

# SOIRÉES MUSICALES

Spring 2018 ~ Edition 58



*Bramwell Tovey*

*The Magazine of the BBC  
Concert Orchestra's Supporters Club*

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## ED LINES.

The old saying tells us that absence makes the heart grow fonder but when absence is prolonged perhaps the fondness becomes somewhat diminished. I write this as a consequence of many phone calls in recent years regarding the scant appearances on Radio2 of the BBC Concert Orchestra. A few years ago, we had 2 or3 regular broadcasts every week by our favourite orchestra, but now it is just usually one a week and sometimes not even that. I know that they appear from time to time on Radio3, but not in my opinion playing the type of music which they do best or indeed the music for which they were originally intended.

A lot of this situation of course is down to the old chestnut of appealing to the younger listener, but surely the powers-that-be realise that people are living longer these days and the listeners who are over 70 or so are the people who have loyally supported Radio2 and our Orchestra for many years. What a waste!

A former Controller of Radio2 once told me that the BBC Concert Orchestra was “the jewel in the crown” of Radio2, but alas the current Controller doesn't seem keen on jewellery, or maybe his crown is slipping!

***Brian Crouch***  
**Chairman.**

***The Club's Website.***  
***<http://www.cosc.co.uk>***

Webmaster Stephen has updated and redesigned our website. What it needs now is contributions from you, yes YOU! - And that includes BBC personnel and members of the Orchestra!

# CHANGES IN THE ORCHESTRA & OTHER NEWS

*Happy Retirement Wishes* to Robin del Mar of the Viola section who retired last October.

*Goodbye* to Katherine O’Kane principal No2 of the Cello section who left at the end of last year to pursue a teaching career at the Suzuki cello studio.

*Welcome* to Bramwell Tovey on his appointment as the BBC Concert Orchestra’s new Principal Conductor, from January 2018.

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## POSTBAG

Dear Brian & Jenny

I enclose my subscription for another year.

Thank you for sending the latest edition of Soirées Musicales. How I echo Brian’s opening remarks in the Magazine. One of these programmes “Your Hundred Best Tunes” I used to listen to every week. In my view the late Alan Keith was one of the best presenters we have ever had on radio.

Yes, there is far too much American music broadcast, and not nearly enough proper English music. Composers such as Albert Ketelby who wrote tunes like “Bells Across the Meadow” & “In A Monastery Garden” are seldom heard these days.

Once again, heartfelt thanks for all you do for the Club and I look forward to the Saturday Special on 30th September.

With best wishes

Alistair Wills.  
St Albans.

*There are a lot of folk who have expressed similar sentiments – but will it fall on deaf ears????*

Dear Jenny & Brian

Thank you again, for the wonderful Soirées Musicales, how you keep going is indeed commendable.

I can still manage the organ on Sundays, and piano trios and the like, but no orchestra or Benslow.

I liked the bit about late trains to Cambridge – but that means none to Bury until 9am Sunday Morning – and I am getting much too old to doss down just anywhere!

All best wishes & many thanks.

Lawford Smith

Bury St Edmunds.

Dear Jenny & Brian

I'm enclosing a cheque because I'd like to keep up my membership even though I can't get there. I always enjoy the excellent Magazine and have very good memories of our times out with the Club.

Best wishes

Pat Clark

Colindale

*Sadly, Pat recently lost her husband Eric. They had been members since 1995 and supported many Club events.*

Dear Jenny.

A sign of a great editorial flair is being able to turn my paltry text into a decent looking article. Thank you!

John Harding – *on the subject of his write up of the 2nd Music Museum trip.*

*But it was not my doing John, it's all down to the layout done by our printer Chris Lunnon*

Dear Jenny

Its that time of year again and I have much pleasure in enclosing my cheque for £10 in payment of subscription.

I hope you have all had a very successful year and I am so sorry that I do not get up to London very often. However, I do listen whenever I can and I am very proud to be a member of the Supporters Club.

As my luck would have it I did miss the very programme I would have loved to hear and that was the one with Michael Feinstein but I did manage to listen on my iPad.

It is a pity I live so far away from London and it has not been helped with the various problems with the trains and the part closure of Waterloo station for some time.

Wishing you a good New Year  
Elizabeth Christie  
New Milton Hampshire.

Dear Jenny  
Enclosed cheque for renewal of my membership.

I really enjoy the concerts & only wish we got more of them. Also, the other concerts I did miss the very good evenings in Finchley & the "outings".

Thank you very much for all your efforts & Brian's also of course. See you at the end of the month

Best wishes.  
Vivien Mallindine  
East Finchley

DEAR BRIAN  
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE RECENT COPY OF SOIRÉES MUSICALES WHICH I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST. NATHANIEL SEEMS TO BE A SUPER FIND AND I ONLY HOPE AND PRAY THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY A LENGTHY STAY WITH THE ORCHESTRA. I CERTAINLY WISH I WAS STILL PERFORMING AND, IN A POSITION TO GET TO KNOW HIM. ANNA, JULIET, MARYETTA & I WISH HIM A LONG AND HAPPY TENURE.

I WAS PLEASED TO READ ABOUT A RELEASE OF "JOLLY ROGER" ON CD, I WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE SOME COPIES.

GOD BLESS & LOVE TO JENNY  
VERNON MIDGLEY.  
CHRISTCHURCH. NEW ZEALAND.



Did you catch Vernon & Maryetta Midgley on a rehash of “The Good Old Days”?

Dear Jenny & Brian

I would very much like to attend your special events as in past years I attended many FNIMN concerts around the UK However health problems have restricted me from travelling – much to my regret

Whilst looking through my photo collection of past trips I discovered this picture which may be of interest to you. It was taken backstage in the White Rock Theatre, Hastings, probably in the late 70s early 80s it includes Robin Boyle, myself, Juan Martin & Roderick Dunk.



**Robin, Paddy, Juan & Rod**

Roger Groves a member of the Orchestra had mentioned to Robin that I travelled to concerts from Ireland. On the night of the concert Robin told the audience how popular FNIMN was & there were two people in the theatre that night, one had travelled from Scotland the other from Ireland, and he was meeting them both after the show.... It was a wonderful experience for me meeting Robin & Roderick which I will never forget. I had the pleasure of meeting them again on a number of occasions after.

Best wishes to you and all members of the Orchestra  
Regards  
Paddy Murphy  
Co Wicklow.

*(You wouldn't get that now Paddy. Long gone are the days when parties & Club members were welcomed by the presenter!...Other Ed)*

We are always happy to receive comments & suggestions, but make sure you include your name or membership number.

**The next edition of Soirées Musicales will be out early Autumn.  
Any items for inclusion please by 31st JULY**



**Bramwell Tovey**

*We received the official notification, press releases etc pertaining to the appointment of Bramwell Tovey as the new Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra.*

All very formal & correct – it can be viewed on our website.  
**<http://www.cosc.co.uk>**

*However, I felt a more personal “pen portrait” was appropriate for the Magazine, so I asked Roderick Elms if he would oblige, and happily he was only too pleased to do so. Other Ed.*



# An introduction to Bramwell Tovey

## by Roderick Elms



© 2012 New Line Cinema

I was delighted to be asked for a personal introduction to my friend of over fifty years and would like to start by taking you back to the 27th April 1974 – I'm standing in front of an orchestra in St Andrew's Church in Ilford, Essex and about to conduct a performance of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. In front of me is a wonderful array of musicians, mostly from the local area – many of whom will go on to work with the symphony and session orchestras and major musical-education provisions in this country and abroad. Seated at the back of the orchestra is a young gentleman playing the organ. Frequently, if playing an instrument, it would be the tuba, double-bass, violin, piano, sometimes vocals, but more usually his instrument of choice was a white baton – his name is Bramwell Tovey and that orchestra was called *Concerti Allegri* (Joyful Concerts). Normally, Bram would be on the conductor's rostrum.

The late sixties and seventies was a golden period for music in the London Borough of Redbridge. The local music service, under the leadership of its pioneering and revered Music Advisor, Malcolm Bidgood OBE, had gone from strength to strength and so many of us became legacies of this extraordinary period. Malcolm formed the Redbridge Youth Orchestra in 1966 and its members would play in its bi-annual courses – one in Ilford and the other, a residential course after Easter in Aldeburgh, Suffolk (we were the first youth orchestra to play in the Snape Maltings). I could be found in the double-bass section, and Bram, sitting behind his tuba – we all had a great deal of fun. Many of us celebrated the orchestra's fiftieth anniversary (and Malcolm Bidgood's ninetieth) last year in Aldeburgh and Bram flew from Canada for the occasion – so important to us were those formative years, both then and now. This is by way of background to explain why, after some fifty years of friendship, it is such a privilege to have been asked to write this introduction to the new Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra.

It was probably never in doubt that with a family background in the Salvation Army, Bramwell Tovey would be led to the playing of a brass instrument. His father was a lifelong Salvation Army bandsman until his untimely death at the age of 48 and his mother was buried with full Salvation Army honours in 2011. His parents were also both members of the local and very fine Ivor Evans Choir. His maternal Grandfather had a beautiful tenor voice and played the tenor horn, and on his mother's side, his Grandfather played the euphonium and his Grandmother was a fine pianist.

It's hardly surprising that Bram has always retained a strong connection with the brass world. He gave his first BBC broadcasts in 1974-1975 conducting the Hanwell

Band on Radio 3's *Bandstand*. He went on to direct the GUS Band from 1984-1988 during which time they won the British Open Championships and he appeared with them on a *Friday Night* from the Golders Green Hippodrome in April 1986, conducting both orchestra and band which was thought to be a first. A band was a regular feature of a *Friday Night* in those days but the band's conductor would only ever conduct the band. Since 2000 Bram has maintained a very close and treasured relationship with the Fodens Band of which he is now President.

Ilford, where we grew up, was a catalyst for the formation of many musical groups. In the late seventies, Bram fronted the east-London equivalent of *Les Six* when, along with Paul Hart, Russell Jordan, Christopher Stearn, Harold Sim and me, he became part of the internationally unknown *Gnaff Ensemble*, giving several international tours (of Essex) and appearing on ITV on Boxing Day 1982 celebrating the launch of our Christmas single *Free Kings*. These concerts gave Bram a unique opportunity to hone his presentational skills with audiences brave enough to attend our concerts.

Bramwell Tovey studied at the Royal Academy of Music and London University where he took a B. Mus degree, studied both the tuba and piano, and pursued the conducting course (which path I had also followed alongside a young Simon Rattle). Following life at the RAM, Bram continued to freelance as a tuba player, mostly playing for sessions and deputising in the London Symphony Orchestra for the late and brilliant John Fletcher.

In November 1975 he was appointed Assistant Conductor and rehearsal pianist with *London Festival Ballet* (now *English National Ballet*) giving up the tuba, selling it and hardly playing it since. He toured with the company full time for three years, playing piano all day and conducting three to four shows a week, rarely with any orchestral rehearsal. He worked and toured with Nureyev and Massine amongst others and this period was an incredible learning curve. From 1978-1982 he was Music Director of *Scottish Ballet* and for the first time he had his own professional orchestra, writing and arranging a great deal of music that the company danced to. In 1983 he moved to *Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet* (until 1988) as Conductor then, after Barry Wordsworth left, Principal Conductor. He and Barry worked together for a year and a half, with Ashley Lawrence once joining them on a tour of New Zealand – all three of them quite remarkably destined to be Principal Conductor of the BBCCO.

1986 was a seminal year for Bram when he stepped in to conduct the opening night of the LSO's Leonard Bernstein Festival following the indisposition of Lucas Foss (Bram had previously conducted the LSO/Shell Music Scholarship finals at the Barbican, the first occasion being when Evelyn Glennie won in 1984). This twist of fate brought widespread attention to Bram as well as a personal invitation from Bernstein (who had been in the audience) to join him at the famous *Tanglewood Music Festival*. From 1987-1989 he was Artistic Director for the New D'Oyly Carte Opera and he auditioned a new company when it was relaunched after six years of

bankruptcy. This was a very exciting process with about 1,000 auditions (many of which I played for) which led to their triumphant return to the Savoy Theatre with *The Mikado* in September 1989. Bram left the company in December of that year.

Following conducting trips with the ballet to Canada, Dr. Tovey (Bram holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Kwantlen and British Columbia) was invited to become Music Director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, which position he adopted in 1989 (I had the pleasure of visiting for some solo performances in 1998 as well as two greatly uplifting performances of Mahler's eighth symphony). Bram left Winnipeg in 2001 for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra where he will shortly conclude an eighteen-year term as Music Director, becoming *Music Director Emeritus*. From 2002 until 2006 he was also Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg. In 2006, he became Music Director of the *National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain* – a position he treasures along with the responsibility of bringing the great brass band tradition to a new generation. It was a personal delight that the following year (2007) Bram was able to make an overnight dash the length of the country to stand alongside me as Best Man for my wedding to Jo.

Ten years on (last August) Jo and I had the great pleasure to be official pianists for the Harry Mortimer Solo Competition, held by the NYBBGB each year. It was remarkable to witness the enthusiasm and expertise of these young players and the unqualified respect for their Music Director.

A frequent visitor to all the major orchestras in the USA, Bram is very proud to have conducted nearly 150 concerts with the New York Philharmonic and been Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl for four years before the arrival of Gustavo Dudamel as their new Music Director. He also visits



**Bram at Rod's Wedding**

Australia and has conducted most of the British orchestras as well as other leading European orchestras such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Professor Tovey (Bram was appointed *Associate Professor of Music, Director of Orchestral Activities* at Boston University's College of Fine Arts in 2017) is also a prolific composer who has written music for a large range of genres. He is a fine pianist, as will become apparent in his new role with the CO, and his communication skills with orchestras and audiences alike are legendary. In August 2011 he was described by *Musical America* as "one of the most versatile and charismatic musicians in the world."



**Rod Jo & Bram**

Bramwell Tovey is no stranger to the CO. He was a regular visitor for *Friday Nights* and other programmes back in the eighties and early nineties and I particularly recall a broadcast with him from the Dome, Brighton in 1990. His last visit at that time was for a *Friday Night* from Barnstaple in the orchestra's fortieth anniversary year. This was an all-Mozart programme as the stage was not big enough to accommodate a larger orchestra (I remember driving there for a CO concert and several players being sent straight back to London due to lack of space!). He has visited again in recent times for Radio 3, notably a recording of music by Edward Gregson for Chandos.

Bram lives with his wife Lana, Choral Director of an independent school, in Vancouver. He has three children – Emmeline who is going to the Royal Northern College of Music to study for a B. Mus in voice, Jessica who is currently studying violin at the University of British Columbia and Ben, a guitarist and composer who has just finished touring with a rock group.

Whilst maintaining his busy international schedule of guest conducting, Bram looks forward to being able to spend more time in the UK and will now be making regular appearances with the CO. His first concert, recorded at Watford Colosseum, was broadcast on the 27th February (2018). An innovative programme in which the strings played Britten's notoriously difficult *Variations on a theme of Frank Bridge*; the wind, brass, percussion, piano and harp played the hugely challenging *Hemispheres* – a piece by the contemporary American composer, Joseph Turrin. In the second half, the whole orchestra came together for Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and on this occasion, the writer assumed his rightful position at the back of the orchestra – playing the organ!



I'm sure that I speak for everyone in saying that we are all thrilled that Bramwell Tovey has accepted the invitation to be the Principal Conductor of this esteemed orchestra and that they look forward to many exciting years of music-making ahead under its new and highly distinguished maestro.

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*Huge thanks to Roderick for this article. We don't often have a new Principal Conductor, so to have such an excellent personal introduction is an added bonus! Also congratulations are due to Roderick as he celebrated 40 years of working with the BBC on 7th March....Other Ed.*

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## **CLASSICAL, LIGHT, OPERATIC, POPULAR. WHAT IS MUSIC?**

### **A topic for discussion by Graham Offord**

What is 'classical' music? What sort of music do we prefer? Is there snobbery in music? What is 'light' music? What is the difference between operetta and musicals? Most of the answers to these questions will differ from person to person, so I can only give my own opinion. I prefer music which is tuneful or melodic, music to which I can sing along or hum, and remember from the first time of hearing. Something memorable. As a member of the BBC Concert Orchestra Supporters' Club, I very much like what we refer to as 'light' music, the sort of material that was played on programmes such as *Grand Hotel* with Max Jaffa, *Your 100 Best Tunes* with Alan Keith or Richard Baker, and of course *Friday Night Is Music Night*.

However, I also very much like the really famous arias or choruses from operas; those with what I call 'good tunes'; but that doesn't mean to say that I like the whole opera. Similarly, I like certain movements from symphonies, but it doesn't necessarily mean that I like the whole symphony, although there are certain works by Dvorak, Bizet, César Franck, Tchaikovsky, Mozart and Beethoven of which I like the whole.

I also liked many of the so-called 'pop' songs of the 1950s and '60s, when they were well sung and one could hear the words. I have only liked a few in the last 40 years, mainly because there is less subtlety, little discernible melody and I can't hear the words. I can't even lip-read as most performers hold the microphone in front of their mouths. What's the matter with modern mics that they can't pick up sounds from 6 inches away?

I also enjoy many operettas. What's the difference between opera and operetta? Bizet's *Carmen* was originally called an operetta and opened at the *Opéra Comique*, not the Paris Opera House, because it had spoken dialogue. It was only after the dialogue had been turned into *recitative* that it was transferred to the Palais Garnier.

For more than 40 years I have been the Musical Director of a couple of amateur operatic societies, conducting mostly the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. But I have also conducted *Carousel*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Boy Friend* and *Calamity Jane*.

I am still not sure what 'classic' means. The music of Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, the Beatles and so on are all 'classics' of their type; likewise, the music of John Barry, John Williams, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Ivor Novello, Noel Coward. The list goes on and on.

I was delighted when, 25 years ago, a new radio channel began broadcasting under the name *Classic FM*. This was fine to begin with, but gradually they introduced music from films and more recently from video games. Do these come under the heading of 'classical'? Certainly, Williams and Barry have written some really good melodies but are they 'classical'?

What really turned me away from Classic FM was the embargo on the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, who contributed so much to late Victorian theatre and are still immensely popular in the English-speaking world. We might occasionally hear an overture (*The Pirates of Penzance* or *The Yeomen of the Guard*.) but they are the exceptions to the rule. Surely the brilliant arrangement of Sullivan's music by Sir Charles Mackerras for the ballet *Pineapple Poll* deserves a hearing now and then. After all, we hear *Swan Lake* and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, though usually only one or two numbers of the latter.

We do occasionally hear the songs from *The Merry Widow*, or *Die Fledermaus*, but they probably get away with it as they are sung in a foreign language. I have yet to hear anything from *Oklahoma!*, yet the Rodgers and Hammerstein work was performed as written at the BBC Proms this year. When the channel's annual poll is held we are told that *Rusalka* is a favourite opera. I bet that most people only know the *Song to the Moon*; *Turandot*, but have they heard anything other than *Nessun Dorma*? *The Pearl Fishers* but only *Aufond du temple saint*. Is this musical snobbery on my part? The trouble is that we often hear the same old thing well-known works by the myriad number of composers who are so often neglected by radio stations.

I am not saying that all modern music is bad or that all music written before 1900 is intrinsically better, but I would like all composers to be treated alike. Perhaps a brave presenter could suggest to the powers-that-be that the story of *The Mikado* or *The Gondoliers* be told on Classic FM in small sections at the same time every day, with the song that's connected to the dialogue played after it has been put into context.

Operetta, or Musical Comedy, or Symphony or Concerto. What does it matter as long as it's enjoyable?

©2017 Graham Offord

*Well is anyone else entering in to Graham's debate?. Let's hear from you.*

## THE SAME OLD STORY

Yes! It's happened again! 2 more musical treats disappearing from Radio2. Listen to the Band & The Organist Entertains, are both being axed this spring. Not much left now is there?

*Oh, Mr Controller whatever shall we do  
We want melodic music and it all depends on YOU  
Bring it back we beg you as quickly as you can  
Oh, Mr Controller won't you be our music man?*

Can be sung to the Music Hall song "Oh Mr Porter" (but only just). Probably not the sort of tune the Controller is fond of!

*(no prizes for guessing who penned this!.....Other Ed)*



## CD REVIEWS by Dave Daniels.

NEW CD'S REVIEW  
James McCarthy *Code breaker* and Will Todd  
*Ode to a Nightingale*  
Signum Classics SIGCD495 (2 discs)

Choral singing at the moment seems to be on something of high with programmes proliferating on TV and people such as Gareth Malone encouraging amateur choirs all over the land. Much of their core repertoire are the traditional works such as "Messiah", "Gerontious" "Elijah" etc therefore it is important that new works are created to compliment these and this 2-disc set is an outstanding example of just these.

The outstanding **HERTFORDSHIRE CHORUS** is one of this the UK's finest choirs and appears regularly at all the major concert halls in not only the much-loved works mentioned but also new music. The Chorus has a special fund to commission new work and the two pieces on this set were both commissioned with generous help from individual sponsors. The BBC Concert Orchestra are making their 1st appearance on this label joining the choir conducted by David Temple and these recordings entered the Specialist Classical Charts at No. 7.

**CODEBREAKER** by James McCarthy is an exploration of the life of pioneering computer scientist and mathematician Alan Turing who did so much important work at Bletchley Park during the war including cracking the Enigma codes. Despite this



in 1952 he was arrested for having an affair with a young man – illegal then of course - and in 1954 he took his own life at the age of 41. First performed in 2014 at the Barbican it is a riveting work- “*Deeply Moving*” said BBC Music Mag. “*A passion that is intoxicating*” the Financial Times. It is a very original but very approachable piece. The excellent soprano soloist is Julia Doyle.

**ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE** by Will Todd is a setting of Keats’s famous poem, again commissioned by the Choir and a generous patron it was 1st performed at the Barbican in 2011. It is what Will Todd calls his 4th Symphony and he says that he felt a little humbled before he put down a note – this is after all one of the most famous poems in the English language. Nevertheless, the result is what Rob Cowan writing in Classical Ear calls “*A sizable, texturally rich and beautifully orchestrated essay*”. Reviewing this recording of these 2 works “Gramophone” magazine says “*This release should be in every choral singer’s Christmas stocking. Two important new additions to the genre launched with their bright and rich tone by the Hertfordshire Chorus with superb support from the BBC Concert Orchestra*” There is little to add!

**William Walton – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra**

*(original version -1939)*

**Arthur Bliss – Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1955)**

**Dutton Epoch CDLX 7342**

Back on the more familiar territory of the Dutton label this record finds the BBC Concert Orchestra and Martin Yates joined by Scottish-born violinist Lorraine McAslan – the most recorded British violinist of her generation and with whom the Orchestra has recorded, all on Dutton.

William Walton had been approached by the great Jascha Heifetz for a violin concerto, but in April 1939 the British Council asked him for one to be premiered at the New York World Fair in June 1939. Realising the prestige attached to a commission for both Heifetz and the Fair- Walton engineered the fusion of the 2 by stipulating that Heifetz should give the 1st performance! In the event it was not premiered in New York- but Cleveland in December 1939. This is the version that we hear on this record in the first recording since 1941 – for in 1943 Walton rescored the orchestral part –leaving the solo part unchanged-so what have here is very different from what we normally hear now – some would say the original is more romantic. I have the revised concerto on vinyl as recorded by Nigel Kennedy with Andre Previn and the RPO and most noticeable is the lack of percussion which some feel is a mistake, though the newer version together with the viola concerto are regarded of 2 of the finest string concertos of the 20th century. However, it is good to have both versions of the violin concerto.

The Arthur Bliss concerto is quite large scale – 40 minutes or so – and was the result of a commission from the BBC in May 1953. It was produced in close collaboration with the Violinist to whom it is dedicated – Alfredo Campoli – who gave the 1st performance in May 1955 with Sir Malcolm Sargent and the BBC S.O. Later that

year Campoli and Bliss recorded the work together for Decca (I suspect you can still get it on CD). The concerto, which is not so often heard as the Walton is in 3 movements with echoes of some of Bliss's ballet music in the 1st movement the second being a lightly scored scherzo and elements of gypsy music in the last!

All in all, a fascinating record.

## MORE FROM THE ARCHIVES

### *“The Jameson Collection”*

Like millions of others in the 1980s, when on the road I would listen to Terry Wogan on his breakfast show playing pleasant middle-of-the-road popular music together with his inimitable banter. Then, I think in about the mid 80's he decided he wanted to do other things so he left R2, as we know he returned some years later. He was replaced by another outstanding character, a real 'cockney sparrow' the former editor of the 'Daily Express' Derek Jameson who did the breakfast show for some years playing very much the same material as Terry with one exception. Derek was a great music lover of the classics, especially opera, so a feature of his show was to always include a piece of classical music in the programme, usually I seem to remember around 8.30, these had been recorded for the show by the BBC Concert Orchestra and he called these “The Jameson Collection”. At this time the BBC had its own record label and so Tim McDonald, the BBC producer devised and produced a 2-record album of these pieces – for the most part, though not exclusively, popular classics. I have the vinyl LPs (BBC ref 719) though it was also issued on cassette and the then new medium of compact disc, this was 1988.

*“I believe in music, as the song says. The printed word has been the story of my life but for me nothing on paper can match the joy of listening to the wonderful sounds created by the world's greatest composers and played by the finest musicians”* So said Derek in his sleeve notes on these records recorded by the Concert Orchestra at Golders Green and conducted by Ashley Lawrence who was in his last year as principal conductor after 18 years and Barry Wordsworth who would succeed Ashley in 1989 and also remain for 18 years! There are no less than 26 pieces in the collection so I can't list them all – *“The Stockton to Darlington Express”* by Andy Faris (of “Upstairs Downstairs” theme) is a favourite of mine as you might expect but also included are items by Bob Docker – his *“Tabarinage”* and Leroy Anderson – *“Belle of the Ball”* then onto music by Elgar, Respighi, Rodrigo, Gounod, Handel, Grieg, Rossini, Mozart and the album ends with our Chairman's favourite piece – Bizet's *“Farandole”* – so I guess he has this collection !

An album well worth looking out for at a specialist dealer or online – the CD may still be available – a jolly good listen!

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As ever a huge **“THANK YOU”** to Dave for this contribution, his knowledge is truly amazing.

# Saturday Special Evening of entertainment

## Saturday, September 30th 2017 at Finchley Methodist Church.

Those of us who turned up for this special evening of entertainment, which was billed as 'Hats off to the ladies' and 'Autumn Serenade' enjoyed two very different and very special treats.

The first half of the evening was dedicated to eight full video performances from the archives of The British Musical Hall Society, presented by officials Geoff Bowden and David Reed. We started with a Lily Morris performing on a typical music hall stage, presumably around the 1920s, and moved through sometimes humorous, sometimes more serious performances by Julia Migenes, Hinge and Bracket, June Bronhill, Alma Cogan (with Cliff Richard), Joan Hinde distracting an audience from Ken Dodd on stage, Marilyn Hill Smith, and ending with a virtuoso comedic piece by Patricia Routledge. Geoff, who is editor of the society's "Call Boy Magazine", provided terrific insight into the careers of the various performers. A thoroughly enjoyable series of films, and I for one would be delighted to see more of similar items at future evenings.

After refreshments, we were then delighted to welcome back once again the retired former harpist of the BBC Concert Orchestra, Andrew Knight. Andrew has performed for the Club at such events more than once, and always manages to find beautiful pieces which lend themselves so well to the harp. I am always surprised that the effort of transporting and loading/unloading his instrument does not impede his playing, but everyone there could hear in an instant that those famous 'Friday Night is Music Night' theme tune flourishes are as strong as ever.

*Andrew chose the following pieces for this evening:*

4 movements from the ballet '*Paquita*' by Minkus – I noticed Chairman Brian's eyebrows rise at one of Andrew's grand flourishes, and as the grouping progressed, I was struck by the fast tempo in certain places, and how the various individual strings vanished in a blur as a result at the fingers of this expert practitioner. '*Girl With The Flaxen Hair*' by Debussy. '*Vers la Source Dans le Bois*' by Tournier – it occurred to me during this piece how very perfectly it maximises the presentation qualities which the harp affords. '*Im Chamber Separee*' by Heuberger, '*I'll See You Again*' by Coward. '*The Russian Dance*' from Swan Lake by Tchaikovsky – another example of how well the harp lends itself to certain rhythms, not all of which would necessarily be expected to fit so very well. '*You Don't Have To Say You Love Me*', by Donaggio – I had heard Andrew perform this piece at one of his earlier visits and had mentioned how much I enjoyed his rendition of this piece. I was more than delighted to hear its inclusion once again.

I do not pretend to be well versed in classical music, but I can appreciate superlative musicianship when I hear it. I think we are all highly privileged to be entertained by a harpist of Andrew's calibre (as we are when other orchestra members give up their personal time to come along to provide so much enjoyment).



**Geoff, Andrew and David**

These meetings are very kindly arranged by Brian, but it is quite noticeable that there is much greater capacity at Finchley than for the number of members who attend. I encourage all members to consider seriously next time one is held; I am confident that no-one would be disappointed. Certainly, I should like to extend my thanks to Geoff, David and of course Andrew for making this evening such a special event.

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The Orchestra has a Facebook page.  
Visit: [www.facebook.com/bbcconcertorchestra](http://www.facebook.com/bbcconcertorchestra).

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# OUR MEMORIES OF THE GOLDERS GREEN HIPPODROME

The recent publicity some positive and others negative, about the new Islamic Cultural Centre which now occupies the former Golders Green Hippodrome, has prompted us to recall just the few years we enjoyed visiting this venue for FNIMN recordings.

At that time Shirley and I were members of a thriving North London Social club for married couples and quite often we were offered tickets to attend the programme recordings.

We remember clearly having found somewhere to park the car in the local busy side streets of Golders Green, we would then queue alongside the theatre building in all sorts of weather. Just above us on the side of the building in large capital letters it proudly announced 'THE HOME OF THE BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA' - Oh how times have changed!

When the doors eventually opened we submitted our tickets to the attendants as we entered. However, before climbing the stairs to the balcony, there was a tall good-looking gentleman, handing out leaflets inviting the incoming audience to join the BBC Concert Orchestra Club (as it was then). Brian was very persuasive in recruiting new members and I'm sure somewhere nearby, Jenny was offering a range of Club souvenirs and other useful items plus of course a selection of the orchestra's CD's.

I seem to recollect that on our next visit we accepted the offer and we joined the 600/700 other Club members. That must have been around 1998. We still have a copy of *Soirées Musicales* dated Spring 1999, printed all in black and white except for the green border on the cover page.

Thinking back - just before the recording began, the evening's programme presenter Robin Boyle would welcome the various organised groups in the audience - 'W.I. from Epping' - Derby and Jones Club from Hitchin' etc. and finally greeted the members of the BBC Concert Orchestra Club - followed by loud cheers from all parts of the audience. That made us feel very welcome and part of the broadcast.

Then we would settle back to enjoy a great programme of popular music which we all appreciated. One thing which we would have liked, was a handout (Programme) of the music, composers, soloists, and other performers which was to follow during the recording session. So as a compromise Shirley would quietly write down on a pad, details of the item being played, sometimes much to the annoyance of the people seating nearby as she would often whisper "What's his name again?" as the item began to be performed.

Another feature of the Club in those days was being occasionally invited to pre-concert talks entitled the 'Green Room Interview' with members of the BBCCO, conductors and others connected to the Orchestra. I believe on one occasion Barry Wordsworth was the quest interviewee and I had the opportunity to ask him a question.

When the BBC vacated GGH we attended the orchestra recordings at the BBC Maida Vale studios, LSO St Luke's, the Mermaid Theatre and the Watford Coliseum. Regrettably due to Medical problems and old age we cannot get to the concert venues very easily but still try to attend the Club's AGM and special events at the Finchley Methodist Church. We now record all the FNIMN programmes through our TV view box and delete those which do not include our kind of old fashioned popular music.

Having said that we must loudly applaud the BBCCO for their continued extremely high quality of performance and versatility whether it is live or recorded. Long may they continue to give great pleasure to many in the years to come.

And that also goes for the BBC Concert Orchestra Supporters Club and all the officers and members - best wishes to everyone and happy listening.

© 2017 Bernard and Shirley Ecker

*Thank you for reminding us of those happy days at "The Hipp" What a shame it had to end!*

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## THE CONCERT GOERS

### **A contribution from Susan Ruckes.**

How I loved Brian's rhyme in the last edition of Soirées Musicales. Ronald Corp and the New London Orchestra have recorded some of our favourites, but there is rarely any light music on Radio2

Has anyone else noticed the frequent disappearance of the signature tune from FNIMN?

'A Night at the Opera' from the Colosseum sounded promising, BUT 'Mozart's 'QUEEN of the Night'? No, it was a pop group called QUEEN & I don't think they were there. What a noisy rowdy audience!

I phoned the BBC – they must groan when they see my number! I said something about the Trades Description Act, 'A Night at the Opera' was anything but!

How much I enjoyed that evening in Finchley on 30th September. The harp recital was great. 'Hats off to the Ladies' was interesting, entertaining and informative.

Having received a leaflet at Finchley I attended 'An Evening with Marilyn Hill Smith' on 12th October in Covent Garden. Although the venue was hard to find, it

was well worth the effort. Marilyn was as delightful as ever and looked lovely as always in a pretty lilac dress. Geoff & David reminded us of people and music that are neglected today.

On Friday 20th October I returned from Ilford's Kenneth More Theatre to hear the last 20 minutes of FNIMN from Chichester, Ilona Domnich was singing a well-known aria. Also, on the programme were Noah Stuart singing 'Nessun Dorma' and Alexander Armstrong, the Concert Orchestra played some familiar pieces on their own too. **REAL MUSIC AT LAST!**

I phoned the BBC to express my delight and the hope that the programme will be repeated. We can but hope!



**Marilyn**

© 2018 Susan Ruckes

## **Dave Daniels at Watford Colosseum 11th January 2018**

The second week in January of the new year will probably be remembered for the ongoing slanging match between politicians on both sides of the Atlantic over who said what to whom and when....and of course the dismal weather ...dull, wet, and depressing. Hardly a time to make one of my all too rare forays from Doncaster to the Capital for a Concert – and hey who in Watford will turn out on a miserable afternoon to hear Holst and Copland? The answer – everyone it seems – the Colosseum was packed – when the auditorium doors were opened at 1.15pm the queue stretched from the door through the reception and foyer outside and round the block! When the recording started at 2.00pm the hall was virtually full – but not quite – as to my amazement the staff were still admitting people 30mins into the session amid much shuffling etc – quite unnecessary in my opinion – they should have waited a few minutes until the interval.

The BBC Concert Orchestra under Barry Wordsworth gave a splendid programme devised by Barry to reflect his life in Ballet plus some songs in a programme entitled “*Holst and Britten meet the American Songbook*” introduced by Radio 3 presenter Ian Skelly and to be broadcast later in the year. The folk-song revival of the early 20th century inspired the opening piece – Holst’s “*Somerset Rhapsody*” written for, and dedicated to, Cecil Sharp. Not so often played it opens with a long- held chord on the 2nd violins over which the oboe d’amore plays a Sheep-Shearing song leading to a march tune “*High Germany*” and “*The Lovers Farewell*” making for a rumbustious middle section before returning to the quiet opening. It really does deserve to be better known as indeed does Holst’s “*Japanese Suite*” which I have never heard before. It is a suite in 3 sections but joined by interludes each section appears to be a traditional far eastern folk tune and the piece incorporates, as you might expect a large percussion section and which gave Alasdair, Stephen, and co a chance to shine!

According to my research the piece received its 1st performance under the Composer at a Henry Wood Prom in 1919 the same year as Eric Coates' "*Summer Days*" Suite (also under the Composer) and "*A Children's Overture*" by Quilter. It must have been quite a year at The Queens Hall! Our concert also included between the 2 items by Holst - 4 folk settings by Britten sung by the wonderful Susan Bullock including "*O Waly Waly*" & "*By the Sally Gardens*" I was familiar with these in their setting for voice and piano but I don't think I have heard the orchestral version which was delightful.

The 2nd half consisted of Copland's 2 great ballet scores "*Rodeo*" and "*El Salon Mexico*" The audience were obviously not too familiar with these as they clapped in the wrong place in the Hoe-Down from "*Rodeo*" and not at all at the end of "*El Salon Mexico*" which of course ends very abruptly! This meant we had 2 very good-humoured retakes at the end of the concert!! Between these works we heard 2 gorgeous songs sung by Susan Bullock – "*Bill*" from "*Showboat*" by Jerome Kern and from Stephen Sondheim's "*Follies*" the moving "*Losing my mind*". Both these demonstrated what makes the BBC CO special– they play Holst and Copland as well as any top symphony orchestra but when it comes to things like the Kern and Sondheim the Concert Orchestra play with a style and flair you don't find elsewhere – except maybe on Broadway itself!

© 2017 Dave Daniels

## **Jenny & Brian on the Concert circuit.**

Like Susan we attended An Evening with Marilyn Hill Smith at the Club for Acts & Actors. Having been warned in advance it was difficult to find, we arrived in good time and took our seats at the far end of the row, in order to get this photo for the magazine.

This did not go down well with the regulars (average age 80+!) Far from welcoming the extended audience, the interlopers had bagged their usual seats! Things did not improve when Jenny won a much-coveted prize in the raffle!!!







As those who have attended Geoff & David's audio/visual presentations at Finchley would expect, the evening was a great success. Geoff's skilful interviewing together with David's stills & videos and Marilyn's relaxed and often amusing anecdotes were a perfect combination.

It was lovely to meet Marilyn & Adam after the show and catch up – it's been a long time since she appeared on FNIMN. Such a shame as her voice & personality are as captivating as ever!

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November was a really busy month! On 12th we attended **Camerata Quartet** at Barton le Clay in rural Bedfordshire for a delightful evening entitled Music & Cakes

Peter Bussereau & Anna Dryer-Beers violins, Paul Bennett viola & Peter Randall cello provided the music, introduced as always by Peter, and featured Franz Josef Haydn's *Quartet* in G major opus 64 No 4,"Anton Webern's *Langsamer Satz*, & Danish Quartet "*Wood Works*" a short compilation of Scandinavian Wedding melodies. And finally Claude Debussy *Quartet* in G minor opus 10.



### Quartet Camerata

And the cakes? A mouthwatering selection of gateaux & sponge cakes served in the interval. What better way to spend an evening!

## **Beaman Consort at Redbourn 25th November.**

Next it was a long cross country trip to St Mary's Church in Redbourn on the far side of Hertfordshire for a concert by The Beaman Consort. All familiar faces from the CO David Beaman from the 2nd violins, his wife Julie clarinet, Michael Gray 2nd violins, Mike Briggs viola, Katherine O'Kane cello & Andrew Wood double bass.

An excellent programme with a variety of music, starting with Julie giving a faultless rendition of Weber's *Clarinet Quintet* in B-flat op 34. Next Rossini's *duo* for Cello & Double Bass and Schubert's "*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*" D965 (The Shepherd on the Rock) sung by Louise McPhee.

After the interval with wine & nibbles, Mike Briggs played Bach's *Tocatta* in D minor BWV565 on the Church organ. Then came Mozart's *Divertimento* in D K136, Schubert's Piano Quintet D667 (*The Trout*). Nino Tirouni "*Adoration*", Coates' "*Knightsbridge March*" (London Suite). Paul Reader arr Gray "*The Victorian Kitchen Garden*", the traditional "*Ede'n*" and finally David's own arrangement of Monti's *Czardas*.



Michael,

Mike, David, Katharine, Julie

Andy

## **Beaman Consort**

The concert was performed in aid of St Mary's charity of the year, "Open Doors UK" It was lovely to meet & chat to the players, we seldom get the opportunity these days!

The next evening it was down to London for the **Barnet Symphony Orchestra at St John's Friern Barnet, 26th November.**

We are always pleased to support concerts performed by this highly talented band of musicians, and as usual we were not disappointed. Haydn; *London Symphony No104*, and Faure: *Pavanne*. After the interval we were treated to Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No2* faultlessly performed by the orchestra's principal clarinet, Steve Randall.

**Barnet Symphony Orchestra, March 11th St John's Church Friern Barnet.**

This was another excellent evening under the baton of Roselise Gentile, who conducted the entire performance without any music.



Schubert: *Unfinished Symphony*, Mozart: *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Verdi: *Prelude from Atilla*, Mascagni: *Intermezzo*, Bizet: *Prelude from Carmen* & Tchaikovsky: *March Slave*.

**This was an ambitious programme for an amateur orchestra, who must be congratulated on their success.**

*Barnet Symphony occasionally have "extras" from the BBC CO and it was good to see David Cropper still blowing his French horn for this concert.*

***We certainly get around!***

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**Don't Forget the Club's AGM  
14th April see back cover for details.**

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Quartet Camerata** 7.30 Saturday 24th March

The Toddington Music Society  
St George of England Parish Church  
Toddington  
Bedfordshire  
LU5 6BP

Quartet Camerata visits Toddington Music Society in Bedfordshire. The quartet are joined by the cellist James Jarvis for a performance of Schubert's sublime string quintet. Their concert will also include Haydn's "Sunrise" quartet, Webern's early and beautifully melodic Langsamer Satz and folk music from Scandinavia.

**Symphonia Academica1** 10pm Friday 4th May

The Mumford Theatre,  
Anglia Ruskin University  
East Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB1 1PT

Following Symphonia Academica's recent appointment as Associate Ensemble at the Anglia Ruskin University, they return to the ARU with another in their "Masterworks" series. As well as Beethoven's powerful early string quartet op 18 no 4 in C minor and Webern's beautifully melodic Langsamer Satz they will perform works by student composers. The concert is part of the ARU's lunchtime concert series for which there is free admission.

*If you would like to receive details of their future concerts you can sign up to the emailing list at [Bussereau@ntlworld.com](mailto:Bussereau@ntlworld.com), or phone Peter on 01582 882159*

**Barnet Symphony Orchestra** 7.30 pm Sunday July 8th

St John's Church  
Friern Barnet Road.  
N11 3EQ

Bizet: Movements from L'arlesienne suites 1&2  
Smetana: Vitava from Ma Vlast  
Schumann: Symphony No3 "Rhenish"

*Don't forget Club members can receive a £2 reduction on ticket prices which also include a programme and interval refreshments.*

# “The Last Word”



## **From Andrew Connolly, the orchestra's General Manager**

With the advent of the internet and social media it has never been easier to keep up to date with the orchestra's activities. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and search engines can rapidly find you all sorts of information about our concerts, broadcasts and recordings. So, for this edition of *Soirées Musicales* I have chosen to share some of the behind the scenes planning and thinking that will shape what you see us doing in the coming years.

The managers of the five BBC Orchestras have been working together in the past 12 months to develop a strategy for each of the groups that will support what the BBC wants us to deliver for our audiences. In the case of the Concert Orchestra the idea is that we are “The Gateway to Classical Music” and use the opportunities we have from popular programming on Radio 2 to bring people into the world of orchestral music of all kinds. This is a simple goal that will help keep the character of the Concert Orchestra where we want to be, you might even say as “The People's Orchestra”.

Picking up from the broadly popular events on Radio 2 (and we also hope to appear on more TV Shows like *Sam Smith at the BBC* and *Sir Bruce: A Celebration*) we will continue to present themed concerts for Radio 3 which are eclectic, contemporary and classical in approach. Of course, there will continue to be the familiar types of Radio 3 studio invitation concerts and appearances out of London in partnership with festivals and promoters.

International touring is always enjoyable and we will aim to continue to fly the flag when we can. In 2018 we are giving a couple of concerts in Austria and I am talking to presenters in China about a 6 concert visit there this November. Chichester, the east of England and Devon and Cornwall will continue to be the places we look to perform concerts and take our education and outreach projects. I guess many of you will have seen our Skegness wedding story on the news earlier this month?

The orchestra's long-term home base has been up in the air since the demise of the Golders Green Hippodrome as a BBC building. We continue to work up to 90 days per year at Watford Colosseum which has enabled us to have some stability in scheduling. The rebuilt Victorian Theatre at Alexandra Palace fully re-opens in December and I have been speaking to them about the orchestra appearing there regularly from 2019. With the BBC TV heritage link and iconic location of Ally Pally, I hope this is a development we can build on for the long term.

As you will have read elsewhere, we are now well into our first year of an initial five contract with Bramwell Tovey as Principal Conductor. Exciting times are ahead under his direction and with Keith and Barry in our other conductor roles we have a fantastic trio at the musical helm! There is much talk in the music press currently about female conductors and at the Concert Orchestra we are actively engaged in developing female conductors and providing real opportunities. Similarly, with Dobrinka Tabakova we have a wonderful Composer in Residence whose music we will be playing more of in 2018 and we will also continue to be part of Radio 3's *Forgotten Female Composers* project.

Diversity in the membership of our orchestras is an issue I want the CO to help with and we are developing year an outreach programme aimed at school age children before they make choices about their A Level or tertiary level subjects. The opportunities for social mobility that a career in music can provide is something I have benefitted from and I feel very strongly that as a BBC Orchestra we can - and should - participate in helping the young people of today.

Finally, I know for many of you the Concert Orchestra is all about *Friday Night is Music Night* and the changes you have seen to the programme may not be welcome. All I can say is that the Head of Radio 2 (Lewis Carnie) has to keep the station to the strategy and budgets that he has to adhere to. I know he, like me would love there to be more FNIMN originations and we are working on making a few extras happen in the coming year. Take it from me, the Concert Orchestra is in really fine form at the moment giving terrific performances, recruiting new players, a new principal conductor and opportunities coming to us across the BBC and with external partners. FNIMN is just one part of our life and if you are feeling a bit depressed about things, I would urge you to dip into the other things we get up to.

Best wishes and thank you for supporting the Concert Orchestra.

*Andrew*  
13/03/18

***And Thank You Andrew for your contribution to the Magazine***



The Orchestra has a Facebook page.  
Visit: [www.facebook.com/bbcconcertorchestra](http://www.facebook.com/bbcconcertorchestra).





# THE 36TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB.

Will be held on  
**SATURDAY April 14th 2018**

At Finchley Methodist Church  
Ballards Lane Finchley N3 1NB

Commencing at 7.00 pm. Doors open 6.30 pm.

It is important that Club members attend. This is your Club, so come along and have your say. Find out more about our future aims & plans for members' entertainment. We usually have a good turnout and we hope to see even more of you this year

After the preliminaries there will be a short interval during which refreshments will be available in the foyer.

**THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY -  
WELL, COME ALONG & FIND OUT !**

## **Getting there**

Finchley Methodist Church is situated on the corner of Essex Park & Ballards Lane. There is limited unrestricted parking in adjacent streets. Buses 82 from Victoria, 460 from Willesden garage & 125 from Southgate stop outside the Church. Nearest underground is Finchley Central on the High Barnet branch of the Northern Line. (lift available), Exit via the ticket hall, cross over and turn right. the church is a 5 minute walk from the station, or you can pick up any DOUBLE DECK (not single) bus from outside Tesco. Church is at the 2nd stop.