



Newsletter

Issue no.22

December 2008

Dates for your diary

11 Jan – 1st rehearsal
8 Feb Sectional rehearsals
15 Feb – no rehearsal
8 Mar – Workshop (all day)
12 Apr – no rehearsal
26 April – Spring Concert
24 May – no rehearsal
14 Jun – Summer Concert

Spring programme

Glinka - Overture Ruslan & Ludmilla
Rachmaninov Symph no 2
Possibility: Flute concerto with Catherine Handley

Workshop

Elgar Symphony no 1
The cost of £15 for the day covers all costs including tea/coffee and a sandwich lunch. It is a great opportunity for non-members to come and play with us and we always hope to recruit new members as a result. Please encourage your friends to come along.

Autumn concert review

The last concert took place towards the end of November and by all accounts was a huge success. The audience was the largest seen for some time; ticket sales set a new record at £1055.

The programme included Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov which we previously 'had a go at' during the workshop in February. It is a challenge for any amateur orchestra to perform, but there was evidence of much fine playing, particularly from solo woodwind lines and from our guest Harpist Ruth, whose dedication in rehearsals and remarkable development was clear to us all. It was great to have a full percussion section and fine brass playing.

The concert also saw Gillian Bradley return to the orchestra as soloist for Vaughan Williams *Lark Ascending*. Again, good playing was evident from the orchestra with sensitive accompaniment for the wonderfully sustained playing for Gill. It is always nice to welcome back an ex-member to perform – thank you Gill.

And of course the whole concert was led superbly by Will Hillman, an up-and-coming professional player who led us through the story of the Rimsky with particular musical poise.

The concert, like the previous one in the church, was reviewed by the South Wales Argus and the review is still available for anyone to see via the paper's website – search for Abergavenny Orchestra and it will be there.

Summer concert review

It seems like quite a while ago now, but the concert back in the Summer at the Angel Hotel carried on the tradition of performing more chamber like music in the Hotel's Ballroom.

The woodwind section performed Janacek – Three Lachian Dances before the full orchestra came together for Bizet – Symphony in C.

Both pieces worked well in the ballroom acoustic, particularly the Bizet which required accuracy of articulation and ensemble, but the lively outer movements rang around the room with great nobility.

It was a nice way to finish the year off in style and with a social drink in the bar afterwards.

Barbecue

The last event of the year was the social get together in the form of a barbecue at the St Michaels Centre. This was enjoyed by all who attended and we hope to repeat it next year. Sugar Loaf Catering put on a good spread and even the weather was kind! It was fun to have a whole evening of conversation and reflect on the year's music making.

ASO on disc

The microphones at the last concert belonged to some of Robert Watson's students who have produced a CD of the 2 main works (there was a technical problem in the Folk Song Suite). To secure your copy, for the reasonable price of £5, please email Rvwatson@glam.ac.uk Alternatively bring a USB memory stick to rehearsal and download for £2.

Change of leader

Members know that we had a collection for Sally Ellerington who stood down as Leader in the summer, raising £150. Sally was delighted with the card, signed by everyone with so many good wishes and chose to have her gift as a Marks and Spencer card with which she can buy things to remind her of her time as Leader.

Our new Leader, Adrian Cook, formally takes the 'hot seat' at the beginning of next term but is already contributing to forward planning.

News of Members

Eiry Hanbury (2nd violins) broke her humerus in early December whilst walking in the Forest of Dean, so will miss the first few rehearsals. However she tells me she will use bowing as physiotherapy! Best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery, Eiry.

Since the last Newsletter we have lost our President and two past members.

Vernon (Tod) Handley died in September. He had been our President since 1987, and had met the committee in 2000 when the search for a new conductor began. I attended his funeral in St Bridget's, Skenfrith as a representative of the orchestra and was moved by the warm tributes which were made. His widow, Catherine, attended our recent concert which was dedicated to his memory.

Louise Carpenter died in June after a battle with leukaemia and several members attended a celebration of her life.

Selby Milner died in August, also of leukaemia. Selby was an enthusiastic violinist and chairman of the orchestra for several years. His widow, Elizabeth, replied to Ian's letter of condolence saying how Selby loved his time with the orchestra and only gave up when he started to work in Cardiff and felt he never had enough time to practise. "He was always

someone who had great enthusiasms – and for several years the orchestra was an overriding one. He would have been very touched by all the really lovely things so many kind people have said coming from so many different angles of his life."

New members

We have welcomed several new members this term. Kate Hoddell has brought strength to the first violins, whilst Mike Standley has given regular support from the bottom on his bass trombone. Particularly noticeable has been Ruth Thomas whose harp playing, as already mentioned, has blossomed. Maya Fryer (2nd violins) is the youngest member we've had for many years.

Chamber Music Courses

I have been notified of these courses in Surrey in April. Please see me (Sue Rogers) for a flyer, or visit <http://www.chambermusiccourses.co.uk/> if you want more info.

The Welsh Amateur Music Federation...

... which contributes towards the cost of our concerts, has changed its name to "Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales" and we will acknowledge it as such in future advertising. The organisation has, at its headquarters at the WMC, a recording studio and a library of Welsh and choral music. Their website is <http://www.tycerdd.org/>