



# Bulletin

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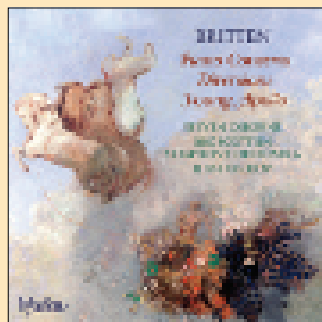
# NEW RELEASES

www.hyperion-records.co.uk

## BRITTEN PIANO CONCERTO DIVERSIONS / YOUNG APOLLO

The three compositions which comprise Britten's music for solo piano and orchestra constitute a unique, yet still little explored, part of his output. Here they are brought together in a stunning disc that pays tribute to the great artistry of all involved.

STEVEN OSBORNE  
BBC SCOTTISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
ILAN VOLKOV

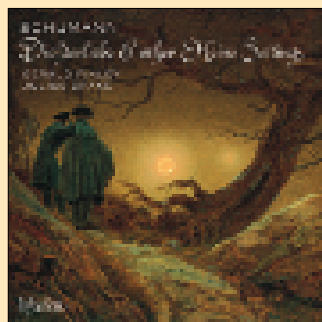


CDA67625

## SCHUMANN DICHTERLIEBE & OTHER HEINE SETTINGS

Why another Dichterliebe recording? Because Gerald Finley has simply one of the greatest voices of his generation, and is an artist at the peak of his powers. He brings to this noble cycle the supreme musical understanding that characterizes all his performances. This is his fourth disc with collaborator Julius Drake, and the partnership has proved to be a uniquely rewarding one.

GERALD FINLEY / JULIUS DRAKE

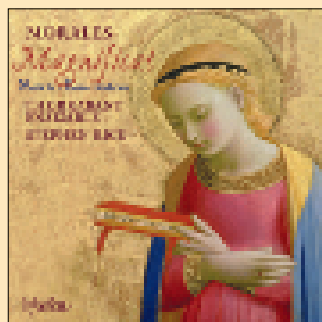


CDA67676

## MORALES MAGNIFICAT MOTETS & LAMENTATIONS

Morales was the first Spanish composer to achieve true international fame, and was described by contemporaries as 'the light of Spain in music'. The longest work on this disc is Morales's *Magnificat primi toni*. This is the first recording of any of Morales's Magnificats to present the entire work as the composer originally intended.

THE BRABANT ENSEMBLE  
STEPHEN RICE



CDA67694

## PORPORA CANTATAS FOR SOPRANO

Porpora is best known for his open rivalry with Handel on the London operatic scene. But this dazzling new disc from Auser Musici shows the composer to be a profound musician with a rich and wide-ranging output, a mastery of compositional technique and a keen sense of theatre and dramatic pacing. Stylishly performed and recorded, this disc will surely force a reappraisal of Porpora's artistry and reawaken interest in this great composer.

ELENA CECCHI FEDI / AUSER MUSICI

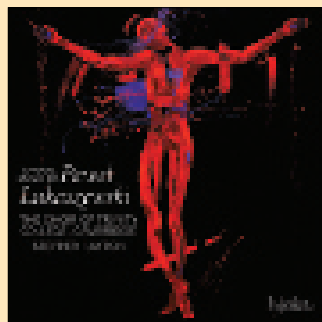


CDA67621

## PAWEŁ LUKASZEWSKI CHORAL MUSIC

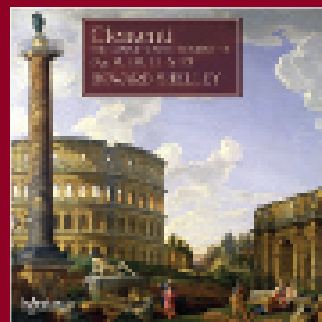
This latest disc from Trinity showcases the talent of this marvellous young choir in a disc of seductively beautiful spiritual music from Poland. Paweł Lukaszewski is the most outstanding of the younger generation of Polish composers specializing in sacred choral music. Conductor Stephen Layton is one of Lukaszewski's most enthusiastic proponents. He communicates this deep understanding of Lukaszewski's music to his young singers, coaxing from them a committed and potent performance.

THE CHOIR OF TRINITY COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE / STEPHEN LAYTON



CDA67639

# Hyperion



CDA67717

## CLEMENTI THE COMPLETE PIANO SONATAS VOLUME 2

This is the second volume in a complete chronological survey of the Clementi sonatas. After the somewhat frivolous delights of Volume 1, Volume 2 displays Clementi in more serious and weighty form. The selection recorded here is of pieces that begin to reveal depths of expression seldom encountered in the composer's earlier music.

HOWARD SHELLEY



CDA67674

## MARTINŮ THE COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA VOLUME 4

This is the fourth volume in Hyperion's set of the complete works for violin and orchestra by Martinů, featuring the wonderful Bohuslav Matoušek. Many first recordings are included in the series, as well as works totally unperformed outside the Czech Republic.

BOHUSLAV MATOUŠEK  
CZECH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD



CDH55295

## THE STUDY OF LOVE FRENCH SONGS AND MOTETS OF THE 14TH CENTURY

'A wonderful addition to the catalogue, and the recorded sound ... is superlative' (*Gramophone*)

'A simply superb CD ... a recording which you might use to snare those as yet unconverted and resistant to the beauties of the Gothic' (*Fanfare, USA*)

GOTHIC VOICES  
CHRISTOPHER PAGE



CDH55314

## MARTINŮ MOZART EPISTLE SONATAS

'Not to be missed. Buy it at once!'

(*Musical Opinion*)

'An hour's delightful listening. Warmly recommended' (*CD Review*)  
'Cannot fail to delight' (*BBC Music Magazine*)

THE KING'S CONSORT  
ROBERT KING



CDH55240

## MARTINŮ CORELLI LA FOLIA

'The most persuasive account of Corelli on disc' (*The Rough Guide 100 Essential CDs*)

'Highly enjoyable' (*Gramophone*)  
'Excellent performances from all concerned, and recording quality to match' (*Penguin Guide to Compact Discs*)

THE PURCELL QUARTET

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Please note that the address of the FRMS website is  
[www.thefrms.co.uk](http://www.thefrms.co.uk)

## *Division of labour - or many hands make light work*



This heading refers to some words that you will find on p.27, and which I'll get round to in due course.

I wonder how many of you remember a broadcast on the BBC Light Programme from days of yore, when we were very young and carefree? It was *Record Roundup*, compèred by a very cheerful Jack Jackson late on Friday nights. As Big Ben struck midnight he would say: "Oh boy! It's Saturday!" This signalled the start of the weekend, time to slow down and forget the weekly treadmill, deadlines and general hurly burly that came with the daily routine of work, whatever that might be, and generally a time to do one's own thing.

Even after years of 'retirement' I still get a

pleasant faint buzz of *je ne sais quoi* when it gets to Saturday. But not today! The Bulletin is finished, just about ready to go to print – except for my editorial! Usually, there is always something I want to say, or some pertinent bee buzzing around, trying to get out of my bonnet and onto paper. But not this time. That is until, in the small hours of this morning, I remembered those words on p.27.

Among the great number of Societies that I have visited, or with which I have contact, there is a small handful battling from a lack of people ready to take office. This means that the burden of running the Society falls continually on the same few people (or, in a couple of cases, even one person).

There are all kinds of reasons for this sometimes almost insoluble problem, but it occurred to me that it might be worth trying to have more than one person sharing the duties of an officer.

It usually happens that the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman work as a team but in other cases, for instance the office of programme secretary, one person has responsibility for finding and liaising with speakers to cover the whole year – quite a task. It might be worth considering how to divide this responsibility between several people, each one responsible for providing speakers for, say, four or even fewer meetings.

Or how about trying a single 'brainstorming' meeting at the beginning of the year when every member could make suggestions and a consensus reached as to how the task could be allotted.

It is possible to make many variations on this theme of division of labour. If adopted, a job-sharing scheme could revitalise a flagging Society.

In this way, harking back to p.27, Everybody would play a part, Nobody would have too daunting a job and poor old Muggins, whoever that might be, would be able to relax a bit more! *Thelma Shaw*

### ***Important events before Christmas!***

**25 October:** FRMS 72<sup>nd</sup> AGM hosted by Bristol Music Club. Details on page 26

**15 November:** FRMS Central Region AUTUMN MUSIC DAY. Details on page 27

**21 – 23 November:** Friends of Torbay MUSIC WEEKEND. Details on page 14  
*And don't forget YRG Music Weekend in Scarborough next year! Details on page 11*

# Daventry Weekend a Sell-out

*This year's Federation Music Weekend from 25th - 27th April at the Barceló Daventry Hotel was a sell-out before the final week for residential booking and well supported by local day visitors. There were several new faces among the battalion of regulars and the usual party atmosphere abounded. Adrian Farmer and Antony Smith of Wyastone were in residence with a CD stall of their products and on Friday, for night owls, gave a short presentation of music from their current catalogue. My thanks to those who contributed to this report, including George Steele who supplied the photographs. Ed.*

**A**fter the pre-dinner drinks reception, the celebration dinner set the tone for the next two days of musical entertainment by celebrated presenters, with good food in good company between sessions.

## John Lill

The weekend started splendidly with an informal, and at times hilarious, conversation between **John Lill**, one of our foremost pianists, and **Lyndon Jenkins**, a long-standing friend of the FRMS. The two formed a superb double act as they explored John's career, interests and views on many matters.

### Role of the performer

John described his professional life as "solitary but not lonely" and considers accurate interpretation of a composer to be the most important aspect of the performer's role. He must understand the composer's intentions, be utterly convinced by the structure of a work and has a duty to transfer that conviction to the audience, sometimes at odds with an incompatible conductor. In his words: "The buck stops with you; it's an exciting challenge."

John Lill is not enthusiastic about recordings and considers that, except in the case of a very few good companies, they

tend to destroy the all-important structure of the work.

John is somewhat ambivalent about critics and is irritated to read a good review of what he considered to be a less than satisfactory performance.



### Humour, hobbies and idols

John brought roars of laughter from the audience as he gave the lie to his serious public persona by demonstrating his love of the ridiculous (the Goons in particular) with a recording of Peter Sellers in a spoof interview of a Lisbon pop singer.

In contrast to his artistic life, John's many interests and hobbies show a scientific bent. They include amateur radio, for which he has a certificate; chess; bird watching and psychic research.

Asked which was his favourite composer he replied without hesitation "Beethoven" and said that he would love to be able to have a conversation with him.

Of fellow pianists, his idol is Claudio Arrau. This is no

surprise since he was, as is John, a great Beethoven interpreter. He also expressed a great admiration for Sviatoslav Richter. Commenting on singers, John caused a smile when he declared that, although he respects them, he "can do without choral music for long periods"!

One of the best experiences of his life, he recalled, was meeting Shostakovich whose concertos he had performed. Another was being asked to perform before Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and Prince Charles. John's choice of music:

\*Toscanini conducting part of Beethoven's *3rd Symphony (Eroica)*

\*William Matthias' conducting the opening of his *2nd Symphony*

\*Furtwängler conducting the finale of Haydn's *Symphony No. 88*

\*The end of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3*.

With consummate skill, Lyndon conducted the proceedings and kept the lively conversation flowing smoothly in an intimate and highly entertaining manner. He showed us an approachable, honest man who is a giant not only on stage but also off and one whose modesty belies his stature as one of our greatest living classical artistes. It was an enormous pleasure to spend an all-too-short two hours in John Lill's company.



## OUT & ABOUT

### Brian Godfrey



**Brian Godfrey**, Secretary of Radlett Record Society, is a regular Weekender, usually among the audience but this year was on stage as a presenter. Brian is a consultant discographer for *International Record Review* and formerly worked for *Gramophone*.

As a member of the LSO Chorus and The Chelsea Opera Group (COG) for over 50 years, Brian has sung in many operas and concert works. His presentation covered the background and activities of COG and featured several of its archive recordings.

COG was founded almost 60 years ago, the brainchild of David Cairns the well-known author and authority on Berlioz, and the oboist Stephen Gray. David found the soloists and Stephen the orchestral players and conductors. A very young and talented conductor until 1957 was one Colin Davis. After he left COG, Davis returned occasionally, mainly for Berlioz. In the very early days COG gave mostly Mozart operas, and they usually sing works in the original language.

#### Platform for young artists

The idea was partly to have fun but, more importantly, also to give young artists the opportunity to play and sing in

concert performances, with the emphasis on the music rather than visual theatre.

#### First time perfection

COG began recording its performances on tape in the early 50s, often in somewhat precarious conditions, at first in mono but in stereo from 1971. These 'amateur' recordings are of remarkable quality with their outstanding clarity, perfect diction and freshness.

Brian's music was from a dozen superb recordings of COG performances between 1955 and 1990 of operas by Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Verdi, Stravinski, Gershwin, and Tchaikovsky. The extracts featured artists that were to become famous names and Brian gave a fascinating background story to each item. Every one was a musical jewel but, for this writer, the highlights were:

\*April Cantelo, (sop) singing *Padre, germani* from Mozart's *Idomeneo*; conductor Colin Davis (1955)

\*Jack Irons & Anne Pashley in a duet from Beethoven's *Fidelio*; conductor, James Loughran (1963)

\*Adrian de Peyer's *Where art thou Venus?* from Stravinski's *The Rake's Progress*; cond. R. Norrington (1969)

\*Willard White singing *Oh Bess, Where is my Bess?* From *Porgy and Bess*; cond. Simon Rattle (1976)

\*A galaxy of stars in the quintet *Wer ein holdes errungen* from *Fidelio*; cond. Colin Davis (1975)

Brian's presentation was full of anecdotes and information as well as wonderful music. If only these recordings were available on general release!

### Christopher Fifield



**Christopher Fifield** is primarily a conductor and has directed orchestras all over the world, from Cape Town, Sweden, Singapore and Iceland to Glyndebourne. But he has other strings to his bow: music historian, author, broadcaster and lecturer. His work for the Swedish CD Sterling label concentrated on unfamiliar, under- (or even un-) performed works. He entitled his talk *Recording unknown Romantic repertoire* and invited us to *Follow the conductor's downbeat view*.

His music items were all excerpts from his own recordings with Sterling, rehearsed and recorded in very long takes in order to preserve the structure of the work. He emphasised that trust between the orchestra and the engineer was of paramount importance. The rarely heard composers that Christopher introduced were:

❖ Frederic Cliffe (1857-1931), a Bradford born piano/organ prodigy. At the age of 16 he accompanied the Bradford Festival CS when Sullivan was conducting his own *Light of the World*. Sullivan suggested that Cliffe apply to NTS (which became the RCM in 1883). There he studied with Prout and

## OUT & ABOUT

Stainer and in 1883 was appointed a professor of piano. Cliffe wrote the *March for the coronation of George V* in 1911 but, apart from a few songs, he left only six works, including his Symphony no.1 in C minor. After its première in 1889 the *Daily Telegraph* wrote of it: "(it is) doubted whether musical history can show on any of its pages the record of such an opus 1. The symphony is a masterpiece." Christopher began and ended his presentation with extracts that covered all movements of this accessible romantic work. Sandwiched between were:

❖ Xaver Scharwenka (1850-1924). Of Czech/Polish parentage, this composer was primarily a renowned pianist who once appeared 22 times in London in one season, including being hauled out of the audience to play Beethoven's *Emperor* concerto when the scheduled soloist failed to turn up! He was represented by excerpts from his only *Symphony in C minor*, which Christopher described as being "lush, like lying in a bath of Barbara Cartland pink!" Later we heard a charming piece by his older brother, Philipp Scharwenka: *Shepherd's Song* from his symphonic *Arcadian Suite*.

❖ Franz Xaver Schnyder von Wartensee (1786-1868). His stylistic influence came from Beethoven showing formal classical structure. His *Symphony no. 3 (Military)* posed the intriguing problem of how to finish a work efficiently! We heard the end of the first

movement, where everything stops for a solo double bass cadenza. The score carries the instruction: *Here the double bass becomes sentimental!*

❖ Andreas Hallén (1846-1925). Hallén studied in Germany under the three Rs: Rheinberger, Reinecke and Rietz and took the Wagnerian gospel back to his native Sweden. We heard this in part of his *Music of the Spheres*, which recalls the Prelude to Wagner's *Lohengrin*. Christopher also played Hallén's *Elf's dance in the moonlight*, a miniature very reminiscent of Mendelssohn. Of this composer Christopher said: "If he sounds like other composers, so what? We can still enjoy the music."

And we did! But the appeal of the music was only part of it; Christopher's pithy humour added zest to a most revealing and enjoyable presentation to an audience who eagerly purchased the Sterling label CDs that were available.

### Lady Valerie Solti & Edward Greenfield



The highlight of Saturday afternoon was a conversation between a remarkably youthful Lady Valerie Solti and FRMS President Edward Greenfield.

Lady Solti talked of her late husband's life and work as a renowned conductor and told of her first meeting with Georg Solti. This was in 1964 when, as Valerie Pitts, she went to interview him about Wagner's *Ring Cycle* for a BBC Arts programme. Lady Solti described this meeting as a *coup de foudre* and they were married in 1967.

Sir Georg was born in Hungary and studied piano and composition in Budapest until the start of World War II, when he went to Switzerland, aged 24. There he supported himself by teaching and playing the piano. Lady Solti said that for the following nine years he couldn't really get started musically and "was always catching up." By the end of the war he had become known for his dynamic flair and in the early 60s was appointed Music Director at Covent Garden.

#### Long association with Decca

John Culshaw of Decca first saw Solti in 1946 and later decided that this vital, free-spirited conductor was the man he wanted to record *The Ring*. Thus began a long collaboration between Solti and Culshaw and we heard excerpts from some of the remarkable recordings that they made.

First was the marvellous Kirsten Flagstad singing Fricka in the 1958 production of *Rhinegold* in Vienna. Although in her late 60s she still had a powerful voice and could hold a beautifully sustained note with no hint of vibrato. Edward Greenfield referred to her as

## OUT & ABOUT

an example of "those wonderful old war horses among the singers of old, who had a special magic not found today." Another notable recording from the Solti/Culshaw association was Richard Strauss' *Salome* with Birgit Nilsson singing the title role.

### Servant of the composer

Solti considered the role of conductor to be the servant of the composer. Lady Solti told us that he drove himself hard and would work for about two years on a new work. He had the ability to create the same tension in a recording as in a live performance. His sympathetic understanding of Elgar and Mahler was heard in the wonderfully controlled last movement of *Symphony no. 1* by Elgar and the *Veni Creator Spiritus* from Mahler's *Symphony no. 8*.

Georg Solti was renowned for his interpretation of the Beethoven Symphonies, which he recorded three times, and Lady Solti played the finale of the 9<sup>th</sup> (Choral) *Symphony*, conducted at a lick with the Chicago SO. Asked about Solti's attitude to Mozart, Lady Solti quoted Sir Georg's observation that: "*Mozart's music is the manifestation of Spiritual Being.*"

It was a memorable afternoon, not only for the fine quality of the recordings but also for the reminiscences of Sir Georg by Lady Solti and the President. These gave the audience the opportunity to appreciate once again the enormous contribution the Maestro made to music.

## Julian Lloyd Webber



The Saturday evening session featured the inspiring cellist **Julian Lloyd Webber** talking to **Paul Guinery**, a familiar voice to listeners of BBC Radio 3.

Julian began by talking about his family background. Both parents were musical: his father, William Lloyd Webber, was a teacher, composer and, later, Director of the London College of Music, and of course, he has a well-known brother.

When he was four years old his mother began to teach him piano but "pounding the keys" (as he put it) did not appeal to him especially. His musical awakening came when his father took him to a recital by Rostropovich. From then on, and inevitably, "*it had to be the cello*" for him. His lessons began in earnest at the age of 13, followed by studies at the Royal College of Music and the insecurity of a professional career.

His first success came with *Variations on a theme for cello and rock band* composed by his brother Andrew and well known to a wide public as the introduction to the South Bank Show. Asked if there was much improvisation in his performance of the piece, Julian replied that Andrew had written every note

and had insisted that they be played as written!

Further commissions followed as Julian's career prospered and he described how he had hesitatingly asked the elderly and nearly blind Joaquin Rodrigo for a concerto. Rodrigo had responded with a work that was immediately accessible and of great vitality. Much more recently, there was a concerto from Philip Glass, written for Julian's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Julian played extracts from both of these commissions.

This led to a discussion about cello works, music in general and the recording industry in particular - all of which are hard-driven by commerce to the detriment of music. Paul and Julian agreed that there are probably 10 great cello concertos that are played frequently, 10 very good concertos that are played occasionally and about another 100 fine works that are never played. Three highlights among those that we did hear were:

\*Frank Bridge's almost forgotten *Oration*. This was Julian's first orchestral recording and he considers the work one of the great pieces in the 'cello repertoire.

\*Britten's *Cello Symphony*, which Julian considers his best recording. It was conducted by Neville Mariner at the Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields.

An item from the Edwardian era, Rasbach's *Trees* and on Julian's last recording in 2006.

The conversation ended all too soon and received a well deserved round of applause and the presentation of bottles of wine to each guest.



## OUT & ABOUT

### Brilliant young pianist from Beijing



After Sunday breakfast, taken more leisurely than usual, the morning began with the customary recital given by an artist in association with the Birmingham Conservatoire. This year it was a recital by the charming and most gifted pianist Di Xiao, Didi to her friends.

Didi was awarded a scholarship to Birmingham after graduating as top student at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She was awarded a full scholarship to stay on for her Master's degree in piano performance, and studied under the distinguished Professor Qi Fang Li, graduating with one of the highest marks in the history of the Conservatory.

Already highly acclaimed for her concert performances in the UK, Didi has been accepted for the Rising Stars performing series for 2008/9 and will appear in Amsterdam, Athens, Baden-Baden, Brussels, Cologne, Salzburg, Stockholm and Vienna.

Didi enchanted her audience with her sensitive virtuosity and artistry. Her varied repertoire, outlined below, gave her the

opportunity to demonstrate to the full her mastery of technique and interpretation.

Didi began with two contrasting *Sonatas in A* by Domenico Scarlatti, the slow romantic K208 and the lively, almost impish K209. Scarlatti was considered the most modern among his musical contemporaries, that included Bach, Handel and Rameau. Burney wrote:

*"Scarlatti hazarded notes of taste and effect at which other musicians have but just arrived."*

Next, a lyrical performance of Mozart's *Sonata in F, K332*, which was one of a set of three, published in Vienna in 1784.

With a dazzling virtuoso performance of Didi showed Schubert's *Impromptus 3 and 2, op.90*, with contrasting serene and exhilarating passages, to be among his most attractive works.

Next, by contrast, the colourful Spanish atmosphere of Albeniz' *Evocation from Iberia Book 1*.

Chopin's *Ballade in F minor, op.52* is often considered to be the most intense and technically demanding of his *Four Ballades*. Didi played this work with confident conviction, and great sensitivity for the dramatic contrasts of light and shade.

The final item was a superb rendering of Ravel's *Miroirs*, with sharp dynamic and textural contrasts.

This was a truly stunning and flawless recital by a young artist on the threshold of her career. Didi's diminutive size bears no relation to the power of her playing, which she does

with consummate ease and moving interpretation.

She received tremendous applause and delighted her audience with an encore, Sibelius' *Impromptu*. There is no doubt that many of us, in the not-too-distant future, will be able to boast that "I heard her before she was famous!"

Jim Bostwick produced a CD of her performance, made from a recording by one of our technical engineers, Antony West-Samuel. If you would like a CD (some 75 minutes of superb music for just £5) please contact the FRMS Treasurer, Graham Kitely, whose details are at the back of the *Bulletin*.

### Technical Forum

After the Sunday afternoon tea break FRMS Technical Officer, Philip Ashton, hosted a discussion for those who understand the finer points of recording technology and other related mysteries. His introductory talk covered four main topics:

- \*Blu-Ray and HDDVD and DRM
- \*HiFi/Theatre Systems without connecting cables
- \*Notes from the Bristol HiFi exhibition held in February
- \*Transmission Line Speakers.

Philip announced that Warner has stopped producing HDDVD/records and will produce commercial recordings in SACD/Blu-Ray. He believes that DRM technology will not feature prominently in Europe, the main use probably being in Australia, South and East Asia and Africa.

## OUT & ABOUT

He went on to the main part of his talk, which looked at the latest developments in virtual surround sound. He explained the theory and described various techniques for building virtual surround systems. After describing items of HiFi equipment displayed at the WHAT HiFi exhibition, Philip described transmission line loudspeakers and compared various makes. These are complex and potentially expensive and therefore not amenable to mass production.

Before opening the discussion Philip ended with a mini disc recording of a short extract from a VOX mono HiFi disc, circa 1953, explaining exactly what HiFi is all about.

*Ed's note: I realise I have nowhere near done justice to Philip's comprehensive address but will be very happy to send a copy of his complete talk to any reader who would like to know more.*

### Having the last word!



After his dynamic duo with John Lill that started the three days of musical festivity, it fell to the popular **Lyndon Jenkins** to end the weekend's presentations. Lyndon is a well-known writer, lecturer and broadcaster. Specialising in British music, British artists and British musical history, he

has many documentary programmes to his credit. He has been associated with Birmingham's Symphony Hall for many years, first as Special Projects Manager and now as Music Advisor. He is a long-standing friend of the FRMS and RMS groups and a welcome return speaker at Daventry.

Lyndon began by saying that he preferred to be considered as "having the last word at the weekend, rather than as the bitter end!" Thus began an unusual presentation spiced with his own brand of highly amusing comments. Under the heading *Who said that?* Lyndon's programme consisted of rare and unusual recordings of words and music and we were invited to guess who was speaking.

\*First was a nostalgic recording of *Peter and the Wolf*, narrated by the inimitable Wilfred Pickles.

\*Malcolm Sargent conducting and narrating Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*;

\*Robert Donat reciting from Rawsthorne's *Practical Cats*;

\*Noel Coward reading verses from an Ogden Nash poem that was the inspiration for Saint Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*;

\*Antony Hopkins reading the lovely sunset poem from *Under Milk Wood*;

\*Eric Fenby describing how he and Delius worked together;

\*A highly amusing extract from the Anna Russell Album, in which the comedienne describes the Valkyries;

\*The composer Vaughan Williams beginning his thanks to Sir Adrian Boult and the orchestra at a recording of his symphonies : "...gentlemen, and I include the lady harpist!"

\*Thomas Beecham introducing Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* to an overseas audience as: "*The most incomprehensible, most inscrutable and finest comic opera ever written.*"

This master of the art of balancing information with comedy educated and entertained us, giving a perfect end to the weekend.

### Au Revoir



Chairman **John Davies** is not baying to the moon but is closing the weekend in front of the stage backdrop. To hearty applause from the audience, he warmly thanked the many people involved in its great success, particularly **Graham Kiteley** and **Tony Baines**, the organisers. Thanking delegates for their enthusiastic support he bid them *Au revoir* until next year.

### OBITUARY

The Loughborough RMS regrets to report the death of **Miss Doreen Roe**, one of its longest serving members.

Many outside our own music society will know Doreen as she attended many of the FRMS Music Weekends.

She was always a very active member of our society, Secretary for 10 years before 11 years on the committee as Social Secretary.

Apart from performing these offices, she was involved with everything the society did. She would help anyone in time of need, and it is for this that Doreen will be remembered by members, and all who knew her.

*Ray Wainwright Sec. Loughborough RMS*



## SCARBOROUGH MUSIC WEEKEND



The weather in Scarborough is unpredictable; we arrived in sunshine with seagulls circling overhead, but it didn't last. Our Weekend programme was far more reliable - a mixture of erudition and good humour, all surrounded by music.

### THE POWER OF MUSIC: Pitch, Pace and Pulse

In a wide-ranging career **Dr. Jill White** was a BBC Radio producer for 23 years with 2000 programmes to her credit; for 10 years she was Director of Music for the National Youth Orchestra and was a producer for *Collegium*, John Rutter's Cambridge-based record company. She also travels a lot and is an adjudicator at music festivals.

Recently returned from South Africa, Jill played excerpts from David Fanshawe's rhythmic *African Sanctus* and Joseph Shabalal's *The Ladysmith Black Mambazo*, with music linking Islam and Christianity. She finds emotion in music very powerful, exemplified by the 'cello solo opening Rutter's *Requiem*, or the NYO's 135 musicians (average age 15) in symphonies by Mahler and Sibelius.

From her time at the BBC we heard Marie Joao Pires play a Schubert *Impromptu* and, from the *International Barbirolli Oboe Festival*, we heard part of J S Bach's *Oboe Concerto in D minor*. Her personal views were neatly encapsulated in her final piece, *There is Sweet Music*, Elgar's setting of Tennyson's words from *The Lotus Eaters*.

### RACHMANINOV: The Man and his Music

In Grove's 1953 edition Rachmaninov was dismissed as a composer whose music was "unlikely to last". Thus **Barry Collett** introduced the composer, whose very tuneful music is still popular and frequently played.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) studied at the Moscow Conservatoire, winning 'The Great Gold Medal' and two citations. He wrote a *Scherzo* when he was 13 and clearly conversant with Mendelssohn's music. When Barry conducted the first performance of it in this country he had to get the score from Moscow and noted that the timpanist had one note to play, right at the end.

Barry played from the *Piano Preludes* on the Hotel piano and then described the premiere of the *First Symphony*. This was an under-rehearsed disaster, conducted by a drunken Glazunov. Rachmaninov had a three-year creative block, which was cured by hypnotherapy by a Dr Dahl, to whom he dedicated the *Second Piano Concerto*.

Rachmaninov fled Russia on the last day of 1917, going by sledge to Finland, then via Sweden and Switzerland to settle in America. There he started afresh and earned a living as a concert pianist. Through the medium of piano rolls we heard Rachmaninov himself playing, a *Polka* and *The Flight of the Bumblebee*. We also had

extracts from the *Vespers*; the *Symphonic Dances*, the *Second Symphony* and a song, *How fair this spot*, an engagement present for his fiancée.

### NINETY MINUTES WITH FRED, PETER & JACK

**Peter Bacon's** subjects, Delius, Warlock and Moeran, were three distinct and very different personalities, but unified by the two younger composers' admiration of Frederick Delius.

The opening chorus from Delius' *Mass of Life* was followed by an impression of nature, *On Craig Dhu*; its profound sense of silence inspired the normally noisy Peter Warlock. Violins and horns set the scene for *Song of Summer* and the 'cellos painted a sea-picture. This was a late work, from 1927, when the disabled Delius could hear the music in his head but depended on Eric Fenby to set it down on paper.

Warlock wrote many songs but one of his best-known works is the *Serenade for Strings*, dedicated to Delius in honour of his 60th birthday. Warlock was inspired by the Elizabethan and Jacobean composers, wrote extensively about music and was a perceptive but often cruel critic. His lifestyle was boisterous, drunken and immature and he died, aged 36, in a gas-filled room.

But Warlock's music is attractive and we heard: part of *Bethlehem Down* celebrating the birth of Christ; *Oh Mistress Mine* from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*; *Captain Stratton's Fancy* in praise of rum; *Yarmouth Fair*, from a tune given to Warlock by Moeran and *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* (her brothers strangled her for marrying a steward).

Ernest John (Jack) Moeran admired Delius's music, particularly the *Piano Concerto* but, unlike Warlock, he never contacted Delius. Although Moeran was close to the noisy, drunken Warlock he needed solitude and the proximity to nature to inspire his musical creativity. As an illustration of Moeran's gentler style we heard the second movement from *Sinfonietta*, written in 1944 and inspired by walks with friends in the Welsh border-country and the Kerry Fair in Ireland.

### BERLIOZ FROM 'B' TO 'Z'

In a very short time **Alastair Aberdare** gave an entertaining summary of Berlioz's 66 years and included 13 varied examples of his music. Alastair played the second movement of the *Symphonic Fantastique* to illustrate Berlioz's *idée fixe*, in which he expresses despair at his apparently hopeless love for the Irish-born actress, Harriet Smithson. This was followed by the *Mephisto Serenade* from *Eight Scenes from Faust*.

At 12 Berlioz fell in love with Estelle, who was 18, "wore pink slippers" and inspired him to write songs. In Paris, in 1821, he studied medicine but was soon diverted by the delights of opera and the music of Beethoven, Gluck and Weber.

The song *Toi que j'aimais verse de pleurs*, was from 1826, the year in which he made the first of five attempts to gain the *Prix de Rome*. His third attempt, *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, was considered far too audacious and the committee decided not to award a first prize in that year.



## OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society News

Berlioz met Harriet Smithson in 1827 and was inspired to write the *Symphonie Fantastique*, his most popular work. They married in 1833 but then her public career declined as his improved: they separated in 1840.

We heard extracts from two of Berlioz's major works: *Harold in Italy* (1834) and the *Grande Messe des Morts* (1837), plus *The Carnival Scene* from his opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*, which failed in Paris and which Queen Victoria compared to the noise of cats and dogs.

Berlioz was a music critic, a conductor and a great traveller, giving his first London concert in Drury Lane in 1848. He wrote 50 songs but no chamber music and nothing for solo piano. His large vocal works have always been well received and to finish we had excerpts from *L'Enfance du Christ*, *The Damnation of Faust*, *Romeo and Juliette* and his last opera, which he never heard in full, *The Trojans*.

### “MAD GENIUS” SCHOOL OF CONDUCTORS

The *A-Z of Conductors* is **David Patmore's** recently published survey of 310 of the world's finest conductors, issued by Naxos with a four-CD set.

David suggested that the conductor cult is now a thing of the past, as the record industry's twentieth-century media-support structure no longer exists.

Fifty percent of the conductors surveyed had a Viennese connection. Starting with Clemens Krauss, a colleague of Richard Strauss and advocate of Johann Strauss's music, we heard him conduct the overture to *Die Fledermaus*. Fritz Reiner conducted the *Prelude to Carmen* and Otto Klemperer conducted Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*.

This survey would be incomplete without the larger-than-life Herbert von Karajan, who joined the Nazi party twice and knew how to use the media. His recordings took up a quarter of the Deutsche Grammophon catalogue and he left an estate valued at £170 million. We heard his version of the *Egmont Overture*, recorded in 1953.

Josef Krips, a victim of Nazi persecution, was a bottle-washer in a Belgrade food factory for a time. One of a few conductors allowed to work in Austria post-war, he put the Vienna Philharmonic back on its feet. We heard him conduct the overture to Mozart's to *Il Seraglio*.

Wilhelm Furtwängler and Karl Böhm, both involved in the war-time Nazi propaganda machine, conducted 1938 recordings: the overture to *Der Freischütz* by Weber and the *Liebestod* from Wagner's *Tristan*. Fritz Busch was not Jewish, but he opposed the regime and had to leave Germany in 1933. He became Glyndebourne's music director and we heard him conduct the overture to *Don Giovanni*.

Our last four conductors taken from this fascinating survey were: Artur Rodzinski, whose main career was in America; Bruno Walter, a Mahler specialist; Georg Solti, who had to flee Hungary after the German invasion; and Felix Weingartner, who succeeded Mahler as conductor of the VSO. There are 298 more conductors in this book!

### WYASTONE ESTATE: Nimbus presents...

Covering 72 acres in the Wye Valley, the Wyastone Estate is the home of Nimbus Records. It has a printing company, a full CD/DVD manufacturing facility, a business park and a well-used, 550-seat concert hall with a recording studio.

Two Wyastone directors came to Scarborough. **Antony Smith** described the company, which produces CDs for 120 different labels in the UK and Europe. By adapting their manufacturing processes they can now take short-run orders, even down to 1 CD complete with booklet.

**Adrian Farmer** talked about the Nimbus catalogue and played Prokofiev's *Cinq Melodies* (arranged for 'cello and orchestra by Shchedrin) and re-mastered 78s from the Prima Voce label. He also played Gideon Klein's *String Trio* (1944); *Two Piano Preludes* which Hans Gal, aged 70, wrote whilst in an Edinburgh hospital; a Bach *Flute Sonata* and one of Scarlatti's 550 *Harpsichord Sonatas*.

Antony spoke about the current market-oriented Nimbus philosophy, which includes meeting as many of their customers as they can. They maintain 1000 titles, some selling only a few copies in the year, hence the need to be able to produce very short runs.

He described the revival of the Lyrita label, founded in 1959, which promoted neglected British music but was withdrawn from the market in the 1990s. Nimbus negotiated from 2004-2006 to secure agreement to revive and re-issue the Lyrita catalogue.

From Lyrita Adrian selected Butterworth's *English Idyll No. 1*; Ian Partridge singing the *Aria* from Finzi's *Farewell to Arms*; Eric Parkin playing John Ireland's *Soliloquy*; and the LPO's famous recording of Bax's *Symphony No. 2*.

If you'd like to hear more of this music, I'm sure that Wyastone would love to hear from you and might even arrange a programme for your society.

### WRONG SEX, WRONG INSTRUMENT

**Maggie Cotton** applied for a music grant but didn't get one because percussion wasn't seen as a proper occupation for a girl. Despite this, she trained at the Royal Academy, the RNCM and North Yorkshire's Bretton Hall. In 1959 she joined the CBSO and spent her career with them as a percussionist.

Many of Maggie's musical examples featured things being hit hard (or as she said "things being played louder and more percussively"). Her first piece was John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, which starts with 'slaps' from the wood block. As a quiet contrast we heard Simon Rattle conducting Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*.

Mahler's symphonies demand special effects. To create a noise like *The Crack of Doom* in the *Sixth Symphony* she had to improvise with a mallet, a tea chest, staging and planks. At Aldeburgh she had to go out to get the special cowbells required in the *Seventh Symphony*, only to be refused re-admission by the attendant who said, "Sorry, you can't do that here, there's a concert being recorded!"



## OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society News

Shostakovich often gives the percussion section a field day. The suite *Hypothetically Murdered* requires all sorts of bangs and crashes, with motor horns, police whistles and a flexatone; this produces weird sound effects by means of a wooden ball attached to a large metal plate. Sofia Gubaidulina, the Russian composer, often uses a number of flexatones and she also calls for cuckoo clocks.

We then moved on to the prosaic but familiar and large, side-drum, being used to good effect in Stravinsky's *Firebird* in both *Kachia's Dance* and the *Finale*.

Maggie told many tales: standing on an empty stage in La Scala to give her version of *On Ikla Moor Baht'at*; she solved the problem of having the wrong shoes on stage in Huddersfield by buying a blue pair and dyeing them black. The most difficult task in her career was playing a big marimba in Ravel's *Vallee des Cloches* and her final music was an excerpt from Mahler's *Second Symphony*.

### DEBUSSY: MUSICIEN FRANÇAIS

Opening Monday's first session, **Gary Midgely** explained that Claude Debussy (1862-1918) had many problems throughout his life because he was such a highly-charged, emotional man.

However, Pierre Boulez considers that modern music started in 1894, with Debussy writing his *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune*, based on a poem by Mallarmé. This new work was loved by the public and ignored by the critics who, as is often the case, got it wrong!

A rich aunt persuaded Debussy's parents to let him study music and paid for his early piano lessons. Aged 18 he was a live-in music tutor to the children of Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's patron. His first substantial work, a *Piano Trio*, was written at this time, influenced more by the *Mighty Handful* than by Tchaikovsky.

Debussy worked as an accompanist and one of his singing pupils, Marie-Blanche Vasnier, gave him professional and emotional support: she had a very tolerant husband! He set words by Verlaine for her and we heard *Mandoline* and *Clair de Lune* (not the well-known song of the same name, which came some ten years later). Debussy won the *Prix de Rome* (a four-year residence at the Villa Medici) but he said it was cold and wet and that the staff were gaoles. He went back to Paris and lodged with the Vasniers!

Debussy lived with Gabrielle Dupont for nine years but married her friend Rosalie Taxier, only to find her boring. He then eloped to Jersey with Emma Bardac, a banker's wife and married her in 1908 after a messy divorce: they had one child, Claude-Emma (Chou-Chou). He lived by giving piano lessons and from writing as a music critic.

From 1893-1902 we had excerpts from *Arabesque No.1*, *Fêtes* from *Nocturnes*, the *String Quartet* and his only opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In 1904 he wrote *L'Isle Joyeuse* and in 1905 moved to Eastbourne and worked on *La Mer*, the nearest he came to writing a symphony.

At the piano Gary played *The Golliwog's Cakewalk* from *The Children's Corner*, which Debussy wrote for his daughter in 1909, the year he was diagnosed with cancer, from which he died in 1918.

*Images* is an example of the Spanish influence in his music, although he visited Spain only once, saw a bullfight and went home. He wrote only small works after 1912: the second set of *Preludes* (1913), *12 Études* (1915) and the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1917). This entertaining session ended with André Previn and the LSO playing *Rondes des Printemps* from *Images*.

Tony Pook, Chairman, YRG

[Thanks to Gordon Allatt of Ossett for the sketches and Tony Haywood of Huddersfield RMS for tuning the piano.]

## SCARBOROUGH MUSIC WEEKEND 2009

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## *OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society News*

### ***West Middlesex Group***

#### ***Festival of British music***

**Alan Ball, Roger Hughes and Denis Jiggins** presented the 11<sup>th</sup> of the biennial West Middlesex Festival on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and a further six evenings from 16<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Each Society within the Group (Ealing, Perivale, Hayes, Uxbridge, Ruislip, Ickenham and Heston) hosted an evening to provide a wealth of music by British composers. There was a sad overtone to the April programme, which was brought forward because the host society, Ealing RMS, was closing down at its AGM later that month because of declining membership. Nevertheless, Ealing gave us an excellent evening to end its 60 happy years as a society.

The preface to the festival brochure explains that the theme title, ***Land without Music***, was taken from a scathing remark made by a German critic just over 100 years ago. Commenting on the English cultural scene, he claimed that England was “*Das lande ohne Musik*” (the land without music). Furthermore, Heinrich Heine, who was touring England in the 1840s, said: “*These people have no ear either for rhythm or music. Nothing on earth is more terrible than English music, except English painting.*”

These provocative statements were a challenge to the three presenters to prove those critics wrong and judging from the programmes they did so with a vengeance. A wonderful selection of works from some 50 composers covered all genres: from large orchestral works to chamber music; compositions for solo instruments from harp, piano and wind instruments; oratorio to folk songs and even Flanders and Swann got a look in!

Among some well-loved and familiar music there was a great deal that was new and exciting. Our thanks to the three organisers who provided programmes that were not only extremely enjoyable and informative but also opened some new musical doors. And they certainly gave the lie to those critics!

### ***Rachmaninov Revealed***

#### ***Goudhurst meeting with a difference***

Cranbrook School generously placed its splendid new music room at the disposal of Goudhurst RMS and in doing so made possible a musical evening of exceptional interest and value. For once recordings were used only briefly, to

illustrate specific points. Instead, the audience was treated to a live and dazzling exposition of a most popular 20<sup>th</sup> century work, Rachmaninov’s *2<sup>nd</sup> Piano Concerto in C minor, op.18*.

The performers were two brilliant young pianists from Royal Tunbridge Wells, **Anthony Zerpa-Falcon** and his partner **Jong-Gyung Park**. Seated side by side at two Yamaha grand pianos, they did so much more than merely perform the music. One with a piano reduction of the full orchestral score and the other with the solo part, they casually and effortlessly changed places from time to time, presenting and discussing the work in the order of its composition. They started with the famous slow movement, then the Finale, followed by the opening Moderato.

Both pianists clearly take an unromantic and unsentimental view of the work and showed how it gains in strength and firmness of structure when the composer’s markings are followed precisely, without unnecessary and unauthorised rubatos, rallentandos and other soupy flourishes.

Their firm grasp of Rachmaninov’s intentions and their clear interpretation of his score made one almost feel the presence of the composer himself, guiding their brilliant performances and endorsing what they had to say. Anthony Zerpa-Falcon and Jong-Gyung Park played the music and discussed it in a way that was neither formal nor academic. Indeed, their exchanges were full of gentle teasing, spontaneous wit and good humour that added to the charm of a most rewarding and very well spent musical evening. *Robert Hardcastle.*

### ***Kettering & District Jubilee***



**May Abbot (left), 95 years young and the longest serving member of Kettering & District RMS, and Mary Underwood cut the Golden Jubilee celebration cake.**

Kettering & District RMS was founded by John Butcher and Derek Bradshaw on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1958, with advice from John Bulman on its formation and affiliation to the then NFGS. Meetings

## *OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society News*

started in the Kettering Technical College but soon moved to the George Hotel, where we met until 1988 when we moved to our current meeting place, the refurbished Corn Market Hall.

Our Jubilee party on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March was the exact 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundation. We welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough of Kettering and also one of the founder members, John Butcher, with his wife Meryl. Unfortunately Derek Bradshaw was unable to be with us but we were delighted to welcome him to our meeting a fortnight later.

Representatives from local Societies were present and Mick Birchall represented the FRMS as its Vice-Chairman. Members of the Committee presented music that symbolised the five decades of the Society and Jocelyn Pack, our Chairman Brian's wife, mounted an interesting display of Society memorabilia, which included photographs of our 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. There was also a collection of sound reproduction equipment, ranging from a wind-up gramophone (formerly belonging to John Bulman) to a reel-to-reel tape recorder, cassette recorder and a 2009 iPod.

At the buffet supper the Mayor proposed a toast to the Society and presented a signed facsimile of the Borough Coat of Arms; Mike Birchell responded to the toast. The celebration cake, shown in the photograph, was suitably decorated with a horn gramophone and a CD. All in all, a wonderful celebration to launch us on the next half century!

*Michael Guest.*

### ***Rare presentation at Radlett***

*The following is Tony Dutton's report of an interesting account he gave to Radlett Record Society of how he discovered three hitherto unknown and unpublished works by Arnold Bax and the events leading up to the first recording, in 2006, of one of those pieces.*

In September 1900 the Royal Academy of Music, London, admitted two pupils who became firm friends. One of them was Arnold Bax who was to become world famous. The other, George Allaby Alder, who was Mr. Dutton's uncle, achieved only local fame.

In the summer of 1901 Bax was invited to stay with the Alder family in Malvern and it is recounted in Bax's autobiography and also Elgar's biography that they visited Elgar, who was a family friend of the Alders.

George Alder's only daughter was Tony Dutton's cousin and while she was in the daunting process

of moving house in Malvern she gave Tony a dusty package of manuscript scores. When he returned home he was rather excited to discover that, mixed in with some original compositions by Alder, there were several pages in a different hand. One of these was headed *Sonata for Piano and Horn*, dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 1901 and dedicated to George Allaby Alder by E. Arnold Trevor Bax. Sorting out more pages, Tony discovered a two movement *Sonata in E major* for clarinet; it had no dedication but was dated April 1901 and autographed by Bax.

The scores were eventually assembled and shown to Graham Parlett, a well-known orchestrator and an authority on Bax. He confirmed that these works were quite unknown and, moreover, are now considered to be Bax' earliest adult compositions. He introduced Tony to Lewis Foreman, an eminent musicologist and Chairman of the Bax Trust, which owns the copyright. Mr. Foreman quickly contacted the principal clarinettist of the (then) BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra, Robert Plane. By pure coincidence, Plane was preparing to make a recording of all the early chamber works by Bax. In the meantime, using computer technology, Tony had made exact facsimile copies of each page —with permission!

Robert Plane and Benjamin Frith gave a private first performance of the *Clarinet Sonata* at the Royal Academy of Music. Later they recorded the beautiful lilting phrases and melodies for Naxos together with four other early chamber works by Bax. <sup>(1)</sup>The *Clarinet Sonata in E* was played during the evening to much acclaim.

To date, the horn sonata has not been performed or officially recorded but arrangements are in progress. All the original scores are now in the British Library, carefully stored with most of Bax' other manuscripts.

© J. A. Dutton

<sup>(1)</sup> **BAX: Clarinet Sonatas (1901 and 1934). Piano Trio. NAXOS 8.557698**

### ***Two that slipped the net –almost!***

*Unfortunately, two news items intended for the last issue had to be held over but, better late than never, I am glad that they can be included this time. Ed.*

### ***Ickenham Gramophone Club***

The club was formed in May 1947 and a special get-together was held in July 2007 to celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Guests from the West Middlesex Group, namely, Ealing, Hayes, Heston, Perivale, Ruislip and Uxbridge gathered at the

## *OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society News*

home of Olive Smith on a (rare!) fine evening to relax informally in her spacious garden.

No music was played but a quiz was organised and the most enjoyable evening ended with a champagne toast and cutting a suitably iced home-made fruit cake, generously provided by our Chairman Roger Hughes' wife, Chris.

### **Long-serving Secretary at Epsom RMS**

**Peggy Dubois** has been the Secretary of Epsom RMS for over 50 years and on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2007 members recognised her long service with a lovely lunch at the South Hatch Restaurant near Epsom Downs. Peggy was the guest of honour and the picture shows her receiving a surprise gift. Special guests were ERMS President, Peter Gammond, and his wife Anna.



### **President of Horsham RMS 90 years young**

Horsham RMS was formed 78 years ago and its President, **Peter Dinnage**, has been an extremely important figure in its growth and development. Since he joined the Society 45 years ago Peter has been very active in many capacities and still works hard for its continued success. He reached his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last January, which was celebrated at the Society's annual party the same month. For many years he attended Federation events and was well known to the organisers.

*Morris Stanton, Sec. Horsham RMS*

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## REVIEWS

### New, nostalgic & historical from Dutton

Dutton's latest issues on its Epoch and Historical labels encompass light music; compositions for flute; ballet music and a miscellany for solo piano, as well as beautifully remastered classics

#### British Light Music Premieres, vol. 5

An interesting and well balanced collection of works by five 20<sup>th</sup> century composers:

\**Tricolor Overture* (1988) by from the legendary composer of film music, Roy Budd (1947-93).

\**Aquerelles (Portraits of Five Children)* (1950) by Francis Chagrin (1905-1972) was first scored for solo piano and later for strings, the version recorded here.

\*From Paul Carr (1961-): *Concerto for Oboe & String Orchestra* (2007), lively and evocative, with a poignant slow movement, *The Unusual Quietness of Snow*. Also his haunting *Air for Strings*, with a theme to rival Barber's *Adagio*.

\*The soloist Verity Butler commissioned the *Clarinet Concerto* (2003) by Gavin Sutherland (1972-).

\* From Richard Addinsell (1904-1977), *Ring Round the Moon* (1949) a suite for Anouilh's play of the same name.

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#### Fire Island – Music for Flute

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\**The Moon Dances* (2003) for flute & piano, which contrasts aspects of dance, and *Not Just a Place* (1999), a lovely arrangement for flute, piano and cello (originally for viola, double bass and piano) by award-winning composer Cecilia McDowell (1951-).

\**Golden Sunset* ((2003) for solo flute and flute ensemble by David Heath (1956-) was inspired by and dedicated to the flute maker Albert Cooper. Heath is an adventurous composer and this exciting innovative work has strong rhythms and elements of modern jazz.

\**Oblivion* (1984) by Astor Piazzolla (1921-92). This slow, sultry work from the Argentinean composer and bandleader exemplifies his rhythmic style, synonymous with the tango.

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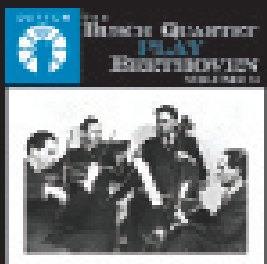
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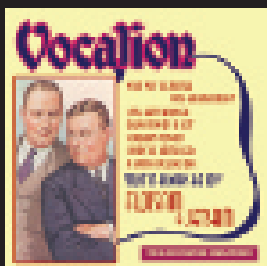


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London in 1947. For the first time on CD are two delightful ballets commissioned by Sadler's Wells and not heard complete since the 1950s:

\**The Great Detective* (1953) is a comic ballet in three scenes inspired by Sherlock Holmes' exploits.

\**The Angels* (1957). With a powerful intricate structure in the symphonic idiom, this work is more than mere entertainment. **Epoch CDLX 7208**

*Billy Mayerl – a miscellany for solo piano*

Toes will start tapping at Leslie De'Ath's masterly performance of Billy Mayerl's syncopated piano music that was at its height of popularity in the 1920s and 30s. This splendid recording gives 24 miniature gems, beginning with *Leprechaun's Leap* and ending with the only piece that is not Mayerl's own work: his arrangement of *Phil the Fluter's Ball*. It also includes a longer poem, *The Forgotten Forest*, scored for piano and orchestra. As De'Ath writes in his full accompanying notes: "This is light music at its finest." **Epoch CDLX 7211**

*Dutton Historical*

Four expert transfers on the Historical label are:

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\**The Busch Quartet Play Beethoven – Vol. 3*. The legendary ensemble give inspiring performances of *Quartet No.7* and *Quartet No.12*, first recorded during the 1930s and early 40s. **CDBP 9786**

\*A compilation of rare 78 rpm discs bring together five German composers of the inter-war years playing their own works. From 1929 recordings are: Eduard Künneke and his *Tänzerische Suite*; Franz Schreker's *Little Suite* for chamber orchestra, and extracts from Von Schilling's opera *Mona Lisa*. Siegfried Wagner also conducts the Prelude and Liebestod from his father's *Tristan and Isolde*. **CDBP 9787**

\* Two acclaimed conductors, Basil Cameron and Eric Leinsdorf conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra in superb interpretations of music by Sibelius:

Cameron was admired for his understanding of Sibelius and often visited the elderly composer. Here he gives an authoritative direction to *Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.43*.

Although Leinsdorf was not regarded as a Sibelius specialist, the LPO and also the public considered this fine 1946 recording of *Symphony No.5 in E flat, op.82* a great success. Side two contained the *Alla Marcia* from the *Karelia Suite*, all recorded in one day!

In both recordings the empathy between the respective conductors and the LPO is obvious. Each conductor had his own distinctive style but their rapport with the players resulted in exciting and outstanding performances reproduced here with Dutton's superb technical expertise. **CDBP 9788**

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## Wyastone produce *Hallé* and also unearth *Treasure*

### *Series of Hallé recordings*

Wyastone has been chosen by Britain's oldest established professional Symphony Orchestra, the renowned Hallé founded in 1858, to produce a series of its highly acclaimed recordings made under the direction of its conductor, Mark Elder. This series carries the Wyastone stamp of quality, this example containing two works by Elgar:

*\*Introduction and Allegro for strings.* Featuring Lyn Fletcher and Ann Lawes, violins, Timothy Pooley, viola, and David Watkin, cello, this is a moving interpretation of a well-loved piece

*\*Symphony No.2 in E flat.* Unbelievably to us now, this complex work got a muted reception at its first performance but has since become an important masterpiece, played here with intense feeling. Mark Elder reads the whole of Shelley's poem containing the words: *Spirit of delight*, quoted by Elgar on the score.

CD HLL 7507

### *Albert Herring conducted by Britten*

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 1949, two years after the first performance of his opera *Albert Herring*, at Glyndebourne, Benjamin Britten conducted a live performance given by the English Opera Group in the Theatre Royal, Copenhagen. The performance was recorded live on one of the first tape-recorders to arrive in Denmark.

Sound historians will be interested to know that it was a Soundmirror BK-401.

The tapes arrived only a few hours before the performance opened and the recording made. That unique tape remained dormant in the collection of Knud Hegermann-Lindencrone, a recording enthusiast associated with the Theatre Royal, until Wyastone unearthed it and transferred it onto CD under licence from The Hegermann-Lindencrone Recording Committee, Denmark.

The tape is a miraculous survivor from the past and, to quote Wyastone: "...given its age and the circumstances of its making, the sound quality is remarkably good." I can vouch for that!

Lovers of Britten and music historians alike will be delighted with this echo of famous voices from the past, all the more atmospheric as it is of a live concert performance. With 11 members of the original cast, including Peter Pears as Albert, Joan Cross as Lady Billows, Gladys Parr as Florence Pike, Nancy Evans as Nancy and Catherine Lawson as Albert's mother, all examples of vocal perfection, it is a must for the collector.

The 3-CD set contains the complete libretto by Eric Crozier and comprehensive notes by Nigel Douglas who writes his personal memories of Benjamin Britten, The English Opera Group and *Albert Herring*. There are also rare photographs from the 1949 performance. Treasure indeed!

Nimbus NI 5824/6

## REVIEWS

### **NAXOS presents world première of Hovhaness**

#### Hovhaness Guitar Concerto

A recent release on Naxos' American Classics label features world première recordings of works by Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000). Hovhaness was one of the most prolific composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose 434 opus numbers include full-scale symphonies, chamber and instrumental music, as well as vocal works of all kinds.

But, although he believed that music must evolve and take a new direction, he stood alone among his contemporaries who followed the modern trend of rejecting melody and classical form. His concept of contemporary music meant bringing back music of the long past, adding his own originality and creating a new beauty from original sources.

Hovhaness was born with melody and thought everyone heard music in their heads as he did. He was an excellent pianist and learned to write down his music but would play it only *after* it was written down – just to check that it was correct. The breadth of Hovhaness' vision is heard in:

\**Concerto No.2 for Guitar and Strings*, which opens with the solo guitar against muted strings and leads into lively dance patterns with changing rhythms. A skilled performance by the Bolivian guitarist Javier Calderón includes his impressive cadenza.

\**Symphony No. 63, Loon Lake*, which is in two movements and expresses Hovhaness' nostalgia for the New Hampshire countryside. The distinctive calls of the loon bird and hermit thrush are heard on the piccolo and a brilliant trumpet obbligato.

\**Fanfare for the New Atlantis*, a short but stirring and majestic vision of the legendary sunken island.

### **Variety from Hyperion**

Arias from Handel operas, jazz-that-isn't-jazz, and songs from the shows staged at the Gaiety, Adelphi, Daly's and Shaftsbury Theatres at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century make up a pot pourri of cheerful listening on recordings from Hyperion.

#### Handel Opera Arias

This 3-CD set was first released in 2007 but, as disc 2 relates to the exhibition currently on at the Handel House Museum and reported on p.23, it is appropriate to review it here. Presenting arias and overtures from 23 operas written between 1704 and 1741 are the superb voices of Dame Emma Kirkby and Catherine Bott with the incomparable Brandenburg Consort directed by Roy Goodman.

\*Disc 1 contains extracts from Handel's operatic career 1704-26 and offers a wide scope to explore further from a mixture of hitherto unrecorded works as well as numbers from well-known masterpieces: *Almira*;

*Rodrigo; Rinaldo; Silla; Amadigi di Gaula; Giulio Cesare in Egitto; Tamerlano; Rodelinda and Scipio.*

\*The arias and duets on Disc 2 were sung originally by the sopranos Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, dubbed 'The Rival Queens' having appeared together as the rival lovers of Alexander the Great. Here, Catherine Bott sings Cuzzoni's roles and Emma Kirkby sings Bordoni's from the 1726-28 operas: *Alessandro; Admeto; Riccardo; Siro and Tolemeo.*

\*On Disc 3 are arias and overtures from operas composed from 1729-41 and from roles created by Anna Strada del Pò and sung here by Emma Kirkby.

Sheer delight!- plus excellent notes. **Hyperion44271**

#### In a State of Jazz

In spite of its title, *Marc-André in a state of Jazz*, and the way it sounds, there is no improvisation in the music on this album so, strictly speaking, it is not jazz. So why call it that? In his notes for the recording, the pianist Marc-André explains: 'I wanted to pay homage to four 20<sup>th</sup> century composers who were particularly successful....in fusing the spirit or letter of jazz with music intended for the concert hall.' The result is some 75 minutes of most pleasing and unusual entertainment that will appeal to lovers of jazz and classical piano music alike.

The international pianist Marc-André is renowned for his brilliance as a virtuoso performer in the classical repertoire as well as for his exploration of the unfamiliar. His impeccable flair is obvious in his interpretation of these works:

\*Three pieces from Friedrich Gulda's *Play Piano Play*.

\*Nikolai Kapustin's Sonata No.2, a fascinating graft of the jazz idiom onto the classical form.

\*Alexis Weissenberg's *Sonata in a State of Jazz* this is in four movements reflecting the tango, Charleston, blues and samba respectively. Also his arrangements of six songs sung by Charles Trenet.

\*A short *Jazz Sonata* by the unconventional George Antheil.

Marc-André's accompanying notes on the fusion of the classical with the jazz idiom are comprehensive and make very interesting reading. If you are looking for something different in piano music, this is a perfect choice. **Hyperion CDA67656**

#### Songs from the Shows – Lionel Monckton

The glory days of the Edwardian era are captured in an enchanting selection of Lionel Monckton's songs from shows such as *The Quaker Girl, The Arcadians, Our Miss Gibbs* and many others.

With the New London Orchestra and Light Opera Chorus opera singer Richard Stuart and early music specialist Catherine Bott display their versatility and, with perfect diction, perform with joyful ease as if born into the limelight.

A lovely miscellany. **Hyperion CDA67654**



### FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

*The Making of Music; James Naughtie.*

**Hardback, £20; publisher John Murray**

This was one of the most interesting, and certainly one of the most readable, books about music to appear under my tree last Christmas. The author, who presents the *Today* programme, devised a brilliant series in which he discussed various composers and their works on BBC Radio 4, to be followed the day after on BBC by actual performances of the music.

His book takes us on a personal journey from plainsong to jazz, and from the glitter of Renaissance courts to Neapolitan opera houses and modern concert halls. He explores the drama and mystery of music, visiting the places that nurtured it and revealing the characters who made it. As the publisher's blurb says: "*Using his own experiences of musicians and his inquisitive eye, he opens the way to a world of imagination, genius and surprise.*"

*The Making of Music* is indeed full of surprising facts. For example: that most moving closing duet from *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, in which Nero and his mistress 'celebrate the power they have achieved, bloodstained but touched by love' was a late addition to the opera and composed not by Monteverdi himself but, in all probability, by one of his pupils. And Naughtie poses some fascinating questions. Who was the 'English Mozart'? Who drowned at the age of twenty-two? Who caused the best first-night riot in musical history?

There is an invaluable reading list, a well-constructed index and, for those with a special interest in recording, a short chapter on recommended CDs that would keep us arguing together for many long and happy hours! Excellent reading, beautifully produced and very good value for money.

*Robert Harcastle*

*Questions of Music; Norman Edwards*

**ISBN 978-1-84728-090-9. £12.0; published Lulu 2005**

*Normstra@hotmail.com or www.lulu.com*

This book is the answer to those many recorded music society programme presenters who are faced with the annual problem: *What programme can I give?* In common with many others, I am sure, I keep all my previous presentations in the hope that I can recycle them at some future date. But titles sometimes elude me as the printing deadline approaches.

Norman's book contains a ready-made source of inspiration to cover 101 different evenings. Many of his programmes are framed around puzzles, with musical clues to help his audience solve them.

After retiring from a lifetime in the record selling industry, Norman devoted much time and thought to his own presentations. This culminated in *Questions of Music* which, as he says, is his 'first

and last published effort.' With some 250 pages full of ideas, commentary and puzzle solutions, and at a very affordable cover price, it could be the answer to many prayers. He does not offer recommendations of specific recordings of the thousands of musical items and this is a sensible policy as particular ones might go in and out of the catalogue. However, it must be said that to be devoted entirely to his suggestions would require an extensive record collection.

Presenters should view this book, therefore, as a helpmate and perhaps use it as a set of templates that could be adapted to the resources available. *Questions of Music* is written in a very user-friendly style and offers exceptional value for money.

*Jim Bostwick*

### DVDs from Select

Two recent DVDs distributed by Select are very much recommended. One is an **Arthaus** documentary, the other a ballet from **Opus Arte**.

**\*Herbert von Karajan – Maestro for the Screen**

Georg Wübbolt's film to commemorate the centenary of Karajan's birth gives a telling insight into the character of the man behind the music. It focuses on the great conductor's passion for filming his own performances in order to preserve his cultural heritage. He is seen to be an uncompromising film and TV director as well as a legendary conductor. Including rare archive material and excerpts from recordings by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at its best, this is real value for money.

**Arthaus Musik 101 459**

**\*La Fille mal Gardée**

Frederick Ashton's bright and light-hearted production of Ferdinand Hérold's delightful ballet was recorded in 2005 by the BBC from the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden and is now released on DVD. The joie de vivre of the dancers and lively playing by the Royal Opera House Orchestra conducted by Anthony Twiner combine to give an immaculate performance starring Carlos Acosta and Marianela Nunez. **Opus Arte 0992 D**



### Calling all Secretaries!

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*with Terry Barfoot*



### **20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> February:**

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## A Tribute to Michael Smith

*Vice-President Roderick Shaw recalls his long friendship with a man who contributed so much to the music world*

The death of Michael Smith on 18 June 2008 marks the loss of a keen enthusiast on the recorded music scene, a self-effacing man but one whose wise counsel and judgement were as invaluable to the Federation as his wide knowledge of music. Michael's involvement with the RMS movement began just after WW II, when he founded the Cambridge Music Circle in 1946. I joined the Circle in 1947 and thus began a friendship that lasted until he died.

For many of those sixty odd years we served together on the FRMS Committee. Michael's span of 21 years included a short term from 1947-8 and then a continuous span from 1978-98.

The Spring issue of the *Bulletin* in 1979 (No.90) carries a photograph of Michael on his re-election to the Committee with an article that underlines his ability to attract eminent speakers and musicians from his associates in the worlds of the gramophone and broadcasting.

One memorable informal occasion was in 1948 when Sir Adrian Boult and the BBC Symphony Orchestra were in Cambridge to give two concerts. At Michael's invitation Sir Adrian joined some of the Circle members for morning coffee in one of the more elegant coffee-houses that existed at that time.

There is no doubt that Michael's experience brought additional knowledge and expertise to the Federation and he was able to introduce many personalities to the music weekends, particularly when we were at Fitzwilliam College. He and I were responsible for programme planning during that time and I remember it with great pleasure. I also admired his tactful diplomacy with which, in 1996, he persuaded the College to loan us its beautiful chapel for a recital of French music by the pianist John Clegg.

Michael was always conscious of the need for close liaison between the Federation and its affiliates and in 1987, he compiled an analysis of the response to a questionnaire sent to all RMS groups. These statistics, combined with those from another survey in 1996, gave a better understanding of the problems that face ageing Societies. In his Chairman's address at the AGM in 1995 he said: *"Fifty percent of affiliated societies have no connection with the Federation apart from paying their fees. We must face and overcome this problem of insularity."* Today we see the combined results of early research

and Michael's commitment in the greater ties that exist between the Federation and its associates.

Michael's career was a good background to his interest in the recorded music movement. In 1961 he joined the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS, later to become the British Forces Network) and was sent immediately to set up a record library at the new station in Aden.

This challenging and fascinating assignment brought him in touch with all kinds of music and also gave him the opportunity to broadcast his own programmes of light classical music. He was moved to the BFBS station in Cologne, where he presented another of his broadcasts, *Your Concert Choice*. This

experience proved most valuable when he joined Radio Medway (later Radio Kent) in 1970. There he produced and presented Radio Kent's programmes *Concert Hall* and *Kent Classics*.

It was also in 1961 that he began his series of compilations of the numerical catalogues of 78rpm recordings by such major companies as HMV, Columbia, Parlophone and others. These attracted world-wide interest and he continued work in this field until shortly before his death. He was recognised in America with an award for his discographies and it is very sad that he died before he could travel to be presented with it.

He joined Gillingham (Kent) RMS in 1973, was made Chairman in 1976, and was delighted to welcome the Federation for its AGM in 1983, for it was in Gillingham that the idea of the Federation was conceived in the 1930s. At the meeting was Vice-President W.W. Johnson, one of the founder members, returning to the town after 40 years.

It was during his last five years as FRMS Chairman that Michael carefully steered the Federation through some of the most troubled time in its history and in his unassuming but sound way kept it on an even keel.

This quiet, non-confrontational but effective man had many friends and will be greatly missed. After he retired from the FRMS committee he was always present at its events when his health permitted and was often seen, puffing on his pipe, considering the scene before him. If anyone is brave enough to write a history of the FRMS, the name of Michael Smith should be written large, with thanks for his contribution to its affairs and success.



*Michael Smith as FRMS Vice-Chairman at a music weekend at Fitzwilliam College, 1989*



# Evelyn Barbirolli

*A personal memoir by Lyndon Jenkins, Music Advisor, Symphony Hall, Birmingham*

I first met Evelyn in 1955 when Sir John Barbirolli brought the Hallé to the festival in my home town of Swansea but it was not until well after his death that we were introduced properly - I think it was when she narrated *Peter and the Wolf* at a concert in Manchester.

From then on we were in regular touch. Wherever I went, I'd send a postcard, which she always acknowledged. This was the last thing I wanted her to be bothered to do so I took to telephoning a few days later so there was no need for her to respond. In return she would occasionally send me a card, when she was on one of those cruises she enjoyed so much.

When I felt I knew her well enough I asked her to speak to music clubs and societies and at other events. She came to the Delius Society during my chairmanship, to Worcester for an Elgar festival and twice to a FRMS weekend. Everyone knows she was worth her weight in gold on such occasions.

Her totally selfless side showed one year when the Federation found itself with a defecting principal guest. She answered my *cri de coeur* immediately with a 'yes'; she came and she conquered. Edward Greenfield and I were so grateful. When we proposed sending a car to bring her the response was typical: "Don't worry about me, I'll get there!" But Stratford-on-Avon is not the easiest place to reach by train, especially at a weekend, and we were able to persuade her. "I'm not used to being treated like royalty" she protested, as she got out of the car.

Well, she may not have wanted it (and she certainly didn't seek it), but people always did treat her

like royalty. That little restaurant just off Abbey Road that she loved so much, where we would go around her birthday time, was one. And in Worcester, watching from a restaurant window as the swans floated majestically on the Severn, was another. I had not said who she was, but afterwards the owners wanted to know. 'Yes', they said, 'we knew she must be somebody.'

In Manchester, of course, she *was* royalty, as we saw on that



*Sir John and Lady Evelyn Barbirolli*

memorable night marking JB's centenary in 1999. Hallé personnel from his time joined her, Daniel Barenboim and Michael Kennedy in an evening of delightful reminiscence. It was a privilege for me merely to try to keep them in order, but Evelyn was enthralling, full of those fascinating little details and features that were so much part of JB's make-up. Some carried into her affectionate memoir *Life with Glorious John*, which also contains a transcript of that anniversary evening. It was a pity that her publishers let her down with poor proof reading. And how typical of her that she went through the copies she sent out personally and, in her own hand, corrected all the errors.

A little later Daniel Barenboim brought his German orchestra to

Symphony Hall to play the Brahms symphonies over a weekend. Knowing of Evelyn's affection for the conductor, I invited her to come as our guest. She could have gone to hear the concerts in London, but she often preferred the provinces: "Besides, that music will sound so good in your Hall in Birmingham!" she said, and that clinched it. We were lunching quietly together on the Saturday when who should walk in but the Maestro himself: it was easy to sense the warmth between them. She was on such sparkling form that day that I sprang a suggestion that we might do a talk together before one of the concerts. 'Oh, how lovely!' she said without hesitation, and a simple leaflet handed out at the first concert was enough to ensure a full house for her at the second.

Her reminiscences of Glyndebourne, the Hallé days and much else were hugely enjoyed and, not surprisingly, there was a standing ovation for her at the end. She took my arm to make our slow exit from the stage, and when we got to the side the innate performer in her caused her to half turn to give the audience a last wave with her stick. I'm sure she didn't even notice how the applause almost doubled in volume. I suspect that many people there that evening probably felt that they were seeing her in Birmingham for perhaps the last time.

But there was one more opportunity. In January 2005 we devised a day of concerts, films and talks to mark what would have been Jacqueline du Pré's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. From the earliest planning stages I wondered whether she might like to take part, but I was conscious that Jackie's real connection was with JB through their renowned disc of the Elgar concerto. Eventually I



overcame my diffidence and telephoned her. Her reply took my breath away. Not only would she come, but: *"You won't know that I visited Jackie regularly all through her illness, and ended up feeding her from a spoon."* Effortlessly, she was the high point of the day.

If that occasion was unforgettable for me, so was our last appearance together, in 2006 at Oxford. At lunch she seemed tired and much less her usual communicative self, and I rather feared for the talk we were due to give at five o'clock. But when she re-appeared, refreshed from a rest, somehow she had bounced back to her top form.

Once into her stride there was no stopping her, and I felt it was one of the best of all the talks we had done together. She brushed aside any attempt I made (purely out of consideration for her) to bring the session to a close, and it

eventually ran to almost an hour longer than scheduled.

What a trooper she was! And kindness itself. Generous of her time, ever thoughtful, considerate, and always ready to help with sensible and sensitive advice from her long experience.

I still meet oboists who, however advanced they might be, are proud to think of themselves as her 'pupils'. The latest was Joachim Dam Thomsen of the Royal Danish Orchestra, in London for a concert at Wigmore Hall. "Do you think she might come?" he asked me. I enquired, and she would have done so but for a previous engagement: *"Give him my love,"* she said.

Another time she graciously found time for a producer friend of mine from Copenhagen who was making a programme about Carl Nielsen's music for Danish Radio. He was enchanted with 'Madam Barbirolli', and we

arranged for her contribution to come at the end so that the programme could finish with her words merging into the culmination of JB's magnificent Promenade performance of the *Inextinguishable* Symphony. It was the perfect conjunction. As I listened, I thought: 'What haven't those two done for music in England?'

And now she, too, is gone. However keenly we feel the loss, we consider how immensely fortunate we were to have such a wonderful person among us for so long.

*Ed's note: So many members of the FRMS affiliates think of Lady Barbirolli with affection and will remember her presentation appearance and lively conversation with Edward Greenfield at the Music Weekend in Daventry in 2006.*



## *Handel & the Divas*

**Exhibition at Handel House Museum; 020 7495 1685  
25 Brook Street, London until 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008  
Tues-Sat 10 am-6 pm. £5 adult (conc.£4.50), £2 child**

I went to the opening of the *Handel and the Divas* exhibition in April and highly recommend this as one worth making an effort to visit. The museum keeps Handel's residence alive with music, weekend lecture-recitals, family activities and other events. The current exhibition brings to life the atmosphere of the place where Handel worked with the great performers of his work and where life was musically vibrant.

Handel made use of the whole house. He composed, rehearsed and held informal performances for his friends and neighbours on the first floor; used the second for his bedroom and dressing room and his servants slept in the garret. From the ground floor he sold tickets for his concerts and copies of his music.

Throughout the house are rarely seen portraits of the famous opera divas of the day, each with a comprehensive summary of the successes, failures, rivalries and scandals behind the singer. There are also original scores and other archive material on display. Using audio headsets one can listen to the commentaries and recordings of music from the



operas in which the singers starred. The arias are sung by Dame Emma Kirkby, who opened the exhibition, and Catherine Bott. They double as the famous 'rival queens' mentioned in the review on p.18 of Hyperion's CD, in which Kirkby sings roles assigned to Faustina Bordoni, seen in the insert<sup>(1)</sup>.

There are also displays explaining the term 'diva' and her worth. Handel would not have used 'diva' to describe his leading ladies, although he would have been familiar with the behaviour coupled with the word today. There were usually two leading ladies in his operas, the one with the more prominent role known as the 'prima donna'. The inevitable battles for precedence would be fought on and off stage. To quote: *'Handel's female singers captured popular imagination, attracting loyal audiences and devoted fans. They were idolised. They behaved badly and made extravagant demands. They were the first divas.'*

In terms of financial worth, a female singer's career was erratic. With only verbal agreements with managers, players relied on benefit performances and gifts from patrons and admirers. A popular prima donna with social standing could reap high rewards – but only for as long as her voice lasted. Some of Handel's singers died in poverty.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Reproduced by permission of Handel House Collections Trust.*

### FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

We were sad to learn in June that **Michael Smith**, a former FRMS Chairman and great contributor to the wider world of music, had died. A tribute to him is on p.21. While he was able to do so, Michael regularly attended music weekends and would be glad to know that the events at Daventry and Scarborough were resounding successes. Full reports are in this *Bulletin*.

#### **John Maidment retires**

I am sorry to report that, because of his work commitments, we shall be losing the services of John Maidment.

In his time on committee John has been responsible for regeneration. He has worked tirelessly and ceaselessly for this cause. With his enthusiasm he has encouraged us to persevere when times were tough.

One of his suggestions, which I commend to you, is to put in a request for publicity to a programme such as Classic FM or Radio 3 if one of your neighbouring local societies is celebrating a significant special anniversary. This will enable you to mention the recorded music movement.

#### **Website regeneration page**

I would like to draw your attention to the regeneration page on the FRMS website. Thanks to the good offices of George Steele, the FRMS Website Manager, we now have a Mercia website. Mercia ([www.merciamusic.co.uk](http://www.merciamusic.co.uk)) consists of Stoke-on-Trent RMC, Stafford RMS, Stone RMS, Walton MG, Newcastle RMS, my own society South Cheshire RMS together with three local U3A groups. This website is linked to the FRMS website and we hope it will aid communication with the local population.

#### **Golden Jubilees**

I am privileged to have been invited to speak and to share in the festivities of two societies who, in 2009, are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. There are a number of affiliated societies of this age. I have a certain fascination about such matters because the age of these societies encapsulates much of the history of recording and Hi-Fidelity.

A society formed in 1949 would, at its inception, have used 78rpm records, a speed that had been standardised in 1928. In 1952 EMI released the first 45rpm records. Shortly afterwards came the long-playing 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> rpm. A famous advert of the time was Decca's 'six v. thirty-four' making the point that '*you can now possess a complete performance of Wagner's Meistersingers on six Decca LPs as against thirty-four seventy-eights*'.

1958 saw the introduction of stereo LPs and this again, as with mono LPs, meant new equipment. The industry at this time was producing all three record forms, viz. 78 rpm, mono LPs and stereo LPs. Small wonder that music enthusiasts were looking for societies who were able to cope with these rapid changes as well as providing the necessary expensive equipment. Many of our societies were formed around this time. For some time afterwards it was possible for some societies to experience programmes incorporating the then three main forms of reproduction.

The story does not end there. Relatively recently we have had reel-to-reel, cassettes and CDs. And when we thought it was over, at least for the time being, we now have MP3s and downloading from the web. However, in spite of all these changes, Man, being a sociable animal, will always seek out like-minded individuals to share his enthusiasm and expand his knowledge. Our societies supply this need and I am confident that, even in ever-changing circumstances, they will continue to do so.

*John Davies, Chairman*

## WHAT'S IN THE SECRETARY'S POSTBAG?

### Novel enterprises

In the last few months my postbag has brought in three exceptionally interesting items.

Dating for music lovers. In April I heard from an enterprising lady who had discovered our website via her own: [www.classicalmusic-lovers.com](http://www.classicalmusic-lovers.com). She is in fact an internationally known equestrian trainer, designer and author but, as a sideline, she has formed a dating agency specifically for people who are interested in classical music – a bold and novel idea! I wish success to her and her clients.

New label. More free enterprise! This gentleman tells me “*I got fed up with waiting for CD labels to bring out the music I wanted to hear*” – so he formed his own company, **Toccata Classics**. So far he has issued 31 CDs, all to professional standards and all of repertoire that is otherwise not available – more are in the pipeline.

He has even started a Toccata Discovery Club through which members will be able to buy his earlier CDs at reduced price.

As they are for us, large advertisements in the music press are way above his budget, but we have been so impressed by his operation that George Steele has put a link to his website on the FRMS homepage. His name is **Martin Anderson**, and he is currently producing a printed catalogue. I hope to be able to tell you how to get hold of a copy.

Martin lives in Central London, and my guess is that he could easily be persuaded to visit societies in the South East.

Exposure in mature press. The third in this interesting trio was suggested to me by my committee colleague Ron Bleach. Ron subscribes to a publication called *The Mature Times* and he suggested that we might approach them with a view to giving us a bit of publicity.

To my delight, the Editor Tony Watts has accepted an article of 850 words which describes the origins and *raison d'être* of the Federation which he intends to put on his website, with the possibility of a reduced version going into his newspaper. A limited circulation certainly, but when the musical press expects a substantial fee to promote us, at least this is something well worth having and could well prove fruitful in attracting interest.

In my view, if the musical press really understood who we are and what we do, it would be in their interests to give us a leg-up, but the chances of that are, as they say, fat. If anyone knows of a publication that might give us some promotion, I would be happy to send you a copy of the article.

### General enquiries

The postbag, electronic and terrestrial, has brought in the usual interesting crop of general enquiries. Matters of insurance and copyright, enquiries for the location of societies and contact details for speakers were, as ever, to the fore. It is good to know that many people take advantage of the ways in which we can help.

More testing were the quest for a computer-linked projector and the ways and means of getting music from tape cassettes to CD via the computer. Not that I answer all these queries myself. I break into a cold sweat whenever I read the instructions. Matters that are beyond me I put out by email to my committee colleagues and somebody always comes up with the answer.

One of the pleasures of manning the Secretary's desk is that so many of you accompany your query or notification of personnel changes with a greeting and often a bit of news about your society, for which I thank you.

*Tony Baines, FRMS Secretary.*

# **The Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd**

Invites you to our 72nd

## **Annual General Meeting**

Hosted this year by The City of Bristol Recorded Music Society on

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at**

### **The Bristol Music Club**

**76 St Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol**

Assist directly in the running of the Federation; meet old friends and make new ones; meet members of the Committee; relax and enjoy the hospitality of a fellow Society.

It is not just a business meeting, but

**a recorded music recital**

**Presented by Bristol RMS Chairman John Lawes**

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and a recital of live music by

### **The Emerald Players**

Comprising Roger Huckle, piano, and The Emerald Quartet

The programme will include  
Vaughan Williams 'The Lark Ascending'  
Elgar's Piano Quintet.

**Tickets (£24 each) for the dinner and recital (£5 recital only)**

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01782 251460      [secretary@thefrms.co.uk](mailto:secretary@thefrms.co.uk)  
or via [www.thefrms.co.uk](http://www.thefrms.co.uk)

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your application.  
All cheques to be payable to the Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd.

**This year's AGM takes place within a Weekend devoted to the possibility of  
creating a SOUTH WEST REGIONAL GROUP  
With optional events also on Friday and Sunday  
Details available from the FRMS Secretary**



### Whose Job?

This homily was on a tea cloth printed by Ulster Weavers and it somehow struck a chord! But I'm sure it doesn't apply to many RMS members!

\*

"This is a story about four people, named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody would do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done."

\*

*In my experience, Muggins always does it! Ed.*

### THOMAS ROUND SINGS IRISH SONGS



Thomas Round is internationally famous for his Gilbert & Sullivan and operatic performances and has made many recordings during his long career. He recorded this recital of Irish songs in the late 1950s in his London home and the recording has never been released before.

The reel-to-reel tape has been fully re-mastered for this CD.

This is an important issue for collectors of British singers on disc and a 'must have' for all fans of Thomas Round.

There are 12 songs in the recital, which opens with Dan Maguinness' comic song *The Tipperary Christening*. Several songs by Percy French include the well-known *Phil the Fluter's Ball*. There are two settings by Herbert Hughes: *The Star of the County Down* and the hauntingly beautiful *She moved through the Fair*. *Trotting to the Fair* is a delightful setting by Stanford.

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## AUTUMN MUSIC DAY 2008

### MUSIC FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2008

10.30 am to 5.00 pm

St. Margaret's Church Hall, Olton, near Solihull

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**More information from Regional Secretary Mick Birchall, tel: 01455 82394**

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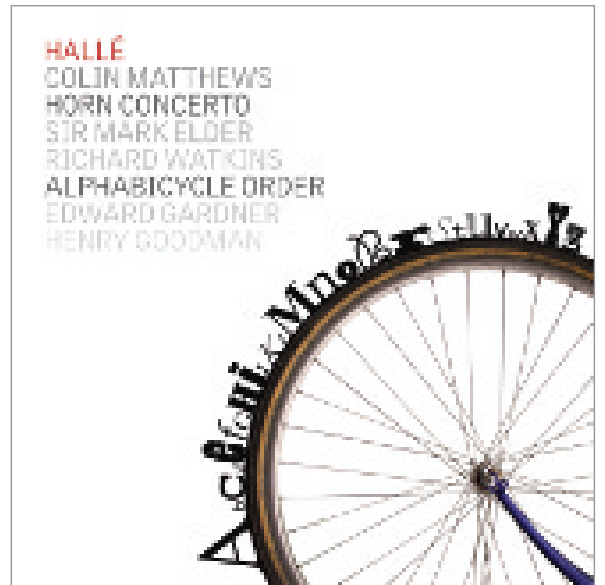
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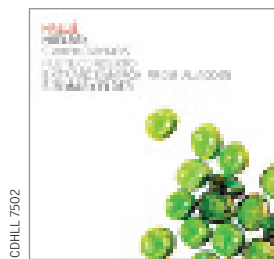
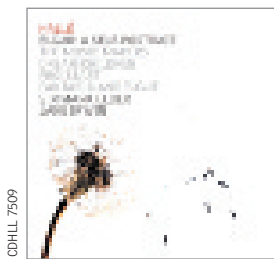
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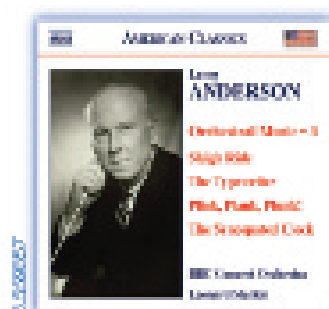


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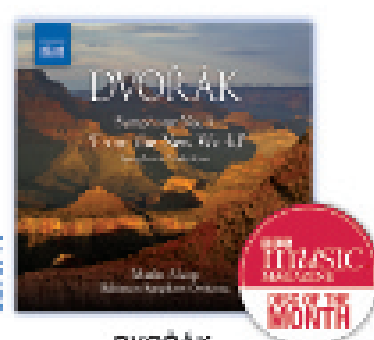
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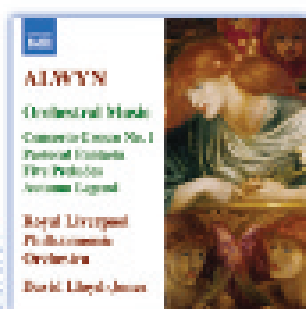
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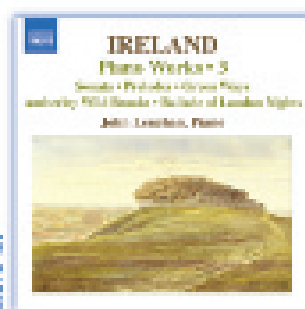
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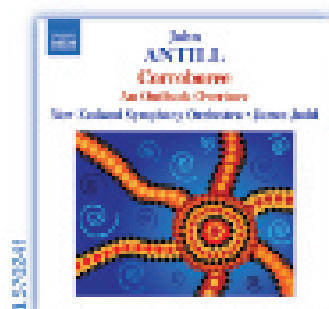
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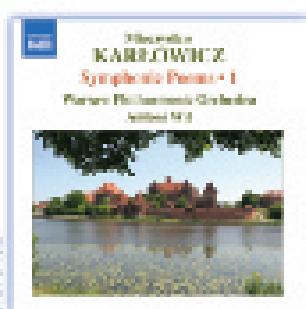
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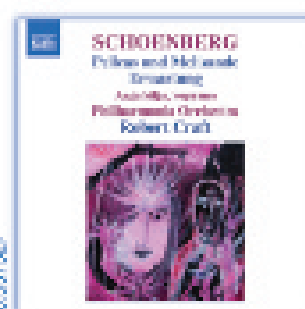
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