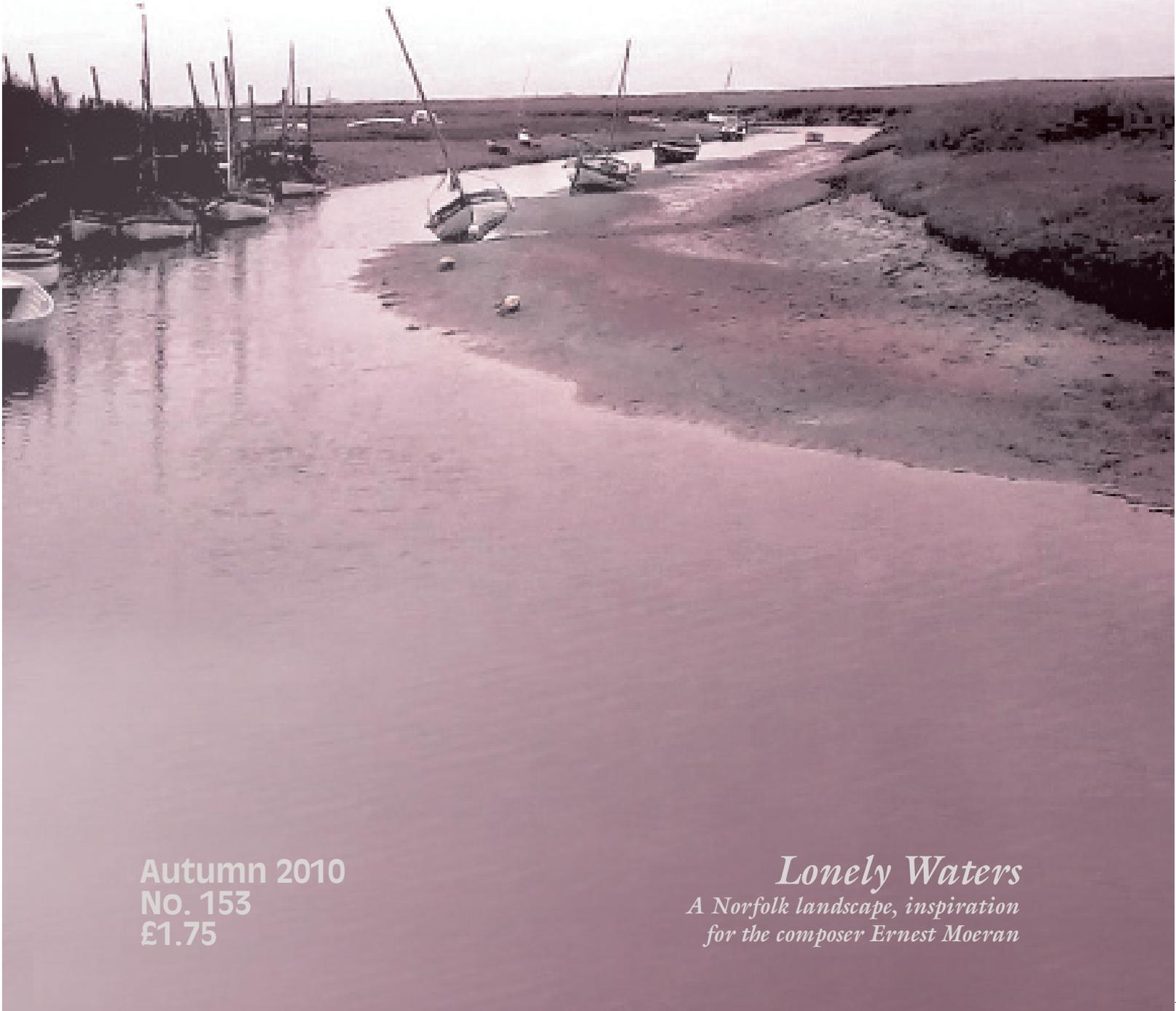




# Bulletin



Autumn 2010  
No. 153  
£1.75

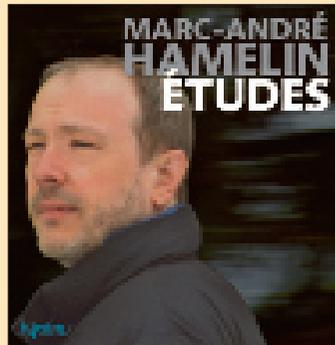
*Lonely Waters*  
A Norfolk landscape, inspiration  
for the composer Ernest Moeran

# NEW RELEASES

[www.hyperion-records.co.uk](http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk)

## MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN ÉTUDES

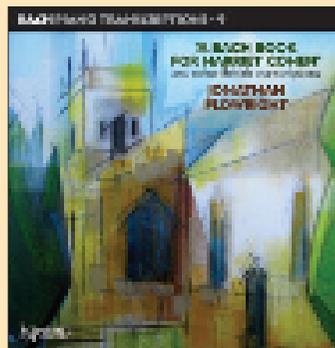
Hamelin plays Hamelin: a glimpse into the fabulously bizarre musical mind of one of the greatest piano virtuosos of today. Marc-André Hamelin's 12 Études, written over a period of nearly twenty-five years, have already achieved cult status by reputation as pianistic challenges beyond the reach of most human fingers. They are also highly-wrought character pieces. That they will immediately take their place in the concert repertoire of any pianist who thinks himself equal to them is indicated by their contemporaneous publication by Peters Edition New York. **MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN**



Compact Disc CDA67789

## 'A BACH BOOK FOR HARRIET COHEN' AND OTHER BRITISH TRANSCRIPTIONS

In 1931 the pianist and muse Harriet Cohen invited all her principal composer friends each to make an arrangement of a work by J S Bach for inclusion in an album to be published by Oxford University Press. Published as *A Bach Book for Harriet Cohen*, it is recorded here for the first time by virtuoso pianist Jonathan Plowright. The disc is completed by eight other 20th-century British Bach transcriptions. **JONATHAN PLOWRIGHT**



Compact Disc CDA67767

## DOVE CHORAL MUSIC

Jonathan Dove's beautiful choral works have made him into a household name among professional and amateur singers alike. His writing is eminently approachable yet highly original. The *Missa brevis* is the most recent work to be recorded here and was first performed by Wells Cathedral Choir under Matthew Owens' direction. The same forces have recorded it here along with a delectable selection of Dove's anthems. **WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR  
MATTHEW OWENS**



Compact Disc CDA67768

## MOZART STRING QUINTETS

The relatively novel instrumental combination which Mozart used for his string quintets (employing two violas) seems to have been inspired by a work by his friend and colleague Michael Haydn. Throughout his life Mozart loved the dusky sonority of the viola, always his instrument of choice when he played chamber music with friends. The complete String Quintets is an enchanting body of chamber music, recorded here in a 3-disc set by the peerless Nash Ensemble. **THE NASH ENSEMBLE**



3 Compact Discs CDA67861/3

# 30 hyperion

## THREE MAGNIFICENT BOXED SETS

### SCHUMANN THE COMPLETE SONGS

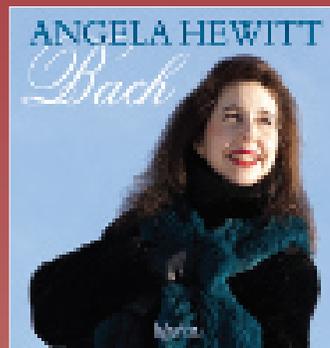
Schumann's songs are among the greatest musical achievements of the nineteenth century and this is the perfect release with which to mark the composer's 200th birthday. This marvellous collection comprises Schumann's complete songs, presented for the first time in their chronological sequence of composition, with complete song texts, and a chronology of Schumann's life and songs by Graham Johnson. Johnson is, of course, also the curator and unifying musical force of this series, accompanying his hand-picked selection of singers – some of the greatest lieder performers of today, and indeed of tomorrow – with utter sensitivity.



10 Compact Discs CDS44441/50 (at a special price)

### ANGELA HEWITT PLAYS BACH

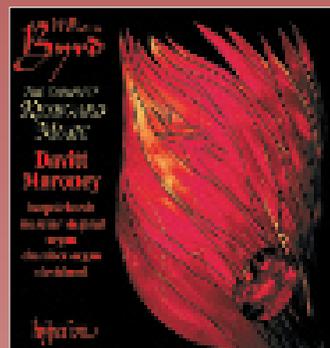
Angela Hewitt's acclaimed recordings of Bach on the piano have received the highest critical acclaim and found their way into thousands of homes, selling nearly 400,000 copies since her recording of the Inventions burst onto the scene in 1994. Now for the first time Angela's complete solo Bach is available as a boxed set of 15 CDs at a special price.



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7 Compact Discs CDS44461/7 (at a special price)

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**SAINT-SAËNS / YSAÏE RARE TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR VIOLIN & PIANO** 'Graffin's tone throughout is sweet and seductive, his phrasing a thing of pure joy ... a wonderful disc. Buy it' (*Gramophone*) **PHILIPPE GRAFFIN / PASCAL DEVOYON**



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# FRMS BULLETIN Autumn 2010 No. 153

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**Editor** Thelma Shaw  
15 Cann's Lane  
Hethersett  
Norwich NR9 3JE  
Tel: 01603 812996

### Editorial copy

*If your copy* is in manuscript form or on CD or floppy disc, send it direct to the Editor at the above address.

*If your copy* is available as an email attachment send it to:  
*editor@thefrms.co.uk*

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Autumn issue: 30<sup>th</sup> June

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**Front cover: *Lonely Waters***  
from a series of photographs of  
coastal Norfolk by **Sholto Mills**

Please note that the address  
of the FRMS website is  
**www.thefrms.co.uk**

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## EDITORIAL

### *To whom it might concern, or letter to an unknown lady*



During over 20 years association with the FRMS, most of them as Editor of this magazine, I have met and made a multitude of friends. Other readers have telephoned me for one reason or another, either to point out an error (that's par for the course for an Editor, but thankfully it doesn't happen too often!) or to comment on some aspect of the content. Always the exchange has been good-humoured and mutually beneficial.

So I was somewhat taken aback at the rather unfriendly tone of a recent caller who asked whether I ever checked the facts 'in the supposedly wonderful Bulletin' and was adamant that there was wrong information on p.21 of the Spring issue. She claimed that the person with Adrian Boulton in picture no.4 on the inside back cover was not Herbert Howells but the conductor Vilem Tausky.

I assured her that I didn't think the advertiser would have given me wrong information but I would ask the directors of Wyastone to investigate. She refused to give her name and contact number, saying brusquely:

"It doesn't matter who I am, I am just telling you that you are wrong. That is definitely a picture of Vilem Tausky." Needless to say, the call was not registered on 1471.

I am very sorry that I can't speak to this caller directly (or communicate via her RMS as she refused to tell me that also) so I hope she reads the following information from Antony Smith at Wyastone. "It cannot possibly be Vilem Tausky as he never recorded with Lyrita and, as far as I know, never visited the studio, but I will check with Richard Itter himself."

A few days later he told me that Richard Itter confirmed that he had never met Vilem Tausky. Richard Itter and Antony investigated three different sources: the Lyrita archives; the biography and photographic folder for Herbert Howells, and known photographs of Vilem Tausky. All these established beyond doubt that the answer given for picture 4 was correct, with a 100% match with a picture in Herbert Howells' folder. As luck would have it, Roderick also has in his archives this rather old photograph of Vilem Tausky, taken when he addressed a Federation music weekend held at Fitzwilliam College in 1989.

A comparison with the person in the picture in question shows that the man with Adrian Boulton is not

Vilem Tausky. I hope my unknown caller will accept this information in the friendly spirit in which it is offered.



Vilem Tausky, young at heart

#### ***We reach a venerable age***

Next year the Federation reaches its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. As you can imagine, much thought has gone into how best to celebrate this significant milestone, and the brainstorming sessions still continue! It might be that something special could be included in the two important annual events in the FRMS calendar: the music weekend and the AGM. If you have an idea to add to the pool of suggestions, please let either the Chairman or the Secretary know about it; their details are at the back of the magazine.

#### ***Lonely Waters***

The composer Ernest Moeran loved the stillness of Norfolk's coastal landscapes, captured in his atmospheric tone poem *Lonely Waters*. This season's cover is one of a series of photographs of the NE Norfolk coast taken by a teenager, out of work and hoping to sell them. Please contact me if you would like further details. *Thelma Shaw*

## OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news

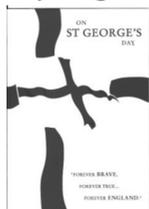
### Music weekend almost a sell-out

A good sprinkling of newcomers added to the large number of regulars at the annual FRMS music weekend in Daventry, making the event almost a sell-out. Once again, with their streamlined organisation, Graham Kiteley and Tony Baines staged another gala weekend. Their formula of first-rate presenters, excellent cuisine, a brilliant live recital and enough time between sessions to catch up with old friends (and make new ones) ensures the continued success of an event that has become the social highlight of the Federation year and strengthens the links between affiliates.

My thanks to George Steele for the pics and to those named below, for their contributions to this report. ED

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Flying the flag



The weekend began on St. George's Day and it is a mark of the rapport between the Federation and the hotel management that there was an appropriate signed good-wishes card on every table at the celebration dinner.

At an informal pre-dinner drinks reception the FRMS President **Lyndon Jenkins** and both Vice-Presidents joined Chairman **John Davies** and his Committee to circulate among the assembled company and add to the considerable buzz of happy talk.

Suitably wine and dined, guests were ready to let the music begin. In his Chairman's welcome **John Davies** read greetings from Sir David Willcocks and Ted Greenfield before introducing the first presenter, who really needed no introduction.

#### Added spice

President **Lyndon Jenkins**, well known for his ready wit and entertaining style of presentation, said that he had used spoof, pastiche, transcription and variation to 'spice up' the vegetarian originals of his music items. Before he began his talk, Lyndon passed on good wishes from the pianist John Lill, who had enjoyed his appearance last year, when he was in conversation with Lyndon.



Lyndon introduced his first two items with a good-hearted dig at Classic FM's pandering to the vagaries of the general public. First, we heard an attractive arrangement of Albinoni's *Adagio in G* followed by pianist Alec Templeton playing his own transcriptions of Bach: *Bach goes to Town*.

Other delightful examples included Isobel Baillie's lyrical singing of an aria from Handel's *Solomon*; Liszt's and Berlioz's different arrangements of Schubert's *The Erl King*; Chabrier's tongue-in-cheek pot pourri of *Tristan and Isolde* themes arranged for piano, and much more. For this writer, the most surprising and charming item was introduced as "*Elgar as you've never heard him before*." This was The Swingles Singers wonderfully atmospheric version of his short composition *The Shower*. The singers' incredibly sensitive and musical sounds produced exactly the effect that Elgar intended.

Introducing his final item, Lyndon told how the conductor Nicolai Malko challenged the young Shostakovich to write an orchestral version of the piano piece *Tea for Two* in two hours. A mere 45 minutes later Shostakovich had completed the task, calling the toe-tapping work *Tahiti Trot*.

Lyndon's highly individual presentation, laced with many hilarious anecdotes, witty comments and the occasional slightly spicy aside, contained many recordings that most of us had not heard before and gave a rollicking start to the weekend.

#### From North America

*Mary Seaburn reports on a recital of not-so-familiar music.*

*Look west across the Atlantic and listen. Wait for the surprises.* This was the theme of Canadian-born opera singer-cum actress **Debbie Bridge's** talk about music by American composers.

Now resident in Britain, Debbie is a lively ambassador for the music of North America. She turned our European-based listening in a new direction and presented a chronological and lively sequence of American classical composers. She began surprisingly early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Louis Moreau Gottschalk, a contemporary of Chopin.

Expected and familiar names came in their turn: Ferde Grofe, Aaron Copland (father-figure of American music for 40 years), Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Philip Glass and John Adams.

But there were also less familiar, or even unknown, composers such as Paul Creston,

## OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news



**Opera singer/actress Debbie Bridge in good voice**

Frederick Shepherd, Converse, and Meredith Willson. All were indebted to their European heritage but all had also absorbed distinctly American influences that made their music unique.

This was a programme charged with infectious enthusiasm and included a delightful performance by Debbie herself. With vivacious enthusiasm, she took us on a musical journey to a New World, bounded by different and interesting horizons.

### **Elizabeth Muir-Lewis**



**Elizabeth Muir-Lewis was married to the great tenor, Richard Lewis, from 1963 until his death in 1990. The following summary of her talk about her late husband's life and work is by Brian Godfrey.**

Richard Lewis was born in 1914 into a poor working-class family in Manchester, his mother having to scrub floors to pay for his singing lessons and his studies at the Royal Manchester College of Music. His photographic memory made him a quick learner and his diction was always impeccable.

Richard Lewis made his opera debut in 1939 but his career was interrupted by World War II - his commanding officer decided that his best occupation was singing to the troops!

After the war, he picked up his opera career at Covent Garden and sang with Glyndebourne Opera at the Edinburgh Festival in 1948. He subsequently sang in the Sussex house for many seasons, from 1950 onwards. He had also flirted with the idea of joining the Britten set in Aldeburgh, but was discouraged from doing so by the near-monopoly of tenor parts by Peter Pears. We heard part of a rare archive recording from

Covent Garden in which Lewis sang Peter Grimes under Karl Rankl, one of the few performances not given by Peter Pears.

In 1954 Richard Lewis created the role of Troilus in Walton's opera, a part written especially for him. In the late 1950s he displayed a somewhat different talent in various Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. He recorded these for HMV under Sargent and we heard his touching rendering of *A wand'ring minstrel, I* from *The Mikado*.

He also had a major career as an oratorio singer, and we were treated to splendid excerpts from *Messiah*, *Elijah* and *The Dream of Gerontius*. Lewis held a strong Christian belief that he regarded as important in singing this genre of music. He recorded the role of Gerontius twice (under Sargent and Barbirolli) and rapidly assumed the mantle previously worn by Heddle Nash in this part. He also had success in Mahler, singing *Das Lied von der Erde* under Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and John Barbirolli.

Although dubbed 'the voice of Britain', Lewis developed an international career, making his US debut in 1955 and singing in the most prestigious company. Able to sing with moving conviction in any role, from dramatic passion to romantic lyricism, Richard Lewis was created CBE in 1963 and is greatly missed today.

### **Mark Bebbington**

A young British pianist of rare refinement and maturity, Mark Bebbington is an acknowledged champion of British music, which was the basis of his presentation: *A garden of rare and neglected delights*. It was a greater delight for us that, because there are few other recordings, he used his own highly acclaimed CDs to illustrate the works of composers that influenced his career.



**The acclaimed pianist Mark Bebbington**

He began with an unpublished miniature by Ivor Gurney, which Mark recorded at the invitation of the Gurney Society. The piece was written when Gurney was 14 years old and hints at the composer's emotional fragility. From the same disc we heard excerpts from Harold Ferguson's

## *OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news*

challenging *Piano Concerto* that he wrote for Myra Hess. Meaty and defiant, but also romantic, it deserves greater recognition.

English musical life was forced into isolation by developments abroad and this was an obstacle to the recognition of Frank Bridge. After his death his music fell into almost complete neglect but is beginning to enjoy a revival. We heard two examples: *Rosemary*, an early work that was very popular with Edwardian audiences; and (not an easy listen!) the beginning and ending of his *Piano Sonata*, a leading example of bitonality.

Elgar is not readily associated with piano but Mark was asked to prepare a transcription for piano of his 1<sup>st</sup> symphony. He played the last four minutes of this hugely demanding work, describing it as a 'good pianistic romp' saying that he always loses weight when he performs it!

Mark's final items were the lyrical slow movement of Ireland's *Piano Concerto* and Finzi's *Eclogue*, which was intended to be the slow movement of a piano concerto that was never finished. This fragment encapsulates the very essence of 'Englishness' and was, indeed, a rare delight to end a dazzling recital by a brilliant performer.

It was our great good fortune to welcome Mark Bebbington as one of our presenters.

### ***Sir Neville Marriner***

It was a great privilege to welcome Sir Neville Marriner and Lady Mary to Daventry.



*A smilingly reminiscent Sir Neville Marriner*

A prime figure in the music world for over 60 years, the renowned conductor Sir Neville Marriner, has been honoured widely for his services to music: in England with a CBE in 1979 and a knighthood in 1985; and in France with the prestigious award of the Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1995.

With a merry vibrance that belied his auspicious background – and 86 years! – Sir Neville gave a resumé of his life and work and introduced DVD recordings to illustrate some of his concert performances.

As a boy in Lincoln he entered many Methodist competitive music festivals as a violinist. Armstrong Gibbs, an adjudicator at one of these, recognised Neville's ability. As a result of Gibbs' encouragement, the 13 year old Neville entered and won an open class award; three years later he gained a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music and then entered the violin class at the Paris Conservatoire.

After spending the war years in the army he resumed his music career and founded the Virtuoso String Trio in 1949 and, together with Thurston Dart, the Jacobean Trio. He also taught the violin at the RCM and attended conducting courses held by Pierre Monteux in the USA.

While playing as a principal violinist with the LSO in 1959, Neville Marriner gathered a splinter group of fellow musicians who were not happy with the standard of playing to give concerts at the church of St. Martins-in-the Fields. Thus he founded the now world-famous orchestra and from his director's seat gravitated toward conducting.

Although, in response to the demands of recording companies, the orchestra has increased its size and repertoire, it has maintained its supremely high standard and style and 'the Academy sound' is recognised worldwide. Highlights among the music and DVD examples of Sir Neville conducting The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields were *The Entry of the Queen of Sheba*, filmed at Longleat; *King of Kings* from *Messiah*, and part of a Beethoven piano concerto with Murray Perahia as soloist.

Sir Neville endeared himself to his audience with his wit and good humour in a presentation that was a gala performance for Saturday evening.

### ***Stylish recital***

The traditional live recital given on Sunday morning by young musicians from the Birmingham Conservatoire was performed this year by The Boult Quartet with the award winning clarinettist Cosima Yu. Born in Taiwan, Cosima has played the clarinet since the age of 10, and in 2006 gained a scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Music degree at Birmingham Conservatoire.

Formed in 2008, the talented Boult Quartet is already an established promising and exciting ensemble. The influence of master-classes from such prestigious tutors as the Carducci, Chilingirian and Endellion Quartets and the Schubert Ensemble was manifest in the stunning performance we heard.

## OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news



*L to R: Hsin-jung (Cindy), violin; Catalin Chelaru, violin; Philipa Lodge, viola; Philip Handy, cello; Cosima Yu, clarinet.*

The programme included two of the greatest works written for clarinets: Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet in A major*. and Brahms' *Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet in B minor*.

The rapport between the players made for a beautifully balanced and sensitive interpretation of the works, with singing lyricism from the clarinet elegantly supported by the strings.

While Cosima gained her breath between these two marathons, the Boult Quartet gave a dazzling performance of Shostakovich's challenging *String Quartet no. 7*.

The FRMS technical team recorded this outstanding recital and the CD is available for £5 from Graham Kiteley whose details are at the back of this issue.

### **British Film Music**

*Graham Ladley summarises a presentation by a devotee of British film music.*



*Paul Westcott watching a film clip.*

Paul Westcott was a most appreciated return visitor to the Weekend, making his third appearance at Daventry. Paul is the Press Officer for Chandos Records. The company's well-known recordings of film music made up the core of the examples he played.

Paul described the heyday of film music as being in the 40s and 50s when, frequently, the scores were a successful mix of high art with popular culture. At its best, film music can become almost another character. Paul illustrated this

with Bernard Hermann's music for *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in which, for an instant, one thinks murder is committed by a clash of the cymbals. The video extract we were shown demonstrated this to perfection.

Paul also examined the phenomenon of the 'piano concerto' film and gave examples such as *The Lady Vanishes*, *While I Live* (Dream of Olwen) and *Hanover Square*. We also heard music from many of Alfred Hitchcock's films. Hitchcock was very particular about the music for his films and was inclined to sack composers who did not please him!

Paul made the interesting point that much of the music to the typically English Ealing films was written by a Frenchman, George Auric. He was not confined to comedy, however, as the eerie music to the thriller *Dead of Night* illustrated.

I must not give the impression that we were overwhelmed by information. On the contrary, Paul's élan and his affable approach – not to mention the rivetting film clips - ensured that not even a good lunch and a warm afternoon could stop the weekend coming to a triumphant conclusion.

### **Bargains & prizes**

In addition to the first-rate music presentations (and excellent cuisine at regular intervals!) there were bargain offers of highly collectable CDs available from the Wyastone collection and attractive prizes from the raffle organised by Diana Kiteley and Rita Davies.



*Antony Smith and, just visible behind him, Adrian Farmer behind their stall of CDs from the current Nimbus, Lyrita, Prima Voce and Saydisc labels.*



*L to R: Diana Kiteley, Ann Norman and Rita Davies get ready for a brisk sale of raffle tickets*

## OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news

### *Thank you and au revoir*

Before bidding us au revoir, FRMS Chairman John Davies gave well-earned thanks to all concerned with the smooth running of this annual highlight in the FRMS calendar.

There was heartfelt applause for the technical team: sound engineers Antony West-Samuel and Robert Swithenbank and Technical Officer Philip Ashton. Their expertise makes the weekend listening on equipment provided gratis by Cambridge Audio a real pleasure.

### *And a final reminder*



*Chairman John Davies reminds us that 2011 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federation and that brainstorming sessions are already under way to discuss how to mark this momentous year at the Daventry weekend. See you there!*

\*\*\*\*\*

## FRMS Scottish Group Spring Music Day

The FRMS Scottish group held a successful Spring Music Day at Discovery Point, Dundee on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> with a gathering of 36 members from Dundee, Falkirk, Carnoustie, Kirkcaldy, Stirling and St Fillans.

### *Distinguished Baritone*

Acting Chairman **John Maidment** welcomed the well-known baritone **Donald Maxwell** as the main speaker. He recalled his early introduction to Gilbert and Sullivan and produced a recording of Nelson Eddy singing Prince Gama's aria: *Yet ev'rybody says I'm such a disagreeable man! And I can't think why!* from Princess Ida.

Donald began his operatic career in the 1970s with Broughty Ferry Operatic Society. There is not the wealth of amateur singers as there was 40 years ago when, aided by an orchestra of excellent musicians, the company mounted such spectacular productions as Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*. In those days the chorus and orchestra were amateurs and only the leading singers were paid.

Through the pianist George Donald, perhaps best known for his role in *Scotland the What*, Donald was introduced to the lyric tenor Joseph Hislop, then in his 90s, for singing lessons. At this point Donald played a recording of Joseph Hislop and the Italian baritone Apollo Granforte singing a

duet from Verdi's *Force of Destiny*. The recording, made in the 1930s, involved recording into a horn. We learned that Joseph Hislop was a comparatively small man, whereas Granforte was somewhat larger and throughout the recording process Granforte repeatedly pushed Hislop aside!

Donald went on to talk about his time with Scottish Opera and paid tribute to the role of Sir Alexander Gibson in its founding in 1962, and under whose guidance it acquired a considerable reputation for its distinguished productions.

He then paid tribute to two of his friends who, sadly, are no longer with us, Kenneth McKellar and Ian Wallace. He recalled with great affection Kenneth McKellar's performance in Handel's *Messiah* with Dundee Choral Union.

His programme ended on a humorous note with contributions from Flotsam and Jetsam, The Harmonistes, Spike Jones and a rendition of *Winchester Cathedral* by Jan Peerce & Robert Merrill. **Chris Hamilton** proposed the vote of thanks.

### *The Annual General Meeting*

At the AGM, which followed the opening presentation, the Office bearers elected were:

**Pat Leishman**, of Dundee RMS, Chair;  
**Iain Pinkerton**, St Fillans Music Circle, Vice Chair,  
**John Maidment**, Carnoustie RMS Secretary  
**Chris Hamilton**, Dundee, Treasurer.

In the past year, the Scottish Group has established contact with Voluntary Arts Scotland whose role is to promote participation in the arts and crafts by supporting the development of the voluntary arts sector. The fortnightly newsletter is a valuable source of information and also offers free online advertising.

In addition the Scottish Group has initiated a database of speakers who are willing to travel to other societies within Scotland.

### *The Instrumental Side of Opera*

**Jim Angus** of Carnoustie RMS gave the second programme of the day and played enjoyable examples to illustrate his theme, *The Instrumental Side of Opera*. He included:

- \*Rossini's overture to the Barber of Seville
- \*The Intermezzo from Calvallerie Rusticana
- \*Liszt's Paraphrase from Rigoletto
- \*Beethoven's 7 variations on a theme from Mozart's *Magic Flute* for cello and piano
- \*The *Bacchanale* from Saint-Saens *Samson and Delilah*.

**Iain Pinkerton** of St Fillan's Music Circle gave the vote of thanks.

The address of Donald Pickett, Hon. Secretary of Portslade RMS is 79 Tumulus Road, Saltdean and not number 17 as given in issue 152.

Many apologies for the misprint.

## OUT & ABOUT - Regional and Society news

### FRMS CENTRAL REGION AUTUMN MUSIC DAY 2010

The Theme for the Day will be  
"Inspirations"

Saturday 6th November  
at a **NEW VENUE**

Quinborne Community Centre  
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For more details please contact the  
Regional Secretary, Mick Birchall, on  
01455 823484 or e-mail the Regional  
Chairman, Allan Child -  
allan.child@thefrms.co.uk

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Carshalton & Wallington RMS

On 14<sup>th</sup> September members of Carshalton & Wallington RMS celebrated the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at its usual venue, Wallington Library.

The Society was founded as Carshalton Gramophone Society in 1960 and the Rules were drawn up at its first committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September that year. On its inauguration the Society became affiliated to the then National Federation of Gramophone Societies and has since maintained close links with that body and its successor, the Federation of Recorded Music Societies.

The first venue was Honeywood, a 19<sup>th</sup> century house now designated as the Museum of the London Borough of Sutton. Other locations were used occasionally but this became the settled venue until 1970 when, first, Carshalton Library, and then Wallington Library, became the Society's home. There have been two subsequent name changes: first, in 1983, to Carshalton & Wallington Gramophone Society, and in 2002, 'Gramophone' was changed to 'Recorded Music'.

Remarkably, the Society has had only three chairmen in half a century: Mr George Punnett (1960 to 1974) was succeeded by Miss Mary Wignall (1974 to 1987) and her successor, Mr Roy Egan, has just been re-elected for the twenty-third time. Roy is shown in the photograph with Mary, who remains an active and enthusiastic member.



The Society meets on alternate Tuesdays at 7.45pm for about 24 meetings a year, with occasional meetings on more specialised subjects in members' homes. Guest presenters feature in almost half of our programmes.

In common with many societies, membership has fallen substantially and now stands in the region of 28, but attendance remains encouragingly high. Our aim is still to achieve a high standard of presentation using good quality equipment.

The Society has reached a significant milestone and we fervently hope it will reach many more.

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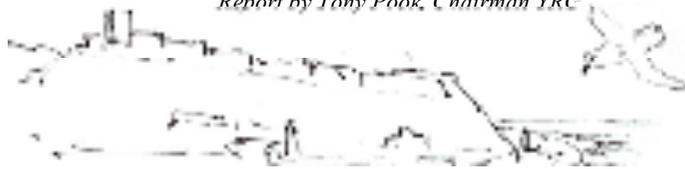
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## OUT & ABOUT –Regional and Society news

### SCARBOROUGH MUSIC WEEKEND

Report by Tony Pook, Chairman YRC



**Y**orkshire Regional Group's Treasurer, **Eric Illingworth** has managed both our technical and financial interests for many years to ensure the smooth running of the Music Weekend. This year he presented his first music programme at Scarborough. So it was a great pleasure to welcome him as the opening speaker on Friday night.



ERIC ILLINGWORTH

Eric's **Transport of Delight** set off by taxi, train, troika, boat and Hackney carriage, courtesy of Herb Alpert - *Tijuana Taxi*; Villa-Lobos - *Little Train of the Caipira*; Prokofiev- *Lt. Kije's wedding*; Debussy - *En bateau* from *The Little Suite*. The Hackney carriage was Jean Sablon's version of *Le Fiacre*, a scandalous tale of Madame and her lover, Leon, kissing in a cab, which unfortunately runs over her elderly husband. Relieved of the need for secrecy Madame instructs Leon to give the driver a tip!

We continued our travels in a pestle and mortar with the not-too-pleasant witch, Baba Yaga, as depicted by Liadov and, in a lighter Russian vein, Shostakovich took us for a ride in the boss's car to the new flats in Cheryomushki. We also witnessed the sun rising over Moscow and heard the church bells ringing in the prelude to Mussorgsky's epic opera *Khovanshchina*, before Borodin took us to join a romantic camel train on the Steppes of Central Asia.

Back in Europe, after a Schubertian Farewell (*Abschied*), we hurried off to a Norwegian *Winter's Night* party with Grieg before being lured away for *A Short Ride in a Fast Machine* with John Adams, Simon Rattle and the CBSO.

Hans Christian Lumbye was so impressed with Johann Strauss's popular Viennese concerts that he offered similar fare in the Tivoli Gardens, where we joined him for *The Copenhagen Steam Railway Galop*, written in 1843 in honour of the first railway in the Danish capital.

The Barcarolle from Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* gave a brief respite before we joined the King's Singers with Flanders and Swann's *Big six-wheeler, scarlet-painted, London Transport, diesel-engined, 97-horse-power omnibus* - truly a Transport of Delight!

**S**aturday mornings are free-time in the Weekend, so it is good opportunity to shop in Scarborough's centre, walk to the Spa or the harbour, or visit the Art deco tea-room, *Francis*, tucked away in the back-streets of Scarborough's southern headland.

**S**aturday afternoon saw a change of programme. Our scheduled presenter, **Bjorn Bantock**, 'cellist, conductor and great-grandson of the composer **Sir Granville Bantock**, was unable to come to

Scarborough. In his place, he asked his cousin **Anton Bantock**, the composer's grandson, to talk about their famous ancestor.

Anton is not a musician but a retired history master who taught at Bedminster Down School for 27 years. In retirement he had an extension built on his bungalow to house his collection of books. This became *The University of Withywood* (see their internet site to learn more) and it is now a learning resource centre whose profits are used to sponsor the education of young people in Third World Countries.



ANTON BANTOCK

In 2003 Anton received an MBE from the Queen for his services to the community.

Anton's family lived next door to Granville Bantock and he was 13 when his grandfather died, so he has a good recollection of him. Granville was adored by his children but could not relate to his grandchildren.

The family traces its ancestry back to the 1300s when a (Dutchman) Van der Hock, settled in Saxmundham, and thereafter the family name changed and eventually became anglicised as Bantock.

The family has a colourful history including one Benjamin, an agent/game-keeper who abandoned his wife and went to work for Lord George Granville, helping in the controversial plan to clear the highlands. Benjamin then married one Janet Munro and started a second family, although some of the Bantocks believe they are descended from Lord George!

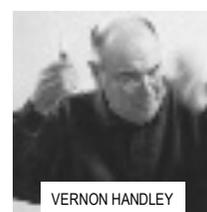
Benjamin's fourth son, George Granville Bantock, was a child prodigy (not in music) who studied medicine in Edinburgh and became a noted gynaecologist. There was much more to this fascinating family before coming to Granville Bantock the composer, who was originally intended to have a career in the Indian Civil Service.

Despite the successes of his musical life, particularly in the Birmingham area, Granville Bantock never had any money, using what little he had to promote younger musicians, to publish music and to expand his obsessive collection of Japanese woodcuts and oriental objects.

**Sue Parker**, YRG Committee member, consulted both Anton and Bjorn Bantock to put together a selection of Granville Bantock's music, playing extracts from *Russian Scenes* (Mazurka & Cossack Dance), *Fifine at the Fair*, *The Celtic Symphony* and *Atlanta in Calydon*.

**R**aymond Wood's programme was a tribute to **Vernon Handley**, who died in September 2008. Handley was a conductor, not just a conductor of English music, who, like his mentor, Sir Adrian Boult, was not over-demonstrative when wielding the baton.

Most of Ray's examples were of music by English composers, but he started with Vernon Handley conducting the Hallé in Glinka's Overture *Ruslan and Ludmila* and followed this with Handley and the Ulster Orchestra in part of Mozart's *40th Symphony*.



VERNON HANDLEY

## OUT & ABOUT –Regional and Society news

The first English piece was E J Moeran's *Lonely Waters*, sung by Harry Cox, a Norfolk singer, in an extract from a BBC talk, followed by the orchestral version. As Ray said: "The contrast between this lovely, fresh, English-sounding piece and the raucous pub rendition could not be more marked. But that was the skill of the folk-song collectors; to take a seemingly banal song and infuse it with beauty, grace and images of the rural countryside, in fact, to give it dignity."

Vaughan Williams's arrangement of another folksong, *Dives and Lazarus* for strings and harp, had tunes far too good to waste so he re-used them in the 1906 version of the *English Hymnal* - No. 574 'I heard the voice of Jesus say'. Handley conducted the RPO on this recording.

Patrick Hadley was Ray's professor at Cambridge but his composing was limited because of his involvement with administrative duties. We heard the second movement of his orchestral setting of a folk song *The Trees so High*, in which Handley conducted the Philharmonia. He often conducted works ignored by others - for example Rutland Boughton's symphony *Oliver Cromwell* - from which we heard *The March of the Puritans*. This was followed by Handley's favourite work, Arnold Bax's *The Garden of Fand*. *Fand* was an Irish heroine and her garden was the sea. Handley admired this work so much that he named his daughter *Fand*. On this recording Handley conducted the BBC Philharmonic and we then heard Handley discuss Bax's work with the BBC's Andrew McGregor.

To conclude this tribute to Vernon Handley, Ray played *The Swimmer*, the fifth song from Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, with Janet Baker, Handley and the LPO in a Royal Festival Hall memorial concert for Sir Adrian Boult.

**K**evin Paynes is a member of Quintessential, a five-part, *a capella* vocal group, and his talk was entitled **Who Needs Instruments?** Of course, he was referring to mechanical instruments, not voices.

We were given a whistle-stop, chronological tour of unaccompanied singing from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, with a range of composers from the early and very prolific *Anonymous* to the contemporary American, Randy Newman.



The spread of music and styles was enormous, ranging from plainsong and madrigals, through folk songs and ballads, barber's shop groups and carols, pop, jazz and modern poetry, with plenty of humour along the way: the monks and their wine-dominated lives, Gilbert and Sullivan and nursery rhymes arranged by Roald Dahl. This was a lovely programme of real music, despite the lack of instruments, and it demonstrated the great skill and ability of the authors, the composers and the singers.

**S**unday morning also saw a change of programme. **Em Marshall**, Director of the Dorchester English Music Festival, had a virus and was dreadfully sorry not to be with us. However, in the Yorkshire Region we

have great talents to call upon in such emergencies and **Gary Midgley**, at very short notice, produced his own version of **Holst - Beyond the Planets**.



Professionally Gary is a Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at Huddersfield University, but he is also a fine solo pianist and accompanist. As an introduction to his programme Gary played a record of the closing moments from *Mars*, from *The Planets Suite*, and

spoke about the influence of Stravinsky and *The Rite of Spring* on Holst and his music.

Gustav Holst, an English composer, was born Gustavus Theodore von Holst in Cheltenham in 1874. He was descended from Swedish and Russian stock, and studied piano, violin and trombone at the Royal College of Music. After leaving college, unlike his life-long friend, Vaughan Williams who had a private income and did not need to work, Holst had a living to earn and played the trombone in various theatre bands.

In the 1890s he became obsessed with Wagner's music and developed a strong interest in Hinduism and Sanskrit, learning the language so he could set the original texts. After his death his daughter, Imogen, resisted revivals of his early works, including several one-act operas, because "they were not representative". However, one can detect the influences of Sullivan, Wagner and English folk-song at various stages in Holst's career. Unlike his friend Vaughan Williams, he was not a folksong collector.

Holst wrote a lot of music for amateurs, probably due to his work in girl's schools, notably at St Paul's Girls' School in Brook Green, Hammersmith, where he was director of music from 1905 until his retirement in 1924.

He was provided with a soundproof room at St. Paul's where he could compose. We heard the last movement of *The St Paul's Suite*, which incorporates two folk tunes: *The Dargason* and the ever-popular *Greensleeves*. Holst was influenced by the socialist movement and attended lectures by William Morris and George Bernard Shaw. He became director of music at Morley College in 1907, another post that he held until his retirement.

Many of the pupils at St Paul's must have been musically talented because some of them helped with the scoring of *The Planets*, and in 1916 two of the teachers performed the early two-piano version. Vaughan Williams attended this early recital and shared a copy of the score with Holst. The first public performance was given in the Queen's Hall, conducted by Adrian Boult and financed by Balfour Gardiner, and it was an enormous success.

We also heard Holst's setting of Walt Whitman's *Ode to Death*, a much more austere piece written in 1919. Whitman wrote this in response to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and included the line: *Come lovely and soothing death*. Gary then played part of Holst's *Fugal Concerto for Flute, Oboe and Strings*, written in 1923; this reflected another style change, following Stravinsky in exploring the classicism of Bach.

## OUT & ABOUT –Regional and Society news

Holst wrote many choral and vocal works and, as an example, we heard part of the *First Choral Symphony*, commissioned for the Leeds Triennial Festival of 1925.

To conclude this extensive review of Holst and his music we heard extracts from *Egdon Heath*, a tone poem written in homage to Thomas Hardy, and the *Nocturne* from the *Moorside Suite*, played by Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

For the **Sunday Afternoon** record-company slot we were very pleased to have a return visit from the Commercial and Sales Directors of **Wyastone**, **Adrian Farmer** and **Antony Smith** respectively, with a combined 55 years experience in the music industry.



ADRIAN (LEFT) AND ANTONY AND ANTONY'S SON DAN - THE NEXT GENERATION OF NIMBUS!

With Wyastone, you don't get just one record company, you get a wide range of labels with everything from popular to nostalgia to classical. They also produce and administer recordings for many other 'independent' companies. They have been incredibly busy, so it's not yet time to write off the music business!

We have remarked before on the great enthusiasm and affection with which Wyastone describe and present their music, and this programme was no different. Our first piece was a waltz, *El Diablo suelto*, written by Heraclio Fernandez, a contemporary of Liszt, and played by Clara Rodriguez on a Nimbus Alliance record of *Piano Music from Venezuela*. The first artists signed for that label were the Czech Wihan String Quartet and from them we heard the last movement of Dvořák's *American Quartet*.

From Nimbus Records, (as opposed to the newer Nimbus Alliance label) we heard Raphael Wallfisch and the RLPO play two excerpts from Frank Bridge's *Oration*, followed by an unusual Spanish piano work *Homenaje a Mompou*, composed by Ernesto Halffter and played by Martin Jones, who has been with Nimbus for over 40 years.

Kurt Nikkanen played and William Boughton conducted the New Haven Symphony Orchestra in a fine reading of Walton's *Violin Concerto* and, ending the first half, Kevin Bowyer played two of Bach's *Choral Preludes*.

After a tea break and an opportunity to browse the large number of CDs brought by Wyastone, we heard Maddy Prior sing *Ding Dong Merrily on High* from a *Tapestry of Carols*. From the Lyrita catalogue we heard Eugene Goossens conduct Robert Still's *Third Symphony* and this was followed by Vlado Perlemuter (at 80 with one eye and one lung) playing Chopin's *Nocturne, Opus 55*.

The programme finished with invigorating performances from the American Music Masters label of Oscar Shumsky playing Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 1* and, from the Yale Archive, Benny Goodman in the 'Basin Street Club' playing *After You've Gone*.

**Sunday night's programme** was called "*Ombre et Lumière*" (*Shadow and Light*), or *The Triumph of Will over Adversity*. It was the story of a life and a festival with a difference.

In 2002 **Brenda Dean**, who had been widowed for eight years, visited France. Within a week she had bought a house in a quiet village - quiet, that is, apart from church bells ringing day and night.

This was **La Fontenelle** (The Little Fountain) in **Brittany** and she later



discovered that the village was the birthplace of **Jean Langlais** (1907-1991) a composer and organist, blind from the age of two. This inspired her to investigate his music and, eventually, to organise a festival in his memory.

Brenda played Langlais's *Dance* for two pianos (1934); an organ work, *Incantation* (1949) first heard at an Easter Vigil in Bath Cathedral, and *Venite et audite* a motet from 1958. The last piece was sung at a festival in 2005 by the Wingrave Singers from Buckinghamshire, a choir of 18 singers of which Brenda was a member.

The village of La Fontenelle is based on farming and granite quarrying. Langlais's father was a stone cutter and his mother was a seamstress. His rich uncle, Jules, sent him to a school for the blind in Paris, where he learned piano, violin and organ and won prizes for his playing.



Jean Langlais became a teacher at the National School for the Blind and gradually gained an international reputation for his music. In 1945 he became the organist of the Basilica of St Clothilde in Paris, succeeding such eminent names as César Franck and Charles Tournamire, and he remained in that post for 42 years, until the age of 80.

His first wife, married in 1931, was a sculptress and they adopted Janine and later had a son, Claude, who became a stone mason, church restorer and organ builder. Three months after his wife Jeannette died Langlais, aged 72, married Marie-Louise, also an organist, who was 36.

After Brenda organised a Festival of Langlais's music in 2005, the village officials formed a festival association with Brenda as President. The subsequent 2006 Festival was more ambitious and in 2007 they celebrated the anniversary of Langlais's birth, with choirs from France, England and Spain. Marie-Louise, who now teaches at the Paris Conservatoire, attended as did the adopted daughter Janine, and Marie Claire Alain, the noted French organist, gave a recital.

Brenda played many more musical examples, including works recorded by Jean Langlais and Marie-Louise, the Girl Choristers of All Saints' Church, Northampton, and many others, too numerous to mention here. Why not ask Brenda to come and give you a talk?

## OUT & ABOUT –Regional and Society news

**O**n Monday morning (yes, the Scarborough Weekend is a really long weekend from Friday to Monday) **Geoff Bateman**, Secretary of Bradford RMS, gave us **The Mercury Sound** and explored some of their best recordings made in the 1950s and 1960s.

The American Mercury label was founded in 1945 in Chicago, originally as a vehicle for pop music but moved into classical music in 1947. We had an electrifying start with Antal Dorati and the LSO playing *The Infernal Dance* from Stravinsky's *Firebird*.



HOWARD HANSON

Mercury did not record chamber works or individual vocal works, but varied its output with classical and light music and the occasional choral work. Apart from Dorati and the LSO, a large proportion of their music was played by the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, conducted by the composer Howard Hanson, or by the Eastman Wind Ensemble, conducted by Frederick Fennell, who also conducted the Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra.

Our next music examples came from the Pops Orchestra with a bull fight from *Hi-Fi A La Espanola*, and Leroy Anderson's *Belle of the Ball* and *The Typewriter*. Antal Dorati conducted *Tropical Night* from Respighi's *Brazilian Impressions* and Howard Hanson gave us MacDowell's *In a Haunted Forest*, followed by his own *Merry Mount Suite*. Morton Gould's *Jubilee* from *Spirituals in Five Movements for Strings* took us up to the interval.



FREDERICK FENNEL

The second half started with a *Fanfare and Allegro* by a little-known American composer, Clifton Williams, who studied with Leonard Bernstein, and this was followed by William Walton's *Crown Imperial*.

The last two works were played by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Paul Paray, a French composer who was the DSO's conductor from 1952-1962. We heard the *Sanctus* from Paray's own *Mass for the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Joan of Arc*, a most impressive work that made you want to hear more.

And finally we listened to the third and fourth movements from Saint Saëns' *Organ Symphony* - a stirring way to conclude this year's Music Weekend. We look forward to seeing you next year!

*Tony Pook, Chairman, YRG*



**The YRG Spring Musical Weekend 2011** will again be in The Crown Spa Hotel, Scarborough from **Friday 25th to Monday 28th March**.

Most of the speakers have been engaged already and we anticipate an interesting mixture of entertainment and erudition. Bookings will be taken in November: details available from: YRG Secretary, Jim Bostwick, telephone 01484 717865.

### Dennis Clark 1925 - 2010

**Jim Bostwick, Secretary of the Yorkshire Regional Group, pays tribute to Dennis Clark who was a key figure in the Region and its Scarborough Weekend.**

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Dennis Clark on Saturday 29 May 2010 at Leeds General Infirmary. Dennis had direct involvement with the recorded music movement in Yorkshire for nearly a quarter of a century. He served as secretary of the Regional Group and, for some 20 years, was responsible for mounting the annual musical weekend at Scarborough, attracting many celebrity presenters.

The music of Edward Elgar was Dennis's lifelong passion and he served the composer indirectly for many years, both as a member of the Elgar Society, which he joined in 1976, and as secretary of the Yorkshire Branch. Those fortunate enough to have seen and heard one of Dennis's slide and music presentations about the



**Dennis Clark at last year's Scarborough Weekend**

composer and, particularly, Elgar's connections with Yorkshire via his friendship with Dr Buck of Settle, will have known of his enthusiasm and enjoyed the fruits of Dennis's considerable photographic skills. Several Elgar authors consulted and credited Dennis Clark for details they had gleaned from him about the composer's life and music. Dennis also presented programmes for recorded music societies locally and nationally.

Another group that will miss Dennis immensely is Horsforth Recorded Music Society that Dennis joined in 1972, serving latterly as its devoted Chairman.

Dennis survived his wife Betty by seven years and leaves his son David. We send him our deep sympathy.

**Lyndon Jenkins, FRMS President, writes:**

Although my official connection with the FRMS is extremely recent, through speaking to Societies up and down the country during the last 30 years I have been fortunate to meet some of its stalwarts.

One was Dennis Clark, following an invitation in 1990 to speak at a YRG in Scarborough. I became full of admiration for the sterling work he did there and we became friends. I was glad to return and later to speak to his own Horsforth Society which, as Jim Bostwick has mentioned, he also served devotedly for a long time.

Dennis was one of those people without whom organisations like ours do not exist. Involving themselves over a long period of time and readily bringing the benefits of their knowledge and experience, they help others to a greater appreciation of the noble art that enthral us all.

Throughout its long history the Federation has been wonderfully fortunate to be able to count on people like Dennis. His selfless and enthusiastic contribution will always be remembered.

## OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society news

### Godalming regional reunion

Godalming Music Listening Group held a very successful regional reunion on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in the glorious surroundings of the Hascombe Village Hall. Sadly this was the group's swan song, as falling membership and the ageing process make it increasingly difficult to organise this event.

The audience of about 55 people was entertained by the Farnborough Winds, a most professional ensemble, whose repertoire ranged from *The Arrival of The Queen of Sheba*, through Albeniz' *Tango* and ended with Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer*. The Godalming members (ladies and men!) provided a splendid tea of sandwiches and cake and the day finished with drawing the raffle.

Although the afternoon was a great success, everyone was saddened by the knowledge that their great friend, and Godalming Music Listening Group's Hon. Secretary, Les Warner, was gravely ill in a Nursing Home but it was lovely to see his wife, Sheila, at the reunion. Sadly, Les has since passed away and our thoughts are with Sheila.

We look forward to the next reunion in 2011.

### Cardiff RMS & St David's Hall

The relationship between Cardiff RMS and St David's Hall was forged during 1991, when our late Vice-President, **Wynne Lloyd**, suggested that on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mozart's death the Society play Mozart's music in the Hall throughout the day. This was a great success and we were invited to continue with a monthly series of 'concerts' the following year.

With limited resources, the Society agreed to produce a series of 8 programmes, one each month from September to April. The accommodation would be free provided no entry charge was made and so the series started in the bar (unfortunately closed!) on Level 5 on Thursday afternoons. At first the series was every two years, but was so successful that it became an annual event.

The series is very popular, particularly with members who no longer want to venture out to our normal evening meetings, but the wider audiences have raised the profile of Cardiff RMS.

Programmes have included presentations on opera, including *Viva Verdi*, *Viva Bel Canto* and *Singers of the Century*. Some of the opera presentations attracted audiences of over 100; more recently, attendance has averaged between 30 and 40.

We have acquired a few new members through the series, although that was not the main aim of the series' founder. Wynne Lloyd just wanted to give something back to the people of Cardiff.

Wynne died earlier this year and we have changed the title of the series to the **Wynne Lloyd Series**, a move that has met with general approval.

### Bath RMS begins its 70<sup>th</sup> season

*Desmond Nancollas, Hon. Secretary sends this report.*

Bath Society has reason to be proud as it enters its 70<sup>th</sup> season. Several times over the years membership has topped 100 but sadly, during the last 10 years this has dropped slowly to only 18. Nevertheless, we still fill a season of 20 meetings with talks given mostly by present or ex members. We meet in a pleasant venue close to the city centre, the only drawback being the fireworks show on the Recreation Ground on Bonfire Night. Then we need to turn the volume control to maximum while playing the 1812 Overture!

The first meeting place was the YMCA, when the group was known as the Bath Philharmonic Club. Records show that the first official AGM was in the 1942/3 season but we are in fact in our 70<sup>th</sup> season because there were Special Meetings in the first two years. Interestingly, one year the Secretary's report was read by his assistant because the Secretary was "away on military exercises and the Chairman was on war work." Later there is a reference to the City of Bath Gramophone Society's monthly meetings in a committee member's flat "concentrating on chamber music and gentle material." We have met in various places throughout our history but our present venue is in the luncheon club of Fitzroy House in Great Pulteney Street.

In the 1940s the majority of members were civil servants coming from London and there was talk of calling the Society 'The Admiralty Gramophone Society'. However, the proposal was not welcome because of "the regrettable distaste still felt in some quarters for the Admiralty." It was in 1972, when we were using recorded tape, that we became Bath Recorded Music Society.

In the second decade the Society was particularly strong and thriving and had many celebrity talks given by speakers from the professional world. These talks were referred to as 'starred evenings' and members paid extra to attend. The famous personalities included Stuart Hibberd, Antony Hopkins (our President for a number of years), Robert Simpson and Eva Turner. The conductor Raymond Leppard, who grew up in Bath but is now an American citizen, was also a key figure in our early days.

We are very proud to have the retired international opera singer Raimund Herinx as our President. Our Chairperson is Mrs. Joan White, who has been a stalwart member for many years.

We have great hopes for our 71<sup>st</sup> season next year and if you happen to be taking the waters in Bath you would be a very welcome visitor to Bath RMS.

## OUT & ABOUT – Regional and Society news

### Would you believe it!

*Adrian Faulks of Croydon RMS sends this account of a true, but stranger-than-fiction, experience that he had recently.*

Those who appreciate Edmund Rubbra's music might enjoy this. Two of the composer's nieces, Jane and Mary Phillips, who are blind, belonged to Carshalton and Wallington RMS. I did a programme there in 2001 to mark the centenary of Rubbra's birth and Jane and Mary provided a Braille version of my notes for the benefit of blind friends they had invited.

Mary wrote recently to say that Edmund Rubbra's son Adrian, her cousin, was now living near them, and did I still have copies of the 2001 Braille notes? Luckily, after nine years, I was able to oblige. I decided to deliver them by hand and, en route, to take the through train to Shoreditch and visit Club Row Market.

Almost the first stall I came across was selling CDs. The stallholder was closing down and this was his last day, so his entire stock was displayed with the notice: *Everything must go – only 50p each!* There seemed to be no classical CDs in this huge selection, as one might expect on a market stall.

\*\*\*\*\*

But then, to my astonishment, I found several copies of Rubbra's *Sacred Choral Music*. There was no other repertoire like this among what must have been several hundred CDs.

### East End generosity

I produced Jane and Mary's Braille notes on Rubbra from my rucksack and explained its significance to the stallholder, who seemed almost moved to tears. He searched out all the remaining copies of the Rubbra CD and insisted on giving them to me to distribute.

I can still scarcely believe that I should visit an East End Market not noted for selling CDs of any kind, and find such rare repertoire as this. But fancy my having Braille notes with me written by the composer's nieces! If I had gone to Club Row the next week the stallholder would have ceased trading and this remarkable incident would never have occurred.

Can you imagine a scenario like this in East-Enders? I daresay that if the scriptwriters included such a storyline, viewers would complain that it was too far-fetched!

## The Trojans in Somerset



16<sup>th</sup> century Dillington House

The thirty or so of us who spent the weekend at Dillington House in Ilminster, Somerset, for Terry Barfoot's **Arts in Residence** course on Berlioz' epic *Les Troyens* saw more of the opera than the composer himself ever saw!

Initially rejected by the Paris Opéra, for which the grand five-act work was intended, it was five years before it was staged. Even then only part 2, *The Trojans in Carthage*, was performed and it was not until 1879, ten years after Berlioz died, that Acts I and II, comprising the first part, *The Fall of Troy*, were performed.

On a lovely Friday evening in May, after aperitifs and dinner, a serious analysis of the work began with an illustrated talk on operatic life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris. This gave the background to the ambitious marathon that for years was performed with cuts that detracted from the essence of the ancient story taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Sessions over the next two days closely studied

each act in turn ending with the appropriate extract from the superb BBC DVD featuring Sir John Eliot Gardiner directing The Monteverdi Choir, the Chœur du Théâtre du Châtelet and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. Soloists Susan Graham, Anna Caterina Antonacci, Gregory Kunde and Ludovic Tézier, among others are outstanding.

Sir Colin Davis said of this monumental and dramatic work: *"I think it reveals Berlioz completely and it shows how remarkable he was – you see the size of the man's mind."* Suffice it to say that I went to the weekend a bit like Shakespeare's schoolboy, like a snail unwillingly, but left utterly enchanted, much better educated and bought the Opus Arte DVD the following week - such is the effect of the Arts in Residence themed courses! The in-depth focus on music, plus good cuisine and fine wine in congenial company is a winning formula. TMS



# Arts in Residence

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Enjoy music more by meeting other music lovers at a weekend house party. Arts in Residence offers themed musical weekends discussing and exploring the lives and music of the great composers with lectures illustrated by music examples on excellent hi-fi equipment. The weekends are spent in hotels and houses of great character, especially selected for their historic and/or architectural significance.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February: Georgian House Hotel, Haslemere**

The elegant and historic Georgian House Hotel is situated in Haslemere High Street, and is set in attractive private gardens.

**‘English Idyll’**

Our weekend will explore a varied and representative selection of paintings and music. The featured artists and composers will include Constable, Turner and Gainsborough, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Delius and Elgar.

*with Terry Barfoot and Tim Gwvther*

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February: Chilworth Manor Hotel, Southampton**

Chilworth Manor's impressive architecture is set amidst 12 acres of landscaped grounds on the outskirts of Southampton.

**Shostakovich**

Our weekend will concentrate on the autobiographical Eighth String Quartet and the various compositions associated with it, for example the First and Tenth Symphonies and the opera *A Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. It will include a performance by one of Britain's leading chamber ensembles.

*with Terry Barfoot and the Brodowski String Quartet*

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**For further information and booking contact: -**

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**email: [info@artsinresidence.co.uk](mailto:info@artsinresidence.co.uk)**



## REVIEWS

### *Hyperion celebrates thirty brilliant years*

In October 1980 a new classical independent record label was launched. That label was to become one of the bright stars in the industry's firmament. A ground-breaking release in 1982, Hildegard of Bingen's *A Feather on the breath of God*, put Hyperion firmly on the map as a byword for excellence. With an exciting repertoire of performances by the best musicians of the day, first-rate sound recording and production, Hyperion's brilliant reputation remains unchallenged.

Hyperion will mark its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday with 30 special re-releases at mid-price of recordings from its catalogue. These CDs include benchmark performances by such celebrated artists as Steven Isserliss, Matthias Goerne, Angela Hewitt, The Choir of Westminster Cathedral and many others. All the recordings have received the highest acclaim and many have received *Gramophone* and *Record of the Year* awards. A few of the many highlights include:

❖ **September:** A boxed set of Graham Johnson's *Complete Schumann Songs*.

❖ **October:** Bartók and Rószka Viola Concertos performed by Lawrence Power.

*Ikon* Vol.2: Russian music from Stephen Layton and the Holst Singers.

❖ **November:** Schubert *Piano duets* with Paul Lewis and Steven Osborne.

Liszt *The Complete Songs* Vol.1 featuring the American tenor Matthew Polenzani and accompanist Julius Drake. The following CDs from a comprehensive catalogue are testament to Hyperion's constant.

#### ***A feather on the breath of God***

This is a benchmark recording of the most beautiful contemplative mediaeval plainchant by the 11<sup>th</sup> century Abbess Hildegard of Bingen. Highly praised when it was first issued, it received the coveted Gramophone Award in 1983 and was among the Classic CD top 100 CDs of all time. The pure tone and clarity of Emma Kirkby and Andrew Lawrence-King under the direction of Christopher Page give an ethereal quality to a flawless recording. **CDA30009**

#### ***Bach with a British accent***

The captivating pianist Harriet Cohen was a great champion of contemporary British music and in 1931 invited all her close British composer friends to write a piano arrangement of a J S Bach work. Twelve responded and their transcriptions were published in an album entitled *A Bach Book for Harriet Cohen*. Cohen gave the first performance of these works in October 1932 at the Queen's Hall. Although the transcriptions were summarily dismissed by the composer-pianist Ronald Stevenson in 1982 as not being "real piano music", taken on their own merit as

British arrangements of organ preludes, chorales and other works, they give an interesting insight into the 20<sup>th</sup> C British method of transcription. The CD also includes arrangements of Bach by Cohen herself, Myra Hess, Leonard Borwick, Hubert Foss and Robert Stevenson (this is transcribed second hand, as it were, from Stokowski's orchestral arrangement of a chorale). All in all, a lovely eighty minutes of piano music in a sparkling performance by the Royal Academy Gold Medallist and internationally acclaimed British pianist Jonathan Plowright. This is another typically splendid Hyperion issue. **CDA67767**

#### ***Vibrant choral music from Wells Cathedral***

It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most exciting church choral music I have heard in a long time! Jonathan Dove (1959-) is an imaginative and versatile composer with a flair for dramatic imagery. The 11 pieces here range from the reflective to the blatantly jolly and include a *Missa Brevis*, songs for Christmas and the prayer *Into thy hands*.

The music is compelling and even the most energetic carol with audience participation never loses the sacred focus. Matthew Owens conducts the Wells Cathedral Choir, either unaccompanied or with Jonathan Vaughn, organ, in a stunning performance. The booklet gives comprehensive information about the composer and each work. **CDA67768**

### ***Latest releases on Dutton's EPOCH label***

Mike Dutton's latest issues of impeccably mastered recordings of interesting music that is seldom heard feature, among others, the composers Haydn Wood, Lionel Sainsbury, Stephen Dodgson, Arnold Cooke, Edmund Rubbra and John Foulds. Some are world-first recordings of works that should not be ignored.

❖ **Haydn Wood (1882-1959; Lionel Sainsbury (1958-).** Two generations separate the composers of the two violin concertos on this world-première recording.

**Haydn Wood** is probably better known for his later light music and popular ballads (particularly the WWI success *Roses of Picardy*). But Wood was a child prodigy and a brilliant violinist, winning an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music at 15. Much of his early classical work has been ignored or lost but Dutton has brought this later (1928) *Violin Concerto in A minor* out of the shadows together with the *Adagio* from his much earlier (1905) *Violin Concerto in B minor*.

**Lionel Sainsbury's** *Violin Concerto op.14* (1989) is expressed in modern terms but evokes much of the romantic idiom of composers such as Walton and Lloyd. The work was first heard in a BBC broadcast in 1995, and Lorraine McAslan gave the public première at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival in 2002.

These must-hear-again works are given a sensitive and virtuosic performance by Lorraine McAslan with the BBC Concert Orchestra. **CDLX 7245**

## REVIEWS

❖ **John Foulds** (1880-1939) Those whose interest in Foulds' music was awakened by his expressive *April-England*, played in one of this year's Proms concerts, will welcome this CD of seven of his other works. *Keltic Overture* and *Keltic Suite* carry strong Scottish influences, from hearty Highlands sketches to a more pastoral lament, played as a cello solo.

Other national impressions are found in: *Sicilian Aubade*; *Isles of Greece*; *Holiday Sketches* (four movements depicting Nuremburg, Bohemia, Odenwald and Koblenz), and an oriental nocturne *Arabian Night*. *Suite Fantastique* contains pieces from incidental music that Foulds wrote for a French costume comedy.

Although the trend has been reversed of late, during his lifetime Foulds felt frustrated that his serious work was ignored in favour of the lighter compositions. This was probably because he employed innovative techniques that were somewhat ahead of his time. Nevertheless, much of the 'light' music in this recording carry a weight that lifts it out of the ordinary and banal. **CDLX 7252**

❖ **Edmund Rubbra** (1901-86). A 2-CD pack of Rubbra's chamber music highlight another composer whose work deserves more attention. *String Quartets Nos. 1-4*; *Sonata for Cello & Piano*; *Improvisation for unaccompanied Cello*; and, for two violas, *Meditations on a Byzantine Hymn* make up a veritable feast for chamber music lovers.

The works are interpreted with perceptive imagination and played with elan by the young dynamic Dante Quartet launched in 1995 and highly regarded world wide. **CDLX7144/23**

*Ed's note: An interesting anecdote pertaining to Rubbra's choral music is on p.14 of the Out & About section.*

❖ **Stephen Dodgson** (1924-) is the leading contemporary composer for the guitar, although his work covers all musical forms. He tends to compose on a small scale in terms of length of work and forces employed and here are five superb examples in his *Essays for Orchestra Nos. 1-5*. Each is a single movement with its own characteristic and with, as Dodgson says: "*ideas concentrated and unified more than contrasted.*"

The accompanying notes give a short and informative analysis of each essay and, together with just over an hour of enjoyable music, could form the basis of an interesting RMS programme. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is conducted by David Lloyd-Jones. **DLX 7236**

### ***Mint condition Lyrity LPs from the private archive of Lyrity proprietor Richard Itter***

As a part of its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and in conjunction with Wyastone Estate Limited, Lyrity Recorded Edition will release for sale by auction 97 titles from the original Lyrity LP catalogue.

All copies come from the private archive of Lyrity's founder and proprietor, Richard Itter. The LPs, which are all original Nimbus pressings, were manufactured at the company's Monmouth premises during the mid 1980s. Every LP is in its original sleeve.

These examples have never been shipped for sale and have been stored upright in their factory boxes in dry, dark, temperate conditions since manufacture. This release of 1,987 LPs constitutes the entire remaining contents of the Lyrity LP archive.

**Simon Heffer, The Daily Telegraph:** "*From the 1960s to the 1990s, those with a taste for obscure English classical composers, or for the obscure works of the well-known ones, needed only one port of call: Lyrity Records. It is like coming across long-buried treasure, and represents perhaps the finest exhibition our music has ever had.*"

#### **Operation of the Auction**

The auction will:

**Open** at 09.00 GMT on 1 September 2010

**Close** at 24.00 GMT on 5 December 2010.

Details of each LP are available in a printed catalogue and also on the Lyrity website. Bids will be accepted only if made by post, fax or e-mail using the order form provided. LPs will be allocated solely on the highest value bid. Successful bidders will be contacted after the auction has closed at which time we will confirm the allocation, calculate postage and collect payment details.

To make these LPs as widely available as possible, Lyrity will allocate only one example of any title per bid. Any LPs that fail to reach their minimum bid, and that are unsold at the close of the auction, will be returned to the Lyrity archive.

Bidders will be informed of a bid reference number. They may revise this bid at any time. We will give periodic bulletins of the status and value of bids for each title via the Lyrity website.

**Edward Greenfield:** "*One point to emphasise is the quality of sound that Richard Itter always insisted on. Ambitiously, he employed some of the finest engineers in the recording business, notably those from the Decca company under Kenneth Wilkinson. That means that Lyrity recordings over 30 years old rival, and even outshine, many of the latest digital recordings.*"

For more information regarding this press release and the Lyrity LP Auction contact Adrian Farmer or Antony Smith by telephone: 01600 890 007 or email [sales@wyastone.co.uk](mailto:sales@wyastone.co.uk)

#### **Catalogue copies**

To obtain copies of the LP auction catalogue, either:

**telephone:** 01600 892 747

**email:** [sales@wyastone.co.uk](mailto:sales@wyastone.co.uk)

**write** to Lyrity Recorded Edition, PO Box 87, Monmouth, NP25 3WX or

**download** from the web site: [www.lyrity.co.uk](http://www.lyrity.co.uk)

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## News and Views

### WHAT'S IN THE SECRETARY'S POSTBAG? *FRMS Secretary Tony Baines reports*

#### **My first email**

I well recall the first thing that ever fell into my electronic postbag. It was April 2002, and I received an email telling me that the Federation Committee needed temporary assistance. Was I interested? Two of the Committee, Reg Williamson and John Davies, lived quite close to me and I knew them slightly through the interaction of local Music Societies.

It seemed that the Committee unexpectedly needed secretarial assistance; would I help out until the AGM? Reg showed me the ropes as we prepared for the 2002 AGM at Eastbourne.

There I expected that the real people would turn up and I would go back into obscurity. But nobody at Eastbourne, or any subsequent AGM, has volunteered to be Fed Sec, and I am still in office 8 years later. I would never have dreamt of coming forward but, having been asked, I must say it has been a most rewarding and enjoyable way to spend my retirement. The reason why I am beginning to think that it is time to go is not because I don't enjoy it any more, but because nobody lasts forever and it is time to think of the succession.

Conspicuously absent from my postbag have been enquiries from people in response to recent articles by Thelma and John on the problem of finding successors for the various Committee Offices.

#### **Volunteers are vital**

We know that from time to time there are music society closures. Sometimes this is because they have run their course. Many of our societies are rather informal groups that have done wonderful work for years, but the time comes to call it a day. On the other hand, it is not unknown for a society bustling with 50 or so members to close simply because nobody will take on the responsibility of running it.

If this happens to the Federation itself the party will be over. The whole operation would become illegal overnight when the annual licences expire. Those who try to make their own PRS/PPL arrangements would find it too expensive to carry on.

#### **Enquire without obligation**

It is not too late to let us know that, entirely without obligation, you are interested to find out what is involved in one or other of the Federation Committee Offices.

#### **Comings and goings**

Sadly, the Perivale Record Circle has left us this year. On the positive side, five new societies joined us in 2010. Welcome to Opera Speke, based in Devon, and the Recorded Music Societies from Blackpool and Preston in Lancashire, Bradford-on-Avon in Somerset and Drymen in Stirlingshire. What did Mark Twain say about reports of his demise?

#### **What's in a name?**

I had an enquiry recently about whether or not it was necessary to use the word 'Recorded' in the title of a society. On searching the database I discovered that 41 of our 205 societies do not use the word 'Recorded' in their title. We have Music Societies, Circles, Clubs, Listening Groups, Appreciation Groups and the delightfully named 'Music for Enjoyment' in Shaftesbury. I suppose that when the movement was formed in 1936 it was a phenomenon to be able to listen to great music via ever improving equipment. Now the equipment is taken for granted for the most part and the emphasis is more social: getting together to share the enjoyment of listening to the music.

#### **News from France**

I have just received an email from Gordon Smith of Operadou in Nimes. He has had 'zero enquiries' for the opera holiday, but has managed to let his apartment, now called *Diva-Nimes*, to a non-musical incumbent for the summer. However, the home opera house itself is flourishing and he now promotes it as 'The World's First Home Opera Theatre' website, so far without challenge. He has invested in significantly updated equipment and improved seating. He now invites his audiences to rate performances and records their comments on the Trial by Jury page on his website. He is even planning to take his opera on tour to towns in the nearby hills. All this can be seen on his website: <http://www.operadou.info/>

By the time you read this Sheila and I hope to have visited Operadou in September while we are staying in nearby Arles. Surely there is a future for this exciting idea for RMS members looking for something different.

*Tony Baines*

As we go to press, we are sad to report that news has come in of the death of **Brian Cartwright**, Federation Treasurer from 2001/2003. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife Sylvia. A full tribute will appear in the Bulletin Spring Issue.

## *News & Views*

### **FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK**

Recently, in conversation with a small group of RMS enthusiasts about where we bought our CDs, the answer was unanimous; we all bought on-line. My reasons mirrored the views of the group.

Until relatively recently there were many specialist CD shops in towns and cities up and down the land. Only ten short years ago Birmingham had an HMV shop with one floor completely devoted to classical music.

Until a couple of years ago I bought CDs from a local shop that sold mostly classical music. The proprietor was the organist/pianist for the local Choral Society and had a very wide and deep knowledge of music. His shop was well stocked but if he did not have what you wanted you could place an order and usually the CD would be in your hot little hand within 3-4 days. The shop was a place where you could relax, browse and meet friends and fellow collectors. We were all very sad when, two years ago, the proprietor decided to move on. Maybe he knew something we didn't.

There were two other outlets nearby, one in the bookshop that stocked a small number of popular classics and another that catered for the mass market. These were of little use to me so I went online.

#### ***How long can it last?***

Our conversation led to the inevitable second question about the future of the CD. How long will it last and what will take its place? Again our respective answers were much the same. Technology has moved on and the age of the CD is coming to an end. The birth of the CD was in the 80s and this spelled the end of the cassette, the 45 single and the LP.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century came to an end we saw the development of Ipods, MP3, Napster and iTunes. For the mass market, singles and albums are bought online as tracks, stored on a personal computer and subsequently can be made into personal lists and albums. These lists can then be transferred to an Ipod and played back via headphones, through the computer or by connecting to a docking station. This appeals to the pop singles/album purchasers, but has its limitations for the classical collector.

The stereo LP saw an improvement in sound quality; this, combined with a large amount of space on the record cover for the historic details and other information, was ideal for the classical music collector. The CD had the improved sound and the booklet replaced the record cover for the detail. The ensuing CD was a more handy size for storage. What we purchased was a coherent package with everything kept in the same place.

#### ***Where do we go from here?***

The pop singles/album collectors make up most of the market and their purchasing power greatly eclipses ours. Therefore the producers cater mainly for their wants and needs.

A purchased track for a single is probably around four minutes; for us the equivalent might be one movement of a symphony and this can take anything from 15 to 20 minutes. However, most classical listeners prefer to listen to the complete work rather than fragments.

The singles buyer is generally not interested in a published history of his purchase because he can find all that he needs to know in magazines and newspapers and on TV. It is unlikely that there **is** any history in our sense of the word. The situation is different in the case of, say, a hundred-year-old symphony, where detailed background knowledge can be important to understanding the composition and greatly enhance one's listening.

In short, I accept that changes and developments will continue to be made. I can only hope that out of these inevitable changes there will be a solution that is tailored to suit the wants and needs of the classical listener.

I would be interested in the comments of readers.

*John Davies*

# Frederyk Chopin

*"The pallid Pole who holds the Heavens open" - Hyacinthe de la Touche*

## *Colin Dancer looks at Chopin's impact on the music world*

Chopin held Paris enthralled during the 1830s and 1840s. It was not only by his compositions, but also by his playing technique. Caressing the keys, Chopin coaxed a far greater range of tones and nuances from the instrument than other great pianists working in Paris at the time. It is said that in his quiet way, Chopin produced a far greater dynamic range in his music than pianists such as Liszt and Kalkbrenner, who pounded the keyboard in a showy display.

### **Early freedom**

His technique began to evolve when he was introduced to the piano by his mother at the age of four and allowed to develop his own unique way of using the keyboard. Soon he could play quite difficult pieces and even improvise on a simple theme.

When Chopin was six, Adelbert Zywny, a freelance music teacher, was engaged to teach him music. Zywny did not play the piano and did not interfere with Chopin's technique, but introduced him to the music of Bach, Haydn and Mozart. These were to remain Chopin's favourite composers throughout his life.

By the age of 11 Chopin had progressed so well that Zywny could teach him no more and the music lessons stopped. Two friends of the family, Wilhelm Würfel and Josef Elsner then guided Chopin informally.

### **Parental opposition**

Chopin's father did not want his son to become a musician and allowed him to play only in charity concerts; he gave his first public concert when he was 8 years old.. He was also allowed to play when the family were invited to the homes of their aristocratic friends and this experience was to prove useful when he settled in Paris.



### **Formal teaching**

When he was 14 Chopin entered the Warsaw Lyceum. His piano playing and his wit, especially his ability to mimic some of the teachers, quickly made him friends. He was not a strong boy but did not suffer poor health. He was to correspond with his school friends throughout his life. He was especially close to Tytus Woyciechowsky, sharing with him his innermost thoughts.

When Elsner was appointed head of the newly founded Warsaw Conservatoire he was anxious that Chopin should enter that institution, but there was still opposition from his father. Eventually a compromise was reached in which Chopin would study certain subjects at the University, while attending the Conservatoire.

### **Concert success**

When he finished at the Conservatoire, Chopin went with friends to Vienna where he met many influential people, among them the publisher, Hasslinger. He told Chopin that in order to sell his music, he must be better known and the best way to do this was to give a concert.

This was arranged and Chopin was to play his "*Variations on La ci darem la mano*" from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and his own *Krakowiak Rondo*. However the orchestra couldn't read his hand-written score of the rondo and was not very cooperative. At the

last minute he decided to improvise on a Polish drinking song instead.

The concert was a great success, although some comments were made about his soft tone. He was asked to give a second concert and, to prevent the first being declared a failure, he agreed. The house was packed; the theatre manager had arranged for his *Rondo* to be transcribed and again Chopin was well received. He had not been paid for these two concerts and declined to give a third.

Returning to Warsaw he completed his *E minor Concerto* and gave its première in his parents' home with friends present. He then returned to Vienna, this time with his close friend Tytus. Chopin had been given letters of introduction to people who could help him. But after an assassination attempt on the Grand Duke in Warsaw Tytus left to join the fighting in Poland while Chopin was persuaded to stay in Vienna.

Chopin was unprepared to cope on his own and wrote to his parents and one of his friends asking what he should do. No one replied. As a Pole in Vienna many people shunned him after the uprising, and so he left for Paris.

### **Life in Paris**

Chopin arrived in Paris to be greeted by a musical scene that was unlike anywhere else in Europe. All the finest artistic talent had congregated and in 1831 composers such as Cherubini, Rossini and Meyerbeer held sway. The next generation of young musicians, in their late teens and early twenties, was waiting in the wings.

The news of the defeat of the uprising in Warsaw left Chopin feeling helpless because he had been unable to take part in the

fighting. In Paris he aligned himself with the dissident Poles. He attended their meetings and did not hide his sympathies. This made it impossible for him to return to Poland while it was under Russian domination.

He was quickly accepted by the musicians in Paris for the quality of his playing and Kalkbrenner, the leading virtuoso pianist, offered to take Chopin on as a pupil. His friends and family warned him against it, while his old teacher, Elsner, was angry that anyone considered himself able to teach Chopin how to play the piano. He wrote to Chopin and urged him to write an opera. But Chopin knew that his strength lay in writing for the piano and decided that was where his future lay.

Chopin met the affluent society at soirées that were popular in Paris at that time and he quickly acquired many of their children as pupils and was able to live comfortably. At these soirées he would play his own compositions and also improvise. But he was not a hired hand. On one occasion, when the host invited him to play, he declined. The host insisted, pointing out that Chopin had eaten his supper, to which Chopin replied that he had eaten only very little.

### ***Georges Sand's influence***

The biggest influence on Chopin in Paris was undoubtedly George Sand. When they first met in 1836, neither was attracted to the other. Chopin was not attracted to the swarthy, cigar smoking novelist who had serial lovers; she thought he was a bit of a wimp. But eighteen months later they attended the same soirée at the home of the Spanish ambassador. Despite themselves they fell in love and George Sand discarded her current lover in favour of Chopin.

George Sand took Chopin to Majorca for the warm Mediterranean weather in the autumn of 1838. The trip was a disaster. The weather was wet and cold; Chopin became ill and George Sand nursed him back to health.

A doctor diagnosed tuberculosis and notified the authorities. The landlord evicted Chopin and Georges Sand from the cottage and the islanders shunned them. They found accommodation in the monastery at Valldemosa and as Chopin's health improved, so he worked, finishing his *Twenty Four Preludes*, which were inspired by Bach.

With little help from the locals, George Sand had to fetch and carry everything they needed up the mountainside. Later she was to get her own back on the islanders with a vitriolic attack in her book *A Winter in Majorca*.

The affair with George Sand lasted eight years, although she had become bored with previous lovers after a few months. They spent the summers at her estate in Nohant where Chopin had his own room and was able to work.

This was the most productive period of his creative life, but it ended as suddenly as it had begun. Sand unjustly accused Chopin of having an affair with her daughter, Solange. Chopin left and although they corresponded for a while they only met once in a chance encounter on the stairs.

### ***Onset of final illness***

In Paris Chopin took up teaching again and one of his pupils, the Scottish lady Jane Stirling, suggested that he should visit Britain.

1848 was a year of unrest in Paris when the barricades were raised again and so they set out for London on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

The London smoke was not good for Chopin's chest and he started coughing again. He was invited to play at many houses and these recitals were well attended. The Queen attended one and in her diary wrote "*... and some pianists played.*"

Jane Stirling took him to Scotland to meet her family and once again he was invited to play at the houses where he stayed. But he was bored there since he was unable to take part in the grouse shooting which meant he stayed at home with the old folk. Returning to London his health deteriorated and the Queen's physician recommended that he return to Paris as soon as he was strong enough to travel.

He left England on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and was greeted by his friends when he arrived back. He never recovered his strength and died of heart failure on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1849. After his death his heart was removed and sent to Poland. He had chosen his own *Funeral March* and Mozart's *Requiem* for his funeral, which was held at the Madeleine. More than 3000 people attended, but George Sand was absent.

### ***Lasting influence***

The legacy of Chopin's music lives on. He introduced the mazurka and other polish dance forms, as well as the ballade and the scherzo as dramatic piano pieces. He revolutionised the way people wrote for the piano. Saint-Saëns said that he paved the way for modern music with his harmonies. His influence can be heard in the music of Debussy, Alkan and many other composers.

And still, not a day goes by without someone either listening to or playing Chopin's music. There are not many composers about whom that can be said.

***The Bulletin is YOUR magazine!***

***If you have a bee in your bonnet, a view that you would like to air, or an article that might interest other readers, the Editor would be glad to hear from you.***

## GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

*Mike Wheeler examines the spiritual dimension of the composer's work*

### **A bald assertion**

Some years ago, the BBC Radio 3 presenter Rob Cowan, writing in *BBC Music Magazine*, contrasted Mahler's popularity at the end of the twentieth century with the growing popularity of Bruckner, and commented:

*"There can be little doubt that nowadays we are gravitating more and more towards music with a spiritual dimension."*

What surprised and puzzled me about his remark was the implication that Bruckner's music has a spiritual dimension, but Mahler's doesn't. I could have been either misinterpreting or oversimplifying, but such a bald assertion seems highly questionable.

What do we mean by 'a spiritual dimension'? What marks out one piece of music as having it and another not?

Well, for me the tangled emotions of *The Marriage of Figaro* offer just as spiritual an experience as the mixture of pantomime and profundity that is *The Magic Flute*. A Debussy prelude or a Bartók string quartet are as spiritual as a Bruckner symphony or a Bach cantata. Debussy and Bartók might not have the religious trappings, but that to me is irrelevant.

Already I can hear voices telling me that I'm confusing the human and the spiritual, but that's the point: the two are inseparable.

So where does this leave Mahler? It has often been observed that the centenary of his birth in 1960 generated a huge surge of interest in music that seemed to speak directly to the anxieties of the time.



Here was a composer who was not afraid to look life full in the face, accepting all of its contradictions, absurdities, delights and fears. Dismissed as a wild eccentric by so many for so long, Mahler quickly became hugely popular, and his work has remained central to the repertoire of Western concert music ever since.

### **Songs and symphonies**

His composing career was unusual in that he focused on just two genres, songs and symphonies, and the one constantly fed the other.

In the first part of his career he was continually drawn to *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of German folk poems, given varying degrees of intrusive literary polish by the volume's editors and first published between 1805 and 1808.

### **Poetic emotional range**

Mahler's chosen poems cover a huge emotional range. Tragic scenes – a mother desperate to feed her starving child; a soldier facing the firing-squad for desertion – sit alongside episodes of whimsical or sardonic humour. A lover throws his gold ring into the Rhine, sending it on a tortuous journey to his girlfriend, a servant in the king's palace; St Anthony of Padua preaches to the fish, which lap up his sermon but carry on just as before; the cuckoo wins a song-contest with the nightingale because the judge (a donkey, who must know about these things because he has nice long ears) prefers the cuckoo's simple two-note song to the nightingale's, which is far too complicated for him to understand.

In 1907 Sibelius recorded in his diary a conversation with Mahler, in which Mahler asserted that a symphony should be like the world and embrace everything. His own symphonies present the varied experiences of the *Wunderhorn* songs writ large, for which he draws on an equally wide range of musical styles. Popular music – marches, waltzes, songs (often parodied) – rubs shoulders with profound tragedy, tender, deeply calm lyricism and evocative nature music. It's a mixture that Mahler's early critics found hard to take seriously.

### **Profound symphonic journeys**

But each of his symphonies leads us on a profound spiritual journey.

*Symphony No. 1* begins with some of his most rarefied nature music and ends in a triumph that sounds more provisional than final.

After that comes the *Resurrection Symphony*, a huge conception spanning funeral march, sardonic scherzo and choral finale that portrays resurrection not so much in literal terms as in the vindication of ideals. As did Brahms in his choice of texts his *German Requiem*, Mahler avoids specifically Christian references

### **Love of nature**

In *Symphony No. 3* Mahler's love of nature runs riot, almost literally in the gigantic winter-to-spring carnival procession that forms the first movement. Taking in the dark mediation of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra's Midnight Song* and the joyful morning bells of the following movement the symphony ends with the most warmly radiant of Mahler's adagios. It was to have finished with another *Wunderhorn* setting, giving a child's very earthy vision of heaven. Instead Mahler used this as the finale of *Symphony No. 4*.

Although often portrayed as the sunniest of his symphonies, it also has dark corners and spooky moments

worthy of a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimms.

*Symphony No. 5* is perhaps the nearest Mahler came to a conventional tragedy-to-triumph romantic symphony, while *Symphony No. 6* reverses the direction, starting out with fierce energy only to end by confronting tragedy head on.

Even some of Mahler's most sympathetic critics took time to get their heads round the unusual dislocations and strange nocturnal world of *Symphony No. 7*, with its ironic pair of serenade movements, creepy scherzo and strenuously jolly finale.

*Symphony No. 8* is Mahler's most ambitious work, in two huge movements, for eight solo singers, boys' and mixed adult choirs and orchestra. Ignore the fatuous sub-title *Symphony of a Thousand*; this was a wildly inaccurate sales-pitch coined by the promoter of the first performance.

It opens with a setting of the Latin hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come, Creator Spirit), while the much longer second part sets the whole final scene of Goethe's drama *Faust*, a vast fresco of redemption and regeneration through love.

### **Three-fold tragedy**

There were two more symphonies, Nos. 9 and 10. Mahler died leaving No. 10 unfinished, but with enough material for a performable version to be constructed.

These last two symphonies and the symphonic song-cycle *The Song of the Earth* were written after the three-fold tragedy that hit Mahler in 1907: his forced resignation as musical director of the Vienna State Opera; the death of his elder daughter, Maria, aged four, and the diagnosis of his own heart condition.

### **Down to earth spirituality**

Commentators and also performers have sometimes over-emphasised the terminal farewell-to-life aspect of these three works, but they are also forward-looking in terms of musical style, and as the music swings between anguish and consolation, Mahler goes through the desolate lyricism of *Symphony No. 9* and comes out of it again in the hard-won serenity that ends *Symphony No. 10*.

In a very real sense, then, all human life is here, just as Mahler intended. It's music with a spiritual dimension, all right. But it's not some rarefied, other-worldly kind of spirituality; it's the kind that is not afraid to get its hands dirty. © Mike Wheeler, 2010

\*\*\*\*\*

*Mike Wheeler is a Derby-based music reviewer, contributing to local newspapers and to the Music and Vision website (www.mvdaily.com). He also lectures on musical subjects to organisations such as the WEA and is a regular guest presenter at Derby Music Circle and other Recorded music Societies.*

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#### **FEDERATION EVENTS ON THE HORIZON**

23<sup>rd</sup> October FRMS AGM at Stratton House Hotel, Cirencester + dinner and live recital. **See p.27**

6<sup>th</sup> November Central Region Music Day in Birmingham, inc. lunch. Theme "Inspirations" **See p.8**

## Heath-Robinson's approach to cleaning records

*Since childhood, JIM BOSTWICK has been prone to take things to bits and has hoarded a multifarious stack of 'things that I can't bear to throw away as they might come in useful one day'. In this article he describes how some of those bits have been used in an ingenious way.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Snap, crackle pop!**

I love records and have a large collection of LPs and 78s, (stored mostly in the garage) and spend happy evenings listening. The trouble is they click, pop and crackle as if someone had poured milk on Rice Crispies near the microphone while recording. They didn't of course, but the medium was/is prone to these annoying intrusions.

### **Heath Robinson cure**

But all is not lost. You can buy machines that will do what I describe below, but the most effective ones are expensive, some very expensive. So here is my Heath-Robinson approach. The essentials are: (1) a vacuum cleaner that accepts liquids (e.g. a Vax Wet'n'Dry model)

(2) a turntable that can be either manually turned or, preferably, electrically driven. The turntable for playing LPs will NOT do, in both stages of the cleaning process it will stall and liquids are involved so it is not a good idea anyway

(3) a fine nylon filament brush, not easy to source nowadays, but if you've kept a Cecil Watts 'Manual Parastat' from those heady-days of vinyl care, treasure it. To apply the liquid in the wet part of the process, I use a pressure garden-spray (B&Q) adapted with a medicine dropper.



Initially, I just let the fine spray loose on the record surface, but found it very wasteful, since it also sprayed most of the table I was working on, hence the

modification. The cleaning mix I have found effective is 1 part isopropyl alcohol (Maplins or Internet) to 4 parts of water and a few drops of dishwasher rinse-aid, this acts as a wetting agent.



In the cleaning phase, rotate the LP and apply a quantity of liquid to it via the nylon brush, enough to produce a bow-wave in front of the brush. You might care to avoid the label, but if there is drift onto it, it can be mopped off with kitchen roll. Continue rotating the record with the brush in contact until all of the groove-surface is wet. With experiment, you will develop your own technique. If it is a particularly dirty disc (for example, an LP gem found in a charity shop), you will see scum accumulating in the bow-wave; this is an excellent sign. If you are rotating manually, exhaustion could now set in! You've probably done as much of the cleaning cycle as is necessary.

### **The vacuum phase**

This is the exciting part! You will need to make a suitable vacuum-head. The picture might help but there are important features I should describe.



Clearly, a standard vacuum-cleaner accessory part that you might use to suck out crumbs

from a settee, will not be immediately suitable. In any case, there needs to be a non-destructive interface between the vacuum-head and the disc.

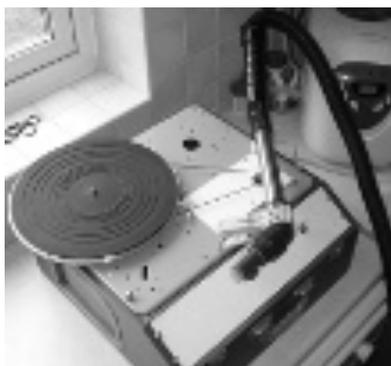
The white chord you see in the picture is made from nylon, very familiar to campers for constructing guy-ropes and therefore easily obtainable from camping shops. Nylon is ideal since it does not absorb the liquid that could leave smears. It is not abrasive because it is softer than the material being cleaned, as you will find when it starts to fray and needs to be replaced. The other factor that makes it ideal is its thickness. By serendipity, this permits a gap of about 2-3mm for the most effective vacuum-suction.



You will see from the picture, I have used a plumber's copper 'T' joint for large pipe-work, suitably brought to the correct dimension for snug fitting in the adapted cleaner-accessory using 'Duck Tape'. The clear window to stop off the front hole was one of the caps you get from a bottle of the very expensive water you tend only to buy on stations when you've forgotten cheaper alternatives. That too was brought to the correct dimension with tape. It is quite unnecessary, a cork would do (or just a plumber's large-bore 90° bend would render both redundant) but it adds a visual dimension of seeing the swirling liquid being sucked from the disc. The centre stabilising weight is from a loudspeaker and is needed

to keep the record in place on the spindle, particularly when vacuuming.

The wet disc needs to be rotated as the adapted suction head is applied carefully so that only the nylon comes into contact with the LP and it is slowly moved from the outside edge to the centre with the vacuum switched on. Unlike the expensive machines, it is not quiet; it is not using the very quiet medical standard vacuum pumps. However, ear-defenders not necessary unless extended cleaning sessions are anticipated. At the end of the process the LP should be completely dry. If it isn't then repeat the vacuum tracking until it is.



Above is a picture of my Heath-Robinson machine based on a Vax Wet'n'Dry vacuum cleaner (out of shot) and a defunct Ferrograph tape recorder, which, when stripped down, provided a top plate full of holes to which things could be bolted (a turntable and bearing) as well as a capstan drive motor more than capable of not stalling when pressure is applied. It is wise to keep the electrics away from the business end because of the liquid, so the turntable is

connected to motor spindle with a strong rubber belt.

Disclaimer: I accept no liability incurred from construction or subsequent use.

### Cleaning 78s

The process can be used to clean 78s but with a couple of important changes:

(1) isopropyl alcohol solution **MUST NOT** be used as it will attack the shellac binder, simply use a mixture of weak detergent and warm water.

(2) Use a different brush - a stiff short-bristle paint brush or even a shaving brush having the coarser hairs, will reach into the larger 78 rpm groove.

### Keep it clean!

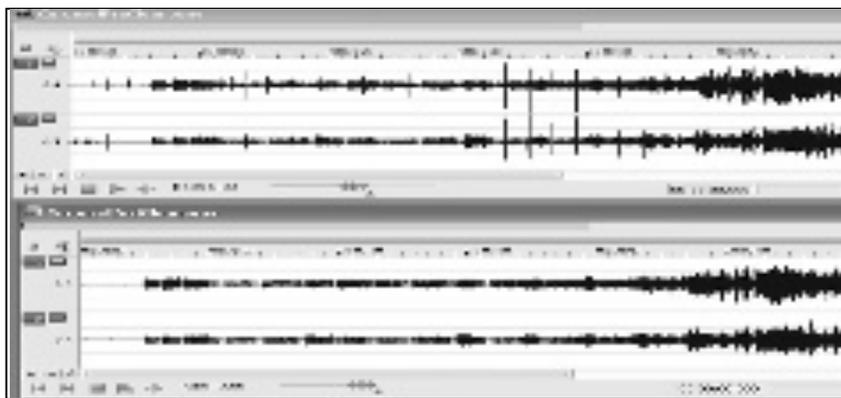
So now you have a clean disc. Do not put it back in its original plastic/paper sleeve - you will re-contaminate it if you do. Cut down rolls of greaseproof paper to the correct width.

To avoid lengthy careful scissor-cutting, saw off a full roll to the correct dimension (a little under 12 inches). This is seriously hard work, difficult to understand since it is only paper!

You will need the greaseproof paper to re-line the old sleeve; alternatively you can buy replacement sleeves, although this is extra expense that can be avoided. By experiment you will find the best way to remove the inner-polythene without tearing the outer paper but some attempts will be write-offs. Similarly, you will find the best way to re-line with greaseproof paper.

Below is a computer screen-print which shows how effective this method can be. It is a before and after picture and you can see clearly on the 'before' picture the spikes that indicate the intrusive clicks. I assure you the 'post' picture is not doctored in any way and is purely the result of the cleaning outlined above. Needless to say, you will hear the difference. Obviously the process will not remove scratches; that damage is there for all time but by removing the snap, crackle and pop you will enhance your listening.

**NB. This cleaning process must be done in a well-ventilated room.**



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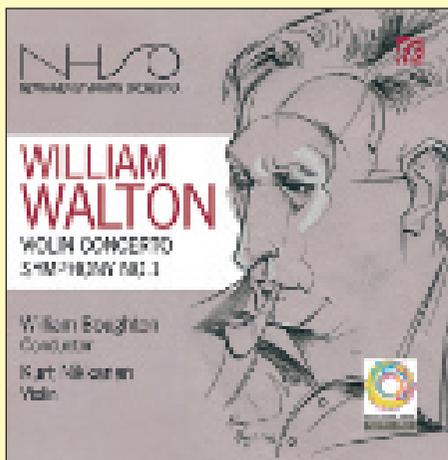
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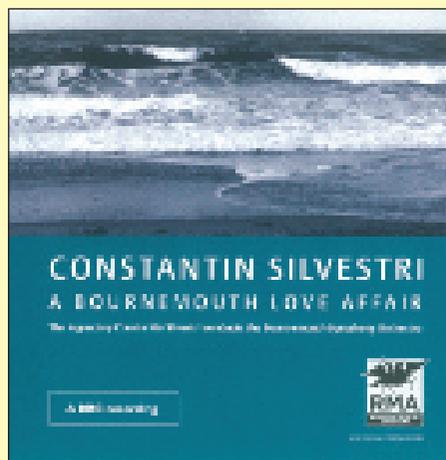
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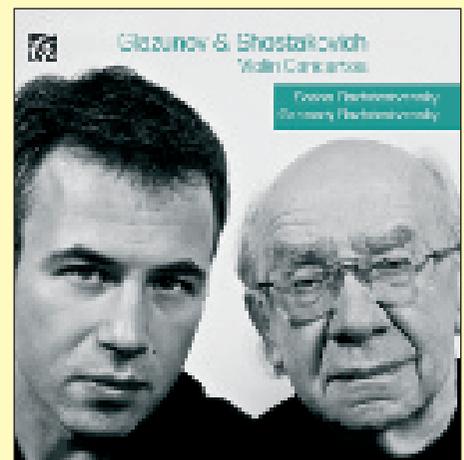
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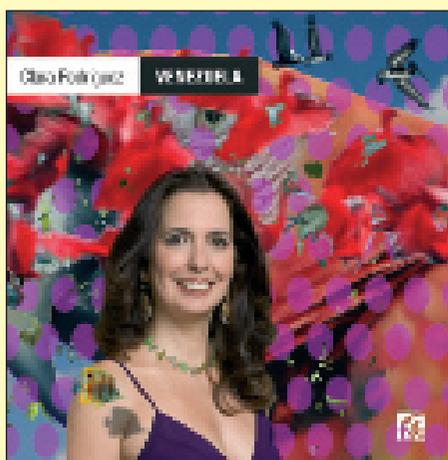
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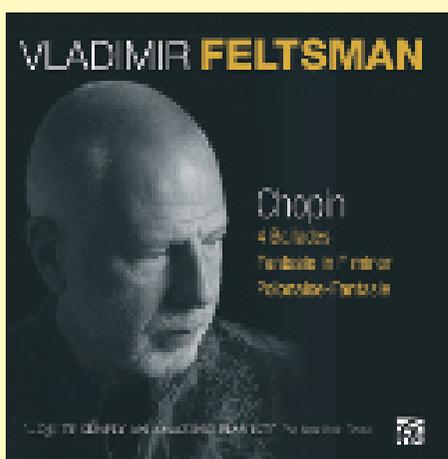
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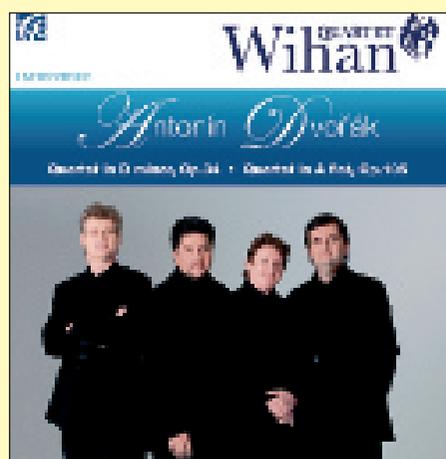
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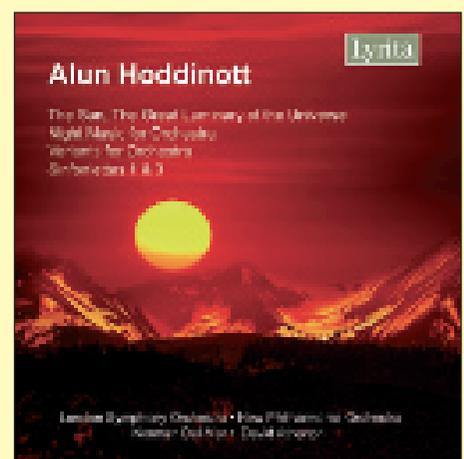
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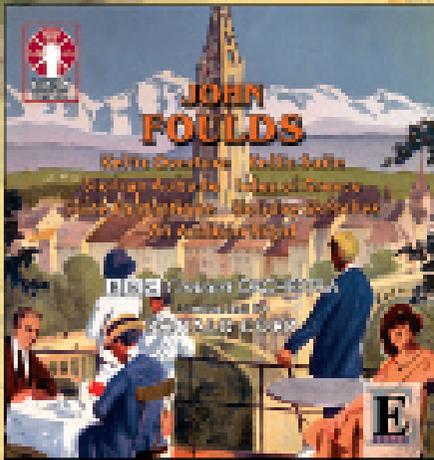
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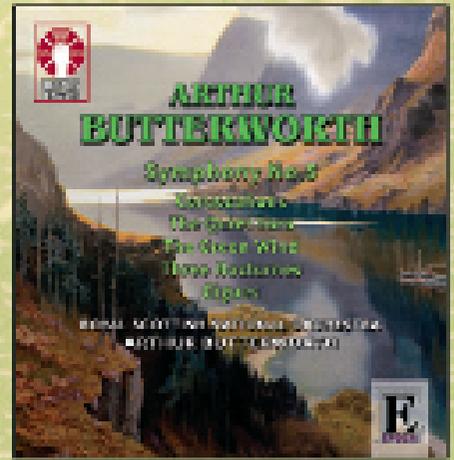
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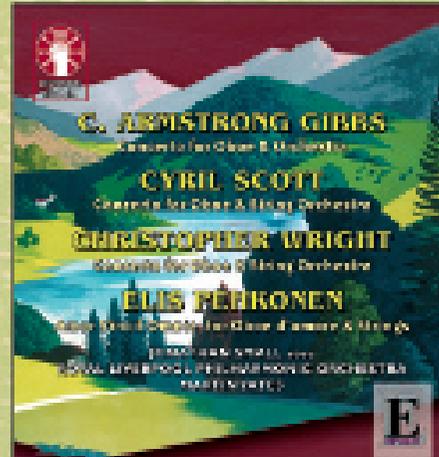
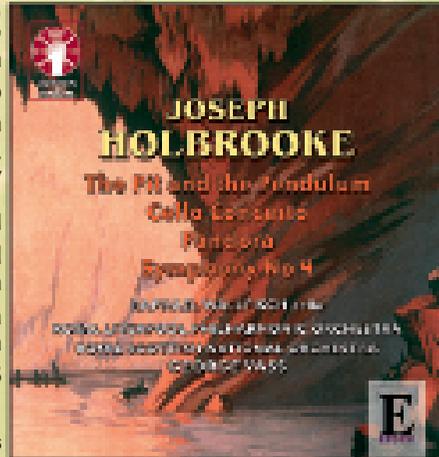
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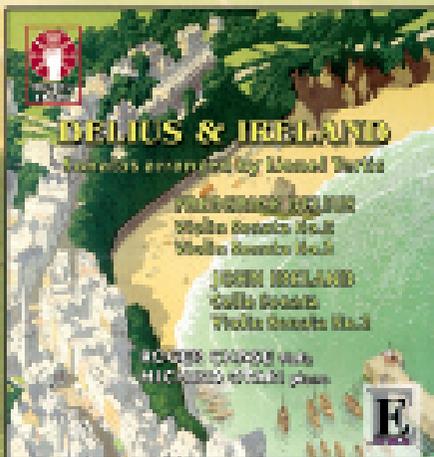
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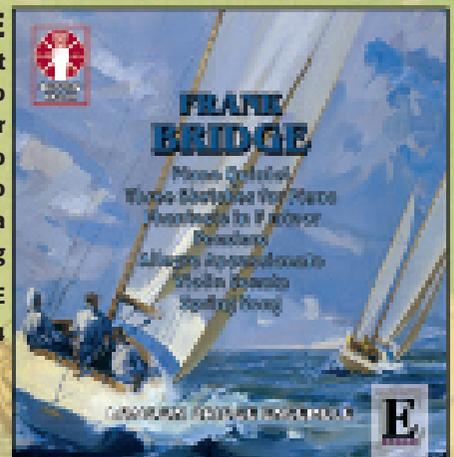
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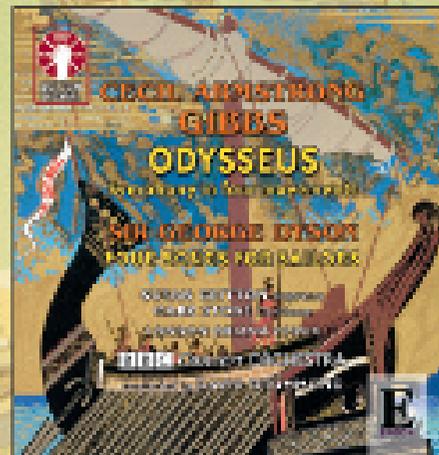
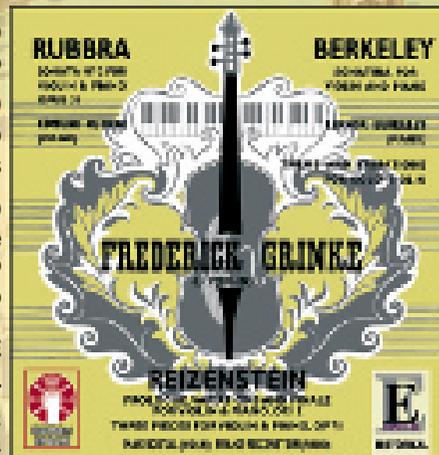
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