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EDITORIAL: What is the FRMS for?

I think if you asked a typical member of an affiliated Society he would say he didn't know (but it looked impressive on the programme). A more knowledgeable member, perhaps one who had served on the local committee would probably reply that the Federation negotiates a good rate for the copyright licences required by Societies to play records in public and also arranges public liability insurance at favourable terms. If really pressed he might also remember that FRMS publishes a magazine (the Bulletin – one or a few copies of which arrive twice a year), an annual musical weekend (a few members have attended the odd one and reported it to be good, but expensive), there is also an equipment insurance scheme.

This would be a fair description of what the FRMS does. But is this all that the Federation is for? Some would argue that yes this is the case and that the Federation is not expected to do more.

Most, perhaps all, officers or FRMS Committee members upon election feel instinctively that the Federation should do more. Alas, like so very many voluntary organisations, recorded music societies report a shortage of members, increasing age of membership and despair for the prospect of recruiting young members. We know that so many other organisations report similar problems, but this is no consolation.



These problems have often been raised at Committee but no solutions (easy or difficult) have been suggested as how to reverse these trends which seem to be both long term and inexorable. Always there are things of pressing importance to do, minor crises and fights amongst members (see Editorial in Bulletin 138). However a programme called Outreach has been instituted and has the enthusiastic backing of John Davies our current chairman. This is based on the concept of members of the Committee visiting Societies, explaining what FRMS does, and listening to what the Societies want to tell us. So if a Society is approached by an FRMS Committee member, this is not interference from the centre, but an

attempt to set up a two-way communication system so that you know more about us and we know more about you and your problems.

So to revert to the question posed, the FRMS should continue to do what it does now (and even better if possible) but also to try to devise strategic solutions to the problems of Societies and to help Societies prosper. The main current problem is membership and this is a difficult one.

However, we should not despair, I can think of two organisations which are expanding in the current climate – these are U3A and Probus. Perhaps we can learn from them.

Federation of Recorded Music Societies – Annual General Meeting

Commences 2pm. on Saturday 25th October 2003 at
The George Hotel, Sheep Street, Kettering NN16 0AN

Hosted by The Kettering and District Recorded Music Society

Following the meeting, bar facilities will be available.

A three-course dinner will be followed in the evening by a recital by the Quartet of the Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Service

Tickets (£20 each) for the dinner and recital should be obtained from FRMS Secretary, Tony Baines, 2 Fulmar Place, Meir Park, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 7QF

Please enclose a DL size stamped addressed envelope with your application.

All cheques to be payable to the Federation of Recorded Music Societies Ltd.

Some accommodation is available at the hotel for £25 per night including breakfast.

Application for accommodation, quoting the FRMS AGM,

should be made directly to the Hotel: Tel. 01536 410787

Advice on other places to stay in and around Kettering will be supplied to Society Secretaries

Reg Williamson Retires

At the Committee meeting held in May, Reg Williamson, after presenting a report on the successful Musical Weekend held at Stratford earlier this year, announced that he was retiring from the Committee with immediate effect.

This brings to an end an era in the life of the Federation that has produced many changes most of which have had the intimate involvement of Reg.

Reg first joined the Committee in 1971; he resigned in 1981 but subsequently rejoined in 1998. Much of his second period on the committee was in conjunction with his wife Marjorie (now, of course, a Vice-President) then Secretary, and a formidable combination this was.

Reg has held an unprecedented number of positions within the Federation. He has been Technical Officer, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Bulletin Editor. This is an amazing record. One former Chairman told me that his defining characteristic is a total loyalty to the Federation.

He is a man of action, he was not one to fuff around but if something needed to be done he would set to and do it; he would then present the result to an often surprised committee. As mentioned in the last paragraph, he became Technical Officer and his encyclopaedic knowledge of all aspects of Hi Fi served him well and even now he contributes articles to Hi Fi magazines (although these days he has tended to specialize in Digital Radio). However his technical skills were not confined to sound reproduction, as he was also very knowledgeable in the use of computers and this he put to very effective results for the Federation. He promulgated the use of e-mail within the Committee and now this has become the accepted form of communication between all officers and all but two members of the Committee. In conjunction with Len Mullenger, then a member of the Committee, he established the FRMS Website. He also set up computer databases of lists of Affiliates and their secretaries and similar databases covering the distribution of the Bulletin.

Following the resignation of Thelma Mills, Reg

became emergency editor of the Bulletin and produced one issue (No. 130); this was designed in conjunction with our printer, Maxiprint of York, based upon modern electronic design that was subsequently developed by the current editor. Perhaps his most important innovation was as Treasurer. The previous Treasurer had maintained paper records, none of which were made available to FRMS. Reg thus was faced with the task of setting up a system from scratch; this he did based upon computer spreadsheets, which enable detailed reports to be prepared within minutes. This is fully in accordance with modern practices and is still used with some refinements by the present Treasurer.



From the above it can be seen that Reg left a solid set of achievements that has dragged a not always willing Federation firmly into the 20th Century. The process has not been without controversy and Reg

who prides himself as being a blunt speaking man from Norfolk (not to be confused with a blunt speaking Yorkshire man!) was always happy to give robust reply to anyone who questioned his approach. Thus we did not always have an easy ride but the Federation has gained a lot from Reg who has provided a solid foundation for future development. Thank you Reg, and we wish you a happy retirement.

AB.

Federation Website

From 1st July Bob Astill has taken over the Web-master job previously performed by Reg Williamson. There will be a change as your website information is updated, browsers will notice the email link will change to Bob Astill.

If you have any queries or alterations to FRMS webpages then you can contact him at: bobastill@lycos.co.uk

If an Affiliated Society wishes to have a web page for the first time, or if you are updating your information on an existing page, then please forward the details via email to him at the above address preferably in Word or text format, any graphics should be sent in .jpg or .gif format.

L E T T E R S

Schubert

On my annual visit to speak to Sheffield Gramophone Society, as their President I was passed a copy of your Autumn 2002 Bulletin. This issue contained an article by Brian R Smith entitled 'Unfinished Symphonies Finished', in which some statements about my realisations of sketched Schubert symphonies appeared which surprised me.

Mr Smith tells his readers that the third movement of the Symphony No.10, to my completion of which he refers, "shows Schubert attempting counterpoint for the first time". Schubert had, of course, *attempted* counterpoint from his early youth, and his successful contrapuntal ventures in works from the middle years onwards were documented by me in *Schubert: the Music and the Man* (Gollancz/University of California Press, 1997). There are in fact some decidedly progressive instances of counterpoint to be found among these examples. What Schubert did in the Symphony No. 10 was to stack into its third movement a succession of contrapuntal devices quite unprecedented in a symphony, including the simultaneous combination of themes.

The realisation of this symphony does not, according to Mr Smith, "appear to have found its way on to the normal concert repertoire", while my completion of the Symphony No.8 in B minor has not, to his knowledge, ever been heard in the concert hall. I can only assume that the several hundred concert performances of my completions have taken place in venues outside Mr Smith's orbit. He is perhaps aware that, apart from the several commercial recordings (one of which he mentions), a number of radio recordings have also been made. The recordings are perhaps of more interest to your readers than concert performances.

Nobody, certainly not I, would expect a completion of the 'Unfinished' (No.8) to enter the "normal concert repertoire" when the two-movement half-symphony Schubert left has so many kinds of appeal as a concert piece. This was, it hardly needs saying, the least significant of the tasks I have undertaken. The completion of the 'Tenth' Symphony brought to the public ear, a 'deathbed' work that was *new* in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Similarly, my realisation of

L E T T E R S

the Seventh Symphony (not mentioned by your contributor) plugged the time-gap and style-gap we had all wondered at between the youthful No.6 and the mature No.8.

My first realisation (No.7) was done to give students at Leeds University a novel way of marking the 150th anniversary of Schubert's death in 1978. Its adoption by the BBC Symphony Orchestra a few months after its Leeds premiere, then by orchestras worldwide, occasioned surprise and pleasure on my part: and the continued interest by promoters and conductors in all these completions almost a quarter of a century on is an encouraging phenomenon I could never have foreseen. I write this letter having returned a few days ago from marvellous concert performances of Nos. 7 and 10 in Finland, where the orchestra was placed at my disposal to provide live illustrations for two lectures. An abnormal activity, to be sure, outside the "normal concert repertoire". But the manifold awestruck tributes to Schubert I hear when listeners first encounter the slow movement of his swansong 'Tenth' tell me that the restoration of such gems has its point: "better" (in Mr Smith's words) "than allowing the work to sink into oblivion".

Professor Brian Newbould

John Bulman

I should like to express my thanks to all members and friends associated with FRMS groups for the kind words and support I have received from them since my father's death in January.

I should particularly like mention of the Appreciation in the spring issue written by Reg Williamson, and the considerable support in many ways given by Marjorie. I am most grateful also to the present members of the National Committee, many of whom did not know my father, but have shown concern and respect for his memory.

Christine Bulman (daughter).

Equipment and Enjoyment

I don't think Con Cuac (letter, Bulletin 138) allows for the possible Dichotomous nature of Recorded Music Societies. Some societies, seem to have split group personalities, hovering between Hi-Fi Enthusiasts Clubs and Musical Appreciation Groups; a musical Jekyll & Hyde situation, as it were. I have, over the years, been a member of

several societies; some of them enjoyed the music via the HI-FI and others listened to HI-FI via the music; some oscillated between these two approaches. Societies that are of the first type are willing to accept lower reproduction standards than do the others. Recent research demonstrated that the “Tingle Factor” is largely independent of the standard of music reproduction. In short, it takes really grossly reproduced music for the hairs on the back of the neck NOT to stand up. This, obviously, only applies to the musically inclined!

Vic Riches. Salisbury R.M.S.

Editor: I showed this letter to Con Cuac who commented “I fully agree with Mr Riches and in fact some of my most exciting musical experiences have been from listening to music reproduced from very questionable equipment. The point I was making in my letter is that there is a danger of losing as members people whose own equipment is markedly better than those of the Society”.

Affiliation Charges

With reference to Reg Williamson’s article “The FRMS. And You” and his reference to my letter that was printed in the Spring 2002 Bulletin I would like to point out that any misunderstanding is by him not me, as those who read my letter will know that I did not say that affiliation charges have risen regularly but expressed our concern that now that it was agreed at the AGM. to increase affiliation fees in line with the RPI and average earnings index that it will result in a regular annual increase which Mr. Williamson can not deny.

I am a retired pensioner on a small income so I do not need to have it explained to me about rising costs and I realise that the FRMS has also to keep up with rising costs but I still maintain that it should not be automatically increased annually. We are a very small club with about half the membership of Mr. Wainwright’s Wolverhampton club so we have to cut our suit according to the cloth. However we have not increased our subscriptions for several years and we are still financially viable. We discuss the financial situation at our AGM and that is when any increase is decided or not, and that is the way it should be done at the FRMS. It appears only a small number of societies attend the AGM, so a special provision is needed so that all members have a chance to vote on finances annually. Furthermore I know the real reason behind this article and it is not just to

enlighten members of the workings of the Federation.

I think we are all well aware of the vital and important role that the Federation plays and the help and support that it gives to its members especially the small clubs like ourselves so the observations I made in my letter about a vote of only 31 at the AGM for the regular annual increase from a membership of over 200 was not that it had not been democratically passed but that so many affiliates for one reason or another had not voted one way or the other on the matter and less than half of the clubs had returned their voting forms for the committee so could there be a degree of apathy among the membership.

*J. T. Taylor, Secretary,
Great Yarmouth Classical Music Circle*

Editor: I showed this letter to Reg Williamson who commented: “There is not much I can say, is there? Except to agree about the apathy. This means the burden of policy making falls on others that do care and so, have to make decisions on behalf of those that decline to attend the AGM — including Gt Yarmouth. A majority of us on the FRMS Committee are also pensioners (including me). This does not stop us to the best of our ability attempting to manage the FRMS finances in a disciplined and sensible manner.”

Ted Perry

The death earlier this year of Ted Perry, founder and Managing Director of Hyperion Records will have saddened many folk within the FRMS and its affiliated societies. Happily, Hyperion continues in the capable hands of Ted’s son, Simon.

Tributes appeared at the time in the broadsheet papers, and in *The Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*. I need not repeat what was written then, but would like to add an appreciation of Ted from within the FRMS; in particular from one of its affiliated societies. Ted was always interested in the FRMS. His association with it dated from the late 1940s when he joined the fledgling Derby Recorded Music Society, started by Donald Rooksby in 1945. Donald was later to join Ted at Hyperion for a few years, and still visits societies to present recent issues (and take orders) for Hyperion.

Though Ted was always interested in the whole Federation, he retained a particular affection for Derby RMS. We were privileged to welcome him back to Derby on several occasions — our 50th Anniversary in 1995, the Federation AGM in 1998

and the East Midlands Music Day in 2001. On such occasions, too, he was always approachable and would listen tolerantly to suggestions for Hyperion repertoire. We treasure our links with a great figure in the world of recorded music, but I am sure many other societies share our sense of loss.

Recorded music would not thrive, of course, without the musicians who are its life blood. So, it is a fitting tribute to Ted's memory that several firms in the recording industry have made donations to the Musicians Benevolent Fund (16 Ogle Street, London, W1W 6JA). If any societies or individuals would like to join in that tribute donations will be gratefully received.

I am much indebted to Donald Rooksby for his assistance in compiling this note.

Allan Child, Chairman, Derby RMS

Examination of Accounts

The 2000 Durham AGM marked the end of three traumatic years in the FRMS' history with the removal of the incumbent from the Treasurer's Office. Prior to this, his friends created as many obstacles as possible for those in Office attempting to discharge their elected responsibilities. There then followed the most difficult three months in my long service to the FRMS. On one hand, trying to bring order out of the inherited chaos, totally without assistance from my predecessor. The accounts hadn't even been seen by the Committee, let alone approved and I found myself dealing with not one, but *two* Chartered Accountants as Independent Examiners. One quickly indicated a wish to relinquish appointment; the other virtually ignored all attempts to open a dialogue on what had gone before.

Accounts are required to give a clear, unambiguous picture of the Federation's true financial status. Carrying out the Chairman's directive, I then recast them as a true record. One IE signed them without question. The other ignored them but had no qualms, however, about submitting an account that amounted on average to over £2 per affiliate. By the year's end the management of our accounts was completely restructured. In the professional care of my successor, they have been above reproach since,

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achieving healthy surpluses for each of the past three years. Partially ignored prior to 2000, there has since been full compliance with the current Constitution.

There now began a move by a tiny minority to impose upon your Federation at least one Chartered Accountant as Independent Examiner by means of an amendment to the Constitution. A total irrelevancy, it would not have prevented our problems prior to 2000. Moreover, it will be a burden on the Treasurer and a deterrent to anyone taking the Office; for you all, considerably higher costs that can only be recovered from your affiliation fees. The attempt last year at Eastbourne ended by being remitted. The Committee did not appreciate that procedurally, it had the right to drop it altogether; sadly, it still rattles on so draconian amendments are likely to appear again at Kettering. From my not inconsiderable experience, I urge all AGM delegates to vote against any alteration to the Constitution. Tinkering with the Constitution is never needed by any Committee comfortable with the authority vested in it by virtue of that most democratic of all institutions, the ballot.

Reg Williamson (FRMS Treasurer 2000-2001)

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Sir Lennox Berkeley

— A Centenary Celebration.

Musical life in the UK seems to have had more than its share of centenary celebration in recent years. Alan Bush in 2000, Gerald Finzi and Edmund Rubbra in 2001, Walton in 2002 and with 2005 looming — Tippett, Alwyn, Lambert, Rawsthorne, Seiber — and so the list goes on. For a country that seems to take a sort of absurd national pride in running down its own composers, these occasions provide a good chance for discovery and reassessment. The year 2003 provides a most welcome chance to explore the output of one of the most distinguished figures in British musical life in the second half of the twentieth century — Sir Lennox Berkeley.

Berkeley was born into a titled family on May 12th 1903. Indeed if it were not for a quirk of fate Berkeley would have inherited the title Earl of Berkeley — thankfully, for we might not have had his music as a result. Life took a different turn and the young Berkeley studied languages at Oxford in the company of such luminaries as Auden, Waugh and C Day Lewis. Whilst at Oxford he began to compose seriously and later, on the recommendation of Ravel no less, travelled to Paris to become one of the very few English protégés of the great teacher Nadia Boulanger. Over 50 years later, in conversation with the present writer, Berkeley still used to speak in awe of ‘Madame’ and her extraordinary ear and strict methods of tuition — no pupil was allowed to write music of their own until they had mastered counterpoint to ‘Madame’s’ satisfaction. Quite apart from his studies Berkeley became part of the truly remarkable artistic scene of Paris in the 1920’s, becoming acquainted with not only Ravel (who allowed Berkeley to use his box at the opera), but also Stravinsky and Les Six (Poulenc in particular became a lifelong friend). Berkeley’s music has always been described as having a French accent - if these qualities include a certain emotional restraint, elegant melodic lines, a sure harmonic sense, a sophisticated wit and a high level of craftsmanship, this is most certainly the

case ; but a look beneath the notes reveals a more complex figure, with hidden reserves of energy, determination and especially, like his friend Poulenc, in works setting religious texts, a dignified but striking expression of deep conviction and passion.

A more than capable pianist himself and a lover of the music of Mozart, Chopin and Fauré it is perhaps unsurprising that many of Berkeley’s earliest works involve the piano — the *Polka* and the *Five Short Pieces* make their various bows to the Walton of *Façade* and Poulenc’s *Mouvement Perpétuels*, whilst the *Three Impromptus* show their debt to one of Berkeley’s greatest loves, the



Berkeley at Home

music of Chopin. Rather more uncharacteristic is a large scale oratorio *Jonah* from 1935, perhaps written in the furore following Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* — very few works on anything like this scale followed, showing that Berkeley knew all along that he didn’t need nor was particularly interested in making big statements. A close friendship with Benjamin

Britten had a profound personal and professional effect on Berkeley — the precocious musicality of his younger colleague must have been on the one hand inspiring and on the other rather intimidating for a late developing composer, but it is a sign of Berkeley’s inner strength that he was still able to retain a close friendship with Britten and go his own way.

The decade from the start of the Second World War was without any doubt the most productive from a musical point view — a large number of Berkeley’s acknowledged master-works come from this period — and personally too, for it was during this time, whilst working for the BBC, that he met and married Freda Bernstein — so beginning almost fifty years of happy marriage. Beginning with the popular *Serenade for Strings* in 1939, music poured from his pen — the *Symphony No 1*, which Berkeley himself conducted for the first time at a war-time Promenade concert, the *Divertimento for*

Orchestra — a Piano Sonata for Clifford Curzon. A *Festival Anthem* — one of the first of a large number of deeply felt religious works, several shorter piano pieces, songs and chamber music ranging from the delightful *Sonatina for Flute/Recorder & Piano* to the *String Trio*. All this as well as two of his most profound and passionate sacred pieces — *Four Poems of St Teresa of Avila* (originally written for Kathleen Ferrier) and *Stabat Mater* which has rather suffered from its unusual calling for six solo voices and twelve players (it was written for Britten and the English Opera Group) — despite this, that such an accomplished and beautiful work should never have been professionally recorded and be so rarely performed frankly beggars belief. The end of the 1940's brought the unaccountably neglected *Piano Concerto*, written for Colin Horsley who became one of Berkeley's most fervent champions and performed his music all over the world and the equally marvellous *Concerto for two pianos and orchestra*. This list is no mean achievement for any composer.

Berkeley turned his thought to opera in the years following the war. Three followed in quick succession. *A Dinner Engagement* a short one act opera that has had many productions, the biblical chamber opera *Ruth* and the large scale *Nelson* which although being on the whole well received, has, with the exception of a couple of concert performances, disappeared from view. Many Berkeley fans are hoping that the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005 might tempt a revival. During the 1950's, apart from a considerable output of music, Berkeley also taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His list of pupils reads like a Who's Who of British music — Sir John Tavener, Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, William Mathias, David Bedford, Nicholas Maw, Brian Fernyhough, to name but a few — something of a diverse collection! Bennett recently told the present writer that he adored Berkeley and his music but felt that he personally needed a much more demanding and strict teacher.

Amongst important works of the 1950's were a *Second Symphony*, a sensual set of *Ronsard Sonnets* for two tenors & piano, a fine *Flute Concerto* and two significant chamber works — the *Horn*

Trio (written, performed and recorded by Dennis Brain) and the *Sextet for Clarinet, Horn and String Quartet*. Berkeley is not a composer that one might ever describe as an innovator — nor would he ever have claimed to be so, but he was one of the first major composers from any country to take a serious interest in writing for the guitar. The artistry of Julian Bream inspired the much played *Sonatina for Guitar*, the *Songs of*



Benjamin Britten with Berkeley

Half-Light for tenor (Peter Pears) and Guitar and the later, completely un-Spanish *Guitar Concerto*. These works together with *Theme and Variations* for Guitar and some fascinating, recently discovered *Four Pieces for Guitar*, evidently written for Segovia in Paris in the 1920's, make a unique contribution to a still not exactly exhaustive repertoire. The mid 1950's also saw Berkeley experi-

menting with aspects of twelve note composition, but in this, like Britten and Walton, he carefully adapted to suit his own end and mode of expression. Works of this period such as the *Sonatina for oboe & piano*, the choral *Signs in the Dark* (setting texts by Laurie Lee) and the *Violin Concerto* (written for Yehudi Menuhin) show a more austere, but still instantly personal side to Berkeley's musical language. There are at least three masterpieces from the 60's, the one movement *Symphony No. 3*, which packs a huge emotional range into around fifteen minutes, the *Missa Brevis* written for the choir of Westminster Cathedral (where the composer's sons Julian and Michael [now a distinguished composer himself] sang in the first performances) and the choral/orchestral *Magnificat* written for the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey, and St Paul's Cathedral. These works alone should banish the thought that is occasionally aired that Berkeley is 'merely a miniaturist'

The final decade or so of Berkeley's life seemed to coincide with a new faith in purely melodic writing. The *Canzonetta* movement in the *Sinfonia Concertante for oboe & orchestra* couldn't be by any other composer, neither could the beguilingly simple setting of Psalm 23 *The Lord is my Shepherd* which has found a regular home in churches throughout the world. The 1970's also brought many honours including a

knighthood, and two last major works — the *Guitar Concerto* mentioned above and *Fourth Symphony*, premiered in Berkeley's 75th year in 1978. In his typically modest programme note Berkeley refers to the 'slightly more expansive manner' of the Symphony compared to a lot of his music. Although the work didn't by all accounts excite a great deal of critical comment, a premiere recording issued around the time of writing this article has shown the piece to be a very powerful and significant statement and certainly not worthy of its neglect. The beginning of the 1980's saw Berkeley begin a new full-scale opera — *Faldon Park* — but sadly this undertaking became no more than a series of sketches following the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

The last few works are interesting as they are moving, as a hugely skilled craftsman struggled to get his thoughts onto paper — a *Bagatelle* for two pianos harks back to the salons of 1920's Paris, a tiny *Mazurka* for piano, actually written in homage to Haydn but showing more kinship with Berkeley's beloved Chopin, an intense, rather sparse *Sonnet* for voice & piano written for Huges Cuenod, which has a particularly angry climax and a little Christmas carol for Kings College, Cambridge — *In Wintertime*. Michael Berkeley has

told how he had to go through his father's manuscript, correct mistakes and turn the note heads the right way around — a terrible reality for anyone that took such pride in the way his music looked and sounded. Berkeley died in December 1989.

The Lennox Berkeley Society was formed at the end of the 1990's by a small group of admirers who felt, quite rightly, that Berkeley's music was unjustifiably neglected. Since then the Society has grown and has managed to help to raise money and sponsor a whole series of performances and recordings during the centenary year - not least performances and recordings of two of Berkeley's operas — *A dinner Engagement* and *Ruth*. In addition, thanks to the indefatigable Richard Hickox, Chandos are in the middle of a Berkeley Symphonic cycle coupling Lennox's music with that of his son. These recordings together with several others are revealing that, in the hands of good and dedicated performers, Berkeley's music can stand up to much of the best music of its time and although I suspect Lennox might have been a little bemused by all the attention and having a Society named after him — I like to think he would have been pleased too!

David Wordsworth

Berkeley Society Advert

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by Arthur Butterworth

In early youth I was always struck with the sound of the orchestra: especially its fiery, brazen horns which struck so romantic a note, especially in Berlioz. There was always a feint frisson of excitement because it was known that the horns, those most intractable of instruments, were liable to split notes; this somehow added to the verve of the performances. The intrepid players did not play for safety, they played for exhilaration and *Joie de vivre*. It was all wonderfully exciting. I just longed to play in a large orchestra, little knowing that a few years later, the war being over, that is what in fact I should do. However, coming home on leave from the army — probably early in 1946, before being demobilised, I chanced to go to a concert in Manchester given by a visiting American orchestra, on its first post-war

tour of Britain. But something curious struck me about it. I could not quite make out why it sounded so different from the Hallé, of pre-war years. Lively and energetic though the American playing was, it all sounded rather slick, but at the same time paradoxically lack-lustre too, especially the wind playing, and certainly most of all the horn-playing.

What was different of course, was that in place of the traditional 'french horns' of narrow bore, they had been replaced by wide-bored instruments of German pattern, the so-called 'double-horns' — much safer to play — but far less poetic and lacking the romantic character of the earlier instruments. Not only the horns, but the other brass had changed over to larger-bored instruments; the ravishing sound of the wooden flutes had been replaced by the steely-bright sound of metal ones. The characteristic French bassoon was given over to those of Heckel type. String players began to rely on metal as opposed to gut strings. Within a comparatively short time there came about a virtual sea-change in the sound of orchestras in this country; we copied the German and American style. Now this is all very well for some music, and with the technical perfection demanded by the modern recording industry, players now play for

safety and use the most up-to-date and reliable instruments they can find, and who can blame them? Whereas at one time a live performance was evanescent, disappearing for ever into thin air, flaws and human failings soon forgotten, the modern recorded performance exists into perpetuity, an ominous indictment of the players' failings. But, slick and polished and virtually technically flawless, though modern orchestral



Arthur Butterworth

playing, worldwide, has now become, there is often something missing: a sense of poetry and humanity in many of the performances one hears. Not only the modern instruments, but perhaps even more important the style of performance by individual players, aided and abetted by jet-setting conductors whose technical abilities may be excellent, but who often lack imagination and those qualities

of insight and interpretation that make music sound human — even if at times there are technical flaws and shortcomings.

Certainly the younger generation: Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Hindemith, Walton, Copland, Britten, and those who have arisen since 1945 perhaps expect a more chromium-plated sound, but a vast amount of music, not necessarily just that of earlier twentieth century composers and their forebears, still cries out for a more human sound instead of the ubiquitous 'orchestral super-market' we hear so predictably in almost all the world's concert halls, although the Vienna Philharmonic has always preserved a unique sound of its own, mostly on account of the use of instruments traditional to the Viennese: 'Zuleger' oboes, 'Oehler' clarinets and the particular characteristics of Viennese horn-playing.

It is not generally known, for example, that there was at one time, to the connoisseur at least, a distinctive 'Manchester' tone of clarinet sound, as there was in parallel with it an influential school of Lancashire oboe playing that originated with a group of wind players in the Hallé, Orchestra which was ultimately to gain the upper hand in London and elsewhere in British orchestral play-

ing. Of course, everything depends on the quality of sound produced by individual artists, but nowadays there is often a sameness about many players of the younger generation. That they are invariably of astonishing technical accomplishment is never in question but music making is not solely about technical wizardry; it is concerned with imagination, individuality, and above all humanity.

Stimulating as it is to visit the world's great and sophisticated cities, there is often a faint sense of ennui to discover that the fashionable shops in the exclusive malls are much the same everywhere. The world-wide brands of coffee-house, furniture, textiles or food chains are ubiquitous, and the same snazzy model of car bought so recently at that exclusive showroom in Hampstead can be seen — perhaps to the mutual embarrassment of their drivers — on the streets of Munich or Stockholm.

The world's great orchestras, rather like the fine cities they symbolise are much the same too. So that despite the personal quirks and mannerisms of international jet-setting conductors, who insidiously cajole or insist that the orchestras they visit interpret whatever it is they are performing in the maestro's own individual way, the resulting sound tends to be pretty much the same whether it be in Chicago, Prague, Paris, Tokyo or London.

The New Queen's Hall Orchestra however, has cultivated a sound of its own, recapturing the essence of a style we once cherished and, which regrettably now seems to elude us. In place of the present-day universal metal flute the earlier and more mellow wooden instrument is used. The 'Buffet' bassoon, essentially of French tradition, also regains that elegant sound rarely heard in today's concert halls. But it is the brass which has undergone the most drastic change in character in the past half century or more. The horn in particular has endured a sea-change. While it is true that the modern 'double-horn' is safer for the player, its sound is a far cry from the ravishingly romantic timbre of the classic 'french' horn of earlier times. A parallel might fancifully be drawn between the one-time classic Hispano-Suiza racing car of the early days of motoring (when indeed it must have been an exciting and elegant pastime for rich young men), and a BMW saloon for today's tedious motorway journeys. The trumpets and trombones with their wider bores are inclined to be overwhelming, lacking that bright, lithe sound that was once so exciting; while the cornet, once a subtle and contrastingly lyrical sound in the brass

section of an orchestra has all but disappeared completely, conductors not seeming to care whether a composer's original cornet parts are played on the instruments they were intended to be. But there was a time when a pair of trumpets sounded quite different from the antiphonal sound of the cornets answering them — for example in Tchaikovsky's "1812" overture. The timpani's round sonority is projected in the mellow sound of the traditional calf-skin heads of the hand-tuned timpani (still it must be admitted an admirable quality of modern timpani). However, it is in the overall sound and, even more significantly, the style of performance that the New Queen's Hall Orchestra has evolved a unique purpose. The use of genuine older instruments has been made possible by enthusiastic individual members seeking out such rarities, and studying the technique of playing them in a style which is appropriate.

Arthur Butterworth

CD Review: DE PROFUNDIS - The Art of Dying

A Cantata by Fra Armando Pierucci

Text by Regina Derieva

*Gintar, Skeryt, (sop.); Aidijar Chamber Choir
Vilnius String Quartet;*

Conductor Romualdas Grazinis

Pilgrim's Star 027004 : Divine Art Ltd.

Pierucci was born in Italy; since 1988 he has been the organist at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and has written much sacred music. Regina Derieva was born in the Soviet Union; in 1949, she emigrated with her husband and son to go to Israel, where, however they were denied citizenship since they are Catholics. As stateless persons they later found a home when they were allowed to live in Sweden.

The cantata reflects upon the tragedies of suffering mankind, of death, and of the striving of Man to God. Its writing coincided with an exacerbation of the suffering of the Palestine people but makes no direct reference to this.

Despite a theme that many will find shocking, the music is not morbid, on the contrary it is tuneful and uplifting in spirit. It is written in traditional European mode with just a hint of Eastern exoticism and is enjoyable to listen to. The performance and recording is excellent. The presentation is good, and includes the full text of the poems in various languages. The disc also includes two sets of organ variations played by the composer. The disc can be recommended strongly to lovers of church music.

AB

Arnold Sugden — Pioneer Extraordinary

For those of us active in high quality audio engineering, the 1950's were exciting times. The tautological corruption "HiFi" had yet to find its way across the Atlantic to the UK, and what commercial products there were available, were produced by small specialist companies run by enthusiasts. More importantly, the merits of a product did not originate in the fertile imagination of the company's advertising department (if, indeed, it had one) but had to earn acceptance and approval by customers already well educated in the intricacies of audio engineering by erudite articles in the then, much respected "Wireless World" (now a shadow of its former self and entitled "Electronics World")

One such small company was "Connoisseur", situated in a small town called Brighouse, in West Yorkshire. It was here, in 1953, that one of the most important developments in domestic sound reproduction took its first, firm steps. I refer to single groove stereo on long playing records and the man who started it is now, all but forgotten — Arnold Sugden.

The idea of recording stereophonically on disc was not new. Emory Cook in the USA was already carving his own small niche in history with his "Binaural" discs, on which each channel was cut as a separate set of tracks. They required two pickups started on the disc in synchronism to reproduce the recorded material. Apart from the impossibility of preserving phase coherence, Cook's records were, nevertheless, a novel if ergonomically impractical idea. But as long ago as 1933, the system on which modern techniques are based was developed and patented by Alan Blumlein working in the laboratories of EMI, the parent company of the familiar "Dog and Horn" HMV label records. Similar, but less impressive work (in my opinion) was also being carried out in the Bell Laboratories in the USA. At the time EMI, with what was to become its habitual lack of commercial foresight, saw no future in it; and in any case, the imminence of war forestalled any further development. Blumlein's patents

languished until ca. 1958, when an international standard was eventually agreed using his proposed 45/45 system of groove modulation. Paradoxically, most of EMI's competitors demonstrated their enterprise by marketing records that year, but with Blumlein's old company misguidedly placing all its commercial faith in 19 cm/sec 2-track stereo tapes, their "StereoSonic" system. Inevitably, because of the cost of both the software and the hardware, it failed and belatedly, the company conceded defeat and began to produce stereo LPs like all its competitors.

Arnold Sugden was the enthusiastic Managing Director, Technical Director and owner of the "Connoisseur" company which, for some time, had been enjoying considerable commercial success in producing many high quality record playing products, notably the first British belt driven turntable. This subsequently became available in kit form and was an unusual introduction in the embryo market for such products. Even today, the BD1 turntable is much sought after by aficionados still fascinated by the now obsolescent vinyl recordings. Practically everything to do with sound reproduction and recording was tackled by the tireless innovator. Connoisseur's first postwar product he designed was a miniature lightweight cartridge and arm for quality reproduction of the old 78 discs and he even invented a technique for mass production of the miniature chrome tipped steel needles that were in very short supply in the immediate post-war era. Pickup arms, cartridges, amplifiers, loudspeakers, even microphones — all came out bearing the Connoisseur label. As early as 1950, Connoisseur was manufacturing a 33/78 r.p.m. turntable, a high quality pickup with interchangeable heads and a two speed disc recording system.

All this is the more remarkable when, during a visit to see Sugden, then 78 and still active, I learned that he had left school at 14 and had never had any formal engineering training. But, right



from the outset of his career, he demonstrated a natural flair for engineering design of an intuitive kind that is all too rare these days. No matter what the problem, Arnold Sugden would come up with an ingenious answer and a high precision product. Even at an age when most men would be sitting back and enjoying the leisure of retirement, he was still working in a small shed outside his kitchen door, producing replacement motors for his turntable. He used a compression moulder for the plastic formers, a magnetiser of his own design for the rotors, and makes the stators on a stamping press — again producing his own cutters. A truly remarkable man, very much in the Edison mould.

Arnold Sugden's interest in high quality audio was, as for so many of us in those days, linked with a passion for music. Shortly after the introduction of the LP, he became convinced that there was a future for single groove stereo on disc. In 1953, he set to work in a disused church near the Connoisseur factory, often working alone till the early hours of the morning. He finally perfected a stereo cutter head, designed to be fitted to a disc-cutting table the company had already developed for specialist orders. By methods both intuitive and empirical, an approach that would be frowned on today, he evolved a remarkable design that frankly, one cannot easily fault. He knew already, that the mass of the cutter system had to be as low as practicable, which linked with the compliance of the movement, must push the first fundamental resonance of the system as high as possible. His use of balsa wood as the former material vividly demonstrates his unorthodox, but imaginative approach, with the fundamental resonance of the system occurring at 4.5KHz, and well damped. This, he corrected by a tuned circuit in the driver amplifier. The equally unusual feature of the system was its efficiency, with as little as five watts fully modulating the cutter assembly. The essentially powerful but heavy magnet was mounted separately on the cutter carrier, with just the comparatively lightweight of the cutter assembly resting the stylus on the surface of the master lacquer disc. All the well established refinements were incorporated, such as an advance ball to regulate the depth of the cutter, a

heated stylus and a variable groove pitch facility over a range of 100 to 300 lines per inch.

Cartridges capable of playing his records had to be designed and made, of course; and his solution demonstrates more clearly than anything, his uninhibited imagination. At that time, there was a very popular mono crystal cartridge available, designed by Stanley Kelly for the Cosmocord company and called the "Acos". It was very much in advance of all competitors in the same price range, as well, being the first crystal type with any claim to a wide frequency response and low tracking weight. Sugden simply took two of these cartridges, mounted them together at right angles to one another, and coupled the two stylii with a fine wire link. This combination, he mounted in a special moulding. As a short-term solution to an engineering problem, it was an extraordinary approach although, inevitably, tests later showed that its performance was markedly inferior to that of the cutter.



So later, Sugden went on to design a high quality crystal cartridge himself, but which he marketed for the new 45/45 discs.

By 1956, Sugden was ready to demonstrate his system, having produced some master tapes using spaced Neumann U47 microphones and a tape recorder fitted with a staggered extra head. In the light of experience, Sugden later adopted a much-reduced spacing in his miking technique, as little as 6" separating the pair and angled outwards by approximately 90 degrees. This basic configuration is still favoured today by some purists. Whilst he had finally decided on vertical and lateral groove modulation, his cutter could, of course, be used for 45/45 as well with an appropriate matrix. In any case, the validity of Blumlein's original patents was in some doubt. So, for the time being anyway, it had to be vertical/lateral. No conventions or standards existed at that time, so on the basis that the most critical sounds would be from the string section of an orchestra, he determined that the lateral cut should carry the left channel. Additionally, there appeared to be no advantage for any particular phase relationship between channels, so long as it was always consistent with the arbitrarily chosen

standard (incidentally, the lack of knowledge of what the original phase relationship was, did create some difficulty for me when attempting to rematrix some of his original recordings for playback). In the preceding three years, Sugden had recorded a diverse range of material locally - orchestral concerts, brass bands (a speciality of Yorkshire) and cinema organs. From this wide variety, he subsequently cut lacquer stereodiscs. Now, he looked for a platform to demonstrate his achievement to his peers.

Commercial HiFi Shows were, of course, non-existent in 1956. Most new developments were demonstrated every year in London, at a two-day exhibition organised by the (then) British Sound Recording Society. The old BSRA was eventually absorbed in to the British branch of the Audio Engineering Society. May 26 in 1956 was a particularly memorable date in the annals of audio advancement, since at that same show that Sugden first introduced his stereo discs, Peter Walker of "Quad" also demonstrated his prototype electrostatic speaker another landmark in audio design. As one might expect, there were many waiting in a queue to hear these twin wonders and your contributor was amongst them. To put this in some sort of perspective, neither of the two major record companies in the UK were, at that time, showing any great interest in a disc system based on vertical/lateral or 45/45 techniques. As I mentioned earlier, EMI had misplaced their faith in tapes; Decca were working independently on a h.f. carrier system with no apparent evidence of a sense of urgency. In passing, it is for this system the Decca pickup was designed and which still enjoys some popularity with those still playing vinyl discs.

To say his demonstration caused a stir would be a master understatement; and almost immediately, all the record companies anxious to take advantage of his pioneering work besieged Sugden in Brighouse. EMI even sent a large mobile recording studio to his factory, so that sample discs could be cut from a variety of EMI master tapes; many of these were subsequently pressed, thereby revealing some difficulties in pressing technique. The problems overcome, these too, were given a demonstration at the BSRA exhibition in the following year, 1957. Sugden gave me a pair of these pressings and using a matrix I designed, I was able to prepare them for playing with an orthodox 45/45 cartridge; and very impressive they are, too. Had v/l been the adopted standard, there might now have been a Connoisseur label on

the market; and indeed, four discs were prepared and ready for issue, with no less than ten in total. Arnold designed even the labels and cover sleeves.

But it was not to be. Illness, probably provoked by overwork, slowed all work on producing stereo discs and eventually, they had to be dropped altogether when commercial stereodiscs to the universally agreed 45/45 standard were released in 1958. As "Hi Fi" arrived and highly competitive, consumer orientated products began to invade the markets from the Far East, the viability of Sugden's company came under threat; so, in the early -70's, Arnold Sugden sold his company and retired. The final chapter in the story of his enterprise ends on a sad note, for the company fell into the ruthless hands of asset strippers and the once familiar name of "Connoisseur" has now disappeared altogether. An unhappy, but all too common tale in today's commercial world of Hi Fi. Sadder still, no one knows of the whereabouts of his original cutter system.

However, not so for the name of Arnold Sugden. Within the history of audio, he has written his own personal paragraph and undoubtedly earns a prime place amongst the pioneers. I attempted to persuade the august Audio Engineering Society to make him some award but to its shame, it was never taken up. Along with many of his contemporaries, he advanced the science and art of sound recording and reproduction to a significant degree, sharing joint honours with many other well-known figures.

In the preparation of this article, I warmly acknowledge an earlier essay by the late Roger Maude of Huddersfield Polytechnic; and of course, I am indebted to the veteran pioneer Arnold Sugden himself who, sadly, is no longer with us.

Reg Williamson

Appendix

Disc cutter specification:

Type - Vertical/lateral Motor - Long Moving coils

Impedance - 15 ohms(40 SWG copper on balsa wood formers)

Sensitivity - 5 watts for full modulation Field

Large permanent magnet, separately mounted on carrier

Cutter Stylus Heated (1 watt), radius 1 thou.

Depth of Cut - Adjustable by means of advance ballpoint stylus

Frequency Response - 30Hz to 15KHz

Natural System Resonance 4.5KHz

Separation - >20dB

The driver amplifiers were Sugden design, using PX2S valves and capable of 15 watts into 15 ohm.

Life does not begin at 40! – Part 2

In the Spring Issue composers were the focus of those of who had died before their 40th birthday. This article looks at the performers who were unfortunate not to reach this milestone age. Many of the names featured have become legends for their qualities in producing performances that most lovers of music would want to have in their collections. Consequently, the 20th century provides the time-frame for our attention. In the first dozen or so years after the end of the Second World War a number of brilliant young musicians died prematurely, often in tragic circumstances.

Any instrumentalist who appears as a soloist with an orchestra at the age of seven has a potential worth developing and it is equally remarkable that it is the mother who is responsible for teaching the child to play the instrument. Such was the achievement of the French violinist, Ginette Neveu, but success was not to stop there when, at the age of 11, she gained the Premier Prix at the Paris Conservatoire. Then, in 1935, at the age of 16 she won the International Wieniawski Competition beating the now legendary David Oistrakh to first prize which became the fore-runner to a brilliant career.

It was 14 years later that tragedy struck when Ginette died at the age of 30 in a plane crash in the Azores whilst en route to the USA along with her brother, who was a gifted pianist and accompanist. According to Groves Dictionary, Ginette Neveu “played with fire and passion and with a controlled impeccable sense of style” and recordings that are available illustrate that this view is far from hyperbole.

Another air crash was to claim the life of the accomplished and very demanding conductor, Guido Cantelli. His father was an army bandmaster and so the young Guido was exposed to music from an early age, so developing a talent for conducting that led him to his first job, namely, conducting a performance of Verdi’s *La Traviata* in his home town of Novara.

Cantelli’s British debut occurred at the Edinburgh Festival (this venue will crop up again in this article) in 1950 with the orchestra of La Scala, Milan; shortly afterwards he conducted a London concert with the same orchestra replacing the indisposed Victor de Sabata. The following year, Guido Cantelli began an association with the Philharmonia Orchestra producing some

wonderful recordings that are now available on CD. His career continued to flourish and in November 1956 he was appointed as Musical Director of La Scala, Milan.

A few days after this appointment Cantelli took a plane from Rome to New York where he was to conduct a series of concerts with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The plane reached Paris on the first leg of its journey (no long-distance jets in those days) and, on take off, it appeared to catch fire and break up in the air killing 33 of the 35 passengers on board. Sadly, Guido Cantelli was one of those who did not survive; he was only 36 years of age.

At the time that Cantelli was working with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Dennis Brain was the principal horn player. They clashed often as the conductor demanded many “takes” during recording sessions – the naturally talented (Brain) versus the perfectionist (Cantelli). Dennis Brain was a second generation horn player, following his father whose skills with the instrument were also highly regarded. In the family there was another son, Leonard, who joined Dennis in chamber works performing on the oboe.

The Mozart *Horn Concertos* will forever be works that raised Dennis Brain to legendary status but his work in the orchestra is instantly recognisable in those recordings where he is involved. His talent was such that horn players who followed him had to suffer unfavourable comparison. Outside of music Dennis was a motoring enthusiast, reputedly reading magazines on the subject during rest periods in concerts. It was a car accident a few miles from home that would claim his life. He was returning from the Edinburgh Festival where he had given a scintillating performance both serious and humorous that has recently been released on CD. Coincidentally, like his adversary Cantelli, he, too, was only 36 years of age.

Other coincidences occur when researching a subject of interest. There are few better examples than that of the German lyric tenor Fritz Wunderlich who, like Guido Cantelli was the son of a military bandmaster and, like Dennis Brain, was originally a horn player. Less than two weeks before he died in a freak accident at the home of the German bass, Gottlieb Frick, Fritz Wunderlich had scored a great success at the Edinburgh Festival in the role of Tamino in Mozart’s *Magic*

Flute. At the time of his death in September 1966 he was nine days short of his 36th birthday – almost the same age as Cantelli and Brain.

No less a singer than Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau remarked at the time that Wunderlich was irreplaceable and, nearly 40 years later, it is true that Germany has not yet produced a lyric tenor of Wunderlich's quality.

Recently, I remarked to a colleague during a train journey that I was reading a biography of Emanuel Feuermann. "Ah," he replied, "the cellist's cellist!" Such is the esteem in which he is still held. To read the biography is to live through the musical life of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe and America with the great names of the time including, Artur Schnabel, Jascha Heifetz and Paul Hindemith. Feuermann became professor of cello at the Cologne Conservatoire in 1919 (then one of Germany's leading musical establishments) at the age of 16 leaping from student to professor in one bound. He completely overwhelmed the interview panel with his talent but he was not to retain the post due to the rise of Nazism. Like many other prominent musicians at that time he eventually made his way to the USA.

It was the good things in life to which he was attracted especially flashy sports cars plus he was a very heavy smoker. Many photographs of him are taken whilst he is smoking including one used to advertise Chesterfield Cigarettes – almost unthinkable in the current period when smoking is much less acceptable. He died from pneumonia following an operation on the appendix on 25th May 1942 aged 39.

One of his favourite party pieces as a young musician was to play the final movement of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* whilst holding the violin between his knees and playing it like a cello. Now that would have been a sight to see!

Early music is now a much more accepted genre of music but its present popularity grew from the enthusiasm created by David Munrow, who had been born in Birmingham only a few weeks after the death of Emanuel Feuermann. Munrow founded a music group to perform early music whilst he was a student at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and then spent a year studying 17th century music at Birmingham

University. In 1967, he formed the Early Music Consort of London, whose members included two prominent musicians of today Christopher Hogwood and James Bowman,

The recordings made by David Munrow demonstrated his talent in performing on a number of early instruments and these were always produced to a high standard. Without doubt, he was one of the most influential musicians of his generation; he took his own life in May 1976 at the age of 33.

Dinu Lipatti is a legend amongst pianists and mourned as much for what he might have achieved as for his actual achievements. His performances and recordings have almost always received critical acclaim especially in music by Bach, Schubert and Chopin. Lipatti escaped from his native Rumania in 1943 and eventually settled in Geneva.

His musical life story is well known but he was in delicate health from his earliest years. When not preparing for or appearing in concerts Dinu loved the process of recording because it gave him scope for what has been described as his inveterate perfectionism. It was severe illness which forced him to refuse tours to Australia and the USA as well as drastically reducing his concert work. Although Hodgkins Disease was diagnosed, it was actually an undiagnosed burst abscess on the lung that was the cause of his death on 24th November 1956. Coincidentally, Bellini, – another short-lived musician – also died from an undiagnosed burst abscess.

So what has been the lesson of my study of the under-40s? Obviously, that fate is a cruel power but it must engender intrigue in we music enthusiasts. We can never know what might have been but it is fertile ground for those types of radio programmes built around the question "What if...?" What do you think might have happened? Go on, present a recital on your theories – I dare you!

Brian Cartwright.



Emanuel Feuermann

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Recorded and Live Music

The thing about records is that, while they can be easy to play and enjoy, there is not the same atmosphere or aura as there is when the same music is being performed live and spontaneously at a public concert.

It is true that it is a problem sometimes to get there and it is equally likely that you will not be able to pick and choose the programme of music that you wish to hear. Further you may be unfortunate enough to find yourself sitting next door to a noisy neighbour who is either coughing, noisily turning over the pages of the programme or even stirring about in his or her seat.

But the spontaneity of the music, the thought that you are enjoying music being played live, can make up for all of this on most occasions.

Further, it has to be said that most conductors and orchestras rarely perform the same work in the same manner. There is an atmosphere of re-discovery in the air.

The sounds are coming from the instruments themselves and are not being “doctored” by any recording engineer. Neither are you at the mercy of a duff amplifier nor rattling loudspeakers. In the early days, the hissing of the recording was a further deterrent.

I first learnt something about music from the two sources almost at the same time.

I had a whole stack of ten inch and twelve inch 78 r.p.m. discs, mostly overtures, arias and popular pieces of the day, but I had the clear benefit of attending a whole series of childrens’ concerts on Saturday mornings in the City Hall given by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Here I was first introduced to the orchestral instruments one by one, to understand their sound and musical range, and then section by section. Then we were given the opportunity to hear what the string section sounded like when playing together; and the woodwind, brass and percussion sections treated in the same manner followed this.

Of course, all this was long before Benjamin Britten produced his *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* which was featured so successfully in a film with comments by Sir Malcolm Sargent.

The main disadvantage being suffered by listeners to records of orchestral music at the time was the absence of stereophonic sound plus the simple fact that the reproducing instrument had to

be wound up at the beginning of every side of each record. Also the thorn needle had to be changed or sharpened.

Whilst I later learnt about many different composers’ music through the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts broadcast on the BBC, I started learning about the Tchaikovsky and Brahms Symphonies by repeated playing my uncle’s recordings on 78 r.p.m. records and was thus able to appreciate the live performances I later heard when performed by the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham.

As now, the attendance at a public orchestral concert should be observed as an event. The arrival, one by one, and the tuning up of the orchestral players and the expectant mutterings of the audience are parts of the whole thing to be followed by the applause as the conductor moves to the rostrum. All of this is lost to the person or persons who are listening to records. It is a different experience altogether.

The availability of recordings, however, particularly historic ones, is a thing to value and it was only by this means, for example, that I was able first to hear the performance by the young Yehudi Menuhin of the Elgar *Violin Concerto* with the London Symphony Orchestra being conducted by the composer himself. A friend of mine, who was very interested in Elgar and who was playing the French horn in the Manchester University Orchestra, having obtained all the highly valued twelve inch discs, offered me the chance to hear them in the comfort of his own home.

Every four or five minutes, the record had to be changed, the thorn needle resharpened and the needle carefully placed in the right groove. On this occasion, the continuity of the music was further interrupted by this exceedingly enthusiastic friend giving me a “run-down” on what we had just heard and then his description and careful analysis of what was to follow.

The advent of the LP meant that music no longer had to be sliced up, and sometimes re-arranged with repeats omitted, into 4 or 5 minute sections. We then enjoyed only one “break” in a symphony or tone poem like Richard Strauss’ *Ein Heldenleben*.

But the real significant change, for me, happened when we could enjoy music performed in stereo. Now we could understand the intense and complicated structure of even the simplest

Mozart symphony during which the various instruments were enjoying “conversations” with one another. When I was very much younger, I failed utterly in understanding most of what was available as “chamber music”. For me, music had to be on the “big screen” but my opinion changed drastically when, as Programme Secretary of my local Recorded Music Society, I was successful in persuading four young members of the Hallé Orchestra to come and play three string quartets for us. For their programme, they had selected quartets by Haydn, Beethoven and Dvorak

It would seem that many orchestral players like to “relax” by playing, entirely for their own pleasure, in smaller groups. Indeed, some directors of continental orchestras used to require that their players should spend some time doing just this.

Listening in mono, however, either on the radio or on record, to a quartet without the benefit of a score did not enable me to appreciate the finer things going on and it was not really until this live concert that I truly began to appreciate what fine contributions to music making they are.

While discussing the physical relationship of players, it is perhaps relevant to remark on the fact that in Elgar’s orchestral works, it is better when the first and second violins are placed in the same arrangement that he had them himself because there are occasions when they are having a “conversation” or even a “contravention” with each other while the cellos are placed behind the first violins. Elgar was very concerned with getting the “right balance” of sound and used this arrangement for all his recordings.

In their own concert hall, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra use this same plan, as they have when playing in the pit at their opera performances, with the double basses up behind the orchestra providing the solid bass line so vital in works by, for example, Brahms.

The advent of the cassette tape recordings enabled me to hear up to 45 minutes of uninterrupted music and this was especially useful for listening to symphonies and operas. But it was rather complicated when one wished to pick out just one movement from a complete work.

The fact that CDs can now provide up to eighty minutes of continuous sound in stereo and that individual sections or movements can be easily “found” is indeed to a valuable contribution to the serious music listener.

In the old days with 78 rpm records, presentations at Recorded Music Society meetings

were severely interrupted by record and needle changing and the advent of the LP made things a little more difficult when trying to find a “track” half way through a side.

The use of a tape cassette recorder did mean that one could pre-record one’s programme from a mixture of 78 rpm, LP and tape although one had to be careful to achieve a good “balance” of sound level and quality of reproduction.

Now, with the arrival of recent technology enabling one to pre-record one’s whole presentation either on to a mini-disc or 80 minute CD, it is possible to ensure that the quality and volume of all the items can be correctly balanced and this means that the presentation itself consists only of the verbal introductions between the music being played from just the one CD.

While recordings will always be valuable because they can introduce us to music that may never be performed in public or on the radio, they will never replace the “Live Performance”. In my personal view, all Recorded Music Societies should include in their programmes opportunities for members to enjoy seeing and participating in such happy and involving situations.

John Kemsey-Bourne

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DVD-A or SACD?

Like it or not technology continues to march on! On the record shelves (in some dealers) we can find discs produced in DVD-A and SACD formats. What are they? Can I play them on my existing equipment?

The quick answer is Yes and No, a contradiction in terms, Yes. Now for an explanation:

SACD or Super Audio Compact Disc has been developed by those giants of the audio industry – Sony and Philips. This will play on a normal CD player, but the best way to hear SACDs at their best is to use a Super Audio CD player. However only the CD layer of these hybrid discs can be played on a DVD-V player.

DVD-A is an extension of the popular DVD-V discs and will play on a DVD-V player, but the best way to obtain the full richness of DVD-A is to use a DVD-A player.

SACD offers a much higher resolution (higher quality) of recorded music than CD and surround sound and is of a purer quality than DVD-A. This is due to the material being recorded in Direct Stream Digital Technology. Stereo is better than CD, so too is surround sound in direct proportion to the number of audio channels used. The playing time is around 75 minutes. Currently the SACD worldwide catalogue has over 1000 titles. Many of the famous labels are gearing up to produce SACDs so reducing production costs and eventually the savings will be passed on to consumers (we hope!).

DVD-A like its brother DVD-V has on screen menus and the ability to select anything that is programmed on the disc. Again it gives you surround sound with up to five channels or sometimes more. Here PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) gives excellent audio coding with 100 kHz bandwidth and 144db dynamic range. The playing time can be over 2.5 hours in better than CD quality. Discs can contain for example, interviews with the artists, pictures and liner notes, biographies and discographies. The take up of DVD-A technology has been somewhat slower and smaller. Some record companies have produced discs in both formats!

Like the VHS/Betamax format war in times gone by, we are in for another format war, both systems have their plus points and it must be up to the user to audition them using the very best systems to hear them on. SACD gives one an analogue like smoothness of sound whilst DVD-A

can sound slightly glitzy or hard on some discs.

So ideally a player that can reproduce CD, SACD and DVD-A well is what the record buying public requires. Does one exist? Yes a well-known Japanese company has produced a complete universal system that in reviews appears not to reproduce any of the systems to the reviewer's satisfaction. But that is only the start. Only a truly hybrid system up to the best modern standards will do. It will take a minor miracle to overcome all the technical and licensing hurdles for this to happen. One thing is for certain, both systems have their merits and can co-exist together catering for different sections of the record buying public.

What am I going to do? Well, sit on the fence and see what happens in the future!

Philip Ashton

How To Organise A Brass Band

Some excerpts from *A Practical Guide To The Arrangement Of Band Music* by George F. Patton published in 1875.

...Having selected the men for your band, pick out the most intelligent and ambitious of the lot for the Cornet players.

...The next most important place to be filled is that of the Tuba player.

...besides having plenty of good, common sense, his supply of patience should be practically inexhaustible.

...for a Tuba player, who has not the qualities of patience and good humour is likely to get disgusted, and if a man of profane habits is apt to swear in a disagreeable way at the stupid blunders made by his companions.

...and this makes them very angry in turn, and the disgust and swearing may become mutual.

...For the side instruments and

Drums it does not make much difference.

...The author has a bit of advice to offer. Do not let anybody persuade you to bother with Piccolos, Clarinets, and Slide Trombones.



MUSICAL WEEKEND — STRATFORD

Once again the Moat House Hotel, Stratford on Avon was the venue of our Annual Musical Weekend. This represents a swan song of Reg Williamson as organiser; a job he has done so ably before. The weather was good, and the Hotel maintained the high standards of previous years. Comments from delegates were favourable and there was no doubt that from an artistic view point the event was very successful. The number of delegates for the full weekend was less than last year but there were an appreciable number of non-residential day delegates.



Puccini's "Tosca"

After an excellent reception and dinner, the opening event was a "First" for the Musical Weekend; this was the use of projection TV and the new medium of Digital Versatile Disk (DVD). We saw the famous 1976 film version of the complete Puccini's Tosca produced by Gianfranco de Bosio.

Unlike most operas the three acts are set in three very specific Roman localities. These are used in this film with Act 1 being in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Act 2 in the Palazzo Farnese and the Castel Sant'Angelo is the perfect backdrop for the dramatic last act.

This account is notable not only for the use of the actual locations but for both the acting and the singing. Placido Domingo was at his peak in the heroic tenor role of Cavaradossi,

Raina Kabaivanska is a winning Tosca both in voice and appearance, Sherrill Milnes is outstanding as Scarpia; his characterization exudes corrupt power, suavity and lust. The New Philharmonia Orchestra gives dramatic support under the baton of Bruno Bartoletti.

The film was excellent and the evening was supplemented by an entertaining and difficult quiz with the DVDs as the prize.

Brian Couzens and Chandos

Chandos is one of the most innovative and enterprising of the Independent Recording Companies, it was founded in 1978 by Brian Couzens who here held a fascinating and entertaining talk with our President Edward Greenfield.

Brian Couzens had a background of sound engineering that started with films (recording the Ron

Goodwin Band). He told us that he had no technical training but had "ears" (this was well demonstrated by the technical excellence of the Chandos recordings he played with this talk); he told us that the weakest link in recording is the microphone and at home it is the speakers.

He named his company after the BBC Chandos Club (with permission from the Chandos Estate). The Company specialises in English and rare repertoire and it has won over 160 awards. Several of the artists he 'discovered' subsequently left him to join one of the 'Major' Companies,



Brian Couzens and Edward Greenfield

his discoveries included Nigel Kennedy, Bryn Terfel, the Kings Singers and many others. Richard Hickox remains under contract. Chandos has over 2000 titles and seldom deletes things.

When recording he used two track stereo (no multi-tracking) but now uses 4-6 tracks for Surround Sound. He uses long takes, often from live concerts with subsequent

patching of mistakes.

Jennifer Bate

Jennifer Bate is a concert organist of international repute who made a return visit to an FRMS Weekend and gave us an hilarious account of some of her experiences whilst travelling the



Jennifer Bate

world; this was interspersed with practical hints on how to deal with the unexpected things which always seem to occur. She interspersed her talk with extracts from her many recordings.

She regaled us with accounts of things falling apart (the Albert Hall organ), how to cope with birds in the building and how to cope when bats are urinating on you when playing the organ. Playing old instruments such as the organ in Adlington Hall (near Stockport) can be incredibly taxing but the recordings sell best when the instruments sound really old!

An organist is advised always to have a tuner present when recording; extremes of temperature can effect the tuning and it is best to record loud and soft parts at different times. She finished her talk with an entrancing description of her reaction when a mouse walked down the aisle when she was playing – the audience had been

transfixed.

Dame Janet Baker

Dame Janet Baker made a welcome return to the FRMS Weekend, again in conversation with Edward Greenfield. Here they reviewed her distinguished and very varied career in singing.

Her first record was for Saga, which was just down the road from her home in Harrow on the Hill; the song was "I'll go with my father to the rain Field" by Ivor Gurney – she confessed that she was terrified. However this was followed by her first major recording – Purcell's Dido and Aeneas again for Saga, followed by Hugo Wolf songs for the same company.

Later she was to record for EMI with Barbirolli and Sea Pictures is a classic recording (previously considered to be



Dame Janet Baker

second rate Elgar). She considered that the great challenge was to sing English as if it were Italian by maintaining a line. She put her main efforts not in aiming for a big sound but for accuracy. Barbirolli opened up her recording career and many of major recordings followed, including some songs with Gerald Moore (after his retirement from the stage).

Her first job was in opera at Glyndebourne in the chorus. Her first major solo opera role was in



Dame Janet Baker with Marjorie Williamson

Cosi Fan Tutte under Colin Davis and subsequently she appeared at a many opera houses. She was often on stage but never wanted opera to become her whole life. She retired from the stage at the age of 56.

Dame Janet is a favourite of audiences of FRMS Musical Weekends and the sheer beauty of the recordings she played combined with the description of her fascinating career were greeted with acclaim.

Technical Demonstration and Forum

PMC Limited of Luton, had kindly provided high quality sound equipment for the weekend and this had sounded impressive in action, handling well all the multitudinous recordings presented. In addition, Peter Thomas of PMC hosted a separate demonstration of Surround Sound. This is the successor to the quadraphonic sound of the 80's and is technically much superior; typically would provide at least 6 track – 3 front, 2 rear plus sub woofer (deep bass). Unfortunately there are two competing systems (or three if you include the sound output of DVD – these are DVD(Audio) and SACD (see also page 17). The demonstrations were quite



The Technical Forum

staggering in their auditory impact.

The PMC staff joined FRMS Technical Officer, Philip Ashton and Reg Williamson in a Technical Forum on the Sunday morning. This was a wide-ranging discussion and the following are some of the points that arose:

Computer Copied Disks. Don't buy cheap blanks; Use good software e.g. Nero; copy to hard disk before burning; When it will not play, try cleaning the lens.

Deterioration of Equipment with Age – most electronic faults occur in first year, then it stabilises for many years; Speakers, especially when played very loud, deteriorate quickly. Amplifiers should outlast their owners.

Controls – these are now disappearing with a 'minimalist approach' to tone control. A sharp high filter is needed for playing 78s.

Hearing loss – this is inevitable with old age; it can be best to listen to music with open backed headphones e.g. 'Sennhauser'.

Discoloured CDs - Some CDs became champagne coloured with age. See the Hyperion Website.

Bryce Morrison

Bryce Morrison is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and also an internationally



Bryce Morrison

famous critic, broadcaster and pianist and is considered among the world's leading authorities of piano performance. He gave a wide-ranging, authoritative and at times slightly indiscreet survey of the current piano scene looking for the best. He classified pianists into three classes, first the legendary pianists of the earlier generations, these include Rubinstein, Rachmaninov, Solomon, Hess, Curzon and others. Then there is a middle group of recognised masters who are still practising such as

Perahia, Zimerman, Argerich and Lupu.

His talk concentrated upon a last group, that is the younger players of today. Out of hundreds of talented pianists of real merit he had identified six pianists of special talent and he presented recordings of their work accompanied by detailed analysis. The six chosen pianists were Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Boris Berezovsky, Leif Ove Ansnes, Arcadi Volodos and Marc-André Hamelin. Under his excellent tutelage we obtained an understanding of the factors that distinguished between the good and the best. A most stimulating and informative talk.

The Singh String Quartet

Reg Williamson, when organising the Weekend, had reverted to the practise which had been promulgated so strongly in the past by Joyce Knight, that FRMS should support young musicians. The Singh quartet (named after their leader Miss Singh) was made up of students of the Royal Northern College of Music.

Despite their youth, the Quartet demonstrated maturity of vision in their interpretation of Mendelssohn's *Quartet in D*, Opus 44 No 1. This is a work which had been strongly influenced by the Beethoven late quartets. They played the first movement with enthusiasm and finesse; the second movement was a flowing cantabile; after an expressive third movement the finale went with an ebb and flow representing the reflections of an Italian summer.

The First Quartet of William Alwyn continued the concert, this was enterprising repertoire — a work known to few of the audience — but what a delightful work it proved with lyrical tunes and military overtures. The andante was especially beautiful with gentle musing on the cello and heart-stopping pianissimo interjections by the first violin. The nervous pulsating finale was also most satisfying. Ravel's Quartet in F concluded the concert and what a fascinating work this is, rhapsodic and melodious yet with a slightly astringent freshness. This was described in their introduction as depicting hazy summer evenings in Paris. The playing was totally



The Singh Quartet

assured and professional.

During an interview with the Bulletin Editor, Miss Singh explained that the formation and playing of the quartet was part of their studies and their work together had led them into deep professional friendship; normally they were four girls but due to illness of one, a male had been recruited who had soon acclimatised well.

They had included the Alwyn at the suggestion of FRMS; at first they had found it difficult but a deeper acquaintance they had come really to like it.

AB

"Aspects of Love" — Rowland Edwards

The Society spot was re-instated as a trial this year, and Cardiff Recorded Music Society was asked to provide the programme. It was not an easy challenge, since it was to be the last programme of a busy and successful weekend, when many were thinking of the long journey home and wondering whether they had cancelled the milk and put the cat out.

Rowland Edwards rose to the occasion with a presentation called *Aspects of Love*, covering those aspects from the joy of first love to the sadness of parting when love breaks down. Recognizing the emotional effect this could have on his audience, Rowland thoughtfully provided a stack of paper hankies to wipe away those tears. The musical items ranged across all genres from classical to jazz and popular music. The introduction to the items was light-hearted and informative.

Rowland got the programme "rolling" with Anna McGarragal's song *The Heart is like a Wheel* where the analogy was brought out that the wheel is so important to our quality of life — when it's working well our quality of life is wonderful, but when it's damaged it's a disaster! As a complete contrast, the next item went back to a love song by Caccini sung by Gigli, after which we were treated to Cole Porter's *Every time we say Goodbye* sung by the incomparable Ella Fitzgerald. Tragedy was covered in Neris's aria from Cherubini's *Medea* and

Rigoletto's last moments with his daughter Gilda.

Being Welsh and hailing from Pontypridd, Rowland could not leave out a reference to the nearby village of Cilfynydd and Williams Street,



Rowland Edwards with Dame Janet Baker

the birthplace of two fine opera singers, Geraint Evans and Stuart Burrows. It was Stuart Burrows who entertained us with an example of love at first sight from Mozart's *Magic Flute* — *Diese Bildnis*. Divorce was not forgotten as Carly Simpson asked *What shall we do with the child?* nor those happy people who seem to have multiple loves (Zsa Zsa Gabor) when Tom Lehrer recalled the three loves of *Alma*.

A note of sadness was introduced in the item on bereavement and grief, where Mary Black sang *My younger son came home today* which was particularly poignant in view of the recent hostilities. Rowland did not however leave his audience in tears, but illustrated the resilience of the human spirit with Handel's *Angels ever Bright and Fair* sung by Lorraine Hunt.

The presentation hit just the right note for the last programme of the weekend and sent the audience home singing. Rowland will be a hard act for other societies to follow!

Colin Dancer

Scottish Group Annual Conference

The Group Annual Conference was held at the Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan on 16th to 17th May 2003. The weather this year was changeable and for much of the time it was rather wet. This meant that we were confined indoors; but that was compensated by the presence of four first class guest speakers.



The first of these was Rob MacKillop, who gave us a talk on Saturday morning called *The Quiet Tradition*. Rob was, until recently a Lecturer at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Rob is an expert in the lute and guitar and has spent many years researching these instruments and their music. He is also an expert player of these instruments. During his talk Rob explained how the lute was made and showed us examples of the instrument. He also showed us a 17th Century guitar. This instrument originated in Germany and is much smaller and more rounded than today's guitar. Many examples of 17th and 18th Century lute music were played from Rob's published CDs. We were brought right up to date with a composition by Rob called *The Healing* (A Pibroch for Lute). This piece was born in his imagination in Casablanca on the evening of 11th September 2001. He said he felt a need to explore the hidden sounds of the lute, to dig deep into the dark recesses of our music, to find the invisible musical ley-lines, which are timeless and which bind us. I found this a haunting piece which I will listen to again and again. Rob opened up a new area of classical music, which few present had delved into before.

After lunch Bruce Fraser, the Fife-born Head of Music at Buckhaven High School, and a composer well known in the brass band world, gave us an

insight into the life of a modern composer. Fife Council had commissioned him to write a new piece and as he was a long-time close friend of fellow Fifer, John Wallace, he decided to write a Trumpet Concerto and dedicate it to John Wallace. We learnt how Bruce sketched out the piece in his head and then with the aid of a piece of software called *Sibelius*, which he had installed in his laptop computer, he printed out the score. He brought his laptop along and demonstrated *Sibelius* to us. He then played us a recording of the complete *Trumpet Concerto* with John Wallace as the soloist accompanied by the Fife Schools Orchestra conducted by Graeme Wilson. Bruce told us that his composing had enabled him to travel to many parts of the world. The previous week-end he was in Holland judging a brass band competition. This was a fascinating and enjoyable programme that we all enjoyed.

On Sunday morning Neil Mantle, conductor of The Scottish Sinfonia, The Edinburgh Bach Choir and The Dundee Choral Union gave us a talk entitled *Elgar and The Gramophone*. Neil told us when he was a student in London he was distracted by something glinting in the twilight while he was walking home. On investigation he found it was an album of 78s of Elgar conducting his *Second Symphony*. After hearing this he became an life-long addict of Elgar. Neil played us many ex-



Neil Mantle

cerpts from Elgar's own recordings ranging from his first of *Carissima* through a version of *Cockaigne Overture*, which Elgar had cut from around 12 minutes to 4½ minutes to fit one side of a pre-electric 12" 78 record, to one of his last recordings, which he supervised from his deathbed in 1934, *Dream Children* conducted by Lawrance Collingwood. Neil gave us lots of information on Elgar's close relationship with Fred Gaisberg of The Gramophone Co. Ltd. and how he became that company's flagship composer. Thanks to Neil's enthusiasm and detailed research we all went off to lunch with a much greater understanding of the importance of Sir Edward Elgar's relationship

with the Gramophone.

After lunch Derek Watson, Chairman of the



Derek Watson

Scottish Wagner Society, gave us a presentation called *The Ring – 100 Years Recorded*. Derek gave us lots of information on recording the Ring and

played us several examples of recordings from the last 100 years. The artistes ranged from Johanna Gadski in a 1909 recording, through Astrid Varnay, Lauritz Melchior, Kirsten Flagstad and Eberhard Wächter to Birgit Nilsson. This was an excellent talk and was a fitting finish to our guest presentations.

Malcolm Cloke from Stirling RMS, Nan Dow from Kirkcaldy RMS, and Nisbet Cunningham gave us most enjoyable programmes in the evenings of Friday, Saturday and Sunday respectively.

The magnificent equipment was supplied by McMichael Bros. of Alloa and this added to our enjoyment of the weekend.

Unfortunately the numbers attending the weekend over the last few years have steadily declined and it was decided at the AGM that the format of the conference should be changed to a day conference for 2004. This will cost less and will avoid staying away from home and we hope more people will be encouraged to attend.

Chris Hamilton



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CENTRAL REGIONAL GROUP

The new Central Region held its first Day Event in The Adam Ballroom, Lion Hotel Shrewsbury on Saturday 15 March 2003.

Gordon Wainwright, Central Region Chairman welcomed around 140 delegates, representing 25 affiliates, to the inaugural event of the Central Region, held in the Adam Ballroom at the Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury. He commented briefly on the historic events that had occurred in the ballroom since its completion in the 1770's, notably that Paganni had given two recitals here in 1831.

Whilst opening a new chapter in the history of the Federation, Gordon stressed that this Regional event complemented the activities of the National Federation and he encouraged people to attend their weekend in Stratford upon Avon. He also expressed sadness at the death of three people who have actively supported our movement — John Bulman, one of the Federation's Vice Presidents; Patrick Russell, Chairman of Tavistock RMS and a past member of the Federation Committee, also Ted Perry, Founder of Hyperion Records and a former member of Derby RMS.

The first presenter was Alan Ward, a retired BBC Studio Manager who outlined a career that had spanned the wide changes that had taken place in sound recording techniques.

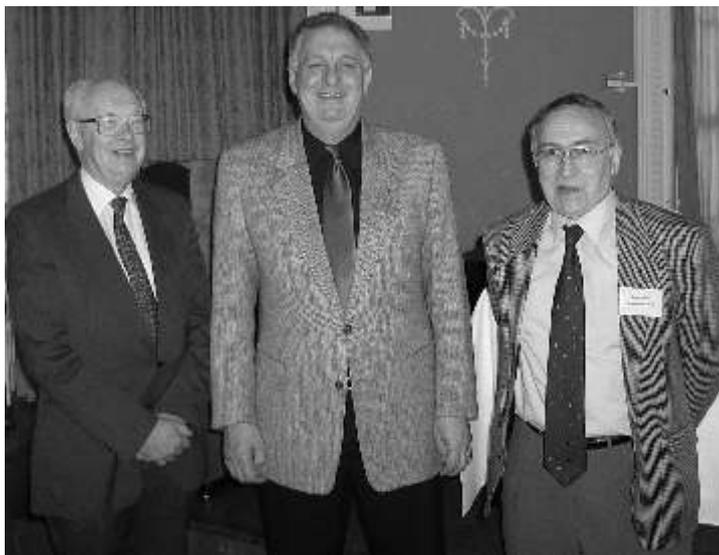
Alan joined the BBC in 1953 and spoke of his early involvement in recording BBC Light Entertainment Programmes. Tape was originally used merely because it was more easily handled than disc, the possibilities of editing came later. Programmes included "Take It From Here" which was always recorded in 'one take'; The Goon Show always involved a lot of editing, another programme was Hancock's Half Hour.

Charles Parker was the greatest producer Alan worked with, a perfectionist who often worked late into the night. Alan worked with Parker on a series of Radio Ballads. These were innovative in concept

for their time, blending documentary and art, fact and folksong into an atmospheric sound picture of the world of work and those involved in it. There were eight in all, of which the best remembered are probably *The Ballad of John Axon* (recalling an engine driver who died trying to regain control of his runaway train) and the one we heard was an excerpt from *Singing the Fishing* about North Sea herring fishermen.

Turning to music broadcasts it was a particular pleasure to hear a recording he had been involved with; namely the Chapel Organ at Great

Packington, Warwickshire, played by a musician with strong Midland connections, Ivor Keys, Professor of Music at Nottingham University and later at Birmingham University (This was the location where a recording of all the Handel Organ Concertos was made with the Organist E. Power Biggs and the London Philharmonic conducted by Sir



Alan Ward, James Watson & John Davies

Adrian Boult). The Great Packington organ does not use standard modern pitch, this causing difficulty when played with an orchestra.

During his career Alan had met and worked with Holst's daughter Imogen and we heard a recording of her conducting her father's Moorside Suite.

Alan moved to the BBC in Birmingham and we told of the attitude by the BBC in the 1960's towards Stereo broadcasts outside London; Alan being given £50 to buy some equipment. However Wolverhampton's Civic Hall in 1969 boasted one of the first stereo broadcasts outside the Capital and we heard an interesting recording of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra rehearsing inside the Civic Hall with their then newly appointed Principal Conductor Louis Fremaux.

After a pleasant lunch our second Speaker was James Watson, who had agreed to come to talk to us at less than 48 hours notice, due to the fact that

Paul Daniel, Musical Director of the ENO and our scheduled Speaker, had had to withdraw.

James' presentation revealed a very versatile musician. He was born into an all-musical Leicestershire family. As a young boy he played in the local Desford Colliery Band, becoming senior trumpet at the age of eleven. James also entered senior contests as a boy, winning cash prizes that were more than an adult's weekly wage.

He went on to study trumpet at The Royal Academy of Music. He has held Principal Trumpet posts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; as well as leading the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

The diversity of James' work was truly amazing. For instance, from working with Sir Colin Davis at Covent Garden he chose to change direction after being invited to be Conductor of the Black Dyke Mills Band, vividly describing the difficulties and attitudes of some of the band members to him at the start, given his musical back ground. Though some members of the band did leave, he eventually won the confidence and respect of the remainder.

James said that whilst he enjoyed the Brass Band, it was the 'phone call from John Charles, Personnel Manager of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra asking him to be acting principal trumpet in the RPO on their tour of Germany that changed his life. James was subsequently offered the position full time, a position that lasted nine years.

Referring to the busy life of a musician James told us how he had toured America and Canada with the Orchestra arriving back at Heathrow Airport to be met by his wife who had got another suitcase. After a quick coffee at the terminal, he took the case of clean clothes and headed off for a tour of Scandinavian countries giving more concerts. Now Professor of Trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music, the musical tradition continues in the family with his two sons playing the trumpet and studying at the Royal College of Music.

Those affiliates who have heard previous presentations by Federation Chairman, John Davies, will be aware of his knack of blending wit and knowledge into an attractive programme with music for all tastes and styles.

Here John chose to illustrate "By Arrangement" with compositions that had appeared in different guises...some arranged by the composer himself, some by other composers, and the remainder by musicians who had made their names "re-organising" the music of others.



James Watson

Ravel's *La Vallée des cloches* from *Miroirs* appeared in its original form as piano solo performed by Angela Hewitt, and then in Percy Grainger's orchestration, played by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Simon.

Leopold Stokowski always had fun arranging the music of J.S.Bach, but on this occasion, we heard his version of the *Little Fugue* BWV578 played by the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra under Eric Kunzel. Bach's more famous

BWV565 *Tocatta and Fugue* then appeared in a four hands piano transcription by the German composer, Max Reger.

After listening to Liszt's *Second Hungarian Rhapsody* arranged for brass ensemble, John's programme concluded with Beethoven's own arrangement for piano of his *Violin Concerto*, published as Op.61a. The writer has just acquired a set of CDs wherein this work is billed as Beethoven's *Sixth Piano Concerto*! Artistic licence gone mad, perhaps!

At the close, Gordon Wainwright thanked all who had attended, members of the committee and others who had helped in any way but particularly mentioning the hard work of Regional Secretary Mick Birchall and SMC Sound and Vision of Shrewsbury for generously providing all the sound reproduction equipment.

The next Central Region Music Day will be on Saturday 11th October 2003 at The Lion Hotel, Belper, Derbyshire. The speakers will include organist Wayne Marshall and the renowned Berlioz scholar and biographer, David Cairns.

The event will commence at 11.00am and conclude at 5.00pm. The price will be £19, including lunch. Further details may be obtained from the Central Region Secretary (see last page of this Bulletin).

Report compiled by Mick Birchall, Allan Child, Ken Daley, Graham Kiteley and Gordon Wainwright

SUSSEX REGION GROUP

SCHUBERTIAD' to mark the '50th' Weekend

The champagne corks were popping when members gathered at the historic Pyke House in Battle to celebrate the 50th weekend. So 25 years of musical get togethers, not all at Pyke House as earlier weekends were held at Hassocks and Seaford, but the longest association has been with Pyke House on the edge of the famous 1066 battle field in the lovely small town of Battle.

It was decided to celebrate this historic event in style with a 'Schubertiad' so that we could raise a glass to celebrate the genius of Franz Schubert who as a composer of songs has no equal in fertility of melodic invention. In addition, apart from opera and concertos, Schubert ranks among the very greatest of composers in all other forms.

Wine with the Saturday evening dinner was followed by champagne, a sherry reception on the Sunday; there was still lots of time to enjoy an abundance of heavenly music. EILEEN TAYLOR gave us a survey of Schubert's orchestral output including most of the symphonies and incidental music from *Rosamunde*. Eileen also gave us the beautiful 'Sanctus' from the *German Mass*.

ALAN THOMAS took a detailed look at the two song cycles; on the Saturday after *The Erl King* and *An die Musik* a selection from *Die Schone Mullerin* using the Ian Bostridge recording with Graham Johnson. On Sunday Alan selected songs from *Winterreise* using the Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau recording with Jorg Demus. After the splendid dinner on Saturday evening Alan presented a 'Schubertiad' of songs, piano works and chamber works prior to presenting a performance of *The Trout Quintet* with the star-studied line-up of Jacqueline Du Pré, Daniel Barenboim, Zubin Mehta, Pinchas Zuckerman and Itzhak Perlman.

After breakfast on Sunday JONATHAN PARRIS concentrated on the String Quartets, some composed for private performances; he played an early quartet where each movement was set in a different key. The song like movement of the A minor quartet the second movement of which uses music from his *Rosamunde* work was well received. Jonathan also played some recordings of the piano sonatas played on a 'Graf pianoforte'.

ALAN GILBY took his now regular slot after the splendid Sunday lunch but there was no chance of

'nodding-off' as he presented his choice for a Schubertiad! With some little known and unusual works including a *Violin Concerto*, Alan kept everyone's attention. He also introduced a name unfamiliar to some of us: Robert Fuchs (1847-1927) whose first piano sonata he described as "Schubert with a dash of Brahms!" Alan's wide ranging programme in fact, went from Deutsch 1 to D 959!

This brief resumé hardly does justice to Schubert or the hard work and enthusiastic dedication that all the presenters put into their programmes. To paraphrase a well known cliché "you had to be there to hear it!" I must take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped so much to make these residential weekends such a success over the last quarter of a century, it doesn't seem like that! It really is a team effort and it has been a challenge to present a wide range of musical subjects in an enjoyable but informative way, composers, artists, countries, eras, concert guides are generic titles behind which lies the endlessly fascinating and rich world of music, of which we are still only scratching the surface. Tribute must be paid to the late DENIS BOWYER who had the vision to see and put into being these weekends and to initiate such a successful formula.

Last but by no means least, thanks are due to the staff at Pyke House, which is an outpost of the Hastings College of Arts and Technology. They have over the years always provided us with a warm welcome, an environment in which we could relax and enjoy our music knowing that we would also be well fed, watered, have comfortable beds and a garden to enjoy between the sessions. The consistently high standard of the house has been maintained by all the staff even over changes of managers and personnel.

We look forward to the next twenty-five years with confidence, enthusiasm and the certain knowledge that we still have much to learn and will go on enjoying our studies with many friends old and new at Pyke House.

Alan Thomas

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WEST SURREY REGION

The picturesque village of Hascombe was the focal point for this year's Annual Reunion of the Federation's West Surrey Region, held on May 10 and hosted by the Godalming Music Listening Group. A gathering some seventy strong converged on the splendid new village hall, bringing members and friends from all round the area - Aldershot, Bookham, Esher, Guildford and Haslemere.

As 2003 marks the bi-centenary of the birth of Hector Berlioz, the evening opened on an appropriate note with an informative and highly entertaining presentation by Berlioz Society member Dr Diana Bickley, in which she concentrated particularly on the great French composer's early years. Dr Bickley was able to demonstrate, both on disc and at the keyboard, how Berlioz's youthful essays into composition laid the foundation for his first and best-known major work — the *Symphonie Fantastique*. Her illustrations of early songs and orchestral writing left no room for doubt as to the steady flowering of Berlioz's genius, drawing our attention also to the frequency and skill with which he returned again and again to re-use musical ideas in his later works.

As is usual on these social occasions, the ladies of the host society volunteered to feed the audience during the interval, Godalming's talented team providing an excellent buffet supper which was appreciated by all.

A varied diet of songs spanning many years kept us in our seats for a further hour with a hugely enjoyable choral concert by The Ian Engelmann Singers under their conductor John Tudhope. A mixed choir of some twenty performers, the Singers demonstrated a wide-ranging repertoire of Motets, Madrigals, Victorian Songs, French Chansons and Close Harmony. Their enthusiasm and elan was infectious and brought the evening to a resounding close.

Next year's Reunion will be the 40th in the series, with the Haslemere society at the helm. It's been a long run. Such events, however, don't just happen: they are the result of much thought, careful planning — and a large measure of hard work. But what a splendid medium they are for bringing together musical friends old and new and fostering an *entente cordiale* among those of us whose lives continue to be enriched by the technology of putting great music onto "record".

Les Warner

YORKSHIRE REGIONAL GROUP

The 2003 Yorkshire Weekend started with dinner on Friday 11th April and finished after lunch on Monday 14th. The weather was kind, the location and food were excellent.

My Kind of Music

The YRG Secretary, Dennis Clark, opened the weekend and, given his well-known allegiance to Elgar, the Friday night session was notable for Sir Edward's absence! A relaxed scene was set with two pieces of Schrammel music, named after the leader of a nineteenth century Viennese quartet who wrote and played light-hearted waltz tunes. This was followed by a wide range of music by Schubert, Coleridge-Taylor and Mendelssohn.

We then indulged in true 78s nostalgia with Frank Titterton *Blessing This House* and Derek Oldham singing *Songs of Araby*. The nostalgia was interrupted by the *Andante* from Emil von Sauer's *First Piano Concerto* and Haydn Wood's *London Cameos* suite,

but then returned with Walter Widdup, recorded in 1930 singing extracts from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

This attractive and light-hearted programme concluded with excerpts from Signor Alexandre Luigini's *Ballet Égyptien* from 1875.

DVD Special

Taking time off from editing the *Penguin Guide*, Ivan March is a regular visitor to the YRG weekend. This year he gave us our first ever Saturday morning programme. It was an ideal opportunity to share his enthusiasm for good quality DVDs — Digital Versatile Discs, as he told us, not Digital Video Discs, as they are sometimes called.

Ivan played lots of examples to show the good quality of sound and vision that is now available, illustrating chamber, choral and orchestral works, opera and ballet. Covent Garden's *Traviata* with Angela Gheorghiu,



Paul Serotsky,
Technical manager

Bach's *Magnificat* by Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic, the *Brandenburg Concertos* from Cothen, *Giselle* from the Kirov, *La Fille Mal Gardée* from Covent Garden and more. The dramatic results that can be obtained by combining work inside and outside the studio was admirably demonstrated with Peter Wegl's film of *Eugene Onegin*.

The 'Four Fs'

Jean Charters, from Durham RMS, opened the formal weekend and her enigmatic title concealed the characteristics of living creatures: Feathers, Fur, Fins and Feelers. As a retired infant teacher she was unhappy with the national curriculum for teaching music, which had become too formal for the younger children and had lost the essential 'fun' element, so important as an aid to learning.

Jean's music was apt — Respighi's *Birds*, both of Schubert's *Trouts*, Flanders and Swan's *Spider* and *Hippopotamus Encore*, and two songs from Papagano, the bird-catcher in *The Magic Flute*. Johnny Morris's *Carnival of the Animals* went down well, as did *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Ivan had shown extracts from the Royal Ballet film).

More unusual was Walter Braunfels' opera *Die Vögel (The Birds)*, and the depiction of swans flying by in the last movement of Sibelius's *Fifth Symphony*. Daquin's *Cuckoo* and Couperin's *The Fly* were good examples from an earlier age. Her final piece was *The Lark in the clear air*, a North Country song recorded by Owen Brannigan.

Victorian Popular Music
Graham Saunders programme was a complete contrast, being a brief but detailed history of popular musical development from the Industrial Revolution through to the Victorian parlour and the music hall. He illustrated this with folk songs from Lincolnshire countryside and Scots mining disasters, hymns and oratorios, marches, Gilbert and Sullivan patter songs and romantic ballads.

Along the way we covered the growth of chapels (and public houses), which led to the British choral movement, the need for bigger and better organs, the growth of brass bands, and eventually to the broadening of ordinary people's musical abilities through the tonic sol-fa system.

The Brass Band movement held its first public contest in Burton Constable in 1845. Soon after that Enderby Jackson, a railway timetable clerk, decided to organise and develop contests, and he

was the first person to commission a test piece.

Elsewhere, the piano became an indispensable part of any respectable Victorian home, and with it grew new styles in home music: the sentimental ballads and songs, flashy, demonstrative playing and impressive-sounding foreign names. It was but a short step to the Victorian Music Hall.

Eine Kleine (und Leichte) Nachtmusik

Raymond Wood's "post prandial confection" was, as usual, a most entertaining mixture of light froth and nostalgia with a few serious bits in between. Just the thing for Saturday night.

The inimitable Swingle Singers's opened with the *Finale* of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, which was followed by a 1929 recording of Clemens Krauss and the VPO playing two polkas. We had nostalgic music from France and also an obligatory Dutch Masters section

John Field was represented by *Le Midi* and Percy Grainger by *Handel in the Strand*. This pleasant late-night programme continued with songs from Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Elisabeth Schumann. Finally we had Richard Tauber *Began the Beguine*, Stan Getz played *a bossa nova*, and Flanders and Swan *gave the Weather Forecast*.
Bold as Brass

On Sunday morning Ivan March introduced Arthur Butterworth as "our composer in residence of whom you will hear more in future" and as "a composer with Yorkshire in his veins, influenced more by Sibelius than Mahler".

Arthur spoke of the development of Brass instruments, techniques and awareness, and his first musical illustration showed that the pre-1750 techniques of playing natural horns and trumpets were being re-discovered today.

After 1750 the flamboyance of the baroque period became unfashionable and was replaced by a gentler, more melodic style. Mozart and Haydn's trumpet writing was not very interesting for brass players and, apart from the occasional concerto, gave them little to do.

Thus, the brass were effectively demoted until the invention of the valve mechanism in the nineteenth century, and this revival was enhanced by the development of Adolphe Sax's family of modern instruments. The resurgence of brass was illustrated with two pieces by Berlioz played by the Hallé under Sir Hamilton Harty in the 1930s.



Ron Downs, Bradford RMS,
with Arthur Butterworth

The cornet was developed very successfully as an alternative to the trumpet in France, but this was not so in England.

We then heard a new recording of Wagner's *Rienzi* Overture, made by Barry Wordsworth and the New Queen's Hall Orchestra with instruments from the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries: they use wooden flutes, gut strings and narrow-bore trumpets and trombones.

In the 1970s Arthur heard Edmund Rubbra's orchestration of the Brahms *Handel Variations*, which he had known as a piano work. The new version sounded like a greater work. Arthur was later inspired to give the *Variations* a similar treatment for brass, which the Black Dyke Mills Band recorded in 2001.

More recently Arthur wrote a work for both brass band and orchestra. It was inspired by an exhibition of paintings by Lowry's teacher, Adolphe Valette, showing Manchester in the late Victorian period. We heard a rehearsal tape of the first movement, called *Oxford Road, Manchester, on a misty November evening*, with Nagano conducting the Hallé and the Glasgow CWS Brass Band.

Ivan March gave the vote of thanks and asked Arthur to take questions about brass instruments. We learnt that Ravel favoured a small tuba in C to the standard model in B flat; that the Sousaphone is an E flat Bass instrument; and the Sarrusophone is a metal contra bassoon with a broad reed.

Naxos recent Releases

David Denton started by giving a few Naxos growth statistics. Twelve years ago the Naxos catalogue offered about 150 discs and had 0.5% of the market: now they have 2500 discs and 24% of the UK market, double the size of the next largest label. They are now exploring the USA market and in two-to-three years expect to be the largest seller of discs in the world!

The selection of current records started with a fanfare from Shostakovich's ballet *The Bolt* and the opening march from his *Second Jazz Suite*.

Naxos now issue most of their discs in themed series, targeting those who like 'completeness'. Klaus Heymann, "Mr Naxos", asked David for 80-disc lists for a British and an American series. The British list included Elgar, Holst and Walton, and went on to explore the symphonies and tone poems of Arnold Bax. Although they have tended to use their own recordings in the past, Naxos have acquired the English Song Cycle series from Collins Classics and the interesting American Delos label.

We also heard extracts from the Light Classics, Organ, and the Opera Classics series. Naxos are also proud of their Historic Series, where the processing from 78s or early LPs to CD is done by a man called Ward Marston who has been blind since birth. For transfers he obtains a number of pressings and segments them, then selects the best to create superb sound. There were many goodies, too many to list here but we had a sample of two future issues: an exciting new violinist named Si qin Lu playing Sarasate's *Violin Showpieces*, and Dmitri Yablonsky with the Russian State Symphony Orchestra, playing Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*.

An Evening with Linda Ormiston

The late-night Sunday show had a riotous start. Paul Serotsky, YRG's resident technical expert, was enjoying every inch of Linda's décolletage whilst deciding where to fix the microphone and, having lectured her to be careful of the wires, promptly tripped over them himself. This was greeted with much applause.

Linda spoke of her career, starting at the age of nine with a small repertoire that included *How*

THE YORKSHIRE REGIONAL GROUP'S SPRING WEEKEND 2004

The Crown Hotel, The Esplanade,
Scarborough

The Weekend starts at 2.30 on
Saturday 24 April and finishes
after lunch on Monday 26 April.

The cost is £104 per person, which
is payable to the hotel, and covers twin
or double rooms, meals and interval teas

The Conference fee is £10.00 per person,
payable to the YRG Secretary when booking

If you want to stay on Friday 23 it will cost
£32.00 for B&B, or £37.00 for DB&B (the extra
£5.00 for Friday dinner is extremely good value).

Booking for YRG Societies opens on 11 October.

General booking opens on 12 November to
31 December 2003. There will be no single
rooms but plenty of double or shared twin rooms.

For further details contact Dennis Clark,
YRG Secretary, 227 Tinchill Road, Leeds, LS16 7BU

much is that doggie in the window? Early roles in *HMS Pinafore* eventually led to a recording in 1988 with the New Sadler's Wells Opera, and from this we heard Linda as *Little Buttercup*. She followed this with the Sandman's song from Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Linda's evening was full of anecdotes and stories. For example, the role of *Mother Goose* in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, has only 41 notes to sing in the first half thus, when singing at Glyndebourne it was possible to leave Sussex and be home in Glasgow before the opera finished.

Linda has enjoyed a very varied career, from singing Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore*, appearing in *Façade* with the Black Dyke Mills Band, and doing her own one-woman show, with songs by Joyce Grenfell, Beatrice Lillie and Gracie Fields. We heard several songs from some of Linda's friends.

To finish we had an explosion of fun with an incredibly fast version of the patter song from Act II of *Ruddigore*, in which Linda was partnered by Gordon Sanderson and Harold Innocent.

A Mixed Bag

Peter Allen's Monday morning programme was full of beautiful music and had been crafted with obvious affection for both the works and artists. He started with Schumann's Opus 24 *Liederkreis*, exquisitely sung by Ian Bostridge accompanied by Julius Drake. Few people had heard of *The Red Dragonfly*, a beautiful song for counter-tenor and piano by the Japanese composer Kosaku Yamada (1886-1965), and Peter noted how much the musical world had changed, particularly in the

integration of Eastern and Western music. It was followed by two excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*.

Peter's programme concluded with Elgar's *Sonata for Violin and Piano in E minor*. It was written in 1918 at 'Brinkwells', where Lady Alice Elgar had taken Sir Edward to recuperate from the stresses of war. We heard the 1980s recording made by a young Nigel Kennedy with Peter Pettinger.

Conclusion

The weekend ended with a raffle, then votes of thanks were given to all concerned with organising the weekend.

Tony Pook, Chairman YRG

Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?

There's a famous seaside town
called Scarb'rough,
Where every year, in the spring,
The Recorded Music Societies
Converge for their annual fling.

They travel from all over Yorkshire,
And some from much further away,
All eager to hear the guest speakers
And enjoy the music they'll play.

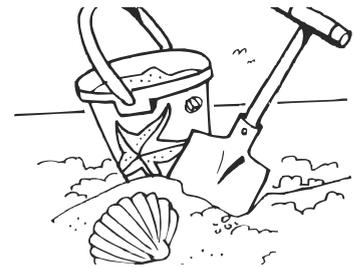
This year the forecast wasn't pleasant,
It said "rainy", not "Scarb'rough Fair",
But though there were one or two showers,
We'd sunshine, too, when we got there.

Most people arrived on the Friday,
Though things didn't start till next day,
And so we'd an extra recital
Which made a most pleasant soiree.

The speakers were all interesting,
With plenty of humour as well;
And as for the music they'd chosen,
We could only describe it as 'swell'.

Now Peter and Paul played the music
(Our members of course, not the saints);
They gave such a perfect performance
That we had no cause for complaints.

When they heard a loud, exciting passage
From brass, woods, percussion and strings,
They jumped up, beat time and gyrated
As if they were sitting on springs.



The CD sale quickly attracted
A small crowd which rapidly grew;
Some discs were being sold by our members
And Naxos had others there too.

The staff at the Crown Hotel
helped us
To spend a most happy weekend;
The service and food were both splendid.
It's a place we can well recommend.

We all enjoyed talking to people
We'd met and made friends with before,
And after this year's get-together
We found we had many friends more.

Our stay at the Crown was soon ending;
The time for departure was here;
We'd enjoyed the weekend so well that
We've booked the hotel for next year.

Brian Jenkinson, Huddersfield
RMS

HOLIDAYS AD.

Cardiff RMS

Another successful season was finished in April 2003 giving members time to go on holiday and tend their gardens. However the new committee is now working hard to ensure that the next season is just as successful, especially as the society will then be 60 years old.

The season, which runs on a weekly basis from September to April, has had a series of interesting presentations, both from our own members and outside presenters. With details of working from the inside we had a member, Heather James, recounting her amusing experiences while treading the boards in amateur opera and operetta, while Chris Ball, Birmingham's Deputy Coroner, gave advice on how to avoid being a subject of a coroner's inquest when discussing death in opera.

We had two conversation pieces last season: The conversation between Richard Hickox, Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and our president, Edward Greenfield was one of the highlights of the year where Richard Hickox talked about his career, his work with the BBC NOW and his musical preferences. We are indeed fortunate to have Edward Greenfield as our President and look forward to his annual presentations. In the other conversation piece, Wynne Lloyd, a past chairman of the society, talked to Anthony Freud, General Director of the Welsh National Opera who gave us an eclectic selection of music from Wagner to Sondheim.

Live music was not forgotten and in February we had Robert Codd and Jean Marsden, both players with the BBC NOW, who gave us an interesting programme on the oboe and bassoon from the baroque to the present day, illustrating their programme with live music and recorded music.

In April we had an audio-visual presentation by Tim Porter, a lecturer in Music and Mediaeval History from Reading University, who gave us magnificent slides showing the splendours of Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, and played music that illustrated the problems and challenges of singing in such a building. The problem of reverberation was particularly critical.

As well as all this we had our regular features presented by members such as Music Magazine, where topical issues are presented, *Pick 'n' Mix* where members are interviewed and tell a story about a favourite piece of music, and London being discussed in the Great Musical Cities series.

One of our senior members and former

committee member of both the FRMS and our own society, Rainer Lenk, celebrated his 80th birthday by giving us a memorable evening where he considered a lifetime of collecting serious music recordings.

In such a successful programme Ann Davies was challenged to come up with an equivalent speaker for the Society's annual Social Event. Ann met the challenge by inviting Donald Maxwell, well known locally for his roles with WNO, including Falstaff. (which he has sung around the world). Donald entertained us with wit and charm at the new venue of the University Catering Department whilst we sat digesting a superb fork buffet.

Our activities have not been confined to our



Ann Davies and Donald Maxwell

Society meetings. Wynne Lloyd has been instrumental in putting together a series of programmes on Level 5 of St David's Hall covering the Bel Canto Operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. This is a series of 10 programmes given by members of the Society for the benefit of the citizens of Cardiff, and raises an awareness of the Society amongst the general public. The series is very successful, each meeting being attended by up to 120 people, and we are all looking forward to the restart of the series in September after the summer break.

Last season has been particularly successful; our Programme Secretary, Norman Slater, had excelled himself but we are confident that he will keep up the standard this next season. All these items were complemented by stage management by Rowland Edwards who succeeds in adding a touch of magic to our rather mundane Hall! The details of the presentations and the music played can be found on our web site (www.crms.supanet.com) which is maintained by Colin Dancer who has also taken on the task of Secretary for the coming year.

Kirkcaldy RMS

The Society recently marked the end of its sixtieth season with two special commemorative programmes. The first, "Celebration I", was presented by Miss Nan Dow, the longest-serving member. Miss Dow drew upon her long personal association with the Society and had gleaned further details from the archives and from the former magazine of the Society, *The Grammalogue*. The first meeting had taken place in the home of an enthusiast and the first piece to be heard was a 78 rpm recording of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* which had been played on an acoustic gramophone with a large external horn. After playing a modern CD of this work, Miss Dow outlined developments in equipment and recording media over the sixty years, illustrating her talk with recordings of music that had been heard at different events throughout the Society's history. From its inception as the Nairn Gramophone Society which met in the staff canteen of the Nairn linoleum-manufacturing firm, the Society had experienced changes which had led to changes in the name, firstly to Kirkcaldy Gramophone Society and then to Kirkcaldy Recorded Music Society. Factual material gained from the archives was coloured with personal reminiscences of occasions and personalities in the Society's history.

"Celebration I" having been devoted to the past, "Celebration II" concentrated on the present membership. The President, Roy Plaice, set the festive mood with a welcoming glass of wine before presiding over a programme of favourite recordings chosen by those who are currently active in running the Society. After a wide-ranging and rewarding selection of operatic and instrumental music, the programme was wound up in festive and toe-tapping style with four of Malcolm Arnold's *Scottish Dances* — the choice of Douglas Paton who has the onus of operating the equipment. After this feast of music, the celebration continued with a delicious buffet arranged by the Secretary, Miss Jean Peddie, and numerous surprise gifts were handed over to members who had drawn lucky numbers. This rounded off the sixtieth season in truly memorable style.

Celebrations will continue in the autumn when members will attend a performance by RSNO including *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and recalling the first piece heard at a meeting of the Society. Members are also looking forward to a commemorative lunch which will be held on 20th

November, the sixtieth anniversary of the first meeting. The guest speaker on this special occasion will be Mr Brian Cartwright, Hon. Treasurer of FRMS. Then on with the 61st season!

Elizabeth Coutts

Lincoln R. M. Group

Visit To Spalding

Lincoln Recorded Music Group has been exchanging visits with other R. M. Societies for the past ten years. Beginning with the Loughborough society and progressively tying up with Grantham, Newark, Rotherham & Spalding for the added enjoyment of sharing music and friendship with kindred spirits in other parts of their region. In a period when numbers in their own society have declined to challenging levels, the Lincoln members derive significant encouragement and reassurance from these contacts.

Having already travelled to Loughborough & Grantham earlier in the present season, March 11 saw a party of their members joining their southern Lincolnshire county cousins to share a programme presented by Lincoln RM Group committee member Grahame Foster. In a selection entitled Sounds Unfamiliar it was not surprising that names like Schnittke, George Moffat, John Adams, Guy Ropartz & Philip Glass came up; more perhaps, that those assembled heard music by Barber & Bruch, too.

Spalding Chairman Keith Dabling welcomed their guests & expressed his thanks on behalf of his members for the presenter's programme whilst fellow-committee-member Barry Dance did his usual seamless job of disc-jockeying. Lincoln Chairman George James & Secretary/Treasurer Fred Toyne both find, in addition to the shared enjoyment of some music, these exchange visits provide useful opportunities for comparing notes with their counterparts in the other society on a range of aspects of running RM groups, especially matters relating to low membership levels.

(In the photo, L. to R. : Barry Dance, Keith Dabling, Grahame Foster & George James).



Uxbridge RMS

The Society was founded in 1944 "To enjoy and study music of all kinds, chiefly by the interchange of records on a mutual or co-operative basis, and to present amongst ourselves suitable recitals by this means, and to afford an opportunity for discussion and exposition among those whose common interest is a love of music". It meets at Oak Farm Library on alternative Thursdays.

Murray Nash has been chairman at Uxbridge for over twenty years and has from time to time found himself championing composers from our shores; men such as Sir Granville Bantock, Sir Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge and George Lloyd. His review of a CD of some of the works of Matthew Curtis is included in the CD Review section of this Bulletin.

The President is Leslie Howard; and Lydia Davies and John Bryer are Hon. Vice Presidents.

Members at Uxbridge still remember their former President FREDERICK YOUENS who died in 1997 just short of his 100th birthday. A dear friend for over 50 years he was one of the four founder members of the Federation in 1936. He produced the first twelve issues of the Bulletin 'off his own bat' as he put it himself. He knew Sir Granville Bantock, Kathleen Ferrier, Hugh Bean, Ted Perry and many others; gave Dame Janet Baker her first recording contract when he was recording manager at Saga Records. He had a fund of stories with which to entertain and is still much missed.

York RMS

As York Recorded Music Society approaches its 49th year it has to move to a new venue. We have been meeting in *The House of Laymen*, part of St William's College (a splendid medieval building administered by York Minster) for some 32 years. All our visitors have admired its panelling and beams, many declaring that they have never listened to music in such splendid surroundings.

But commercial considerations now dominate so many aspects of modern life. Over the past three years our room-hire charges have increased by 100% and this, coupled with a reduction in our membership to 31, meant we had to consider alternatives: increase our annual subscription from £21 to about £50, drastically reduce the number of meetings or move. Has your Society faced similar problems? If so, how have you coped?

Fortunately York has other suitable buildings and we were able to find an affordable alternative in the Central Methodist Church Hall. This is part

of a most impressive building with a pillared façade, and it is still in the centre of York.

So, if you're visiting York, we'd be very pleased to see you. We've got some interesting programmes and we meet on alternate Thursdays in our new premises, very close to one of York's shortest and most unusually named streets, *Whip-ma-whop-ma Gate*. You can get further details about our speakers and us on the FRMS website.

Tony Pook, Chairman, York RMS

BOOK REVIEW

The Amadeus: Forty years in pictures and words

Compiled by Suzanne Rozsa-Lovett

£10 including p&p from the author at 24

Redlington Gardens, London NW3 7RX



What an apt title for this splendid publication. We

immediately think of the String Quartet by that name, viz. Brainin, Nissel, Schidlof and Lovett, who charmed us all over the world for so many years. After an auspicious start in Wigmore

Hall in January 1948, the Amadeus continued until the end of 1987, after 40 years when Schidlof died. This is a book with a difference in that it is more of a scrapbook with sketches, facsimiles of programmes and many other memorabilia all of which are beautifully reproduced.

Naturally there is an insight into the life and family of each of the four protagonists. And as so often, great musical abilities manifested themselves early in each of their lives. Of course they had contact with many other musicians in particular Yehudi Menuhin, and more directly Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst.

For us now the flavour of their musicianship comes from the discography. This is faithfully reproduced and we start with 78s, LPs and finally CDs. And as expected a substantial number of their recordings are now available on CD. Immediately one thinks of Haydn's Emperor quartet or Mozart's Hunt quartet, but looking at what is available there is a fascinating and comprehensive set of Brahms works and a delightful collection they are. And finally this publication is being sold in aid of the Amadeus Scholarship Fund. The future too must be supported.

Hein Kropholler

NOBILMENTE

Elgar and Chivalry by Robert Anderson

468 pp, HB, £20

Elgar Editions

Robert Anderson is a Vice President of the Elgar Society, has conducted some of Elgar's choral works, has been Coordinating Editor of the Elgar Complete Edition. The author has provided a comprehensive bibliography and good index.

The book itself is subdivided into 18 chapters, each designed to suggest the various experiences Elgar enjoyed that, in some way, influenced the manner in which he composed and, in particular, the manner in which Elgar viewed chivalry. The author, sometimes rather exhaustively, quotes from poems, novels, records of encounters with fellow artists and other sources in his enthusiasm to try to give some impression of the many areas from which Elgar may have derived his inspiration.

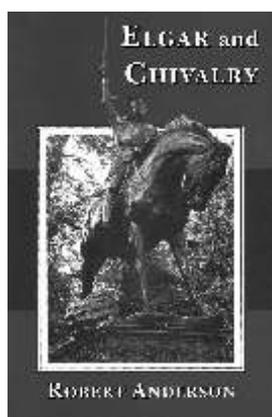
The main thought running through the book is that some of his main stimuli for things to do with chivalry were the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Froissart, the poems by his wife and Longfellow, and anything about King Arthur.

Like many artists however, it seemed that there was quite an interval in time between the germ of the idea and its realisation or incorporation into a composition. The coming together of different ideas culled from different sources is quite clearly indicated throughout the book.

It was some time before Elgar himself became dubbed as a knight with an Order of Merit awarded by a gracious sovereign in appreciation for his services rendered, partly as a Composer of the King's Musick but this reward was greatly appreciated by Elgar and he was glad to receive such a chivalrous award.

Of all of Elgar's compositions, however, perhaps his symphonic study, "Falstaff" gives us the best autobiography available. Like Elgar, Falstaff started from lowly beginnings, enjoyed an experimental youth in the country, learning his trade from personal experience, how to cope with life, reaching great heights and, in very much later life, finding himself no longer in tune. The main difference was obvious that Elgar had a loving and faithful wife who supported him.

Most artists rely on creation by trying to manifest what they have experienced in dreams or



in their own imagination, these being a hopeless mixture of some of their experiences, both recent and well past. Elgar was a dreamer par excellence and he composed another part of his autobiography in his setting of O'Shaughnessy's poem *Ode* which begins "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams, wandering by lone sea breakers, and sitting by desolate streams". He also composed *Dream Children* and *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Throughout his life, Elgar always enjoyed "escaping" from his studio and either walking, cycling or motoring on his beloved Malvern Hills. Walking and relaxing in the countryside has been found by many as the opportunity to ponder undistracted by other people and to live in one's own little world, sorting things out. This book serves to confirm the many different directions one's mind may be searching in simultaneously using the artist's innate senses to put together something highly personal.

In his setting of the "Ode" he quotes quite liberally from some of his own works as Richard Strauss did in his *Ein Heldenleben*, which could be construed as describing some of his "knightly exploits" and his fights against his critics.

In this book the author attempts, for the most part successfully, to suggest how the various aspects of chivalry that Elgar had experienced became manifest in his major works, starting with his early orchestral overture *Froissart* and moving through his *First and Second Symphonies*, his oratorio *King Olaf* and others, his concert overture *Cockaigne* and his *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* to his incomplete *Third Symphony*.

It is perhaps particularly significant that one of Elgar's favourite markings in his scores is "Nobilmente", with long themes which soar and surge with intense grandeur and humility.

The author of this book confesses that it contains merely ideas and suggestions on how various things may have come about. He has put much effort into his researches into the various possible origins of Elgar's music as related to chivalry and is to be commended for putting together such a comprehensive composition of thoughts.

Apart from Elgar's own admissions, however, we may never really know.

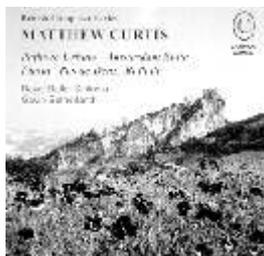
John Kemsey-Bourne

Matthew Curtis (b. 1959):

Orchestral Works: Fiesta; Amsterdam Suite; Pas De Deux; Paths to Urbino.; Ballade; Haunted Woods; Outward Bound.

The Royal Ballet Sinfonia / Gavin Sutherland. Campion Cameo 2015

Has your society discovered the music of Matthew Curtis yet? We at the Uxbridge Society have known about him since 1984 when a couple of his works were broadcast on BBC Radio 3. *Romanza* and *Autumn Song* both pieces for full orchestra were performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra under their conductor Ashley Lawrence. Curtis, born in Cumbria in 1959, was then in his early twenties but already showing he was a master of orchestration.



In March of this year, *The Gramophone* magazine contained a review of the above new compact disc. This was by Ivan March. Surprisingly none of the items were included in the *Editor's Choice* CD issued by the magazine for the month. To help readers appreciate the quality of the music Ivan made comparisons with Eric Coates, Haydn Wood, Ronald Binge, Robert Farnon and Bizet in his glowing review. Despite those comparisons Curtis is his own man and has his own style being largely self taught.

I managed (with difficulty – but Harold Moore in London were very helpful) to obtain this Campion CD and sat in my lounge with baited breath to hear this music I had waited for so long.

I was enthralled as tune followed tune for the entire 77 minutes. I would draw your attention in particular however to the symphonic suite *Paths to Urbino* which recalls a walking holiday he enjoyed in North Italy. The movement *Music of the fields* is especially beautiful, as are *Ballade* and *Haunted Woods*.

This is music to stand the test of time. If you feel unable to trust my judgement, then trust that of Ivan March who has served music lovers for decades. Why not get this CD and give your members a treat.

I understand that Curtis wrote a symphony whilst in his teens, and I urge that a further CD containing that symphony plus *Romanza* and *Autumn Song* should be considered by Campion.

Murray Nash, Chairman, Uxbridge RMS

BRAHMS: Trio in A minor, op. 114

Hugh WOOD: Clarinet trio, op.40

BEETHOVEN : Trio in B flat, op.11

Trio Gemelli

Divine Art 25009

The Trio Gemelli, made its debut in Madrid in 1994 and comprises John (clarinet) and Adrian (cello) Bradbury who are identical twins and Emily Segal (piano). It has given a series of successful concerts both in the UK and in continental Europe.



The Brahms Trio is a late work that shows Brahms at his rich romantic best, it is

not designed as a showpiece for the clarinet as all three instruments are of equal importance, with the cello often taking the lead. The dreamy slow movement is especially fine. The three young players play with maturity and the work sounds most impressive.

Hugh Wood was born in Wigan in 1932 and has been involved in teaching music for most of his life. His compositions are mainly in the chamber music field and the Trio Gemelli premiered this trio. The work is short, with three brief movements and is uncompromisingly modern in sound. The opening movement concentrates on each musician as a solo instrumentalist, with long solos for each instrument in turn. The second movement is a scherzo march of considerable character. Unusually the finale is a slow movement intended as a tribute to two friends who died in 1997. However it comes across as a work lacking in emotion and it does not fit in well with the accompanying works.

Beethoven wrote his Opus 11 trio in 1798 and it is sometimes played in a contemporary arrangement for violin, cello and piano. Although a relatively early work, it shows Beethoven at his peak. The first movement is an allegro con brio and is of fascinating complexity. It is followed by a slow movement, played here with great feeling. The last movement is a theme and variations, the theme is a jaunty tune from an opera by J. Weigl – it reminds us that Beethoven is unsurpassed at writing variations, even based upon the most trivial of tunes (see for example the *Variations for Piano Trio on Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu*).

The playing is exemplary and it is recorded in a warm acoustic. The disc is well presented, with good notes.

AB

Crossword

(Mainly Music!)

By Hein Kropholler

CHANDOS

This crossword has been sponsored by Chandos Record who will give a prize of a CD from their catalogue to the winner who will be chosen by a draw from all correct answers received by the editor before the 1st January. 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. Modern sackbut virtuoso [8]
- 5&1 down. Small? virtuoso violinist [6,6]
- 9. Thus with violin? Certainly not 5 [2,6]
- 10&21. Famous French composer [6,7]
- 12. Did 24 say this to her when he came to Carthage? [2,4]
- 13. So 7th and 3rd note? [4,2,2]
- 15. No discord in this form [2,5]
- 16. A drum can go thus [4]
- 20. Direction for Chinese music [4]
- 21. see 10.[7]
- 25+27 down. No Russian but Armenian [12]
- 26. All together at the right rate [2,4]
- 28. Lucia? Only the bit that sounds like a sheep [6]
- 29. Note alone sounds unmarried [2,6]
- 30. Sings in the alps [6]
- 31. We talk of eight & twelve but really count thus [2,6]

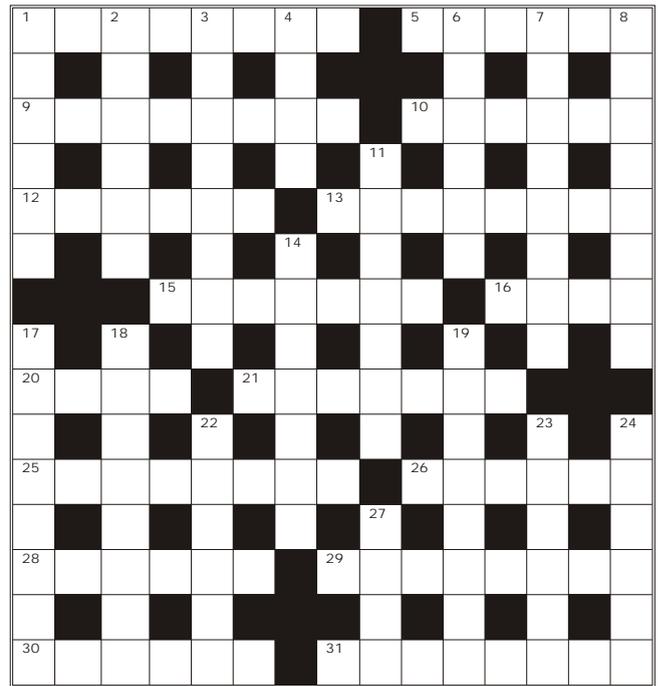
DOWN

- 1. See 5. [6]
- 2. Prom conductor [6]
- 3. Chemist with first becomes mezzo [8]
- 4. Happened to Lucrezia! [4]
- 6. Beauty with ... [1,5]
- 7. Strong weak weak beats are [8]
- 8. With neither circles ... [3,5]
- 11. When exasperated Tortelier might say this [2,5]
- 14. Instrument adjusted [5,2]
- 17. Lennox? [8]
- 18. When music soothes the troubled breast [2,6]
- 19. Jazz when it is blazing? [3,5]
- 22. Besech it in the belfry? [2,4]
- 23. Alone [6]
- 24. Hero of the Trojan war [6]
- 27. See 25

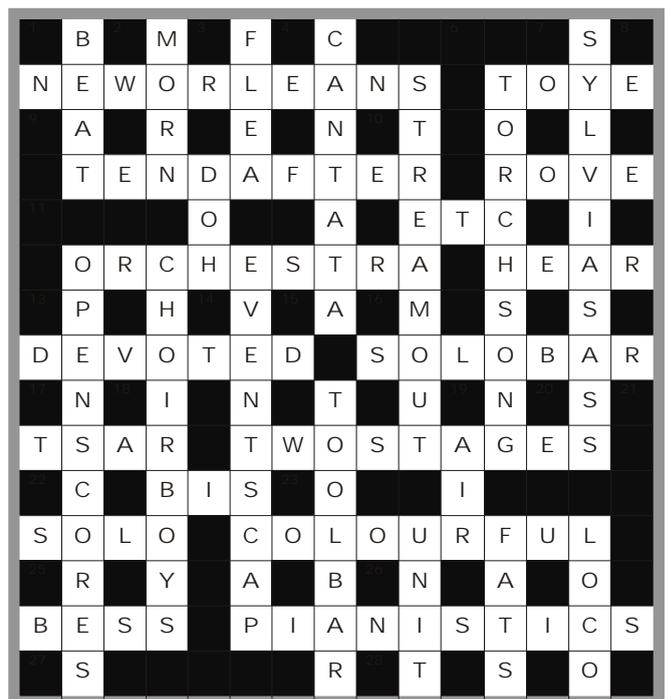
WHOOPS! Corrections to Crossword 138

8 down clue missing 8. Unrequited love air of the 30's. [5,4] and "existing 8" becomes 10 down. also 18 across the answer is two words i.e. [4,3] Sorry!

Crossword 139



Solution to Crossword 138



Winner

Despite the problems, there was one correct solution submitted for crossword number 138, and the prize has been given to D.H. Page, Orpington RMS. Two submissions were received with only minor errors, these being from Paul Webster and Brendon Sadler.



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