don't recommend airport lounges! Using your computer to store and play music in this way enables you to save

space and enjoy the convenience of playlists. The next step up the sound improvement ladder involves buying specialist media-playing software which allows you to play high-resolution digital recordings.

In recent years, some record companies have been issuing 24-bit high-resolution digital products as an alternative to standard 16-bit CDs. Companies like Linn Records and Hyperion Records have been among the leaders in marketing high-resolution releases. Theoretically, higher bit and sampling rates offer improved sound quality. The higher fidelity is achieved in a way that is analogous to the improvement in picture quality that results from increasing the number of pixels in a digital camera image. There are, though, a number of caveats that need to be added to the claims made by the advocates of 24-bit high-resolution technology.

Audio engineers have developed clever ways of removing any (apparently) unnecessary information in audio recordings. This process is known as compression and saves a considerable amount of memory space, although this process does usually involve some loss of sound quality. To get the best fidelity, uncompressed file types, such as WAV or AIFF, may be used. Alternatively, forms of compression which involve no, or very little, loss of information may be utilised. FLAC or ALAC files allow this 'lossless' form of compression. Inevitably, both uncompressed and 'lossless' files are larger than those that are compressed and therefore take up more of your computer's memory space, but this is the price you have to pay to achieve the improvements that come with high-resolution technology.

Although the signal definition of high-resolution recordings may well be higher, there is some debate as to whether the human auditory system can actually hear the improvements that high-resolution technology brings.

One way of resolving this issue involves finding out whether people can really hear the difference between 24-bit and 16-bit recordings. To do this properly, a 'double blind' test has to be set up in which both versions of the same sample of music are presented to listeners who are kept in the dark about which are made at the higher resolution. There have been a number of such studies recently including one web-based experiment in which several hundred volunteers took part. In this study the results were not at all encouraging for the audiophiles who advocate switching to 24-bit. They show that listeners could not reliably distinguish between 16- and 24-bit examples, despite using high-quality hi-fi equipment.

Of course, the audiophiles who support high-resolution digital technology dispute these findings, but it appears that this lobby has yet to prove its case. The record and equipment manufacturing companies don't have much to say about these listening tests and prefer to stress the technical arguments which favour high-resolution recordings.

When I started looking into this controversy I tended to favour the move to high-resolution technology, but more recently I've doubted whether, at my age, I can actually hear any difference. Nevertheless, when downloading and given a choice between purchasing a 16- or 24-bit version, I tend to choose the latter, especially if the price difference is not too great. My philosophy is that although single technical improvements may not, by themselves, be audible, the cumulative effects of a number of improvements may well produce a perceptible benefit. However, I admit this is a case of hope triumphing over established fact!

Whatever the benefits of high-resolution technology might be, there are some improvements in sound quality that can be achieved by optimising your computer's settings. Just go to one of the many websites that deal with this subject and follow the instructions. You could consider replacing your computer's standard media-player software. Most Windows machines are supplied with Windows Media Player (WMP) pre-installed. However, WMP only plays a limited range of audio file formats and is primarily focussed on the somewhat lower-resolution mp3 file format. This is fine for many applications, but to achieve the best quality, sound file formats like FLAC, WAV, AIFF and ALAC should be used. Some of the better quality audio players can be downloaded at no cost from the Internet, whereas others have to be paid for. Among the free-to-download players, Foobar 2000 is probably the most widely used but there are a number of others if you find that product a bit too difficult to set

up and use. The following audio players are popular with audiophiles: Decibel, BitPerfect, MediaMonkey, JRiver Media Center and Audirvana.

If you are using an Apple device rather than a Windows computer, iTunes will be your standard media player. There you can also purchase tracks and download them to your music library quite conveniently. The iTunes downloads store does not offer 24-bit high-resolution, although this might change in the near future. The sound quality of iTunes used to be heavily criticised, but the more recent versions do seem to offer better sound quality. Alternatively, some of the specialised audio players mentioned above can be set up to work with iTunes, including BitPerfect and Audirvana. Many users like the way iTunes manages and displays album and track information, and using it in conjunction with a specialised audio player seems to offer the best of both worlds. Passions do run high in this area, though, and there are some audiophiles who prefer to use these audio players and avoid iTunes altogether.

If setting up your own computer-based hi-fi system sounds too daunting a task, there are a number of off-the-shelf devices you can buy which offer many of the advantages listed above. These devices allow you to rip and store your music in a range of file formats from mp3 upwards. The more expensive units also allow you to

download, store and play high-resolution 24-bit recordings. Moreover, some of these devices also incorporate stereo amplifiers so you can just connect them to your existing speakers if you wish. Manufacturers of these players include Brennan, Cambridge, Linn and Naim, but there are many others. The range of products in this category can be bewildering so it is best to take advice from your favourite hi-fi store.

In summary, whatever the complexities of the technical debates might be, the use of digital audio has a number of distinct advantages. The space savings are considerable and for those who present programmes of recorded music, the convenience of using playlists makes life much easier. Finally, the convenience of purchasing recorded music online makes new albums much faster and easier to obtain. Computer

audio is a complex and controversial subject but hopefully this brief introduction will whet your appetite and encourage you, if you haven't already, to look more deeply into this fascinating development in audio technology.

Editor's footnote: There will inevitably be readers who have strong opinions on this subject. Please get in touch to let us know your thoughts and experiences.

mp3 files			
Highest bitrate	File size per minute	File size per hour*	
320 Kbit/s	2.40 MB	144.0 MB	

High res files			
Settings	Bitrate	File size* per minute	File size* per hour
16 bit, 44.1 kHz	1,411.2 Kbit/s	10 MB	600 MB
16 bit, 48 kHz	1,536 Kbit/s	11 MB	660 MB
24 bit, 96 kHz	4,608 Kbit/s	33 MB	2 GB
24 bit, 192 kHz	9,216 Kbit/s	66 MB	4 GB

*Approximate sizes

It is generally accepted that for a digital audio file to be classified as HD (or high resolution), it needs to be encoded to have a higher sampling frequency and bit depth beyond that of CD.

A standard audio CD plays at 44.1 kHz per channel (sample rate) at 16 Bit. This effectively gives a bit rate of 1411.2 Kbit/s (44.1 x 16 x 2) for stereo.

High-resolution audio files usually use a sampling frequency of 96 kHz or 192 kHz. At 24-bit, this factor alone gives an increase of 256 times the detail over a standard audio CD.

REVIEWS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 3 (Pastoral); Tallis Fantasia; Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus; Wasps Overture*

Hallé Orchestra, Sir Mark Elder (conductor)

CD HLL 7540 (74:16)

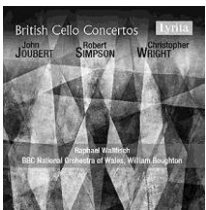


This latest Vaughan Williams release from the Hallé, in what looks increasingly like a full symphony cycle, has already garnered some rave reviews. Apart from the odd tiny niggle, I will be adding to that general chorus of approval. Things get off to a fine start with a well-paced, evocative rendition of the great *Tallis Fantasia*, where the Hallé strings really do display the sort of lustrous sheen needed for this music. It's a marvellous reading, Elder displaying obvious affection for the music without over-sentimentalising. The same can be said of the *Five Variants*, a lovely work – very close to VW's heart – that is not heard often enough. *The Wasps* overture hasn't quite the zip of Elder's own earlier version that prefaced his recording of the complete work, but is still effective. The symphony is the centrepiece here and is magnificently played. Again, Elder has an obvious affinity with the music, and the many glorious moments are relished. It is on the whole a steady reading but never lacking tension. My only quibble would be the famous wordless vocalise in the finale. Here I find Sarah Fox's soprano just a touch too operatic, the wide vibrato and slightly too-close balance robbing the music of that ultimate magic that the Boult and Previn versions are able to conjure. Some may prefer this more forthright approach, and it certainly doesn't spoil what is a very fine achievement, recorded in full, resplendent sound and complete with typically authoritative notes by the late Michael Kennedy.

BRITISH CELLO CONCERTOS Cello concertos by John Joubert, Robert Simpson and Christopher Wright

Raphael Wallfisch (cello), BBC National Orchestra of Wales, William Boughton (conductor)

Lyritya SRCD 344 (70:38)



It's nice to see the famous Lyritya label resurrected by Nimbus; Lyritya became a byword for fine recordings of British music, some of it rare or neglected, and here we have an impressive collection of cello concertos that are certainly new to me. The Joubert work comes from 2011 and is the latest contribution in his prolific output. It strikes me as elegiac in tone, its two contrasting movements delicately scored but not lacking muscle, with a hint of Shostakovich in places. The Simpson concerto (1991) is, perhaps as expected, a thornier piece that is nevertheless cogently argued, basically unfolding as a huge set of variations cleverly linked into sections. Christopher Wright's concerto, like the Joubert, was written in 2011 but with a very different stimulus – the summer riots that year in England. This influences the piece's single movement structure, with sections entitled 'Battle' and 'Lament' and a quote from Martin Luther King prefacing the score. Whether you need to know any of this is debatable, as the

CDs reviewed by Tony Haywood

concerto is enjoyably colourful in its own right and, as with the rest of the programme, is superbly played by Wallfisch and expertly accompanied by BBC NOW and Boughton. The audio quality is also first rate, and the very helpful liner notes from Paul Conway are a model of their kind. If the more approachable side of English modernism appeals to you, this disc can be bought with confidence.

BRITISH STRING CONCERTOS Works by Coleridge-Taylor, Holst, Finzi, Hoddinott, Maconchy, Busch, Fricker, Moeran, Gerhard, Banks, Rubbra, Morgan

Various artists

Lyritya SRCD 2346 (4 discs 76:48; 73:22; 79:10; 73:44)



The first thing to say is that the works here are not all 'string concertos'; some are occasional or concertante pieces, as in the case of the Finzi *Introit*, Holst's *Lyric Movement* or Rubbra's *Soliloquy*. This, though, is extremely good value with four exceptionally well-filled discs from the Lyritya back catalogue at budget price, and there is something here for everyone. The Coleridge-Taylor Violin Concerto from 1912 might be a tad old-fashioned, even for its time, but nevertheless has an enjoyably romantic sweep to it, full of Dvořákian tunes and beautifully orchestrated. Holst's *Invocation* for cello and orchestra has a moody grandeur to it, whereas his *Lyric Movement* for viola shows us the neo-classical traits that edged their way into his style. The Rubbra *Soliloquy* for cello (1947) has a powerful climactic section and Moeran's Violin Concerto (1941), written straight after his famous symphony, shares many of that wonderful work's emotional terrain, especially in the slow finale. Like many other works in this box, this was a debut recording.

The third and fourth discs bring us into a more modern and dissonant world. The Violin Concerto (1942-5) by Roberto Gerhard is actually one of his more lyrical works, though the finale displays the more experimental traits that infiltrated his later serial music. The Maconchy and Fricker pieces have a craggy edge typical of certain English composers at this time, where lyricism rubs shoulders with European modernism, but both works have a chamber-like delicacy and are appealing in the way the ideas unfold. The Don Banks concerto has spirit and vitality and is beautifully orchestrated. I confess to knowing nothing about David Morgan and his Violin Concerto is completely new to me. Paul Conway's helpful note tells us the piece is his most autobiographical, and the sardonic feel here suggests a somewhat cynical outlook, perhaps unsurprising given the concerto's genesis in Prague in 1966. Alun Hoddinott's excellent Nocturnes and Cadenzas for cello and orchestra (1969) bring the set to an atmospheric close. The artists and recording details are too numerous to mention here, but comprise the cream of British talent in this repertoire. Handley, Groves, Boult and del Mar are among the conductors supporting a galaxy of superb soloists and all performances are excellent. The famous Lyritya sound, even with recordings going back to the 60s, is here in spades, rich, detailed, still demonstration class. Whatever your tastes, this really is an outstanding bargain. ●

Notable Anniversaries for 2016 compiled by Brenadan Sadler

Next year there are no ‘giants’ to celebrate in the field of composition. This provides the opportunity to explore some of the lesser known or neglected figures such as Max Reger and William Sterndale Bennett.

The following will be celebrating significant birthdays/anniversaries in 2016:

90: Gervase de Peyer (clarinettist), Jon Vickers (tenor)

80: Charles Dutoit (conductor), Zubin Mehta (conductor), David Zinman (conductor), Eliahu Inbal (conductor)

70: José Carreras (tenor), René Jacobs (counter tenor/conductor)

60: Nigel Kennedy (violinist)

50: Gabrieli String Quartet.

Composers (b = born; d = died)

?? .05.1616	Froberger, Johann	(Ger)	b	Bliss	Two pieces for clarinet & piano
05.11.1666	Ariosti, Attilio	(It)	b	Bloch	String Quartet No. 1
?? .?? .1766	Süssmayr, Franz	(Aust)	b*	Bridge	A Prayer for chorus and orchestra
24.02.1766	Wesley, Samuel	(Eng)	b	Busoni	Doktor Faust, opera
13.04.1816	Bennett, William Sterndale	(Eng)	b	Debussy	Sonata for flute, viola & harp
13.01.1866	Kalinnikov, Vasily	(Rus)	b	Casella	Elegia Eroica
01.04.1866	Busoni, Ferruccio	(It)	b		Pagine di guerra
03.05.1866	Nováček, Ottokar	(Aust)	b		Pupazzetti
17.05.1866	Satie, Erik	(Fr)	b	Delius	Dance Rhapsody No. 2
23.07.1866	Cilea, Francesco	(It)	b		Violin concerto
03.12.1866	Kalivoda, Jan Křtitel	(Boh)	d	Dohnányi	Variations on a Nursery Song
22.01.1916	Dutilleux, Henri	(Fra)	b	Grainger	In a Nutshell, for piano & orchestra
02.03.1916	Stevens, Bernard	(Eng)	b	Hanson	Piano Quintet
24.03.1916	Granados, Enrique	(Sp)	d		Symphonic Prelude
10.05.1916	Babbitt, Milton	(US)	b	Ippolitov-Ivanov	Ole the Norseman
11.05.1916	Reger, Max	(Ger)	d	Jongen	String Quartet No. 2
02.08.1916	MacCunn, Hamish	(Scot)	d	Korngold	Der Ring des Polykrates, opera-buffe
05.08.1916	Butterworth, George	(Eng)	d	Milhaud	String Quartet No.3
10.09.1916	Gernsheim, Friedrich	(Ger)	d*	Nielsen	Symphony No. 4, ‘The Inextinguishable’
25.09.1916	Fučík, Julius	(Boh)	d*		Theme & variations for piano
02.12.1916	Tosti, Paolo	(It)	d		Chaconne for piano
28.12.1916	Strauss, Eduard	(Aust)	d	Prokofiev	Symphony No. 1, ‘Classical’
*Contributed by Roger Hughes				Quilter	Three songs of William Blake
				Reger	Clarinet Quintet in A major
				Sibelius	Everyman, incidental music
				Satie	Parade, ballet
				Smyth	The Boatswain's Mate, opera
				Sowerby	Quintet for Woodwind
				Stravinsky	Berceuses du chat, for voice & three clarinets
				Tansman	Symphony No. 1
				Villa-Lobos	Symphony No. 1, ‘The Unforeseen’
					String Quartet No.3

Selected list of Compositions

1716

Telemann	Kleine Kammermusik
	Six suites for violin, flutes & keyboard
Vivaldi	Arsilda Regina di Ponto, opera
	Juditha triumphans, oratorio

1816

Beethoven	An die ferne Geliebte, song cycle
Berwald	Theme & variations for violin & orch
Rossini	Otello, opera
	The Barber of Seville, opera
Schubert	Symphony No. 4, ‘Tragic’
	Symphony No. 5
	String Trio D. 471
	Concertstücke for violin & orchestra
	Rondo for violin & orchestra
	Adagio e Rondo concertante, D.487
	Piano sonata No. 3

1916

Bartók	Suite for piano
Bax	Elegiac Trio, for flute viola & harp
	Ballad for violin & piano
	Dream in Exile for piano
	The Garden of Fand

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Photographs

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Editorial deadlines

Spring issue: 31st December

Autumn issue: 30th June

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Advertisements are available from £35. For information on rates and discounts contact the editor.

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Copies are distributed to all affiliated Societies and to the Federation's Associates with a total estimated readership of approaching 10,000.

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Printed by:

The Max
Chessingham Park Industrial Est.
Common Road, Dunnington
North Yorkshire YO19 5SE

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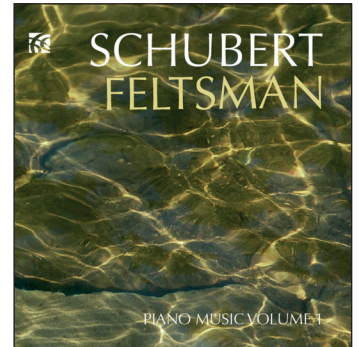
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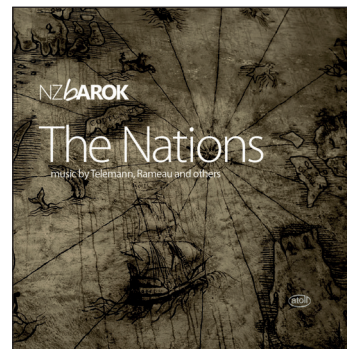
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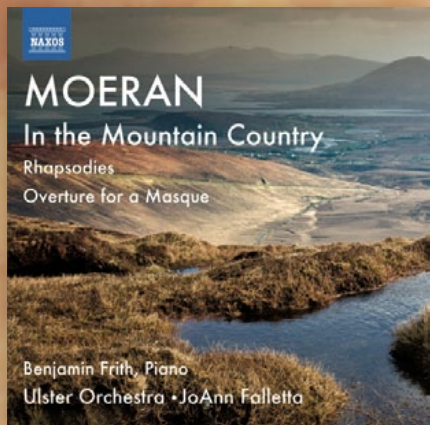
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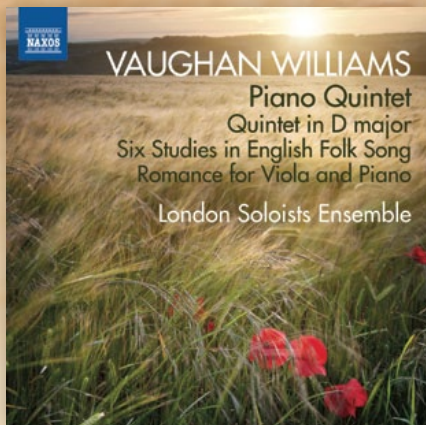
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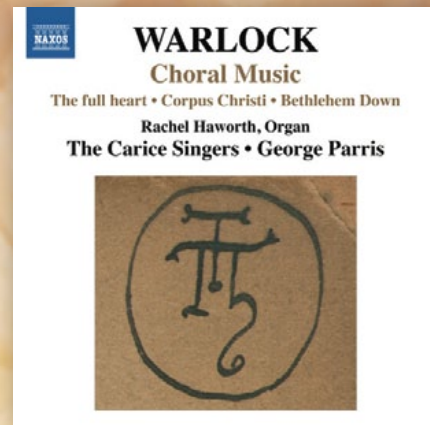
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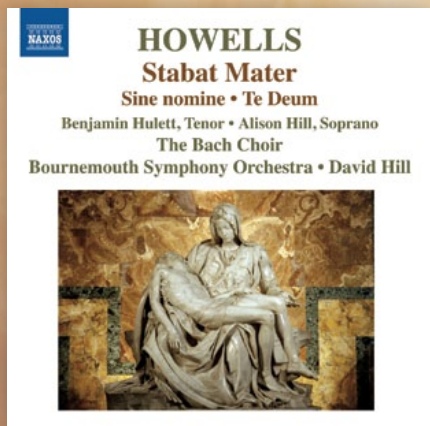
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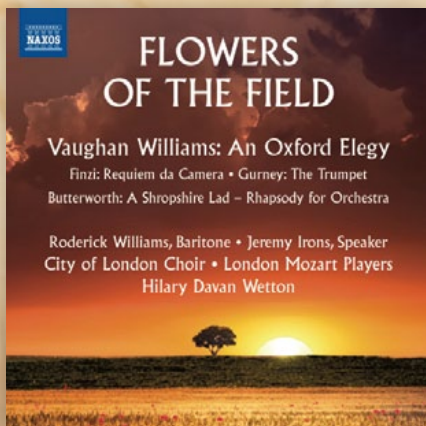
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