

Spring 2016
No. 164
£2.00

The Federation of Recorded Music Societies
FRMS
Founded 1936

Bulletin



Cecilia Bartoli
Buon compleanno!

hyperion



Two new concertos from the unparalleled Stephen Hough and the CBSO. The eminent Andris Nelsons conducts. Schumann and Dvořák each wrote just one piano concerto, the latter being performed here in its fearsomely challenging original version.

CDA68099

Dvořák & Schumann: Piano Concertos
STEPHEN HOUGH piano
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ANDRIS NELSONS conductor

CD collectors ...

New releases are a competitive £10.50 when you buy from our website, and there are 100s of older CDs available from just £5.00.

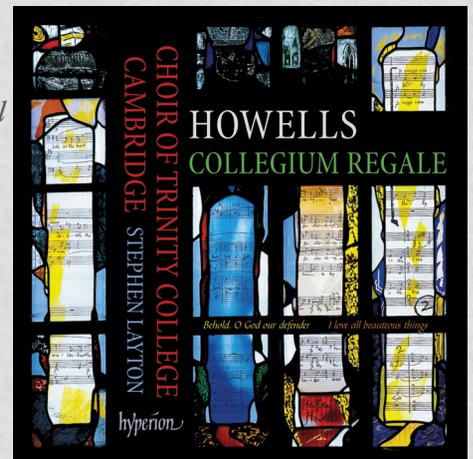
ANOTHER REASON TO GET YOUR MUSIC FROM
www.hyperion-records.co.uk



A triumphant new complete recording of Howells' liturgical masterpiece—from the finest of choirs.

CDA68105

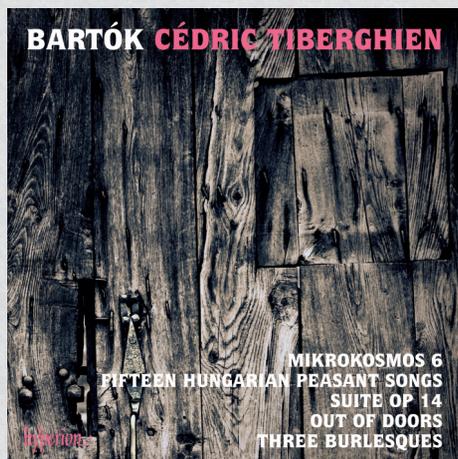
Herbert Howells: Collegium Regale & other choral works
TRINITY COLLEGE CHOIR
CAMBRIDGE
STEPHEN LAYTON conductor



Cédric Tiberghien makes a welcome return to the studio revealing the pianistic wonders of Béla Bartók.

CDA68123

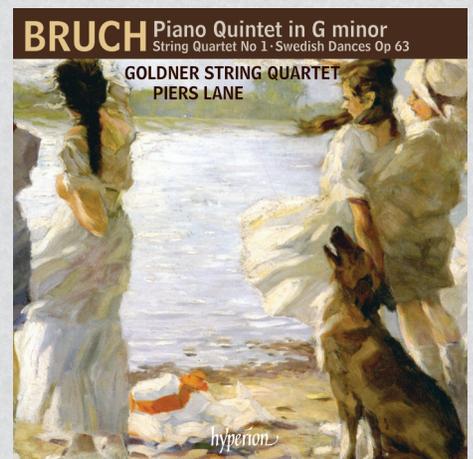
Béla Bartók: Mikrokosmos 6 & other piano music
CÉDRIC TIBERGHYEN piano



Our exuberant team of Australians casts lustrous chamber magic over the works of Max Bruch.

CDA68120

Max Bruch: Piano Quintet & other works
GOLDNER STRING QUARTET
PIERS LANE piano



OTHER LABELS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD ON OUR WEBSITE



CDs, MP3 and lossless downloads of all our recordings are available from www.hyperion-records.co.uk

HYPERION RECORDS LTD, PO BOX 25, LONDON SE9 1AX · info@hyperion-records.co.uk · TEL +44 (0)20 8318 1234

CONTENTS

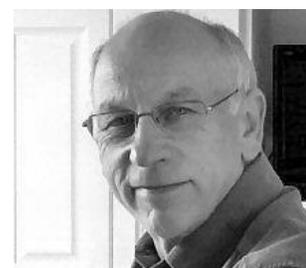
News and Comment		Features	
Editorial	3	Cecilia Bartoli at 50 by Sue Parker	10
AGM 2015 report	4	Daventry Music Weekend details	16
Chairman's Chat	7	Opera Unmasked by Jim Mitchell	18
A view from Yorkshire – Jim Bostwick	21	Concert Notes by Paul Corfield Godfrey	20
		Presenters' Panel	22
		Letters and emails	25
		Notable anniversaries for 2017	29
Regional Groups		Officers and Committee	
Yorkshire & Northwest Music Day	8		30
Societies		Index of Advertisers	
News from Maidstone, South Cheshire, Swinton, West Wickham, and Torbay Musical Weekend	12	Hyperion Records	2
		Arts in Residence	9
		Prof. Gerald Seaman seminars	11
		Naxos	17
		Nimbus records	31
		Watson Records	Back Cover
CD Reviews			
Naxos	A-Z of Singers		27
Hyperion	Janáček, Scriabin, Ornstein		28

Front cover: *Cecilia Bartoli, Salzburg 2014*. Photo credit salzburg-cityguide.at

<p>The editor acknowledges the assistance of Sue Parker (Barnsley and Huddersfield RMSs) in the production of this magazine.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For more information about the FRMS please go to www.thefrms.co.uk</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Forthcoming Events</p> <p>Y&NRG Spring Musical Weekend, March 11th - 14th 2016 (Page 8) Daventry Music Weekend, April 22nd - 24th 2016 (Page 16) Scottish Group Music Day, April 23rd 2016 (Page 19) FRMS AGM, Bournemouth, November 12th 2016 Torbay Music Weekend, November 18th - 21st 2016</p>
---	--

EDITORIAL Paul Astell

WELL, TIME FLIES and this issue marks my tenth as editor. I'll admit to not being quite sure what I was letting myself in for when I put myself forward for this role back in 2010, but it has been a pleasurable task. It's fairly time-consuming at certain points in the calendar, accompanied by mini-panics about assembling sufficient copy, and will it all be ready by deadline day. I should emphasise that this is no one-man show. Others involved in the production process are mentioned elsewhere and their important work is much appreciated. Then there are the various correspondents, be they writers of letters, emails or articles, as well as our CD reviewer. Last, but certainly not least, are our loyal band of advertisers without whom the magazine would not be viable in its current form. I'd like to be able to say that major errors have been less likely with the appearance of each issue, but even for the previous edition I did contrive to use the pre-proofread version of one page which contained a number of bloopers. It goes to prove that you must never allow complacency to set in. Incidentally, if you didn't spot it, I'm certainly not going to divulge which page that was!



Readers will be aware that, sadly, it's a rare event these days that a new society affiliates to the FRMS, but we are delighted to welcome a group who call themselves Opera Unmasked. Their mission sounds quite ambitious and enterprising, so I was pleased that when approached, the group's founder was willing to, er...unmask himself and write an article for this magazine. I'm sure you'll find what he has to say interesting.

If you haven't attended previously, have you ever thought about coming along to the Federation's annual event at Daventry? The Music Weekend in April really is worth considering, and many music-lovers representing our affiliated societies have been enjoying excellent presentations and recitals for many years. That's not to mention the social aspects where you will be among like-minded and friendly people. Please see details on page 16 and get your application in as soon as possible. See you there? ●

FRMS Annual General Meeting 2015

Torbay RMS were the hosts for this year's AGM held at the town's Redcliffe Hotel.

Report and photos: Paul Astell. Additional photography: Stuart Sillitoe.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THIS YEAR'S hosts, Martyn Worth, welcomed delegates to sunny Paignton and wished for a successful day. He then introduced FRMS chairman Allan Child.

The **Chairman's Annual Report** began with Allan looking back on what has been effectively his second year in office, describing the period as an 'agreeable time'. The first year as acting chairman had been a difficult time for the Federation with the loss within a few months of then chairman Colin Dancer, President Lyndon Jenkins and vice-chairman Roger Apps. Fortunately the atmosphere within the Federation, and particularly the committee, was now very different from when he previously served as chairman some twelve to fifteen years ago.



Martyn Worth, Torbay RMS chairman, welcomes delegates

It is often mentioned, but Allan wished to acknowledge the work of the chairman who succeeded him back then, John Davies (South Cheshire RMS and now FRMS Vice-President), who was able to steer the Federation through to a time of stability before taking a well-earned retirement in 2011. This applies equally to another of our Vice-Presidents, Tony Baines, who became secretary around the same time.

One of Allan's aims as chairman is to encourage contact between societies either directly or through the Federation, and he felt privileged to visit societies in Alnwick, Bournemouth, Carnoustie, Loughborough, Ripley, Rustington, Sheffield, Torbay and Wollaton. At some venues it was to present programmes, but at others he was pleased just to have the chance to meet members. He has also enjoyed regional events in Scotland, Yorkshire and the West Region.

Allan was pleased earlier this year, along with Jim Bostwick and Graham Kiteley, to meet and discuss issues of mutual interest with Julian Lloyd Webber, the new President of the Federation. There was much sadness, though, to hear of the death of our former President, Ted Greenfield, in July. Sadly, the FRMS did not receive details of the funeral arrangements.

Regarding the formal duties of the chairman in presiding at committee meetings (as well as the AGM), Allan was happy to report that they are never dull but they never get out of hand! The efforts of the

2015 Daventry Music Weekend organising team resulted in a superb event, and all credit goes to organisers Ron and Denise Beech, and administrator Jim Bostwick. This is not to forget the generous (anonymous) sponsor who made possible the memorable recital by Chloë Hanslip and Danny Driver.

The chairman, though, warned that there are worries within the Federation. As mentioned in his recent *Bulletin* column, most of the societies he has visited are thriving but others are experiencing difficulties and there have again been some closures this year. Federation events have also experienced problems and last October's Central region event was cancelled owing to minimal interest. The FRMS appears to be a long way from extinction, but we cannot be complacent. Our core business – serving the interests of societies through licensing and insurance – will continue as long as there is a need for it (and it can be provided economically). But other activities such as *Bulletin*, the Daventry and regional events, as well as technical advice, all depend for their survival on support from societies and individuals.



Jim Bostwick (secretary), Allan Child (chairman) and Paul Corfield Godfrey (treasurer) get down to business.

Allan concluded his report by acknowledging the support provided by his team. Secretary Jim Bostwick keeps the Federation running smoothly; Paul Godfrey is not only treasurer but is a valuable member of our Daventry organising team which is headed by Ron and Denise Beech. Commenting on this magazine, Allan said: 'Currently edited by Paul Astell, our excellent

Bulletin draws compliments from outside the FRMS.' The late delivery of the Autumn issue was nobody's fault, our previous print company having suddenly closed down. We were able to hastily make alternative arrangements but some delay was inevitable. The taking of minutes of meetings is in the capable hands of Mick Birchall, and the invaluable website is ably managed by George Steele. Philip Ashton offers technical advice and handles the management of equipment at Daventry. John Hardie of Southport (our AGM hosts last year) is a newcomer to the committee and is taking over management of the *Bulletin* distribution operation. Allan thanked all these people for making his duties as chairman so pleasurable.

Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

For his first report as treasurer, Paul Corfield Godfrey described the past 12 months as a period of transition, in more ways than one. Having inherited the mantle from Graham Kiteley, Paul had spent considerable

time becoming accustomed to the not inconsiderable paperwork whilst at the same time moving home. It has also taken nearly twelve months to get the bank to update its own records, and access to computer banking has only been completed recently. Consequently, it should prove easier to manage the affairs of the FRMS during the year ahead.

In previous years it has been possible to isolate expenditure and costs for different events during the course of the year. Because of the aforementioned banking difficulties, such detailed analysis for 2014-15 has not been possible.

The FRMS constitution requires that the annual accounts are subject to independent inspection by accountants with the relevant professional qualifications. In the search for new auditors, Paul had been unable to find any that would work *gratis*. However, an offer from former HMRC colleagues (who lack those specific qualifications) to carry out the work on an unpaid basis would require a minor amendment to the constitution. This was put before the meeting and was unanimously approved. Given that this year's fees amounted to £500 + VAT, this will result in a considerable saving for the Federation.

Our treasurer was able to report that the FRMS's finances remain in a healthy state, the balance even showing a slight increase on that for 2013-14. This has meant that, given the historically low rate of inflation, subscription fees for 2015-16 are unchanged. Income will, however, continue to fall as a number of societies have ceased operation during the year, and we assume that this trend will continue. Subscription rates, therefore, will be kept under review. Paul's hope was that societies will appreciate that their subscriptions will continue to be well spent.

Introducing his fourth **Secretary's Report**, Jim Bostwick thanked committee members and fellow officers for their support. The major part of his role is dealing with matters raised by societies and committee colleagues. Jim estimates the number of emails – by far the most common form of contact – received during the past 12 months to be around 1000. A common reason for societies finding themselves in difficulties is the inability to fill key posts. Combining roles often happens but, through experience, Jim recommends that the post of treasurer is kept separate. The Federation is here to help, but all too often the first news received of a group in difficulty is that it has closed. Jim stressed how important it is that all societies notify him immediately of any changes to contact details such as postal and email addresses, phone number, etc.

Jim enjoys visiting societies to present programmes and he has been invited to attend by two Scottish societies. Another of his duties is the administration of the Daventry Music Weekend. The difficulties of travelling to that venue are well understood and measures are in hand to address that problem with the provision of a bus service to and from a major rail link.

A new Society, based in Oxfordshire, has recently affiliated to the Federation. One of Opera Unmasked's aims is to promote the joys of opera to young people,

so we must wish them well in that quest. [*Ed: see page 19.*] Sadly, there are more closures to report: the societies at Winscombe, Sunbury, Tring, Uxbridge, Bridport, Rotherham, and Jubilee (West Sussex) have ceased to function.

There is only one vacancy on the FRMS committee now that Stuart Sillitoe from Preston RMS has joined. Stuart came along to a committee meeting as an observer, an offer that is open to any society member, and wasn't frightened away! Next year's AGM will be hosted by Bournemouth RMS and will be held in that town's Elstead Hotel. Jim thanked Torbay RMS, this year's hosts, in particular the aforementioned Tony Baines as the main point of contact.

Following a question from the floor about Daventry and the numbers attracted to that event, a discussion ensued around costs and whether the quality of presenters is a draw. Jim explained that the audience is mainly, but not exclusively, drawn from the south of the UK. Other venues have been explored but, quite simply, research has shown that the costs involved for a hotel elsewhere with similar facilities don't compare favourably with the terms we have secured, and continue to enjoy, at Daventry. Obviously the attraction of any particular star presenter is a matter of taste, but it was pointed out by a delegate that it is not unusual to be completely satisfied by a presentation given by someone unknown to most.

Confirmation of the New Committee was an opportunity for each of the members to make themselves known to the meeting. The **Appointment of Independent Examiners** was confirmed by the treasurer, the process having previously been explained and voted on during his report. The examiners are Ruth Williams and David Brooke. There were no questions raised under **Any Other Business**, and the chairman duly declared the meeting closed.

Recorded music recital

To mark the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius, John J Davis of Torbay RMS, who is surely one of the composer's greatest advocates, presented what he described as a cross-section of the composer's output to show what Sibelius is all about. John has often spoken, including on Radio 3, about his favourite Sibelius piece, so much so that his personal email address shares the title of the work. The suite from *King Christian II* is taken from incidental music for the play which was written by the composer's friend, Adolf Paul. John played the 'Nocturne' which he said was all he needs in music for 'a goose-pimple extravaganza'! It was performed by the Lahti SO with Osmo Vänskä conducting.

Sibelius wrote many songs and John's chosen example from this genre was *Diamond on the March Snow* which depicts how snowflakes are finally melted by the kiss of the sun. Soile Isokoski was the soprano with the Helsinki PO under Leif Segerstam. John was once introduced to the Chinese pianist Di Xiao by the late Lyndon Jenkins in a Birmingham studio. There,

John was treated to a personal performance of the *Impromptu* Op. 5, No. 5. Playing this track recalled a very special moment in his life. John seemed to think that we would find it hard to believe that he was speechless after that experience!

Sibelius's choral output is considerable, a fine example being 'Give me no splendour, gold or pomp' performed on John's recording by the YL Male Voice Choir conducted by Matti Hyökki. Next came a very special recording of a very famous piece, *The Swan of Tuonela*, performed in the 1970s by an orchestra hand-picked by Leopold Stokowski, which demonstrated its glorious and radiant string sound. In 2006 John visited the music festival on the small island of Korpo located in the Turku archipelago. In 1887, when Sibelius and his family were holidaying on the island, he composed the *Korpo* Trio. We heard the wonderful third movement superbly performed by Folke Gräsbeck (piano), Jaakko Kuusisto (violin) and Marko Ylönen (cello).



John J Davis (left) and FRMS chairman Allan Child

To represent the composer's symphonic repertoire, John chose the third movement of Symphony No. 1 which features a very important part for timpani. The Helsinki PO under Leif Segerstam were again the performers. John told us that Sibelius was a pretty competent violinist, so it's natural that he should compose for his own instrument. Among those works are the six Humoresques for violin and orchestra, from which John selected the third, with Christian Tetzlaff as soloist and the Danish NSO conducted by Thomas Dausgaard. At one point Sibelius dabbled with Italian folksongs and John provided an example: 'Oje Caruli' (Oh Caroline) performed by baritone Jorma Hynninen and pianist Folke Gräsbeck.

For his grand finale, John offered the composer's most popular work, *Finlandia*, in 'a very special recording' where the performers 'really give it the works'. Those performers were the Laulun Ystävät Male Voice Choir with the Gothenburg SO under Neeme Järvi. John left his audience in no doubt about his admiration for his number one composer.

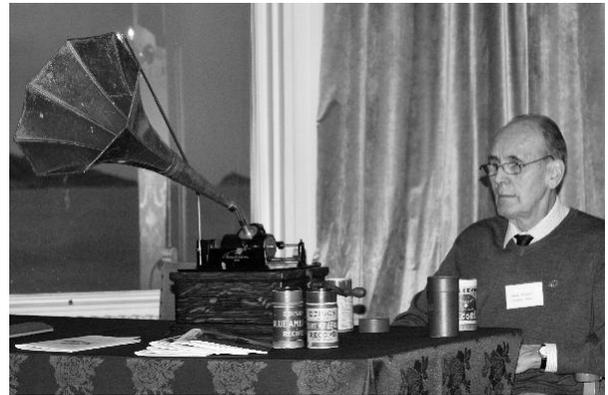
CLPGS phonograph presentation

The second presentation of the day was given by **Dave Roberts**, a patron of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society (CLPGS). (A fellow patron is Oliver Berliner, grandson of the inventor of the gramophone.) Dave told us they are the oldest recorded music society in the world, having been

founded in 1919 as the London Edison Society. Its first patron was Thomas Edison himself. The original aim was to promote Edison's cylinders as his recording technique was seen by some as being superior to a flat disc. Problems with storage space, though, saw the disc finally win out.

Dave quipped that the handsome-looking machine before him was there in case we had a power cut. He explained that the Edison Fireside model was manufactured in 1909 when Edison produced his long-playing cylinder. This is now the only machine Dave owns, though at one time he had collected 75 phonographs and gramophones. To compete with the 78-rpm disc which lasted for three minutes, Edison developed the 200-groove per inch, 4-minute cylinder, which was an obvious advancement on the earlier 2-minute, 100-groove per inch version. Dave conceded that the cylinders he was about to demonstrate would not be of similar quality to the CDs we'd just heard, but they are more than 100 years old.

Dave's first example was a 2-minute wax cylinder with Peter Dawson singing 'When the boys go marching by', recorded, remarkably, in 1906. Next



Dave Roberts of CLPGS with his 1909 Edison Fireside phonograph

came a wax cylinder from around 1903, also of two minutes' duration, the slave minstrel song 'My old Kentucky home'. The speed of the machine's reproducer was now changed to play the next item, which was a newly manufactured 4-minute cylinder, albeit recorded via computer software and transferred using 'other scientific processes' from its original 2-minute version. Volume-wise, the reproduction was at a slightly lower level, but hearing the 1906 performance by Anton van Rooy of the 'Toreador song' from Bizet's *Carmen* was amazing. The remaining 2-minute segment on the cylinder was taken up with Mario Ancona's rendition of 'Nobil Dama' from *Les Huguenots* by Giacomo Meyerbeer, recorded in 1907.

Dave is a big fan of Peter Dawson and his final example was the Australian bass-baritone's rendition of *The admiral's broom*, originally recorded in 1912 on an Edison black wax Amberol cylinder but transferred to a celluloid Blue Amberol type when they first became available the following year.

This was an extremely interesting presentation given by someone who is an obvious expert in his subject and to whom the term 'enthusiast' seems something of an understatement!

Go to clpgs.org.uk to hear these and other recordings.

Live music recital

Following a very enjoyable evening meal, Torbay RMS chairman Martyn Worth introduced pianist Nick



Ray. Nick studied music at Cambridge, specifically piano and composition with Alexander Goehr. He has

also been a music teacher for 15 years and is currently a student support worker at Treloar College, Alton, Hampshire. The college provides education, care, therapy, medical support and independence training to young people with physical disabilities.

Nick (pictured) introduced each of the three pieces in his recital and began with the final movement of Handel's Suite No. 5 in E major, popularly known as 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'. This was followed by the four movements of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3. Nick explained that this was his first public performance of the piece. He finished with an energetic performance of the Fantasia in F minor by Chopin, demonstrating that it was clearly not the first time he'd played it in public!

Nick is to be congratulated on his choice of programme featuring well-known but challenging pieces, and we are grateful that he came along to entertain us and bring the day to a satisfactory conclusion.

Thanks go to Tony Baines and his team at Torbay RMS for a very successful and well-organised day. ●

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT Allan Child

In a recent broadcast of Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, the very first notes had me saying to myself 'that's far too fast!' Well, this is not a critical review, and in any case by the time you read this the broadcast will no longer be recent, so I will refrain both from naming the performers involved and from drawing a comparison with those whom I consider to have achieved the correct tempo. But the incident highlights the danger – touched on by our President in his article in *Bulletin* 163 – of becoming so attached to a favourite recording that one comes to regard it as definitive, and all other performances, live or on record, as inferior or unsatisfactory.

Is there, or can there be, such a thing as a definitive performance or recording? One has only to listen to the 'Building a Library' feature in Radio 3's *Record Review* to realise that the perfect recording is almost an impossibility. Not only the performers but also the producer and the recording engineer have input to the finished product and the final recommendation will often be a compromise.

So in our record collections we may have a cherished recording of a particular work, but I think we would do well to have others that we can listen to from time to time. Sometimes a second version may be acquired almost unintentionally as the coupling to something else, but maybe we should actively seek out alternatives. 'Not another Beethoven's Fifth!' you may say to yourself as you glance through the stock in a charity shop, but for the modest outlay involved why not see how it compares with Carlos Kleiber's 1974 classic, or whatever your favourite is?

Of course, you may have other priorities depending on where you are in your musical journey of discovery (a journey, surely, that lasts one's lifetime) and it may be far more rewarding to seek out, say, Beethoven's songs or some of his cello sonatas rather than yet another Fifth Symphony. An introduction to less familiar music may be one of the benefits of belonging to a Recorded Music Society, subsequently prompting one to seek out further examples, something that independent record companies – for example those that advertise in *Bulletin* – have made so much easier these days. But whatever your plans for record buying, may I wish you many hours of enjoyable listening. ●



A Request to Society Secretaries

Occasionally, members tell us that they rarely, or never, get to see the copy of *Bulletin* that is sent to their Society. We would encourage all secretaries to kindly ensure their Society's copy is distributed as widely as possible among its membership. Even better, why not subscribe to additional copies? Please see contact details on page 30.

Also, does the Federation have full and up-to-date details of your Society? Do you have new officers, or does the secretary now have an email address, or has it changed? Is your FRMS website entry current and up to date? Please keep us informed.

REGIONAL NEWS

Yorkshire & Northwest Regional Group

Yorkshire & Northwest Regional Group's music day on October 10th was held at the New North Road Baptist Church, Huddersfield. Reporter: acting chairman Ron Cooper

Hosted by York RMS, which this year celebrates its 60th anniversary, the day's programme began with Gavin Mist's 'York Connections', a presentation which featured music and performances by composers and artists connected with the city. Gavin opened with 'Blessed City, Heavenly Salem' by Sir Edward Bairstow, the Huddersfield-born church organist and composer, who was both organist and Director of Music at York Minster for more than thirty years until his death in 1946. The late-Baroque composer John Hebdon, baptised in Spofforth (1712), lived in York for many years. His Concerto No. 3 for string orchestra is a delightful work, one of six such concertos, none of which had been heard for over 200 years until the 1980s. The influence of the York University Music Department was stressed by works from contemporary composers such as Christopher Fox's *Second Eight* (piano solo), David Blake's 'Fantasy Piece' (string quartet), Peter Aston's choral *Alleluia Psallat*, and his hymn for soprano 'And I saw a new heaven', accompanied by the University Chamber Choir. The Fitzwilliam String Quartet, resident at the University, performed Glazunov's 1886 work *Rêverie Orientale*. Three solo organ works completed the programme, the highlight of which was Francis Jackson's poignant tribute to Sir Edward Bairstow, under whom he sang as a chorister, to mark his mentor's 70th birthday in 1944. This was a fitting finale, coming from the long-serving composer and organist who performed at York Minster for 35 years. Underpinning all the extracts were the influences of the ancient and modern institutions within the city, namely the Minster, with its wealth of ecclesiastical works for organ and choirs, and York University's Music Department, founded in 1964, with its vibrant contemporary compositions.

Irene Parkin's 'A Violin Pot Pourri' featured a wide selection from across the centuries and contrasting genres, performed by some of the finest virtuosi. Opening with JS Bach's Partita No. 3 played by Itzhak Perlman, Irene followed this with Perlman's duet with pianist André Previn in Scott Joplin's *Ragtime Dance*. Extracts from three of the most celebrated and popular concertos in the violin repertoire – Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Elgar – were superbly played by, respectively, Anne-Sophie Mutter, David Oistrakh and Yehudi Menuhin. In sharp contrast, a live recording of traditional Gypsy music by the Titi Winterstein Quintett, followed by Stéphane Grappelli's *Tournesol*, and then his duet with Menuhin in Gershwin's 'Lady Be Good', demonstrated the violin's versatility in different genres. The Minimalist and the Romantic were nicely juxtaposed, with Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel*, played by Tasmin Little and Mark Roscoe, and Clara Schumann's Romance for violin and piano Op. 22 No. 2, played by Jennifer Pike and Tom Poster, both being very much of their time. Irene's well-balanced and varied programme was concluded by a

stirring Jascha Heifetz performance in the *allegro guerriero* finale of Max Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*.

The final presentation, 'Larks Ascending', given by Peter Lerew, took us into the world of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Peter, brought up near Dorking and Leith Hill, was a boy chorister and was introduced to the great man and his music, in particular the church choral works. He reminded us about Vaughan Williams's love of folk songs and how they influenced so much of his repertoire, notably the early song cycles, from which we heard examples superbly sung by Ian Bostridge and Christopher Maltman. A choral setting of *Greensleeves* and extracts from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which included the spoken words of Sir John Gielgud and the enchanting 'Shepherds' Song', were much enjoyed. A fitting finale to the presentation, as well as the whole day's programme, was a performance of *Serenade to Music*, the tribute to Sir Henry Wood first sung at the Royal Albert Hall in 1938. In a modern recording we heard, among others, the soprano Amanda Roocroft. Shakespeare's words from Act V of *The Merchant of Venice* are most apposite: 'Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music / Creep in our ears...'

YORKSHIRE & NORTHWEST REGIONAL GROUP SPRING MUSICAL WEEKEND

March 11-14, 2016

Craiglands Hotel

Cowpasture Road, Ilkley LS29 8RQ
01943 430001

Programme

Light as a feather – Peter Smart

The good, the bad and the ugly – John Atkin

GB Shaw at the opera – Prof. Anthony Ogun

Pierre Monteux: an appreciation – Trevor Cattell

The Philharmonia at 70 – Nigel Simeone

The life of an LPO cellist – Catherine Wilmers

50+ years in the recording industry – Malcolm Walker

Great conductors discovered on CRQ – David Patmore

Let's celebrate the LP – Jim Bostwick

Attendance is open to all, including members of other affiliated societies, their friends, and relatives

Enquiries to:

Geoff Bateman

Eroica, 1 South Road, Bradford BD9 4SU

01274 783285

geoffbateman@blueyonder.co.uk

or

Jim Bostwick

6 Oakroyd Close, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 4BP

01484 717865

jamesbostwick@btinternet.com



Arts in Residence

CULTURAL BREAKS IN BEAUTIFUL PLACES

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

Friday 10th–Sunday 12th June: Sheafhayne Manor, Yarcombe, East Devon

Sheafhayne Manor is a Grade II listed Elizabethan manor house, commanding wonderful views. The house has recently been extensively and lovingly refurbished, so that modern facilities have been combined with the original features.

‘Composers in Exile’ with Terry Barfoot and Ian Lowes

The weekend will explore a wide variety of music, all of it written by composers who for various reasons were living far from their homelands. Among the composers to be featured are Handel, Stravinsky, Korngold, Rachmaninov, Chopin and Bartók.

Tuesday 5th–Thursday 7th July: Bartley Lodge Hotel, Cadnam, New Forest

Bartley Lodge is a splendid Grade II listed country house hotel set in the heart of the New Forest, in eight acres of grounds. The facilities are well appointed and versatile, and the Grand Baronial Hall will be the location for our meetings.

‘Othello & Otello’ with Terry Barfoot and Karen Hewitt

An opportunity to explore in detail *Othello (Otello)*, one of the most famous of all dramas. We will discuss both Shakespeare’s play and Verdi’s opera, with illustrations on DVD with large screen.

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

For further information and booking contact:

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

Telephone: 02392 383356

www.artsinresidence.co.uk

email: info@artsinresidence.co.uk



Cecilia Bartoli

Sue Parker looks at the career of a much-loved artist

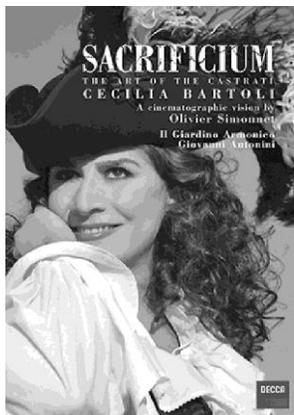
CECILIA BARTOLI, who enlivens our front cover in this spring issue, turns 50 on 4th June.

Born in Rome in 1966, she received her first singing lessons from her parents, who were both professional singers. Subsequently she studied at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in her home town, and made her professional operatic début in Verona in 1987. She was unusual in becoming vocally mature in her early 20s, at an age when most singers would be waiting for their voices to develop further before embarking on their careers. She first came to prominence as an accomplished singer of Rossini, taking the role of Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Cologne and elsewhere in 1988, and her reputation was enhanced with the release the following year of a Rossini recital disc and the complete recording of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Both discs were recorded under conductor Giuseppe Patanè and demonstrated her musicality and her extraordinary technical mastery of Rossini's writing for that rare breed, the coloratura mezzo.



MARIA CECILIA BARTOLI

Equally at home in Mozart (think for example of Despina, Zerlina, and perhaps above all Cherubino, a role which she recorded with Barenboim shortly before her 24th birthday), Bartoli has over the years extended her areas of interest and expertise to include the Baroque (Handel), early classical period (Haydn) and *bel canto* (Bellini), to mention just a few examples. She has also been able to expand her repertoire by virtue of her wide vocal range, which allows her to interpret soprano as well as mezzo roles. Her talent was noticed very early on by Karajan, Barenboim and Harnoncourt, with all of whom she worked when she had barely finished her studies, and since then numerous renowned conductors, pianists and orchestras have regularly partnered her.



More recently she has developed collaborations with period-instrument ensembles such as I Barocchisti, Il Giardino Armonico and Les Musiciens du Louvre, alongside her special interest in exploring neglected 18th-century repertoire. Notable CD releases in this respect include 'Maria' (a tribute to the legendary early 19th-century diva Maria Malibran); 'Sacrificium' (the art of the great castrati); 'Mission' (music of Agostino Steffani (1654 – 1728), also issued as one of the 3-disc set 'The Steffani Project'); and 'St Petersburg' (lost Baroque operatic treasures from Tsarist Russia). Those of us who were at Daventry last year will remember *Gramophone* editor Martin Cullingford's

reference to Bartoli's well-researched and lavishly presented 'project' albums, and the thrilling Raupach aria which he played from the last-named disc.

Although she has now cut down on her appearances in opera, Bartoli has performed at all the principal opera houses around the world, and many of the smaller ones. Her début at the new Opéra Bastille took place as early as 1990, when she portrayed Cherubino, and the following year she made her first appearance at La Scala in the role of Isolier in Rossini's *Le comte Ory*. The Met welcomed her for the first time in 1996 in another of her favourite Mozart roles, Despina, but her début at Covent Garden in 2001 was probably an unfortunate choice: a dual role in Haydn's *L'anima del filosofo*, which received universally poor reviews for both production and performances.



Bartoli is a Knight of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Cavaliere Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana) and has received countless other honours, including Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and Officier de l'Ordre du Mérite from France. She is an honorary Member of our Royal Academy of Music and of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, and holds an honorary doctorate from University College Dublin. Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, and Monaco have all recognised her achievements with an honour, award, or prize. Among her many awards for her recordings are five Grammys, two Classical Brits, ten ECHO Klassiks and a Victoire de la musique classique.

Cecilia Bartoli continues to delight her legions of fans in her live performances and recordings, but she also attracts criticism from some people who dislike her style, finding it too breathy, shrill, or just mannered. She has also fallen foul of the notorious claque at La Scala – who make their disapproval of anyone who isn't Callas or Tebaldi apparent with well-organised boos and catcalls – and has kept her good humour. She is acclaimed as a singer of outstanding musicianship, beauty of tone, and technical ability, noted for her intensity of communication and joy in performing. But more than that, she is a diligent researcher, seeking out unfairly neglected composers and repertoire and bringing them to the attention of professional musicians, musicologists, critics, and the music-loving public. Her website (ceciliabartolionline.com) currently displays over 40 CDs and DVDs, and that is not an exhaustive list. In 2012 she became the Artistic Director of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival and our cover photo shows her at the Festival in 2014, where she was performing in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Hard-working, risk-taking, controversial, Cecilia Bartoli is a musical phenomenon of our times and we wish her *tanti auguri di buon compleanno!* (best wishes for a happy birthday!). ●

MUSIC WEEKEND SEMINARS

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

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

Organised by **Professor Gerald Seaman**, formerly Professor of Musicology at the University of Auckland and subsequently on the staff of Oxford University, the courses are informative and stimulating though fully comprehensible to the non-musician. The venues for the next four courses are Stanton House, a beautiful manor house near Oxford which is situated in the village of Stanton St John, and Shallowford House near Stafford, which is easily accessible by train or by car.

The cost for each weekend, including full board and comfortable accommodation, is £250.00. The courses are as follows:

25-27 March 2016: *The Wonderful Legacy of English Music [Part 1]* Stanton House

England possesses an unbroken musical history lasting over 1000 years. The music of the great cathedrals, the Age of Elizabeth, the keyboard works of William Byrd, the English madrigal school, Henry Purcell, Handel, Boyce, Gilbert and Sullivan, the English folk song revival, Vaughan Williams, Delius, Holst, Parry, Elgar, Walton, Benjamin Britten are only some of the outstanding names in the wonderful legacy that is English music. Illustrated with CDs and DVDs and live performance.

29 April-1 May: *The Genius of Tchaikovsky* Shallowford House

Tchaikovsky is generally regarded as one of the greatest and most Russian of all the Russian composers. A gifted symphonist, creator of magnificent orchestral works, a composer of a whole series of brilliant operas and ballets, an outstanding writer of sacred music, a wonderful orchestrator, Tchaikovsky occupies a unique place in world music. Beautifully illustrated, the course incorporates new materials to be used in Professor Seaman's book on the composer (Routledge, 2017).

27-29 May: *The Wonderful World of Russian Ballet* Stanton House

The ground-breaking ballets of Tchaikovsky, the genius of Marius Petipa, innovations in the arts, the coruscating orchestral compositions of Rimsky-Korsakov all inspired Serge Diaghilev to create the 'Ballets Russes', among the most brilliant composers being the young Igor Stravinsky, whom Diaghilev 'discovered'. This unique course traces the development of the 'Ballets Russes', being superbly illustrated with excellent CDs and DVDs.

5-7 October: *Franz Schubert – the Great Romantic* Shallowford House

Although Franz Schubert (1797-1828) died at a tragically early age, he left behind a heritage of some of the greatest music ever written. Writing in obscurity, battling with illness and poverty, he nevertheless composed symphonic, chamber, vocal and keyboard masterpieces which are unsurpassed. The course includes the *Unfinished* Symphony, the *Great C Major*, the *Trout* Quintet, outstanding piano sonatas and, of course, the great body of *Lieder*. Beautifully illustrated with DVDs and CDs.

***Please note: this course will run, exceptionally, Wednesday to Friday**

For further details and booking, please contact:

Professor Gerald Seaman, 60 Woodstock Close, Oxford OX2 8DD

Tel: 01865 515114

email: gerald.seaman@outlook.com

Comments about the lecturer

'Professor Seaman's lectures are always interesting and worthwhile. Full of information, not only about music but on culture in general, they sustain the interest and whet the appetite for more.' [Dr. J.A., Chorleywood]

SOCIETY NEWS

Another busy year at West Wickham

West Wickham Recorded Music Society in the London Borough of Bromley can report another very active and successful year. The regular fortnightly meetings have been supplemented with social events, concert and opera visits, a musical weekend and a musical holiday. It is possible to include larger-scale enterprises in the programming as the membership of just over 100 provides good support.

Our social programme started with the annual coffee morning in February, the proceeds from sales of CDs, books and home-made items going towards the regular buffet-supper and concert event in March. There, after an excellent and varied supper, three post-graduate students from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama entertained members. Luba Tunnicliffe (viola), Henry Roberts (flute), and Oliver Wass (harp) gave a very contrasting recital including Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin*, the *Elegiac Trio* for flute, viola and harp by Arnold Bax, and Debussy's Sonata for the same instruments.

The Imperial Hotel at Eastbourne was the venue for our annual musical weekend, the theme being music from four great European cities: Venice, Paris, Vienna and London. A coach-load of members travelled down in mid-April for music presented on CDs and DVDs. The weekend opened with the Venice theme and one of Vivaldi's Concertos for Multiple Instruments – eleven soloists in all. Also, excerpts from two operas: Verdi's *La Traviata* premiered at La Fenice Opera House in 1855, and Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*, set in Venice in the 17th century. The *adagietto* from Mahler's Symphony No. 5 was also included as it was used by the Italian director Franco Zeffirelli for the soundtrack of his film *Death in Venice*. The session ended with an extract from Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*.

The second session (Paris) featured Poulenc's *Gloria*, the delightful harp concerto by Boieldieu (who taught at the Paris Conservatoire), Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*, and two operatic excerpts: from Gounod's *Faust* and from Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*, both first produced in Paris. In contrast, the programme covering Vienna was in a more classical vein, with Mozart's Wind Quintet in E flat major, Haydn's Symphony No. 8, 'Le Soir', a minuet in E flat major for fortepiano by Salieri, and Hummel's Violin Concerto in G.

The final session illustrated the depth of music-making in London. John Ogdon's playing of a movement from Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata reflected chamber recitals at Wigmore Hall, and Haydn's Symphony No. 104 'London' represented Johann Salomon's concert series in the capital. Other works included Purcell's Trumpet Overture for his opera *The Indian Queen*, first performed in London in 1695, and excerpts from the Savoy opera *The Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan, and from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, premiered in London in 1729. Two DVDs about ballet and opera, projected onto a large screen, concluded a very full weekend.

The main event of the year was the musical holiday at the Cheltenham Music Festival in late June and early July. The five-day holiday covered morning chamber concerts in the Pittville Pump Room and evening concerts in Cheltenham Town Hall. Members attended the opening night of the 18-day Festival with the BBC Concert Orchestra under conductor Ben Gernon in a programme with a strong American flavour. The works included Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the 18-year-old BBC Young Musician winner Martin James Bartlett as soloist, and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* by John Adams. This lively concert featured two excerpts from Stravinsky's *Firebird* and ended in full trans-Atlantic mood with Gershwin's *An American in Paris*.

The second evening concert in Cheltenham Town Hall featured the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and conductor Edward Gardner. Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 performed by Steven Osborne was followed by Rachmaninov's Symphony No. 2. The King's Singers celebrated the 150th anniversary of *Alice in Wonderland* in another evening concert. The fine Pittville Pump Room is an ideal venue for chamber music and has excellent acoustics. We attended a concert on each morning of the holiday: the Arcanto Quartet, pianist Marc-André Hamelin, the Danish String Quartet, and a cello and piano recital on the last morning.

Each afternoon our coach took us to a place of interest in the Cotswolds. Members were able to relax at Sudeley Castle, visit Gloucester Cathedral for a guided tour of this magnificent Norman Abbey, and explore Bourton-on-the-Water, known as 'Little Venice of the Cotswolds'. We were blessed with fine, sunny weather throughout this memorable holiday of high-quality music making.

The Society's annual 'Day Out' continues to be a very popular event, with an afternoon cruise on the Thames and an orchestral concert in the evening. The outing this year started at Walton-on-Thames where members embarked on the *Walton Lady* for a cruise downstream. The group was then conveyed by coach to the Royal Festival Hall for a concert given by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Yuri Temirkanov, looking as sprightly as ever. The opening work was the overture from Weber's *Der Freischütz* followed by Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, with Nikolai Lugansky as soloist in a beautifully realised performance. The sold-out concert ended with Brahms's Symphony No. 2, the composer here in pastoral mood.

In late July, the Society was able to maintain its annual visit to the BBC Promenade Concerts by obtaining ten second-tier boxes, each seating five people. A record 118,000 tickets were sold on the first day of booking, but fortunately we had queued very early. A packed Royal Albert Hall heard the Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Leif Ove Andsnes conducting from the piano in one of three concerts covering all of Beethoven's works for piano and orchestra. First came

Stravinsky's Octet of 1923 and then Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2. This concerto was the first to be written, but published second. The concert concluded with the incomparable Piano Concerto No. 5 'The Emperor' with Leif Ove Andsnes, the finest pianist to emerge from Norway, giving a magnificent, authoritative performance.

In spite of the huge demand for tickets, in October the Society were fortunate enough to get a coach-load of members to the Glyndebourne on Tour production of *Don Pasquale* by Donizetti. The composer's comic masterpiece of 1843 was wonderfully presented in a traditional production with José Fardilha (bass) as Don Pasquale and Eliana Pretorian (soprano) as Norina. Tuomas Katajala (tenor) was Ernesto and John Brancy (baritone) was Dr Malatesta. The hugely enjoyable opera was conducted by Duncan Ward.

A visit to a pre-Christmas orchestral concert at the Royal Festival Hall was the final excursion of the year. An all-Grieg programme in late November was part of the Philharmonia Orchestra's 70th anniversary celebration under the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. The Chinese pianist Lang Lang was the soloist in Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor. This Romantic work was played in an inappropriate virtuoso manner, totally unsuited to this lovely composition. *Daily Telegraph* critic Ivan Hewett described the performance as 'an insult to the audience as Lang Lang worked the audience with his posturing and exaggerated gestures, throwing off cascades of notes and double octaves, mostly ahead of the orchestra'. The second part of the concert was a semi-staged version of the incidental music to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* covering all the musical numbers, with scenes acted between the pieces. The actors, fitted with radio mics, were far too loud – one could have done without them and just settled for Grieg's atmospheric score. This was a somewhat disappointing evening.

The regular fortnightly meetings have been very well attended and we were pleased that Terry Barfoot was again able to visit us with a much appreciated programme entitled 'Romanticism in Classical Music'. Two other very popular programmes were 'An Invitation to the Ballet' given by our secretary Avis Smith, and 'JS Bach – The Learned Musician', a brilliant potted exposition of music's seminal composer. The year ended on a high note with a much-enjoyed and well-attended Christmas lunch at The Chateau, Shirley, and a lively Christmas party. 2016 is set to follow the same busy pattern.

Phillip Cox, chairman

Torbay Musical Weekend

The weekend started on Friday evening, and after the welcome reception and dinner, and maybe reflecting on what had been an energetic day of travel for some folk, **A Flyby of RAF Music** was perhaps ideal. Wing Commander Gil Singleton gave us both historical interest and stirring music from the leaders of 20th-century military musical development. That same evening, night birds were given an audio-visual extravaganza by Mike Price who had discovered

amazing live and exceptional performances from around the world on the internet.

Presenting a double act along the lines of Desert Island Discs, Petroc Trelawny and Tony Scotland regaled us with their **Lives in Music**. In addition to personal reminiscences they each chose an eclectic selection of music illustrating their varied experiences of meeting people and visiting places around the world. In a truly professional presentation they entertained us with a veritable kaleidoscope of enchantment, inspiration and unusual musical variety.

InQUIRES and Places provided Neil Collier with the opportunity to enlighten and enthrall us with recordings of both choral and organ music from the catalogue of his Priory Records label. It is no secret that **The Life and Voice of Kathleen Ferrier** was a popular favourite with the TMW audience and Dr Christopher Fifield lifted us by providing insights into her very short, but very full, life by quoting from her diaries and letters and by playing many of her recordings.

A relatively unknown French composer, **Albéric Magnard**, was shown to be comparable to Bruckner in stature by Gwyn Parry-Jones, who illustrated this assertion by introducing us to some of Magnard's charming and accessible music. This composer, who tragically suffered such a sad and untimely death, should be better known. Gwyn delivered the facts and the musical excerpts during his usual polished and well-researched presentation.

For those who like baroque and classical music performed by a real exponent of the instrument, **Richard Lester** gave us a splendid virtuosic harpsichord recital on Saturday evening. Not only were people beguiled by his dexterity but those seated near to him were also fascinated watching the actual mechanics of playing and frequent tuning of the instrument.

Following the AGM on Sunday morning we were delighted to have another presentation from Torbay regular Lynne Plummer on **The Skill of the Instrument Maker**. Her use of recorded personal interviews illustrating the makers' ideas of what goes into making brass, woodwind and string instruments was so interesting.

In the 150th anniversary year of the birth of Sibelius, who better to talk to us about the BIS Sibelius Edition – **Every Note He Ever Wrote** – than Andrew Barnett. He was intimately involved with this mammoth recording project and just happens to be the general manager of Sibelius One, the international Sibelius Society. There is nothing quite like hearing the behind-the-scenes activity 'straight from the horse's mouth'!

Two of our in-house team and committee members of the Torbay Friends, Kevin Ryland and Maureen Greenhouse, gave presentations. They were, respectively, **The Presence of Life** showcasing the world-beating (in its day) American Mercury label and, in a late-night session, **In Praise of Women** (as composers, performers and dedicatees). Both presentations were rated as most enjoyable by all those

who attended, as evidenced by the questionnaires handed in at the conclusion of the weekend.

That very well-known figure around most things musical, Rodney Greenberg, ended our weekend in a wonderfully foot-tapping fashion, with a glimpse into **The Glory of Gershwin**. This audio-visual presentation, interspersed with Rodney playing Gershwin's music at a keyboard, admirably highlighted the genius behind the amazingly driven George Gershwin. For many this was the highlight of the weekend.

TMW 2015 was another weekend that evoked high praise for the sheer quality of presentations and we owe a debt of gratitude to all concerned.

The dates for the 2016 Torbay Musical Weekend are November 18th – 21st at the Palace Hotel, Torquay; put them in your diary now!

Double loss at Swinton Recorded Music Group

Our group recently lost Betty Seddon, a member of over forty years' standing. She was one of the earliest members of the group and took a full part in all its activities, from presenting programmes to committee work, holding office as chairman and programme secretary. It is the latter role in particular which was so significant, stretching continuously over a period of more than three decades.

Betty was a trained musician, an assiduous collector of recorded music and a gifted communicator. She had a deep, informed knowledge of what she considered to be good music which went with the ability to pass on her interest and enthusiasm to others. Her presentations were clear and interesting and she encouraged members to make their debuts as presenters, offering help and advice. Her prime aim was to see the group continue to flourish,

particularly by encouraging recruitment of new members. She certainly exemplified the best qualities of the recorded music movement. She may be known to some readers who met her at FRMS or Torbay weekends, both events she cherished. Betty resigned from office in 2013 and was made an honorary life member of our group. She continued to attend meetings, although gradually deteriorating ill health made this increasingly difficult. She passed away peacefully in Salford Royal Hospital on September 15th.

I also have to report the death of Derek Stott. Derek was a gentleman, a gentle courteous and kind man whose genial presence had graced our group, from which he derived such pleasure. Derek's calm and pragmatic approach to the business of the club while holding several offices helped it survive and prosper over the years. He was more or less a founder member of the group and, in common with other stalwarts such



From *Bulletin 159*: Betty Seddon and Derek Stott

'I remember record-store owners in Melbourne stubbornly dismissing LP microgroove records as a flash in the pan. They stuck steadfastly to the belief that the 78 revolutions per minute record was the only speed at which to properly listen to music. I'm not sure what they'd make of online music streaming and mp3 downloads – no doubt they are spinning in their graves ... at a constant 78 rpm!'

**Barry Humphries (aka Dame Edna Everage):
Barry's Forgotten Musical Masterpieces
BBC Radio 2**

as his friends Betty Seddon and Aubrey Kreike, provided dedicated service and structure in an unbroken period of membership over most of his adult life. As a speaker and presenter he always brought interesting biographical touches to his presentations, particularly if they touched on his love of travel. His ideal holiday was one where there was a concert hall nearby, plus an opportunity to explore local railways, particularly of the vintage variety. Amongst others, I remember his account of a tour of Poland and Mallorca tracing incidents in the life of Chopin, and a programme he gave on what he called 'The golden age of recorded music' where he regaled us with an account of visits to a neighbour with a collection of the new-fangled stereo LPs. I also recall his tale of a holiday in Bavaria where he had knocked nervously at the door of the home of the great Richard Strauss and had been invited in and courteously shown around by a family descendant. Finally, I remember the last programme he gave on the occasion of his 90th birthday where he played recordings of music by artists and ensembles he had heard in British and continental venues and which had left lasting impressions. Personally, I wish to testify to his kindness and the pleasure I gained from his company, for example at pre-concert meals and in shared impressions of a concert on interminable tram journeys between St Peter's Square and the Ladywell Park and Ride. He was a good and amusing conversationalist with his own definite and sometimes baffling views. Here was a music lover who could listen to the Wagner *Ring* but flinched at the thought of listening to an oratorio or choral music of any ilk. Nor could he bring himself to admit admiration for the music of Elgar. We all have a composer who first awakened our interest in classical music. For Derek, this was Tchaikovsky, on whom he also delivered a memorable presentation. Hence his disgust when we went together to a Duke Ellington concert at the RNCM and the

students played Ellington's witty pastiche of the *Nutcracker* Suite.

We will miss Derek for many reasons and he will be remembered with affection by all lucky enough to have known him.

Derek Kinsey, secretary

Maidstone 50th anniversary

On August 22nd the Maidstone Music Appreciation Society (formerly Recorded Music Society) celebrated its 50th anniversary at a special meeting. There were five speakers and plenty of refreshments and conviviality. The first to speak was Brian Kelsey who founded the Society in 1965. He described the early days when the meetings were held in his own house in a large music room with all the latest hi-fi equipment. He presented some of his early musical favourites, including the overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla* by Glinka, and some operatic arias. Then June Apps gave a programme to commemorate the death last year of her husband, Roger, who was a very enthusiastic member before he moved to Wiltshire. He subsequently became a senior figure in the Federation and was much mourned when he died at a relatively young age. June presented some music based on a programme that Roger had started to prepare called 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' featuring Strauss's *Dance of the Seven Veils*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and the conductor Simon Rattle.



L-r: Gordon Sladen (secretary), June Apps, John White, Brian Kelsey, John Eldon (chairman)

John White has been a member for many years and he is very knowledgeable about many aspects of music, especially the piano. He studied piano under Katharina Wolpe in his youth and remains a keen amateur pianist. He included some pieces by Chopin, his favourite composer.

Peter Snare was our chairman for many years but is no longer able to attend regularly. Indeed, he had to cancel his appearance but the secretary read from his script. Peter broadcast music in Hong Kong while serving in the RAF in the 1950s. He subsequently worked for a time with the Decca recording company and was associated with a number of BBC projects under John Culshaw. His first love was Chabrier's *España* and his choices included an excerpt from Wagner's *Ring* cycle and the closing pages of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Finally, John Eldon, our current chairman, talked about programmes he had given to the Society in the 1970s. He also presented music, which he associated

with several other members who are no longer able to attend regularly or to be present on this occasion. This featured a number of composers and concluded with 'Summertime' from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. The absence of those friends was sad but those present enjoyed the occasion, relishing the music and the hospitality. Our numbers are sadly declining but we hope to continue for some years to come.

Jim Andrew, Hon treasurer

South Cheshire RMS celebrates 50 years

In the last year, members of SCRMS have celebrated the Society's first 50 years of recitals. Founded in 1965 by Bert Shotton, the Society has had a continuous history of providing pleasure and education in matters musical. Stretching back almost to the days



SCRMS members (l-r): Barbara Waters, Christine Stephens (secretary), Rita Davies and John Davies (programme secretary)

of 78 rpm records, early recitals used the then modern developments of smaller record players and long-playing records. We now use CDs instead but the objectives remain to entertain, educate and inform our loyal members who continue to support the Society enthusiastically. To mark the occasion, we recently held a celebration evening which was well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

Our President has for many years been Roger Fisher, a distinguished musician who will be well known via his activities as Choral Director at Chester Cathedral and as an organist who has given very many recitals, both in this country and abroad.

John Davies has been an officer and committee member of the Society for many years but will be better known to Federation members through his many years as chairman and now Vice-President. His wife Rita recently completed an eight-year stint as the Society's chairman.

The Society is, naturally, a member of the FRMS and a supporter of its aims and ambitions, as well as a client for the Federation's benefits such as insurance cover for our recitals and the informative *Bulletin* magazine which we distribute to our members.

I was elected as chairman in the current season (2015-16) and I hope to maintain the Society's activities and its passion for good music as it moves into its second half-century.

Lance Stephens, chairman

FRMS Music Weekend

Daventry

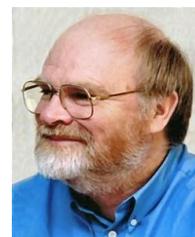
April 22nd - 24th
2016

*Daventry Court
Hotel*



Adam Jondelius (baritone)
Live recital

Patrick McCarthy (singer and conductor)
On and Orff the record – before Carmina and after



Prof. Brian Newbould (composer, conductor and author)
Finishing unfinished Schubert – Why & how

Dr David Patmore (University of Sheffield Department of Music)
Tales from the prompt corner – Memories of the world of opera



Gwyn Parry-Jones (conductor, performer and speaker)
Albéric Magnard - the French Bruckner?

John Francis (Ralph Vaughan Williams Society)
World War I: Awakening memories



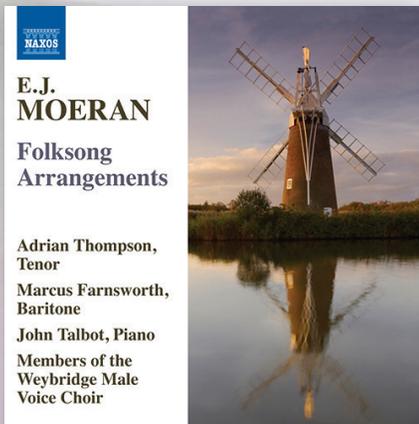
**Also:
Technical Forum
CD sales**

*Cost: £176 per person (two people sharing). Single occupancy £198.
Conference fee £40 per person. Day visitors welcome.*

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

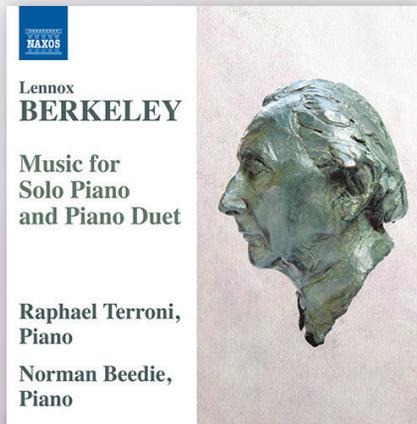
NEW BRITISH MUSIC TITLES FROM NAXOS

8.571359



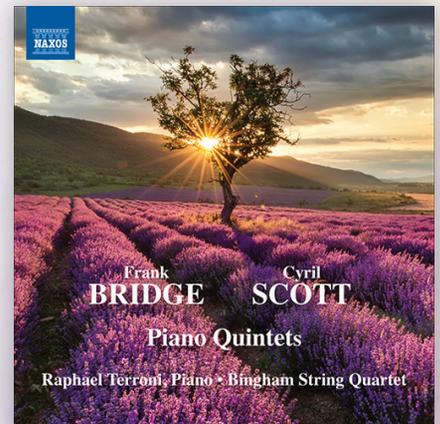
“[Marcus Farnsworth] is content to respond sensitively to the words without excessive pointing of them, and John Talbot is a most expressive accompanist.”
– *MusicWeb International*

8.571369



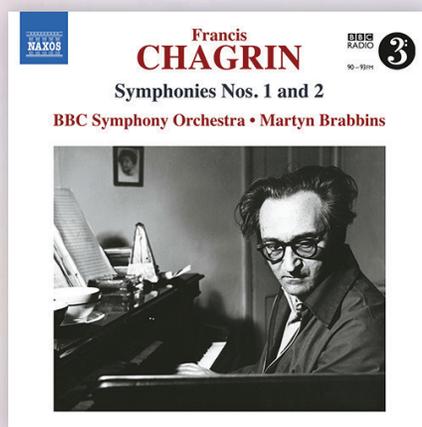
“Raphael Terroni is...a fluent pianist with a thorough grasp of the idiom. ...Norman Beedie who joins him in the duet works is a versatile musician who makes a good duet partner”
– *MusicWeb International*

8.571355



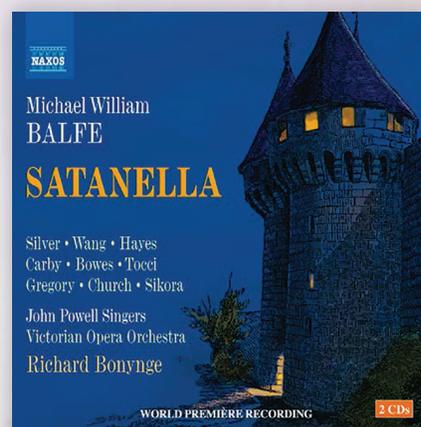
Frank Bridge's Piano Quintet, a work of personal significance prompted by the absence of his fiancée, is notable for its passionate, lyrical and forceful language.

8.571371



Francis Chagrin described himself as ‘Romanian by birth, British by nationality’. The two symphonies are among his most important orchestral works. Underservedly neglected, they reveal Chagrin's mastery of form and colour.

8.660378-79



Satanelle was Michael William Balfe's 23rd opera, first presented at Covent Garden in 1858 to much acclaim. Richard Bonyng, an acknowledged master of eighteenth and nineteenth-century opera, has edited the new performing edition.



Encouraging enjoyment of Opera, Theatre and all Performing Arts

This enterprising organisation has recently affiliated to the FRMS. Its founder maps out their mission...

Please allow me to introduce myself and my organisation as relatively new members of the FRMS. My name is Jim Mitchell and I'm the founder member of Opera Unmasked. I welcome this opportunity to tell Federation members about ourselves and what we are aiming to achieve. Hopefully, it might encourage other organisations to do something along the same lines.

Firstly, a little bit of information about how Opera Unmasked began. For several years I was the Artistic Director of the Wantage Betjeman Festival. This was originally founded to celebrate the work and life of John Betjeman who lived for many years in Wantage where I also reside. This has become very successful over the last four years as a major literary festival. Possibly because I have always been a singer and passionate about music, particularly opera, I felt that my energies could be better spent on something closer to my heart. This was how Opera Unmasked began, with just me as Artistic Director at the end of 2014. We now have a committee of four and the organisation covers the White Horse District of Oxfordshire (south-west) but would be keen to spread further and develop other connections with organisations which share the same objectives.

The main objective of Opera Unmasked is to encourage an understanding and enjoyment of opera amongst all age groups. We've certainly been successful in identifying and attracting more senior opera-lovers, as I'll explain later. This group of music-lovers had often experienced opera in their younger years. One recent innovation, direct live transmissions from the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, and others, has also contributed to a rekindling of interest amongst lapsed opera enthusiasts. A recent transmission of the Met's *Pearl Fishers* at Cineworld in Didcot attracted a sell-out audience. It is thought other operas in this same season including *Turandot* and *Manon Lescaut* will also have a similar result.

However, when we began to focus on attracting a younger audience, there appeared to be a major problem. This is possibly connected to a perceived reduction in music provision in most state schools and may also depend on the quality of teaching, which appears to vary enormously. This, obviously, doesn't apply to those schools which might have chosen to become music or performing academies. Reaching this younger audience,

most of whom will never see an opera performance in their lives, does present an enormous challenge. More about how we intend to get around this in a moment.

A difference seems to exist with pupils from private schools where exposure to classical music and opera is much more likely. Without doing further research, it appears that only a very small minority of pupils from state schools ever become professional classical musicians or opera singers. This may be different in Wales, possibly because of social factors or a greater emphasis on music generally.

Various events which we've arranged which are attracting larger adult audiences include 'Opera on Film' nights (usually classic performances from any time during the last 30 years), concerts such as 'A Night at the Opera', and joint promotions including *La Traviata* with Kennet Opera from Newbury. We have been able

to conform to copyright and licensing requirements during public screening of these opera DVDs by becoming members of the FRMS. Many thanks are due to them for their guidance and assistance. A more unusual event was employing an 'opera busker' singing arias in the Market Place at Wantage (pictured). This got a lot of attention, especially from young children. Opera Unmasked has also sponsored young soloists in some local

concerts. In June and July we're planning an opera festival which will include concerts, films and other related events.

Our plan for attracting younger people was suggested by my friend Richard Baker whom you might remember as the compere of many BBC music programmes. Yes, Richard is still with us aged 90, his love of music remains and he presents a monthly 'Richard's Records' in a sheltered complex near Wantage. Richard has told me that the way to involve young people in opera is to somehow get them to participate in a production. Ideally this should be performing alongside professionals, but this can be just as successful with very good amateurs. We are having discussions with a very good local semi-professional opera company with a view to 'adopting' talented young singers from local schools and offering them free membership for a period of at least two years. During this time they can work with company members. We are also looking at the possibility of taking opera workshops, with professional singers, into various local schools. And another plan is to take children from local schools to an afternoon opera performance at Covent Garden.

My initial attempts to involve local schools with these plans have been met with various excuses, such as health and safety concerns, teachers too busy with curriculums, and other reasons. I remain undaunted and have had discussions with the Oxfordshire schools music advisor who is a keen choir conductor and this looks much more promising. Another initiative we have



Opera Unmasked founder Jim Mitchell with 'opera busker' Josephine Organ-Jennings. Photo: Howard Hill

undertaken is to offer a £100 prize to the winner of the under-25 opera/opera class at the Wantage Music Festival. This is also intended as a rallying point to get singing teachers within a 50-mile radius to prepare and enter their students.

We also have constructed a website www.operaunmasked.com and a Facebook page, and we try to use social media as much as possible. I must admit it does need a lot of attention (and savvy) to keep all these elements up to date! Obviously, in order to finance our activities, we need to raise money and as a non-profit organisation we are completely reliant on raising money from various grants and donations. These have usually come from local authorities, music grant-making bodies, music enthusiasts and local supermarkets. These organisations can be tremendously supportive but it does require a lot of effort and determination. On our horizons are Arts Council and Lottery funding. At present we are not a registered charity, but this is certainly our intention at some point in the future. Other plans include a possible 3-year project in conjunction with local schools and the Oxfordshire Schools Music Service. This not only seeks to promote an understanding and enjoyment of opera in local schools,

but would also encourage the formation of school choirs and promote a love of singing.

Details of events we are arranging in the next three months appear on our website. These include Opera on Film (*Madam Butterfly*), and a live performance of *La Bohème* by Merry Opera. We're also sponsoring a young *basso profundo*, Thomas Bennet, in a Welsh Choir event by Côr Meibion at Wantage. We'd love to see you at any of these events – please introduce yourself.

One idea I might suggest to member societies is to have an afternoon showing of an opera DVD plus refreshments. In my experience it's almost certain to succeed! (*La Traviata* and *Carmen* are the best to start with.) We'd be delighted to hear any suggestions or comments from other FRMS members, especially in relation to promoting opera or encouraging singing in schools. If you would like to go on our monthly email mailing list for information about our activities or events, please send an email to jim@operaunmasked.com

If you would like to know more about us please visit our website www.operaunmasked.com

Jim Mitchell

His Master's Voices

Readers may have missed a series of short radio programmes broadcast on Radio 4 which looked at the earliest days of recorded sound. In the first episode ('Beginnings') singer Cerys Matthews and music commentator Tristram Penna go back to the summer of 1898 when Fred Gaisberg (pictured) and The Gramophone Company opened offices in London's Covent Garden. Among those offering their views throughout the series is Christopher Proudfoot, chairman of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society (CLPGS).



The second episode's title, 'Laughter & Novelty', speaks for itself. The third instalment ('British Ethnic') comes from Cecil Sharp House, the home of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Episode four ('The



Theatre/EMI Archive') visits the EMI Archive Trust in Hayes, which houses Fred Gaisberg's own collection of over 14,000 7-inch discs dating from 1898. Also

featured is the Wyndham's Theatre in London's West End where famous actors of the day – such as Charles Wyndham – had their voices captured on disc. For those who couldn't afford a gramophone in their own home, there were gramophone evenings in theatres across the country where they could go along to hear the latest speeches. The final episode – 'The First Superstars' – looks at the popular artists of the day, most famously Caruso.

Although broadcast in November, the series is available on the BBC iPlayer, and at the time of writing, will be available 'indefinitely'. But if you're interested, it's probably best not to wait too long. The first episode is here: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06ptdd6

FRMS SCOTTISH GROUP

invite you to their

ANNUAL MUSIC DAY SATURDAY APRIL 23rd 2016

Dundee University Chaplaincy Centre,
University of Dundee
Cross Row
Dundee DD1 4HN

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 12.00 | Lunch |
| 13.00-14.30 | <i>Making historically informed recordings in the 21st century</i>
John Butt, musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort |
| 14.30-15.00 | Tea |
| 15.00-16.30 | <i>Percy Grainger, a 21st-century re-evaluation</i>
Barry Peter Ould, President of the International Percy Grainger Society |
| 16.30-17.00 | AGM |

Conference Fee £15

For further information contact
John Maidment on 01241 853017
or email johnmaidment@msn.com
Booking forms will be available from the FRMS website

Concert Notes

Paul Corfield Godfrey



Following on from my complaints about the failure of some record companies to provide adequate documentation with their releases on CD (*Bulletin* 163, Notes with Discs, page 24), I think it might be appropriate to turn my attention to the provision of programme notes for live performances. This can be a tricky matter. David Wynne, with whom I once studied composition, contended forcefully that music in performance should be able to communicate directly with an audience without the need for lengthy exegesis, and that composers who felt the need to provide such explanations were to a degree confessing to a failure in that regard. I must admit that I disagreed with him then, and after many years' experience as a listener, as a composer and as a writer, I disagree with him now.

The audience needs as much help as they can get in coming to terms with the composer's thoughts, especially with new and unfamiliar music. That is not only true in the field of music. George Bernard Shaw, an expert communicator about the theatrical stage, found it helpful to add prefaces or other explanatory notes to many of his plays, and in some cases, such as *Androcles and the Lion* and *Man and Superman*, the subsidiary material was even more substantial than the play itself. At the same time, Shaw acknowledged that his prefaces were intended only to investigate further the philosophy which underlay his drama, and that the plays could certainly stand on their own feet. That is however less evident in the case of music, where the written word is often necessary to explain the thought that underlies the notes. And music itself is of course a much less explicit means of communication than spoken dialogue on the stage, as is witnessed by any number of symphonic poems and other programme music.

In one regard, however, those who deny the relevance of programme notes do have a point. There is nothing more dispiriting at a concert than to watch an audience with their heads buried in their programmes reading the comments of the annotator, rather than listening to what they are actually hearing. Apart from the fact that it is a rudeness to the live performers and can disturb their concentration (a consideration which does not of course apply when the listener is hearing a recorded disc), it erects a barrier between performer and listener which positively militates against the sense of direct communication between the two, which is after all the main object of the exercise. Better by far to read the programme notes before the performance begins, and then allow the actual sounds to take hold. That is the case with many of the best programmes, as for example in many opera houses where both English and Welsh National Opera provide extensive background reading about both composers and works. Audiences cannot consult those notes during performances in darkened auditoriums, of course, and there is rarely sufficient time to absorb all of the

material provided before the event, leaving the reader to catch up afterwards and sometimes find explanations for incidents on stage which may have seemed puzzling at the time (especially in modern or revisionist productions).

Otherwise, there seems no excuse for any failure to provide the words of any sung texts in a concert (together with translations where appropriate), as indeed most opera houses now acknowledge with their almost universal provision of surtitles projected above the stage. These have to be employed with considerable care and discretion. There can be nothing worse than to find the audience laughing at a joke in the libretto which has yet to be delivered by the singer. But at their best they can be extraordinarily helpful, as indeed can subtitles on DVD recordings, although there I sometimes wish that unintentional humour inspired by inelegant translations could be avoided. But even when singers' diction is crystal clear (and that unfortunately can by no means be taken for granted, even when the composer actually allows them to project with clarity) it is still helpful to be able to take in a whole sentence at a glance, and then concentrate on the manner in which the composer illuminates the individual phrases with melody and harmony.

Unfortunately the provision of texts and translations in the concert hall cannot be taken for granted. I recently attended a performance of Beethoven's *Choral* Symphony and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* at which neither was provided. In the case of the Beethoven this was annoying – not everyone knows Schiller (or Beethoven) word-for-word, and Beethoven certainly intended that his setting should illuminate the text quite specifically. But in the case of the Szymanowski it was positively disastrous, since the work was performed in the composer's Polish translation, and even those few who know the mediaeval poem perfectly would have found themselves totally at sea, especially since the translation in a number of places actually alters the import of the original Latin. Similarly, I have attended concerts at which works such as Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and Strauss's *Four Last Songs* were given without any assistance to the audience seeking to follow the precise manner in which the composer mirrored the thoughts of the poet. This is reprehensible even with CDs, where at least the listener can go online and try to locate texts and translations. In the concert hall, where there is no possibility to rectify the promoters' omissions, it is simply unforgivable.

These thoughts are in part provoked by the fact that three of my own songs are to be performed (two of them in public premières) as part of the programme for the 2016 FRMS Daventry Musical Weekend, and I had perforce to give consideration to the notes I should provide for listeners. The words will be provided, of course, but I will also endeavour to

introduce the poems and their settings in their context at some length in the hope that the audience may find this useful. All that I would ask is that listeners do not attempt to read these notes while the performance is actually going on. Quite apart from the matter of rudeness to the performers themselves, they should also regard the programme notes as preparation rather than elucidation. Perhaps we need to rehearse audiences as well as performers?

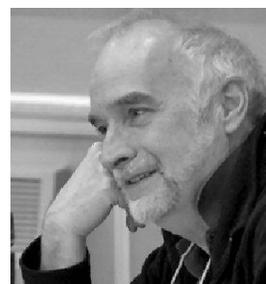
The interesting thing about all this is that this is not the way in which I actually review a performance, either live or on disc. I will always endeavour to have a score in front of me (unless it is a work I know very well indeed), and find that not infrequently things in a performance that sound surprising or unorthodox can prove to be a very perceptive response to a generally overlooked instruction by the composer. That is true even in the case of my own scores, where the late

Glynne Jones once gave a performance of one of my folksong arrangements that surprised even me by the emphasis he gave to what I had regarded as quite subsidiary aspects of the music. The result was a fascinating insight, and I was rather disappointed when, following some discussion, he subsequently recorded the work (the disc unfortunately long deleted) with some of these peculiar ‘highlightings’ suppressed. All of which just goes to show that music is always a process of discovery and learning, for composers and performers as much as for audiences. But in the end any preparation or rehearsal must finally give way to the sheer enjoyment of the music, and that applies to critics and general members of the audience alike. Programme notes may help, but they can never be a substitute.

Paul is FRMS treasurer, a composer, conductor, writer and critic.

A VIEW FROM YORKSHIRE Jim Bostwick, FRMS Secretary

CHANCE CAN BRING NEW EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES. In early October 2015, I was due to accompany a fellow Federation committee member to a jumble sale in Kent. You are thinking, probably, that’s a long way to go to acquire some cheap trousers; no, this was a hi-fi jumble sale. Remember hi-fi? I’d never been to such a thing, so I was quite excited about doing the map-reading and plotting the route from the van’s passenger seat. Now follows a cautionary tale. A day or so before we were to travel, a phone call from my colleague had a sound of some alarm from the start. He had gone to collect the hired van to transport his sizeable collection of hi-fi items for sale, had presented his driving licence for the hire contract, only to be told that it had expired some two weeks before. Many of us will still have the folded-paper licence which was valid from the day we passed our test until the day before our 70th birthday. Perhaps now is a time for you, before reading on, to (a) find it and (b) check you haven’t been driving illegally and uninsured for some time. Well, though the impending eighth decade is not that far away, my licence is current. ‘Jim, do you think you could drive the van – it’s a twenty-footer!’ I thought, only momentarily, ‘Jim’ll Fix It’, and then of course, immediately erased this phrase from my memory. Again, thinking aloud to myself, I used to drive the school’s Ford Transit minibus so it’ll be no different. In truth, it wasn’t – reversing was a bit problematic and I added the odd hair-line scratch to the bodywork, but it was only joining several others.



Eventually we arrived in Tonbridge, at a leisure centre where the entire sports hall and adjoining annexes were filled with row upon row of tables. Fortunately for us, the plan to arrive a day early had been a good one. Trolley after trolley of cassette and MiniDisc machines, turntables, amplifiers and tuners eventually filled three sagging tables near to the entrance. How, I wondered, could anyone have accumulated so much stuff? ‘J***’, I said, ‘How have you accumulated so much stuff?’ ‘Oh, you know, over the years, it just sort of happened.’

Early on the Sunday morning, and near chaos ensues. The leisure centre shares a car park with Sainsbury’s, whose trolleys were being acquired by an army of men (yes, mostly men of a certain age) emptying their car boots of ‘gear’, joining the queue of other trolleys trying to get into the sports hall at the same time as another army of eager punters (mostly men again) were attempting to do the same. I can say, I have never seen anything like it and it was marvellous. Everyone should do this – once.

Our tables, being close to the entrance and sporting the biggest ‘ghetto blaster’ I had ever seen, attracted much attention. It stood proudly on the floor in front of the tables. The man from *Hi-Fi News* magazine who’d come to report on the event took a photograph, as did many others. This ‘portable’ machine – I think it was a Sharp – would play LPs vertically and had FM/LW/MW/SW (obviously no DAB) radio and cassette all built in with sizeable loudspeakers at each end. It weighed a ton and I wondered how many batteries it took. My friend did quite well. Two youngish Latvian guys bought it together with a couple of turntables – apparently vinyl is very ‘now’. You meet interesting people at such events and the enthusiasm got the better of me. Having vowed that I would buy nothing, I came away with a large TEAC reel-to-reel tape recorder weighing more than 20 kilos, which I *will* use, obviously.

Footnotes: the Sharp photo appeared in the next issue of *Hi-Fi News*, and my son announced when on a home visit and seeing my latest acquisition: ‘Oh, yet another piece of outmoded equipment I shall eventually have to deal with’. ‘Well, son,’ I replied, ‘not that it will concern me over much, but I can recommend a good place in Kent you might consider.’ ●

FRMS Presenters Panel

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

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

LORD ABERDARE – The Berlioz Society

16 Beverley Road, London SW13 0LX

Tel: 020 8876 8398; mobile 07768 397190

email: alastair@aberdares.co.uk

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

Expenses only; willing to travel

KENNETH ALWYN, FRAM

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

Tel: 01403 741348 mobile 07403 892415;

email: FilomusicUK@aol.com

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

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

1998 Gramophone award winner.

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

Reasonable expenses and accommodation (where applicable) negotiable.

TERRY BARFOOT

25 Mulberry Lane, Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 2QU

Tel: 0239 238 3356

email: terrybarfoot@artsinresidence.co.uk

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

Reviewer for the Musicweb International website.

Regular presenter at societies in southern England.

Recent presentations include studies of Dvořák, Elgar, Mozart and Richard Strauss.

Repertoire list on request.

Fee and expenses negotiable.

GEOFF BATEMAN ACIB Cefa

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

Tel: 01274 783285

email: geoffbateman@blueyonder.co.uk

Wide variety of programmes including artist and composer profiles.

Most programmes feature audiophile recordings.

No fee, minimal travel expenses only.

BBC MIDLAND RADIO ORCHESTRA

Paul Arden-Taylor, 11 Romsley Hill Grange, Romsley, Worcs, B62 0LN

Tel/Fax: 01562 710801 mobile: 07778 016769

email: paul@dinmore-records.co.uk

An evening of light music presented by former MRO oboist Paul Arden-Taylor, who now works as a recording engineer and has compiled an extensive archive of surviving MRO recordings.

Midlands area only. No fee, petrol costs requested.

Selection of classical CDs for sale.

IAN RUTLAND BOUGHTON BA (Hons) DipMus

25 Bearton Green, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1UN

Tel 01462 434318 mobile 07703 584152

email: Boughtontrust@btinternet.com

website: www.rutlandboughtonmusictrust.org.uk

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

MAGGIE COTTON

57 Elmfield Crescent, Birmingham B13 9TL

Tel; 0121 449 3196

email: maggie.cottonbeat@hotmail.co.uk

First professional female percussionist in a UK symphony orchestra. CBSO40 years (18 with Simon Rattle). Author of: *Agogo Bells – a friendly guide to schools percussion* and *Wrong Sex, Wrong Instrument – an autobiography*.

Presentations offered: 'Orchestral Notes' (behind the scenes: lots of 'tales out of school' as Rattle remarked). 'Do Butterflies Sing?' – working with severely deaf youngsters in special schools. Life-changing.

'Red Light District' – lifts the lid off recording sessions - warts and all!

Fee £60 plus negotiated travel expenses.

THE DELIUS SOCIETY

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

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

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

email: adviser@TheDeliusSociety.org.uk

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

email: l.carley@yahoo.co.uk

Mike Green, 4 Caxton Close, Beeston Regis,

Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8SY. Tel: 07833 300450

email: michael.heather.green@gmail.com

THE DVOŘÁK SOCIETY

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

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

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

DR DAVID FLIGG

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

JOHN HUMPHRIES

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

MIKE LUNAN

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

DR JOHN MALPASS

4 Carlton Road, Kibworth Harcourt, Leics LE8 0LZ,
email: jrm@le.ac.uk; Tel: 0116 279 2557
Former Trustee and Membership Secretary of the Rachmaninoff Society. Currently one presentation is offered: 'Sergei Rachmaninoff - his life and music'. This is a Powerpoint-based presentation covering Rachmaninoff's personal and musical development and includes many historical photographs. The many musical examples concentrate on less well-known compositions and include significant recordings of his songs, choral music, chamber music, and piano works (some with the composer at the piano) together with selected orchestral excerpts. No fee; reasonable expenses.

EM MARSHALL-LUCK MA (Oxon) MCIJ

EM Records / English Music Festival
Suite M0222, 265-269 Kingston Road,
Wimbledon, London SW19 3NW Tel: 07808 473889
email: em.marshall-luck@em-records.com or
em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk
Director of EM Records and Founder-Director of the English Music Festival - can give talks on both subjects. In the EMF talk, illustrated with music and visuals, she covers the aims, objectives and achievements of the Festival - her mission to put English music back on the map. And with her husband, violinist Rupert Marshall-Luck, she delivers a presentation on EM Records, covering the *raison d'être* of the record label, as well as topics such as how repertoire and venues are chosen, what takes place at recording sessions (exploding bows and mysterious noises), how works are edited for recording, and what is involved in the running of a label. With musical excerpts.
Reasonable expenses and a modest fee requested.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

16 Melbourn Road, Halesowen B63 3NB
Tel: 0121 550 4482.
email: cfmorley47@aol.com; mobile 07958 509391
Chief music critic of Birmingham Post; Midlands correspondent for Classical Music, Musical Opinion, Opera and other music publications.
Illustrated programmes include, among others: Confessions of a music critic; Changing critical attitudes to Elgar; The Symphonies of Gustav Mahler; Composers on record; The problem of bespoke music; Rachmaninov and plainchant; Beethoven the Bounds-Breaker; European Composers in America; Did Mozart burn himself out? The Faust legend in music; The Orpheus legend in music. Fee negotiable

JAMES MURRAY

44 Victoria Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4QD
Tel: 01726 71714 / 07989 398782
email: james.murray47@tesco.net or
james.47murray@talktalk.net
Manager, Kernow Classics.
Subjects: Emmanuel Chabrier; Music in Germany 1918-45 (with emphasis on Werner Egk & Eduard and Evelyn Künneke); Jerome Kern; George Gershwin; Albert Lortzing; The post-war Vienna State Opera; The Mozart-da Ponte Operas. I would consider any operatic subject or evenings about historic singers (German, French or Austrian preferred).
Fee: usually £75 plus reasonable expenses over 50 miles.

NIMBUS RECORDS

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

DR GEOFF OGRAM, Secretary, Stafford RMS
6 Silverthorn Way, Wildwood, Stafford ST17 4PZ
Tel: 01785 663423 email: geoff.ogram@talktalk.net
A number of recital programmes, with a significant content of C20th British music. My specialist composer is Gordon Jacob, whose music I discovered in 1956. Over the years we met frequently and became friends. I now act as a consultant to help performers and others with information about his music. Although I have completed a book on his music it remains unpublished. The recital on his work is entitled Seventh Son. No fee required, just minimal travel expenses.

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

LYNNE PLUMMER
52 Judkin Court, Century Wharf, Cardiff CF10 5AU.
Tel: 02920 489332; email: lynne@lynneplummer.co.uk
Professional career as a broadcaster with the BBC and other radio stations. Illustrated talks with interviews on various topics, such as 'Conductors: who needs 'em?' and 'The craft of instrument-making' - or maybe ask me to cover a subject of your choice.
Will travel. Fees negotiable + expenses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thurso RMS calls it a day

Thurso Recorded Music Society has met and formally voted to disband. We did so unanimously and with great regret after so many years of conviviality and musical enjoyment. The proximate reason for this decision was the sudden and unexpected death of the lady in whose house we held our weekly meetings. There is no suitable publicly available location in Thurso, so we would have been reduced to a peripatetic existence in members' homes, not one of which would be ideal. Since our equipment is very far from being portable this was really an insuperable obstacle. Five of our members had died in recent years and most of those remaining were over 75 – our oldest member being a still fairly spry 97 – so going into a dignified retirement was the only option.

Mike Lunan, secretary

More Carmina memories

Very many thanks for sending me *Bulletin* 163 which carried the Brian Godfrey article (page 29) about my appearance with Previn at the Proms in 1974. As it was written by someone who was there, it is very accurate. I would just say that the *Telegraph* was wrong and the *Evening Standard* was right – I was promming, not sitting! And I actually had my own vocal score with me, though I had taken it there for me to follow, not to sing from ...



Patrick McCarthy (right) with André Previn in 1974

I was 40 in 1987 and my then sister-in-law leant on someone at the Beeb and provided me with a videotape of the concert (back in 1974 video recorders were unheard of). So I know exactly how good I was that night. My mother down in Brighton recognised my (unannounced) voice during the Radio 3 live broadcast.

What an interesting magazine *Bulletin* is, with so many interesting articles. Before I went to the Guildhall I worked for Decca for 18 months, mainly on Vox/Turnabout and L'Oiseau Lyre, but had always been interested in recorded music. Over the years I amassed a huge collection of LPs, and later, CDs. I am glad that the RMSs are still very much alive. In my teens I used to attend one at Bognor Regis, where I was brought up. It used to meet in a room above a pub

by the station. Alec Robertson, then the editor of *Gramophone*, gave a talk and played some records, including a bit of Act 2 of *Meistersinger* from the Kempe recording which I knew – my Dad had recently borrowed that recording from the Westminster public library. Alec mentioned to me that he had told Rudolf Kempe how much he had enjoyed it, and the conductor replied that he had never listened to it!

I remember presenting a very tough evening there myself – *The Rite of Spring* (Doráti/Minneapolis) followed by Mahler's Fifth (LSO/Rudolf Schwarz on World Record Club) on the flimsy pretext that both pieces were written at about the same time. Hmm...the worst evening I remember was when a member played a complete LP of Strauss waltzes straight through without pause or explanation. It took me a little while to get over that, though I am glad to say that I have.

With all good wishes, **Patrick McCarthy**
Patrick will be at Daventry 2016! See page 16.

Bin the CD ... or not?

Re Debbie Bilham's article (*Bulletin* 163, page 20, The Great 30-Year Rock and Roll Swindle): she is right in parts. Debbie is only comparing CDs downloaded to her FiO digital player (good though it is and which costs £150.00 at Amazon). Also, I think she has missed the point: good CD recordings have ambience whilst poor ones do not – and there are many of those! Certainly, studio masters heard on professional analogue tape decks will sound more natural. But as for cassettes, well I have never heard a good recording on that medium, ever. They almost always lack a good top end, i.e. high-frequency response. Also, analogue equipment nearly always has an element of second harmonic distortion which makes the sound 'warmer', but less accurate!

I think that CDs have a useful life, especially in the area of classical music, and the advent of SACD will only prolong the life of that medium. Listen to the latest release by BIS of the seven Sibelius symphonies, played by the Lahti SO and conducted by Okko Kamu, in SACD and CD modes – they are simply stunning. Of course, the acoustics in the Sibelius Hall are outstanding and it is rated one of the five best concert halls in the world, as is very evident in their CD/SACD recordings. Symphony Hall in Birmingham, designed by the same acoustic architects, has similar properties. A lack of clarity and depth? No way.

Another aspect is that there are millions of CD players around the world. Are they all going to be scrapped? Not likely! Although lossless downloads are good, the average music listener would need a considerable outlay in equipment to play them. For example, a PC/Laptop/Notebook with a good DAC (digital to analogue converter) would be the first requirement, then a good-quality amplifier and speakers or headphones. This is not to forget the lack of an accompanying booklet, although this aspect is

inconsistent as some companies in their reissues have omitted the original notes on the original LP sleeves. Tut tut!

Vinyl discs, to get the best of them, have always needed high-quality cartridges, arms and turntables, and again this is not for everyone. No Debbie, I fear you have missed the point. It is not time to pension off the Compact Disc!

Philip Ashton, FRMS Technical Officer

The Radio Circle

Having retired, I established the Radio Circle in 1996 (it was then named The Vintage Radio Programme Collectors' Circle). Although I had been taping off-air for some time before that and knew a few others who did the same, I was surprised to discover that a very



high percentage of BBC output over the years had, for various reasons, never officially been archived. There were two aims:

to put collectors in touch with each other, so that programmes of mutual interest could be exchanged, and probably more importantly, to locate others with similar interests to try to ensure that collections could be backed up and their disappearance into landfill sites avoided.

The second aim involved a good deal of networking, which has since paid dividends because it has resulted in a very substantial quantity of 'missing, believed wiped' material being obtained, from collectors both in the UK and overseas. The latter had often recorded programmes broadcast on local stations which were provided by the BBC's Transcription Service, initially on 16-inch discs, later on 10-inch and 12-inch vinyl LPs. Private recordings were generally on quarter-inch tape and cassette, a few on DAT, and very occasionally on lacquer discs – and later, perhaps on MiniDisc and even CD.

About 15 years ago I decided to concentrate activities more on drama and feature material which was probably at risk, because there were already societies which catered specifically for those interested in music and comedy. These categories are certainly not ignored by our group, because when collectors are located, they sometimes have interests outside radio plays and serials. So live music recordings have been unearthed, some dating back to the early 1960s. The fact that storage capacity is now so cheap invalidates the excuse that 'it does not interest me, I cannot afford (or have space for) the media', so we now tend to accept virtually anything which we believe may not have been officially archived.

The BBC has operated at least two 'Treasure Hunts' since 2000, and has now become aware of the commercial possibilities of some of their programmes which were either never thought worth archiving or had been lost. One example of this is the remakes of many of the post-war 'Paul Temple' serials broadcast since 2006, where recordings of the originals had been destroyed. The fear that individual collectors could be prosecuted for retaining what they had recorded has almost disappeared, save in cases where attempts are clearly being made to sell material on the open market. The Radio Circle has always had strict rules to ensure

that no personal gain can be made from any recordings and has, at times, been able to pass lost programmes back to the Corporation. Within its membership, facilities exist to digitise material on most media, including so-called 'acetate' discs.

The content of programmes, as well as the mode of presentation, does reflect the social mores of the time, not to mention the pace of life. 'Dead air', for instance, is virtually unknown today and announcers like Patricia Hughes are virtually an extinct species. In addition, some programmes have been edited before they are repeated in an effort to avoid perceived offence being caused to some sectors of society. Leaving aside the pros and cons of this, we do try to get back to the material as originally broadcast, leaving others to pass judgment. So to some extent, what we have within the Circle is a mirror of social history. In this context, it appears that almost all output since 2000 has been kept, so, in essence, the older the material, the more potential interest it has.

I would like to hear from any reader who may have earlier off-air recordings of BBC spoken word output, especially plays, serials and documentary or feature programmes (or who may know others who do). I can be contacted either by letter at 11 Brinklow Way, Harrogate HG2 9JW, by telephone on 01423 549353 or email at roger.bickerton@ntlworld.com. Please also see our website: www.radiocircle.org.uk

Roger Bickerton

Even fewer notes on discs?

Further to my article in the last issue (Notes on Discs, page 24) regarding the failure of record companies to provide adequate booklet notes, I have just observed an even more disturbing trend at Sony Classical. Their recent boxes of reissues of John Williams film music conducted by the composer, and that of Boulez conducting Ravel, have dispensed with any notes at all! The only information given is a listing of tracks on the back of each CD sleeve – and those for the Ravel are not even translated into English. This is surely the ultimate in shabby treatment both of the potential purchaser and of the artists whose historically important recordings are so devalued. Members should deluge the company with letters of complaint. You never know, they might take notice.

Paul Corfield Godfrey, FRMS treasurer

Ronald Bleach (1930-2015)

We heard recently of the death of Ronald Bleach, a former secretary of the City of Bristol RMS which sadly closed in 2010. Ron was also a member of the FRMS committee from 2001-5 and 2007-9, and was vice-chairman 2004-5. He was also active in the Elgar and Granville Bantock Societies, giving presentations about those composers at Federation events and to individual societies. He was a somewhat flamboyant character, but the Federation lost touch with him after he left the committee and the closure of the Bristol Society. His last days were spent in a care home in Bristol where he died on Christmas Eve last year, aged 85.

Allan Child, FRMS chairman

JANÁČEK; SCRIBIN *Sonatas & Poems*

Stephen Hough (piano)

Hyperion CDA 67895 (72:39)



The indefatigable Stephen Hough is back with yet another superbly planned and executed disc from Hyperion. At first glance, Scriabin and Janáček may seem like odd bedfellows, but as Hough's own note on the disc's sleeve rightly says: 'This recording brings

together two Slavic eccentrics, both geniuses with high energy and powerful sexuality inspiring their lives and work – yet as musicians they are far apart. I love the contrast between their styles...alternating them creates a wonderful patchwork, their voices so different but equally compelling, equally intense.' How right he is! Hough has constructed his programme to bring these contrasts to the fore, and yet it also serves to emphasise the originality and harmonic daring in each composer's music.

He plays the first and most famous set of Janáček's most popular piano work *On an Overgrown Path* with just the right balance of improvisatory abandon and lyrical discipline; the pieces are miniatures but contain some of Janáček's most intimate and spontaneous music. Rather like Schumann's piano collections, there is a general air of sad reminiscence about much of this music, and even when things get rather dramatic and heated, as in the clamorous arpeggios of 'The barn owl has not flown away', Hough keeps things under firm control and never loses the overall line. His touch is quite magical, and though there is much competition here from rival versions, no-one is likely to be disappointed. His Sonata 'From the Street' is even finer, and here the underlying inspiration behind the music – the death of a Czech worker during a demonstration – is keenly felt in Hough's performance. The scurrying figurations and repetitive motifs are superbly articulated and bring out the suggested turmoil and unease in the music.

His Scriabin shares many of the same qualities. The piano sonatas cover the composer's entire creative life, and Hough has chosen two of the most compact yet fascinating of them to bookend the recital. He opens with Sonata No. 5 from 1907, where the ghost of Chopin, which dominates the earlier ones, is starting to fade and be replaced with something more adventurous. Hough tears into the tumultuous, violent introductory bars, and he clearly relishes Scriabin's adventurous keyboard sonorities, which range from the growling bass to the uppermost reaches of the piano. The closing Sonata No. 4, as mentioned, does hark back to an earlier style, but makes an effective coda, its Romanticism tinged with something wilder. The two short *Poèmes* are much more interesting than their brevity would suggest. The first is from 1903 and shares the 4th Sonata's key of F sharp major, a Scriabin favourite. It has a typically adventurous brand of lyricism, and was apparently a regular encore in the composer's own concerts. The second *Poème* is from 1914 and is dubbed by the liner-note writer as Scriabin's *Rite of Spring*. This is perhaps a bit strong but there is a real sense of unease and experimentation, a feeling that rhythm and texture have begun to take precedence over melody, and the subtitle 'Towards the flame' is absolutely appropriate.

With excellent audio quality, this is another very recommendable disc. I've already mentioned the strong

competition, and I certainly wouldn't be without Rudolf Firkušný's Janáček, or the superb Scriabin sonata cycles from Håkon Austbø and Vladimir Ashkenazy. There is even competition in Hyperion's own catalogue from their other star pianist, Marc-André Hamelin, who has recorded all the Scriabin sonatas as well as Book 1 of *On an Overgrown Path* (coupled very sensibly with Schumann). But as with most things Hough does, this playing instantly commands your attention.

LEO ORNSTEIN

Piano Quintet Op. 92; String Quartet No. 2 Op. 99

Marc-André Hamelin (piano); Pacifica Quartet

Hyperion CDA 68084 (72:45)



Leo Ornstein was a very interesting figure. His dates (1893-2002) tell you immediately that he lived a very long life (a mere 108 when he died) and thus spanned every radical development in 20th-century music. As Michael Broyles's excellent booklet

note tells us, he was trained as a concert pianist and became something of an *enfant terrible* as a composer, and his early works were so radical that one critic was wowed enough to declare '...out of Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Ornstein, it is Ornstein, the youngest of these, who promises to be the greatest'. Another anonymous London critic wryly observed that Ornstein was 'the sum of Schoenberg and Scriabin squared'. That is actually not too far off the mark in many ways. As Ornstein's style developed, he grew uneasy about the direction it was taking, and some time in the mid-twenties made a conscious decision to step back from the abyss of dissonance and extreme modernism. As he himself put it: 'I had brought music to the very edge...I drew back and said "beyond that lies complete chaos"'. The works presented here come from this very period and show Ornstein embracing a more lyrical style that still has a barbed edge and a restless, uneasy, but compelling ferocity.

The Piano Quintet was commissioned in 1929 by that famous doyenne of the arts Elizabeth Coolidge and was premiered in Philadelphia with Ornstein himself at the piano. The concert also featured works by Bartók, who was present and later shared the stage with Ornstein. Many consider it his best work, and it perfectly exemplifies his intuitive approach to composition. Ornstein said of this work: 'It is not a polite piece...it may be overcharged, but it is what I heard'. The first movement is marked *Allegro barbaro*, and must surely be a reference to the eponymous work by Bartók himself. The music is indeed restless and full of rhythmic energy, but there is an underlying sense of something richer and more emotional that holds the attention as wave after wave of sequences unfold. I confess I've not really encountered anything quite like it, but it certainly is impossible to ignore. It is not atonal as such, but key centres are hard to define, and the forward momentum and propulsive energy are gripping. The second movement is marked *Andante lamentoso*, and its keening modality reminds us of Ornstein's Russian-Jewish heritage more than once. The third movement returns us to the vigour of the first and contains more fearsome demands for the pianist. Though it may just be a little overblown for the material it uses, these performances help save the day.

Indeed, it has to be said that even by Hamelin's standards, the playing here is breathtaking. He has already championed Ornstein's music in a solo recital disc, and much of the success and enjoyment of the Quintet must be down to the standard of execution from Hamelin and the superb Pacifica Quartet.

The Second String Quartet is less ferocious than the Quintet, and Ornstein's particular brand of lyricism is more obvious in this work. The notes tell us that he virtually abandoned any use of counterpoint, and while that may seem like heresy if one considers the history of string quartet writing up to that point, Ornstein gets away with it. The first movement does contain a few too many gear changes, but the texture and forward impetus are always interesting. The overall effect is rather like a mash-up of Alban Berg, Debussy and Bartók – to name three! I did personally find the slow second movement the most interesting – it's also the shortest – but the lively finale does have a naggingly memorable main theme and plenty of rhythmic interest.

It is possible to have caveats about certain aspects of Ornstein's compositional style – too many references to other composers, not enough discipline in some movements, perhaps overall just too many notes. But the simple fact is that I have gone back to this disc more than many others of new music that come my way, which perhaps indicates that it does grab you and will not let go. As already mentioned, performances and notes are exemplary and recording quality very good indeed.

NAXOS A-Z of SINGERS

Compiled and annotated by David Patmore

Naxos 8.558097-100 (4 discs: 75:23; 74:23; 74:23; 77:34)



This is the latest instalment of Naxos's popular A-Z series; these are boxed sets pretty squarely aimed at listeners new to that particular area of classical music. Previous sets include Pianists, Opera, Conductors and, indeed, Classical Music itself. The more experienced collectors may well know a lot of the recordings featured here, but that does not for one minute dilute the enjoyment of playing through these very well-filled discs, where old favourites rub shoulders with the odd new discovery.

I must start with the general layout and the set's biggest attraction, for me at least: the booklet which runs to a massive 850 pages, and lists over 300 singers. Dates are given for each singer, followed by a brief career summary, selected recordings, and finally a detailed and very readable biography. It must be said that it would be impossible to feature all the listed singers on the four discs, so a selection has been made and the rest have to be sampled via a link to the Naxos website. The password is included in the booklet and I found the site pretty easy to access and navigate. Once there, you can hear carefully selected items and, in some cases, even longer extracts and whole scenes. For those relying solely on the CDs, you may baulk at those singers left out. This must, presumably, have been in the hands of the man behind all this, David Patmore (also responsible for the A-Z of Conductors) and his personal preferences. In the excellent preface, he tells us of the difficult decisions regarding the material for inclusion, but that he has 'sought to provide as broad a conspectus of vocal achievement on record since the dawn of the recording age as space permits'. Reading that, it probably won't come as any surprise that the accent is

largely on the more 'historic' side of things on the discs. If you want any recordings after 1955, you'll be disappointed unless you go to the website. Of course, this does include many classic recordings, all taken from the Naxos catalogue and re-mastered by their in-house experts Ward Marston and Mark Obert-Thorn.

There is still a very impressive list of great voices represented here. It is way beyond the scope of this review to talk about every singer, so I will simply mention my own personal highlights. Caruso had to be featured, and one of his very earliest recordings with piano is here, 'Questa o quella' from Act 1 of *Rigoletto* from 1902. It sounds as well as it ever did, even with that faint and rather crude accompaniment, and if one of his slightly later 1912-13 recordings had been featured one would have been aware of the amazing advances in sound reproduction in that short time. Still, this is the very dawn of recorded sound and the voice is in superb shape. Björling's equally famous 'Che gelida manina' from the classic Beecham *La bohème* is here, as resplendent as ever, as is the Callas 'Vissi d'arte' from *Tosca*, both benchmark versions. There's an extremely early (1906) Mattia Battistini aria from Verdi's *Ernani* that has a decidedly ropey orchestra and unknown conductor, but again, this 'king of baritones' comes across well down the decades. By contrast, Kathleen Ferrier's famous Gluck aria 'What is life to me without thee?' is beautifully and sympathetically accompanied by Malcolm Sargent and the London Symphony Orchestra. Talking of conductors, Furtwängler gets a few slots, accompanying Fischer-Dieskau in Mahler, Flagstad in *Tristan*, and Gottlob Frick in *Fidelio*, all reference recordings. It was wonderful to hear an extended section from Strauss's *Salome* with Fritz Reiner conducting Ljuba Welitsch at the Metropolitan Opera in 1949, and Lotte Lehmann in a 1927 *Rosenkavalier* from Berlin. As you can see, riches aplenty and many famous recordings. Of the items I was less familiar with but glad to discover, there are: Mary Garden (Debussy's first Mélisande) here singing 'Depuis le jour' from Charpentier's *Louise* with piano accompaniment in 1927; Magda Olivero in a 1938 recording of 'Tu che di gel sei cinta' from Act 3 of *Turandot*; and Bidu Sayão's radiant 'O soave fanciulla' (*La bohème*), with a virile Giuseppe di Stefano live at the Met in 1950. Other discoveries include Leonie Rysanek's hair-raising 'Dich, teure Halle' from Act 2 of *Lohengrin*, superbly recorded in 1957 by DG; and one of the most thrilling renditions I've come across of Verdi's 'Di quella pira' from Act 3 of *Il Trovatore* featuring Aureliano Pertile, recorded with amazing presence and clarity in 1930. As already mentioned, the accompaniments vary in the very earliest recordings, but I don't think there's any extract that doesn't do justice to the voices, and some are real revelations for their time.

I have a small caveat; of all the omissions, poor old Pavarotti must be the most obvious. His face adorns the cover (presumably as a selling point) and he obviously gets a biographical entry, but nowhere does his voice feature, either on the discs or website. As with other singers who are excluded, this is probably contractual, but surely a featured singer should have replaced him on the cover. Still, I doubt very much if the listener this is really aimed at will care, especially given the bargain price. There really is a feast of great singing here that will give delight to more than just the aficionado.

Tony Haywood (*Huddersfield RMS*) works part-time at *Huddersfield University* and runs his own piano tuning and maintenance business. ●

Notable Anniversaries in 2017

In the previous issue, we invited contributions to this our revamped Notable Anniversaries feature that might assist programme planners for 2017. Well done to a certain Yorkshire Society whose members provide the following suggestions. Surely the rest of the country has some ideas for next time ...

Sue Parker of Huddersfield and Barnsley Recorded Music Societies has this in mind:

Beethoven, String Quintet, Op. 104 (1817)

In 1817 Beethoven reworked his early Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, No. 3) as a string quintet. He had been offered an amateurish transcription made by some long-forgotten hopeful, and in order to prevent it from circulating without his authorisation – something that happened all too often with his compositions – he made his own version and allocated it an opus number, 104. The choice of that particular piano trio is interesting, as it is the most original and bold of the set of three which the composer chose to present to the world as his Opus 1 in 1795. In fact Haydn discouraged him from publishing it, saying it would be too difficult for the public to understand (an opinion of Beethoven's music that persisted for more than a century after his death!)



Looking at composers' reworkings of their own, or other people's, compositions, and their reasons for making them, could make an interesting programme. There are currently six recordings of the Beethoven quintet in the catalogue, including the 86-disc Complete Edition on Brilliant Classics. The Naxos (Fine Arts Quartet with Gil Sharon) and Hyperion (Nash Ensemble) versions are both recommended by MusicWeb International, while the Supraphon recording (Suk Quartet with Karel Špelina) dates from the 1970s and was for over two decades the only one in existence. The publication of Vikram Seth's novel *An Equal Music* in 1999, and the release the following year of Decca's 2-CD set of music referred to in the novel, seem to have stimulated interest in the work. Couplings vary across the different recordings and that in itself merits further investigation.

Gary Midgley from the University of Huddersfield, and a member of Huddersfield and Barnsley Societies, has this suggestion:

Debussy, Violin Sonata in G minor (1917)

The Violin Sonata for violin and piano is Debussy's last major work and was intended to be one of a cycle of six sonatas for various instruments. In the event, only the Cello Sonata (1915), Sonata for flute, viola and harp (also 1915) and Violin Sonata (1917) were completed. The first performance of the Violin Sonata in May 1917 by violinist Gaston Poulet with the composer at the piano was also Debussy's last public performance; he died of cancer at his Paris home one year later.



The late sonatas are short but concentrated works, almost neo-classical in texture. The Violin Sonata in particular conveys a sad poignant mood, no doubt reflecting the composer's rapid decline in health and his anguish at the impending bombardment of Paris in the last turbulent years of World War 1. This piece could fit into a number of thematic programmes, for example:

- Centenary Works (for 2017)
- Last Thoughts: composers' final compositions
- Unfinished Business: here, the Violin Sonata is part of an unfinished cycle
- Compositions from World War I

There are many acceptable performances at all price ranges. Kyung-Wha Chung and Radu Lupu (on a 1988 Decca recording) is a fine, restrained and well-balanced interpretation - with the added bonus of excellent recordings of Franck's Violin Sonata and (with the Melos Ensemble) of Debussy's other late sonata (for flute, viola and harp), as well as Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro*.

Tony Haywood, also from the University of Huddersfield and a member of Huddersfield RMS, suggests:

Erik Satie, Parade (1917)

On May 18th 1917, an extraordinary premiere took place at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. It was a short ballet to a scenario by Cocteau, and the all-star production team continued with designs by Picasso, choreography by Massine and the orchestra conducted by Ansermet. It was of course *Parade*, music by Erik Satie and presented by the famous Ballets Russes, and it caused nearly as big a scandal as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* some four years earlier. Additions to the orchestra include typewriter, revolver and sirens, and this witty, irreverent work came to epitomise the anti-Wagner backlash spreading through France during these years. Satie's iconoclasm influenced Les Six and many other composers, and this aspect could easily provide the subject for a talk, which could be devoted to Satie himself, other composers in his circle, or other commissions by the Ballets Russes. There are quite a few good recordings of *Parade*. The best for me remains the excellent Mercury disc conducted by Antal Doráti, where it is part of a very good programme of music from the period, including works by Milhaud, Françaix and Auric.



The editor offers these notable dates:

Ferde Grofé March 27th – 125th anniversary of birth
Enrique Granados July 27th – 150th anniversary of birth
Darius Milhaud September 4th – 125th anniversary of birth
Philip Glass January 31st – 80th birthday

Alexander von Zemlinsky March 15th - 75th anniversary of death
Luigi Cherubini March 15th – 175th anniversary of death
Claudio Monteverdi May 15th – 450th anniversary of baptism
John Adams February 15th – 70th birthday

Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd



Registered Office: 6 Oakroyd Close, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 4BP

Registered in England: No. 700106

Website: www.thefrms.co.uk

President Julian Lloyd Webber

Vice-Presidents Roderick Shaw
John Davies
Tony Baines

OFFICERS

Chairman Allan Child *Presenters' Panel List*
12 Highfield Road, Derby DE22 1GZ
01332 332649 allan.child@thefrms.co.uk

Vice-Chairman Ron Beech *Organiser Daventry Music Weekend*
96, Kenilworth Road, Coventry CV4 7AH
02476 418789 ron.beech@thefrms.co.uk

Secretary Jim Bostwick *Daventry Weekend admin*
6 Oakroyd Close, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 4BP
01484 717865 secretary@thefrms.co.uk

Treasurer Paul Corfield Godfrey
9 Heol y Mynach, Old Ynysyawl, Pontypridd, Mid Glam CF37 3PE
Tel: 01443 791117 paul.godfrey@thefrms.co.uk

Bulletin Editor Paul Astell
17 Boot Street, Whittington, Oswestry SY11 4DG
01691 662460 editor@thefrms.co.uk

Technical Officer Philip Ashton
27 Dunsby Road, Luton LU3 2UA
01582 651632 technical@thefrms.co.uk

COMMITTEE

Mick Birchall *Minutes secretary*
2 Burley Close, Desford, Leicester LE9 9HX
01455 823494

George Steele *Website manager*
The Cottage, 51 Pegasus Court, Rochdale OL11 4EA
01706 525630 webmaster@thefrms.co.uk

Denise Beech *Organiser Daventry Music Weekend*
96, Kenilworth Road, Coventry CV4 7AH
02476 418789 denise.beech@thefrms.co.uk

John Hardie *Bulletin Distribution*
13 Belmont Street, Southport PR8 INF
01704 530928 john.hardie@thefrms.co.uk

Stuart Sillitoe
37 Holme Slack Lane, Preston PR1 6EX
01772 705220 stuart.sillitoe@thefrms.co.uk

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

Scotland John Maidment
St Magnus, 61 Queen Street, Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7BA
01241 853017 johnmaidment@msn.com

Central Mick Birchall
2 Burley Close, Desford, Leicester LE9 9HX
01455 823494

West Surrey Roger Saunders
Westbury, 52 Waggoners Way, Grayshott, Surrey GU26 6JX
01428 605002

Yorkshire & Northwest Jim Bostwick
6 Oakroyd Close, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6
01484 717865 james.bostwick@thefrms.co.uk

BULLETIN

Editor Paul Astell

Editorial copy

Should you wish to submit copy and it is in manuscript form or on CD, please send it direct to the editor at the address shown left. If your copy is available as an email attachment, send it to: editor@thefrms.co.uk

Photographs

Please ensure that traditional prints sent for inclusion are of reasonable quality and digital images are at the original resolution.

Editorial deadlines

Spring issue: 31st December
Autumn issue: 30th June

Advertising

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

Circulation

If you would like your own copy of *Bulletin* sent direct, contact: John Hardie, Distribution Manager (details left). **All enquiries about non-delivery, changes to quantity ordered or delivery address should also be directed to John.**

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

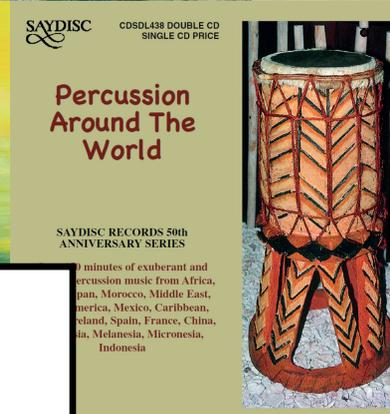
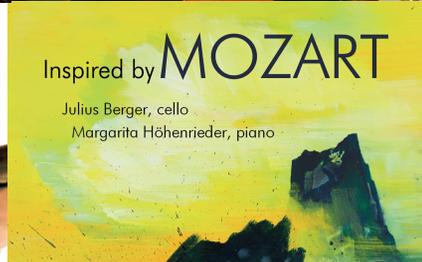
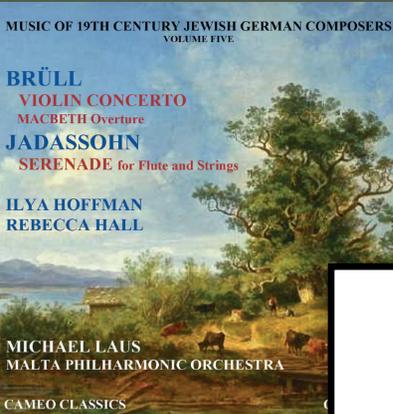
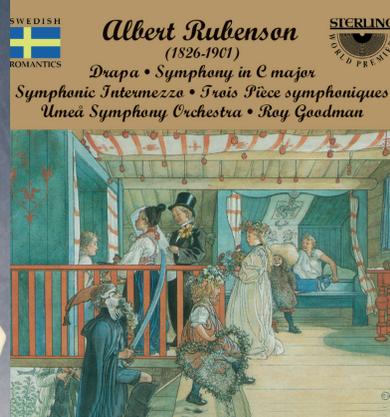
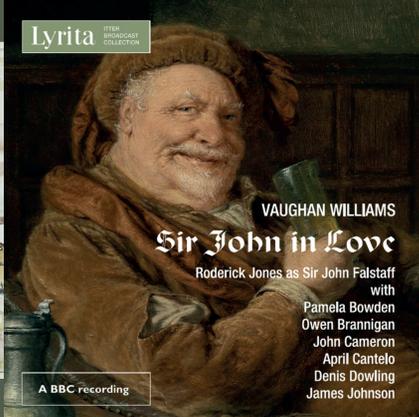
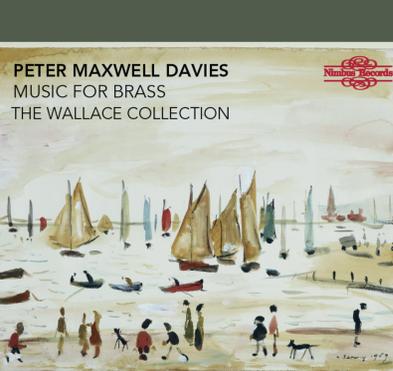
Copyright notice

The material content of *Bulletin* may not be reproduced elsewhere without the formal permission of the publishers, the Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd.

Printed by:

Inc Dot Design & Print
Inc Dot House, Seafire Close,
Clifton Moor
York YO30 4UU

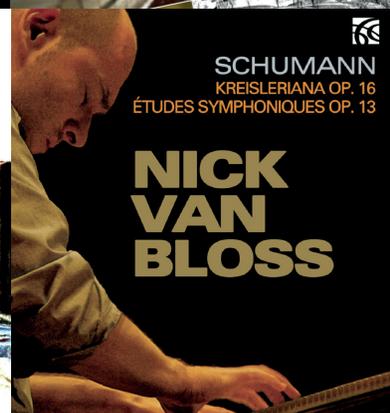
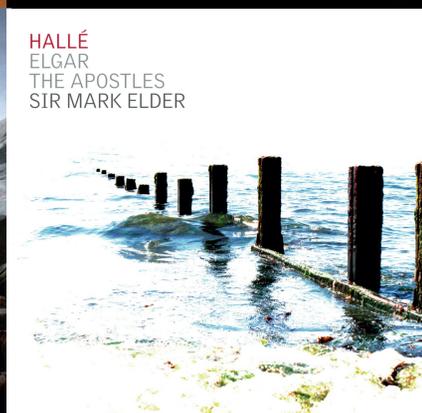
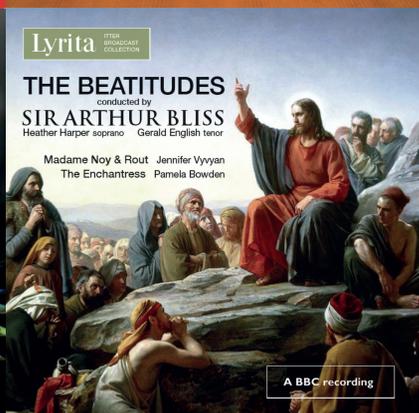
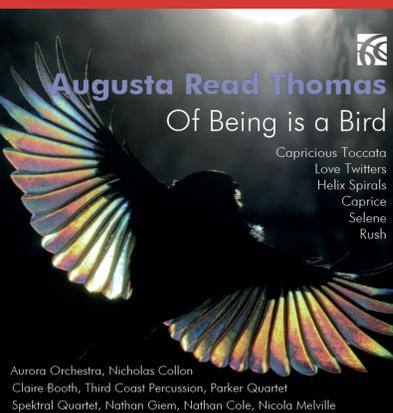
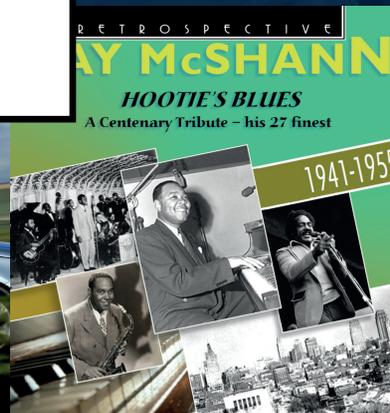
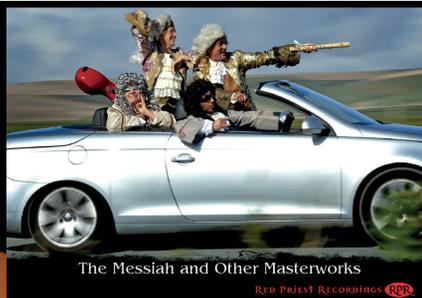
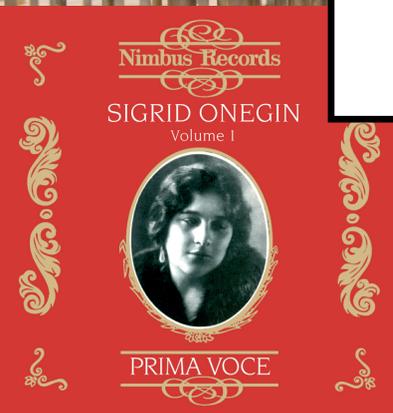
The editor reserves the right to shorten or amend articles, letters and emails received for publication.





Sign up to our e-newsletter
and receive 20% off
wyastone.co.uk forever!

Simply follow this link:
<http://eepurl.com/611Ab>



If you are having trouble signing up to the e-newsletter,
please contact:
marketing@wyastone.co.uk
01600 890 007



LPs · CDs · EQUIPMENT

WE BUY

THROUGHOUT UK AND EUROPE

WE SELL

ONLINE | BY APPOINTMENT



Contact info@watsonrecords.co.uk

Telephone 0207 689 7533

www.watsonrecords.co.uk

WATSON
RECORDS