



Newsletter

Issue no.20

March 20

Concert date change

27 April is the new date for our April concert. We have changed it because of a clash with the Closing Gala Concert at the Millennium Centre of the Menuhin Competition which will involve our soloist, Sally and the students we might need to use for augmentation.

The programme for our April concert is:

Mozart – Overture to Figaro
Beethoven – Violin Concerto
Dvorak – Symphony no 6

Our soloist will be Laurence Kempton, who is a member of the first violins section from the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera.

Classical Triumph

The concert last November included performances of Beethoven's Egmont Overture and Symphony No 3 (Eroica), as well as Mozart's Fourth Horn Concerto.

The concert was a great success, and with individual technical issues less apparent in 'classical' works, the orchestra was able to concentrate more on ensemble, articulation, style, structure and pace. Overall feedback from the large audience was very positive

and members seem to enjoy concentrating on a wholly classical programme.

Brian was particularly pleased to 'hook-up' again with his old French Horn teacher, and stated afterwards that he felt the concert had been the strongest musical and stylistic performance since he took over the baton in 2001.

Not only was the concert a musical success but the ticket sales were improved too. Thanks to everyone who made a special effort to sell tickets, it was worth it not only for the income but for the pleasure in playing to a packed house.

After the concert, Ian Fisher wrote to the Secretary with his thanks to everyone concerned for the concert. He said *"Playing with the orchestra was (as before) a delight and it was wonderful to work with such a friendly group of people."*

Workshop – Sunday 24 Feb

Rimsky-Korsakov
Sheherazade

A day long workshop on Sheherazade took place for a whole Sunday in late February. The orchestra were

based in the Wedgwood Room for a day's fun music making.

The idea of the annual workshop is to give members an opportunity to have a look at a work which we are unlikely to perform in concert – all pressure off, then, and a chance to relax and have a go.

The workshop attracted several non-members to join us for the day, including a bassoonist, several violinists, numerous violas (always a luxury) and a trumpet player. Hal Hutchinson dropped in to play again and say hello whilst his mum burnt his birthday cake and hit the timps.

All-in-all, a good time was had by all. Several non-members have indicated an interest in staying in touch and even helping out in dearth areas for concerts.

Congratulations to all involved and thanks to the Angel Hotel for the food.

Summer Concert, Sunday 15 June

As in recent years this will be in the Ballroom of the Angel Hotel. Brian is thinking about what can be performed to involve everyone who wants to play. Please remember that if

you commit to play in that concert, you may be needed for most of the rehearsals, so discuss with Brian if you are likely to be absent for many rehearsals.

Council Grant

We were delighted to hear that our Chairman Ian's request to the Abergavenny Town Council for a grant was so well supported by Tony O'Donovan (last year's mayor) that they have given us £1500. Our finances now look much healthier and we have scope for something big! We offer our very sincere thanks to the Council for this. If you have any suggestions, please put them to Brian or any member of the committee.

Social event

At the AGM we talked in general terms about a social dinner in February. However, this proved difficult to arrange so the committee are currently thinking about something after our summer concert.

News of members

Many congratulations to Brian who became engaged on New Years Day to his girlfriend Jen Bostic (remember she played the Binge Saxophone Concerto with us in Nov 2006). He says he will bear us in mind when they are arranging music for the wedding, but that won't be until next year at the earliest, so we have time to improve!

You may have wondered why we haven't seen Beccy Rogers (bassoon) for a while – it's because she is expecting her first child towards the end of April and says she hasn't the puff or energy to play at the moment. However she is missing playing in general and her 2 partners in crime in particular and hopes to come to the concert (though if she's in labour she says she might appreciate an audio/video feed from the church to help her along!).

Cheryl Rousset (2nd violin until she went up to Cambridge last autumn) has won her Licentiate of the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (per Abergavenny Chronicle). Many congratulations, Cheryl!

The birth of grandchildren to members of the orchestra may not be hot news but perhaps the two latest are something of a coincidence. Cynthia Bailey-Wood's daughter Rhiannon had a son, Jack, in November whilst Elizabeth Macfie's daughter, also Rhiannon, had (I believe) a daughter in December. The two Rhiannons played in the same concert with AOS in November 1991!

Rohan keeps in touch with Louise Carpenter, who played so enthusiastically in the 2nd violins for a few concerts. Louise had to stop playing with us when she underwent treatment for leukaemia last autumn. She was well enough to return to the USA in December to visit family but has since needed further treatment in hospital. However she is now back home with a typically positive attitude and we all wish her well for her recovery.

Your Chairman met Ralph Dowdeswell recently. Ralph was in good health and missed playing with the orchestra which he found too tiring. He related that that a weekend away had been spoiled because he broke his front teeth. When the Chairman enquired how this misfortune occurred, he was told it was while drinking soup. Surely some sort of dental record

We were sorry to hear of the death of Harold Rackham, who played viola until 2002, at the age of 90. Harold leaves a widow, Elizabeth, who despite failing sight remains at home with help. Our sympathies are with her and her family.

Music and Art in the Italian Courts

Cardiff Centre for life long learning hold various musically themed courses at the St Michaels Centre. The above course with Jolanda Pupillo will run from Thursday 1 May for 8 consecutive weeks, 10 - 12.30. "In addition to the early composers, artists and architects will be discussed". For more inf phone 029 2087 0000 or 01873 857750.

Music for People, Summer School of Music. 2-9 August, Giggleswick School.

We have a brochure for this school which appears to cater for everything from jazz, wind & brass bands, choral & opera singing to string & symphony orchestras. For more inf, see www.m4p.org.uk or Sue (cello) for the paper copy.