West Wickham Recorded Music Society

For 2011, the West Wickham Recorded Music Society can report another very busy year. In addition to the regular fortnightly meetings throughout the year, a special musical event has been arranged almost monthly. The highlight of the year was the 19th Annual Musical Holiday, this time to the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival held in mid-August in the Opera House, Buxton. A full coach of 49 members stayed for four nights at the Palace Hotel and attended performances each evening of The Yeomen of the Guard, Ruddigore, The Gondoliers and The Sorcerer given by a succession of operatic societies. During each day members visited, by coach and in fine weather, National Trust properties in the region including Calke Abbey, Hardwick Hall, Lyme Park and Kedleston Hall.

Another well-attended event was our annual Musical Weekend in April at the Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne. The theme was ‘Royal Connections’ and the first session, given by the chairman, included the ‘Royal Hunt and Storm’ from The Trojans by Berlioz and excerpts from Life for the Czar by Glinka and from Puccini’s Turandot. Four other members presented programmes covering royal topics such as the Emperor Concerto by Beethoven, the coronation anthem Zadok the Priest by Handel and A Masked Ball by Verdi. The weekend concluded with a large-screen DVD presentation of scenes from Tchaikovsky’s Sleeping Beauty ballet.

Members greatly enjoyed the annual supper and concert in March with an excellent cold buffet with wine, followed by a piano recital. John Cleave, pianist of the Royal Ballet, gave a wide-ranging programme including Grieg’s Wedding Day at Troldhaugen, Moszkowski’s Five Spanish Dances, Fauré’s Dolly Suite and movements from Tchaikovsky’s piano suite The Seasons.

The Society arranges a live recital each year in our headquarters in the Methodist Church, West Wickham. In September, a large audience attended a superb recital given by violinist Dominic Moore, sometime leader of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and pianist Jeremy Young, who records for Decca, SOMM Recordings and Meridian. Their programme included Beethoven’s Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Major Op. 47 ‘Kreutzer’, and César Franck’s Sonata for Violin and Piano in A.

Another high point was the annual Musical Day Out in June, with a three-hour afternoon cruise on the River Medway on a private charter. This was followed by coach transport to the Royal Festival Hall for an orchestral concert given by the Philharmonia Orchestra. 60 members greatly enjoyed a perfect summer’s day and the evening concert with Berlioz’s Overture Roman Carnival and Rachmaninov’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with soloist Nikolai Demidenko. The concert ended with Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6 ‘Pathétique’. In October 2011, the Society was fortunate in obtaining tickets for Don Pasquale by Donizetti at Glyndebourne. Another full coach party travelled to see an excellent Glyndebourne On Tour production, traditionally staged, with Jonathan Veira as Don Pasquale and Andrei Bondarenko as Malatesta; Ainhoa Garmendia sang the part of Norina.

There have been a number of orchestral concert visits throughout the year including a memorable visit to the Henry Wood Promenade concerts in the Royal Albert Hall. In August members occupied ten upper tier boxes for a concert given by the Chamber Orchestra of Europe conducted by Bernard Haitink. Emmanucl Ax played Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2, followed by his Symphony No. 4.

Three other orchestral concerts have been fitted into the year. In March, at the Royal Festival Hall, members heard the Philharmonia Orchestra play Glinka’s Overture to Ruslan and Ludmila, Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto (soloist Valeriy Sokolov) and the Symphony No. 5 by Sibelius. A spring concert visit in May to the Barbican Hall featured the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev playing the two Shostakovich Piano Concertos (soloist Yefim Bronfman). The final pre-Christmas concert in December at the Royal Festival Hall was a programme of French and Spanish works; Debussy’s La Mer was the highlight.

The programming throughout the year included two large-screen DVD presentations. In January members saw excerpts from Verdi’s Aida and Wagner’s Tannhäuser together with the ballet Elite Syncopations. In September the DVD programme featured Act 2 of the ballet Coppélia by Delibes and La Rondine by Puccini. A coffee morning and CD sale in February raised over £250 towards the cost of the live recital in September.

The fortnightly programmes, which include tea, coffee and biscuits, have included visits by Siva Oke LRAM, owner of SOMM Recordings, and a talk by music critic and author, Robert Matthew-Walker, on ‘Aspects of Sir Thomas Beecham’ to mark the 50th anniversary of the conductor’s death. Julian Williamson, conductor and lecturer, gave us ‘The Mendelssohns’. Excellent support was given to the annual Christmas lunch in December and membership continues at 120 with a waiting list!

Phillip Cox, Chairman

New Dean Music Club

Wildlife has been an unusual factor in the planning of the New Dean MC. Members travel to meetings through the Forest of Dean in West Gloucestershire where deer and sheep wander onto the roads; lately, wild boar have also become established. Night driving is unpopular, so the Club decided several years ago to go into hibernation in the winter, since the animals do not. The autumn season of ten weekly meetings now starts in late summer while the spring season, also of ten meetings, starts in late February or early March. This change has proved fortunate because the weather in recent winters would have
enforced many meeting cancellations.

Last year our venue for many years became unavailable. Fortunately the Cinderford Town Council offered the council chamber in a building only a few yards away, but the meetings had to be changed from Wednesdays to Mondays.

Programmes have covered a wide variety of music, presented by knowledgeable enthusiasts including performers discussing their instruments. DVDs of ballets and of musicians' lives have proved popular. ‘Lucky Dip’ programmes give much entertainment; in these a word or phrase is the theme for the evening. Members can then play short items which illustrate the theme, the more devious the connection the better! New Dean MC continues to bring musical enjoyment in a social atmosphere to a district which has little live music and is far from large cities. Like many societies greater membership would be welcome. Bryan Pugh, Publicity Officer

Torbay Musical Weekend
The 42nd Torbay Musical Weekend took place in November 2011 under the auspices of the Friends of Torbay in the familiar and congenial surroundings of the Palace Hotel, Torquay. A varied programme of talks, illustrated by musical examples and visual aids, culminated in the usual live recital on the last night, given on this occasion by the Bournemouth Symphony Brass, who covered a wide range of styles and moods in their selection, complete with some audience participation.

The opening talk was given by Peter Shaw, who cast new light on old-time music hall, aided by contemporary recordings of uncanny realism. This was followed by a two-part presentation by the celebrated music documentary producer Tony Palmer, whose spontaneous talks leapt with ease from the apparently unbeatable trio of Sex, Lies and Composers to the ‘appalling’ Wagner family, and Michael Crawford narrating a disastrous (but successful) job interview with Gene Kelly. The second day began with a wide-ranging survey by Roderick Swanston of women composers from Hildegard of Bingen to Judith Weir. Irene Lawford covered new territory with insights into her family firm - the famous publishers Peters Edition - followed by a relaxing and entertaining ‘Transport of Delight’ as Gwyn Parry-Jones found unexpected new angles in a well-tried musical subject by adding various modern forms of travel. Ian Graham-Jones then introduced us to three unknown 15th-19th century English composers, who certainly lived up to their billing by being obscure, yet still worth an occasional hearing. In a late-night and more informal presentation, the Friends’ Vice Chairman entertained the audience with the considerable assistance of Sir Thomas Beecham's huge recorded legacy.

On the final day, Gustav Holst, who had already figured eccentrically as a communist Anglo-Catholic in Tony Palmer's talk, reappeared in a completely new guise as a much-loved schoolmaster in a lively talk by Amelia Marriette. Murray Grainger then revealed to the unenformed among us the secrets of the accordion, and the spoken part of the proceedings terminated with an idiosyncratic ramble with Richard Gilbert-Johnson informatively and accurately entitled ‘The Sound of Music’. The well-received recital by the Bournemouth Symphony Brass which rounded off the Weekend was followed by a few words from the Friends’ Chairman, Barry Miller, in which he drew attention to the economic problems attending weekends such as this, while hoping it would still prove possible to continue into 2012.

Peter Lymbury, Vice Chairman

FRMS Scottish Group
Spring Music Day
Saturday 21 April 2012 in the Smith Museum and Art Gallery, Dumbarton Road, Stirling from 1 pm

Speakers - Dr Myra Soutar on ‘Chopin’s Revolution’
Richard Beith on ‘Vilem Tausky’

Conference Fee £15

Further information from John Maidment
Tel: 01241 853017
email: johncmaidment@msn.com
Booking forms can also be downloaded from the FRMS website.

FRMS YORKSHIRE REGIONAL GROUP
MUSICAL WEEKEND
THE CROWN SPA HOTEL, SCARBOROUGH
30TH MARCH – 2ND APRIL 2012

SUBJECTS
Delphian Records Gideon Klein
Haervarg Brian Women in Music
Louis Moreau Gottschalk Mozart in Italy
Reviving 19th Century British Opera Schubert’s Schwanengesang

PRESENTERS
Paul Baxter David Fligg
John Grimshaw Valerie Langfield
Tony Pook Barbara Satterthwaite
David Vickers Richard Wigmore

Can you match Subjects and Presenters?

Full details available from:
Jim Bostwick, Secretary YRG
6 Oakroyd Close, Brighouse HD6 4BP
01484 717865 jim_bostwick@hotmail.com
Stroud Valleys Music Club
30th Birthday Celebration
On September 28th the Stroud Valleys Music Club (SVMC) celebrated its 30th anniversary with an evening of music, memories and refreshment. The Club was started in 1981 by Maurice Kelly and some musical friends. Three years later the Club hosted the NFGS National Conference in Stonehouse and Maurice became the editor of the Bulletin. Shortly after that he helped local businessman and club member, Bob Justham, set up what became the International String Quartet Week, which was based around Gloucester for several years. Maurice died in 1987 and Bob was unable to join the party, but we were delighted that his son Nigel was able to come from Aberystwyth and tell us just what sort of person Maurice was. He sounded like perpetuum mobile!

Other guests included past members, presenters and members of the local musical community. We were also pleased to welcome Roger and June Apps whom we met a few weeks earlier in Stonehouse when Roger inaugurated the new FRMS West Region. After a welcoming drink we heard a reprise of some pieces from the very first meeting, including a historic recording of the Dvořák Cello Concerto played by Rostropovich with the Czech Philharmonic under Václav Talich. There then followed an interval for some musical cupcakes and light refreshments. The finale was a series of short reminiscences from present club members, each choosing an appropriate piece of music. Chairman Robert Crockford rounded off the very enjoyable evening with thanks for everyone who had contributed to the club's past success, and looked forward to a long future.

Robert Crockford, Chairman

Old Bridge Music Club – Aylesford
60th Birthday
Old Bridge Music Club – Aylesford, celebrated its 60th birthday on Friday 22nd July 2011, a beautiful sunny day, not too hot, but lovely air. We enjoyed a lunch at Hadlow Manor Hotel, just a mile away from Downderry Nursery where Dr Simon Charlesworth houses the National Lavender Collection. The late Mrs Sylvia Charlesworth, Simon's mother, was an original member of Old Bridge who held office on the Committee. As a Recorded Classical Music Club we have over the years enjoyed some wonderful programmes put on by our own members, guests and on many occasions, visiting choirs. East Peckham Silver Band and other musicians have also given us most enjoyable times. Possibly because of passing years, we have changed from evening to afternoon meetings, and that has proved a great success. Our Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each calendar month at the Aylesford Community Centre and enjoys being affiliated to the FRMS. The OBMC was started by a number of residents of Aylesford who were employed by well-known papermakers, Albert E Reed and Kimberly-Clark. Large mills of both companies were at the time situated on a site close to the village but separated from it by the tidal River Medway.

Gordon Crouch, Chairman

Torbay RMS stalwart’s award
John Davis (Torbay RMS) collected his FRMS 50-year award at a concert in Symphony Hall Birmingham where President Lyndon Jenkins invited the evening’s soloist, Peter Donohoe, to present it.

Picture: Matthew Walker, Kent Messenger