

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	
....not in our stars but in ourselves	Page 2
OUT & ABOUT	
Federation	
A very musical AGM in Bromsgrove	3
Regional Groups	
Central Region's Music Day	4
West Middlesex goes Mediterranean	5
Music to our ears at Torbay	6
Societies	
From ARP hut to home comfort in Ickenham	7
Rochdale celebrates its 75 th anniversary	7
Reflections from SRMC in Stockport	8
New Dean Music Club	8
FEATURE	
Calling all jazz fans! <i>A few facts about the saxophone</i>	10
REVIEWS	
Releases from Hyperion	11
Robert Simpson – The complete symphonies	
Burgon Choral Music (Wells Cathedral Choir /Matthew Owens)	
All in the April Evening (Laudibus/Michael Brewer)	
The Essential Sibelius from BIS	12
Unusual Releases from Naxos	12
Handel's Messiah (Choir of New College Oxford, Academy of Ancient Music/Edward Higginbottom)	
Elgar's Sea Pictures & The Music Makers	
A Young Person's Guide to Elgar	12
NEWS & VIEWS	
From the Chairman's desk	13
What's in the Secretary's postbag?	14
Towards Regeneration	15
Letters to the Editor	17
Reflections & Recollections <i>by Roderick Shaw</i>	19
REGULAR FEATURES	
FRMS Presenters Panel	22
Anniversaries for 2008	27

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Editorial copy

If your copy is in manuscript form or on CD or floppy disc, send it direct to the Editor at the above address.

If your copy is available as an email attachment send it to:
tpook@globalnet.co.uk

Editorial deadlines

Spring issue: 31st December

Autumn issue: 30th June

Advertising

Advertisements are available from £35. For information on rates and discounts contact the Editor or the Advertising Manager:

tpook@globalnet.co.uk
(full address inside back cover)

Circulation

If you would like your own copy of *Bulletin* sent direct, contact the Distribution Manager

Arch112@aol.com
(full address inside back cover)

Copies are distributed to all affiliated societies and to the Federation's Associates, with a total estimated membership in the region of 10,000.

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Printed by: The Max
Kettlestring Lane
Clifton Moor
York YO30 4XF

ISSN 0928150

Front cover: Harps demonstrated at Torbay MW 2006: Welsh triple harp, Camac concert harp, neo Irish harp

Please note that the address of the FRMS website is www.thefrms.co.uk

“.....not in our stars, but in ourselves.”



Those words spoken by Cassius to Brutus in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* seem to me to be an elegant and poetic way of saying that the fault for our failures and

mishaps lies firmly with ourselves. Instead of ferreting around for excuses and a whipping boy when things are not going exactly our way, we should look on our own doorstep.

In the case of the apparent decline in some RMS groups, it might just be that apathy has crept in and that it requires only a little effort or change of attitude to gee things up a bit and get a new lease of life. John Maidment's report on regeneration (p.15) might give some ideas. The analysis of Sarah Polfreman's research project on declining membership has yet to be published but, in her letter on p.18 she hints that the mindset of gloom and doom is unjustified. Her findings should make interesting reading and will be published in the *Bulletin* as soon as we have them.

SOS to all photographers

I am no photographer, guaranteed to get a thumbprint across the print, jerk the camera as I push the button or ruin a picture in any other way imaginable. I can outwit even the latest technology when it comes to foolproof mechanisms! Thus I have no useful store of photographs to rely on as backup or fillers for the magazine.

Illustrations and photographs help enhance the written word and all pictorial donations are gratefully received, either as a support to items sent as news, as a record of a moment captured in a social event or simply as a subject of interest in itself. This month I am particularly grateful to Larry Napthine (Surbiton RMS and technical organiser at TMW) for his photograph used on the front cover, Alan Child (Derby RMS and FRMS Committee) for his picture of the memorial to Adolphe Sax on p10 which prompted me to write the article, and to George Steele (Rochdale RMS and FRMS Committee) for the photograph of members of his society.

With the new digital cameras it is remarkably easy to reproduce photographs and I shudder at the

memory of colour separations, litho negatives, positives and the like! So, if you have a photograph of anything that you think will interest other readers please send it to me. If I can't use it immediately, it will most certainly help to build up a picture library to provide material for future issues.

Advertising

It is very gratifying that two of the prominent recording companies with whom we had good commercial relations in the past have renewed that association to take space to promote their products in the *Bulletin*. We have always maintained our contact with Hyperion, and members will recall Donald Rooksby's presentation at Daventry last year of some of Hyperion's outstanding award winning CDs.

Wyastone Estate Ltd., under its previous name of Nimbus, is another old friend and on Saturday 14th April, at this year's music weekend at Daventry, Wyastone's Music Director, Adrian Farmer, will talk about Nimbus and its history and also play some of its notable recordings. These will be available at the company's stall at Daventry. I remember in particular the splendid Grand Piano series devoted to the reproducing piano developed by the Aeolian Company (see my article in *Bulletin* no. 125 p.26). Aeolian collapsed in 1930, leaving many hitherto unpublished piano rolls that were rediscovered some 60 years later.

By means of a unique robot piano that recorded directly from the piano rolls, Nimbus captured the performances of many legendary pianists, such as Paderewski, Bauer, Grainger and others, sometimes playing their own compositions and, in some cases being heard for the first time by a future generation!

While on the subject of advertising, did you know that for a nominal sum you could place an 'exchange and mart' notice in the *Bulletin*? So if there is anything you either need, want to get rid of or exchange, just ask for details. As well as being a useful service to our readers, it also gives the FRMS another link with members of its affiliates.

PLEASE NOTE! FRMS Secretary, Tony Baines has moved, Tony Pook has a new e-mail address and there are two new members on the committee. Details of these changes are on the inside back cover.

OUT & ABOUT

A very musical AGM in Bromsgrove

The following is an overview of the day, as societies are sent a verbatim report later

Welcome

The overall impression of this year's AGM was more of a social music event centred around the business matters. In fact, 'AGM' could well have been the abbreviation for 'All Good Music'! It was a most enjoyable occasion for the 52 delegates and guests, and satisfying on all accounts. Classical Music Society Kidderminster hosted the 70th anniversary AGM, held at Bromsgrove Golf Centre on Saturday 28th October. The meeting began at 2 pm when Von Stewart, Vice-Chairman of CMS Kidderminster, welcomed representatives of 42 societies and reminded us that Kidderminster previously hosted the AGM in 1989, the year when the NFGS became the FRMS.

She gave a short background to the former centre of the carpet-making industry and an account of its lively musical activities. As well as the recorded music society there are choral societies, two opera groups, a children's choir, and an orchestra.

Chairman's review

After the preliminary business, **John Davies**, FRMS Chairman, thanked the Committee members for their support and work in their individual areas of responsibility during the past year and those involved in organising Regional events. He gave particular thanks to Graham Kiteley and Tony Baines for their splendid organisation of the Federation's Music Weekend at Daventry.

As all Officers were willing to stand for re-election, and there were no additional nominations, they were re-appointed en bloc. Graham Ladley and Bob Astill had resigned from the FRMS Committee but nominations had been received for Ron Bleach (Bristol RMS and a former FRMS committee member) and George Steele (Rochdale RMS). The other four members of the existing Committee were willing to stand again and the meeting voted unanimously for all six to be elected en bloc.

This milestone year had been a successful one and, although three small societies had closed, two new groups had affiliated to the Federation.

After a brief look at the history of the Federation John reminded us that two of its original purposes are still very much in use, namely, to give advice about forming new societies and to provide help to those that are struggling. A prime example of the success of the latter is the rejuvenation of Stockport RMS from an ailing society to a thriving group with nine enthusiastic new members.

Sarah Polfreman project

At the Chairman's invitation, Sarah Polfreman gave a progress report on her survey of affiliates and thanked the FRMS and the 65% of societies that responded to her questionnaire for their co-operation.

Her immediate and tentative conclusion is that doom and gloom (about the future) is not totally justified. The results are under assessment and a full report will be issued in due course.

Treasurer's report

Graham Kiteley, Treasurer, read his previously circulated report and audited account statement and balance sheet. The surplus on total income was less than last year, largely because of his refunds to Societies' affiliation fees.

Advertising in the *Bulletin* was following the same downward trend as in the general press, accounting for a reduced surplus income but the situation is closely monitored. The results of the Music Weekend fluctuate but its surpluses are ring-fenced to provide a financial cushion as a protection against any adverse results.

The Treasurer judged the Federation's finances to be sound and they will be managed carefully to maintain this situation. The meeting approved and accepted his report unanimously.

Secretary's report

Tony Baines read a Regeneration Report from John Maidment (*details of this are on p.15*) before his own report on day to day administration. He received many and varied enquiries for advice on: revitalising or starting societies, exchange of speakers, making contacts for newcomers to an area, etc. In response to an increasing number of enquiries about copyright legislation Graham Kiteley is preparing a fact sheet about PRS and PPL.

Motions for approval

Two motions were proposed for consideration:

Motion 1. Amendments to clauses 3 and 27 of the Constitution. It was proposed to add the following new clause, 3.6, to Clause 3. Affiliation: *At the Federation's discretion, individuals who are not members of an affiliated or associated society may become Friends of the FRMS on payment of an annual subscription. Friends of the FRMS shall be entitled to receive notice of and attend events organised by the Federation and to other benefits as may from time to time be decided by the Federation. They shall not be entitled to vote as individuals at general meetings although, at the Chairman's discretion and subject to Rule 18, they may be allowed to act as proxies. Friends of the FRMS shall not be eligible for nomination as Officers or Committee members.*

Clause 27. Circulation of Rules. Add the sentence: *Friends of the FRMS as defined in Clause 3.6 may be provided with a copy of these rules on application to the Secretary.* After a short discussion, the meeting unanimously approved the motion. (*concluded on p.9*)

REGIONAL & SOCIETY NEWS

Central Region Music day

At Olton, Solihull on Saturday 11 November, 2006

The day began with the observance of a minute's silence for Armistice Day and also as a mark of respect for Gordon Wainwright who was a prime mover in the formation of the newly constituted Central Region of which he was Chairman from its inception in 2003. The day's programme was devoted to Mozart and was, in a way, back to front, in that it began with Mozart's last year; but was none the worse for that.

1791 – A Fateful Year

Presented by George Wallis, of the local Olton Society and of Solihull Recorded Music Circle.

Assuming the persona of Josef Deiner, a servant in the Mozart household, George skilfully wove actual events and popular beliefs into a personal reminiscence of the period from autumn 1790 to Mozart's death in December 1791, illustrating these with musical examples. Much of the music came from the last year of Mozart's life but we should not forget that works from earlier years were also performed, by Mozart or by others, during that time. Indeed, the first music we heard was from the D minor piano concerto, K466, of 1785, which featured in a concert Mozart gave in the autumn of 1790.

The *Requiem* (of which more anon) and *Die Zauberflöte* might be remembered as the outstanding work of Mozart's last year, although there were other great works of this period. They include another opera (*La Clemenza di Tito*, K621), the clarinet concerto, the motet *Ave Verum Corpus* and the B flat piano concerto, K595. Interestingly, the first performance of the latter – with Mozart as the soloist – was conducted by Salieri!

When Salieri's name was mentioned in Deiner's reminiscences, it was not linked to the suspicion that Mozart was poisoned. We heard though, of speculation about the position of Mozart's pupil and assistant, Süßmayr, in the household and, of course, about Mozart's premonition that he was writing his own requiem.

This premonition was said to have overshadowed Mozart throughout his last months, so the *Requiem* played a major part in this programme. From different recordings, we heard the *Rex Tremendae*, the *Introitus* and finally the *Lacrimosa*, of which the manuscript was on Mozart's bed when he died.

George, in his role of Josef Deiner, vouched for his story with the words: 'I was there'. We were left to judge for ourselves the accuracy of his information from a footnote to the programme. There really was a Josef Deiner; he was a friend of Mozart, playing billiards with him and occasionally delivering meals from the restaurant where he worked, but not part of the household.

Thanks to George for a programme that was not only interesting and entertaining, but set us thinking about what we know, or think we know, about Mozart.

Mozart-some Musical Snapshots

Presented by Allan Child of Derby-RMS and dedicated to the memory of Gordon Wainwright.

Allan's first snapshot was *Symphony No 4 in D K19*. Its three movements, allegro, andante and presto, written by the then nine year old last for a mere seven minutes but do reveal an embryo genius.

Two further snapshots confirmed this view: the *Divertimento in F, K 138*, written in 1772 when he was sixteen and the *Piano Sonata in A Minor, K 310* composed at the age of twenty-one. The Piano Sonata was composed on the death of his mother, Anna Maria, and some think that this composition, one of only two sonatas that are in a minor key, was a direct response to that event. Anna Maria's death marked a turning point in his life and from this time he became more independent of Leopold, his father.

Baron von Swieten introduced Mozart to the music of Bach. Mozart was influenced by the fugal form and decided to compose some of his own. He sent one to Nannerl, the *Fantasia and Fugue in C major K 394* and this was another of our snapshots.

The Mass in C minor K 427 was composed with his wife Constanze in mind as soprano soloist and the next snapshot was *Et incarnatus est* from this work. It was first performed in St Peter's Abbey, Salzburg in October 1783 and was a triumph for both Wolfgang and Constanze. But they returned to Vienna to learn the devastating news of their baby son's death.

In 1786 *Le Nozze de Figaro, K 492*, took Vienna, Prague and a host of other cities by storm. In a 1787 letter to a friend Mozart wrote '...here they talk about nothing but Figaro'. And so our next snapshot was the *Overture from Figaro* in Vent's arrangement for wind band. Allan challenged the view that Mozart was up to his ears in debt when he

OUT & ABOUT

died and was buried in a pauper's grave. Constanze had taken over the finances in 1791 and things were improving. In any case, Baron von Swieten had taken it upon himself to make the funeral arrangements and thus Mozart was buried in a normal and not a communal grave. No headstone was provided immediately but what seems inexplicable is the fact that Constanze did not even visit the cemetery until 1808!

Our final snapshot was the *Introit and Kyrie from Requiem K 626* Mozart's last work, unfinished but completed by Süssmeyer.

Allan is to be complimented on his well-chosen snapshots and in the knowledgeable, direct and clear way in which he presented his programme.

Mozart and the Italians

Presented by Mick Birchall, Central Region Secretary; Chairman of Hinckley Gramophone Society; member of the Dante Alighieri Society

As well as preparing an excellent lunch and being principal organiser of the event, Mick Birchall demonstrated what motivates him to work so hard by sharing with us his love of music.

One of the dangers of a day of programmes devoted to a popular composer is that the last presenter risks over-exposing his audience to the familiar. However, Mick has a way of finding the unusual in the familiar and the title of his presentation indicated where his enthusiasms would take us.

The years between 1770-73 saw the Mozarts, father and son, make three visits to Italy, where they were chasing commissions and arranging for the 14-year-old Wolfgang to become acquainted with Italian styles. It was what he heard, the musicians and people he met that were the inspiration for the stories and music we listened to.

Mick's opening example of Italian influence on Mozart was the first movement of *Divertimento K113*, written at the age of 15 when the composer visited Milan in 1771. This set the scene for visits to Bologna, where Mozart met the famous music teacher Padre Giovanni Battista Martini and led to us hearing *Martini's Organ Sonata No.6* and the boy-composer's test piece for admission to the prestigious Academia Filarmonica, *Quaerite primum regnum Dei, K86/73v*.

Arriving in Rome we were diverted by the legend of Allegri's setting of Psalm 51, the *Miserere mei*. To copy this was an excommunicable offence but Mozart is reputed to have written down the work after hearing it performed. Knowing Mozart, it is

neither surprising that he reproduced the work, nor that he risked the consequences. Visits to Verona, Naples and Milan followed with Mick's captivating anecdotes and musical examples, ending with our presenter's view of how Mozart's *Barber of Seville* appeared to have been written well after its sequel, *The Marriage of Figaro*. Mick's stories and musical examples of Mozart's three visits to Italy ended appropriately with extracts from Act III of the opera that is as near perfection as can be.

Variety of music and splendid hospitality

The audience had experienced a journey based on the familiar, interspersed with the unknown, the unusual and the unexpected that provided entertainment and food for thought. All three presenters provided programmes that were highly individual in style and presentation and each in their own way captured the attention and imagination of an appreciative audience.

Very many thanks to Mick Birchall who was principal organiser and also supplied and prepared the food for this most memorable day.

W. Middlesex goes Mediterranean

The tenth of the W. Middlesex Group's biennial music festival was held from 4th October to 20th November, hosted by seven different societies and presented by Alan Ball, Denis Jiggins and Roger Hughes.

This year's theme was *Music Mediterranean* and covered not only the European countries bordering its northern shore but also some of the African countries on its southern side. The music spanned two centuries, mostly by composers from Mediterranean countries but the programmes also included works by other composers whose theme or setting was based on a Mediterranean country.

While compiling the programmes we discovered unfamiliar names and attractive little-known works. This was a most successful festival, packed with enjoyable and exciting music that catered for all tastes. Our thanks to the following societies:

Ealing RMS. Denis Jiggins took us to the opera with his presentation on the opening night. With stories set in countries as far apart as Spain, North Africa and Turkey, he played music from operas by Bizet, Rossini, Mascagni, Strauss, Mozart and Verdi and also excerpts from Romberg's *The Desert Song*.

Uxbridge RMS welcomed Alan Ball's presentation of orchestral, chamber and piano music and a song by Duparc, sung by Janet Baker. His programme added the names of Poulenc, Bax, Rodrigo, Berlioz, Ravel and Pergolesi to the composers.

OUT & ABOUT

At **Perivale Record Circle** Roger Hughes continued the theme, including works by Arriaga, Luigin and Giornovich among more familiar items.

Our three splendid presenters extended the theme on four further evenings at **Heston Community Centre RM Section, Ruislip GS, Hayes RM Club** and **Ickenham GC**. We are grateful to them and to the many people who contributed to the success of the tenth West Middlesex Festival.

Music to our ears at Torbay

With eleven presentations, a DVD and a recital by the Bergoutz Quartet, there was much to delight and inform at the 37th music weekend in Torbay, November 17th - 20th.

There was a party atmosphere at the welcoming reception in the sun lounge at The Palace Hotel as the weekend got off to a jolly start before dinner with 25 new members among the 172 delegates.

Dog Meat Specialist to DMus

The intriguing title for the first presentation gave a hint to the rich and varied career of **Dr. Jill White**. With a wicked sense of fun she gave a résumé of her professional life as an opera singer, BBC 3 music producer, artistic director and archivist; Director of the National Youth Orchestra and her association with John Rutter as producer for his Collegium label.

She also told many amusing stories of her unusual jobs sandwiched between her prestigious musical pursuits. One of the most bizarre was indeed as apprentice to a butcher as a dog meat specialist!

Jill's was an extremely amusing talk, interspersed with lovely examples of music played by the National Youth Orchestra.

Schumann remembered

The weekend's first late-night session marked the 150th anniversary of the death of Robert Schumann. Artur Schnabel was the soloist in recordings of two of Schumann's best-loved piano works: *Carnaval, op. 9*, and *8 Fantasiestücke, op. 12*.

The Bodkin bequest

Peter Bodkin was a regular supporter of TMW for many years and when, sadly, he died earlier in the year, he bequeathed his record collection to the Friends of Torbay. This amounted to almost 3,000 CDs and in Saturday's first session the TMW Chairman **Bob Hardcastle** and Vice-Chairman **Peter Lyubery** talked about the bequest and played a few extracts from the remarkable collection. During the weekend the CDs were sold at the bargain price of £1 each. Needless to say, thanks to **Ted and Sheila Pezzarro** for their tremendous

efforts and remarkable organisation in categorising the CDs and handling the sales, it was a sell-out! The rest of Saturday was given to, among other things, Mozart, harps and harpists and the podium.

Mozart in Vienna

Terry Barfoot, author and presenter, looked at Mozart's final decade in Vienna, 1781-1791, posing such questions as: What was his daily life like? How did his musical style develop? And was he really buried in a pauper's grave? With beautiful musical illustrations, this was a fitting presentation at the end of Mozart's 250th anniversary year.

The long-playing years

Peter Gammond, a founder member of the Friends of Torbay is author of over 40 books on classical and light music, including *The Oxford Companion to Popular Music*. His wide-ranging programme was a delightful journey through 50 years of his varied musical experiences and discoveries since he joined Decca in the early days of the LP.

Harp and harpists

Not only a distinguished performer, harp historian, writer and composer, **Ann Griffiths** is the first British harpist to be awarded a Premier Prix of the Paris Conservatoire. In an enthusiastic presentation she demonstrated three harps: a neo-Irish harp, a triple harp and a concert harp by Camac, playing music appropriate to each instrument.

Both sides of the podium

Having started his musical career as a violinist, **Christopher Adey** is now a distinguished conductor in this country and abroad. In an amusing presentation after dinner on Saturday, he delivered witty and pertinent observations about people and performances on both sides of the podium.

At the end of the day

In the late-night spot was a two-part DVD of the BBC's production of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, in which a documentary on the people featured in the variations was followed by a performance of the work, conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

The essential double bass

Former bass player **Lynne Plummer** regards this underestimated instrument the kingpin in any orchestral work. She proved her point with a brilliant selection of classical and jazz recordings and introduced artists already familiar but in other contexts.

Two of the home team took us up to dinner, followed by the traditional live recital. First, Vice-Chairman

OUT & ABOUT

Peter Lybery looked back at a long series of presentations, some with the late David Inman, that featured outstanding CDs. He also reviewed some superb current releases.

Under the title *The Cowlick and the Commissars*, **Kevin Ryland** examined the uneasy relationship between Shostakovich and the Soviet regime.

The Bergonzi Quartet

*Kit Massey, violin; Melanie Hamer, violin;
Charlotte Stock, viola; David Butler, violoncello*

These young musicians have established a wide reputation for their superb musicianship and innovative performances. The quartet was formed in 2000 and has been in great demand at many prestigious venues and events. After the TMW recital they were leaving for a performing engagement in India. On Sunday evening they played *Mozart's String Quartet no. 17 (The Hunt)*; *Borodin's String Quartet no. 2* and *Dvorak's String Quartet no. 12 (American)*.

Until the next time

Chairman **Robert Harcastle** brought another full and memorable weekend to a close with a personal choice of music and thoughts about the future. During the AGM on Sunday morning he announced his retirement as Chairman. He also pointed out that others on the committee were approaching retirement and invited anyone who felt able and willing to take part in the organisation of TMW to come forward.

With thanks to the many who have contributed so much over the years to the success of this event, he wished us: "Safe journey and see you next year."

From ARP hut to home comfort

ICKENHAM GC is on the verge of its 60th birthday and Chairman Roger Hughes gives an account of its progress.

Ten enthusiastic gramophiles attended the club's inaugural meeting at a private house in 1947. The first few fortnightly meetings were held in the local ARP hut (long since demolished to make room for shops) but we were driven from there by the intrusive noise of traffic and repaired to the home of the then chairman.

In 1949 we tried again to meet in a public venue, this time in a room in Ickenham Hall Community Centre (since redeveloped as part of a theatre complex). Again, the combined noise of rumbustious activity in an adjoining room and nearby trains drove us out. So back we went to the chairman's home. Since then we have continued to meet in a domestic environment, alternating each calendar quarter

between the homes of two members and, for many years now, on a weekly basis. From the beginning we have considered it important to promote congenial informality and to recognise every member as an active member. Inevitably, over the years our numbers have suffered from death and infirmity but, by word of mouth or personal introduction, membership has remained constant, so bucking the general downward trend.

Special events have included such notables as Antony Hopkins; the pianist Walter Landauer, who became the club's President; Dame Moura Lympany and the Ondine Flute Quartet. We also had a presentation from the then Secretary of the NFGS, Mr. Frederick Youens.

We are aware that many societies will be celebrating their 60th anniversary in 2007. We offer them all our best wishes for a continuing successful future.

Rochdale Gramophone Society.

Rochdale Gramophone Society is celebrating its 75th anniversary and is believed to be the Federation's senior affiliate. George Steele, past Chairman of RGS reports.

As part of the special celebrations in November, some 75 members and guests met for a gala lunch at the Crimble Restaurant in Rochdale. After the meal Eric Jennings, Principal Trombone with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, gave a wonderfully entertaining talk about his experiences. With many an amusing tale, he opened our eyes to the many things that go on behind the scenes to ensure a perfect performance on the night.

A further event will be held at the Society's normal meeting place on 21st April 07 when John Summers, Chief Executive of the Hallé Concerts Society will give an illustrated talk on the Orchestra's recordings and tell us about its own label recordings.



The group picture shows the members of Rochdale Society at the 80th birthday celebration of our Honorary President, Jack Tattersall (front row on the right), who has been a member for over 50 years.

OUT & ABOUT

Reflections from SRMC

Pat Smith, Secretary of Stockport RMC, remembers how the Society lifted itself out of the doldrums to maintain its tradition that "Friday night is music night"

Dabbling with the dishes after breakfast and enjoying the kaleidoscope of fantastic colours in the garden and beyond, I remembered our concern in the winter of 2005, with the noticeable lack of interest in our beloved Music Club. Several long-standing loyal members were beginning to find that age and infirmity prevented them from joining us regularly and hardly any new members appeared.

Our falling membership barely covered out-going expenses and a successful Lottery application helped to replace our ageing equipment.

During the following Spring/Summer we installed new equipment and bought enough cushions to ease the acute discomfort of the stacking chairs. We also advertised and distributed well-designed leaflets throughout the district. This labour of love ensured the health of all our committee throughout that winter. We were very pleased with our efforts and the halo of satisfaction positively glowed around our heads as we felt that at least we had tried.

Good start to Diamond Jubilee year

To our surprise and delight there were many visitors for the first programme of the Autumn Session, 2005 and again in the ensuing weeks. A highlight that season was on 11th November when we celebrated 60 years of weekly music. We invited past and present members, offered a buffet supper and loved the live music from one of our regular presenters, the Dulcian Ensemble. It was a very happy, truly memorable evening.

Throughout the following few months we welcomed more people to the Stockport RM Club and we now have ten enthusiastic new members as well as one or two regular visitors!

As ever, Friday night is still Music Night, our antidote to all ills and possibly an awful week just ending. It is the night we meet with like-minded friends and listen to superb music in warm and comfortable surroundings. There is something for everyone to enjoy in the choice of music presented by members or guests, and the periods before the programme, during the interval and at the end of the evening, are noisy with friendly chatter. We are fortunate in having a friendly, musical Chairman and a hardworking Committee, as well as good support from the user Committee of our excellent venue.

Many clubs are finding it difficult to survive. There

ALASTAIR MITCHELL LGSM

47 King Edward's Gardens, London W3 9RF

Tel: 0208 992 0600

Lecturer, author and conductor

Former instructor for music holidays covering

The Bath and Cheltenham Festivals

For the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Elgar in 2007 affiliate societies should consider Mr Mitchell's wide-ranging illustrated talk.

MASTERS OF THE QUEEN'S MUSIC:

**Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
was Master of the King's Music from 1924-1934**

Changing styles over the period from Charles I to our present Queen show the progress that music has made and includes music by the first Master, Nicholas Lanier, up to the present Master, Sir Peter Maxwell Davis, by way of William Shield, Edward Elgar, Walford Davies, Arnold Bax, Arthur Bliss and Malcolm Williamson.

This talk was first given to members of the Cirencester Recorded Music Society in November 2006. They found the talk "a most enjoyable evening."

Fees: £150 plus travel and overnight expenses if a journey is over twenty miles from London.
A discount of 10% of the fee is available if bookings are confirmed by the end of May 2007

is much of interest elsewhere, places to go and always the telly, I suppose. On a bleak, cold and dark night, the temptation is to stay at home. But for our members and friends SRMC is a happy place to be and Friday night IS indeed Music Night. We shall do our best to keep it so, particularly for the members who are now alone.

New Dean MC – 12 years on

In 1995 Newnham & District Music Club sent a report on its 25th anniversary celebrations. It became New Dean MC and Brian Pugh, Publicity Officer, gives an update.

Our new name reflects the large area of West Gloucestershire from which members come, particularly the Forest of Dean. Problems with venues were solved in 1998 when we moved to the Belle Vue Centre in Cinderford, which is central and provides comfortable accommodation. However, while excellent for recorded music, the acoustics are not ideal for live performances; these are held in the Baptist Church on Coleford.

We use high quality equipment, always looking out for opportunities for improvement. Recently, a trawl of e-bay provided some excellent items at low cost and we recommend this source to everyone. Autumn

OUT & ABOUT

and Spring each have a season of 12 weekly meetings. In the past, support from the district council also enabled us to have two live concerts every season but this funding is no longer available and we are limited to one.

Members and guest speakers, often musicians or experts in particular areas of music, present the recorded music, the aim being to provide a wide range of subjects. We also hear some astonishing music in a fun 'Lucky Dip' meeting. In this, members present a four-minute recording that interprets the set theme; such odd ideas as "who dunnit?", "March hares" and once even "I can't remember"!

Live concerts are important, especially in an area remote from large cities. We are limited by lack of external funding but manage to present soloists and small groups. Performers such as players from The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the well known harpist Jemima Phillips and also groups from outside mainstream classical music, such as the Latin-American groups, Duende, and the Colwell Arts Jazz Group.

We make a great effort to maintain a good social atmosphere. Newcomers are made welcome and there is always a buzz of friendly chatter in the coffee break. This, and the very reasonable annual subscription of £15, seems to attract people and membership is stable in the 40s.

So what of the future? Hopefully, thanks to the hard work of all who help to run it, the club will continue to thrive and give pleasure to its members. The impending 40th anniversary definitely deserves another celebration.

Visitors to the area are very welcome to attend our meetings, held on Wednesday evenings. For information contact John Lawes, tel: 01594 542619 or e-mail Ltwojays@aol.com

A very musical AGM *(concluded from p.3)*

Motion 2. To delete Rule 6.4 of the Constitution. This rule allowed the Committee the benefit of a discount at Musical Weekends in lieu of expenses. This clause had not been invoked for many years and was deemed to be redundant. The Treasurer pointed out that hiding expenses in a discount was totally contrary to the policy of making FRMS financial arrangements transparent. The motion was approved unanimously and the Chairman said the Constitution booklet would be updated.

AGM Format

The Chairman outlined three possible formats for future AGMs: a) retain the present format, b) have a morning

meeting, music in the afternoon and finishing at teatime or c) incorporate it into a music weekend. After discussing pros and cons, the meeting agreed to retain the present format, with a second day of music at the host society's discretion.

During AOB Graham Kiteley reported that the FRMS President, Edward Greenfield is still unwell but sent his good wishes. Bob Drew (CMS Kidderminster) paid a tribute to the late Gordon Wainwright, who had made an immense contribution to the FRMS, especially in the Midlands. His widow Doreen was present and acknowledged the tributes and condolences.

Before the meeting closed for tea, at 3.50, the Chairman announced that the next AGM will be held at **Huddersfield on 27 October 2007.**

A feast of entertainment

The social aspect of this year's AGM was especially marked and began immediately after tea with a music presentation by members of the host CMS Kidderminster. Appropriately entitled *The Platinum Collection*, it referred not to the average age of those assembled but the Federation's 70th anniversary year. Von Stewart and four of her co-members each gave a short introduction to an opus 70 composition by a different composer:

Tchaikovsky: *Souvenirs de Florence*: 3rd movement, allegretto, played by the Raphael Ensemble

Chopin: *Three waltzes* played by Alan Schiller, piano

Beethoven: *Piano Trio no. 1 (The Ghost)*, 1st and 3rd movements played by the Beaux Arts Trio

Elgar: *Nocturne*, for strings, piano and organ with Andrew Davies and members of the HBC Symphony Orchestra

Dvorak: *Symphony no. 7 in D min.*, finale – allegro, with Istvan Kertaz conducting the London Symphony Orchestra.

Dvorak said of this last item: 'Pray God it will stir the world.' It certainly stirred the 52 assembled in the Bromsgrove Golf Centre before sitting down to a splendid three course dinner where Lyndon Jenkins was the guest scheduled to introduce the recital after dinner.

His brilliance as a raconteur is well known and his after-dinner speech was delivered with side-splitting wit and humour, leading to the introduction of *The Duo Rosa*. Joanna Kirkwood, flute, and Victoria Green, guitar, are highly talented musicians, much in demand individually and as an ensemble. Their sparkling recital featured works by Molino, Liebermann, Debussy, Bartok, Ibert, Villa-Lobos, and Hindt, ending with a delightful and vivacious selection of South American music. A happy end to a happy day.

APOLOGY

In the last issue of the *Bulletin* (p.15) we published an obituary notice for Isabel Anne Hills of Cheltenham RMS. The notice should have been for Isabel Anne Grindley, as Hills was Isabel's single name. We apologise sincerely for the error and very much regret any distress it might have caused to Isabel's family and friends.

Calling all Jazz Fans!

'The saxophone is the embodied spirit of beer' – Arnold Bennett 1867-1931

Facts, figures and non sequiturs on the instrument synonymous with jazz

It is difficult to believe that the man who invented the popular instrument beloved by jazz musicians died in poverty in 1894.

Antoine Joseph Sax, also known as Adolphe, was born in Dinant in 1814 and with his father he invented a valved brass wind instrument that he called the sax-horn, or alto saxophone, to form a powerful link between the clarinet and tenor brasses and give military bands a bit more oomph.

Although his idea was not entirely new it was the first successful instrument of its kind. Some 20 years earlier William Meikle, combined a small bassoon with a clarinet mouthpiece and introduced the alto fagotto, now almost forgotten.

What is it exactly?

The obvious features of the saxophone family are its long conical body made of thin metal, usually brass, which is flared into a bell-shape at the end. The larger instruments have a U-bend with the bell opening tilted slightly downward; this makes them much easier to manage.

The mouthpiece was originally of wood but is now usually ebonite or, occasionally, brass and has a single reed.

The instrument is pitched at either B or E flat and the family is made up of the soprano (the baby) in E flat, the larger B flat soprano, E flat alto, B flat tenor, E flat baritone and B flat bass. Along the body of the instrument are 18-21 tone-



Sculpture of Adolphe Sax outside his birthplace in Dinant

holes of varying size that are controlled by keys. At the mouthpiece end are two keys called speaker keys; these allow the player to over-blow the octave. Although slightly modified models are produced from time to time, the basic structure remains unaltered.



Universal use

The saxophone is not only all the rage in jazz groups. After it was introduced to England in the mid 19th century, it very soon became a familiar part of British brass and military bands. By the end of the century it had spread to America, much popularised by Sousa's band.

Now it is sometimes seen among the wind section even in a concert orchestra, although one leading saxophone player once said: "Saxophone players are like jackalaws - they have to steal

a lot of stuff." But among the classical works that do feature the saxophone are Ravel's *Bolero*; Debussy's *Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra*; Phyllis Tate's *Concerto for Saxophone and Strings*, while in his ballet, *Job*, Vaughan Williams introduces Job's comforters with the saxophone.

The jazz scene

But it is in jazz groups and dance bands that the instrument really comes into its own. Historically, jazz has its roots in New Orleans where, in the mid 1920s it replaced the enthusiasm for ragtime.

By the 1930s traditional jazz bands were forming world wide, with the saxophone playing a leading role. This was also the beginning of the dance band era and the 'big bands' featured the saxophone strongly. The popularity of these two groups made the saxophone the best known instrument to the general public. Early jazz groups used the four main types of instrument but today's players mostly use the B flat tenor and E flat alto sax. There are many famous players but the amazing technique of Charlie Parker made him, arguably, the foremost and an idol of jazz fans all over the world. And, to those of us who were bright young things in the 1950s and 60s, names such as Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington and Joe Loss still bring a reminiscent smile. TMS

Hyperion brings British composer out of neglect

Robert Simpson (1921-1997) is a sadly neglected composer whose creative work richly deserves to be heard by a wider audience. Hyperion's 7-CD set features his eleven symphonies and also *Variations on a theme by Nielsen*. Simpson began a career in medicine but his sympathies were with music and he took lessons in composition from Herbert Howells. Howells encouraged Simpson to take, first, a Bachelor of Music degree followed by a Doctorate in 1951, with his First Symphony as his thesis. In this year he joined the BBC music staff and became a highly respected producer and broadcaster.

Although his work reinforces 20th century traditions established by composers such as Nielsen, Shostakovich and Sibelius, Simpson extended their example to incorporate fundamental principles of symphonic form laid down by Beethoven and Haydn whom he admired profoundly. The result is a unique and powerful but controlled style that is worth exploring. The high-quality recordings feature Vernon Handley conducting the symphonies with the Royal Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras.

Societies wishing to extend their area of interest would do well to invest in this set. The accompanying booklet gives a comprehensive biography of the composer and detailed analyses of the works. **Hyperion CDS4491/7**

Aspects of Choral Singing from Hyperion

Burgon Choral Music

Geoffrey Burgon's artistic quality is often overlooked because of the commercial success of his music for the BBC television programmes *Brideshead Revisited* and *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy*. The latter featured the popular 1997 re-arranged version of Burgon's *Nunc Dimittis*, which is one of the 10 first recordings among the 14 works on this CD.

The choir of Wells Cathedral, conducted by its new Director Matthew Owens, exemplifies Burgon's mastery of the classical tradition, especially in Anglican Church music, while

retaining the appeal of modern composition. *The Short Mass*, lasting only 10 minutes, is unaffected yet powerful and reflects something of Britten's influence.

Liturgical music is a relatively small part of Burgon's choral works and the English Metaphysicals provided a valuable source of texts. Particularly attractive is his setting for soprano, trumpet and organ of John Donne's *At the round earth's imagined corners*. The girl soloist sings with remarkable clarity and with a timbre well matched to the boy sopranos. Wells Cathedral Choir, one of the world's supreme, has recorded regularly for Hyperion and this CD has universal appeal.

The Choir of Wells Cathedral/Matthew Owens. David Bednall, organ; Alan Thomas, trumpet.

Hyperion CDA67567

All in the April evening

Those of a certain age will feel a touch of nostalgia here! This title was virtually the signature tune of The Glasgow Orpheus Choir and the two phrases became inextricably linked. The mixed-voice choir began as an adjunct to a working men's club and in 1901 a young funeral undertaker and self-taught musician became its conductor. Five years later the choir became independent under the name by which it established its unique place in the public's affections.

For the first few years the choir's repertoire was limited to fairly simple, poetic, and often sentimental, pieces that were the norm for amateur choirs at the time. But, encouraged by the competitive music festival, the choir developed its musicianship and ability. By the time of its last concert in 1946 the Orpheus had established a standard that inspired choral groups world-wide. It gave many first performances and regularly sang music by composers such as Elgar, Bach, Brahms, Bruch, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Bantock as well as liturgical works of the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches.

But it was long remembered for its familiar and well-loved pieces and Hyperion has compiled a delightful anthology of these favourites. The 24 tracks include arrangements of some charming traditional folksongs (once part of the 'community singing' ethos!), laced with settings of Shakespeare songs by Vaughan Williams and works by Byrd, Warlock,

REVIEWS

Sullivan and Elgar. With impeccable diction, phrasing and attention to detail, *Laudibus*, under the direction of Michael Brewer, has captured the inimitable sound and quality from the repertoire of the almost-forgotten Glasgow Orpheus Choir. The superior sound engineering from Hyperion has encapsulated its memory in a recording gem.

Laudibus/Michael Brewer Hyperion CDH55243

The essential Sibelius from BIS

As part of the countdown to the 50th anniversary of the Finnish composer's death, BIS has issued a superb selection of recordings representing all the genres of Jean Sibelius' work. The boxed set is a not-to-be missed bargain of 15 discs offered for the price of four and is the prelude to a forthcoming edition that will complete a 25-year project to record "every note he ever wrote." The wide-ranging survey in this set includes the seven symphonies, violin concerto, tone poems and theatre music, as well as songs, choral and chamber works and music for piano. This collection also includes the world première recording of the melodrama *Näcken* and other material not released before. Featuring leading performers such as the Lahti Symphony Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä, Anne Sofie von Otter, the Helsinki University Choir and other high calibre artists, this is a remarkably good buy. The supporting 132-page booklet gives a comprehensive background to the composer, his music, and the text of the songs with English translations.

The Essential Sibelius. BIS CD-1697/1700

Unusual releases from Naxos

Rare Messiah

It is sheer delight to listen to this reconstruction of the 1751 all-male version of *Messiah*. Handel drew upon the resources of the Chapel Royal for the London performances in 1751 and in this superb recording the work is performed by the choir and soloists of New College Oxford and the Academy of Ancient Music directed by Edward Higginbottom. Treble voices from the choir and counter tenor Iestyn Davies sing the soprano arias and, as in the 1751 performances, the rest of the soloists are from the choir, with arias sung by former clerks of New College, Toby Spence (tenor) and Eamonn Dougan (bass).

Having been accustomed to the choral equivalent of the 'big band' sound from very large mixed choirs in most modern performances, it is refreshing and uplifting to hear the more delicate, yet equally dramatic, sound that the first audiences heard.

The 2-CD recording was made in the splendid acoustic of St. John's Smith Square, which highlights the pure tone and clarity of the singers in an outstanding performance. This is a must-have!

Naxos 8.570131-32

Elgar's Music Makers and Sea Pictures

These two important works are rarely recorded together so Elgar lovers will welcome this release. Having heard the mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly at a concert where she gave a lovely performance of *Sea Pictures* that was delicately balanced and articulate, I was disappointed that the woolly orchestral backing in this recording masked the soloist's moving interpretation of the work.

Similarly in *The Music Makers*, also featuring Connolly, she is let down by the run-of-the-mill choral and orchestral forces.

If I were allowed only one recording of either of these superb works, it would be the 1965 with the LSO and Sir John Barbirolli and the archetype Janet Baker at her peak.

Sarah Connolly, mezzo-soprano; Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra/Simon Wright
Naxos 8.557710

A Young Person's Guide to Elgar

Even children without an interest in music are bound to find this delightful booklet biography of Sir Edward Elgar immensely readable. Aimed ostensibly at the reading age group 7-11, it will appeal to a much wider readership. Teachers will find it an invaluable aid for KS2, not only for specific music topics but also for English and general studies.

In succinct and evocative language and copiously illustrated, the publication describes Elgar's Victorian childhood and family life; growing up as a teenager in the city; his early life, marriage and struggle for success. It also features individual works and gives a historical summary of his life set against world events.

Young Person's Guide to Elgar, ISBN 0 9548553 2 9
Price £3.50 from Elgar Foundation Enterprises Ltd
Crown East Lane, Lower Broadheath,
Worcester WR2 6RH

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

I have been heartened by three recent events, all of which indicate a healthy state of affairs in many of our societies, at local, regional and national levels up and down the country.

AGM with flute & guitar in Bromsgrove

First, the AGM in Bromsgrove organised by the Classical Music Society, Kidderminster, to whom we must extend our thanks for superb organisation. The business went very smoothly and there was constructive participation in the debates. Our number of affiliated societies remains as last year; the losses were offset by the gains. After the business meeting we had an excellent society presentation by members of the CMS followed by dinner, a humorous after-dinner speech by Lyndon Jenkins the Vice-President of CMS. The day ended with a superb flute and guitar recital presented by ex-students of the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Mozart with Central Region in Solihull

In early November I attended the Central Region's Mozart Music Day at Olton, Solihull. On my way to the venue I confess that it did cross my mind that, even allowing for the fact that Mozart was undoubtedly a genius, perhaps three programmes on the same composer was a little too much. My fears were unfounded. The three presenters of the day had obviously checked with each other and there were no repeats or repetition; each in their own way captured the attention and imagination of an appreciative audience.

Musical bounty in Torquay

Also in November I attended the Torbay Music Weekend held at the Palace Hotel, Torquay. It was evident that this weekend was, for many, a meeting of old friends. There were over 170 in attendance and most appeared to know each other and some were even on first name terms with the staff. It turned out that I was one of twenty-five there for the first time but we were quickly accepted into the family.

Throughout the weekend we had the opportunity to purchase CDs from the Bodkin Bequest. Peter Bodkin, who had attended this weekend for many years, left his collection of over 2500 CDs to the Friends of Torbay. These were on sale for £1 per disc. Many of us thought we had died and gone to heaven! In the event I purchased 38 and spent the journey back home regretting that I had not purchased more. I faced the inevitable question as to whether we should consider building an extension to house our collection.

The individual presentations were of the very highest standard and the arrangements ran with clockwork precision. Thanks for this are due to Robert Hardcastle and his team. Also thanks to Robert for the assurance that this weekend will continue for the foreseeable future.

And that's not all

Those are just three of such events that are held regularly throughout the year, and which are a golden opportunity to introduce new members to the enjoyment and benefits of belonging to a RMS group. Those of you with the time and inclination should think about the Yorkshire Regional event to be held in Scarborough and the FRMS weekend in Daventry. We meet in Scarborough at the end of March and in Daventry in April. Music is indeed alive and well in our societies.

Research findings

Sarah Polfreman's research project is complete and we await the findings with great interest. These will be published as soon as we have the full details.

John Davies, Chairman FRMS

WHAT'S IN THE SECRETARY'S POSTBAG?

How wrong can I be? In the last Bulletin I said that in general societies did not respond to postal enquiries. The recent questionnaire from student Sarah Polfreman brought in a response from no fewer than 65% of affiliated societies! What a response, and one which shows what we are all really about. A totally non-controversial, non-political enquiry into the matters which really concern us - the survival and progress of our wonderful movement.

A good year

For us, this was just one aspect of what we feel has been a rather upbeat, positive year. For the first time in a very long time, we did not suffer a net loss of societies. It is true that, sadly, three societies closed, but three new ones replaced them, one of which was the revival of a group that had closed the previous year.

Graham reports a number of societies with increased membership, and Allan reports an influx of new names on the Presenters Panel.

Add to this the fact that I have recently been in touch with three parties who aim to form new societies in areas where none exists. It is a tough job without a team around you, but my feeling is that at least two of them are likely to succeed. One of them just e-mailed me to point out that I had forgotten to enclose a form of application for membership with the handbook of advice!

It pays to advertise

You might have seen our small ad in *The Gramophone*. Also, have you heard of *The Mature Times*? It is a newspaper aimed at the over-50s. Committee member Ron Bleach recently put an ad in it promoting his Bristol RMS and the FRMS in general.

In the week 12th/19th December I received three enquiries from people looking for their nearest society. All by telephone, which is unusual, one via *The Gramophone* and two via *The Mature Times*. All three were for Cardiff!

Generally of course recruitment is slow. We are never going to discover an 'abracadabra' which brings them running. However, we will continue trying to raise the profile of our societies and our movement.

Any good ideas?

The contact with societies which comes with being national secretary often gives me the chance to spy out examples of good practice, some of which I have managed to smuggle into my local society in Stoke, of which I am secretary. We now have a programme/newsletter for each meeting, an idea I stole from South Cheshire RMS (and national Chairman JD); from Carnoustie (and Committee member JM) we now have a series of at-home Summer meetings.

The latest 'good idea' I have encountered was in the printed programme of Cardiff RMS. There, newcomers and members who have never presented a programme are invited to take part in a compèred joint presentation Desert Island Disc style. The 'Good Idea' that we are willing to export from Stoke is that after each meeting a nucleus of us resorts to the Real Ale pub round the corner, usually taking the guest speaker with us.

I have no doubt you have all been doing all these things for years, but perhaps there is something that would be of new interest to someone. Does anyone else have an example of good practice, which they would like to share with us?

Talking of good practice, a number of societies have now benefited from the grants that are available locally to those with a good case to present.

By the way, I was recently reminded that the purpose of charging an admission fee to guests and visitors to a society is to grant them temporary membership to meet the terms of our contract with the PRS.

My wife and I recently went for the first time to the Torbay Music Weekend. I would like to echo all the good things that Chairman John Davies has said about it.

Tony Baines, FRMS Secretary

Towards Regeneration

John Maidment, responsible for implementing FRMS regeneration policy, gives two suggestions to help revitalise declining societies and enhance thriving ones.

Internet opportunities

Recently I have found out about the BBC Action Network, which offers the opportunity to publicise your society and any of its events. The website is:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork>

A handful of societies have already registered and added their details and ideally I would like to see all Recorded Music Societies follow suit. You will notice that this is an under-used resource and, as you know, under-used resources have a habit of being taken away! It is easy to register and enter your details. You are asked under which headings you wish to be listed. My society, Carnoustie is listed under Music, Culture Media and Sport, Angus and Scotland.

I have put together a guide for entering a society on this website and would be happy to pass this on to anyone who wants it. You can e-mail me at:

johnmaidment@aol.com or ring me on 01241 853017.

I would also like to mention two 'communities' you might find of interest, *Classicalmania*, run by MSN, website address

<http://groups.msn.com/classicalmania/whatsnew.msnw>

and *The Classical Music Guide*, website address:

<http://www.classicalmusicguide.com>

Both operate discussion boards that offer the chance to take part in discussions on classical music, or indeed to publicise your society. At the time of writing I know very little of *The Classic Guide* as I have only just joined but it would seem, as with *Classicalmania*, that the membership is very knowledgeable

If you have any queries on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Listening circles

Over the past three years members of Carnoustie RMS have been running a series of meetings that are a variation on the format of conventional RMS gathering and are termed 'Listening Circles.'

We have a group of seven who get together in each other's houses on Saturday nights throughout the winter to listen to complete performances of whatever works we agree. There is always wine, beer and nibbles and so we always feel very relaxed and contented at the end of each session!

To date we have worked our way through complete symphonic cycles by Beethoven, performed by NDR Sinfonieorchester/Wand; Shostakovich, played by the WDR Sinfonieorchester/Barshai, and Vaughan Williams with Sir Adrian Boult conducting various orchestras. We have also heard a wide range of works by Tchaikovsky,

This season we are concentrating on works by American composers. The symphonies by Samuel Barber, Roy Harris, Amy Beach and William Grant Still in particular have been of great interest.

A varied menu of music, and all recordings owned by myself! As a presenter of a 90-minute weekly classical programme with a local independent radio station, I get through a considerable amount of music in a year and am always on the lookout for something different to augment the mainstream classics.

It is worth mentioning that I keep a Microsoft Access database of all my recordings. Initially it took a whole winter to list every recording I had but now it is to keep the list up to date. I find it very user friendly and it is easy to filter out recordings by, say, a particular artist.

We have found listening circles very rewarding and would recommend them to any society as an added interest.

** There are still a few vacancies left for
a weekend with celebrities! **

FRMS MUSIC WEEKEND

DAVENTRY 2007

April 13th – 15th

Venue: Daventry Hotel, Northants

Celebrity guests are:

RICHARD BAKER, well known broadcaster and television personality on *Face the Music*. He will talk about his love of music in a presentation entitled *At Sea with Music*.

MARIANNE OLYVER, violinist and founder and director of the orchestra that bears her name.

Other notable presenters include Peter Alward, former President of EMI Records; Paul Westcott, author and Press Officer for Chandos Records, and Anthony Hodgson, author, music critic and recording producer currently working with the Royal Scottish National Symphony Orchestra.

*

Also a recital by the **AMIROV PIANO TRIO**
in association with the Birmingham Conservatoire

*

Weekend or daily sessional bookings available.

Contact: FRMS Secretary, tel: 01782 251460 for further details and booking

Letters to the Editor

Ed's note: Letters to the Editor, or extracts from letters, are published verbatim and unedited. Members can reply to letters through these pages.

In the last issue was a letter from Alan Palmer of Wimbledon, concerning the lighter side of music. His comments have prompted several replies.

Jazz series in Portslade

From Donald Pickett, 79 Tumble Road, Saltdoun, Brighton, Sussex BN2 8FR

I too share (Alan Palmer's) interests, particularly where jazz is concerned. A recent venture of mine is a series of programmes entitled *Discovering Jazz*, which I present at my local society, Portslade RMS.

The first, featuring the early years up to the 1940s, was in March 2005. The second took us from the 1940s through to the 1960s. The third will be a video presentation about jazz on film and jazz at the movies and will be given on June 19th this year. And, all being well, *Jazzin' in the UK* will be presented in 2008.

I wonder whether any other society would be interested in these presentations. If so, please contact me at the above address.

Light music in Tavistock

From Eddie White, 40 Westbridge Cottages, Tavistock PL19 8JQ

There was a time when the Tavistock RMS, of which I am a member, had a regular jazz evening every season, because one of our number was a jazz devotee. But these stopped when he moved away some years ago.

As I, like Alan, have a wide musical appreciation, I thought it would make a change to have a programme of light music: Coates, Farnon, Binge, Tomlinson, etc. With this in mind, I asked our members at the last AGM how many would NOT be interested and only two hands were raised.

My presentation is on 23rd January 2007. I will report back!

Jazz clubs and the FRMS

Alan Child, Chairman of Derby RMS, writes:

Tucked away in our list of over 200 affiliates, among all the recorded music societies and gramophone societies will be found a few whose names proclaim the principal interest of their members.

Names such as the Elgar Society and the Berlioz Society may come to mind. But there are also some whose names contain the dreaded word: **JAZZ**.

Dreaded? I hope not! Some people of my generation were perhaps steered away from jazz by elders who thought it 'inferior' or 'not respectable', but there are others who have always enjoyed jazz and some of us who have discovered the delights of jazz more recently.

Anyone who has followed the development of 'classical' music in the 20th century must be aware of the influence of jazz on composers such as Ravel and Stravinsky, to name but two, and also the attraction of the music of Bach for jazz musicians. There must be many members of our affiliates who appreciate at least some styles of jazz, and few affiliates who have not at some time or other featured jazz in their programmes. My own society, some years ago, had a programme entitled *Great Tenors of the World*, which had nothing whatever to do with *Nexan dorma!* But there is often a problem in that although many of us like jazz we do not feel competent to talk about an art form that is essentially improvisatory in contrast to the more prescriptive nature of present-day 'classical' performance.

Maybe jazz clubs could 'spread the word' among other affiliates in their local areas, perhaps by inviting members of other FRMS societies to drop in on their meetings, or those societies might like to invite a jazz club to provide a presenter or a programme as part of their season's activities.

Would any members of jazz clubs like their names included in the Presenters' Panel? Of course, the scope for this sort of thing is limited, but it could grow if jazz clubs were awakened to the benefits of belonging to the Federation. At present there is only a handful of jazz clubs in the Federation; these are currently on the south coast, in south Lakeland and in central Scotland.

I am sure that our jazz-oriented affiliates appreciate, as do the rest, the services the Federation provides for PRS and PPL licensing, together with equipment and public liability insurance - these are very strong incentives for most of our affiliates to belong.

But I hope that the predominantly 'classical' nature of most of our societies, and of our national and regional events will not lead the few jazz clubs among us to feel that they are in some sort of musical ghetto. The Federation can only benefit from all its affiliates taking an active part in its affairs.

Wagner Divas

Vic Riches of Salisbury RMS remarks on an operative term used in the report on the Daventry Music Weekend, in which Dame Anne Evans was described as 'a diva of Wagner operas' (issue 143, p6, col3).

Now, everybody loves a Diva. However, one has to admit that Divas are, almost by definition, lady opera singers that are exhibitionist, temperamental and adulation-addicted. Most have mastered the art of the short pause after every major operative number that they sing, for the sole purpose of eliciting rapturous applause from the audience; invariably supplied.

As any opera buff knows, Wagner operas are symphonic in structure, continuous, with no breaks at all within acts. Mindless, adulatory applause never occurs in live Wagner performances. Hence, no Divas. Put very simply: Wagner singers don't do Diva!

Ed's note: As Professor Joad would say: "It all depends on what you mean by diva!"

In the early days of opera, the expression 'prima donna' simply defined the status of the principal female singer with a leading role ('primo uomo' was the male equivalent). Later, with the Italian enthusiasm for opera 'stars', the word 'diva', which has its roots in the Latin for 'divine' or 'goddess', became an alternative word with the same meaning. Sadly, with the affected behaviour of some lead singers, the word has almost lost its original meaning, except in a

dictionary, and is used largely as Vic describes. Obviously, in the report on Dame Anne Evans the contributor used 'diva' in its original and complimentary sense.

THANK YOU SECRETARIES!

Sarah Polfreman thanks all who supplied data for her research project.

A big thank you for the help given towards my BSc. (Hons) Management project: investigating the perception of declining membership among Societies.

I am delighted that over half of the Society Secretaries responded to the 'data gathering' questionnaire, and many sent additional information, giving valuable insights into FRMS work and local circumstances. The good wishes expressed for my studies and future career touched me greatly.

The project has been submitted for assessment. And anonymity has been respected where Societies requested it.

The findings are that 'membership decline' is largely a misconception, and the principal difference between 'successful' and 'failing' Societies lies within the Societies and not their external environment. It is for the FRMS to study the report and use the findings as it sees fit.

Thank you again, all of you! Sarah Polfreman.

“THANKS FOR THE MEMORY”

A Weekend Course

If you remember the gramophone and record player, this course is for you.

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Telephone: 0845 230 8590; Fax: 01386 854350 or

E-mail to: [enquiries@Farncombe Estate.co.uk]

The course runs from dinner of **Friday 4th May** until lunch on **Sunday 6th May 2007**

Please make bookings direct with the College

Reflections and Recollections

Roneo news-sheet to glossy magazine: FRMS Vice-President Roderick Shaw looks at Bulletin issues over 60 years

First-rate words, third-rate paper

The opening paragraph of issue No. 1 of the *Bulletin*, in April 1947, states: "Since the first post-war AGM, which was held last July (1946) the Committee has been grappling with the task of launching the National Federation on its way so that the interests of the affiliated societies, at the time of writing exceeding 100 in number, can be served to the fullest degree possible." That first issue was typed and roneo-ed on three sheets of foolscap paper of very poor war-time economy quality. This style of in-house production continued for at least 14 issues, until November 1951.

No Editor was named but I suspect it was the Secretary. At various times The Chairman and other Committee members took on the task. In fact, the name of the Editor was not published until 1958/60 and then only sporadically until January 1967, when a permanent Editor was appointed. At the head of his editorial was a photograph of him and his "mate" (i.e. long suffering wife!).

PRS fees were quoted as £1.10 (£1.05p) for a society of 50 members meeting 26 times a year, and twice that amount for 52 meetings. P.P Ltd. required a token payment of 5/- to cover all societies.

Fuel crisis cramps progress

The fuel crisis at the beginning of 1947 had widespread effects, and even thwarted plans to publish a regular series of the *Bulletin* plus a Federation Handbook. The latter did not appear until 1954, and I still have a copy. The NFGS very much appreciated the City of Bristol Gramophone Society's offer of space in its quarterly publication *Disc*.

On-going tradition of communication

Since its inception in 1947, the *Bulletin* has been the major vehicle for communication between the Federation and its affiliated societies. The tradition is maintained today, as we go to press with issue 146. Before anyone tells me that the numbers do not add up, I'll point out that two



issues a year has not always been the norm. At times there have been three, or even four, publications a year, depending on the state of the Federation's finances.

Gradually going commercial

March 1954 was a milestone that marked the first booklet with issue 22. It was still roneo-ed on the same sort of paper but the folded foolscap sheets were stapled into a yellow cover with red print. This year also saw the first attempt to encourage societies to buy extra copies at 2/6 (13p) per annum.

En passant, it is interesting to read in that issue a report that a collection for the Kathleen Ferrier Fund raised £60.14.9 (£60.74½p).

First steps into the wide world of commerce came with *Bulletin* No. 42 in December 1960. Two well-known companies, *World Record Club* and *Gramophone*, each placed an advertisement in the *Bulletin*, on the inside and outside of the back cover respectively.

This publication also contained an article headed *Federation Economy Drive*. At the previous AGM concerns for rising costs and suggestions for economy were aired. It was pointed out that better attendance at AGMs and Hoddesdon weekends would alleviate the situation. What's new? And how often have we discussed these matters over the years?

Just nine months later, in September 1961, the first commercially printed edition (No. 45) came out. The decision to produce out of house obviously had an impact. Not only did it prompt a congratulatory letter from our President, Sir Adrian Boult, but the following advertisement from a far-flung reader was in the June 1962 edition (No. 48):

WANTED: Pathephone 10 tone-arm extension and sound-box required, or good clear illustration to enable copy to be made. FitzRoy du Toit, PO Box 56 Capetown, South Africa.

I wonder if he ever received a reply?

Facelifts with advancing years

The opening paragraph of No. 55 in April 1964 was: *If the present issue of this journal seems to have had a facelift, it is because we are now fortunate to be receiving the assistance for which*

NEWS & VIEWS

we have been waiting so long. It went on to report that Alan Blyth, member and Press Officer for Putney GS and also a writer for *TV Times*, had agreed to help with the layout. The yellow front cover sported a striking red masthead with BULLETIN printed on it in black, the centred NFGS logo and the issue details at the bottom.

And so it stayed until 1971, when we adopted a glossy white cover. BULLETIN and date were still black but a new orange 'nfgs' monogram was printed at the bottom: societies were free to use the new emblem on their headed notepaper.

Fourteen years on the future became orange when the front cover of issue 103, 1985, was given a complete makeover. We retained the usual logo on a white background but in the centre of the new orange cover was a boxed photograph of a pertinent subject and below this were details of the contents. There was also noticeably more variety in typeface and an increasing number of important advertisements.

The next edition (104) was the commemorative issue for the Golden Jubilee in Spring 1986. The cover of this bumper edition featured a composite photograph of 78 rpm and LP records, tape and CD. Inside were tributes and congratulations from many notables including: our then President, Dr. Vernon Handley; co-founder and Vice-President, W. W. Johnson; representatives of EMI Records and *Gramophone*; music journalists and many more. There was also a number of articles looking at various aspects of the Federation's fifty years and the Editor recorded thanks to all contributors and the advertisers who had supported this special issue.

The New Look

In the ensuing years up to 1992, the magazine continued as a small A5 booklet, although more pictures were used. But advertisements were still thin on the ground and for various reasons, it was becoming difficult to produce a financially viable publication.

The new Editor was still working as a professional Editor, with many years experience and suggested that we change the appearance of the magazine completely and also appoint a Marketing Manager, dedicated to selling advertising space. Thus we arrived at today's A4 glossy magazine. For several years the marketing strategy paid dividends, bringing much needed finance to the *Bulletin*. Indeed, for a while the

Bulletin more than paid for itself and maintained a healthy profit.

But once again the financial trend has reversed. With rapid changes in information technology, advertisers promote their products via the internet and use conventional methods less and less. Coupled with greatly increased printing costs, this makes production difficult. However, if members could be persuaded to buy individual copies, we could buck the trend. One suggestion is for membership to embrace purchase of the *Bulletin* automatically, the cost per capita being first included in subscriptions and then sent on to the Federation treasurer for the *Bulletin* account.

Letters to the Editor

One topic that has stimulated comment via the *Bulletin* from time to time over the years is the style and quality of presentations by society members. In September 1970 (No. 73) a member of the Shaftesbury Gramophone Record Discussion Group wrote: *"The record recital of today is as dead as the dodo, a sure killer of interest.... We should be more concerned with the appreciation of music."* He went on to suggest that the Federation should meet the need for *"a regular service of appreciation information...with advice on books illustrating musical points..."*

Curiously, at the next AGM, there was very little discussion on this matter and delegates agreed that it was beyond the Federation's scope. A view endorsed by the Secretary of West Wickham (No. 74). In the same issue the Federation Vice-Chairman responded with his personal opinion, pointing out the difference between a Society such as Putney Music, with many resources and expertise, and the average society in which *"there are often only one or two members who are able to present their programmes with more than a superficial knowledge of the music, let alone informed opinion. All the books in the world are of no use to the person who is unable to interpret the information in the pages."* As far as I can remember, little more came of this interesting dialogue.

Quotable Quotes

The writer of an amusing article in *Bulletin* 86, 1977, entitled *A Gallery of Gramophone Society Eccentrics* gave cameo sketches of ten character types, all based on life, that are to be found in a typical society. Mind you, he began by

counselling us to be mindful of the mote in our own eye! Space limits me to only a couple of quotes here, and we've all met the characters described!

1. The technician who never finds it easy to find the right hand but whose difficulties are compounded by a recitalist who fails to provide him with a clear written indication of the hands he wishes to be played. He therefore has to resort to a loud conference with the recitalist concerning the exact spot. This conversation is usually an accompaniment to the item just coming to an end.

2. The circle of Mesdames Desfages with incessantly clicking knitting needles, ably assisted in their work by compatriots in the other room, rattling the teacups and chatting in far from whispered tones.

On another occasion, under the heading Foresight, Sir Arthur Sullivan was quoted as saying in 1888: *Dear Mr Edison, For myself, I can only say that I am astonished and somewhat terrified at the result of this evening's experiment. Astonished at the wonderful form you have developed and terrified at the thought that so much hideous and bad music will be put on records forever.*"

Multipurpose showcase

The Bulletin serves many purposes. It has always been a showcase for news and views from societies and individuals; it is a vehicle to disseminate information from the Federation to society secretaries and thence to all members; its review section gives information on what is happening in the recording world and articles on humorous, informative or critical subjects are always welcome. Long may it continue.

During the last forty or so years there have been nine named Editors, one served for 15 years and the current one is back for a second innings. In their various ways all have made the Bulletin a welcome, useful and entertaining read. As in my other articles, in order to be strictly fair, I have deliberately not mentioned names.

The articles in this series are not intended to be a critical survey but random thoughts and memories of people and events. I remember with pleasure so many colleagues and friends, some sadly no longer with us, who served at all levels and in many capacities. Collectively and individually they have maintained the principles laid down by those far-off founders of 1936. *Roderick Shaw*

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"If we could give products six stars, then these CD players would get them" *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision*



PRESENTERS PANEL

FRMS PRESENTERS PANEL

Societies are invited to recommend successful presenters for inclusion in this section. Please note, for those charging a fee there is a modest charge of £10 per entry per annum. An entry on the FRMS Website is also offered free. In addition, many record companies, especially the smaller firms, are able to give presentations on application. Contact the companies direct.

Officers and committee members of the FRMS are experienced presenters and are generally available to give presentations within reasonable distance of home; two have entries in this list and others can be contacted at the addresses inside the back cover of the Bulletin. This supplement is intended to be a general guide to programme planning. Reasonable care is taken to ensure accuracy of the details given but neither the FRMS Committee nor the Editor can accept responsibility for any circumstances subsequent on the use of the supplement.

LORD ABERDARE – the Berlioz Society

16 Beverley Road, London SW13 0LX

Tel: 020 8876 8398, mobile 07768 397190

E-mail: aberdare@probustnw.com

Talks with visual and music illustrations include:

Berlioz from B to Z: an overview of the composer's life and works

Berlioz in England: his five visits from 1847-55

The Musical Madhouse: on my translation of

Berlioz' book *Les Grottesques de la Musique*

Berlioz songs for voice and piano, exploring a less well-known but rewarding group of his compositions

Other Berlioz-related subjects considered.

Expenses only; willing to travel.

OWEN BALLS

1 Wilkinson Way, North Walsham

Norfolk NR28 9BB. Tel: 01692 402737

Chairman: N. Walsham Opera Appreciation Club

Owen is an experienced presenter of opera and

opera singers and has attended the Royal College

of Music. Special titles include:

Viva Verdi: Life and works of Giuseppe Verdi.

The Bel Canto Operas of Bellini and Donizetti.

Outstanding Singers: series includes: Jussi

Bjorling, Franco Corelli, Leontyne Price, Renata

Tebaldi, Dame Joan Sutherland

No fee. Minimum travel expenses.

IAN BOUGHTON BA (Hons), DipMus

25 Bearton Green, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1UN

Tel: 01462 434318 Mobile 07703 584152

E-mail: ianrboughton@aol.com

Website: www.rutlandboughtonmusictrust.org.uk

During the 1920s, Rutland Boughton was the most widely talked about composer in England, surpassing even Edward Elgar and Vaughan Williams. His festivals were the first of their kind in England and his opera "The Immortal Hour" broke a world record that is still held today.

Ian Boughton, a grandson of the composer, gives illustrative presentations to societies.

Expenses only; no fee

DEBBIE BRIDGE BA (Voice)

14 Milnthorpe Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5HT

Tel: 01273 732121; Mobile: 07748 678564

Email: debscrazycat22bridge@btinternet.com

Professional opera singer and singing coach. Has

toured with companies in the UK and abroad.

most notably D'Oyly Carte. Member of the

Incorporated Society of Musicians, the Royal

Society of Musicians, Equity and Spotlight.

Keen interest in music from North America.

Talks on American classical music include:

American Round Up – series 1 and series 2

Fees £50 plus travel for non-local destinations.

ALLAN CHILD

12 Highfield Road, Derby, DE22 1GZ

Tel: 01532 332649

E-mail (might change soon): archil12@aol.com

Chairman, Derby RMS. FRMS Committee.

Among recent programmes are:

"Transports of Delight?" – a programme inspired

not so much by places visited as by the means of

getting there.

"Words and Music" – a joint presentation by

Allan and Ruth Child in which words about music

and music inspired by words are woven into an

uninterrupted sequence.

Other programmes include the music of Scotland,

Spain and Hungary - please ask for details.

No fee; expenses minimal or none. \will travel.

DINMORE RECORDS

11 Romsley Hill Grange, Romsley

Halesowen B622 0LN

Tel/fax 01562 7108015

E-mail: paularden-taylor@ntlworld.com

PRESENTERS PANEL

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

Contact Paul Arden-Taylor to arrange a presentation illustrated with music from the current catalogue.

No fee, but expenses requested over 50 miles.

ANDREW DOWNES

2 Church Street, Hagley, Stourbridge
West Midlands DY9 0NA

Tel/fax 01562 886625

E-mail: downlyn@globalnet.co.uk

Website: www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~downlyn

Andrew has been described in a brochure for the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra as a composer "ranking today among the internationally acclaimed personalities". His music has been performed in India, USA, Austria, France, Czech Republic, Mexico and Israel and the UK by the Royal Philharmonic and Czech Philharmonic Orchestras, Sarah Walker and John Mitchinson. It has been broadcast on BBC TV and radio, Czech, Dutch, Austrian, French, Italian and Chinese stations and also recorded on CD.

Titles, fee and expenses by negotiation.

GORDON DRURY

31 Kingsley Park, Whitechurch,
Hampshire RG28 7HA. Tel: 01256 892267

E-mail: gdrury2000@aol.com

Experienced speaker offers audio-visual presentations about one of London's major recording venues, Kingsway Hall, and some of the many classic recordings made there.

No fee, but reasonable travelling expenses required.

Please contact to discuss your requirements.

THE DVORÁK SOCIETY

Promotes the music of all Czech and Slovak composers, past and present. A few of its members are invited on occasion to give talks and lectures to societies at various locations.

Enquiries to: Don Preddy, Hon Sec, The Dvorak Society, Church House, Lyonshall, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3HR. Tel: 01544 340760.

E-mail: secretary@dvorak-society.org

No fee but expenses might be requested.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

The Society will arrange for experienced presenters to give illustrated talks on general or specific topics concerning Elgar's life and work. Contact Branch Secretaries in the following areas to arrange a speaker from the Society.

London

Dr Relf Clark, 61 Torridge Drive, Diddot,
Oxfordshire. OX11 7QZ. Tel: 01235 813257

West Midlands

Hywel Davies, 24 College Grove, Malvern,
Wores. WR14 3HP. Tel: 01684 562692

North West

Mrs Pat Hurst, 60 Homewood Rd., Northenden,
Manchester M22 4DW. Tel: 0161 998 4404

Thames Valley

John Beech, 38 Cedar Crescent, Thame,
Oxon OX9 2AU. Tel: 01844 212061

Southern England

Chris Conally, 17 Lonsdale Avenue, Cosham,
Portsmouth PO6 2PU. Tel: 02392 389410

South West England/South Wales

Michael Butterfield, 2 Leigh Road, Bristol
BS8 2DA. Tel: 01179 092503

Yorkshire

Robert Seager, 28 Alton Way, Mapplewell,
Bamsley, S. Yorks S75 6EY. Tel: 01226 383053

Scotland

Sharon Bassett, 9 George Street, Dunfermline,
Fife KY11 4TQ. Tel: 01383 727491

CHRISTOPHER FIFIELD MusD GRSM ARMC MARCO
80 Wolfington Road, London SE27 0RQ
Tel: 07752 273 558

E-Mail: christopherfifield@ntlworld.com

Freelance conductor of thirty years experience; also 12 years on the music staff at Glyndebourne. Records for the Swedish label Sterling.

Has written books on Max Bruch, Hans Richter and Kathleen Ferrier and a history of Ibbs and Tillett. Talks include:

The music of Bruch beyond the first violin concerto

The life and work of conductor Hans Richter (Wagner, Brahms and Elgar in particular)

The life of Kathleen Ferrier

Forgotten composer Frederic Cliffe (1857-1931)

Fee: Negotiable, plus expenses and/or hospitality if over 50 miles from South London.

DR DAVID FLIGG

Leeds College of Music, 3 Quarry Hill, Leeds
LS2 7PD. Tel: 0113 222 3423

E-mail: d.fligg@lcm.ac.uk

Website: www.impulse-music.co.uk/fligg.htm

Lecturer in composition and music history at Leeds College of Music. Composer and conductor. Subject Specialist Reviewer (Music) for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians and the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters. Contributor to various music magazines. CD sleeve notes and

PRESENTERS PANEL

programme notes. Various non-technical and entertaining topics and workshops.
Contact to discuss availability, details of fees and your Society's requirements.

JOHN GILKS

The Old School, High Street, Nawton,
York YO62 7TT Tel: 01439 771273

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C is for Composer

Creating good habits: the story of Simon Rattle

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Expenses only.

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10 Drovers, Bolney Street, Haywards Heath,
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Since retirement has made over 400 appearances as baritone soloist and speaker on subjects inc:

Charles Villiers Stanford. The life of arguably Britain's greatest all round musician; teacher of most of the best of Britain's early 20th C

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William Yeates Hurlstone. Outstandingly gifted pupil of Stanford, who might have rivalled Purcell and Elgar had he lived longer. Much of his work

was left in manuscript but has since been recorded. 2006 was the centenary of his death.

Expenses: negotiable. Will travel anywhere.

ERIC JENNINGS

9 Hillside Road, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6AW
Tel: 01928 733209

E-mail: fizneric@tiscali.co.uk

For 31 years was principal trombone with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Subjects include:

Conductors I have known and worked for

The life and times of Beethoven

Life in the Orchestra

Rio de Janeiro

On the fiddle

A Musician Becoming

Fee: £40.00 plus expenses for non-local presentations.

BERESFORD KING-SMITH

Cantabile, 8 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands B72 1QY Tel/Fax: 0121 355 5018

E-mail: cantabile@frecola.com

Retired senior administrator with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; author of its official history 'Crescendo!'

Talks available include:

Crescendo! - The Story of the CBSO

The Story of Birmingham's Choral Societies
What is Genius?

Six Special Singers

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Fee: £75, includes travel up to 15 miles from Sutton Coldfield

THE GUSTAV MAHLER SOCIETY UK

Since 2001 it has promoted education for the twenty-first century public in the life and music of Gustav Mahler and related composers. It also supports young professional artists. The chair of the GMS UK, Dr Jim Pritchard, well-known for his talks on Wagner's early and later life and also *The Ring* cycle now offers additional new talks on Gustav Mahler, his songs and symphonies, and Alma Mahler. Programmes tailored to the recorded music society's requirements.

Enquiries: Dr Jim Pritchard, GMS UK, 15 David Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS11 7HG.

Email: jpritchard@mahlersociety.org or visit the website www.mahlersociety.org

Possible small fee and/or expenses depending on distance and circumstances.

ALASTAIR MITCHELL, LGSM

See advertisement on p.8

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

16 Melbourne Road, Halesowen B63 3NB

Tel: 0121 550 4482

E-mail: cfmorley47@aol.com

Graduated as Bmus(Hons) from University of Birmingham in 1969; is Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, chief music critic of *Birmingham Post* and Midlands correspondent for *Classical Music*, *Musical Opinion*, *Opera* and *Music Teacher*. Illustrated programmes include:

Confessions of music critic

Changing critical attitudes to Elgar

The Symphonies of Gustav Mahler

Mahler's Sixth Symphony - greatest of the 20th C

Composers on record

The problem of bespoke music

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Fee £75, inclusive of expenses.

NIMBUS RECORDS

Wyastone Estate Ltd, Wyastone Leys, Ganarew,
Monmouth NP25 3SR

Tel: 01600 890007

E-mail: antony@wyastone.co.uk

Nimbus Records issued its first LP recording in 1977 and in 1984 opened the first CD plant in the UK. In nearly 30 years the catalogue has grown to almost 1000 titles with a very international flavour. Nimbus has never imposed directives on age, geography or marketing attraction on its

PRESENTERS PANEL

artists – it was enough that they appealed to the Nimbus directors.

Two of the original founders are still part of the team and, under a new umbrella of *Wyastone Estate Limited*, the company continues with a mixed business base of music recording and disc manufacturing.

To arrange a presentation about Nimbus Records please contact Business Director, Antony Smith.

CLIFFORD OCCOMORE

East Cottage, Wyse Hill Farm, Barnard Castle, Durham DL12 9RA

Tel: 01833 631755 (after 2 p.m.)

E-mail: cliff.occo@yahoo.co.uk

Particular interests/programmes:

British Music; inc. 'the Celtic Fringe' and music of composers involved in or affected by World Wars 1 and 2

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Piano/Organ/Guitar

Light Music

Spanish/Latin American music (with assistance of Mrs. Judy Occomore)

No fee. Travelling expenses 40p/mile up to 50 miles; longer distances by arrangement.

DR GEOFF OGRAM,

Secretary Stafford RMS

6 Silverthorn Way, Wildwood, Stafford ST17 4PZ

Tel: 01785 663423

E-mail: geoff.ogram@talktalk.net

A number of recital programmes are available, with a significant content of 20th C British music.

My specialist composer is Gordon Jacob, whose music I discovered in 1956. We became friends and I have just completed a book on his music.

The recital on his work is entitled *Seventh Son*.

No fee required, just minimal travel expenses.

MISS JOY PURITZ

149c Holland Rd, London W14 8AS

Tel: 020 7602 4187 (evening)

020 7494 3130 (daytime)

E-mail: jepuritz@tiscali.co.uk

Granddaughter of Elisabeth Schumann and translator of her biography (written by the singer's son, Gerd Puritz).

Illustrated presentation entitled *A Portrait of the Soprano, Elisabeth Schumann* has been well received by the Friends of Covent Garden, the National Sound Archive and many recorded music societies.

Fee negotiable

SIVA OKE LRAM

13 Riversdale Rd, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT17 0QL

Tel: 020 8398 1586 Fax: 020 8339 0981

E-mail: soka@somm-recordings.com

Website: www.somm-recordings.com

Former professional musician, veteran of the record industry and owner of SOMM Recordings, a well-established label with a wide-ranging and interesting repertoire.

'Sailing through Troubled Waters', with music from current catalogue.

No fee, but expenses requested over 50 miles.

TONY POOK (York RMS)

1 Lower Friargate, York, YO1 9SL

Tel: 01904 642407

E-mail: tpook@globalnet.co.uk

Travelling expenses only.

Presentations are from the lesser-known but tuneful repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries.

My particular interest is in American, British and Czech composers, but I also have programmes from Finland, Russia, Slovakia and Spain.

Examples are:

Dvořák in England (or America or at home)

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Louis Moreau Gottschalk – composer and adventurer

The music of Alexander Borodin

PAUL ADRIAN ROOKE MA (Cantab) Cert. Ed

95 Nightingale Road Hitchin

Hertfordshire SG5 1RL

Tel: 01462 458614 Mobile: 07711 617561

E-mail: paulrooke@hotmail.com

Web site: pauladrianrooke.com

Retired music teacher. International co-ordinator of the Elgar Society. Talks on Elgar and most musical subjects, especially 19th C British music. Fee: £50-100 (negotiable) plus expenses.

DONALD ROOKSBY

Glanrafon, 14 Hcof Garrog, Eglwysbach,

Colwyn Bay, North Wales LL28 5AQ.

Tel: 01492 650244.

Founder of Derby RMS and general manager Hyperion Records until 1986. Subjects include: Britain's Brightest Record Label: some recent issues from Hyperion

Rare Pleasures – some neglected Mozart

Off the Beaten Groove: a personal search in musical byways.

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No fee for Hyperion programme; others minimum expenses.

Midlands, N. England, Wales, Scotland preferred.

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70 Filching Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex
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Current programmes:

Wagner and Liszt, an uneasy friendship; linked to:
Wagner and Liszt, their musical legacy.

Vienna: Mahler and his contemporaries; linked to:
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who fled Vienna and Nazi Germany.

George Gershwin - Crazy for you

Sergei Prokofiev - the prodigal son

Golden age of film music

Aspects of opera in the 20th Century

Viva Verdi! and Viva Verdi! (Encore)

Once upon a time: fairytales, myths and legends

Dmitri Shostakovich 1906-75

Further details on request. Expenses only.

CATHERINE WILMERS

The Brew House, Radwell, Baldoak,

Herts SG7 5ES. Tel: 01462 730490

E-mail: ccwilmers@bigfoot.com

Professional cellist, LPO recitals and chamber music. Recorded CD for ASV, *A Cello Century of British Women Composers 1884-1984*, which won Diapason gold award. Catherine features anecdotes about the composers (with her cello) and the making of the CD.

Also *The Not so Silent Minority*: examples of late 19th and early 20th century string chamber music by Louise Farrenc, Ethyl Smyth, Clara Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn, Teresa Carreño, and Rebecca Clarke.

Travels countrywide. Fees negotiable + expenses.

DAVID WILSON

5 Orchard Court, Bridge St, Walton on Thames
Surrey KT12 1AN; Tel: 01932 229711

E-mail: drwilson24@tiscali.co.uk

Subjects covered include:

Kathleen Ferrier

Solomon

Adolf Busch and the Busch Quartet

Sir Henry Wood

Emmanuel Feuermann (in preparation)

No fee. South-east England preferred.

Nimbus under new umbrella 'Wyastone Estate Limited'

Nimbus Records first LPs were pressed in 1977 in a small factory in the courtyard of a Victorian Country Mansion called 'Wyastone Leys' close to the ancient town of Monmouth.

The master-tapes had been recorded in the Birmingham studio built in the late 60s by the company's founders Numa Labinsky, Michael and Gerald Reynolds. From the outset, the company policy was: to be in control of each step in the recording and manufacturing process; to record using the simplest microphone techniques, and to encourage performers to approach recording in the same spirit as they would a concert. In nearly 30 years the catalogue has grown to almost 1,000 titles with an international flavour and the choice of artist has never depended on age, geography or marketing appeal. The company's LP and CD manufacturing businesses have provided revenue stream to fund recording activity and enable Nimbus to remain independent, with classical music as only a part of Nimbus's broader business activities in manufacturing and technology.

Today the Nimbus family is lucky enough to have two of the original founders still part of the team. The company continues with a mixed business base of music recording and disc manufacturing. We continue to enjoy our independence, the beauty of the Wye Valley seen from our headquarters, and the indefinable alchemy of working with musicians who have something interesting to say.

All Nimbus recordings use a microphone technique called 'Ambisonics'. The name sounds like jargon, but the concept is elegant simplicity. Recording is a compromise. The technology each recording engineer uses will be decided by the compromises he finds the least tolerable. In Nimbus' case there were two aspects of contemporary recording felt to be unsatisfactory. First was the fragmentation of the recording ambience resulting from the use of multiple spaced microphones. Second was 2-channel stereo playback, which presented a flat sound as stereo takes no account of the direction and richness of acoustic reflections occurring in a hall. Ambisonics provided a solution to both concerns as part of a whole recording/playback strategy. We liked it so much we have used it exclusively since 1978, and eventually bought the patents! Nimbus recordings are compatible with stereo playback - they have to be since that is the market - but the effect of realism is completely transformed when experienced in surround-sound as we intended. And with home-cinema systems leading the surround charge we retain some vestigial hope that stereo might be gracefully pensioned-off before too much longer!

Notable Anniversaries for 2008

Compiled by Brendan Sadler

In 2008 Italian opera buffs will be able to celebrate the 150th anniversary of one of the most popular opera composers, Giacomo **Puccini**. There is also the centenary of the death of that most prolific of Russian opera composers, Nikolay **Rimsky Korsakov**. While on the subject of opera we should not overlook our own Ethel **Smyth** who was born just eight months before **Puccini**. Lastly but by no means least, next year sees the centenary of the birth of one of the most important composers of the latter half of the 20th century, Olivier **Messiaen**. How many programme planners will pluck up the courage to give this charismatic figure his due? Other notable birthdays include: the **Hallé Orchestra** (150), the **Suisse Romande Orchestra** (90), Herbert von **Karajan** (100), Maxim **Shostakovich** (70), soprano **Barbara Hendrix** (60) and Richard **Hickox** (60).

Composers -

(b = born; d = died)

01.10.1708	Blow, John (Eng) d
20.11.1758	Roman, Helmich (Swed) d*
05.12.1758	Fasch, Johann Friedrich (Ger) d*
29.02.1808	Bagner, Carlos (Sp) d*
15.05.1808	Halfe, Michael (Fre) b
26.09.1808	Vronicky, Pavel (Mor) d*
23.03.1858	Reubke, Julius (Ger) b
03.04.1858	Neukomm, Sigmund (Austria) d*
16.04.1858	Cramer, Johann Baptist (Ger) d
22.04.1858	Smyth, Ethel (Eng) b
16.07.1858	Ysaÿe, Eugène (Belg) b
22.12.1858	Puccini, Giacomo (It) b
23.01.1908	Macdowell, Edward (USA) d
15.05.1908	Larsson Lars Erik (Swed) b
08.06.1908	Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay (Russ) d
29.06.1908	Anderson, Leroy (USA) b*
09.08.1908	Suchon, Eugen (Slov) b
20.09.1908	Sarasate, Pablo (Sp) d
26.09.1908	Wranitzky, Paul (Cz) d
21.10.1908	Ferguson, Howard (Eng) b
20.11.1908	Dietrich, Albert Hermann (Ger) d*
10.12.1908	Messiaen, Olivier (Fr) b
11.12.1908	Carter, Elliot (USA) b
23.06.1958	Järnefelt, Armas (Fin) d
05.08.1958	Holbrooke, Joseph (Eng) d
17.08.1958	Schmidt, Florent (Fr) d
26.08.1958	Vaughan Williams, Ralph (Eng) d
24.10.1958	Shaw, Martin (Eng) d

* Dates supplied by Roger Hughes of *Ruiskip RMS*

Compositions

(fp = first performance; p = year published)

1608

Gabrielli, G	Canzona la Spiritosa (p)
Monteverdi, C	Arianna, opera (fp) Il Ballo Delle Ingrate, ballet

1708

Hach, J-S	Passacaglia & Fugue in C min
Handel	La Resurrezione, Easter oratorio
Porpora	Agrippina, opera

1808

Beethoven	"Sehnsucht", songs with piano (p)
Rossini	Sonata for 2 violins, cello and bass

1908

Aubert	Crépuscules d'Automne, song cycle
Burtok	Portraits, for Orchestra Violin Concerto No.1 String Quartet No.1
Bas	Lyrical Interlude, for string quartet
Berg	Au L'enfer
Brian	The Vision of Cleopatra, for solos, chorus and orchestra
Bridge	Dance Rhapsody, for orchestra Suite for strings
Busoni	The Bridal Choice
Casella	Symphony No.2 Sarabande, for piano and harp
Debussy	Iberia, from Images for orchestra Children's Corner, suite for piano Trois Chansons de France (Charles d'Orleans) for a cappella choir
Delius	Dance Rhapsody No.1 In a Summer Garden Symphony No.1 in E flat
Elgar	Précis Espagnoles, for piano
Falla	Serenade, for cello and piano
Fauré	The Sirens, symphonic poem
Gilèze	A Winter's Tale
Goldmark	Savitra, opera
Hold	Choral Hymns from Rig-Veda, pp.1 The Unanswered Question, for orch
Ives	Mr Bronček's Excursion to the Moon
Janeček	String Quartet No.1
Kodaly	Das Lied von der Erde, song cycle
Mahler	Cello Sonata
Malpiero	Twelve Goethe Songs
Medtner	Saga-Drom, for orchestra
Nielsen	The Children of Bethlehem, oratorio
Pièrre	Songs of Sorrow
Quiller	Symphonic Prologue to a Tragedy
Reger	Violin Concerto Piano Trio Sonata, for clarinet or viola and piano
Respighi	Concerto in the Old Style for violin & orchestra
Satie	Aperçus Désagréables, for piano duet
Schoenberg	Buch der Hängenden Gärten, song cycle
Scriabin	Poem of Ecstasy, for orchestra
Sibelius	String Quartet (Voces Intimae)

ANNIVERSARIES

Stravinsky	Fireworks, for orchestra Scherzo Fantastique Lament on the Death of Rimsky-Korsakov, for chorus and orchestra	Lutoslawski	Funeral Music, for strings
V. Williams	String Quartet in G minor	Lutyens	Piano et Forte, for piano
Villa-Lobos	Recoildi, for small orchestra	Martin	Overture in Rondo Psaumes de Genève, for choir, children's chorus, orch. and organ
Webern	Passacaglia, for orchestra Entflicht auf Leichtem Käthen, for chorus Ten Lieder	Maw	Nocturne, for mezzo soprano and chamber orchestra Piano Concerto
1958		Mennin	Maria Golovan, opera
Arnell	Moonflowers, opera	Menotti	Violin Concerto No.3 (Concerto Royal)
Arnold	Sinfonietta No.2	Milhaud	Oblivies, for orchestra String Quartet A Song for Christmas for voice and piano
Barber	Vanessa, opera	Nilsson	Kreutzlingen, instrumental ensemble Buch der Veränderungen Mädchenstoten - lieder
Berio	Differences, for five instruments/tape Sequence 1, for flute Theme (Homage to Joyce), electronic music	Orff	Oedipus, der Tyrann
Berkley	Concerto for piano & double string orchestra	Penderecki	Emanations, for two string orchestras Epithaphiom on the Death of Artur Malawski, for string orchestra and timpani The Psalms of David, for chorus and instruments
Bliss	The Lady of Shalott, ballet	Piston	Psalms and Prayer of David, for chorus and seven instruments
Brian	Symphony No.16 (unpublished)	Pizzetti	Murder in the Cathedral, opera
Britten	Nocturne, for tenor, instrument ensemble and strings	Poulenc	La Voix Humaine, lyric tragedy, sop
Cage	Piano Concerto	Rawsthorne	Halle Overture
Castelnuovo-Tedesco	The Merchant of Venice, opera Saul	Rochberg	Symphony No.2 Cheltenham Concerto, chamber orch Dialogues, for clarinet and piano Oboe Sonata Pezzo Ostinato, for solo harp Permutazione a Cinque, for five wind instruments Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man - chamber cantata Symphony No.4 String Quintet
Chavez	Inventions No.1 for piano	Rubbra	String Quartet No.5 with female voices Ontogeny, for orchestra Walking Upright, song cycle On Green Mountain, for jazz combo
Dallapiccola	Requiescat, for chorus and orchestra	Seiber	Nagasaki, oratorio
Davies	Stedman Caters, sextet	Sessions	Symphony No.11 (The Year 1905)
Diamond	Woodwind Quintet	Shapey	King Priam, opera Crown of the Year, for chorus and orchestra Prelude, Recitative and Aria, for flute, oboe and harpsichord
Foss	Symphony of Chorales	Shapiro	The First Nowell, for voices, chorus and orchestra
Fricker	Comedy Overture	Shutke	Four Lust Songs
Goehr	La Belle Dame Sans Merci, ballet	Shostakovich	Vocalise, for soprano and clarinet
Gould	Rhythm Gallery, narrator and orch. St Lawrence Suite, for band	Tippet	Serenade de Espada, overture Piano Concerto No.1
Hamilton	Overture 1912 Concerto for jazz trumpet and orchestra Sonata for solo cello	V. Williams	
Hanson	Mosaics, for orchestra	Williamson	
Henze	Sonata per Archi Der Prinz von Homburg, opera Three Dithyrambs, for chamber orchestra Three Tentos, for guitar		
Hindemith	Octet		
Hoddinott	Harp Concerto, (fp) Four Welsh dances, for orchestra (fp) Concerto for viola & small orch (fp) Serenade for string orchestra (fp)		
Jacob	Divisions, for ww and strings Old Wine in new Bottle, for wind Suite, for recorder and string quartet Miniature String Quartet		
Khachaturian	Sonatina for piano		
Korte	The Story of the Flutes, tone poem		
Ligeti	Artikulation, for tape		

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