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EDITORIAL

Berlioz

Most music lovers will be aware from reports in the press that the highly prestigious Samuel Johnson Prize of £30,000 has been awarded to David Cairns for his two volume biography of Berlioz. Mr Cairns, when accepting the prize, talked about “the cause” and how he has dedicated himself for more than 40 years to advancing the appreciation of this often under-appreciated great composer. He has admitted in an article in the Sunday Times that for the first 30 years of his life he found Berlioz as incomprehensible as Sanskrit; however he played in the orchestra of Chelsea Opera Group (of which he was a co-founder) when it was rehearsing for *La Damnation de Faust* he saw the light. The once-impenetrable language now made complete, glorious sense.

Mr Cairns is doubly connected to the FRMS as not only is he Chairman of the Berlioz Society but he is also a member of Putney Music. We feel honoured that this incredibly busy man has found time to write for the Bulletin and on page 10 you will find his article “How Berlioz took off” which describes how the advent of the LP led to first recordings of the major works of Berlioz and thus to a greater appreciation of his genius. In appreciation, and in support of this “cause” which the Federation so fully supports, this edition of the Bulletin is dedicated to this great composer.

Alongside David Cairns’s article, we print an entertaining article by Len Mullenger “Berlioz as a Woman” which describes an incident from the life of Berlioz when he had been jilted by his then fiancée (this article has previously appeared in ‘ORMS NEWS’, the newsletter of the Olton RMS). We also include a review of David Cairns’s *magnum opus* and some miscellaneous writings, two from Berlioz himself and another from a letter from Boieldieu to Berlioz, explaining why he had not recommended the latter for the Prix de Rome.

Penguin Guide

We have also been very fortunate that we have been able to persuade Ivan March, editor of the Penguin Guide to Compact Discs, to write a history of the Guide. This appears on page 15. Surely all our readers will be aware of this invaluable publication which reviews virtually every major recording of classical music. I for one seem to refer to it on a near daily basis, as besides providing excellent reviews, it

is an invaluable catalogue of the major (and many of the minor) composers and their works. The latest Guide was reviewed in the last edition of the Bulletin.

Ivan March has offered to appear alongside his fellow editors of the guide, Edward Greenfield (who, of course is the President of FRMS) and Robert Layton, to make a presentation at the next FRMS Musical Weekend. This will be the first time that all three have appeared together on one platform.

Vintage Performances

Another new article, ‘Historical Concepts’, of particular interest is by our old friend Bill Newman. Bill has been a music enthusiast since 1947 and worked for EMI and CBS/Sony from 1955-70 and now as a free-lance writer contributes to Hi Fi News and International Classic Record Review. The idea for his article arose because during his recital visits to RMSs members ask him about items on his programmes — Where can I purchase that recording... is it currently available... why haven’t I seen a review in one of the monthly magazines?

Mostly their enquiries relate to historical recordings which take a back place, or no allocated space at all in periodicals, but which are slowly taking up a larger status position in monthly release programmes. Many are still not even broadcast on Radio 3, but are available in certain specialist shops, mainly in London.

Good advice is at a premium, especially at general record shops. Even many of the record reviewers have little knowledge and appreciation of the older recordings. In the absence of recommendations, purchase of classical records is mainly a question of impulse buying. But as vintage performances are seldom stocked by general record shops, impulse buying has little chance. It must be said that the Penguin Guides make a valiant effort to cover such performances, but many slip through the net. This article starts to address the problem and gives invaluable advice on what is available.

As a lover of high fidelity sound, have been slow to take up vintage recordings. However I have been spellbound by the excellence of CDs produced by Dutton Laboratories of records that I remember from 78s. Many of these old recordings have a musicality sadly lacking in modern performances. Give them a try!

Arthur Baker

GENERAL MEETING

The March edition of the Bulletin included a report of the AGM held last October and the acrimony relating to the Treasurer's Report and also the subsequent Committee vote of no confidence in the Treasurer. The Committee expected the Treasurer to resign following this vote, however this did not happen. A number of individuals outside the Committee formed a group which later called itself "Save the FRMS" Group which demanded that a Special General Meeting should be held to consider the position of the Treasurer and also called for the removal from office of the Chairman and principal officers. The Committee refused to convene such a meeting on the grounds that the timing was inappropriate (as both the Bulletin and the Musical weekend were at critical stages). Subsequently the Committee organised for the AGM to be held early, this would enable the position of the Treasurer to be resolved and also allowed a vote to be held for the principal officers and the Committee. This meeting (held at Birmingham on 6th May) is described below.

This meeting had been convened as an Annual General Meeting, which had an agenda which included a motion proposed by the Derby RMS which sought to censure the FRMS Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary and dismiss them for mismanagement of the Federation's affairs. At the start of the meeting, before the first agenda item was considered, Mr Roderick Shaw, a Federation Vice-President, stated that no authenticated accounts had been submitted to the Member Societies and that the Federation had no right within the Constitution to hold an AGM before the end of the financial year and to ignore the request for a Special General Meeting (SGM). Accordingly he moved that "the Annual General meeting is invalid and is declared null and void and the meeting will have the status of an SGM with an agenda consisting only of the Motion proposed by the Derby RMS". This was seconded by Mr Brendan Sadler (Street & Glastonbury).

The Federation Chairman, Mr John Gilks, declared that he believed the AGM was constitutionally valid. He had called an AGM rather than a SGM because the timing of the latter would have been at a particularly difficult time when the Bulletin and the Stratford Weekend were both at a critical point, where disruption could have adverse consequences for the Federation. He pointed out that if the motion was passed, there would be no

reports by officers and that the vote for Officers and Committee could not proceed. He also stated that although we were not yet at the end of the financial year, the Committee was in a position to give a statement of the present financial position and that the final accounts would be presented to Societies when available. Mr Reg Williamson, Committee Member, confirmed that under the Constitution an AGM could be called at any time within 15 months of the last one.

A short debate was then held on this motion, mainly concerned with different interpretations of the Constitution. The motion was then put and was accepted by a large majority.

Mr Brendan Sadler suggested that as the Federation Chairman was a subject of the motion which was to be considered by the SGM, an independent Chairman of this meeting should be appointed. Mr Graham Ladley, Oswestry, agreed to be chairman and this was approved by general acclamation.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 4th November in the Durham Light Infantry Museum, Durham.

We are guests of the FRMS North East Region. This is a very important meeting for the Federation as it will set the agenda for new Officers and Committee; all Societies should send a representative if possible.

Tickets are for There will be a Supper (Tickets price £10.50). There will also be a piano recital by Jonathan Middleton, Lecturer at Chetham's School of Music (Tickets priced £8.00).

Further details may be obtained from the FRMS Secretary, Marjorie Williamson, who has sent out full information in a circular to all Societies.

Special General Meeting

Mr Allan Child, Derby RMS, introduced his motion by pointing out that he believed the Committee was not fulfilling their function properly as detailed in the motion. There had been criticism at earlier AGMs which indicated a general concern at the way the Federation was being run. The motion was "This meeting censures the FRMS Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary and seeks to dismiss them for mismanagement in three areas". These areas were breaches of the FRMS Constitution; misuse of funds; and failure to co-operate with the Treasurer.

The Chairman, Mr Ladley, ruled that items discussed at previous Annual General Meetings (AGM) could not be overturned by a subsequent SGM and thus the items relating to misuse of funds were not to be discussed as they referred to items included in audited accounts which had subsequently been approved by AGM.

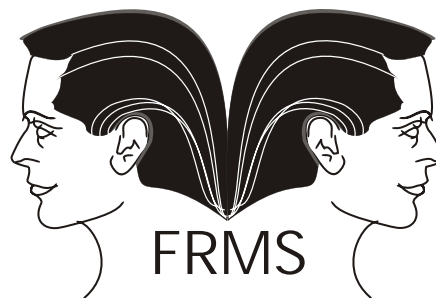
A formal response to these allegations had been prepared by the FRMS officers concerned and the Chairman allowed it to be read out in full, including brief comment on the financial items which had been disallowed. The response was read out by Dr John Phillips, FRMS Vice-Chairman. The main points were that the Treasurer had not been dismissed and therefore there was no constitutional need for a SGM; all financial matters had been agreed by the appropriate AGM; the Treasurer had excluded himself from many decisions because of his continued and determined non co-operation with items agreed by the Committee. The Treasurer was removed from the control of funds as a result of the no-confidence motion, when this was done the Committee was shocked to find that insurance and other payments had not been made and that similar late payments had occurred in previous years.

In the subsequent debate, Mr Chris Hamilton, FRMS Treasurer, stated that the allegation relating to late payment of accounts was not entirely true. He had a policy of paying bills at the best time for the Federation. As the Federation's money was mainly in bank accounts which earned interest he tried to pay only when income had been received to cover payment without dipping into the reserves.

Mr Lerew (Ryedale) said he believed that in the event of a claim before payment any insurance company could repudiate the claim. There are public standards on the payment of bills which FRMS should follow. One of the main reasons for holding reserves is to cover the rough and tumble of events.

Mr Patrick Russell (Tavistock) said that he thought there had been a vendetta against the

Treasurer. When he had joined the Committee he had had good co-operation when working with Mr Hamilton on the presentation of the accounts (which had been accurate).



I know my way is best!

Mr John Gilks, FRMS Chairman, denied that there had been any vendetta against Mr Hamilton; he had tried his best to help him. There had been no question about Mr Hamilton being dishonest. At the last AGM he had given notice of a vote of no confidence; but the Committee had received no letters of support for him at all.

Mr Williams (Wolverhampton), said that as an accountant he was concerned that the accounts should be managed in a proper way. Insurance must be paid by the book. He thought the Committee should not have denied a SGM.

A debate took place on the constitutional position of whether the SGM was empowered to dismiss officers. The Chairman ruled that the expulsion or suspension by a SGM could only take place if it had been previously recommended by the Committee (Rule 23.2). Clearly in the case of the present meeting, the Committee had made no such recommendation and the Officers and Committee will remain in place until the next AGM whatever the outcome on the motion.

It was proposed by Mr Reg Williamson that the motion should be amended to delete the words after "...Secretary". This was seconded by Mr Pezarro (Tewkesbury). Mr Wainwright (Wolverhampton) suggested that this should further be amended to restore the position of the Treasurer. Accordingly Mr Williamson amended his proposal so that it should read "This meeting censures the FRMS Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary and restores the position of Mr Hamilton as Treasurer".

The amendment was carried by 39 to 30; the amended motion was carried by a large majority.

After a vote of thanks for Mr Ladley for chairing the SGM so ably, which the meeting warmly endorsed, the FRMS Chairman then closed the meeting.

Chairman Resigns

On 5th July, John Gilks resigned as chairman of the Federation with immediate effect. In his letter of resignation he gave two main reasons; firstly the stress due to the infighting was affecting his health; secondly the attitude of Chris Hamilton who had been foisted upon the FRMS by the resolution of the Special General Meeting [see above]. He wrote that he found quite unacceptable



the obvious pleasure with which the treasurer alleged that the Bulletin was running at a loss, he also stated "I also noted Hamilton's acute embarrassment when denying that he knew of the action positively to discourage people from coming to the

Stratford weekend; indeed I know that his own secretary at Kirkcaldy 'phoned the Thurso Society in the hope that they would reverse their intention to attend. Chris Hamilton also allowed himself to become the focus and rallying point of the malcontents led by the committee of York RMS".

Mr Gilks concluded his letter by saying that he would stand for re-election if affiliates so desire, but only if Hamilton did not stand for election. He said that it has been an education to be Federation Chairman, and he has made many friends whom he hopes to keep and thanked them and the officers and committee members for their support.

Editor: John Gilks' reign as chairman has been a time of controversy and dissent for the Committee. As I have only been involved in FRMS matters for a short time I cannot say that I understand the history but it is clear that there have been personality clashes and disputes going back for several years which have culminated in the Committee's vote of no confidence in Mr Hamilton and the General Meeting described above. During my brief involvement I have been impressed by John's skills when chairing the meetings of the Committee and the encouragement which he gave to me and to other officers of the Federation. John never tried to censor or influence what appeared in the Bulletin; he devoted tremendous time and effort in visiting numerous affiliated societies and there is no doubt that the Federation has made progress in many areas under his leadership. A.B.

Performing Right Society — New Agreement

One of the main benefits of affiliation to the FRMS is that Societies can play recordings at a public gathering of members which are subject to copyright (ie the majority of commercial recordings) without having to pay specific royalties via an individual licence for each meeting. This is done under an agreement with the Performing Right Society, whereby the FRMS pays a group fee which covers any copyright liabilities for its affiliates; this, in turn is paid to FRMS with the affiliation fees.

Our original arrangement began in 1948. The amount of the licence fee was increased from time to time until 1970. After that, the only increases were in with the rate of VAT, initially at 8%, now 17.5%. In 1983 the PRS proposed a swingeing increase of 400% that led to a long argument with them; agreement was ultimately reached and a series of increases were accepted over a period of four years. The first was 27%, the next year 25%, the third 25% and the final year of the phased increase 20%. The last two years also were the beginning of index linking; there has been no increase in real terms since then.

Last year a large new increase was proposed. The initial PRS proposals were based on a one-off increase from this year to 50p per head, based on the individual Society submissions by the FRMS of its membership in the current graded structure. This was quite unacceptable. It meant the PRS was seeking this year an increase in its revenues from us of a little over 62%. As applied to our graded structure, increases to individual Societies varied from 34% to, in the case of one large Society over 1000%! This was a serious distortion that we could not accept. It also revealed an anomaly — that the smaller Societies pay more per member than the larger ones.

Negotiations were undertaken by Reg Williamson on behalf of FRMS. The first objective was to remove the grading structure out of the equation. It was argued as being our concern alone, not the PRS. So long as the PRS got the same income, did it matter? To achieve this was a major breakthrough. We agreed that henceforth, for the purposes of calculation this year, our total membership should be based on the Treasurer's last figure of 12,000 and we would base our final agreement on that in the application of a per capita formula. We were pressed for a one-off equivalent increase this year of 50p per member, which we

would not accept. A formula of 15.5% per annum was finally agreed, concurrent with the usual cost of living/inflation adjustment and phased in over three years. Thereafter, no changes except the normal indexing which has always applied. Unlike after earlier settlements we now have a written agreement. There was one other valuable bonus which we negotiated - the PRS will pay us 4% of the revenues for acting as their collecting agent.

We were now able to adjust the grading for the first year, so the actual increase is now less for smaller Societies and a little more for the larger ones. Some small adjustments might be needed in the future.

The PRS Tariff Manager frequently stressed the point that compared with their normal rates, it was still exceptionally good value for money; as a Society could easily pay the annual levy for the fee for one meeting under their normal tariff. By 2003, for a whole year, the average affiliated Society will pay for the right to play sound recordings, videos, anywhere and at any time for little more than the cost of a CD.

Reg and Marjorie Williamson

Many will be shocked and a little dismayed to learn that our popular Secretary, Marjorie, and her husband Reg will not be standing for re-election to the Committee next year. This follows an illness she had earlier this year, and both are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the stress associated with their FRMS duties.

Marjorie has been in Office for seven years, and in that time, virtually revolutionised the Secretariat. Anyone writing normally gets an answer within 24 hours, and she has been instrumental in helping many Societies over problems that all face at times. Known personally to a large majority, she is on first name terms with many officers in our affiliates. Not one day goes by but that she gets a 'phone call, an e-mail or a letter. Often, it is just for a friendly chat. Expressions of dismay and regret at her deciding to leave are now coming in. She has also been administrator for the past two Musical Weekends, the last being suggested as the best ever.

Reg has been served the Federation for more years than he can wish to remember; was a Vice Chairman for ten years, Technical Officer for almost the same time. He is currently Assistant Editor of the Bulletin and the negotiator, as reported above, of our PRS agreement. He is highly knowledgeable about Hi Fi, stereo radio and computers and he has initiated and created the Web site, which he still maintains and adds to regularly.

Editor: It was very sad to hear of the decision of Reg and Marjorie to leave Office at the end of this FRMS year,

even though it is easy to understand that their health must come first. Their devotion to the cause of the Federation has been complete and they have never stinted with their time or effort. Reg has been exceptionally helpful to me with his work on the Bulletin. They will both be missed sorely.

Coupled with the report of the resignation of the Chairman — see above, the Federation is left in a highly exposed situation and a very great deal hangs upon the forthcoming elections. A. B.

Elgar Enterprises

The Elgar Society has formed a trading company 'Elgar Enterprises'. This is a necessary legal device for a charity which wishes to supplement its funds through trading activities. It is intended to protect a society's charitable activities from being put at risk by trading losses. Initially, under the imprint of 'Elgar Editions' it will publish books, but other divisions will focus on recordings of Elgar's music; electronic publishing; (a CD-ROM containing all twentieth century issues of the Society's Journal and its predecessors is at an advanced stage of preparation); web authoring services for choirs, souvenirs, etc.

The first two books published by Elgar Editions are reviewed later in this Bulletin. They may be ordered through bookshops or through www.amazon.co.uk and also through the Elgar Society's Website, www.elgar.org, at a slightly discounted price which includes postage.

Price of FRMS Bulletin

For many years the cover price of the Bulletin has remained £1.50 despite increases in materials and postage. However, the latest increases in postal costs led to a review of the pricing structure and the Publishing Board recommended an increase in the price to £1.75. This new price will now include the packing and postage. Discounts for multiple orders will apply. It is planned to introduce the new price at the next issue.

FRMS Website

The Federation Website goes from strength to strength and now contains details and the full programmes of over 60 Societies and there is evidence that it is being used more and more. The summer 2000 edition of ICRC (p55) recommends the site to record collectors and mentions the list of some 150 towns where affiliated societies meet. The Bramhall RMS has had its first prospective new member from the web.



General Meeting

On reading the minutes of the General Meeting held on 6th May, which were sent to our Secretary under cover of a letter from Marjorie Williamson, I was sufficiently concerned to make a succinct precis of the grounds on which the censure of the Officers was based, along with the Officers' response to each point. I then distributed this to the members of our Committee who were meeting to arrange details of next season's programme.

My concern and disquiet was shared by all members of the Committee and, following considerable discussion our Secretary was asked to reply to Marjorie on a personal basis expressing our regret and sorrow that she had been driven to tender her resignation, along with our thanks and good wishes for the future. It was also suggested that I write to you to state the basis of our concern and assure you of our support in trying to repair the damage which has been caused.

With regard to the grounds on which the censure was based, we feel entirely satisfied with the detailed response made to each item. The "Constitutional" grounds appear trivial, the decision regarding publication of the Bulletin appears sensible — if not inevitable, and those members who have attended the FRMS Music Weekends (including the Corby one) found much to enjoy and little to criticise.

The most important items were those concerning the Treasurer, and all our Committee members expressed very considerable disquiet that he appears to have withheld payments to outside bodies when due. Not only is this felt to be wrong in principle, it could also prejudice the interests of the Federation and all its affiliates with regard to insurance and copyright matters. We were also very concerned to note that he withheld information (including the Database details) from other members of your Committee.

Behind all these concerns our members have the feeling that a closed body of Federation members are taking matters into their own hands, which could well prejudice our best interests (and, with regard to the Secretary, already appear to have done so) and that we are remote from them both geographically and as far as representation is concerned.

It is always very difficult for any of our members to be present at Federation Meetings, and, up to now we have not been sufficiently well acquainted with

the various personnel seeking election, but, now we are more clearly in possession of some of the important issues facing the Federation, we would wish to have opportunity to express our collective opinions and submit our votes by proxy or by direct postal representation.

We hope that before any more damage is done, we and other affiliates will have opportunity to make our opinions clear and meanwhile wish to express our support to the Committee and to those other Officers who have been named in the censure motion.

John Dixey
President, Bognor Regis RMC

Societies and Programming

What a remarkable insight George Steele (letter March issue) gives us into the working of the Rochdale Gramophone Society, and what a tolerant lot they must be!

First we are told that "most members are expected to present a programme". This would appear to be a sure recipe for programmes covering the range of "good", "bad" and "indifferent". I prefer the first, and one way of ensuring a higher proportion of the "good" is to cease to invite incompetent presenters.

Next we are told that, although members know who is to present the programme, no advance information, not even a title is provided. I, for one, am certainly not prepared to venture out on a cold evening for this "pig in a poke" policy. There is a large body of music which experience has shown is not for me and I would wish to be warned so as to be enabled to avoid it. At my own Society (Wallington/Carshalton) we have a Membership Card which displays speakers' names and titles of presentations, and there is a further bulletin issued which gives additional advance information about the programmes. I do, however, agree with George Steele that some titles are so vague as to be quite meaningless, amount to the, to my mind, soft option of a presenter simply playing his/her favourite pieces with no connecting theme whatsoever. There is room for this type of programme about once per Season under the title of "Members' Choice" or "Chairman's Choice" or some such name; that is all.

At Rochdale, we are told, "every member is expected to listen to everyone else's choice of

programme". I trust there is no such expectation at Wallington/Carshalton. As I have indicated, there are certain programmes and certain presenters that I would avoid at all costs, and I expect clear warning so that I can take evasive action if needed.

There are lots of things we can do with our time — including staying at home and playing our own choice of music. To attract people to Society meetings we need to strive for presentations which are well-constructed and informative, and the illustrative music carefully selected and of high quality. Members are entitled to clear information and intelligent presentations, not simply a leap in the dark.

David Bury, Sutton

Societies and Programming

I have read, with interest, the correspondence initiated by Reg Williamson and Gordon Wainwright on the general subject of 'Successful programming'. This debate is, for some societies, merely academic, in that they have a stable or even flourishing membership and *a priori* reasonably assume that their present bill of fare suits the customer's needs. Sadly for some this is not the case. Many have declining membership and worry from year to year whether they will have the necessary numbers and income to continue.

I would recommend to all a visit to the Federation Website where it is clearly evident that there are various types of programme in existence, viz.: -

- The long item type usually set out as a list of items to be played. The short item type but not set out as a list.
- Illustrated lectures which usually have an unambiguous title and generally consist of shorter items.
- Those with cryptic titles which may encourage some and deter others.
- Programmes which merely state the name of the presenter and give no clue as to the content.

To me there is no conflict between long or short item presentations. An item should be as long or as short as is necessary to convey the presenter's intent.

The easy option, whether the programme is of the long or short type, is for the presenter to merely read the title, performers and add "I hope you enjoy this as much as I do".

Presenters who fall into this category are, I imagine, unlikely to be re-invited but of course damage may already have been done.

Well-researched illustrated lectures on a chosen theme or composer are often stimulating. It is to be

noted that Federation or Regional events usually employ professional presenters. Their presentations, with very few exceptions, are successful and well worth the investment. Local presenters should therefore aspire to be like them in that they must be prepared to invest time on research and planning.

The 'Friday Night is Music Night' approach may answer short term needs but is likely to fail in the long term by its lack of stimulation to our intellectual and musical needs.

A good programme should educate, challenge, stimulate, inform and entertain and if this takes place within a warm and friendly environment there should be less anxiety for our future.

John Davies

(South Cheshire Recorded Music Society)

Complete works.

I welcome the comments made in the last issue by A.E. Brace and George Steele in response to my thoughts on presenting complete works.

However it is unfair to suggest that I argued against the use of extracts and short works totally, I often present that format of programme with a definite theme, as do my friends at Wolverhampton, but occasionally it is good to listen to large scale works.

If you know this movement of ours well, there are some members who are not avid collectors and do not have the resources to buy 2 or 3 CDs a week, also hearing large scale works at home on the radio or live in the concert hall has its restrictions.

There are a number of folk I know whose spouses are not interested in classical music and do not wish to hear the delights of Mahler's 5th Symphony in the living room, earphones notwithstanding. Also not everyone lives close to Symphony Hall in Birmingham, just to take one other example, they may live many miles from a good concert hall.

Some of you may recall an incident some years ago when a retired vicar who was a regular and devoted listener to "Desert Island Discs" murdered his wife who dared to differ with his listening habit. Better to join a recorded music society than murder your wife.

Gordon Wainwright, Wolverhampton

A Century of Recording

I enjoyed reading Dennis Bostock's article in the March edition of the Bulletin entitled 'A Century of Recording'.

However, I must take issue with him regarding

his last sentence when he says that he believes that the CD will be the most popular form of commercial recording for the next decade. He is almost certainly right if he feels that we are unlikely to discard our CDs for the new technologies but the reported new developments of SACD/CD by Sony and Philips would appear to bring a 'truthfulness' to Hi Fi. that will make the CD seem very 'old hat' in the next few years.

Brian Ward, Guildford

Anniversaries

Your March 2000 issue lists Some Notable Anniversaries all based on the year 2001.

I do not recall seeing any Anniversaries for the year 2000 and am wondering why. Or have I missed it?

The following maybe of some interest:

Composers - Born (b) or Died (d)

1900 Uno Klami. b.

1900 Aaron Copland. b.

1900 Kurt Weill. b.

1950 E. J. Moeran. d.

1750 Tommaso Albinoni. d.

1750 J. S. Bach. d.

1900 Sir Arthur Sullivan. d.

1750 Antonio Salieri. b.

1950 Nikolai Miaskovsky. d.

1450 Josquin des Pres. b.

1900 Alan Bush. b.

1950 Lord Berners. d.

1900 Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius" received its first performance in Birmingham.

I hope this information may be of use to members.

William Hales, Birmingham

Editor: Unfortunately this information was a casualty of the change of editor. Although it is rather late for some 2000 recital planning, I am sure it will be helpful to some Societies.

Four Hands Music

FEATURES... FEATURES...FEATURES...

How Berlioz Took Off

Berlioz once said that if only he could live till he was 150 his musical life would really take off. He died at 65, but his prophecy has proved singularly accurate, and for one special reason among many. The technological future was something that this former student of science had a keen interest in; he predicted air travel and how it would revolutionise concert and opera promotion. LP and CD, though, were beyond even his forward looking imagination. But it was the long-playing record that, arriving almost exactly a century and a half after his birth, played the crucial role in his rediscovery.

One of the things that held his music back for so long was simple ignorance of it. His scores were not performed enough — or, when they were performed, not usually well enough — to become familiar. Everyone knew about them but few people knew them.

When J. H. Elliot wrote his Master Musician's Berlioz in the late 1930s, he based his account of *L'Enfance du Christ* (as he later admitted) on the vocal score: he had not managed to hear the work. There was a disc of the tenor solo in Part 2, sung by Jean Paniel, but so far as I know no complete 78 recording.

It wasn't until the advent of LP that *L'Enfance du Christ* became generally available, first on a (rather poor) André Cluytens set issued in 1951, then on a Munch recording in 1957, and then Colin Davis' 1960 Oiseau-Lyre version, which put the work on the map. In 1953 came the Beecham recording of the *Te Deum*, and in 1959 the Munch Requiem. At the same time recordings of the operas and the lesser known orchestral works began to appear. There had always been a *Symphonie Fantastique* or two around; but now that perennial warhorse was joined by *Harold in Italy* and even *Roméo et Juliette*. *La Damnation de Faust*, which had made it onto disc near the end of the 78 era, acquired an LP recording

in 1954 (Munch) and another (Markevich) in 1960.

Recording and performance interacted, each fostering the other. LPs helped to create a new audience for Berlioz which wanted to hear him in live form. The growth of a public encouraged recording companies to issue more of his music on disc. By the late 1960s, with the centenary of his death due in 1969, the number had increased to a point where Phonogram, which had Colin Davis on their roster of conductors, could envisage risking a cycle of recordings.

In fact, the decision was in a sense taken for them. The orchestral movements of *Roméo et Juliette* had been recorded by Davis, with the London Symphony Orchestra, in February 1968. Six weeks later, after a lot of persuasion, the Dutch bosses of the company agreed that the choral movements should be added. When the complete work was released, on 2 LPs, early next year, the marketing manager of the London Branch of Phonogram, Jack Boyce, placed an advert in the programme of a Festival Hall concert conducted by Davis, announcing it as the first issue of "the Philips Berlioz cycle". The *fait accompli* was accepted with a good grace in Baarn (headquarters of Phonogram) and the cycle was launched.

I was lucky enough to be involved, as an employee of Phonogram, in all the early ventures — *Roméo*, the *Symphonie funèbre*, *Nuits d'été*, *Requiem*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, the *Damnation*, and, above all, *Les Troyens*.

More than anything, the Covent Garden Trojans of 1957 — the first time the work was done anywhere virtually complete on a single evening, as the composer intended — had been the turning point in Berlioz's fortunes and the beginning of the modern Berlioz revival. A whole new generation of admirers and advocates was born during those



Berlioz in 1863

performances and those of 1958 and 1960.

Concert performances of the opera, conducted by Cohn Davis, followed during the 1960s, first with the amateur Chelsea Opera Group, then with the LSO and Philharmonia, culminating in an unforgettable Prom in 1968 and, a year later, in a new production at Covent Garden, on which the recording issued in 1970 was based.

Some of us, including Ernest Fleischmann (then manager of the LSO), Nicholas Snowman and Hugh Macdonald (editor of the full score, which had not been published in Berlioz's lifetime or for the next hundred years), had campaigned for a

recording to be made. When it was, it was acclaimed worldwide and won more prizes than any other except the Decca Ring. The revelation of the power and beauty of this epic opera — long thought of as a white elephant, the work of a tired and ailing artist in creative decline — is what finally turned the tide in Berlioz's favour and won for the once-peripheral, maverick figure his rightful place among the great masters. The excitement of the recording sessions in Walthamstow Town Hall, thirty years ago, remains a vivid memory that I shall cherish as long as I live.

©David Cairns

Berlioz as a woman

At his fifth attempt, Berlioz won the Prix de Rome in 1830. As part of the prize he left Paris to spend two years in Italy. This meant he had to leave his fiancée, Camille Moke, in Paris and for several weeks after arriving in Rome he heard nothing from her.

After recovering from a bout of tonsillitis he ventured to the Post Office to discover a letter from Madame Moke informing him that Camille had become engaged to the piano manufacturer, Pleyel. Beside himself with rage and grief, Berlioz resolved to journey to Paris with the intention of murdering Camille, her Mother and her fiancé!

Naturally this would also necessitate his own death by suicide. Aware that Camille might anticipate his return he realised that he would have to use disguise. He booked a seat on the evening coach, leaving himself only six hours to arrange a disguise. By paying whatever was asked he was able to persuade a dressmaker to alter a maid's dress and to provide a hat with a thick green veil.

He packed, taking a pair of double-barrelled pistols and enough bullets for them all. He also took a bottle of strychnine in case he missed! On boarding, he hid the dress in a side pocket of the coach and sat clutching the pistols. Being quite beside himself with emotion and rage, and having travelled for twelve hours without drink, food or sleep, it is not surprising that at Genoa he realised that he had left the costume behind when he had earlier changed coaches.

With six hours before the connecting coach left, he once again searched and found a dressmaker willing to help. Meanwhile, the local police, now suspicious that he was an agent of the Revolution, refused his visa to travel via Turin but agreed that he could proceed via Nice. On this stage of the journey he rehearsed his plan to gain entrance to the drawing room, draw the pistols from beneath his skirt and blow the brains out of the three of them finally turning the last barrel on himself.

As daylight crept across the sky it gradually registered how unfortunate it was that he would have to kill himself. What a loss to the World. He had still to finish his *Symphonie Fantastique* and many other works were pounding in his brain. As he drew nearer to Nice his resolve faltered and sanity returned once he realised just how hungry he was. Eventually it was revealed that Harriet Smithson was to be his true passion and to

inspire the completion of the *Symphonie*.

GLen Mullenger



Harriet Smithson

Reference:

The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz (1803 - 1869); Gollancz 1969.

Note:

This article first appeared in 'ORMS NEWS', The newsletter of the Olton Recorded Music Society.

Hi Fidelity — The Great Test!

The trouble started when my brother won three quarters of a million on the lottery. Most of this he spent on paying off his mortgage and expanding his small business. However he did give a handsome present to me (his only living relative); I was amazed to receive several large boxes, which when unpacked turned out to be a complete, top of the range, Quad Hi Fi set up. To say that I was surprised is perhaps an understatement, I was also a little disappointed as I had an old but perfectly satisfactory set up already.

My equipment had been purchased in 1952 to play the new fangled LP, it had later been upgraded to play stereo by means of a stereo compatible stylus and a cheap CD player added later. The valve amplifier moreover was still going strong; because of an overheating problem it could only be played for an hour maximum, but I had bought a crate of output valves which the ex-army store assured me was virtually identical to the original specification. The mellow tone of the enormous home made loudspeaker, with 24 inch woofer and eight inch tweeter was much admired by all my visitors.

Obviously I could not reject my new gift and I installed it in my living room and invited my brother round to hear it. I maintained a brave front and thanked him profusely, but secretly I was appalled. It was good to have stereo speakers at last but the musical mellow tone was replaced by a clinical sound which showed up every defect of my old LPs — and the screeching top was horrible. However my few CDs didn't sound too bad.

The next few weeks were difficult as I just was not enjoying my favourite records. However I went to a symphony concert in our nearest large town. This was my first live concert for 30 years and to my surprise the sound was rather similar to CDs played on my Quad equipment. Gradually I became used to, and later enthusiastic about my new sound.

At the RMS I found at first that the Society equipment no longer sounded quite so bad, but as my ears became more attuned to the Quad, I realised that the Society equipment was seriously defective. This equipment had been acquired by a long departed radio and TV shop which had got into

financial trouble. The owner had negotiated a loan from the local bank, where Tony Fiddler, the RMS treasurer, was manager. At about the same time as the loan, the shop had sold a Hi Fi set-up to us at a good price (very good!). None of the pieces matched and they were clearly surplus to requirements for fairly obvious reasons.

With my newly found Hi Fi ears I could now tell that the Society really needed new equipment. I researched the magazines and found a well reviewed

Japanese set-up which sounded well and could be bought for just less than £1000. At the next committee meeting I reported my findings and recommended new equipment. Tony Fiddler went white when I told him the price. A fierce debate ensued, with most of the younger members supporting me whereas the treasurer and most of the older members expressing

satisfaction with the status quo. Eventually Dr Biscuit, the Vice chairman suggested a scientific trial — he said we should arrange it so that the same music could be played on each set of equipment in random order without the audience knowing which was playing. The members would vote on each playing. To my amazement, the treasurer supported this and also volunteered his son to set everything up and actually to play the recordings.

The day of the trial arrived, screens were erected round the equipment, scoring sheets given out and Cuthbert Fiddler played selected test recordings. On most recordings there was a clear winner and when Cheryl the Hon. Secretary added up the scores, I smirked in anticipation. The smile was wiped off my face when the existing equipment won (and when checking with Cheryl I found I had voted for it myself!).

Later, having a pint in the Druids Elbow after the meeting I complimented Tony on the performance of his son whom I had not met before. "What does he do for a living?" I asked. "Why do you want to know?" he replied. "Just curious" I rejoined. He gave an inscrutable smile and told me he was an electronic engineer. Suddenly all became clear. I should have known there was no way the treasurer could be persuaded to part with such a large sum!

Con Couac



New Era in Charitable Giving

April 2000 marked the dawning of a new era in charitable giving. From that moment on, charities could reclaim the tax on all donations made to them, whether large or small, regular or one off. This of course is of great importance to Societies which are registered charities.

The changes included the removal of the minimum limit on Gift Aid donations. So now, any charity receiving a donation from a UK taxpayer can reclaim the basic rate of tax, currently 22%.

So, for example, a £50 donation to Music Aid under the new scheme would actually be worth £64.10 once the charity has reclaimed tax from the Inland Revenue — at no extra cost to the donor. And, higher rate taxpayers can reclaim the difference between higher and basic rate tax, currently 18%, for themselves.

To make this form of giving even easier, donors no longer have to sign a form when making a donation. As long as the charity has details of their name and address, along with confirmation that they are a UK taxpayer and maintains an audit trail for any donations made, then tax can be reclaimed on this, and every subsequent donation made to them.

A further change has been to payroll giving.

Now, not only has the upper ceiling been removed but Government will give an extra 10% to all donations made in this way for the next three years. So a donation of £11, would actually cost you just £7.80 as a basic rate taxpayer, and only £6 as a higher rate taxpayer.

Payroll giving can be used by anyone, including retired individuals, whose company or pension provider is signed up with an agency. CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) operates the largest scheme for payroll giving, Give As You Earn. CAF also operates the CharityCard Account, currently used by over 75,000 individuals for all their giving. The Account can be funded with as little as £10 per month, to which CAF will add the basic rate of tax reclaimed from the Inland Revenue. And higher rate taxpayers are able to reclaim the difference for themselves.

Donations can be made by standing order or through the CharityCard by phone, by post or over the Internet at www.charitycard.org. To help donors and charities CAF has launched a dedicated website, www.givingtoday.org which gives full details. For information about any of these services, call Freephone 0800 993311 for a free guideline.

NEW GROVE, MACMILLAN



CAF

Penguin Guides — the Full Story

I first heard a stereo LP in the late 1950s in Arnold Sugden's personal studio and work-room in a small Ebenezer Chapel on the moors above Brighouse in Yorkshire. It was recorded by a combination of Edison's "hill-and-dale" cylinder grooving and the lateral cut of the 78 shellac disc. Sugden, the brilliantly creative director of Connoisseur (maker of a famous motor and pick-up) had just caused a sensation with a demonstration of his pioneering stereo discs at the annual British Sound Recording Exhibition in London and was eager to show what he had achieved. He first played me a recording of people walking about in a relatively empty Manchester Cathedral, and then astonished me with the glowing brass sounds of the local Brighouse and Rastrick Band. The effect was so real and tangible, I felt as if I could almost reach out and touch the instruments, while I marvelled at the richness of sonority, and the feeling of ambience.

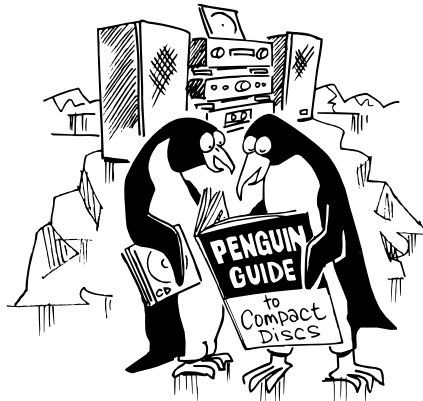
Alas, Sugden's invention had to be shelved when Arthur Haddy Decca's Chief Recording Engineer told him in confidence that at a hastily convened international meeting in New York the record trade had universally decided that the stereo LP standard was to use the now familiar 45 X 45 system (i.e. with the two channels cut into the groove at an angle of 45° to the surface plane).

It was Haddy who was to tell me later that Decca's extraordinarily vivid mono frr Kingsway Hall 78s of the immediate post-war period took advantage of the company's knowledge of stereo potential. He was very proud of their realism and richness of orchestral colour, achieved, not only by the extended frequency range, but by angling the microphones to convey the hall ambience along with the music. "Played through stereo equipment", he said "they can give a remarkable stereo illusion" and he was right.

When stereo LPs first appeared commercially, Decca led the way, and I shall never forget first hearing Ansermet's complete Nutcracker ballet of Tchaikovsky — still demonstration-worthy four decades later. Above all stereo brought an enormous improvement to the sound of the orchestral violins, and I knew that in terms of musical naturalness, stereo was as important a breakthrough in the history

of sound recording as the coming of the electrical system in the mid-1920s.

But at the end of the 1950s the Hi-Fi journalists did not agree, for much of the available stereo equipment was technically inferior to the sophisticated mono systems of the period. "Good mono is better than inadequate stereo" was their theme. "Nonsense", I thought, and determined to do something to counter this widely accepted adverse propaganda.



By a remarkable example of serendipity I was at that moment introduced to Edward Greenfield, Music and Record Critic of "The Guardian", as well as contributor to "The Gramophone".

I immediately discovered that E.G. thought exactly as I did, and by another coincidence, that he was playing his stereo LPs on the

same modest (EMI) Capitol Stereo Reproducer as I was, and responding with equal pleasure. It was very much a "medium-fi" system and its relatively heavy ceramic pick-up was not very kind to stereo LPs, but the pair of (separate) elliptical speakers had a very good middle range and created a remarkably full and spacious stereo image.

So with that shared experience in mind I ventured the question — would he be interested in contributing to a book which was to review the currently available stereo LPs and make a very positive claim for their musical superiority. E.G. replied with an enthusiastic affirmative, and we decided that we needed a third reviewer, in particular to handle early music. I wrote to Alec Robertson. He was unable to take on the project and in turn recommended Dennis Stevens, and Dennis responded with an immediate "Yes".

The Stereo Record Guide was published by my own company, The Long Playing Record Library Ltd, in 1960, and in setting up the venture I had two other pieces of good fortune. A personal friend, Christopher Nightingale-Holloway, was the Printing and Binding Manager of a modest-sized Manchester enterprise (John Sherratt & Son), and while offering to oversee the (hardback) book's production, he also introduced me to Maurice Sarver, at that time the National Sales

Representative of Weidenfeld and Nicholson. He was a music lover too, and he made a deal with me: “You provide me with a good set of stereo equipment and some stereo LPs” and I will get the book into the shops for you. It was a fair bargain, and he was as good as his word. He even got it into Harrods, and we sold all the 5000 copies we printed.

Over the next decade and a half, *The Stereo Record Guide* ran to nine volumes and a complete set is now a collector’s item.

In 1967 Dennis Stevens left England to take a professorial appointment at Berkeley University in California, and we asked Robert Layton, a Music Producer at the BBC, and international expert on Scandinavian music, to join the team in his place.

In the early 1960s the LPRL also published (with remarkable success — 10,000 copies were sold) *A Guide to Bargain Records* and this subsequently was taken up by Penguin Books to become “*The Penguin Guide to Bargain Records*”, with Second and Third Guides following. In the mid 1970s, I suggested to Peter Wright, our Penguin Commissioning Editor that he might consider producing a single Volume Penguin Guide covering all the stereo recordings still available which had been discussed in our early surveys, and bring the overall coverage up to date. To his great credit he agreed, and in 1975 the first Penguin Stereo Record Guide was published. It was so successful that it had to be revised and reprinted as a second edition in 1977.

In 1978 I went to America for the first time, and on a visit to stay with a great friend in Hawaii, went into the Tower Records store in Honolulu. To my amazement there on the counter lay a copy of the 1977 Penguin Guide, in constant use, the page edges black with constant thumbing!

In the analogue LP era, although the recorded repertoire was constantly expanding, there were still far fewer records issued than appear today, and we were able to cover all the important issues from the major labels without strain. I remember also that we were almost embarrassed that some 40% of the “three star” recordings in that mid-seventies Guide came from the Decca group, then still enjoying a vintage period of technical and musical excellence.

Towards the end of that decade the music cassette appeared (again meeting with — in this case often justified — a bad Hi-Fi press). I thought the potential for this medium was huge: apart from in-car use, every home had a cassette player, however modest. So I determined to publish a Penguin Cassette Guide, But the timing was not well judged. It was at least a year too soon, and the prejudice against classical cassettes (and there were many poor

prerecorded tapes) remained strong. In the event cassettes were abandoned by the industry as a medium, their potential perhaps never fully exploited.

But the CD was already on the horizon, and with it in 1983 at last came trouble-free musical reproduction, without the side-breaks of 78s, without the disturbing background “clicks” associated with LP, and with the analogue tape background hiss eventually to be minimised, and complete silence made possible with a digital recording. Instant access to any part of a recording, without damage to the disc itself, was another major plus point appreciated by the collector.

Of all the Penguin Guides we have published over the years, the 1984 PENGUIN GUIDE TO LPS, CASSETTES AND CDS, was the most successful, selling nearly 100,000 copies world-wide. It gave readers a chance to assess for themselves the advantages and disadvantages of the three media. Since then the constant and seemingly ever-growing pressure of new issues (and remastered reissues) has stimulated bi-annual publication of new Guides in 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1999, with Yearbooks in the intervening years (essential to us, if we are not to be deluged by the flood). We also managed a Penguin Opera Guide, and further Penguin Bargain Guides in 1993 and 1998. Whew!

Don’t ask me how we keep it up. One reason certainly is the constant stimulation of the discovery of little-known composers and unknown music, often from the past, but a surprising amount from a new generation of composers of our own time which has turned its back on atonalism (the greatest blind alley in musical history), in favour of more traditional values. Another reason is the continuing marvel of remastered recordings from the 78 era, especially those transferred from shellac discs by that miracle-worker, Mike Dutton, who for us uniquely captures the true quality of those often excellent old recordings as we remember them.

All three authors have recently celebrated their 70th birthdays; but we are still in good fettle to produce a few more Guides yet (with the help of the Internet to cover reviews for which there is no longer room in our printed editions).

When we are finally consigned to the Valhalla (or Nibelungen) of Music Critics, the Guide may well continue, but will there be anyone to carry it on who (as did we) actually collected (and paid good money for) 78s, LPs, and Cassettes, as well as compact discs?

Ivan March

Historical Concepts

Scene: Prague, during the 1999 Festival:

Wealthy lady comes into main record store for a new recording of Janacek's *Katya Kabanova* (widely praised). Sorry, it's out of stock, but if you wish to hear great singing and interpretation you should listen to the earlier recording with Tikalova, Blachut... After glancing at me for an approving nod, her face turns bright red and she stomps out of the shop.

Great music and music making communicates on high levels, but personality 'hype' — the preferential treatment of established performers and projection of select new-comers in a competitive field — leaves others similarly talented in the second or third streams, subconsciously feeling by-passed, continually striving for recognition at remote venues and the eternal plea wider representation; the chance to record. Record companies endeavour to keep pace with current trends, but what importance is accorded to past performers, and the considerable backlog of superb interpretations very fashionable to yesteryear audiences, of great educational value to today's artists, adoring music lovers, record society audiences?

Statisticians, accountants, company executives still counter with: 'minority interest'. Release announcements with accompanying blurb are despatched and advertising expenditure restricted to specialised periodicals, yet away from the 'majors', licensed repertoire is now the firm province of smaller record marketing concerns with lesser overheads. European importers, eager to exploit a compendium of riches, have also found a niche in, for example, the spontaneous excitement of live opera, where uneven moments are dispersed by the charisma of the occasion. By profession a critic and artist interviewer, my selected comparisons are dedicated to the musicians who apply faith and truth beyond the printed score.

Orchestral.

Sir John Barbirolli's long, distinguished career — solo cellist, quartet player, eminent conductor — is well known through the printed word, videos and broadcasts. Listen, spellbound to Ronald Kinloch Anderson speaking to JB following a rehearsal of

Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* exc. on Michael J. Dutton's 2-disc set 'Glorious John' — rare recordings (some first releases) made between 1911-1969. Paul Brooks' choice is astute and memorable with early takes of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Otello*, *Tosca* featuring distinguished soloists, rubbing shoulders with Johann Strauss II, Saint-Saens (Yvonne Arnaud), Balfe's *Bohemian Girl Overture*, Anthony Collins' (a close friend) *Sir Toby and Sir Andrew*, and Weinberger's *Christmas*. Mozart, Weber, Grieg, Stravinsky, Falla, Villa-Lobos and Delius are also there - an enticing flow of superb music-making with the New York the Vienna Philharmonic, and, of course the Hallé. Riches, indeed (CDSJB 1999).

"musicians who apply faith and truth beyond the printed score"

Sir Thomas Beecham, sometimes JB's flamboyant rival and equally popular with audiences everywhere, has three CDs showing his mastery in studio and 'live' performances. Dutton (CDEA5508) programmes him with the London Philharmonic and BBC Symphony Orchestras: Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night Overture*, Berlioz' *The Trojans*, excerpts ,

A Century of Recorded Music

"CYLINDERS TO CDs"

When Edison heard his voice on a cylinder in 1875 and Berliner produced the first discs in 1888 they could never have foreseen the talking picture, stereo sound, the CD and the Internet.

Weekend Schools will trace these developments with music of all kinds by familiar artists in a sea of nostalgia. The significance of broadcasting will not be overlooked. Wherever possible the "real thing" will be employed eg 78rpm and LPs.

The idea originated by John Gilks, Chairman FRMS and Gavin Mist, Northern Chairman, CLPGS
Please contact the following venues for details:-

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30 March-1 April 2001 Denman College, Marcham,
Abingdon OX13 6NW ('phone 01865 391991)

Borodin's *Prince Igor Overture*, Sibelius' Karelia excerpts, and the previously unissued *Donna Diana Overture* by Reznicek, but Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony* — originating from poor orchestral balance — can be heard in equally persuasive, different readings from Mitropoulos (Dante-Lys) and Paray (Mercury).

Beecham, the ideal Mozartian, is revealed by BBC Legends — Symphonies 35, 29, 38 with the Royal Philharmonic (BBCL 4027-2). Swooping strings with phrase 'cut-offs' in period orchestra performances may be stylistically correct, but Mozart would not have objected to Sir Thomas's larger orchestral deployment, where sudden, dramatic surges and filigree touches are employed with controlled mastery. Beecham became Sibelius's lifelong friend: over 15+ minutes he explains why in a BBC talk some years back. The composer's 90th year concert at the Royal Festival Hall is essential listening: *Swanwhite Suite, Symphony 4* (faster than the earlier LPO Sibelius Society recording), *Pelleas et Melisande*, Tapiola (the finest ever), *Dance of the Nymphs*, plus the Royal Albert Hall performance of *Symphony 7*, where extra players and a few scoring amendments brought extra dividends! (BBCL 4041-2). I was in the audience on 16.9.1954!

Eduard van Beinum may be a relative stranger to younger audiences. He pulled the London Philharmonic out of financial-musical doldrums during the 1940s and was Mengelburg's successor at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Schubert *Symphonies 3,6,8, 'Unfinished'* — poetic visions, fleeting pulse, all dynamics intact — is a rarity nowadays (Philips import, vol.38, 462 724-2). Why not make the whole van Beinum Edition generally available?

Swedish conductor Sixten Erhling, still alive, made the first-ever complete Sibelius Symphonies cycle (r.1952-3) with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic (prev. Stockholm Radio). Long ago available on Mercury LPs, Finlandia (Warner Classics) have reissued them on CD. Authority, stylistic accuracy carries one forward in a sweep of conviction from First to Last in these magnificent readings (3984-22713-2 — 3 CDs), with only Anthony Collins on Beulah competing. Similar convictions arise in Jean Fournet's readings of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and the *Grand Messe des Morts* (r.1943/4, Theatre des Champs-Elysees/L'Eglise Saint-Eustache), locations plus French forces providing the authentic touch.

Fournet recalls the occasions in a 1998 talk (Malibran-Music CDRG 107-3 - try Music Discount Centre, London Strand, for availability).

MDC also carry stocks of Dante-Lys recordings, a label progressing steadily on the historic front in rare performances. Older colleagues will recall Romanian conductor Georges Georgescu when he came to the Royal Festival Hall with his orchestra the Budapest Philharmonic, named after its creator Georges Enescu. Although Rob Cowan doesn't share my interest in the players, there is no denying the personality of their maestro. Beethoven *Symphonies 1-9, Overtures Egmont, Coriolan*, and *Leonore III* show what he learnt from mentor Clemens Krauss, dramatic, lean legatos, accented clarity in counterpoint figurations, blossoming into a compelling response as each work unfolds (LYS 485-490). The Russian

“dramatic surges and
filigree touches”

Nikolai Golovanov, a victim of the Stalin regime, was very much the old-style *romantique par excellence*; his epitomization of music's outgoing emotions achieved through uncanny control of forces — the Moscow Radio Orchestra. Whatever he touched turned to gold: Glazounov, *Symphonies 6 & 7* (Arlecchino ARL A60, r.1948/50, distr. Parsifal Productions, avail. MDC/HMV super stores), and a coupling of Mussorgsky/Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition, Borodin *Symphony 2* (LYS481, r. 1947).

Music of genius is more fascinating when treated with new insights, and rethinkings come into focus in Eugen Jochum's performances 6 years apart, where drama, nuance, slight changes of pace inspire fresh discoveries. Beethoven *Symphony 5* (Berlin Philharmonic,1945)/ *Symphony 6* (Hamburg State,1943, TAH229) and Beethoven *Symphony 5* (Berlin Philharmonic 1951)/Schubert *Symphony 8* (Concertgebouw, 1952, TAH238) are on the Tahra label, devoted to the art of German conductors.

Otto Klemperer's Beethoven (1960 Vienna Festival), again a product of the Older School of Conducting, also contains felicitous touches absent from EMI's commercially recorded complete symphonies with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and I listened anew. *Overtures Egmont, Coriolan and Prometheus* are included (Music & Arts CD-886/90).

Back to 1930, and Willem Mengelberg's spell as chief conductor to the New York Philharmonic, we find something different again; Beethoven's phrase lines and mood changes forming an architectural span, freely creative as a coloratura in high-flown

visions of fancy, motivated from within by subtle gradations of mid-register notation, kept under control by a rhythmic but flexible bass line allowing no deviations away from the music's message. Sometimes I regard him as the greatest musician-conductor. *Symphony 1* balances verve with limpid simplicity, while the *Eroica* leaps away from its starting lines with immense energy, changing course during each major/minor interplay and building towards a vision of the whole. The Funeral March has true, solemn dignity, the final movements an expression of mankind's supremacy. (Biddulph Recordings WHL 020). The same is true of Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* — dedicated to Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra; the clarity of transfer for the first time allowing one to hear what endless rehearsals created, more so than in the earlier New York Phil. version (Dutton CDEA 5025, r. 1941/38). The coupling, an equally persuasive *Don Juan*.

Eugene Ormandy was reticent about his status on the concert scene in one of his late interviews. During my CBS/Sony days in the early 70s, the great man registered astonishment that I should be at the Hyde Park Hotel to greet him prior to his concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra, rekindling earlier 1948 memories of famous London appearances at Harringey Arena/Royal Albert Hall. Later, he was graciousness itself, and his vital conducting lives on in performances of Barber's *Essay No.1*, Menotti's *Amelia goes to the Ball Overture*, Miaskovsky *Symphony 21* and the first electrical recording of Strauss' *Sinfonia Domestica*. Part 1 of Mahler *Symphony 8* at the Hollywood Bowl is also featured, plus four items with the Minneapolis Symphony, but Ormandy's early appearances as a violinist on record are rare, indeed (Biddulph WHL064/5, 2 discs). Still awaiting reissue from 78rpm are Bruckner 7, Rachmaninov *Symphony 2*, Prokofiev *Alexander Nevsky* and Kodaly *Hary Janos Suite*.

I heard Erik Tuxen, Danish conductor of the State Radio Symphony Orchestra in London, 1951, the same week that Fritz Busch — who was billed to direct — died. Along with Jensen and Grondahl, Nielsen symphonies were Tuxen's speciality, and the *Espansiva (No.3)* and *No.5* reflect both his extraordinary grasp of lyrical lines and visionary strength. Unlike other versions, the side drummer is still heard during the closing bars of the opening movement of No.5 to ghostly effect (Dutton CDK1207). Also included is the Act 2 Prelude to *Saul and David*.

.....To be continued

Bill Newman

CLASSICAL MUSIC... as understood by modern day students

These Are Actual Answers from Students on Music Exams:

The principal singer of nineteenth century opera was called pre-Madonna.

Gregorian chant has no music, just singers singing the same lines.

Sherbet composed the Unfinished Symphony.



All female parts were sung by castrati. We don't know exactly what they sounded like because there are no known descendants.

Young scholars have expressed their rapture for the Bronze Lullaby, the Taco Bell Cannon, Beethoven's *Erotica*, Tchaikovsky Cracknutter Suite, and Gershwin's *Rap City in Blue*.

Music sung by two people at the same time is called a duel; if they sing without music it is called Acapulco.

A virtuoso is a musician with real high morals.

Contralto is a low sort of music that only ladies sing.

A harp is a nude piano.

Refrain means don't do it. A refrain in music is the part you'd better not try to sing.

I know what a sextet is but I'd rather not say.

My favourite composer was Opus.

The correct way to find the key to a piece of music is to use a pitchfork.

Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music.

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote a great many musical compositions and had a large number of children. In between he practised on an old spinster which he kept up in his attic.

Submitted separately by Len Mullinger and by Brendan Sadler.

MUSIC IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Sixth Decade, 1950-1959

It was during this decade that it became clear that the distance between the “modern” composer and the average concert audience was widening at an ever increasing rate. Throughout the Twentieth Century audiences have been conservative in their tastes. (A century or so before they were *only* interested in new music — hence the scandalous neglect of Schubert whose ‘old-fashioned’ *Fifth Symphony* would have been of little interest to those who had already heard eight of Beethoven’s nine). Halfway through this century composers could take the broader perspective and assume that audiences would eventually catch up with them. That, forty years on, that has not happened is indicated by the current description of the 1950s *avant garde* as “old new music”!

The great bogey-man of Twentieth Century music, Arnold Schoenberg, died in 1951 largely unnoticed. The post-war generation of composers had taken as their mentor his austere pupil, Anton Webern. Even Stravinsky, who had resolutely rejected dodecaphony, almost immediately after the death of Schoenberg adopted it in its most extreme form as pioneered by Webern. Webern’s works are noted for their extreme economy, concentration and brevity. In the 1950s the *avant garde* had reached an impasse whereby it seemed impossible for any of them to write anything lasting longer than a few minutes, or even seconds. The breakthrough came with a composition by a young compatriot and pupil of Olivier Messiaen, Pierre Boulez — one of the greatest all-round men of music in the latter half of this century. *Le Marteau sans Maître* (1953—5) lasts about 35 minutes and is scored, not for a conventional orchestra or a standard chamber ensemble, but for contralto and six individual instrumentalists. In concept and structure it owes much to Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Le Marteau sans Maître was written at about the time that experiments were being conducted into the production of music by electronic means, without the use of musical instruments. There were three main centres in Europe, each associated with a broadcasting organization. In London the BBC Radiophonic Workshop were putting the new medium to practical use, providing new sounds for radio and television productions. (The late Ron Grainer’s theme for the *Dr Who* series is perhaps the

“distance between the modern composer and the average concert audience was widening”

most widely known piece of electronic music). At Eindhoven, the Dutch composer Henk Badings was producing a series of ballet scores. His *Kain and Abel* (1956) was the first electronic score to be recorded for commercial release (Philips BE10073). At the NordWest Deutsche Rundfunks in Cologne a systematic analysis of the new medium was being conducted under the direction of Herbert Eimert. And it was here that Karlheinz Stockhausen produced the first electronic compositions entitled, appropriately if rather unimaginatively, *Electronic Studies 1 and II* in 1953-4. *Gesang der Junglinge* (*Song of the Adolescents*), one of the few ‘classics’ of the medium followed in 1955 — 6). The process was extremely labourious, involving many hours of work to produce only a few minutes of composition. The invention of the synthesizer and, later, computer technology soon made it obsolescent.

Musique Concrete, developed by Pierre Schaeffer and his *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrete*, used electronic means to reprocess ordinary sounds. The best known examples are from Edgar Varese: three episodes interpolated into his otherwise orchestral work *Deserts*. The other is his *Poeme Electronique* created for the Philips pavilion designed by Le Corbusier for the Brussels World Fair in 1958. Another development was the combination of electronic sounds with conventional instruments, something particularly associated with the Italian composer Luciano Berio. In his *Differences* an ensemble play against a tape which they have previously recorded; gradually the “differences” between the live and the pre-recorded performances become more and more accentuated.

But there was still plenty of more conventional music being composed in the 1950s, even by some of the composers already mentioned. At the turn of the half-century Vaughan Williams was 77, with three more symphonies still to come. The next generation of British composers was by now well established. The course of William Walton’s career at this time is interesting. The compositions now lacked the white-heat of his earlier works up to and including the Violin Concerto, and are only now beginning to be appreciated for their true worth.

During the 1950s Benjamin Britten produced his operatic masterpieces, *Billy Budd* and *The Turn of*

the Screw. In between came *Gloriana*, produced in the Coronation year, 1953; it did not seem to accord with the spirit of the times. Another opera that had a history of disapproval and re-evaluation was Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, produced at Covent Garden in 1955.

Musically the most vibrant place to be in the 1950s was New York. A generation of American composers had established an international reputation by now, including Barber, Copland, Sessions, Virgil Thomson and Elliott Carter. That uniquely American music theatre form, the musical, took on a new dimension when Leonard Bernstein collaborated with Stephen Sondheim to produce *West Side Story* in 1957.

In the U.S.S.R. musically, if not politically, the atmosphere began to relax for the likes of Shostakovich, Khachaturian and Kabalevsky consequent upon the death of Stalin in 1953. Sadly it could not be shared by their compatriot, Prokofiev, who died on the same day. Some of the finest musicians the world has ever known were about to emerge on to the international stage — Mravinsky, Richter, Oistrakh, Rostropovich.

Dennis A. Darling

WHO WAS AROUND IN 1950:

Koechlin, Moeran, Myaskovsky and Weill died in 1950

Age in 1950 *Composed 1950-1959*

85	Sibelius (d.1957)				
78	Alfven				
	Vaughan Williams (d.1958)	Symphonies 7-9; Tuba Con.; Harmonica Romance; Hodie Pilgrim's Progress; Violin Sonata			
76	Ives (d.1954)				
	Schoenberg (d.1951)	De Profundis; Modern Psalm			
75	Gliere (d.1956)				
74	Brian; Ruggles				
73	Dohnanyi; Quilter (d.1953)				
72	Boughton				
71	Ireland				
70	Bloch (d.1959)	Symp; Suite Hebraique; Strg Qnts 3-5			
	Enescu (d.1955)				
68	Kodaly	Zrinyi's Appeal; New Moon; Wind Qnt; Malipiero; Sinf dello Zodiaco; Agon; Movements; Canticum; Sacrum; Threni; Septet			
	Stravinsky	Coronation March			
67	Bax (d.1953)				
	Dyson				
65	Varese	Deserts; Poeme Electronique			
63	Villa-Lobos (d.1959)	Concertos for Piano, Violin, Guitar, Harp and Harmonica			
60	Martin (d. 1959)	Vln. Con.; Harps. Conc.; Tempest			
	Martinu	Symph. No.6; Oboe Con.; Epic of Gilgamesh; Ariadne; Mirandolina; Greek Passion			
59	Bliss	Violin Concerto			
	Prokofiev (d.1953)	Symphony No.7; Sinf. Concertante			
58	Honegger (d1955)	Symphony No.5; Cantate de Noel			
	Howells				Missa Sabrinensis
	Milhaud				Harp Concerto
55	Hindemith				Symphony in Bb; Pittsburg Sym. Die Harmonie der Welt; Tuba Son; Octet
	Orff				Trionfo di Afrodite; Oedipus der Tyrann
54	Gerhard				Symph. 1&2; Piano Con.; Harpsic Con; Don Quixote; String Quar. 1
	Sessions				Symphonies 3&4;
	Thomson				
53	Korngold				Symphony
52	Eisler; Harris				Symphony No.7
51	Auric;				
	Poulenc				Dialogues des Carmelites; Voix Humaine
50	Antheil;				
	A. Bush				Men of Blackmoor; Dorian Pass. & Fg
	Copland				The Tender Land; Old Amer. Songs
	Krenek				Spiritus Intelligintiae Sanctus
	Mossolov				
49	Egk;				
	Finzi (d.1956)				Cello Con.; Love's Labours Lost
	Rubbra				Symph. 6 & 7; Piano Con.; Viola Con.; String Quartet No.2
48	Durufle				
	R. Rodgers				The King and I; Sound of Music
	Rodrigo				Con. Serenata; Fant. Gentilbombre
	Walton				Cello Con.; Partita; Orb & Sceptre; Jo'berg Fest.Ov.; Te Deum; Troilus and Cressida
47	Berkeley				Symp. No 2; Nelson; Ruth; Dinner Engagement; 4 Rosnard Sonnets
	Blacher				Piano Con. No.2; Viola Con.
	Goldschmidt				
	Khachaturian				Spartacus
46	Addinsel;				
	Dallapiccola				Requiescat; Canti Liberazioni; Job
	Kabalevsky				Symph.4; Romeo & Juliet; Stg Qt 3
	Petrassi				Cons. for Orch. 2-6; Stg Qt; Stg Tr.
45	Alwyn				Symp. 1-3; Magic Island; Stg Qtt I
	Jolivet				Symp. 1&2; Piano Con.; Harp Con; Bassoon Con.; Trumpet Con.; Percussion Con.; Suite Francaise
	Lambert (d.1951)				Tiresias
	Rawsthorne				Symp. I & 2; Vln. Con. 2 Piano Con. 2; Madame Chysantheme; Practical Cats
	Seiber;				Clarinet Con.; Improv. for Jazz Band and Orch.; Permutazione a Cinque
	Tippett				Symp. No.2; Piano Con.; Corelli Fantasia; Midsummer Marriage; Heart's Assurance
	Wiren				Piano Concerto
44	Frankel				Symphony No.1; Violin Concerto
	Lutyens				
	Wittgenstein				Motet; String Quartet No.6
	Shostakovich				Symp. 10 & 11; Piano Con. .2; Cello Con. 2; Gadfly; Stg. Qrt 5&6
	G. Williams				Penillion
43	Badings				Cain & Abel; Genesis
	Maconchy				Proud Thames; String Quartets 6 & 7
	Rozsa				Ben Hur
42	Carter				Orch. Variations; String Quart. 1&2

	Messiaen	Oiseaux Exotiques; Catalogue de Oiseaux
41	Holmboe	
40	Barber W. Schuman	Souvenirs; Hand of Bridge; Summer New England Triptych; Voyage; String Quart. 4
39	Hovhaness Menotti	The Consul; Amahl and the Night Visitors
	Petterson; Reizenstein	
38	Cage	Fontana Mix; String Quartet; 4'33"
	Francaix; Nancarrow	
37	Britten	Cantata Academica; Billy Budd; Gloriana; Turn of Screw; Noye's Fludde; Winter Words
	Gould	Fiesta; Tap Dance Concerto
	G.Lloyd	John Sooman
	Lutoslawski	Concerto for Orch.; Funeral Music
36	Panufnik	Sinfonia Elegiaca
35	Searle	Symphonies 1&2
34	Babbitt	String Quartets 1&2
	Dutilleux	Symphonies 1&2; Le Loup
	Ginastera	String Quartet No.2; Piano Sonata
33	Harrison;	Yardumian
32	Bernstein	Candide; West Side Story; On the Water Front
	Einem	Piano Concerto; Der Prozess
	Rochberg	
	Zimmermann	Violin Concerto; Oboe Concerto
31	Vainberg	
30	Addison; Brubeck	
	Fricker	Symphony No.2; Dance Suite
	Maderna	
29	Arnold	Symp. 1-3; Tam O'Shanter; English & Scottish Dances; Sea Shanties
	Kokkonen	
28	Foss; Xenakis	
27	Ligeti	String Quartet No.1
	Rorem	Symphonies 1-3
26	Nono	
25	Schuller	7 Studies on Paul Klee
	Berio	Nones; Differences; String Quartet
	Boulez	Soleil des Eaux; Marteaux sans Maitre
24	Earle Brown; Feldman;	
	Henze	Symphonies 3&4; Boulevard Solitude; Stg Qtt No.2; Piano Sonata
22	Baird	Symp. 1&2; Concerto for Orchestra
	Druckman	
	Musgrave	String Quartet
	Stockhausen	Kontra-Punkte; Gruppen; Kreuzspiel; Zeitmasze; Refrain; Electronic Studies I&II; Gesang der Junglinge; Piano Pieces 1-IX
21	Crumb; Denisov	
	Hoddinott	Symphony No.1
	Mayazumi; Pousseur	
	Sculthorpe	Quartet; Sonatina
20	McCabe; Sondheim	
	Takemitsu	Requiem for Strings
19	Bussotti; Kagel	
20	Williamson	Symphonies 1&2; Piano Con.1
18	Colgrass; Goehr;	
	Shchedrin; H.Wood	
17	Penderecki; Subotnik;	
16	Birtwistle; P.M.Davies; Mathias; Schnittke	
15	Maw; Riley; Sallinen	

14	Amy; R.R.Bennett; D.Blake; Reich
13	Bedford; Crosse; Del Tredici; Glass;
12	Bolcom; Corigliano; Wuorinen
11	Brouwer; Tishchenko

A Remarkable Historic Recording

One of the best kept secrets in the history of audio engineering, was the development of tape recording. Originally patented in Germany in 1936, it was actually demonstrated to Sir Thomas Beecham when he took his London Philhamonic orchestra to Ludwigshafen, the home of IG Farben, now BASF. That first crude experimental recording has survived. But thereafter, the Nazi regime realised its unique propaganda value and it disappeared under a cloak of secrecy until the end of the European war. Research and development continued right until the closing violent days in Berlin at the end of hostilities.

By 1944, the laboratories of Reich Rundfunk Gesellschaft had amassed some 200 - 300 two channel (stereo) recordings which, by all accounts, included some fascinating musical performances that included a complete Tristan and Isolde conducted by Furtwangler. Sadly, the closing stages of the chaos that was war-torn Berlin led to most being destroyed in the basement of the Haus des Rundfunk, and it was only some time afterwards, that one or two began to appear from unexpected sources. One was returned by the Russians, along with a large number of historically interesting mono tapes that had been sent back to Moscow by a Russian Officer. Another was from a former German military hospital in the Polish town of Posten.

In 1993, the international Audio Engineering Society held its conference in Berlin, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the development of stereo tape recording and all the surviving tapes were played. These recordings have now been compiled on to a CD and includes a fine Beethoven Emperor concerto played by Walter Geiseking, dating from 1944 and a powerful last movement of Bruckner's 8th symphony conducted by a 36 year old Herbert von Karajan. All are of extraordinarily high quality, and musically fascinating.

The CD, which includes an excellent and fully detailed account of the historical origins of the recordings, is now available from the AES to non-members. Readers can contact Heather Lane on 01628 663725. Heather will take credit card orders, the cost being £8.75 inclusive of p & p. Her address is PO Box 645, Slough, SL1 8BJ

Reg Williamson

Book Reviews... Book Reviews...

Berlioz, by David Cairns.

Volume 1, *The making of an Artist* - 648pp

Volume 2, *Servitude and Greatness* - 896pp

Penguin, £25.00 each

The first volume was published originally in 1989, when it won a number of awards, including that of the Royal Philharmonic Society, it has now been published in a second edition which has been revised and extended. It describes his early years, his years as a student and concludes after his return to France after two years away from Paris, having at last won the Prix de Rome.

The concluding volume has been widely acclaimed and has won the prestigious Samuel Johnson award. It describes his life in maturity, the composition of his works, culminating in *The Trojans*, which the author regards as his crowning masterpiece (which still has not been performed in full in France!). Not only was Berlioz probably the finest conductor of his age, but also a very accomplished author; his music criticism and newspaper articles helped to subsidise his music. His memoirs (which have been translated by David Cairns) must surely be the best autobiography written by a composer.

"What an improbable novel my life is!", Berlioz wrote in 1832. And certainly much of the romantic fervour of his music is a reflection of his life; but just as much of his music is in fact very classical in style, his personal life is based upon a foundation of quiet study and support from his family and friends. Throughout his life he sought endlessly an ideal love which in the end was never within reach and even his marriage to Harriet Smithson, whom he had idealised from afar did not bring long term happiness. The relationship between the composer and his father, who so wanted him to follow in his footsteps and become a doctor, is described over many chapters. It is a classical story of dispute between generations, where the protagonists are still

deeply bound by love and respect.

David Cairns has spent about twenty years immersed in Berlioz and one cannot imagine a better biography. This is no academic treatise lurching from footnote to bibliography, but on the contrary can be read almost like a novel as the facts are presented calmly and often in the words of contemporary letters and writings which are incorporated naturally into the narrative.

The author had access to the papers of the Berlioz family and has been able to draw a much fuller picture than was previously available. One ends up by feeling as if you almost knew Berlioz as a man.

Life in France in the beginning of the nineteenth century is enormously different from the contemporary scene, but the author describes the background

conditions and political and musical events which would have influenced the composer in a most natural and unobtrusive way.

The biography is also to be praised in not attempting to psychoanalyse the composer. The attempt by certain musical biographers to draw conclusions about the sexual nature etc of composers based upon psychobabble with only the scantiest of evidence is to be deplored.

Although clearly based upon very thorough scholarship, this biography is designed to be read by the general reader, not just by musicologists. There is a fascinating story to be told and David Cairns tells it very well.

There are no musical examples but the author knows the music inside out. If there is any criticism which could be made it is that there is an absence of detailed analysis of the music - but that would have resulted in a very different kind of work.

I am very enthusiastic about this biography, which has given me more personal pleasure than any work I have read for years. Fully recommended.

A. B.



Rudolf Firkusny 1912 - 1994

The Dvorak Society
Occasional Publications.No 1.

My first introduction to the music of Brahms was a second-hand copy of his First Piano Concerto played by Rudolf Firkusny with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Although I have heard many different performances since then and owned some excellent ones — Curzon/Szell, Katchen/Monteux included — the Firkusny still holds its place in my affections, particularly because of the beautiful slow movement.

Firkusny's performances of other pieces have captivated me since then, Beethoven Piano Sonatas, Janáček *Concertino* and *Capriccio* and Dvorak's chamber music. This little publication from the Dvorak Society therefore served to remind me of his life and his wide range of recordings.

There are only 28 pages to the booklet, half taken up with a biographical sketch by Graham Melville-Mason and the other half a very full discography compiled by Richard Beith. Rudolf Firkusny was Vice-President of the Dvorak Society and later a Patron, so it is fitting that he should be the subject of their first Occasional Publication. Graham Melville-Mason knew Firkusny, indeed there is a photograph of the two of them with Josef Suk, and his sketch of the pianist is an affectionate one.

From what the author says here and what I have read elsewhere, it would be difficult not to be affectionate about Firkusny, he seems to have been a gentle and kindly man as well as a wonderful pianist. The author is able to comment on the difficulties facing artists and composers who adored Czechoslovakia but deplored the Communist regime with the consequent conflict of loyalties. The text includes quotations from critics and from Firkusny himself and packs a large amount of biographical information into a short space.

Equally valuable is the discography which contains full details of all known recordings and a reference to other sources. Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and Schubert figure largely as well as the expected Dvorak, Janacek and Martinu. If the Dvorak *Piano Concerto* is still not very popular, it is no fault of Firkusny, he recorded it six times in two different editions. Whatever the format, all the performances of Firkusny which have been preserved are listed in a very helpful arrangement. Particularly

tempting to me is that Firkusny performed the Brahms *First Piano Concerto* with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Cantelli, although this is an 'unauthorized release'. It is dubbed such by Mrs Firkusny who also read through the early drafts of this publication, thus further confirming its accuracy.

Small this publication may be but it is a treasure trove for anyone interested in Czech music as well as in Firkusny. The booklet (ISBN is 0 9532769 0 2) may be obtained from the Dvorak Society at 5 Linden Grove, Garstang, Preston PR3 1FN, the price is £5.00 which includes UK P. & P. (Overseas orders add 50p), Cheques payable to The Dvorak Society.

I recommend the publication without reservation.

Ralph J. Smith.

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Elgar — “The Best Of Me”

The Best Of Me; A Gerontius Centenary Companion; Edited By Geoffrey Hodgkins. Elgar Enterprises — £18.

Some members of Recorded Music Societies spend quite a lot of their time trying to select what they consider the best recording of their favourite works and, if one of these is Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, they will find information listing all the commercial recordings and comments on the quality of the recordings themselves together with opinions on the performers' interpretations.

One chapter contains a print-out of the complete poem on which it is based indicating the sections which Elgar selected. This shows quite clearly the manner in which Elgar “translated” the work to reflect his own religious views while still not offending those of any others.

This 340 page volume is an “expansion” of a collection of articles that have appeared previously in the journals of the Elgar Society and in the public press which seek to record the history of the evolution of *The Dream* from the time that Elgar was first presented with a copy of the poem to some of the occasions when the cantata was actually performed and recorded.

Although it is somewhat repetitious in its references to the first public performance, and it has to be said that it was not alone in “failing” at the first fence the contributions from such persons as J A Fuller Maitland and Mrs Richard Powell (Dorabella in the *Enigma Variations*) are interesting to have on public record. Indeed, the chapter entitled “Birchwood in Summer, 1900” being an extract from her book, *Edward Elgar: memories of a variation*, by Dorabella captures the whole essence of Elgar, his personality, his serious yet happy approach to life and his music as nowhere else in the book. When reading this chapter for the first time, however, I did not allow myself to be diverted from her delightful narration by reading the innumerable cross referencing notes at the bottom of almost every page.

The nearest to a careful and detailed analysis of the work is contributed by Andreas Friesenhagen who examines the layout of individual movements and comments on the progressive key signature plan.

While various contributors remark on the presence of *leitmotifs*, no actual musical illustrations are offered and these must have been as important in Elgar's mind as they were in Wagner's.

A full chapter has been contributed by John

Norris giving a biography of John Henry Newman, the composer of the poem in 1865. It would appear that the concept of the poem, the central idea of a soul's journey through the afterlife, was recurrent in his sermons delivered when in Oxford.

I sometimes feel, however, that perhaps through over-enthusiasm or an excess of desire to find what is there, some musicologists find ideas and thoughts that never occurred to the composer or writer.

The book contains an excellent series of photographs of the countryside between Bransford and Powick; of Elgar playing golf; of Sherridge and Birchwood Lodge where Elgar undertook the bulk of his work on the *Dream*. The considerable contributions made and encouragement given by Jaeger are quite correctly attributed, but the sources of artistic inspiration are extremely complex and it could be dangerous on occasions even to conjecture what they may have been. The entire production reflects the scholarly and affectionate approach adopted by the chief editor and his assistants.

John Kemsey-Bourne

In the Bavarian Highlands

by Peter Greaves Editions; 96 pp. — £5.99

This is the first of a series of monographs published in association with the Elgar Society. During the 1890s, Edward Elgar and his wife Alice had holidays in Southern Bavaria in five separate years. These inspired the set of six choral songs under the name “From the Bavarian Highlands”. Three of these were orchestrated and published as “Bavarian Dances”.

Peter Greaves had undertaken intensive research on these holidays and provided maps and detailed itineraries for each holiday together with numerous photographs of existing buildings and contemporary portraits. Letters by the Elgars and by their guests are quoted at length. These provide a detailed picture of a type of holiday which is barely possible today. These holidays clearly represented the highlights of the time when Elgar was leading a happy life with his wife and many friends. It was fascinating to read that they travelled mainly first class, although they could ill afford it.

The description of the music and how it was received is interesting and there is a useful bibliography and discography. It is a must-read for the Elgar enthusiast. It is published by Elgar Enterprises.

A. B.

Berlioz - Miscellaneous Writings

State of Music

Music, which to-day is in the full vigour of its youth, is emancipated, free: it does what it likes... — Many of the old rules no longer have currency; they were made by inattentive observers or by pedants for other pedants. — New needs of the mind, the heart and the aural sense necessitate new attempts and even, in certain cases, the abolition of ancient laws. — Many forms have been too long *in* use to be still admissible. — Moreover, *everything is right* or *everything is wrong* according to the use that is made of it and the reasons which bring about that use. Tone and sound are subordinate to ideas. Ideas are subordinate to feelings and passions.

BERLIOZ (*A travers chants*)

A Terrifying Impression

(of Beethoven's C sharp minor Quartet)

By degrees I felt a frightful weight that oppressed my breast like some horrible nightmare; I felt my hair rising, my teeth clenching with all their might, every muscle contract and in the end, when the theme of

the finale appeared, given out with the utmost violence of Baillot's energetic bow, cold tears, tears of anguish and terror, painfully forced their way through my eyelids and came to give a final turn to this cruel emotion.

(*Biographie de Beethoven*, in *Le Correspondant*, 1829)

A PRIZE-GIVER

My dear friend, you had the prize in your hands, and you threw it on the ground. I came with the firm conviction that you would win it; but when I heard your work...! How can you expect me to give a prize to something of which I have not a notion. I do not understand half of Beethoven's music, and you go farther than Beethoven! How can I understand you? You make game of the difficulties of harmony by lavishing modulations — and I never studied harmony and have no experience of that side of art! Perhaps it is my fault; but I like only music that soothes me.

BOIELDIEU to BERLIOZ

(*Quoted in the latter's Mémoires*)



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METRONOME RECORDS

Musical Weekend - Stratford upon Avon

At the start of a new century the Federation had a momentous change to a new venue for our long-running Musical Weekends. One time in Hoddesdon, then Cambridge, Corby and now the historic town of Stratford upon Avon. The event was held at the Moat House Hotel which is situated right in the centre of Stratford — most convenient for shopping and sight seeing.

The accommodation was good and braving the April showers, most of the guests were able to at least get a taste of the attractions of this wonderful town. Although there were over 100 attendees, the main feature of the weekend was the informality, with most speakers adopting a conversational rather than in a lecturing mode. There were many new faces and despite the absence of several familiar faces, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and a number of people claimed it was perhaps the best ever.

Story of 'The Gramophone'

Anthony Pollard was involved in publishing 'The Gramophone' magazine and here was in conversation with our President Edward Greenfield as they reminisced about the history of the UK Record Industry and of the history of the magazine — in many ways there has always been a symbiotic relationship. The magazine was first published in July 1923 by Compton McKenzie the famous novelist. Support was given by Christopher Stone (the first 'disk jockey'). Anthony Pollard's father became business manager and 1939-50 the magazine was published from the Pollard house with the help of family and neighbours.

After the war came major developments; the LP, then stereo and then quadrasonic. Later digital recording then the CD revolutionised classical recordings and the 'Gramophone' was deeply affected by all these developments. This was a fascinating story, told by someone who was in the thick of things. Edward Greenfield had contributed to the magazine since 1960 and his contributions to the dialogue were invaluable.

Invention of Recording

Howard Hope, is chairman of the City of London Phonograph and Gramo-

phone Society and he told a fascinating story of the early days of sound recordings. The first recording was made in 1877 by Edison using a device made from scrap. Later Bell, using money gained from his inventions of the tele-



An original Gramophone

phone, worked in parallel with Edison. The first disk recording was made by Berliner and in 1893 the first gramophone was sold in England.



Cathy Connolly examining some of the old machines on show..



A view of a phonograph and other old equipment

In the early years of the twentieth century disks (Berliner) were in competition with cylinders (Edison/Bell) but gradually disks took over. This was mainly because disks were easy to duplicate, whereas only 200 copies could be produced from one cylinder recording (thus several performances had to be recorded to produce enough masters). Mr Hope showed an impressive range of machines from these early years. A late cylinder when played had a clear sound with virtually no background hiss — remarkable!

BBC Archives

Derek Horsman was formerly of the BBC Transcription Service and told us about the working of the BBC Archives. There is the BBC Sound Archive which is a well catalogued archive of material which might need to be

broadcast again, there is a wide range of formats used since the 1930'; quality is "Good Enough for Broadcasting". The Transcription Archives consist of recordings made for sale to foreign broadcasting services; originally pressed onto 78's by HMV, from 1951 on tape, from 1966 on 33 1/3 LP and on CD from 1991. The BBC Engineers always tried to keep abreast of technology. Derek is now engaged in preparing CDs of BBC recordings for sale, including the "lost" legendary Mahler 8th in stereo from 1959 under Jascha Horenstein.

Jennie Goossens

Jennie is the daughter of the famous oboist Leon Goossens. The family was very musical, with brother Eugene the well known conductor and two sisters

Marie and Sidonie being



Jennie Goossens

accomplished harpists. Leon was born in Liverpool in 1897; at the age of ten he received oboe lessons from an oboist from the Hallé Orchestra and at the age of 12 played with the Liverpool Orchestra under Beecham.

Later he played in the Queen's Hall Orchestra and when Beecham

founded the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932, Leon was appointed principle oboe. Increasingly however he did more and more solo work and also spent a lot of time teaching (Evelyn Rothwell was one of his students).

During the war he joined ENSA and played all over the country

In 1962 he was involved in a bad car accident where his mouth was damaged and it was thought he would never play again. However he would not give up and was able to resume playing by applying pressure from each side of the mouth.

Leon was not only a wonderful player, as exemplified by the records presented by his daughter, but also very popular, with a fund of amusing anecdotes and jokes. He was

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awarded a well deserved CBE.

Lady Barbirolli

Lady Barbirolli (Evelyn Rothwell) in conversation with Lyndon Johnson gave a relaxed and engrossing history of her life as an oboe soloist and of her husband Sir John Barbirolli. She was born in 1911; at the age of 20 played in Covent Garden Orchestra and later at Glynebourne and with the Scottish S.O. In 1939 she married John Barbirolli who had taken over from Toscanini at the New York P.O. and joined him there. In 1943 both returned to England when J.B. had taken over the Hallé, at a time when half its players had left to join the BBC.

Lady Barbirolli gave an intimate portrait of the great conductor with records both of her own concerto work and of her husband's work (including a recording of Barbirolli speaking). Sir John died 40 years ago and Evelyn continued playing until 1989. She remarked that most modern oboists are technically very proficient, but sometimes at the expense of musicality. Instruments have improved a lot.

Cylinders to CDs and beyond

John Gilks, FRMS chairman, gave an entrancing talk of the history of recorded music illustrated with examples, many of which were most nostalgic. The precursors to cylinder and disc recording were the pianola rolls and barrel organs. Thomas Edison invented the recorded cylinders and then Berliner developed disc recordings. Mechanical recordings in 1925 were superseded by electrical recordings with the development of the microphone. John's examples of the records produced by the two systems with only a short time between them



John Gilks, Marjorie Williamson, Edward Greenfield, Lyndon Jenkins and Lady Barbirolli

proved most graphically, just how great the difference was. In those early days, classical records were sold in piano shops whereas popular recordings were available in tobacconists etc. Some early films were accompanied by 16" discs playing 33rpm., but with Al Johnson's "Jazz Singer" in 1927, film tracks appeared. John led us through the history of broadcasting, FFRS recordings, tape recordings, stereo then CD.

Reg Williamson then gave a short postscript to John's talk by signposting the future. The CD is likely to be the last pure musical recordings (ie where all the musical data is included); new formats such as DVD, minidisks etc used complex algorithms whereby data is omitted without loss noticeable to the ear. He gave an example of the same music recorded as pure sound by the CD, recorded to the MP2 standard (MPEG) where three quarters of the sound is omitted and of MP3 (where 90% is lost). The sound was very similar on all three formats but there were slight

subtle differences when listened to very carefully. Fascinating!

Recital by Martin Roscoe

We were lucky to be able to hear the distinguished pianist Martin Roscoe in a very varied concert. This opened with the Haydn *Sonata in C Minor* which showed the composer in an atypical melancholic mood.

This was followed by Beethoven's Op.110 *Sonata* which celebrated the composer's recovery after illness — a quite outstanding performance of this



Martin Roscoe rehearsing before his recital

major work. After an interval the pianist demonstrated his wide range of repertoire by two pieces by Chopin, followed by *Masques* Op. 34 by Karol Szymanowski. The latter was not an easy work either to play or listen to but Martin Roscoe is a specialist in the music of this composer and has recorded much of his piano music on Naxos. The recital was brought to a sparkling finale with Liszt's *Rhapsodie Espagnole* — a most tuneful and virtuosic piece, played with great elan.

Music in Shakespeare films

John Huntley talked about the close and warm collaboration between Lawrence Olivier and William Walton on the films *Henry V*, *Richard III* and *Hamlet*, in particular using the scenes and sound track at the beginning of *Henry V* and the battle of Agincourt, and the 'play within the play' in *Hamlet* to show how the music effectively reinforced the action. We first heard the sound track alone so that we focussed on the music. Then we saw the film with its soundtrack to appreciate more fully the way the music worked with the plot. He had been in the studios when the sound effects were being created for *Henry V* (the clash of mediaeval armour was the sound of metal pipes banged together in Uxbridge gasworks!, and the buzz of arrows was a piece of string tied to a wooden baton being whizzed around).

He claimed that such professional collaboration was not just a thing of the past but that Kenneth Branagh had found an equally talented and worthy musical collaborator in Patrick Doyle who had provided a wonderful score for the recent 'Much Ado about Nothing' and 'Henry V'.

Conclusion

It was a wonderful end to a very enjoyable weekend, and sent everyone away feeling uplifted.

Tony Thompson, attending his 19th annual weekend, thanked the committee for its work in putting together this weekend, and John Gilks thanked participants for attending, and committee members especially Dennis Bostock and Marjorie Williamson. for their exceptional contribution to its success.

Postscript:

The Editor's prize for best joke is presented to the following story, told by Len Mullenger:

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?"

Watson pondered for a

minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"



Watson was silent for a minute, then spoke. "Watson, you fool. Somebody's stolen our tent."

FRMS WEST MIDLANDS REGION CONFERENCE

Saturday 14 October 2000

VENUE: Birmingham & Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham
 BOOKINGS: Arthur Mould, 86 Sandyfields Road, Sedgley, West Midlands DY3 3LA Tel. 01902 882896
 ENQUIRIES: Gordon Wainwright, Tel: 01952 614268 or Graham Kiteley, Tel: 01527 870549
 PRICE: £19.00 including buffet lunch.

Speakers will be:

1. LYNDON JENKINS
Lecturer, Writer and Special Projects Manager at Symphony Hall, will give a background to the Choral Festival "Voices in the City", to be held at Symphony Hall during October, also an update on the pipe organ to be installed next year.
2. Dr JERROLD NORTHROP MOORE
Well known authority on Elgar and Vaughan Williams, will give an insight into the Shropshire born composer Edward GERMAN.
3. BRENDAN SADLER
Founder of Strobe Opera in Street, Somerset, will present a programme entitled "Curtain Up - The Birth of an Operatic Society".

Full details from enquiries contacts above.

FROM THE REGIONS... FROM THE REGIONS...

West Surrey Region

The West Surrey Region held its 36th Annual Reunion on Saturday 13th May; when the Esher Society was the host. The well known Rob Cowan was the guest speaker; his presentation was entitled "Replay — A Gallery of Great Reissues". Rob is a music critic for the Independent, contributing editor of "The Gramophone", author of the "Guinness Classical 1000" and can be heard regularly at 11 p.m.-midnight on Sundays on Classic FM. He is also a frequent reviewer on Radio 3. His enthusiasm for music and his natural talent to give such captivating lectures without reference notes reach his listeners from the moment he begins. He stated that his aim in life is to communicate and extend music to all he meets.

Rob's discovery of music was when he was convalescing when only 12 years of age from a long bout of rheumatic fever and was given a Toscanini record — he was immediately "hooked". During his music career he joined the BBC Music Department for some years and started his own record label (Melos). Later he spent nineteen years editing the Boosey & Hawkes Music Diary. These posts were just two of his many other musical occupations.

The records Rob played covered a wide range of music. He began with a rousing number played by "The Blood Brothers" of Denmark and Sweden who played in the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. *Spring* from Glazunov's *The Seasons* followed and other spectacular recordings from the past which have been remastered on the modern Compact Disc. Outstanding was Toscanini conducting the slow movement from Handel's *Concerto Grosso No. 12* and the Finale of Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*. Other great conductors featured were Edward van Beinum with the Concertgebouw in Mahler's *Song of the Earth*, and Mengelberg conducting the same orchestra and chorus in Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. An interpretation of Mozart's *Symphony No. 28* played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Bruno Walter was serenely beautiful. The aria *O Isis and Osiris* from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* sung by Kim Borg accompanied by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra was very moving, as was Rosa Ponselle singing *La Vestale* from Spontini's *O Nume Tutelar*. Seldom heard nowadays was Max Reger's *Serenade* and Nielsen's *The Gentle Day*. Another great orchestral recording was that of Schubert's *Symphony No. 5*, so delicately played by the Stuttgart Orchestra conducted by Celibidache. The evening ended with a

recording of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 1* played with great style and at a spanking pace by Yehudi Menuhin.

Having enjoyed an excellent buffet supper and wine during the interval everyone present was disappointed when Rob's presentation was over and would willingly have stayed longer.

Sue M. Garratt, Hon Secretary - Esher RMS

Musical weekend at Scarborough

Heard fantastic music
Some not heard before
At the music weekend
In pleasant Scarborough.

Music in abundance
Some being serious
Bantock, Fibich, Boughton
Played by guest presenters.

Splendid operations
From Dennis and from Paul
Fading out the music
When time is running short.

Ivan March presenting
His choice from Penguin Guide
Elgar, Byrd and Bach
And many more besides.

Impromptu solo sung
Of the immortal hour
On a Monday morning
Before it's time to leave.

(Once again thank you Federation for the weekend)

Ian Hammerton

North West - Visit to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

On Wednesday 15th March 2000, a coach party of members from the South Cheshire, Stone and Newcastle Under-Lyme Music societies made its way to Liverpool on what was to be an exciting and eventful day.

On our arrival at 2.00p.m. we met up with the eight members of Swinton, Manchester, RMS and the now sixty-three strong party made its way into the auditorium for the afternoon rehearsal.

It was soon very clear to all of us that the orchestra, under their able and gifted conductor Libor Pesek, paid great attention to detail, phrasing and dynamics. We knew that after such meticulous preparation that the evening concert would be a success.

During the rehearsal interval both Libor Pesek and Joanna MacGregor found time to welcome us.

Later, during a conducted tour of the Philharmonic Hall, we learned that the Philharmonic Orchestra, formed in 1840, is the fifth oldest in Europe. In 1933 the old Hall was destroyed by fire and the present Hall was completed in June 1939. Thomas Beecham conducted the first concert in the new Hall. Among other distinguished Principal Conductors have been Max Bruch, Charles Hallé, Henry Wood and Charles Groves.

After a period of fifty-five years of constant use the present hall, a grade two listed building, was

found to be in need of refurbishment. Advantage was taken of modern acoustical design techniques and the already fine acoustic was brought up to date. The Hall with its improved facilities and extensions was re-opened for the autumn 1995 season.

After a buffet tea we attended the concert. Following an exhilarating performance of Smetana's *Three Dances from the Bartered Bride*, Joanna MacGregor treated us to excellent interpretations of Mozart's lyrical *Piano Concerto No.21* and the *Piano Concerto No. 2* by Shostakovich with its highly syncopated outer movements and its serene and tender central movement. The highly memorable day concluded with a fine performance of Beethoven's brightest symphony, *the Eighth*.

Members from all the societies thoroughly enjoyed the day and recommend that other interested societies arrange a similar day.

John Davies, South Cheshire RMS

From the Societies...

Bridport and District RMS

A small book has been published by the Bridport RMS, written by Cyril Kay who is the Society president and an original founder. This tells the story of the history of the Society up to the millenium year of 2000. It contains a foreword by the mayor of Bridport. A brief summary from this fascinating book is given below.

The seed was sown in 1970/71. Newly resident in Bridport, Cyril and his wife were seeking new interests and for him the possibility of a gramophone society somewhere in the area was imperative. He became friends with George Thompson, who was a hi-fi enthusiast, and with John Sales, who was later to become Curator of the Museum in Bridport.

Both Cyril and John had been members of gramophone societies and agreed that there was only one solution, that they should form a Society themselves. George Thompson became an enthusiastic supporter of the new project; gradually the circle grew and a series of meetings were held at home.

A number of venues for meetings were considered but it proved difficult to be assured of continuity and quietness. They seemed to be faced with stalemate, but then Peter Hedger, who had become member of the group, announced that the BBC was forming a social club in premises in St. Michael's Lane. There would be a category of Associate Membership for non-BBC staff and so, if

From the Societies...

desired, we could all become Associate Members and form a Music Section within the Club. After due deliberation we decided to take up this proposal and towards the end of 1971 an invitation was issued to all interested persons to attend an inaugural meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Peter Hedger and attendance of about 25 was encouraging. The decision to form a Music Section was unanimous after the conditions of membership had been explained. Cyril was asked to undertake the initial function of Secretary/Chairman and the services of Zena Johnson, a member of the BBC staff, were offered as Assistant Secretary.

The founding circle formed the first committee and John Sales was elected as Chairman for the first year. Initially, equipment was loaned and a young BBC engineer brought loudspeakers at the start, but this temporary arrangement was soon superseded by provision of equipment by the BBC club. The first programme was presented in February 1972.

The Section affiliated to the National Federation of Gramophone Societies in the name of BBC Club, Music Section, for which the Club paid the fees. Members were expected to support all recitals and not "pick and choose". The social side involved visits to concerts, coffee mornings and mystery tours etc.

As time passed presentations became more sophisticated. For visual interest John Sales volunteered to erect a display, appropriate to the

evening's programme, comprising cuttings from journals, pictures of composers and performers, etc. During the tenth year the Committee began to feel the need for a larger meeting room. Also it was felt that the time had arrived to become independent and more closely identified to the artistic life of Bridport. So the decision was taken to reconstitute as Bridport and District Recorded Music Society and to locate meetings at Bridport Arts Centre.

The first meeting at the Centre was held on Friday 7th January, 1983. This attracted some new members and after the first year, membership reached 56. As activities grew in the Centre as a whole, the interference from extraneous noise became a problem. Reluctantly, the decision was taken to seek another venue where they would be the sole occupants on their evenings. As a consequence in 1990 the meeting venue was changed to the W. I. Hall in Bridport.

The N.F.G.S. in its last bulletin of 1980 had appealed to Societies to consider forming regional groups in areas not already represented. Initially a Dorset Regional Group was proposed. Later the scope was widened to embrace the region of Wessex. The societies interested extended from Southampton in the East to Bridport in the West and northwards as far as Warminster, some nine in total. It must be said that the success of the Wessex Group was largely due to the energy and organising ability of Ernest Green. When he felt unable to continue after 1985 no volunteer emerged from any of the other societies. The project thus unfortunately lapsed.

In February, 1997 we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Society. A grand celebration was held at the Arts Centre, opening with the cutting of the President's cake in the afternoon, followed by a repeat of the programme of recorded music presented at the first recital in 1972 and, in the evening, a live concert of music by a group of local players followed a buffet supper. The occasion, which took place on 15th February, 1997, was honoured by the presence of the Chairman of the Federation, as principal guest.

The emphasis on friendliness which has guided the life of the Society from its inception has certainly contributed to its success. Whilst membership cards are issued annually, they show only dates of meetings and names of recitalists. The regular way in which members turn up at meetings, even on evenings of bad weather, to hear whatever comes from the music centre, is a matter of some surprise to outsiders, but not to our members, who know a good thing when they see it - or hear it!

Bury & District RMC

We have had an enjoyable 1999 season, with the usual 31 meetings which were varied recitals ranging from "The life and Times of Bach", through "Springtime" "Music from Films", "Feathered Friends", to "My kind of Music". Surely something to please everyone. We are fortunate to have so many friends who visit us, year after year, and it is always a pleasure to welcome again members of bygone years, who have now left the district, but still come to see us each year.

As usual, we have had several theatre visits, a Winter party, and a Summer outing, and Mrs J. Bowles has again arranged eight visits to the Bridgewater Hall to hear the Hallé concerts.

There seem to be two points to be considered. One is the constant depletion of members. I think we are not the only music society to have this problem. If only by some miracle, we could have an influx of members, especially younger ones. But what chance have Beethoven and Brahms against such as 'Catatonia' and 'Manic Street Preachers?' The other point is lack of support from members for the theatre visits and the Society library. Perhaps the cost can be blamed for lack of support for the theatre visits, but what can be cheaper than 10pence a week for the loan of a C.D.? Perhaps, in this affluent society of ours everyone can afford their own library, and do not need to borrow.

This is the last time I shall be presenting a report as after 28 years of holding office within the Society, I have decided to hand over the baton and I am now looking forward to enjoying recitals as an 'ordinary' member.

Edith Taylor (ex-Hon Secretary.)

Canterbury RMS

The 33rd Season of our small, but successful Society which meets in the comfortable Friends House, Canterbury, was a "bumper" one, commencing with "Watching the Records go round" when we accompanied our enthusiastic Chairman, Tony Thompson on a journey from his first gramophone record to his latest CD, with a very final concluding recital "Cut off in their Prime" when our Secretary, Joyce Waters researched the brief lives of talented musicians such as Dinu Lipatti. In between we explored "The Islands of Paradise" with members Ray and Barbara Toogood who presented an audio-visual programme; enjoyed a game of "Czech Mates" played by our Treasurer, David Wood; visited the "City of St. Petersburg" with member Barbara Horton; on the way to a

“Desert Island” with castaway Paul Edlin, composer, trumpeter and lecturer.

During the Canterbury Festival we welcomed our special guest, Benjamin Luxon who proved that “Variety is the Spice of Life”, followed by a return visit by Ray Crick. ASV Records with a selection of their latest CDs after which many members’ pockets were considerably lighter; and Graeme Quinton-Jones, Music Director of the City of Canterbury Symphony Orchestra interpreted “The Conductor’s Art”.

During the Season our Social events were a Spring Lunch at The Kings Arms Hotel, Elham; an Autumn Lunch at The Red Lion, Wingham and a superb Christmas Buffet Supper in house with mouth watering delicacies provided by members and Seasonal Music by our Chairman. After such a great year, members look forward with eager anticipation to our 34th Season.

Dulwich and Forest Hill RMS

The minutes book is slightly, although only slightly, tattered but the writing, in Stan Miebs’s hand, is perfectly clear — “Minutes of a meeting held on Friday October 25th 1929”. The 14 people present at that meeting unanimously agreed that they would like to form a gramophone society in the area.

The next meeting was therefore the first for the newly formed Society and it took place two weeks later on Friday 8th November in the ladies dress section of a department store in Sydenham in South London. 22 people signified their intention to join the new Society and, while names were being collected, the Chairman played Herold’s Zampa overture performed by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra conducted by Sir Dan Godfrey. This was played on a Columbia machine and then on an HMV and those present were asked to say which they preferred. In order not to jeopardise our position with possible future sponsors(!), the members’ preference is not going to be given here.

So the Dulwich and Forest Hill Gramophone Society was formed. The first meeting place was above the previously mentioned showrooms in Sydenham. The first President was Sir Frederick Hall and a later President was Christopher Stone, whose music programmes on the radio qualified him to be regarded as the first disc jockey.

In 1940 a young music student, the friend of

another member (Rose Miebs’s brother), joined the Society. Later on he was to return, but this time as President; this was of course Robert Simpson. Bob Simpson remained our very popular President, and visited to give a programme on a regular basis until his death two years ago. Rose Miebs has succeeded her old friend as President.

The equipment in the early years was loaned but in 1931 the Society purchased its own with members paying a levy of 6d (2.5p) per meeting until the necessary sum of £12 12s 0d was raised. Visits from representatives of the recording companies featured regularly and there were visits to HMV’s premises and social activities; a tennis tournament was even suggested.

The Society was just ten years old when the War arrived. The numbers of members began to be depleted as those eligible were called up or, in some cases, evacuated because their places of work were moved. Wartime also brought the blackout when all street lighting was extinguished and it was an offence to show a light during hours of darkness. This brought problems for members who were nervous about venturing into unlit streets. One proposal was to hold meetings on Friday evenings when there was sufficient moonlight and on Saturday afternoons when there was not. Eventually Friday evenings were reverted to although members were caught out one night when there was an air raid and they had to adjourn to an air raid shelter, returning home in the early hours. The Society continued to meet throughout the war. “We never closed” was our claim, like that other London institution, the Windmill (although that did eventually).

1950 saw our 21st anniversary but it also brought the death of Mr Brewitt who had been Chairman since the Foundation and the celebratory dinner was postponed.

His passing was greatly regretted. He had been a kind man who regularly invited members to his house for coffee and music; new members always received their invitation soon after joining.

The equipment changed with the introduction of new recording technology. In 1952 an ever hopeful committee decided to write to Decca asking for their help in purchasing equipment as it would allow us to play their new LP records. Not unsurprisingly Decca were not impressed and the following year members had to supply the necessary funds themselves.



Our meeting places changed quite a few times in the early years and have continued to change. This was in the main due to the usual problems which all Societies will have encountered, unless they are very lucky, namely finding premises which are affordable, open in the evening and with storage space for equipment.

Our longest stay was at Kingswood House in Dulwich — about 20 years — but immediately before that we met at spartan premises in Sydenham, which provided a severe test of the resolve and determination of our members. One of the first tasks on opening up was to take the cushions for the chairs from their (damp) storage cupboard and stack them in front of the electric fire to dry them out; the first sight greeting other members when they arrived was therefore these cushions laid out with steam rising from them.

Kingswood House seemed ideal at first, being in a residential area of South London and used as a public library, but it stood in grounds which made it a little remote and we found great difficulty in recruiting new members there. We moved from Kingswood House about five years ago to meet in Anerley Town Hall in Penge, South London, which we shared with the Penge RMS, sadly now no longer in existence. After 3 successful years there the Council decided it had to raise the rent by a considerable amount; four other societies in the regional group also rented their premises from the same council. Correspondence and meetings with local councillors managed to persuade the Council to limit the increase in the case of our premises to a reasonable level - a point to remember perhaps; keep up the pressure, it will sometimes work.

We have been meeting at a new location for the



President Rose Miebs and Chairman Mick Gale

last eighteen months, the Barnabas Centre, East Dulwich, London.

We held our seventieth anniversary celebration, the first Recorded Music Society to do so, on



Rose Miebs with Roderick and Thelma Shaw

Thursday 29th July 1999. This took the form of a dinner at our new meeting place. Everything seemed to combine to make this a most enjoyable and successful event. We were very pleased to be able to welcome our guests of honour, Roderick and Thelma Shaw, as well as representatives from the Lewisham, Orpington, West Wickham and Croydon Societies.

We look forward to the next 70 years.

Eric Pridham (Hon Secretary)

Maidstone RMS

Maidstone Recorded Music Society may not be great in numbers — our membership is 24 — but we do have members with a very keen interest in the society. Our interests are very wide ranging - music of the renaissance, Parry, Richard Strauss, Finzi, Woody Herman and Ella Fitzgerald.

We also have a nucleus of members who open their homes to members so that we may enjoy musical evenings the purpose being, perhaps, to play some of the more unknown works and some well known works that we have not heard for some time. The music is played either side of a buffet.

Another enjoyment is a visit to one of the promenade concerts each year. We have a nucleus of 7-10 members attending each year.

Our society is in its 35th season and in this year of the Millennium we were keen to make a donation to a school connected with music. We chose the Kent Music School. In January 2000 a sum of £200 was duly presented by our president (and one of our founder members), Mrs Margery Pears, to Mr Robert Hoult — a director of the KMS for the benefit of handicapped children. We did receive publicity in the local newspaper. The picture

(courtesy of the Kent Messenger Group) shows the presentation.

Another point I would like to mention is how



delighted I was to read in the spring 1994 (No 120) issue of the Bulletin that W. W. "Johnny" Johnson was an active member of the W.E.A. (Workers' Educational Association) music appreciation classes in the 1930s and as a result Mr Johnson conceived the idea of forming Gramophone Societies up and down the country into one federation. I have been attending Maidstone Branch Music Appreciation Classes for a number of years and the intertwining of the two societies has deepened my knowledge of music. The present WEA music tutor is Dr Andrew Ashbee who is an acknowledged authority on the "Musick of John Jenkins". Want to know more? Then do contact me (01622 682747).

Elsie Harris, Hon Treasurer

Ryedale Recorded Music Society

It is perhaps almost a cliché to say that there are many generous and supportive people who like music. But this adage has been very evident ever since three friends and I decided, in June 1999, to try to launch a recorded music group within Ryedale. For those who are unaware of where Ryedale lies, it is an area between York and Scarborough, bounded by the sea in the east and to the west by the Howardian Hills; to the south by the Yorkshire Wolds and to the north by the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. Legal classifications aside, by general consent it is an area of outstanding natural beauty, of historical and other interests. Ryedale has one of the lowest populations per square hectare in England and it was apparent from this fact that any

recorded music group would necessarily be more difficult to publicise and membership be smaller compared with, say, the south east of the country.

At our inaugural meeting on 26th August 1999 I was very pleased to find 26 people, particularly as I had invited three members of the Federation's Committee to offer advice and to present a typical programme. I am certain that it was largely due to this that the Ryedale RMS got off to a flying start.

For financial reasons as much as anything else, we decided to meet in Wombleton village hall. It has a pleasant ambience, being a listed building constructed of local stone in 1834 for use as a school. It was a real bonus to be told that the acoustics are quite good.

Within six weeks we had speakers arranged for our monthly meetings about half of whom are genuine volunteers from the Society (!) and the remainder, visiting speakers. These were drawn from other RMS and composer orientated groups.

We had a major problem in that until the Society had accumulated sufficient funds we could not buy any audio equipment. We did not envisage being able to own a basic set of equipment until three or four years had passed. Fortunately, we have generous members who brought along their equipment for meetings. Then, thanks to a former resident of Wombleton, now of York, we were given a good turntable and amplifier. This did wonders for our committee's morale and so did the appearance shortly afterwards of two good loudspeakers. These were kindly given to us by the Loughborough Society, through the good offices of the Federation. By this stage we were able to purchase a CD player and so, just ten months after inauguration we have our own audio equipment and a very small bank balance.

Still in our first year, we have 19 members and attendances of up to 28. These figures show that we welcome visitors. Some have even travelled 60 plus miles in each direction! It is my hope that membership will significantly increase for our second year. However, we are mindful that we could not have started so well without a great variety of generous practical support from the Federation and from individuals.

If you would like a copy of our programme from July 2000, which includes a presentation by the Head of Music of Opera North, please write to me care of the Federation Secretary, enclosing a stamped, self addressed (DL size) envelope.

Peter Lerew, Hon Secretary

South Cheshire RMS

The S.C.R.M.S., founded in 1965, now meets in the lecture room of Nantwich Library. This is proving an attractive venue. Nine new Members joined the Society in the 1999-2000 Season. The Society is fortunate in having as its President Roger Fisher, former Organist and Choirmaster of Chester Cathedral.

Interesting and varied annual programmes continue to be arranged, involving members, visitors from other Societies and guest speakers. A new feature introduced into the 1999-2000 programme was a number of recitals concerned with a common theme. In 1999-2000 the theme was 'Towards the Millennium, systematically dealing with music of the last 1000 years. For the 2000-2001 season the theme for seven of the presentations is 'Around the world'.

A most successful visit to a rehearsal and concert at the Philharmonic Hall, also involving members of two other societies, was arranged in March 2000.

Michael J. Moss, Hon. Secretary

Stone RMS

The Stone (Staffordshire) RMS was founded in 1944 during the closing years of World War II. No doubt like many other affiliated societies, it came into existence when an enthusiastic small group of music lovers got together to form a "gramophone society". One of that founding group, a past president of the society, Mrs Trudie Mercer was a regular attendee right up to the time of her death in 1999 at the age of 93. Now, as the society looks forward to its 57th season in 2000-2001, it appears to be still in good shape with a membership approaching the fifty mark. We are comfortably accommodated in Stone's day centre fortnightly on Friday evenings, though sometimes we do wish our rooms had expanding walls.

Our 1999-2000 season was however punctuated by a great sadness caused by the death, early in the new year and after only a brief illness, of Kenneth Follett, our efficient and popular programme secretary for thirteen years. Not only had Ken, every year without fail, produced an ambitious and attractive menu of recitals, he had also for much of that time provided us with helpful programme notes for the year's recitals in advance. It was a conversation between Ken Follett and Bill Humphreys, the popular former presenter of programmes on BBC Radio Stoke, that caused Bill to offer to bring an entire orchestra, The Newcastle Strings, instead of his usual CDs, for his annual recital at the Stone RMS. This offer was accepted

with alacrity and so it was that on 12th May 2000 we held our celebration Millennium Concert at Alleyne's School in Stone. It proved to be a great success, attended not only by our own members and their friends but also by parties from other neighbouring societies. In presenting his programme Bill Humphreys paid special tribute to the memory of Ken Follett. Fortunately we have been able to persuade Brian Cartwright to take over as programme secretary and he has already produced a pleasing programme for 2000-2001. He has also started to produce a highly readable monthly News Bulletin for society members and has ambitious plans for outside visits to concerts etc.

In addition to our Annual Dinner at the Wedgwood College in Barlaston, we have enjoyed, sometimes jointly with other recorded music societies, visits to orchestral concerts, and even one rehearsal, at Liverpool and Birmingham. Although we regard the provision of music programmes of the finest quality as our prime aim, we try not to neglect the social side of our existence and our relationship with other nearby affiliated societies.

At our recent AGM we paid tribute to the long and loyal service to the Stone RMS of our retiring Hon. Secretary Peter Waghorn. He remains a stalwart member of our society, of which he has been secretary for thirty years.

Alan C. Woods, Chairman

Wakefield RMS

Memories were stirred for most members when some of the great voices of the past featured in a programme presented by our Publicity Officer Chris Pearman in July.

The presentation was the result of the donation to the Society of a collection of old 78 RPM recordings by Mrs Gwynneth Clegg in memory of her husband Leonard. Much of the success was due to the time and effort Chris had put into researching the material and transferring it to tape, and also to the fact that Mrs Clegg attended as a special guest of the Society and added interest to the proceedings with anecdotes of how the collection was formed.

Most of the items were of famous operatic arias and well-known songs sung by Caruso, Gigli, Dame Clara Butt and other illustrious names, with contributions from perhaps less well-known artists such as the American Charles Kullman and Romanian Joseph Schmidt. Humour was provided by the bass Malcolm McEachern of Flotsam and Jetsam fame whose rendering of "Drinking" formed a suitable conclusion to a very successful evening.

Mary Prout, Hon. Secretary

Crossword

(Mainly Music!)

By Hein and Margaret Kropholler

Nimbus Records have very kindly sponsored this crossword and will give a prize of any CD from their catalogue to the winner. This will be chosen by a draw from all correct answers received by the editor before the 1st November. In the event of a correct answer not being received, the best attempt (at the discretion of the editor) will win the award. If you are nearly there, chance your arm!

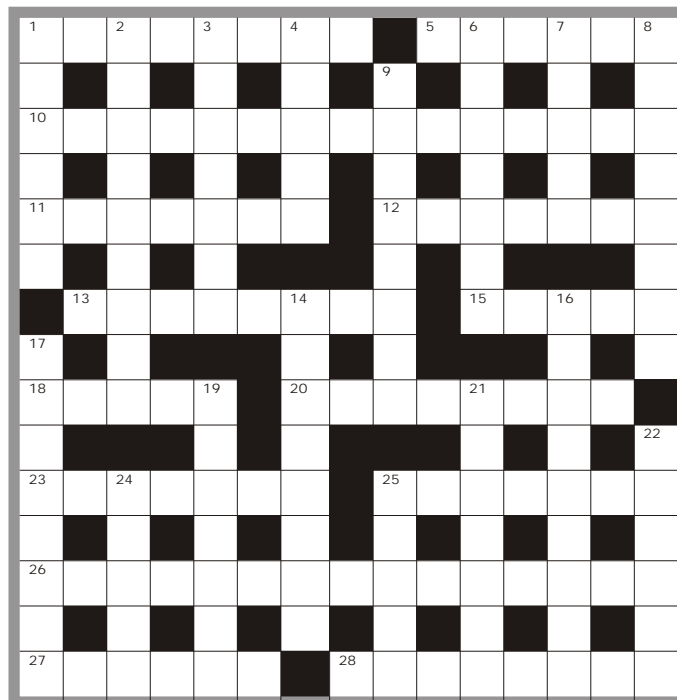


ACROSS

- 1 Munrow popularised these. [8]
- 5 The drunken half of the publishers? [6]
- 10 Famous composer! Without the car. [6,9]
- 11 Sounds like keys on the piano, but makes clear. [7]
- 12 Repeats should be performed at least like this. [3,4]
- 13 You need this to become to be a dragon. [8]
- 15 Levant's first or won the prize? [5]
- 18 You might muse about this label. [5]
- 20 Hansel could not do this to a real house? [3, 5]
- 23 If you like music why not go to one? [7]
- 25 2nd youngest son of the greatest composer. [1,1,1,4]
- 26 Sixth of December plus much later one of three. [8,7]
- 27 Opera from robe on. [6]
- 28 Like the sound of swan, his partner here. [8]

DOWN

- 1 Did they eat this in "those" days? [6]
- 2 No song, but fish in this lake make Cain a bold. [3,2,4]
- 3 Sounds like Britain. [7]
- 4 Low pitched brass instruments of the saxhorn class. [5]
- 6 Play by Will, operas by Rossini and Verdi. [7]
- 7 Number of words for Haydn quartet. [5]
- 8 From the west he made mistakes. [4,4]
- 9 Hear on three on Saturday, but best is to ...! [3,2,3]
- 14 From Sophocles her opera written by Strauss. [3,5]
- 16 Should be all right to sow March bean. [3,4,2]
- 17 Beauty of tone and legato phrasing. [3,5]
- 19 The bored listener at concert might say this near end [3,2,2]
- 21 At end of drumsticks? More likely with grass in meadow [5,2]
- 22 The Gregorian ones are famous. [6]
- 24 Bizet let them dive for the jewel, but find this anyway [5]
- 25 One of those planted by the devil to captivate Marguerite [5]



Solution to Crossword from Edition 132



Society Publicity

John Phillips (who acts as Publicity Officer of the Federation) has received notification from a number of Societies of their annual programmes. He writes. "The detailed programmes are too large to list in full in the Bulletin, and I would suggest that if interested, you either see if the Society is listed on our Website, or you can contact the Secretaries direct.

The Societies who submitted programmes are Billericay Recorded Music Society (Sandra Neil, 01277 - 710464);

Brentwood Recorded Music Society (John Phillips, 01277 - 212096); Cardiff Recorded Music Society (Ann Davies 029 - 2030 2764); Guildford Recorded Music Society (Ron Porter 01483 - 573009); Huddersfield Recorded Music Society (Gordon Hepworth 01484 - 308728); Putney Music (Irma Tertsakian, 020 - 8788 1625); and Ryedale Recorded Music Society (Peter Lerew, 01751 - 432652)".

Please send your Society's details to John Phillips (address details on the last page).



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