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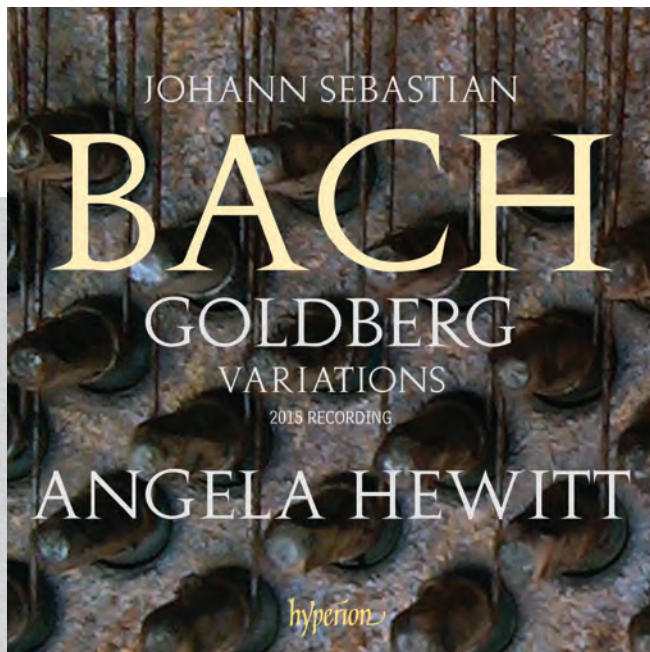
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# Bulletin



Judith Weir CBE, Master of the Queen's Music,  
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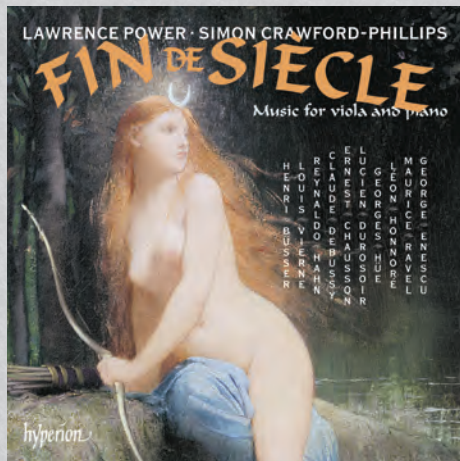
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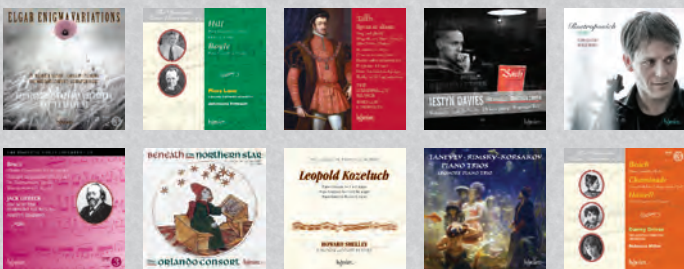


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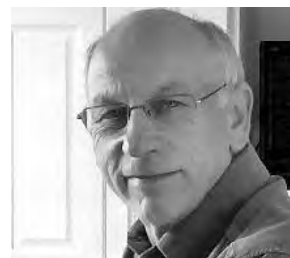
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<p>The editor acknowledges the assistance of Sue Parker (Barnsley and Huddersfield RMSs) in the production of this magazine.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For more information about the FRMS please go to <a href="http://www.thefrms.co.uk">www.thefrms.co.uk</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Forthcoming Events</b></p> <p>FRMS AGM, Bournemouth, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 (Page 24)          Torbay Music Weekend, November 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 2016 (page 17)          Y&amp;NRG Spring Musical Weekend, March 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 2017 (Page 20)          Daventry Music Weekend, April 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 2017          Scottish Group Music Day, May 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 (Page 22)</p>
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## EDITORIAL Paul Astell

**I**N MY LAST EDITORIAL, I invited readers to consider going along to the Federation's Music Weekend at Daventry, an event that consistently provides music-lovers with much to enjoy. This year was no different, and the audience enjoyed yet another excellent line-up of presenters and artists. Among them was the renowned Schubert scholar Professor Brian Newbould, who set out to answer the questions he posed for himself – how does he approach the task of completing the great Master's works, and why? The result, as you can read in the Daventry report beginning on page 4, was a fascinating session delivered by an expert in his field. How fortunate we are to be able to attract presenters of such eminence. As something of a bonus, Prof. Newbould readily agreed to pen an article for this magazine and we are grateful that he took the time to write what is, effectively, a follow-on from his talk.



Once again at the Weekend we were joined by talented young artists whose live performance gave the Daventry crowd a perfect start to their Sunday morning. You can see photos of this session on page 15. I have always especially enjoyed performances by young musicians. This stems from the days when my own children played in various school and county orchestras, and it was always a joy to follow the progress of these groups.

We are delighted to have the eminent composer and Master of the Queen's Music Judith Weir as the subject of this issue's cover feature. We are fortunate that she has found time during her busy schedule to write an article exclusively for this magazine and I'm sure you will be interested in what she has to say. As we go to print, the Daventry team are in negotiations with Judith about the possibility of her appearing at the 2017 Weekend. We look forward to – hopefully – meeting her, and you, at next year's event. ●

# Daventry Music Weekend

The FRMS President regretted that the Birmingham Conservatoire, of which he is principal, takes all of his time and sadly he would not be able to attend, but he wanted to send a message to delegates: 'Welcome to what I am sure will be a wonderful and informative weekend of music. I am only sorry that I am unable to join you but I am happy in the knowledge that you are going to have a very enjoyable weekend.' **Julian Lloyd Webber**



The Friday pre-dinner drinks reception was, as usual, the starting point for this year's Music Weekend in this the Federation's 80<sup>th</sup> year. Having enjoyed dinner, it was soon time to retire to the auditorium for the first presentation.

Main report and photos by Paul Astell; additional reporting by John Futter (Olton RMS).

## Poetry and music in World War I

John Francis is vice-chairman of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society as well as chairman of Albion Records. His aim in **World War I – awakening memories** was to examine the relationship between music and poetry from World War I, and to explore specifically how British music and poetry evolved during and beyond that war.

Poetry was of vital importance before the age of cinema and TV. Many soldiers went to war with the *Oxford Book of English Verse* in their knapsacks and consequently knew a fantastic range of poetry. War was declared on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914 and the next day *The Times* published the first war poem, written by Henry Newbolt. One estimate has it that 1.5 million poems were published in the first month of the war alone, another claims that there were more than 2,200 war poets during the 4 years of the conflict. Germany and France are thought to have produced similar numbers. John had brought along 26 tracks of music and poetry, but space permits mention of only a selected few.

Laurence Binyon's great poem 'For the fallen' was published in *The Times* during the second month of the war, a time when people were already shocked at the sheer scale of early casualties – about one million Allied dead and wounded on the Western Front during 1914. John's first selection was of John Gielgud reading 'For the fallen'. John next demonstrated how Binyon's poem was set to music both by Cyril Rootham, and by Elgar within *The Spirit of England*. That work also contains Binyon's 'The Fourth of August' which came next. Following John Ireland's setting of Rupert Brooke's most famous poem, 'The Soldier', John discussed poetry and music that reflected the huge destruction wrought on Belgium. Elgar used the words of Belgian poet Émile Cammaerts in his setting for narrator and orchestra of *Carillon*, this a response to a request to raise money for Belgian charities. The work was such a success the composer was asked to set two further poems, one of which was *Le drapeau belge* (the Belgian flag). Here, the narrator was Simon Callow.

In 1916 Elgar was asked to set to music Kipling's 'The fringes of the fleet', a series of poems which had originally appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*. The poet eventually withdrew permission for their use when his son Jack was killed in action. From Elgar's work of the same

name we heard 'Submarines' sung by Roderick Williams. As a result of his loss, Kipling wrote: 'Have you news of my boy Jack?'. Elgar was originally going to set this work too, but Edward German was the poet's preferred choice of composer. John used the version recorded in 1917 by Louise Kirkby Lunn before fading into a modern recording by David Owen Norris, Amanda Pitt and Gareth Brynmor John.

John's series of tracks kept coming thick and fast and next he gave us an extract from Arthur Bliss's choral symphony *Morning Heroes*, set to the words of various poets. Bliss, who was gassed and wounded during the war, dedicated the work to his brother who had died. The unmistakable voice of Brian Blessed provided the narration. Next, our presenter burst into song with 'When this lousy war is over', which featured in the stage musical and film *Oh! What a lovely war*. He followed this with 'We've had no beer', a parody on 'Abide with me'.

Many promising artists fell victim to the war and Cecil Coles is deemed one composer who could have been great. Coles was killed bringing in the wounded and spent his dying moments humming Beethoven. He wrote a four-movement suite *Behind the lines* and from that we heard 'Cortège'. The next track was by Australian-born Frederick Septimus Kelly DSC, who was wounded at Gallipoli and spent his recovery time writing *Elegy, in memoriam Rupert Brooke*. Alas, Kelly was killed on the last day of the Battle of the Somme.

In an attempt to overcome the difficulties experienced by women composers at that time, Rebecca Clarke sometimes used the pseudonym Anthony Trent. Invariably, 'his' work attracted more positive reviews! We heard her 1918 work for viola and piano, *Morpheus*. Following brief extracts from Vaughan Williams's Third Symphony and Britten's *War Requiem*, John concluded his very interesting and well-researched presentation with a recording of Laurence Binyon reading his own and most famous poem, 'For the fallen'.

## Unfinished Schubert

The Saturday sessions began with the eagerly anticipated visit by the renowned Schubert scholar, critic, composer, pianist, and conductor Professor Brian Newbould. In his presentation **Unfinished Schubert – Why and How**, Brian outlined his approach when attempting to realise some of the great Master's many incomplete works.

Brian immediately set about answering the question posed by his title: why? In terms of orchestral works, conductors and orchestras tend not to perform fragments and a movement has to be complete. The *Unfinished* Symphony has two wonderful and complete movements and the completion of the work – at the request of Neville



Marriner – is merely an academic exercise that attempts to show what the composer had planned. Brian is persuaded by others that completion of that score is less important than his work on the Seventh and Tenth Symphonies which otherwise would not be heard.

During his slide presentation, Brian showed an image of what is thought to be Schubert's first symphony score, written at the age of 14. It revealed that the composer's preference was to write directly to orchestral score rather than piano sketches. His Seventh Symphony was similarly composed and Brian described the poetic opening of the work by way of further slides and musical examples on CD and from the piano. Then came a 'pretty little tune' that opens the second movement. Another slide showed the end of the symphony some 40 minutes later, at which point Schubert had written '*fine*' and he never returned to the work, despite there being large sections of unfinished orchestration.

Brian told us that he wished he had been born in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The language of music then had reached a stage of development when it had more potential than ever. The next question Brian posed for himself was 'how do you finish the Seventh Symphony?' He demonstrated on piano a passage that he had transcribed from a Schubert sketch, describing how he gradually built it into a fully orchestrated score. A CD excerpt revealed the finished article in all its glory. Back at the piano, Brian demonstrated the simple harmonisation of the main theme of the Seventh's slow movement that a student might produce. He went on to compare it with his own thoughts on how the composer himself would have tackled it, complete with subtle bass pedals. What better way to put this theory to the test than to hear the whole of the beautiful slow movement performed by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields conducted by Neville Marriner? Schubert's sketches are dated at just one year before the Unfinished (Eighth) Symphony and Brian finds it incredible that the composer didn't return to complete that wonderful slow movement.

Next, Brian tackled the question as to why he should be the one to complete the work. The simple answer is that his boss at Leeds University asked him to, in readiness for Schubert's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 1978. The resulting work was performed that year by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Cheltenham Festival under David Atherton. A more recent performance can be found on YouTube with Andrew Manze conducting the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, a video well worth searching out. Interestingly, Manze had questioned the validity of one short passage which he thought not quite right. Brian was able to tell him that that was pure Schubert and not the result of a reconstruction!

Further commissions for Brian included working on piano sketches dating from Schubert's last year, and this resulted in him completing the Tenth Symphony. Given that his first six symphonies were written straight to full score, why would Schubert now use piano sketches? Brian suggested it was because he wanted to experiment and move his style forward and compose something that hadn't been written before. Brian ended his presentation with a performance by Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra of the Tenth Symphony's slow movement.

This was a fascinating insight into how an eminent musicologist sets about completing the works of one of the greatest composers in musical history, a task Brian

acknowledged is both exciting and, back in the 1970s, intimidating!

### Select Music

David Blake is Head of Sales and Marketing at Select Music & Video Distribution Ltd, the company that, although part of Naxos, also represents companies including BIS, Chandos, Hyperion and many other major independent labels.

At the outset of his presentation, **What am I doing here? The point of a distributor**, David admitted he was not a musician and had no specialist knowledge of any particular area of music.

His goal was to show how one part of the industry works now and how it had worked in the past, which does have a bearing on how people now buy music. He emphasised that a distributor's purpose is not to build artists' careers or bring opera to the masses, they exist to sell CDs and do a job for the labels that employ them. They have to get the music into the stores so people can buy it, using their marketing teams as well as press officers for promotion purposes. In previous times the classical music industry was dominated by major companies – EMI, DG, Philips, CBS – who would contract artists, a situation that existed for decades. Back in his youth, David worked in a record store and was drawn to classical music when that world was changing quite markedly. He soon moved on to work for Conifer, a very small, independent distributor which mostly sold imported LPs. Conifer released an album which made quite an impact and its importance within the industry was very apparent. John Rutter's recording of Fauré's Requiem is a 'stripped-down' version with a small choir – the Cambridge Singers. It sold really well and won a *Gramophone* award and is now available on Rutter's own label (which David's company distributes). We heard a short excerpt from Fauré's masterpiece.

In the 1980s things were beginning to change with the arrival of the compact disc and digital recording technology. In the past, expensive studio time was required, but now someone could turn up with equipment in a suitcase and record anywhere. Many music lovers wanted to start their record collections again from scratch and this gave smaller companies their big opportunity. The Naxos company came along selling cheap discs that were attractive to music lovers, and all the while the big boys were distracted as they continued to sign artists with expensive contracts who were never going to realise sufficient profits. Several other independent companies appeared including Hyperion, BIS and Chandos. David's next track was from a successful Hyperion disc that put the company on the map. Hyperion's Ted Perry claimed it paid for all his mistakes! This was *A feather on the breath of God* by Hildegard of Bingen. Big sellers like this are key to getting the smaller labels noticed. Hyperion, BIS and Chandos had initially used various small distributors. Wearing his Naxos hat, David stressed that his company had recognised that distribution methods were key. Naxos itself originally distributed through the Harmonia Mundi company, but as growth gathered pace, they became too



big to handle for the French label and Naxos started its own distribution company.

Naxos's model is that they don't sign artists or pay royalties. A fee is paid with a view that at £5 each, these discs will sell in acceptable quantities. Crucially, there are no endless meetings or mountains of bureaucracy.

David's next selection was a recording from when Naxos was at its peak at the beginning of this century, and it was back to John Rutter, this time an excerpt from his own Requiem featuring Clare College Choir. This CD proved to be Naxos's biggest UK seller in a single year at 50,000 copies. David followed this with the kind of surprising release from BIS that demonstrated the freedom small companies had which enabled them to follow their instincts. 20 years ago it seemed unlikely that Bach Cantatas performed by Bach Collegium Japan under Masaaki Suzuki would be a success. It was and still is as part of a 55-CD set. We heard an extract of Cantata 150.

If David now loves Naxos, he loved Hyperion even more. Every decision made was a case of heart first, business later. David played a recent Hyperion release of Arvo Pärt's choral music performed by Polyphony and conducted by Stephen Layton. The chosen track was *Summa*.

Another big success for Naxos – a number one in the classical chart during 2004 – came when Tony Banks of prog rock group Genesis moved into orchestral music with *Seven: A Suite for Orchestra*. This was a different world attracting lots of coverage and provided an interesting contrast between classical music and the world of rock. We heard an extract.

Classical sales peaked around 2004 and gradually declined. There are many locations where CDs can't be bought and many stores have closed, among them Woolworths, Our Price, MDC and others. There are many reasons and it's not just because of downloads. Musical education in schools has declined and people aren't listening as much as they once did – they have many and varied things to do with their lives.

Next, David introduced his favourite Naxos recording which is currently even more successful than when it was first released: *Spem in Alium* by Thomas Tallis performed by Oxford Camerata and conducted by Jeremy Summerly. This track was clearly an emotional experience for our presenter.

Cantaloupe Music is an American label run by young, enthusiastic people. David selected a work for string quartet, voices and mixed ensemble by David Lang: *The difficulty of crossing a field*. This is based on a story by Ambrose Bierce, a strange, dark, macabre piece and a work that brought complaints from David's work colleagues when he had it on repeat play in the office: 'Can't you play something else?' We heard two short extracts which concluded a fascinating insight into the world of distributors and independent labels.

### **The French Bruckner?**

Gwyn Parry-Jones is Head of Music Activities at the University of Reading and has been Musical Director of the University Choral Society for the past 20 years. He conducts choirs as well as orchestras, is an instrumentalist, composer and adjudicator. For his presentation **Albéric Magnard – the French Bruckner?** Gwyn immediately launched into the 'passionate and dramatic' beginning of Magnard's symphonic poem *Hymne à la justice*. He promised that we would hear the complete work at the end of his talk. He also emphasised that the question mark in

his title was very important, although it was a comparison often made.

Albéric Magnard was born in Paris in 1865, although of Belgian descent. This was also the year of Sibelius's birth, and Magnard and Carl Nielsen were born on the same day! Wagner's *Tristan und*



*Isolde* was also premiered that year, a significant fact in the life of Magnard. Albéric attended a performance of *Tristan* when he was aged 21, an event that made him decide that he was definitely going to be a musician. He enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire where he benefited from the tuition of Jules Massenet, among others. His first works were fairly small scale, but the composer's first piece of any importance was the *Suite dans le style ancien*, its six movements named after 18<sup>th</sup>-century French Baroque dances. We heard the first, 'Française', performed by the Luxembourg Philharmonic conducted by Mark Stringer. Interestingly, there is no such dance with that name; the first movement of a Baroque suite is usually an 'allemande'. That just happens to be French for 'German', however, and Franco-German relations were very strained at the time.

Magnard wrote in many genres: operas, symphonic music, chamber music, and songs, one of which came next. Alfred de Musset's poem of 1840 *Le Rhin allemand* talks of the Rhine as a precious piece of French property stolen by the Germans, and Magnard set that defiant statement to music in 1892. The tenor Robin Tritschler was accompanied by Malcolm Martineau.

In 1896, Magnard married Julie Creton. They enjoyed going out and about in Paris and this inspired the composer to write the six Piano Promenades, each of which describes a different part of the city. We heard 'Bois de Boulogne' and 'St-Cloud' performed by Philippe Guilhon-Herbert.

In the lead-up to World War I, relations between France and Germany were difficult and in the summer of 1914, Albéric realised he was in a very vulnerable situation. The village he lived in was on the direct line which German troops would take on their way to Paris, something he knew was likely to happen. This prompted him to send his family away but he was adamant that he would stay. And so it was that in September 1914, barely a month after the outbreak of war, German troops descended onto the Magnard home. Albéric shot one of the soldiers before he himself was killed. The house was ransacked and all the music he had been working on was destroyed. Gwyn stressed that you have to think Magnard was on the point of writing yet more great music, but the Fourth Symphony was his last major work to be completed before those events took place. We heard the first movement performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jean-Yves Ossonce.

Gwyn considers *Hymne à la justice*, first performed in 1903, to be a masterpiece. This piece was Magnard's direct response to that great cause célèbre, the Dreyfus Affair, a political scandal that divided France between 1894 and 1906. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a young French artillery officer of Alsatian and Jewish descent, was sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island in French Guiana for communicating French military secrets to the German Embassy in Paris. Evidence came to light

in 1896 that a French Army major, Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy, was the real culprit. The new evidence was suppressed and Dreyfus was served with additional charges based on falsified documents. Word of the military court's framing of Dreyfus and of an attempted cover-up began to spread, not least as a result of Emile Zola's famous 'J'accuse' open letter published in a Paris newspaper in January 1898. Gwyn demonstrated that the opening jagged theme on the lower instruments most likely represents the 'stabbing, accusing finger' of Zola's letter. Gwyn's recording featured Mark Stringer conducting the Luxembourg Philharmonic. He concluded an illuminating presentation by addressing the question posed at the beginning: is it accurate to describe Magnard as the French Bruckner? The consensus was an emphatic 'no', although on the evidence of *Hymne à la justice*, a French Mahler, perhaps.

### Orff and on the stage

The Saturday evening session belonged to Patrick McCarthy, who had been the subject of an article by Brian Godfrey in *Bulletin* 163, with a follow-up letter from Patrick in issue 164. Patrick is, of course, the singer who in a performance of *Carmina Burana* at the 1974 Proms famously stepped in to replace Thomas Allen when he collapsed mid-concert through heat exhaustion. Patrick began his presentation, **On and Orff the record – before Carmina and after**, with a video excerpt of *Carmina*, the final section of 'Uf dem Anger', taken from a Bavarian television film directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and conducted by one of Orff's regular colleagues, Kurt Eichhorn. This despite Patrick owning a video recording of his own performance!



Next came a BBC *Omnibus* interview with Patrick in the mid 90s, which included video clips detailing that famous 1974 occasion. From this point, Patrick ran through his career along with musical examples. He was influenced by his father, a violinist whose progress was interrupted by the war. He had access to 78s, which served as an introduction to the classics as well as popular music. Although the family lived in Bognor, the elder Mr McCarthy worked in London and brought home records from the Westminster Public Library. One of these was Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in a 1950s recording by Herbert von Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic, also featuring Erich Kunz, Anton Dermota and Sena Jurinac. We heard the Quintet from Act I.

Patrick's voice eventually broke and he had singing lessons from a future member of the King's Singers, Anthony Holt. On one occasion a schoolmaster took him along to sing in a performance of *Messiah*. The quartet of singers that day included Richard Standen whom we heard in that work's 'Thus saith the Lord'. The Vienna State Opera Orchestra was conducted by Hermann Scherchen. This was followed by another Standen performance, 'Go down Moses' from Tippett's *A Child of our Time* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir under John Pritchard.

In 1965 Patrick worked for Saga Records and then the Home Office, having originally been rejected by Decca

Records. Eventually Decca came calling offering him a job as assistant to the label manager. This was the LP era with Decca handling labels such as Vox, Turnabout, L'Oiseau-Lyre, Ace of Clubs and Ace of Diamonds. In the summer holidays Patrick would often visit the Edinburgh Festival. His next track was of a Festival appearance by Fritz Wunderlich and his final encore in 1966, a week before he died, singing 'An die Musik' by Schubert.

Patrick was given the opportunity to perform at the Players' Theatre, a music hall beneath Charing Cross station which was founded in 1936 and continued for 66 years. 'They didn't pay much but it was great fun!' He also gained work at the Royal Opera House and we heard a recording from the mid 70s of his first chorus appearance there. This was an ensemble from the first scene of *I Lombardi* by Verdi conducted by Lamberto Gardelli. Patrick was 'knocked out' the first time he saw a performance of the Act III Interlude between scenes 1 and 2 of Wagner's *Lohengrin* with its off-stage fanfares. Patrick's presentation was an enjoyable way to spend a Saturday evening and he concluded with the 1962 Bayreuth Festival recording, conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch.

### Live recital: Adam Jondelius and Ella O'Neill

*John Futter (Olton RMS) writes:* On Sunday morning we were privileged to hear a varied programme given by these two young artists from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. The excellently planned recital of vocal and solo piano music commenced with Finzi's well-known settings of Hardy poems, *Earth and Air and Rain*. Adam Jondelius possesses a relatively light baritone which suited these varied-in-mood songs and Ella O'Neill proved to be a sympathetic accompanist.

Next we heard three preludes by York Bowen, Nos 1, 4 and 23 from Op. 102. The performances of these late works had us wanting more. Bowen's music has suffered neglect somewhat in recent years, unjustifiably so on the basis of these performances. Then we were treated to three songs by Peter Warlock, including the well-known 'Captain Stratton's Fancy' to the words of John Masefield. This was a good performance but perhaps just a little lacking in swagger.

After the interval the recital started with a Scandinavian flavour and we heard three songs by Sibelius, including the well-known 'Black Roses'. This was followed by Grieg's early Piano Sonata in E minor, his only large-scale work for the solo instrument. This was an enjoyable performance culminating in a rousing finale.

We then returned to British song, commencing with three works by Paul Corfield Godfrey, the Federation's treasurer who, fortunately, was in the audience. The 'Song of the Wanderer' and 'Song of the Prisoner' are settings of Tolkien. These were followed by the first performance of 'The seven woods of Coole' set to the words of Yeats. These worthy settings rightly take their place in the mainstream British song tradition. Finally we heard a rendition of Roger Quilter's *Three Shakespeare Songs*, Op. 6, thus bringing the recital full circle.

This was a much appreciated recital resulting in enthusiastic applause, and a wonderful way to begin the Sunday sessions. By request from the audience, the duo's encore was a reprise of 'Rollicum-Rorum' from the Finzi settings performed at the start.

*Ed: Please see photos of the recital on page 16.*

### A musical odyssey

A complete version of David Patmore's musical CV could easily take up most of this review. He had read history at Oxford, but among his many activities in a varied career, he studied opera stage management and worked at several opera companies, including



Glyndebourne and The Royal Opera. He has been reviewing and writing about recordings for over 35 years for numerous publications including *Gramophone*, *Which CD?* and *Classic Record Collector*. For the weekend's final presentation, **Tales from the prompt corner – memories of the world of opera**, David promised that he would take us on a musical odyssey based on his involvement in opera between 1959 and 1975.

David recalled when that journey began and being one of about 40 boys taken by a schoolmaster to summer dress rehearsals at Glyndebourne – an incredible experience over two years, after which opera held no terrors at all. His first track was the Overture from the 1959 Glyndebourne production of *La Cenerentola* by Rossini. In 1962 David came across a pile of 78s at school, one of which had him hooked. It was the 1927 recording of the 'Love Duet' from Act II of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. It featured Frida Leider and Lauritz Melchior with Albert Coates conducting.

Through a chance meeting in 1965, David's father secured him a job at Glyndebourne as assistant transport officer organising taxis for producers, singers and conductors to and from Lewes. David next played a track from that year's Glyndebourne production of *Anna Bolena* by Donizetti. We heard the duet from Act II featuring Leyla Gencer, the Turkish soprano 'who was always sent for when Callas wasn't available'. She sang opposite Patricia Johnson, and Gianandrea Gavazzeni was the conductor. In 1969 David found himself working in stage management and was sent to Aldeburgh, soon after which

The Maltings burnt down – 'a baptism of fire!' – which required a hasty relocation to a local church. The first performance, with Benjamin Britten conducting Mozart's *Idomeneo*, was broadcast and we heard the Overture taken from that performance.

David eventually moved to The Royal Opera and he next played the Act I duet from Strauss's *Arabella*, sung by Lisa Della Casa and Hilde Gueden with Rudolf Moralt conducting. During his years at Covent Garden, David got to hear most of the operatic repertoire and he next presented some of the highlights from that period. This included the Act I Finale of Bellini's *La Sonnambula* featuring Renata Scottò, and the Act III trio from *Der fliegende Holländer* by Wagner. This was followed by Tito Gobbi performing the Prologue from *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo. Then came the Act II sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in a 1961 recording featuring Joan Sutherland and conducted by John Pritchard.

In 1973 David was, at the age of 25, thrust into the position of company manager for the opera company, a situation he described as 'too much, too soon'. Nevertheless, there were some amazing experiences, not least when Rudolf Kempe arrived for a production of Richard Strauss's *Elektra*. David described Kempe as probably the greatest conductor he had the privilege of hearing. Danica Mastilovic and Heather Harper were the performers in the Duet from that opera conducted by Kempe.

'Italian opera at its best' is how David described the 1975 ROH production of Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*. His track of the Duet was sung by Katia Ricciarelli and Plácido Domingo with Claudio Abbado conducting. David stressed that it is the conductor who is key to a great performance and he thought Josef Krips was on a par with Kempe. He concluded his most interesting journey through at least part of his varied musical career with the Act III trio from *Der Rosenkavalier* with Krips conducting Viennese forces in a 1971 recording.

Indeed, that also brought yet another successful Music Weekend to a close. Thanks go to all whose hard work throughout the year makes this event possible. Dates for the 2017 Weekend are April 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>. ●





## REGIONAL NEWS

## Yorkshire & Northwest Regional Group

*For the third consecutive year, members graced Ilkley's Craiglands Hotel for another feast of music that featured many outstanding sound recordings. Ron Cooper and Geoff Bateman report on another hugely successful weekend.*

**DEBUTANT PETER SMART** (Huddersfield RMS) opened proceedings with **Light as a Feather**, a delightful selection of mainly English light music including *Horse feathers*, Philip Green's theme tune to *Meet the Huggetts*, under the baton of Sidney Torch, followed by *Coronation Scot* by Vivian Ellis. Both pieces from BBC radio programmes of the 1950s evoked childhood memories for all of us. In a programme ranging from a 1930 recording of Eric Coates's *Three Bears Phantasy*, featuring the Hastings Municipal Orchestra under Basil Cameron, right up to a modern recording of the John Wilson Orchestra's version of the 'Barn dance' from MGM's *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, Peter covered over 70 years of the genre. He praised the role of the BBC, both radio and TV, in fostering and commissioning new works, using quality orchestras and composers. He also regretted that changing tastes and BBC policy decisions from the 1960s onwards led to the demise of many regional orchestras, to the detriment of light music.

The works of Ernest Tomlinson were given a deserved airing. We heard three of his English Folk Dances and his *Little Serenade*. Prominent conductors and arrangers such as Barry Wordsworth, Stanford Robinson, Gavin Sutherland and George Weldon were all included and, most appropriately for a late Friday evening, we heard Ronald Binge's *Sailing By*, a firm favourite with Radio 4 listeners still awake at midnight! Peter's knowledge and enthusiasm for what some would consider a sadly neglected genre showed us what quality exists in the orchestrations of emotionally uplifting and joyous music.

**ALSO MAKING HIS MUSIC WEEKEND** debut was John Atkin, Programme Secretary at Ramsbottom RMS. His programme **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly** wasn't inspired by Clint Eastwood, though we did get a whiff of Ennio Morricone for starters. The theme of the programme was 'characters both real and imagined, in the world of music' and John felt obliged to offer a health warning before kick-off – 'some listeners might find some of the music disturbing!'

We had Alfred Newman's music from the 1939 film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Naxos), and Prokofiev's *Zdravitsa* (Hail to Stalin), conducted by Polyansky on Chandos. We also heard the first section from Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ*, depicting King Herod ordering the massacre of all new-borns (Harmonia Mundi).

A dip into Vaughan Williams's *Job* and Handel's *Theodora* (Naxos and DG Archiv) was followed by the real X-certificate contribution from Berg's *Lulu*: the murder of the heroine at the hands of Jack the Ripper, stirring stuff indeed from the Boulez Paris recording. To end this enterprising and thought-provoking programme, we had the finale of Beethoven's *Fidelio* from the rousing performance under Bernstein and the VPO.

**IN A WELL-RESEARCHED** and thoroughly entertaining session dedicated to a master of the English language, Professor Anthony Ogus presented **George Bernard Shaw at the Opera** which illustrated in depth the musical knowledge, wit and literary style of his subject. Writing under his renowned *nom de plume*, Corno di Bassetto, Shaw could be a fierce critic, with a pen dipped in vitriol if he detected weaknesses in performances, staging, or directorial shortcomings. Extensive quotations from Shaw's reviews were followed up with extracts from modern recordings which were, of course, unavailable to the reviewer! Shaw complained of having sat through at least 60 performances of Gounod's *Faust*, but managed to enjoy the acclaimed tenor Jean de Reszke. We heard a splendid recording of Thomas Allen and Nicolai Ghiaurov in the duet from Act II.

The dearth of English grand opera from the 1860s onwards was perhaps ended by Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* of 1891, premiered at the newly-built Palace Theatre. The duet from Act II, in which Richard I meets Friar Tuck, challenging him to a song contest, was vintage Sullivan. The opera had a decent run but there were no revivals after World War I. Shaw was scathing about a rendition of the Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, as it lasted only three and a half minutes, which left his boiled egg undercooked. Matters were put right by Beecham's LPO recording of 1937 – bang on four minutes! Next we heard the concluding 'mad scene' from Massenet's neglected two-act opera *La Navarraise*, premiered in 1894 and a 50-minute stab at the new school of verismo. The soprano's desperate efforts portraying the attempted suicide of the distraught heroine were much admired at the original production.

Another rarely performed gem, *The Barber of Baghdad* by Peter Cornelius of the Liszt-inspired 'New German School' of composers, and given its London premiere in 1884, was likewise admired by Shaw. The programme ended with the soprano aria, sung by Kundry in the Magic Garden, from Wagner's *Parsifal*. Throughout the programme Anthony certainly showed us the characteristics admired by him in his description of Shaw's work. This was a most entertaining and well-received presentation.

**IN 1961 AND AT THE AGE OF 86**, Pierre Monteux accepted the position of principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, on condition the contract was for 25 years with an option to renew! In **Pierre Monteux: an appreciation**, Trevor Cattell (Wolverhampton RMS) gave an invaluable insight into the 'life and work of an important and perhaps undervalued conductor'. In Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*, Monteux's lightness of touch rather than Germanic grandeur brought out the rhythmic textures, reminding us the composer had played in a dance band and had written the Hungarian Dances. Monteux conducted the world premiere of

Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (as well as *The Rite of Spring* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*), and we had the final dance played by the Boston Symphony. Birgit Nilsson sang the 'Liebestod' from *Tristan und Isolde* in a live 1962 broadcast from the Concertgebouw, and this was followed by the nigh-on definitive recording of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (LSO 1962), played 'just as the composer would have wanted'.

A tremendous forward pulse in the final movement of the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony (Boston Symphony, 1958), brought this all too brief exploration of Monteux's invaluable recorded treasury to a dramatic conclusion. Trevor had supplied us all with a well-researched 10-page programme to supplement his absorbing presentation.

**MAKING A WELCOME RETURN**, Professor Nigel Simeone celebrated **70 years of the Philharmonia Orchestra**. He charted its history from when Walter Legge founded it in 1945, with Beecham conducting the first performance at the Kingsway Hall in an all-Mozart programme. Legge would not concede control of the orchestra to Beecham, who promptly packed his bags and went on his way to form the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1964, Legge announced he was disbanding the orchestra, but with the support of Otto Klemperer the players took it over as a self-governing body as the New Philharmonia – Legge would not allow them to use the name 'Philharmonia', for apparently no legal reason. It was reinstated as the Philharmonia in 1977. As Nigel usually plays short excerpts from many recordings (18 in this programme!) space does not allow us to cite all the items, so we must confine our references to the principal highlights. These include Roussel's Fourth Symphony under Karajan (1949), Toscanini with Brahms's Fourth Symphony (1952 live RFH performance), Beethoven's Seventh Symphony conducted by Cantelli (1956), and Dvořák's *Symphonic Variations* under Kubelik (1957). Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* found Klemperer unusually light of hand (1960) and we had the dream team of Barbirolli and Janet Baker in Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* (1969). Sir Charles Mackerras, who had conducted the orchestra over many years, was represented by his arrangement of Sir Arthur Sullivan's music from *Pineapple Poll* (1982). Nigel brought his entertaining and informative evening to a close with the rousing finale of Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* under the orchestra's current chief, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

**FOLLOWING A RECITAL** at Wigmore Hall, Catherine Wilmers was invited by Alexander Cameron to join the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1979. She spent 10 of her 25 years with them as sub-principal cellist and played under Haitink, Solti, Tennstedt, Welser-Möst and Masur. In a varied and entertaining talk entitled **The life of an LPO cellist**, Catherine spoke of her time in one of the world's great orchestras and related tales not generally known, beginning with the timpanist who broke his ankle

while skiing on the afternoon of a concert. Unable to get into his trousers due to the plaster cast, he had to take to the stage wearing a dress! Then there was the double-bass player who, if he felt a conductor was spending too long over rehearsals, would mischievously play the Big Ben chimes on his instrument as a prompt.

She most revered Klaus Tennstedt for whom the orchestra had a great love. It was his orchestra, whereas during the reign of Solti it was always his number two. He would perfect a piece with them, then dash across the Atlantic to record the work in Chicago! But it was not all plain sailing with Tennstedt. During a lengthy tour of North America, the orchestra had an engagement in New Orleans. While watching TV, he saw a film of Liberace playing with the LPO. Enraged, he immediately informed the hierarchy that he was resigning his post with immediate effect – 'I do not conduct the Liberace orchestra!' Sanity prevailed, and the next concert proceeded without further incident.

Catherine's chosen recordings were from those she had performed in: Strauss's *Don Juan* and *Four Last Songs* (Tennstedt, Popp); Elgar's *In the South* (Solti); Mahler's Symphony No. 3 (Tennstedt); Brahms's Violin Concerto (Tennstedt, Kennedy); Clifford Curzon playing the Piano Concerto, K491 by Mozart from a live recording conducted by Haitink; and 'I got plenty o' nuttin'' from the now famous Glyndebourne *Porgy and Bess* (Rattle).

For her grande finale, Catherine played a short DVD of when she had appeared in a commercial for liquorice allsorts!

**DURING A CAREER WITH EMI**, including many years as Press & Promotions Manager, and editorship of *Gramophone*, Malcolm Walker met and worked with the great and good of the British recording industry. In **50+ years in the recording industry**, we were entertained by early pioneering stereo experiments of ping-pong and engineers walking and talking in the studio in 1933! Many early musical extracts included Ray Noble's New Mayfair Orchestra (1934), followed by Serenade No. 1 by Brahms and the finale of Bruckner's Symphony No. 8.

Malcolm took us on a chronological journey, charting technical advances through the 1950s, with a strong emphasis on the skills of the engineers such as Bert Whyte and Ray Wallace, in his opinion unsung heroes. Further highlights were the finale of Symphony No. 36 by Mozart, operatic extracts from Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* with Callas, Luigi Alva and Tito Gobbi. The presentation was brought to an upbeat conclusion by the Eastman Wind Ensemble's rousing *Hands across the sea* by Souza. Throughout the programme we were impressed not only by the depth of Malcolm's knowledge but also by his fund of anecdotes, delivered in a witty and entertaining style.

**ANOTHER MAKING A WELCOME RETURN** was Dr David Patmore (University of Sheffield Department of Music) who, in **Great conductors**

**discovered on CRQ**, presented a selection of recordings from the CRQ label. David opened with the first movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 3 in a live 1957 recording with Beecham conducting the Symphony of the Air in Carnegie Hall in memory of Toscanini. The Beecham touch distracted us from the less than ideal sound quality, and the conductor was clearly audible urging the players forward.

Also under Beecham from 1951 was the second act aria 'I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls' from Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* sung by Roberta Peters. This was followed by the Prelude to Delius's *Irmelin* from a live BBC TV relay, which included scathing attacks by Beecham about the poor quality of amateur opera performances, prompting hissing from the audience (not the tape!)

CRQ's best-selling recordings are by Boult, including those he made for Miller International (sold at Woolworths) and we heard him conducting Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet*, recorded in Walthamstow Town Hall in 1959. The finest sound of the evening was evidenced in the Overture to Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Vittorio Gui conducting the Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra in 1953.

This was a wide and varied selection of music from the CRQ catalogue, an enterprising company doing much to restore out-of-print gems from the Golden Age of recording.

**A MOST ENJOYABLE WEEKEND** was concluded, fittingly, by Jim Bostwick, the Federation and Y&NRG secretary, who invited us to **Celebrate**

**the LP**. Fondly recalling his teenage experience of working in a Barnsley record shop, he explained how he came to love classical music and start his extensive LP collection. He opened with The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* album from 1967, a treasured possession! The opening movement of Beethoven's Sonata No. 23 *Appassionata* played by Peter Frankl, was followed by extracts from Haydn's *The Seasons*, featuring the Spring Chorus and the Ploughman's song.

The LSO, conducted by Geoffrey Simon, gave us a stirring version of Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa* and this was followed by Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro* for strings conducted by Barbirolli, in a wonderfully vibrant recording from 1963. More Beethoven next and a string quartet played by the Quartetto Italiano from 1969. Then a selection of three lieder by Schumann, sung by Sheila Armstrong, brought us to the concluding work conducted by and in tribute to the late Nikolaus Harnoncourt: Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4, in which the soloist was Gidon Kremer. Throughout the programme the audience was impressed by the outstanding quality of sound reproduction, clarity and dynamics of the LP recordings, all of which, as Jim suggested, stand as reminders of what we've been missing in the era of the CD.

Members were already looking forward to the next music weekend, which will be held at the same venue over the weekend 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017, and is open to all affiliate members, family and friends. Please see our advert on page 20. Further details will be posted on the FRMS website.

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## Scottish Regional Group

**D**UNDEE UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY was the venue for the FRMS Scottish Group's annual get-together on Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Group chair Pat Leishman welcomed members from Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Carnoustie, St Fillans, and Newcastle, along with some others not attached to a Recorded Music Society. The principal speakers were John Butt and Barry Peter Ould.

John Butt, two-times *Gramophone* Award winner, is Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort. His career as both musician and scholar centres on music of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, but he is also concerned with the implications of the past in our present culture. His talk **Making historically informed recordings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century** concentrated on his recordings of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, the *Brandenburg Concertos* and the *Christmas Oratorio*, as well as Mozart's Requiem, and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther*.

Barry Peter Ould was co-founder of the Percy Grainger Society (UK) with David Tall in 1977. In 1984 he took over the editorship of the *Grainger Society Journal*. An International Grainger Medallion Award in 1993 recognised his very considerable work as a Grainger Society music archivist, a task he continues to perform. In 1987 he established the Bardic Edition, and under this imprint many new Grainger works have been published. During his talk, **Percy Grainger, a 21<sup>st</sup>-century re-evaluation**, Barry gave a fascinating insight into the composer's life interspersed with numerous historic recordings including Grainger talking about his arrangement of 'Country Gardens'. We also heard 'Bonnie George Campbell' from *Songs of the North*, Grainger performing Chopin's Waltz in A flat major, Op. 42, and Joseph Taylor singing *Brigg Fair*. Finally came Benjamin Britten's recording of *Scotch Strathspey and Reel*.

Next year's Music Day will be held in the Smith Art Gallery and Museum in Stirling on Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 •

**John Maidment, secretary**



From left: John Butt, Pat Leishman and Barry Peter Ould

# SOCIETY NEWS

## Sad loss of a Rochdale stalwart

Members of Rochdale Gramophone Society have lost their Honorary President, Jack Tattersall (1924-2016) who has died after a fall at home. Jack, who would have been 92 in July, had been a member of the Society continuously for 64 years and had held at various times the posts of chairman, secretary and treasurer before being elected as Honorary President in 2000.

Jack was a great Wagner fan but was also very knowledgeable about Mozart and Beethoven. Until a year before his death, even at his advanced age, Jack had been setting out the chairs and checking the equipment before every meeting and he used to see that all was well before locking up afterwards. His services to the Society are inestimable and he was a very popular member. It is believed that he is the longest-serving member of any of the various recorded music societies in the UK. *[Unless you know differently – Ed].*

**George Steele**

## Sheffield RMS mourns Ray Cottam

It is with sadness that I have to report the death of one of our members, Ray Cottam. In 1974 Ray became a member of Sheffield Gramophone Society. He had originally joined Sheffield Recorded Music Club, which is no longer in existence, in 1956. He was a committee member from 1975 and for 15 years served as treasurer. Each year Ray presented a carefully researched programme but he was always happy to fill vacant dates when we were planning programmes. Readers of *Bulletin* may remember that Ray was secretary of the Yorkshire Regional Group from 1976 to 2006. He used to prepare quizzes at the YRG weekends which were held for many years in Scarborough. One year, as we walked into the hall, we were surrounded by beautifully mounted photographs of composers and musicians. These were clues to a quiz devised by Ray, the culmination of hours of meticulous research.

Ray was a quietly-spoken, loyal and knowledgeable member of our Society, who is sorely missed.

**Margaret Turner, secretary**

## Torbay Musical Weekend 2016

The Friends of Torbay (see [www.fot.org.uk](http://www.fot.org.uk)) have again produced a programme that will be of interest to all music-lovers, to be enjoyed in the comfortable surroundings of the Palace Hotel, Torquay. The 4-star hotel is in the 'Country House' style with golf, swimming, snooker and billiards to occupy partners whilst the 'other halves' can immerse themselves in the broad range of presentations offered.

Whether high-brow or low, the programme will satisfy and stimulate allcomers because the professionalism of the presenters is such that 'it reaches the parts that ...'



Rochdale chairman John Mills presents Jack with a set of Wagner CDs to celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.



This photo from *Bulletin* 158 shows Ray with his Long Service Award, presented in 2013 by FRMS secretary Jim Bostwick

The main evening programmes are live performances. On Saturday the Comberti-Cole Duo with cello and fortepiano will cover the well-known and not so well-known repertoire. The Sunday evening illustrated presentation will close the weekend with 'The Music of Sir Patrick Moore'. Sir Patrick was a most amazing and accomplished person who did not confine himself to stargazing. This will be an evening to remember.

For more information do not hesitate to make contact as shown in our advertisement on page 18.

**John Isaac, Friends of Torbay chairman**



# A Composer's View of Recording

by Judith Weir

'What goes on inside your head when you're composing?' This is my number one Frequently Asked Question. And in Frequently Answering it, I realise that many of my thoughts, while composing, are to do with the live experience of making music. I visualise the space the first performance will be in, I think about the performers, where they will sit, can they be seen, heard; and I also think about the audience and what it will be like for them. I realise also that one of the big reasons I've written music during my lifetime is to bring people together in one space, aiming for those rare but wonderful moments when everyone's thoughts and intentions join together while concentrating on a performance. The reason I first started composing music as a teenager was to get together with a group of my friends in lunch breaks to play music together; no printed music existed for the strange bunch of instruments we had, so I needed to get on and write it.

I wouldn't want to give the impression, however, that composers aren't interested in recording; when we write a new work, the end product we most fervently wish for is to have it permanently preserved on CD. I personally use downloads all the time, and they have changed the convenience of my professional life greatly for the better. But nevertheless, it's still the physical CD, the cover, the booklet that shows it has really happened!

You can see why composers intensely wish for recordings. When my illustrious colleague Colin Matthews first had the idea (in the 1980s) for the successful British new music label NMC which he still heads today, he was at a new music concert, watching all the complicated things happen onstage – strange percussion instruments being shipped around, complicated scores being navigated, an unusual line-up of musicians never normally seen together – and he thought 'what a lot of trouble and expense to go to when only a few hundred people are going to witness this at any one time'. He saw that the costs of mounting a concert of that kind were comparable with making and issuing a recording. And meanwhile, advancing technology was making it much easier to 'capture' and edit live performances. When I started having my music performed in the mid 1970s, if I wished to have any physical reminder of it, my one option (if the musicians agreed) was to lug in my father's reel-to-reel machine, an immense contraption, and, having laboriously found a space on the giant tape reel, 'press record' – on one microphone! (If I later

wanted to edit out any major bloopers, there was the further option of cutting out little bits of the tape with a razor blade and then sticking it together with backing tape – probably the most labour-intensive musical activity I've ever engaged in.)

By now I may inadvertently have given the impression that composers are only interested in their own discs – like the famous *Desert Island Discs* appearance by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, who chose eight recordings of herself. But to become a composer, you need to listen, all the time, with intense focus – which would be impossible without recordings. Most of my colleagues have huge walls full of the things – those sagging shelves suggesting that downloads are a useful invention. But here it's worth stating how useful the liner notes and even the track listings are for anyone planning concerts, teaching, or

indeed just reminding themselves about the little details of music that interested us enough in the past to invest in a CD or LP.

As the years go by, I realise more and more how certain long-loved recordings – and once again their actual physical being – bring me back with extreme immediacy to the time when I first heard them, and to the people who played them to me. Being the age I am, this takes me back as far as my mother's brown-paper sleeved albums of 78s – Bing Crosby, Stokowski, it sometimes seemed in those days that everyone owned the same records! My father was an occasional LP buyer, and his collection reflected his passion for the trumpet, which he played as an enthusiastic amateur. Since his purchases had to highlight the trumpet, he



Judith Weir pictured with the nearly 100-year-old Straight D Trumpet (or 'Bach Trumpet') inherited from her father.  
Photo credit: Suzanne Jansen

**Judith Weir CBE** was born into a Scottish family in 1954, but grew up near London. She was an oboe player, performing with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and studied composition with John Tavener during her schooldays. She went on to Cambridge University, where her composition teacher was Robin Holloway. She now lives in London, where she has had a long association with Spitalfields Music Festival, and in recent years has taught as a visiting professor at Princeton, Harvard and Cardiff universities. Judith has achieved international recognition for her orchestral and chamber works, operas and theatrical works. In 2014 she was appointed Master of The Queen's Music in succession to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. In January 2015 she became Associate Composer to the BBC Singers. She blogs about her experiences of cultural life in the UK at [judithweir.com](http://judithweir.com).

needed to range widely in styles, from Satchmo, via Herb Alpert, to recordings featuring Adolf Scherbaum, the former Berlin Philharmonic principal who at that time was the go-to trumpeter for all those scary Bach piccolo trumpet parts. In fact I just have to hear the opening bars of Brandenburg Two, played by anyone, to return immediately in my mind to our family home of fifty years ago.

My own first purchases were all from the psychedelic world of 1960s pop music – nearly always singles in flimsy paper covers, weekly choices which were carefully, agonisingly considered in the local record shop situated in a suburban parade on my way home from school. With a little more money available I graduated occasionally to LPs, which were at the time visually remarkable objects. What's more, to purchase a newly released album such as *Sergeant Pepper* was to take part in a national cultural event – everyone you knew would be trying to hear, buy or borrow it in the week of its release. I now see that these early transactions in that unremarkable record shop were crucial to my life as a composer. I became more adventurous – still often influenced by the look of the cover. A very important influence on my work from that time was Berio's *Sinfonia* – and I can recall buying that disc along with a couple of pop records,

initially because I was intrigued by the rather cool cover design, featuring a portrait of Martin Luther King. That amazing work by Berio was most unusual in those days in that it had been very swiftly recorded (in fact so swiftly recorded that it was not yet complete in its present five-movement form) and released on a major label by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic. I often wonder if I'd have become a composer without getting to know it so well in my teenage years.

Much as the live experience underpins my continued wish to be involved in music, it's obvious that the presence of recordings has vitally supported it. Often those influential discs weren't consciously chosen as planned purchases – I just happened to come across them. It underlines the importance of recording our contemporary musical culture in its many forms and making it clearly available; I sometimes think those little 1960s independent record stores in every high street did their job of disseminating music just as effectively as iTunes and Spotify do today, although much less conveniently. And of course, it also underlines the importance of listening adventurously (and through proper speakers, as I hardly need remind the gentle readers of this publication). ●

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## FRMS Presenters Panel - update

*Societies are invited to recommend successful presenters for inclusion in this section, the full version of which appears in every Spring issue. 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. 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.*

### New entry

#### **RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY**

www.rvwsociety.com

**Simon Coombs**, chairman; 24 Wellsworth Lane, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire PO9 6BY

02392 412837; email: simonandlaura2004@yahoo.co.uk

**John Francis**, vice-chairman; The Vicarage, Corseley Road, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9SE  
01892 864 265; email: john@lffuk.com

**Graham Muncy**, Information Officer; Rose Cottage, 8 Belvoir Bank, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 4LY  
01684 578794; email: g.muncy058@btinternet.com  
Ralph Vaughan Williams is arguably Britain's greatest composer: his works include nine symphonies, operas, song cycles, music for film, ballet and choirs.

Members of this flourishing society enjoy exclusive events and RVW-related publications as well as recordings of lesser-known works by the composer through the Society's own recording label 'Albion Records'. In 2022 we will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vaughan Williams's birth. Expenses requested. CDs for sale.

### New entry

#### **IAN VENABLES**

2 Turrall Street, Barbourne, Worcester WR3 8AJ

01905 611570; Mobile: 07943 952 460

email: ianvenables@talktalk.net

www.ianvenables.com (contains sound samples)

Described as '...Britain's greatest living composer of art songs...' (*Musical Opinion*) and '...a song composer as fine as Finzi and Gurney...' (*BBC Music Magazine*). Ian Venables has written over 60 works in the genre of art-

song, as well as many fine chamber works. Ian studied music with Professor Richard Arnell at Trinity College of Music, London and later with Andrew Downes, John Mayer and John Joubert at the Birmingham Conservatoire. Since 1986 he has lived in Worcester, and the surrounding landscape has often inspired his compositions. His works have been performed by national and internationally acclaimed artists, recorded on Somm, Signum, Regent, EM Records and Naxos, and published by Novello and Company Ltd (Music Sales International).

Ian's talk, with musical examples, gives an overview of the history of art-song in England from the perspective of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century composer, as well as incorporating illuminating insights into his own works and composing process.

Fee: £100 plus expenses.

### New entry

#### **BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY**

www.britishmusicsociety.com

**Adrian Lucas**, chairman

Mobile: 07719 446 014

email: chairman@britishmusicsociety.com

**John Gibbons**, vice-chairman

Mobile: 07973 617 064

vicechairman@britishmusicsociety.com

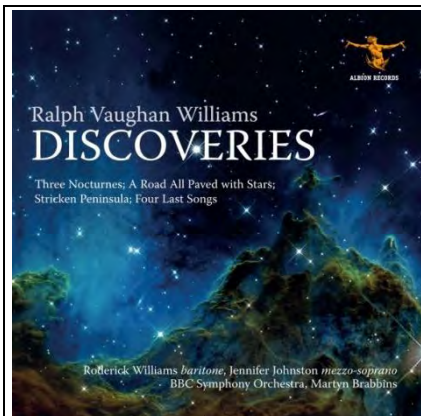
Discover a hidden world of music. The Society's aim is to bring together a broad range of opportunities and experiences for supporters of British music. Our growing catalogue of recordings, in collaboration with Naxos, continues to uncover and preserve often unknown repertoire. Expenses requested. CDs for sale.

Albion Records is the recording arm  
of The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society



Recent and forthcoming recordings

**ALBION RECORDS**



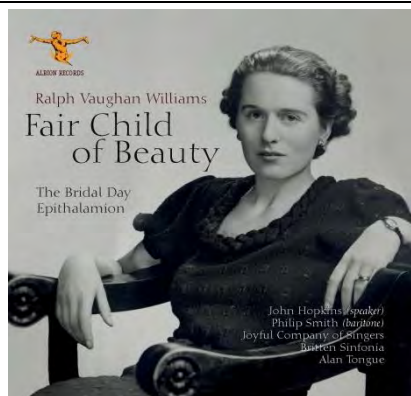
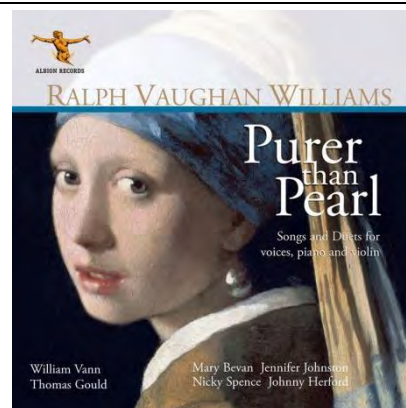
**Discoveries – On sale from September**

**Three Nocturnes with Roderick Williams**  
**A Road All Paved with Stars** from *The Poisoned Kiss*  
**Stricken Peninsula**, the lost film score  
**Four Last Songs** with Jennifer Johnston  
BBC Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins

**Purer than Pearl – from October**

Mary Bevan, Jennifer Johnston,  
Nicky Spence, Johnny Herford, with  
William Vann (piano) and Thomas Gould (violin)

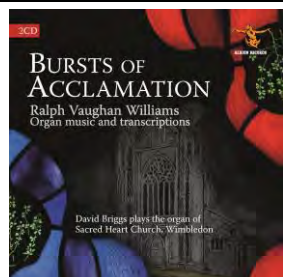
Early songs and duets, with eight songs from *The Poisoned Kiss*. A breathtakingly beautiful recording with many world premières.



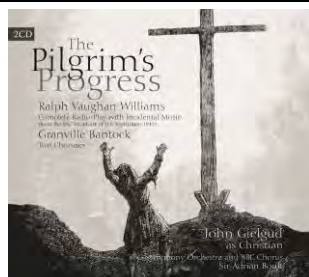
**Fair Child of Beauty**  
**The Bridal Day; Epithalamion**

John Hopkins (speaker), Philip Smith (baritone), Joyful Company of Singers, Britten Sinfonia, Alan Tongue

In 1938, Vaughan Williams fell in love – and *The Bridal Day* was the result. Another wonderful ‘first’ from Albion.



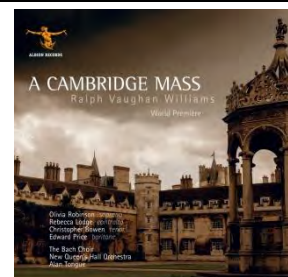
**Bursts of Acclamation:**  
organ music and  
transcriptions



**The Pilgrim's Progress –**  
the BBC radio play from  
1943 with John Gielgud



**Heirs and Rebels –**  
remastered 78s of  
Holst and RVW



**A Cambridge Mass –**  
RVW's doctoral Mass  
from 1899





## *Daventry photo extra*

This year's live recital was given by two young artists from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Baritone Adam Jondelius was accompanied by Ella O'Neill (see report on page 7).

Above and clockwise: Ella and Adam perform Peter Warlock; Adam sings Roger Quilter; Prof. Brian Newbould (who was 'volunteered' as page turner!) congratulates the performers; Ella and Adam acknowledge Paul Corfield Godfrey following their performance of three of his British songs; Ella plays Grieg's Piano Sonata, Op. 7; The performers seem pleased with their morning's work, as were their enthusiastic audience. *Photos: Paul Astell*





# Torbay Musical Weekend



Friday 18th - Monday 21st  
November 2016

at The Palace Hotel Torquay

Enjoy four-star hotel accommodation and a weekend of music and talks on a range of topics at the historic Palace Hotel Torquay.

The hotel is set in beautiful grounds within walking distance of Anstey's Cove and Babbacombe Bay and a short bus ride from the attractive town of Torquay on the English Riviera

## Prices

Friends of Torbay subscription fee £50

Residents' Hotel Tariffs per person inclusive of VAT:

Option A @ £285 from Friday Dinner to Monday Breakfast inclusive

Option B @ £217 from Friday Dinner to Sunday Tea inclusive

Session tickets available from

Kevin Ryland on **01803 406754** (evenings or weekends only)

or email [kevinryland45@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kevinryland45@yahoo.co.uk)

or John Watt on **01803 606489** or **07751 885703**

or email [johnmwatt@me.com](mailto:johnmwatt@me.com)

Day visitors very welcome

For more information please contact John Isaac (Chairman) on 01580 879359 or email [gillianbabbs@waitrose.com](mailto:gillianbabbs@waitrose.com) or visit [www.fot.org.uk](http://www.fot.org.uk)

[www.palacetorquay.com](http://www.palacetorquay.com)



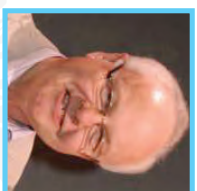
**DR JONATHAN MAW**

From his classical CD collection Dr Jonathan Maw will present a variety of notable live performances from around the world



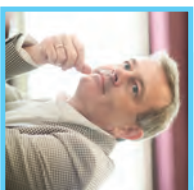
**CHRISTOPHER BEAUMONT & PETER RHODES**

The music of Sir Patrick Moore CBE will be showcased in the Sunday evening presentation. To include premieres, Sir Patrick's life will also be briefly explored, in relation to his compositions. Presented by Christopher Beaumont (Xylophone), with Peter Rhodes (Piano Keyboard)



**MEURIG BOWEN**

Its Artistic Director Meurig Bowen discusses seven successful decades of the Cheltenham Music Festival



**JAMES JOLLY**

Gramophone's Editor in Chief and BBC Radio 3 presenter James Jolly tests the theory of 'Six Degrees of Separation'



**DR LIONEL CARLEY**

How did the lives of Grieg, Delius and Grainger, three seemingly diverse composers, become closely entwined? Dr Lionel Carley will explain



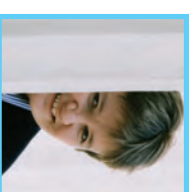
**ANDREW BORKOWSKI**

Saverio Mercadante was a great influence on Verdi. Andrew Borkowski will give an insight into the man and his operas



**THE COMBERT-COLE DUO**

Celebrated musicians Sebastian Combent [cello] and Maggie Cole [fortepiano] will give the Torbay Recital which will include works by Helene Liebmann, Beethoven, Haydn and Schubert



**CAROLINE BROWN**

Founder and Artistic Director of The Hanover Band, Caroline Brown will give an in-depth talk about this distinguished British period instrument orchestra



**DAVID WHERRELL**

'A musical autobiography of an ordinary man' is how David Wherrell describes his presentation



**PATRICK GARVEY**

'An Agent's Viewpoint' will be shared by Patrick Garvey, an ex-professional musician now turned agent

**PLUS** – Two late night presentations on Jacqueline du Pré and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf

Details correct at time of going to print



# NEW BRITISH MUSIC TITLES FROM NAXOS

8.571372



"[A Downland Suite is] felicitously served on this latest anthology from Warwickshire's Orchestra of the Swan under David Curtis..."

I love the thrusting vigour of Curtis's Prelude... and his shapely and infectiously spirited account overall is a most winning one... that tireless champion of British music Raphael Wallfisch plays with full-throated eloquence."

– Gramophone

8.571359

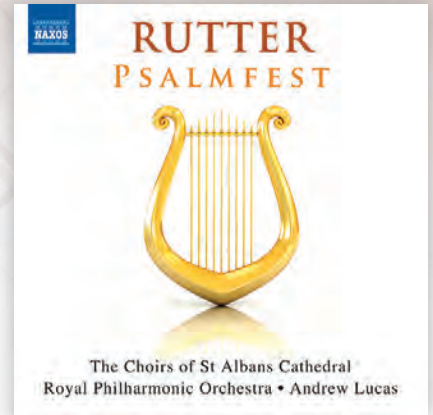


Rarely recorded partsongs by John Ireland and E.J. Moeran performed by The Carice Singers whose recent Warlock disc received critical acclaim: "there's a freshness to the choir's tone that lends itself to the folk-simplicity of

Warlock's texts and settings... These young voices blend and tune beautifully together."

– Gramophone

8.573394



"'O be joyful in the Lord' sets the tone: the bright, chattering orchestration and chirpy syncopations are quintessential Rutter, and the rousingly fresh-toned response of the St Albans singers lifts the music vibrantly..."

[Rutter completists] are fortunate the job has been so professionally executed by the St Albans forces, and that the sound is warmly atmospheric."

– BBC Music Magazine

8.571373



A collection of exquisite cello miniatures by W.H. Squire, Britain's leading cellist from the late 1890s, performed by Squire expert Oliver Gledhill.

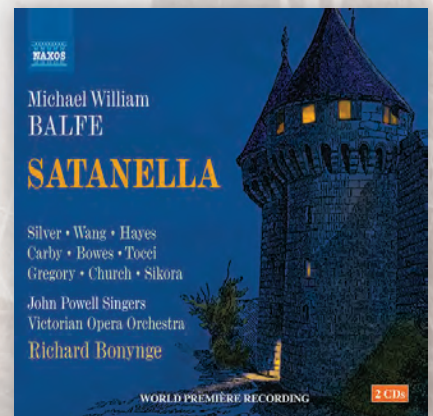
8.571371



"As the BBC Symphony Orchestra's fiercely engaged performances under Martyn Brabbins show, both symphonies are thoroughly worthwhile... there are some echoes of French music, particularly of Roussel in the First Symphony, but much more of that work sounds close to Walton's music of the postwar period."

– The Guardian

8.660378-79



"Bonyng is unsurpassed in this repertoire; he keeps it zipping buoyantly along, effortlessly supporting his singers and clearly relishing every baleful horn call, rippling harp and languishing cello solo. His cast, too, feels near-ideal."

– Gramophone

# How does a composer learn to compose?

## Schubert shows a way

by Professor Brian Newbould

**W**HEN I INTRODUCED Schubert's Seventh and Tenth Symphonies in a talk at the FRMS Weekend in Daventry recently, I showed how the Tenth in particular reflects a keen interest on Schubert's part in the technicalities of composition, and an urge to extend his technique. This raises questions about the education of composers that I did not have time to pursue.

Potted biographies often indicate where a composer studied. Such formal periods of study will at best provide the learner-composer with tools. We tend to forget that it is by focussed listening to the music of their idols, and perhaps scrutiny of their scores, that composers learn much of what is relevant to their needs. Indeed, some composers find their formal study of limited use, or miss out altogether. The evidence suggests that self-education can produce composers of the front rank.

Elgar was a star 'autodidact'. He tells us how, without the benefit of training in Leipzig, Paris, St Petersburg or anywhere else, he stuffed his pockets with scores from his father's music shop, and a supply of cheese, and went off into the country to digest both. The textbooks on harmony and the like that remain in the Birthplace Museum in Worcestershire bear annotations by the composer that indicate not only that he milked them for all he could, but also that he would add thoughts of his own that extended or even contradicted the view of their author. We would not say that his command of harmony is deficient. He will have read harmony from scores on those country picnics, just as others read novels.

As for his marvellous skill and individuality in the use of the orchestra, his regular playing as an orchestral violinist will have helped him, but any composer's core knowledge of orchestration must come from the study of scores, coupled with intense listening. Choosing which instrument should carry a theme is the most elementary of the skills involved. The central craft lies in distributing harmonies across the spectrum of timbres, with care to achieve clarity and the balancing of weights. Where students fail to score well, that is the area most at risk. Elgar mastered that superbly, and developed the art of 'doubling' (mixing different instrumental timbres in a single melodic line) in his own unique way – as the opening pages of *Gerontius* suffice to illustrate.

Schubert learned the art of orchestration by practising it from early on. His daily playing in the Stadtkonvikt orchestra, from the age of 11, of symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and others will have helped. But membership of an orchestra does not confer compositional prowess. The ear – one of the most acute and perceptive in composing history, I'd say – clearly penetrated and absorbed in that environment. It is worth adding that the limited choice



of notes available within the total range of horns and trumpets in Schubert's time was one particular hurdle that exercised his mind – as it does that of anyone who tries to reconstruct his orchestral intentions today (which entails using the instruments of his day).

Schubert had some early tuition from his local church organist, Holzer, who quickly found his pupil knew it all already, as later did Růžička when he tried to teach him figured bass at the Stadtkonvikt. As for his only other teacher, Salieri spent most of his time writing over 60 Italian operas, which left little time for his relatively few and largely forgettable instrumental works. He taught Schubert some counterpoint, without himself being a notable contrapuntist, and spent time on the setting of Italian texts when Schubert would have valued help with setting German. Indeed Salieri tried to dissuade Schubert from setting the 'barbaric' German language at all.

Schubert's real 'absentee mentors' were Mozart, his first love, and to some extent Haydn, while Beethoven's production line, still active almost throughout Schubert's own career, exerted an ambivalent influence, in that sometimes a specific Beethoven model lies behind a new creation while at most times the younger composer's approach is distinctive and remains influence-averse. We know from his school-friend Spaun that Schubert was impressed particularly by Mozart's G minor Symphony (No. 40) and Beethoven's Second. The Mozart left its mark indelibly on Schubert's Fifth, and Beethoven's Second affected directly Schubert's fragmentary 'No. 0' (D. 2b, begun at the age of 14) and displayed in the coda of its first movement a strategy (the 'excursion') which Schubert embraced in the finale of his Third, and thereafter in many works

and specifically in the outer movements of the 'Great' C major.

Schubert's first six symphonies, the product of a fluency that permitted him to compose them directly into orchestral score without preliminary sketches, provided him with a learning platform.

Beethoven's approach to the symphonic medium took a different path. In his twenties he worked towards symphonic status by writing piano and chamber music, including eventually a septet. The Symphony No. 1 arrived when he was about 30. Schubert ventured into symphonic territory much

sooner, producing six actual 'prentice' symphonies in his teens (No. 6 is dated 1817-18). In this light, such gems as the Fifth, or the finales of Nos. 2 and 3, may be seen as bonuses swept up off the workshop floor.

Schubert had a natural fluency as a melodist, which many composers since must have envied. But he was ever looking for new ways of extending his technique – a fact still somewhat contrary to received wisdom, which projects him as a child of nature, a passive vessel whom a beneficent Muse favoured, an instinctive tunesmith whose hand was guided by providence rather than his head. The first quarter of the Deutsch catalogue of his works, up to and into the 200s, is strewn with efforts – sometimes abandoned – at such devices as canon and fugue, including one – a Sanctus, D. 56 – in which two different metres are simultaneously combined. Why did this aspect of his creativity go unsung for so long? 'Unsung' is, by accident, a clue. For a century or more the world gave attention to Schubert's songs and little more, and the technicalities I refer to have little place in the Lieder. They do, though, help to make the late masterpieces such as the D minor String Quartet or the 'Great' C major Symphony or the String Quintet what they are.

I have used the word 'devices'. For some, this term or its occasional substitute 'contrivances' has a negative connotation. Thus it obviously was for Maurice Brown when he wrote of Schubert in the Fifth Edition of the Grove Dictionary in 1953: 'His work is completely devoid of such academic contrivances as augmentation, diminution, inversion and so on – devices which, as one eminent critic has said, belong to the nursery apparatus of composition.' If we sing to ourselves the opening horn theme of the 'Great' C major, we may notice that its last three notes are the same as the preceding three notes, but in rhythmic values exactly twice as long. That is precisely what is meant by augmentation. And all the other devices listed by Brown, and more, are to be found in Schubert's music too.

It's not so much Brown's misinformation that serves Schubert ill, but more the prejudice that lies behind it. 'Devices (or contrivances) are infantile.' Our composer knew better. Why else would he have enquired further and further into the nature and role of devices? Why did he (alone of all 19<sup>th</sup>-century

composers) write a full-orchestral palindrome in his opera *Die Zauberharfe*, or invertible counterpoint in the late quartets, or mirror forms in at least two of his major piano works, or inversion combined with double

augmentation in the finale of his Second Symphony?

The purpose of devices such as these, all of them, is to create progress with coherence: they take material already heard and familiar, but present it in a new and usually succinct way. This is the first thing a composer learns to do. He begins a piece with an idea, then moves forward (progress) with something

that follows connectedly (coherence) – or is a continuation or contrast whose relevance will be cemented later (ultimate coherence). The spirit of technical enquiry – the search for subtler ways of implanting that balance between progress and coherence – stayed with Schubert into his last month.

On the paper he took to sketch the slow movement of his last attempted symphony, in November 1828, were some exercises in canon-by-inversion which, along with the purpose for which they were probably written (a course in counterpoint with Sechter begun on the fourth day of that month), tell us that the composer was ever the avid student of whatever might enrich his creative resource. The enrolment with Sechter was a mere adjunct to a lifelong self-education in composing. •



## YORKSHIRE & NORTHWEST REGIONAL GROUP SPRING MUSIC WEEKEND

MARCH 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 2017  
at the  
Craiglands Hotel, Ilkley

### Guest Presenters

Alan Sanders  
Gordon Drury  
Nigel Simeone

### Member Presenters

Ron Cooper  
Gary Midgley  
Kevin Paynes  
Geoff Bateman

Booking opens mid-October. All FRMS  
affiliate members/friends welcome.

Further details available from secretary Jim  
Bostwick (01484 717865) and Geoff  
Bateman (01274 783285)





# 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 10<sup>th</sup>–Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January: Connaught Hotel, Bournemouth**

The four-star BEST WESTERN PLUS **Connaught Hotel** is located near the West Cliff in central Bournemouth. Built in 1850, it has excellent facilities and an award-winning restaurant.

**‘Sibelius: Master of the Orchestra’ with Terry Barfoot  
and including a concert by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**

We will explore the music of **Jean Sibelius**, one of the greatest composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, featuring his Fifth Symphony and others among his best loved works, while also exploring some less famous but equally rewarding compositions.

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>–Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February: Georgian House Hotel, Haslemere, Surrey**

The elegant and historic **Georgian House Hotel** is situated in Haslemere High Street, and is set in attractive private gardens. With well-equipped modern and period bedrooms, it has its own car park, leisure spa and swimming pool.

**‘Nationalism in Music’, with Terry Barfoot and Peter Rhodes**

Nationalism brought a rich and distinctive character to musical styles, through folksongs and dances, in addition to the subjects chosen for operas and orchestral music. We will explore this rich repertoire, featuring many characteristic national idioms and of course a wide variety of wonderful music. The featured composers will include Smetana, Chopin, Bartók and Wagner.

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](mailto:info@artsinresidence.co.uk)**



## A VIEW FROM YORKSHIRE Jim Bostwick, FRMS Secretary

**T**HIS 'VIEW' IS GOING TO be a bit of a miscellany. With the last one completely devoted to the joys of hi-fi jumble sales, I didn't respond to Debbie Bilham's article in *Bulletin* 163 (page 20) which I thought explored the humble CD, particularly the science and mathematics of it, really well. Of course, there were (and are) limitations to what can be achieved in this format and with ever size-shrinking alternative music carriers, its convenience is now less than it used to be. I am not sure that any current manufacturer produces a Walkman version, and though regular CD players continue to be made, there are fewer brand-names to choose from. But the format persists, with many collectors still preferring it.



I'll also respond to her point about cassette tapes. Given the tape width, the microns thickness and playing length, it is remarkable what was achieved, and it's a tribute to the audio engineers who took the technology well beyond what was originally conceived or even thought possible. Not too far-fetched is the analogy with Edison's phonograph, which was originally intended as a dictation machine but surprised many when music was recorded and reproduced on it. I have one of these machines, as well as a few cylinders, which always delights guests. The big drawback with cassette, however, is the print-through, which is always noticeable, usually at the start with some quiet pre-echo of the music that is to come. When transferring cassettes digitally, this can be edited out to give a clean start and once underway, the ever-present print-through is usually drowned out. Analogue sound from LP or tape can be preferable when reproduced on good equipment. Perhaps our ears became accustomed to it and we like to be reacquainted.

The Daventry Music Weekend sub-committee recently met in Birmingham, along with our President Julian Lloyd Webber, to discuss the 2017 programme. Certainly one, and possibly two, living composers are up for it with other leads being followed up at the time of writing (early July). Since being taken over, this time by the Mercure Group, the Daventry Court Hotel are offering us lower rates than the original quoted prices. The new rates for full board are £60 pppn in a shared room, and £90 pppn for single occupancy. The important dates for your diary are April 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 2017. The free bus service offered this year will be repeated – further details will come via a newsletter before Christmas to all Society secretaries.

The Yorkshire & Northwest Regional Group's Music Weekend in Ilkley will precede the above, taking place at Craiglands Hotel, Ilkley, March 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 2017. If you would like your own mailing for details of either (or both) of these events, just email or drop me a line and I will send out information when it's available.

Before then, of course, the Federation's Annual General Meeting at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth, will be hosted by Bournemouth GS on Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup> 2016. Mailings will go out to secretaries from early September. The live entertainment will be a recital by a quartet of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra players.

And finally, as I write this on the anniversary of the Somme campaign, we remember the many thousands who weren't able to experience any of the 'interesting times' in which we live. ●

*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.*



## FRMS SCOTTISH GROUP

invite you to their

**ANNUAL MUSIC DAY**

**Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Stirling**

For further information contact  
John Maidment on 01241 853017  
or email [johnmaidment@msn.com](mailto:johnmaidment@msn.com)

Booking forms will be available from the  
FRMS website

# MUSIC WEEKEND SEMINARS

**If you are looking for music weekends that are stimulating, friendly and rewarding, held in peaceful, comfortable, congenial surroundings and reasonably priced, then you might like to consider the following.**

Located in beautiful rural settings, weekend music courses begin on a Friday with an excellent meal, followed by the evening session. The course continues throughout the Saturday, time being allowed for music-lovers to get to know each other. The course concludes the next day after a substantial lunch.

Organised by Professor Gerald Seaman, formerly Professor of Musicology at the University of Auckland and subsequently on the staff of Oxford University, the courses are informative and stimulating and fully comprehensible to the non-musician. The venues for the next five courses are the Ocean View Hotel, Bournemouth; Stanton House, an elegant manor house near Oxford, situated in the village of Stanton St John; Ammerdown Park, near Bath; Bishop Woodward House, Ely; and Penhurst Retreat House, Penhurst, East Sussex. The total cost for each weekend, including full board and comfortable accommodation, is £320.00. The courses are as follows:

**4-6 November 2016: *Venice: Home of Music*. Ocean View Hotel, Bournemouth.**

The first in a series entitled 'Great Musical Cities', the course describes the role played by music in the city of Venice. No other city has contributed so much to the evolution of modern music, the concerto being brought about by Giovanni Gabrieli, while Monteverdi may truly be named the 'father' of opera and a pioneer in the creation of the 'new music'. It was Vivaldi who created the modern instrumental concerto, this influencing Bach, while the Venetian opera houses saw the premieres of some of the world's greatest operas. The course is richly illustrated with DVDs and CDs.

**24-26 February 2017: *The Music of Henry Purcell*. Stanton House, near Oxford**

Henry Purcell is generally regarded as one of the greatest English composers, his music including operas, incidental music, magnificent choral works, chamber music, instrumental music and beautiful songs, all of which are unique for their time. The course places Purcell's music in its historical and cultural context, added interest being provided by excellent CDs and DVDs.

**5-7 May 2017: *The Music of the USA*. Ammerdown Park, near Bath.**

This course covers the development of music in the USA from its earliest years, noting the gradual emergence of music education and the first American composers in the nineteenth century. The role of music in the Civil War, the Black and White Minstrel Show, the rise of jazz, the American musical, film music, the emergence of professional music, composers such as Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Red Indian music – these are only some of the topics discussed in this exciting and splendidly illustrated course.

**18-20 August 2017: *Sergey Rachmaninov: a Portrait*. Bishop Woodward House, Ely.**

Rachmaninov may well be considered as one of the most Russian of all composers, since, like that of Tchaikovsky, his music draws its sources from Russian history, folk song and Russian chant. Apart from discussing his personality and his struggle with depression, the course traces the development of Rachmaninov's style, including examination of his symphonies, concertos, operas, sacred choral music together with his wonderful legacy of piano and vocal music. The course is richly illustrated.

**15-17 September 2017: *The French Impressionists and Music*. Penhurst, East Sussex.**

This provides a close insight into French culture and its historical and artistic development, describing the close connections that prevailed between French writers, painters and composers, particularly Claude Debussy. This beautifully illustrated course is both a visual and a musical feast.

**Further details from: Professor Gerald Seaman, 60 Woodstock Close, Oxford OX2 8DD**

**Tel: 01865 515114**

**email: gerald.seaman@outlook.com**

**Comment about the lecturer:** *'A fascinating course led by a master of his subject, able to give an insight into all the subject matter.'* [E.R., Ringwood]

# FRMS 2016 Annual General Meeting

November 12<sup>th</sup>

Elstead Hotel BOURNEMOUTH

Knyveton Road  
Bournemouth BH1 3QP  
Tel: 01202 293071  
email: info@the-elstead.co.uk  
Website: www.the-elstead.co.uk

Hosted by Bournemouth GS



The FRMS AGM takes place once again in a splendid seaside resort and provides an ideal opportunity for a weekend break. This event is open to any number of members from any affiliated Society.

Trains (Bournemouth Central) and coaches both arrive at the Travel Interchange which is about 300 yards from the hotel. It is about half a mile to the pier or the Town centre with buses every few minutes.

1pm: Registration for AGM

2pm: Business meeting

4pm: Presentation by Brian Oakley: The history of the gramophone

6pm: Evening meal (£25 when booked in advance)

8pm: Recital by a quartet from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (£5)

**Important:** when booking, quote the FRMS meeting.

## Hotel charges

Bed & Breakfast: £78 (double); £45 (single)

There are several other hotels nearby, including a Travelodge and a Premier Inn.

## FRMS 2016 Annual General Meeting *Bournemouth* November 12<sup>th</sup>

In the near future it is likely there will be vacancies arising for FRMS committee positions. Whilst some individuals have been approached, the Federation is always keen to hear from anyone who might be willing to put themselves forward for election at the AGM. By the time you are reading this, the FRMS secretary will have sent the necessary nomination forms to each Society.

As an affiliated Society you are entitled to make nominations to the FRMS committee, as follows:

- You may nominate one of your own members as an ordinary committee member.
- You may also nominate one of your own members, or a member of any other affiliated Society, to each of the officer positions on the committee. The officers are chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer.

You may choose to nominate one of your own members both as an officer and as an ordinary member, in which case he or she will be eligible for the latter role if not elected as an officer.

Any responses must be received by the FRMS secretary by October 4<sup>th</sup> so that they can be included on the agenda. If you are interested, please contact your Society secretary in the first instance.



## REVIEWS

### **NOW COMES BEAUTY: Commissions from the English Music Festival. Works by Matthew Curtis, John Pickard, David Matthews, Richard Blackford, Philip Lane, Paul Lewis, Paul Carr, Christopher Wright and David Owen Norris**

Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin), David Owen Norris (piano), Roderick Williams (baritone), BBC Concert Orchestra, Owain Arwel Hughes and Gavin Sutherland (conductors)

EM Records CD037-8 (2 discs: 49:14; 65:51)



Given the range of composers featured and new works commissioned by the English Music Festival in the decade or so since its inception, it seems a very logical idea to record a selection of them for release on CD, which is what we have on this 2-disc set.

Bear in mind that the Festival celebrates a certain sort of Englishness in music, that of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century tonal Romanticism. So even though these are all living contemporary composers, it's fair to say that most of the pieces featured are written to fit in with this general aesthetic of being easy on the ear. For instance, there are a number of rumbustious curtain-raisers, such as Matthew Curtis's *A Festival Overture* which is good fun but sounds very much like a cross between Walton and Eric Coates. Similarly, Richard Blackford's *Spirited* is, well, very spirited in the same sort of Waltonian vein.

This goes hand in hand with a brand of English pastoral nostalgia that is at its strongest in the two Paul Carr works, *Suddenly It's Evening*, which is perilously close to a parody of *A Lark Ascending*, and the piece that gives the set its title, *Now Comes Beauty*. Here, it didn't surprise me to learn that this is a string arrangement of a choral work, for the close harmonies and diatonic clusters are redolent of Eric Whitacre, among others. This sort of music is certainly pleasant and atmospheric, but at its worst, as in Paul Lewis's *Norfolk Suite*, it simply sounds like background music that's pretty much instantly forgettable. It's also no surprise to learn that a lot of these composers work in theatre and television, and this suite is the sort of mood music knocked out all the time in this field. Philip Lane's *Aubade Joyeuse* has a certain Arnold-like swagger and is superbly orchestrated, no surprise really given his expertise in resurrecting film scores from the English golden era of the 40s, 50s and 60s.

There are pieces here with more depth and originality. I liked the *noir*-ish atmosphere of David Matthews's *White Nights*, with its post-Bergian chromaticism and sense of foreboding. Also, John Pickard's settings of Laurence Binyon take us into a world of change and regret without ever becoming cloying or sentimental.

The most substantial piece is David Owen Norris's Piano Concerto, which again is good fun but rather outstays its welcome and is something of a stylistic mish-mash. His detailed liner notes are full of analysis, as if the concerto needs justifying, when to my ears it should have been trimmed down to a shorter single

## CDs reviewed by Tony Haywood

movement using the strongest of the many ideas. It probably went down well live but I don't think bears repeated listening. The music on these two discs is given marvellous advocacy by the artists involved and is superbly recorded. The notes are copious and authoritative so if you want a record of what the Festival does best in this field, here it is.

### **BRAHMS The Three Piano Trios; Double Concerto** Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch; Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie, Daniel Raiskin (conductor)

Nimbus NI 5934 (2 discs: 66:10; 54:42)



I greatly enjoyed the Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch's disc of French works that I reviewed previously. They continued their trawl through the great piano trio repertoire on Nimbus with discs of Mendelssohn, as well as an all-Russian recital. Now that they

turn their attention to the three great Brahms trios, the competition is even hotter than before. There are many notable alternatives, my own current favourites being the Florestan Trio on Hyperion, and Trio Wanderer on Harmonia Mundi, but there's no doubt that this Nimbus set has a lot going for it.

The very early B major trio's glorious opening is given a suitably broad sweep, and pianist Arnon Erez is to be credited for making the most of his important piano part throughout this youthful work. Indeed, there are times when the young Brahms gives us a piano sonata with unison string obbligato, but the melodic ideas are rich enough to easily sustain interest. The C major trio dates from 1882 at the height of Brahms's fame and Nimbus's trio certainly builds up a tremendous head of steam in that first movement development, as well as giving us a highly spirited finale. I think they are even better in the restless energy of the darker C minor trio and there is no want of drama and tension throughout this reading. Overall I think they can easily hold their own against the competition in the chamber works, but these are big works and to have all three means a second disc, so the choice may come down to the coupling.

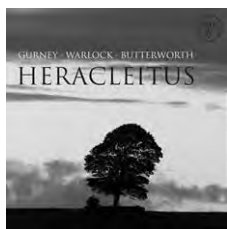
The Florestan Trio has the most obvious fillers in the great clarinet and horn trios, but Nimbus have elected to record violinist Hagai Shaham and cellist Raphael Wallfisch in the Double Concerto and the result is, unfortunately, a mixed bag. It is obviously well played but compared to the best of the competition this performance simply lacks something in energy and character. I find the usually excellent Daniel Raiskin an efficient rather than inspired conductor, and the orchestral playing lacks discipline in places. The soloists' contributions are just a touch bland, and the whole thing has the feeling of routine. Turning to my current modern benchmark from Julia Fischer, Daniel Müller-Schott and the Netherlands Philharmonic under Yakov Kreizberg on Pentatone is to enter a different world; here there is fire, urgency and a greater sense of character in almost every bar. Still, the Nimbus disc is

well recorded and is at mid-price, so if this really is the coupling you want it could be for you.

### **HERACLEITUS Works by Gurney, Warlock, Butterworth**

Michael Dussek (piano), Charles Daniels (tenor), Bridge Quartet

EM Records EMR CD036 (75:09)

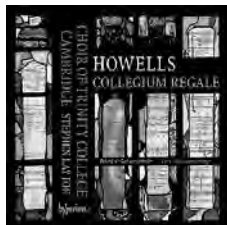


Here are three composers who are meat and drink to EM Records, but true to their philosophy of mixing the familiar with the unknown, there are no less than four world premiere recordings featured on this disc. Ivor Gurney is represented in familiar guise by

his song cycle *Ludlow and Teme* for tenor, piano and string quartet, a work directly inspired by Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge* for the same forces and with which it's often coupled on disc. Here, instead, we get a sombre *adagio* for string quartet that, like many works of this period, is suffused with post-war melancholy. Similarly, a selection of George Butterworth's most famous songs, including the ubiquitous 'Bredon Hill', are set in relief with a Suite for String Quartet from 1910. It's not a terribly original piece and puts into sharp focus where Butterworth's strengths really lay, but like the Gurney is worth hearing for fans of the composers. Of more interest and originality are the two short Warlock settings *Heracleitus* (1917) with its chromatic, unresolved harmonies and the jaunty *Sweet Content* (1919) both resurrected from sketches. I find Charles Daniels's tenor a little light in places, which suits some songs more than others, but he's rather strained in the upper register and doesn't display enough shade or variety in *Ludlow and Teme*, especially compared to rivals such as Andrew Kennedy on *Signum*, who has a similar timbre but brings more passion and dramatic flair to these glorious songs. There is very good support by Michael Dussek and the Bridge Quartet, admirable recording quality and the usual informative notes.

### **HERBERT HOWELLS Collegium Regale and other choral works; Rhapsody in D flat for Organ**

Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge; Eleanor Kornas and Owain Park (organ), Stephen Layton (conductor)  
Hyperion CDA68105 (61:14)



Having had the good fortune to sing part of Howells's great *Collegium Regale* service at Ely Cathedral many moons ago, it has always stayed lodged in my memory. This may produce a bias on my part, but I've always considered it one of Howells's

finest achievements and it's by far his most popular work on record. The present Hyperion disc is one of very few that gives us the complete service. Indeed, I can only think of one other, the classic Argo recording performed by the choir the work was written for, King's College, Cambridge under Stephen Cleobury. That of course uses an all-male choir, which is the most obvious

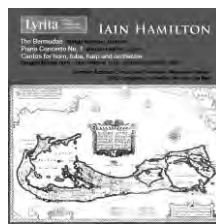
difference to Stephen Layton's mixed voices as recorded here. I warmed immediately to the full, sonorous tone that Layton gets from his singers, and he maintains a slightly swifter tempo than Cleobury that I feel serves the music, particularly the opening 'Jubilate', which is surely one of Howells's most inspired melodies. The famous 'Mag' and 'Nunc' settings are staple diets of Anglican services, and rightly so, as they contain the best of this composer's unique brand of English modality mixed with a tinge of continental exoticism in the harmonies. This is where the inclusion of female voices really helps to give timbral variety.

The extras are well worth having, especially the anthem 'I Love all Beauteous Things', and the two organ scholars Eleanor Kornas and Owain Park acquit themselves admirably in what are some very tricky accompaniments. The engineers beautifully catch the acoustic of the recording venue, Coventry Cathedral, and though the playing time is not over-generous, I doubt anyone will complain with music-making of this quality.

### **IAIN HAMILTON The Bermudas; Piano Concerto No.1; Cantos for horn, tuba, harp and orchestra**

Margaret Kitchin (piano), Scottish National Orchestra, Alexander Gibson (conductor); BBC Symphony Orchestra, Norman Del Mar (conductor);

Lyrta REAM 1126 Mono (65:46)



This is the latest in another batch of invaluable recordings made by Lyrta founder Richard Itter on his own domestic high-quality audio equipment, mainly of BBC broadcasts and transmissions. It's a huge archive and is being lovingly restored and issued on CD in

conjunction with the BBC. This particular disc is devoted to Scottish composer Iain Hamilton (1922-2000) who spanned an interesting period in British music and embraced a number of stylistic trends. The Piano Concerto from 1959/60 is a 12-tone work and reflects Hamilton's interest in the Schoenberg 'method', rather like his contemporaries Fricker and Searle. As perhaps is to be expected, it's a thorny, rather severe but interesting work, especially in such a confident performance as this from Margaret Kitchin and Hamilton's long-time champion Alexander Gibson, recorded in 1961 at the work's premiere in Glasgow. Hamilton went on to revise the piece for larger orchestra and tighten some of the more disparate elements of the score, and it would be good to be able to hear and compare this later version. The most substantial piece on the disc is the cantata *The Bermudas*, a half-hour setting of Sylvester Jordain and Andrew Marvell for baritone, chorus and orchestra from 1956, so just before his fully serial period. The mix of traditional tonality and the spiky 'newer' harmonies is a fascinating one. Again, the performances are excellent from baritone Ronald Morrison and the Scottish National forces under Gibson. This recording is still mono but from 1973 and noticeably better. Finally, we have the four short *Cantos* for the strange and unique combination of horn, tuba,

harp and orchestra from 1964. This is a delicate Webernesque score that teases the ear with its sonorities, and it's testament to the Proms audience that night in 1965 that they listen so attentively. The superb contribution of the soloists Douglas Moore (horn), John Fletcher (tuba) and Sidonie Goossens (harp) with the BBC Symphony under a sympathetic Norman Del Mar must have helped proceedings, and this whole disc is really a fascinating document of a neglected musical figure. The mono recordings are quite acceptable, with generally low audience noise, and the booklet notes by Paul Conway are as authoritative and detailed as one could wish for.

**MOZART: Violin Sonatas**

Alina Ibragimova (violin), Cédric Tiberghien (piano)  
Hyperion CDA 68091 (2 discs 103:54)



The excellent partnership of Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien has already produced wonderful results on disc. Their Beethoven Sonata cycle from Wigmore Hall's own label was very warmly received, and Hyperion snapped them up to

make a disc of French music that included one of the best Ravel Violin Sonatas on disc. They now follow up with the first instalment of a projected Mozart complete cycle that includes some real juvenile rarities. Those very early pieces, especially K. 10 and K. 14, come from a mere 7-year-old, and though they are sometimes

thought of as piano sonatas with a simple violin line, there are flashes of the mature Mozart to come, especially in the use of the melodic material and the way it's developed. In fact, the first thing that struck me about the performances here was the way in which Tiberghien manages to inject real flair and variety into the many *alberti* basses and simple figurations, as for instance the start of the B flat major K. 10. There is a sparkle to Ibragimova's violin lines and a lovely buoyancy and lift that invests what could be seen as trite juvenilia with real feeling. The more mature sonatas begin to show Mozart thinking of the two instruments much more in partnership. I love the slow movement of K. 379, where the richer harmonies and longer singing violin lines seem to be paving the way for the young Beethoven, and here Ibragimova and Tiberghien really do shine. Of course, as with all this repertoire, there is fierce competition, not so much in the early works but certainly sonatas from K. 301 onwards. In fact, I had just been listening to a new recording of K. 379 from violinist Christian Tetzlaff and his regular partner Lars Vogt on the Ondine label that is in many ways just as impressive, if a little more hard-driven. The comparison is fascinating, and I think the Hyperion disc ultimately will not disappoint anyone, given the level of flair and innate musicianship on display. A lovely recording ambience and the two-for-one price seal a very desirable release.

*Tony Haywood (Huddersfield RMS) is a retired University tutor and runs his own piano tuning and maintenance business.*

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT Allan Child

**O**N THE FRONT COVER of each issue of *Bulletin* you will find the FRMS logo; perhaps it has become so familiar that you are aware of it without really noticing it. But if you look carefully you will see, below the name and the stylised initials, the words 'Founded 1936', which means that this year, 2016, the Federation is 80 years young!

Celebration of such significant anniversaries has become fairly common, but it is all too easy to then wallow in nostalgia rather than to think of the role of recorded music societies today or even in the future. What does a recorded music society have to offer members and potential members that is distinctive? To answer that question in brief is well-nigh impossible, given the wide range of interests among members of societies, but perhaps I can highlight one way in which a society – or presenters – can enhance the listening experience.

In recent issues of *Bulletin*, Paul Corfield Godfrey has highlighted the regrettable tendency of some record companies to provide little if anything by way of booklet notes or, in the case of vocal music, the words. There is the potential here for a presenter to make up for the lack of information – depending, of course, on the time and resources available to that presenter, and on the society's resources. No-one should expect every presenter to give a comprehensive musical analysis of the works to be heard, for example, nor does everyone have access to detailed composer biographies, whether online or at the local library. But I would suggest that one should always aim to provide, if possible, the words of vocal music – subject to copyright constraints as well as the availability of facilities either to print copies or to project the words on a screen. Anything which will add to appreciation of the music is to be welcomed.

Having said all that, this is not the place to go into the technicalities of programme presentation. The FRMS has a leaflet available entitled *Presenting a Programme* which even experienced presenters may find useful for reference. Published in 2008, it may need some updating to take account of recent developments in technology, but in its approach to the subject it is still an excellent guide. It's downloadable from [thefrms.co.uk](http://thefrms.co.uk) (under 'Resources'), but if you would like a copy by post or email, please contact Jim Bostwick, the Federation secretary. ●



# Technical Review

by FRMS Technical Officer Philip Ashton, based on his forum at the 2016 Daventry Music Weekend

**T**HIS LAST YEAR has seen a major resurgence in vinyl pressings. Over one million have been made and they range in price from around £15 pounds upwards. In the main they are hand-pressed and the old Sony pressing plant in Holland is once again in use. Titles are mainly jazz, easy listening, country and western, and pop. Sadly, insufficient market demand means that classical titles are rather thin on the ground, although Linn have started to produce vinyl pressings. To accompany all this there are various manufacturers producing turntables once again at prices ranging from around £100 to over £3000. Details can be found in magazines such as *WHAT HI\*FI?*.

You may have read my answer in the last *Bulletin* (Issue 164, letters and emails) to Debbie Bilham's article in issue 163 (The Great 30-Year Rock and Roll Swindle, or why it's time to pension off the compact disc, page 20). My visit last September to Lahti for the 150<sup>th</sup> Sibelius Festival allowed me to have a few words with the owner of the BIS record label. I asked him if he agreed with the opinion held by others that the demise of CDs was imminent. He disagreed and stated that sales of classical CDs would never fade away. Indeed, he said that the SACD in hybrid form was the way forward. Not everyone has a computer, so downloading of material for the user to make copies on CD, SACD, DVD and Blu-ray would never be the complete answer. Also, the serious collector needs to have a product with accompanying notes.

On the equipment front, we now have various devices for one's listening pleasure. Streamers can download from the internet many thousands of radio stations straight into your audio/theatre system. The audio quality can be either very good or extremely bad, depending on the bit rate transmitted. I have listened to concerts from New Zealand, Australian and Swiss radio stations which range in quality from fair to good. I do not use an expensive streamer, but I do use a Roberts portable radio that can connect to the internet via my router. I have a 150 Mbps internet connection via Virgin Media with no additional cost on my bill.

Music in every room! Sonos were arguably the first company to bring this to market, but now many manufacturers are into this branch of music reproduction. Turntable manufacturers have been quick to join, some with Bluetooth connections, so that owners can rip their old LPs onto CDs at whatever quality they like.

Sales of RIAA preamps, record care accessories and styli are on the increase. During 2015 Pro-Ject turntables, which are not discounted online, were the most popular. But let's not forget Rega, Technics, Sony, Lenco, Linn and Audio Technica, to name just a few. These companies' products can now be seen in some high street shops as well as the usual hi-fi dealers. It has become obvious that there are two camps: the people who actually buy vinyl to listen to because they think it sounds better, and those who buy it because it is fashionable. Indeed, I recently saw on TV that youngsters are buying LPs just for the artwork. Some of them do not even have a turntable!

For a long while I have wanted to download audio and video content from classicLive.com (see *Bulletin* 159, page 16). For months I searched for a suitable chip or circuit to make up in a small portable box, but to no avail. Now there are a number of HDMI to SCART adapters available for around £15.00 from Amazon and eBay. My DVD recorder only has SCART input. I just connect this device to my computer HDMI output via an HDMI cable; at the other end I connect a SCART cable to the Recorder. Likewise I now use a Roku 2 device to enable me to receive various streaming output that my TV does not have.

DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) v FM is still a talking point. In Europe I discovered there are a lot fewer DAB stations available to listen to. Indeed, in some countries there are none as yet. Most people seem to agree that FM gives better audio quality, but if the bit rate is high enough DAB can sound almost as good. Many of us may not be able to tell the difference due to the natural aging process of our hearing. In any case, I think the push towards DAB for us all is a political one. The government perhaps wants the band space that FM occupies to be sold off to various other future services. [Editor's note: It's fair to say there was a certain amount of disagreement on this topic at the forum! What do you think? Please let us know.]

Finally, I'll mention a revolutionary new audio technology which could be a game-changer in how we listen to music in the future. It's called MQA (Master Quality Authenticated) which aims to replicate in our listening environment what would be heard in a recording studio. It's been invented by Bob Stuart (of Meridian fame) and the industry now has the knowledge and tools to go back to artists' archives and get the maximum out of their recordings. MQA is about de-blurring and removing digital artefacts to achieve a clear sound and provenance. The artists and producers spend a lot of time getting the sound right, yet many people hear it via mp3 or through ceiling speakers in shops, or in the pub, and the average experience of a song is awful. Of course, an MQA decoder and other hardware are required and HTC have incorporated it into their upcoming range of smartphones; this is just for starters. On conventional equipment, MQA is said to sound better and it will be available across selected streaming and download services. Scandinavian music label 2L is the first to offer consumers the chance to buy their music in MQA. The library of MQA music is set to increase this year with 7digital, Onkyo Music, HQM (Japan) and Tidal all aiming to make it available. For more information, take a look at [www.mqa.co.uk](http://www.mqa.co.uk) and [www.2l.no](http://www.2l.no). Here you will find out a lot more of what will be a revolution in recorded and replayed sound. ●



# Herbert Howells – a short appreciation

by John Futter (Olton RMS)

**H**ERBERT NORMAN HOWELLS (1892-1983) was an articled pupil of Herbert Brewer in Gloucester Cathedral in 1905. In 1912 he won an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Stanford and Wood. Howells himself taught at the college from 1920 and became almost as well known in this role as he did as a composer. He succeeded Holst in 1936 as Director of Music at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, retaining the post until 1962. Though initially composing mainly instrumental music, he is today best known for his very significant contribution of choral music for the Anglican church. Today barely a day passes when one of these works is not sung by a cathedral choir. One relatively early choral work is the Requiem of 1933-36. Perhaps his best-known work is the *Hymnus Paradisi* of 1936-38<sup>1</sup> composed as a response to the early death of his only son in 1935. This work was kept private and it was only when the then organist of Gloucester cathedral, Herbert Sumsion, showed it to Vaughan Williams that the latter insisted that it must be performed at the Three Choirs Festival, Gloucester, in 1950. Other notable choral works include the motet on the death of President Kennedy: 'Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing'<sup>2</sup>.

Like Britten, Howells was a composer who responded to specific people, places and occasions. His numerous settings of the Morning and Evening

Canticles bear witness to this. The set written in November 1944 for the choir of King's College, Cambridge, evokes the unique resonance of the Chapel. A more recent work is the *Stabat Mater* of 1959 which was revised in 1965<sup>3</sup>. Also very rewarding are the two sets of Psalm-Preludes and three organ rhapsodies (Op. 17 Nos 1-3)<sup>4</sup>. Amongst the non-vocal works, one should mention the two piano concertos, the Concerto for Strings<sup>5</sup>, and some of the chamber music: three violin sonatas, the Rhapsodic Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, the Prelude for Harp, and the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano<sup>6</sup>.

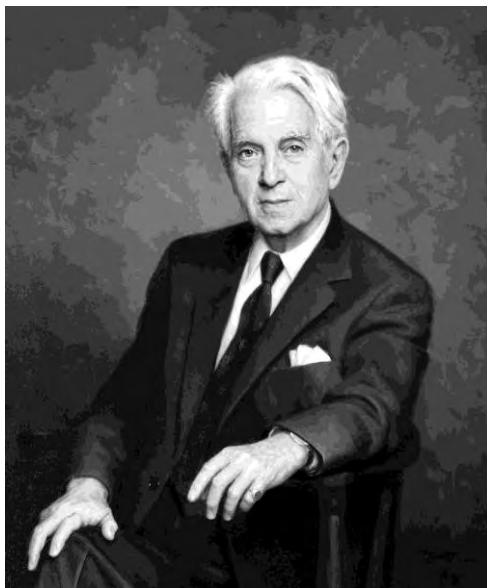
All in all, Howells' compositions are impressive and deserve to be far better known, but his contribution to church music continues to overshadow the other works. This is, I feel, unfortunate as there are many riches waiting to be explored.

The standard biography is by Paul Spicer (a pupil): *Herbert*

*Howells Border Lines*, 1998; ISBN 1-85411-232-5

Discography of named works:

- <sup>1</sup> Hyperion CDA66488
- <sup>2</sup> Naxos 8.554659
- <sup>3</sup> Naxos 8.573176
- <sup>4</sup> Hyperion Dyad (2 CDs) CDD22038
- <sup>5</sup> Hyperion Helios CDH55205
- <sup>6</sup> Naxos 8.557188



Portrait of Herbert Howells by Leonard Boden (1974). Photo credit: Royal College of Music, London

## Notable Anniversaries for 2018

50..100..150..200..250..

IN THE NEXT ISSUE of *Bulletin* we will be looking at notable anniversaries for 2018. Although it is important to be aware of the huge range of music that has been written over many centuries, it is the case that much of it has not been recorded and is therefore unavailable to presenters when they are planning their programmes.

In issue 164 there were several contributions in answer to a previous request – albeit all from members of Yorkshire Societies! – but do you have a favourite piece that was composed or first performed in 1768 or 1818 or any of the other 'significant' anniversary years? Would you like to write a paragraph telling us about the piece, what you like about it, why it's worth listening to, what recording(s) you would recommend, and perhaps suggesting how it might form part of a programme and some other compositions that might 'fit' with it?

If necessary, please refer to those submissions on page 29 of issue 164 and send your ideas to the editor by deadline day (December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016). ●

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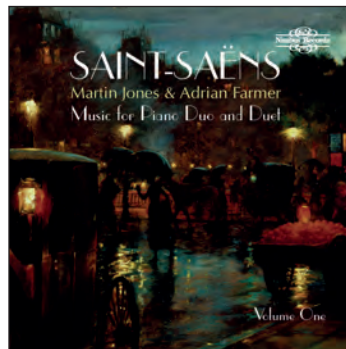
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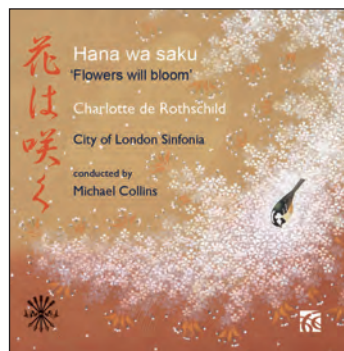
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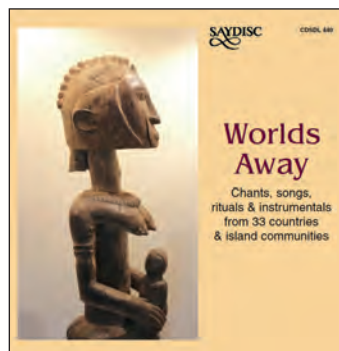
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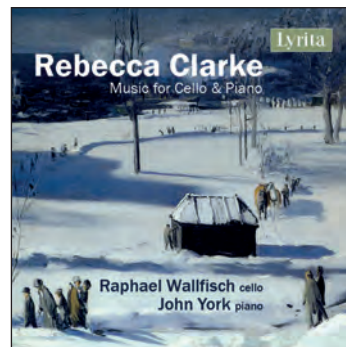
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