

SOIRÉES MUSICALES

Autumn 2009 ~ Edition 40



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

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Soirées Musicales is the Magazine of the BBC Concert Orchestra's Supporters Club, which is an independent body set up in 1984 for the purpose of promoting and supporting the Members of the BBC Concert Orchestra. We are not affiliated to the BBC, neither do we receive any financial support from them.

Disclaimer: the views expressed by the contributors to this magazine are not necessarily the views of the Chairman, the Orchestra or the BBC.

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Copy for the next edition to be submitted by 31st January 2010

ED Lines.....Chairman Brian says....



Many people think the art of letter writing is a thing of the past – but judging by my postbag in recent weeks this certainly is not the case. Needless to say most of the correspondence has been regarding the BBC's attitude to this long established Club, and rest assured your letters have been copied and forwarded to the relevant people. I thank you sincerely for all your messages of support, and lets hope some progress can be made to restore a little sanity to what has become a somewhat bizarre situation.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A question quite often heard in general conversation. Well the BBC seem to think that there's quite a lot in a name – hence we are now the *BBC Concert Orchestra's Supporters Club*. Can you imagine what a lot of work, alterations and cost this very small change has involved? But it seems the BBC don't want us to be associated with their affairs, even though it is their Orchestra we are supporting, *and* we have been doing it for 25 years!! Anyway we soldier on, and we have in fact now got a website, and some new members on the committee to spur us on our way. Full details on the inside cover of this magazine.

CONTRADICTIONS – CONTRADICTIONS!!

We were asked to set up a website with a view to attracting more members to support our Orchestra. Having spent much time, effort and resources on this, we now find that our ticket allocation has been cut by well over half! The BBC has withdrawn our £2,000 grant. Fair enough times are hard. But now they have withdrawn our use of a Club stand at concerts, thus preventing us from dealing personally with Club Members and adding considerably to our stationery and postage costs. It's a funny old world!!

Brian Crouch
Chairman
BBC Concert Orchestra's Supporters Club

Changes in the Orchestra and other news.

New Faces in the Orchestra:

Trials are ongoing for positions as Violin II No2, Violin II tutti, Cello No2 and Principal piccolo. There are no new appointments as yet.

On the sick list:-

Gather Jim Casey did not enjoy his trip down the escalator, and is presently sporting a brace on his damaged incisors. This is not good news for a trombone player, and we wish Jim "*Case-the-Brace*" a speedy recovery.

Welcome Back Wishes to:

Lucy Hartley of the 1st violins, recently returned from maternity leave.

An Apology to Dan Mullin.

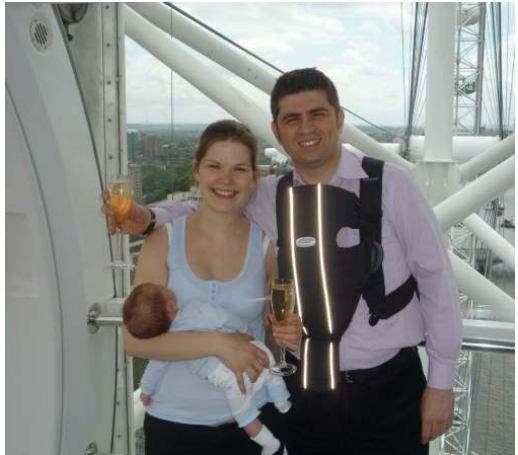
To misspell your surname once is bad enough, twice even worse, but three times is totally unacceptable. A misprint in a programme then missed at proof reading stage is my only excuse. What can I say? Unreserved apologies Dan! – Jenny.

Next Generation in the violin section: - continued.

The saga continues with the 8th baby, Gabriel, first child of Antonia and Remus Azoitei, who finally made his appearance after a 17 hour labour and six days late on July 4th at 01.35 at St Mary's Paddington, weighing in at 7lb 15.5oz. Antonia had wished to give birth in the birthing pool, but this was not possible due to the baby's position, but despite this it was a natural birth.



Baby Gabriel



Antonia and Remus celebrate their 1st Wedding Anniversary on the London Eye. Gabriel was not impressed.

Other Birth Congratulations to:-

Pianist duo Roderick and Joanna Elms. Their son Matthew James arrived on 9th June at Queens Hospital Romford, measuring 22 inches and weighing in at a staggering 10 lbs. Proud Dad says the "little" chap spends most of his time either eating or sleeping although his legs are already flying around like a veteran organist!



Matthew James



Photo by Catherine Jennings

And to keep things going Principal double bass Dominic Worsley's wife is expecting their first child in late November.



We are very sad to report that Larry lost his eight year battle with cancer, and departed this life on 23rd June. Larry served the Club as our Administrator from 1998 – 2003, and was best known for his infectious laugh, and being the life and soul of our Christmas parties at The Hippodrome Golders Green. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Changes in the Club Committee.

There have been several resignations and new appointments in the Club Committee to add to all the other changes we have had to deal with.

At the AGM Stephen Greenhalgh was welcomed. He is the brains and know-how behind our new website, and we would please ask all members – IT literate or otherwise – to give this new venture your support. A website is similar to a newspaper, continually being updated, and members are invited to contribute articles, just as you are in the Club Magazine. Members of the Orchestra will be advertising their own recitals and concerts on it. Remember we are the Orchestra's *Supporters Club* so please go along and support them whenever you are able.

Our Treasurer Barry Shannon has resigned. He has not enjoyed the best of health for a while, and the stress surrounding the new banking arrangements and changes has aggravated his problems. He has served as Treasurer for some 10 years, and we are grateful to him for his past endeavours.

We welcome James (Jim) McLauchlan as our new Treasurer. Jim had a career in banking, is Treasurer for the Friends of Finchley Hospital, and also in charge of the Methodist Church finances. Many of you will know him, as he arranges the premises for our "Saturday Serenades". Our finances couldn't be in better hands.

Along with Barry, we have lost his wife Vivien. Viv was well known for her catering abilities at the Club Parties at the Hippodrome – sadly a thing of the past due to the Orchestra no longer having a permanent "home". The Shannon's have also hosted our Committee Meetings at their home for many years.

Elizabeth DeLeiros has also resigned. It was Liz armed with her clipboard, who collected the signatures of Members attending the AGM for many years.

Finally we have lost Dr Donald Dean. Donald was appointed to the original Committee back in 1983 and wrote the Club Constitution. Despite our views to the contrary, Donald feels he is unable to make the same contribution to the Committee as he has in the past, at a time when considerable changes and input are required, due to advancing years and health problems. He wants to make way for "younger faces and new ideas".

Finally we welcome Jan Mentha. Jan is a lawyer and is the Chairman of the Cambridge Concert Orchestra, in which she plays the viola, Treasurer of the Light Music Society – and was also instrumental in drafting the Constitution for that organisation – and finally General Manager of a 20's – 30's dance band.

Doug French is still with us in his capacity as the trips and visits co-ordinator, for which we are most grateful. James Connelly is our minute secretary.

Marcus Broome is happy to continue as the Orchestra's representative. We rely on him for the latest inside news, and he never fails us. Jenny and Brian continue as before.

It is safe to say that we now have a strong Committee to face up to the new challenges. Please give us your support.

BBC MAILING LIST and THE DATA PROTECTION ACT

In the past, all Club Members were automatically put on the BBC CO mailing list, and you received details of South Bank and other Own Promotion concerts. Since the Club is no longer recognised by the BBC, and to comply with the Data Protection Act, the details of all Club Members are being removed from the BBC mailing database. There will be an application form sent out to all Members and you will need to sign up to the BBC mailing list if you wish to continue to receive their mailings.

FREE 25th ANNIVERSARY CD.

To celebrate this milestone, the Concert Orchestra are recording a special CD on 29th and 30th September. A complimentary copy will be posted to all paid up Club Members later this year.

POSTBAG..... A selection of letters received

Dear Brian.

This is a belated line to offer you Presidential congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of the BBC Concert Orchestra Club. You and Jenny deserve tremendous praise for starting with it and keeping it on the road so splendidly.

The excellent Magazine is very well put together and I'm always glad to read it.

Here's to the next twenty-five!

With love and thanks to you both

Richard Baker

Dear Brian and Jenny

Thanks so much for continuing to send the magazine - it's great to hear all the news, and I pass it on to my folks too, who also love it.

Sad that we don't meet at FNMMN any more - maybe one day they'll take us all out of retirement to do an "Oldies" show!!!!

Till then, keep up the good work. Love and all good wishes

Marilyn Hill Smith.

Dear Jenny,

Thanks for the Magazine, I always enjoy reading it.

Jodie Keane

Producer FNMMN.

Dear Brian

Many thanks for the latest Soirées Musicales – it's always packed with interesting material.

It is quite amazing that you have been organising things for 25 years, Congratulations.

Many thanks and regards,

Margaret Heppenstall

Alton, Hants.

(Oh yes, born organiser our Brian!)

Dear Brian and Jenny.

Re: BBC Concert Orchestra's Supporters Club.

Good News – The Supporters Club is in very good hands

Bad News – A shame about the BBC

Good News – the Club is setting up a website. No use to Luddites like me but Joe public has a better chance for obtaining tickets on-line than by writing in.

Bad News – No £2,000 Annual grant. Of course! Staff are sent to cover important events like Glastonbury (vastly overstaffed) and poor Michael Jackson's demise in USA. Why are BBC staff everywhere covering this?

Good News – There is the 25th Anniversary CD to look forward to.

Bad News – The Club table has been forced to close. Where are we to buy our Supporters Club scarves and tee shirts? Is the BBC afraid the Anniversary CD will top the Classical Hits?

Tell the Orchestra that Club Members are not so easily pushed around and are very resourceful. Treating us like members of the Josh Groban, Michael Jackson or Amy Winehouse fan clubs may just backfire.

Keep up the good work.

Best wishes

Susan Ruckes

Ilford

PS Don't reply to this – you have more than enough to do!

(Maybe, but we always acknowledge contributions from our members, and enjoy receiving your letters, - the best of which we publish! We have been inundated with phone calls and letters of support following the "News" bulletin. It's great to know that so many members are behind us. All relevant letters have been passed on to Andrew as General Manager of CO and Al Booth, Head of R2 Production. Some of you might actually have received a reply!)

Dear Brian,

Thank you for your recent News Bulletin. As we are now a "Supporters Club" will you be issuing woolly scarves and hats so we can look the part?

Good news about the Saturday Special at Finchley, if it is as good as the previous ones, something to look forward to.

Once again many thanks for all the work you and Jenny do for the Club. Looking forward to the Anniversary CD, later in the year.

Yours sincerely

C Busby, Kingsbury.

(Sorry Clive, no Club merchandise allowed - BBC rules)

Dear Brian

Thank you for your hard work during last year, it must be very frustrating at times! Maybe we will get the opportunity to see you and the Orchestra during 2010.

David and Paddy Vincent.

St Athans, Glamorgan.

Dear Brian,

How sad that the BBC have chosen not to appreciate / recognise the support and enthusiasm that the Club has offered the Concert Orchestra over the years. Although we are only fairly new Members we have gained so much enjoyment from the concerts we have attended, and hope to continue to do so. Our thanks to you and Jenny for the work you do for us. Lets hope that the BBC have a change of heart in the future and acknowledge the role we play – supporting *their* Concert Orchestra.

Sincerely

Janet and Philip Gransby

Harpenden, Herts.

(One lives in hopes...!)

Dear Brian

Many thanks for the "Good News, Bad News"

I was surprised of the attitude of the BBC regarding the Club, and the cut back of the £2,000 grant. On these lines I think they should consider the fees they are paying the so-called celebrities lot.

Our thanks for your dedication.

Yours sincerely

Mr and Mrs J Campbell

Woodford Green,

Dear Brian and Jenny

Thanks must go to you and to Jenny too, who work so hard to keep the BBC CO Club such a vibrant entity, against all the obstacles that have been put in your way of late. You try so hard to see that as many of us as possible get the fewer tickets that are available, especially when there are increasing numbers of empty seats at venues.

D Gardner

Upminster

Dear Brian,

Thank you for the Bulletin No1 “Good News and Bad News”.

I can't think what is happening to the BBC. Over the past 25 years the BBC and the Club must have appreciated the mutual benefit that the partnership gave. So what is different now?

Their dictatorial and aggressive move is completely unnecessary and beggars belief.

In my long experience in business life, I can recall companies and corporations who thought they had all the answers, not considering their customers. This was usually their downfall. The best way forward is always to be friendly and cooperative. Let's hope Auntie BBC will recover and become pleasant again.

I have already put my points across to Andrew Connolly, about the pointless changes to FNIMN.

Anyway Brian, thank you for the “Good News” and all the work you and Jenny and the Committee put into the Club.

Yours sincerely

Ken Smith, Redbourn.

Dear Brian,

We enjoyed the concert last Friday - many thanks for the tickets. Would you believe we put the key in the door at exactly 11.00 pm. Not bad going, a taxi from the Mermaid to Liverpool Street, train to Witham and then a taxi to Maldon. A bit of a chase but well worth it! Thank you and Jenny for your dedication in keeping this wonderful civilised cultural and pleasurable Club, ongoing.

Cheers.

Valerie Eve, Maldon

(This letter should shame those of you who complain that getting a bus for 2 stops from Temple station to Blackfriars is too much effort!)

Dear Brian,

I was appalled to hear of the BBC's attitude towards the brilliant efforts of twenty five years. I shall be writing to the appropriate BBC department voicing my disgust

Yours sincerely

Lewis SurrIDGE

Watford.

Dear Jenny

As my husband and I enjoyed so many years of wonderful music concerts, I will continue with my Membership, although as a very senior widow lady I am now unable to attend evening concerts.

I wish the "Supporters Club" lots of luck and long may it continue to flourish. So many treasured memories.

Warmest wishes

Vera Archer-Smith

S1398

Ealing.

Dear Brian and Jenny,

I would like to reiterate my grateful thanks to you both for the hard work you put in, to keep the BBC CO Club running, making it such an enjoyable pastime with music and friendship.

Yours sincerely

Ken

Dear Jenny and Brian,

Many thanks once again to you both for all the hard work you put into running the Club. We have enjoyed our trips to Watford and The Mermaid this last year and look forward once again to hearing the fabulous Orchestra and guests.

Enclosed this coming year's subscription of £15, which is outstanding value.

Yours sincerely

Edna and Frank Collins

Ruislip.

(Thank you kindly. We really do enjoy doing it and letters like this from satisfied Members make it all the more worthwhile Other Ed)

We always enjoy receiving letters from our Members and value your opinion. Some of them might be unprintable mind, but try as we might it's just not possible to please all of you all of the time!

And finally a word from Andrew

Dear Club Members

Many of you have expressed dismay at developments in recent months that have impacted on the Club. Can I firstly say that the Concert Orchestra remains delighted and proud that a Supporters Club exists and that we appreciate your attendance and interest in our activities. Secondly, I am sorry if you had expected to see me at the latest AGM - I did not think I had confirmed my attendance and chose not to come on that occasion.

As we know, in the light of various new BBC procedures and policies - some things have had to change in order that the Club and the BBC are clearly separated. I understand that allocation of tickets for Friday Night is Music Night remains a major concern and understand colleagues at Radio 2 are reviewing the ticketing arrangements from this autumn in order to ensure near capacity audiences at all venues. I'm sure your committee will be seeking information from Radio 2 and Audience Services about this!

My personal belief is that now the Club is totally separated from the BBC, you are freer to express opinions on those subjects that matter to you and with the introduction of your website, revised constitution and new committee members - can look ahead with renewed vigour in your support of the Concert Orchestra and other allied interests.

We are very much looking forward to recording the special Club 25th Anniversary CD in September and seeing you at our concerts and recordings in the coming months.

Thank you for your support.

**Andrew
Andrew Connolly, General Manager,
BBC Concert Orchestra
Room 220A, Drama Building
Television Centre
Wood Lane, London
W12 7RJ**

Anyone who is interested in joining the Robert Farnon Society, or for a FREE sample of their Magazine "Journal into Melody" should contact the Secretary,
RFS, Stone Gables, Upton Lane,
Ilminster, Somerset,
TA19 OPZ,
or ring 01460 242226.

Don't forget to mention you are a member of the
BBC CO Supporters Club!

FREE PRIZE DRAW

As announced at the AGM, there will be two prize draws held in Spring and Autumn. All paid up members will automatically be included. Winners picked at random will each receive a pair of tickets for an "Own Promotion" Concert absolutely FREE.

Using the computer membership database, we asked one committee member for a number, to identify the sheet, and another for a number to identify the line.

Our fifth lucky winner was Member Jean McCutcheon J4930

Don't forget that even if you are not a prize winner, you can still enjoy these concerts.

Contact Mark on 020 8752 7087. Have your membership number to hand when you ring him up.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

As we have changed the name of the Club, we were required to change the title of the bank accounts. Could all members please note that cheques must be made payable to the

BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA'S SUPPORTERS CLUB.

The bank will no longer accept cheques with the old name.

Thank you

Jim McLauchlan. Treasurer.

THE AGM IN BRIEF.

The AGM was held on Monday April 27th at Trinity Church Golders Green at 7pm.

Chairman Brian welcomed the 119 attendant members and thanked them for braving the inclement weather. Apologies had been received from a further 44.

In his report he told members that the BBC had withdrawn the Club's grant, banned the use of a table by Club representatives and the sale of Orchestra's CDs, and had indicated that from July the Club would have its allocation of tickets reduced. He was still awaiting confirmation from Al Booth, the head of Production, what the revised allocation would be.

Over 100 Members had enjoyed the Concert at Finchley, featuring Richard Baker, Robin Stapleton and Nigel Blomiley. A further 5 Letchworth "Afternoon Out" had taken place and more were planned for this year. To celebrate the Club's 25th Anniversary, the Orchestra were going to record a CD which would be free to all Club Members.

The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2008. Income of £12,231.61 had exceeded expenditure of £8,897.04 by £3,347.57 Membership stood at 107 single plus 301 joint Members – a total of 709. Subscription rates would not be increasing. Members were reminded to renew their subscriptions promptly.

Election of Committee:

Esther Lawrence had tendered her resignation at an earlier meeting, and was presented with a bouquet in acknowledgement of her years of catering at Club parties.



Dr Dean presenting Esther with a bouquet.

Paul Taylor had declined to stand for re-election. All other members were re-elected Stephen Greenhalgh was welcomed to the committee for the purpose of setting up a website for the Club, and gave a brief talk.

Unfortunately the Orchestra's representative Marcus Broome had been unable to attend to give his resume of the Orchestra's year and future arrangements, as his daughter was unwell. Andrew Connolly, the Orchestra's General Manager - although expected - failed to attend, so after a brief interval the guest speaker **Kate Moore** took the stage.



Kate entertaining the members.

Kate is a brilliant teacher and soon had the enthralled audience performing an impromptu Raga chorus, before talking of her early musical days dodging the hated piano lessons, and taking up the trumpet. Her despair at having received many rejections before successfully applying for the post at the BBC, would you believe 21 years ago!

She then explained the workings of the trumpet, demonstrating various techniques, and the correct way to breathe and blow, particularly when using a mute, which required much more effort, not to mention the possibility of it falling out in a quiet

passage, and the effects on the instrument of eating too much garlic! She enlightened the audience why there is often much laughter in the brass section...but that's another story!

Needless to say there were many questions from the floor, after which Kate was presented with her favourite tipple.



Kate with Brian.

If you missed this AGM, then we hope to see you at next years. As you gather it's not all dreary reports!

TICKETS tickets TICKETS tickets TICKETS tickets TICKETS

ENTITLEMENT.

The Club can only offer ONE ticket to single members and TWO to joint members – when available PLEASE do not ask for more, as it only deprives other members from attending .

CANNOT USE YOUR TICKET?

Thanks to those of you who return tickets, but sometimes they arrive too late to be posted out again. So instead could you please RING BRIAN on 01462 892670. He will give you the address of another member who can use them, and so save three days. Thank you.

FALSE ECONOMY...

Although we have said it time and again, there are still some members who continue to use 2nd Class stamps on their envelopes. To be sure of attending a concert, please use a *1st class* stamp. We cannot be held responsible for missed concerts due to 2nd class delays.

WISHFUL THINKING?

From time to time we send everyone a form to apply for tickets for concerts. If you do not complete and send back the application form, then tickets will not be sent to you. Don't forget to enclose stamped addressed envelopes for concerts applied for. In the event of a concert being cancelled, we will keep your envelopes for use when an extra concert is arranged.

BE EARLY

We have heard from several members who, despite having tickets, were unable to get into the Mermaid Theatre for FNIMN. Please remember that having a ticket does not guarantee entry, particularly when there are “superstars” appearing. Get there early to avoid disappointment. Bar is open from 6.30 pm.

“SPECIALS”

From time to time some FNIMN are re-classified as “Specials” – when a pop-star is appearing. When this happens, the Club does NOT receive ANY tickets, neither is the Ticket Unit involved. The audience is invited – usually recording studios, members of the star's fan club and winners of Ken Bruce's Radio competition. It's no use ringing Brian!

TICKETS tickets TICKETS tickets TICKETS tickets TICKETS

CLUB OUTINGS

Afternoon Out:

Afternoons in Letchworth: Carvery lunch and Benslow Music recitals.

Our first for the year was held on March 9th a bright but breezy day. 32 members enjoyed the Carvery Lunch and excellent recital by the accomplished clarinettist Nadia Wilson, a woodwind school teacher, who performed works by Aaron Copland, Joseph Horowitz, Arthur Benjamin and André Messager, accompanied at the piano-with some furious page turning - by Marcus Andrews, Professor of Music at Blackheath Conservatoire.

To round off the afternoon there were mouth-watering scones and fruit cake for tea. Everyone agreed it was another successful day.

On 11th May, 41 people converged on the Broadway from 8 counties – yes really!

Matthew was the chef of the day and everyone enjoyed their meals as always. The Benslow recital was performed by the London Myriad Ensemble a professional chamber group consisting of flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and bass clarinet. Their programme of “Sextet” by Jean Françaix, “Mládi” by Leoš Janáček and a first performance of a work by Julian Broughton entitled “Natural Light” enthralled the audience.

Our final one for the season on 8th June attracted 28 Members. We thought our run of fine Mondays had come to an end, but it brightened up in good time! Chef David back in charge ensured everyone was replete. The convoy to Benslow had to be re-routed due to roadworks, but nobody got lost, although a few balloons did! The concert featured Cunningham Quintet playing Schubert’s “The Trout”, and there was an extra special treat for tea - fresh Strawberry and Cream scones.



Cunningham Quintet

We have now arranged 29 Afternoons Out at Letchworth but the hunger for music and food is still very strong out there!

*For the benefit of our newer members who do not know about it, an “Afternoon Out” consists of a visit to North Hertfordshire for a Carvery lunch, dessert and coffee served in the ballroom, followed by a visit to a music college for a concert and home-made cakes and tea. The whole function lasts from 12 noon to 5pm and costs **£20.50** per head.*

The next outing has been arranged for Monday 9th November – which will be the last until the spring. If you would like to join us for this then act quickly as places are restricted.

Cheques payable to BBC Concert Orchestra’s Supporters Club should be sent to PO Box 213 Baldock Herts SG7 6ZP

Letchworth station is on the Kings Cross-Cambridge line via Stevenage, or Moorgate-Letchworth line via Hertford North. Drivers should take the left turn at Junction 9 of A1(M) and follow signs to Town Centre.

For further information, and to book for this event, contact Chairman Brian on 01462 892 670.

Visit to the Emirates Stadium.

We are still working our way through the long waiting list of members wishing to make this tour, which despite lots of stairs, are proving to be very rewarding.

Visit to the Globe Theatre.

People who have applied to do this tour will be contacted as soon as the trip arrangements have been finalised.

THE NEXT “SATURDAY SERENADE”

will be on 26th September.
See back cover for details.

THE CONCERT GOERS.

Barnet Symphony Orchestra performed its first concert for 2009 on Sunday 22nd March, at St John's Church Friern Barnet Road N11.

Martin Loveday, as always, conducted the 59 musicians led by Philip Gibson. More familiar CO faces included Liz Driscoll, Clive Hobday and Peter Beament. This was a far lighter concert than usual, starting with Khachaturian: "Masquerade Suite", Milhaud's "Scaramouche", Piazzola's "Oblivion", Lutoslawski's "Little Suite" and finally Sibelius' "Karelia Overture and Suite". We don't often hear this popular work in its entirety, mores the pity!

We often ask members of the Orchestra to let us know when they are performing recitals and concerts away from the BBC, as we are always happy to support them. We report these and so give other members the opportunity to share some delightful informal evenings.

It was at a FN at Old Street that Benjamin Hughes the Principal cellist told us simply "6.30 next Sunday at Kings Place". Well of course this was an opportunity not to be missed. We didn't know quite what to expect, well it did sound rather unlikely – A Chamber Concert at 6.30 on an April Sunday evening in Kings Cross?...However.

Kings Place is London's newest Concert Hall, situated in York Road, which runs alongside Kings Cross Station, a huge glass and concrete building - rather incongruous in a street otherwise unchanged for aeons, - it was featured on Sean Rafferty's "In Tune" programme when it opened last Autumn, and hails a new and exciting chapter in the history of the London Chamber Music Society. The Society can trace its origins back to 1870 when regular Sunday Concerts first attracted Victorian Londoners.

The interior of this building is spectacular. The atrium is light and spacious with a bar and patisserie and snacks counter and plenty of informal seating. There are Galleries of paintings and sculptures. The Rotunda restaurant has riverside views and al fresco seating, whilst the bar offers an all day à la carte menu serving everything from breakfast to dinner. Everywhere the marble flooring is embedded with the finest assortment of fossils seen outside of the Natural History Museum, it almost seems wrong to walk on it!

The two purpose built Concert Halls are situated on the lower floor which is accessed by lift or escalator. Each has a gently sloping floor to ensure

perfect sight and sound from every seat, sheer delight for disabled folk– But we were not there to admire the premises! However it really is well worth a visit.

Settling into our comfy seats we were surprised to see how quickly the Hall filled up, very few of the 420 seats were not taken. And so to the concert which featured **FIBONACCI SEQUENCE**. Founded in 1994 by its artistic director, pianist Kathron Sturrock, it is now well established as one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles.

This concert featured Ileana Ruhemann (flute) Benjamin Nabarro (violin) Yuko Inoue (viola) Benjamin Hughes (cello) and Kathron Sturrock (piano). The programme was Haydn Trio in G major (flute, cello and piano), a premier performance of a Quartet in C minor for piano and strings, by Frank Bridge, Martinu's Trio for flute viola and piano, John Ireland's Trio No2 (violin, cello and piano), and finally Mozart's Flute Quartet No 1 in D major.

A superb evening, thanks for mentioning it Benjamin!

For full details of free exhibitions, Chamber Concerts on Sundays and other weekday events, visit www.kingsplace.co.uk. Call in or write to Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 3AG, or phone 020 7520 1490

“The Classical Collection”

performed by Symphonia Academica.

Saturday 18th April, at Leighton Buzzard Theatre.

Leader Peter Bussereau, and conducted by David Beaman, this concert consisted of Haydn's powerful “Trauer” Symphony, Mozart's violin concerto in A, Handel's “Arrival of the Queen of Sheba”, Barber's “Adagio for Strings”, Boyce's Symphony No2, and the Romanian Dances of Bela Bartok.

It was another Evening with Peter Bussereau and Wing Yun Wu on 16th May at St Luke's Church, Langley Way, Watford. This is just half a mile down the road from the Colosseum, so it was not surprising to see a few Club members in the audience. (*But it is a huge church and can easily accommodate many more of you!*) Entitled **“Cool Classics”** this was an eclectic mix of American and European music featuring Vivaldi: “Ciacona” Franck: *Sonata*. Dvorak: *Sonatina*, Saint-Saens: *Havanaise*, Massenet: *Meditation from Thais*, and concluding with an arrangement of Gershwin's “*It Ain't Necessarily so*” by Heifetz.



Winnie

Camerata Quartet



All the pieces were informatively introduced by Peter who explained the connection between the music and the more influential violinists of the last two centuries.

And we were there at St Lukes again on Saturday 13th June when Camerata Quartet performed Brahms and Mozart

Barnet Symphony Orchestra. Sunday 28th June St John's, Friern Barnet.

This concert opened with Greig's popular Peer Gynt Suite No1, and followed on with an exhilarating performance of Brahms: Double Concerto



William & Leo

in A Minor, featuring brothers William and Leo Melvin. William aged 20 (violin) and 18 year old Leo (cello) are both former music scholars at the London Oratory School, and brilliant musicians. Watch out for them. After the interval, the orchestra tackled the challenging Symphony No1 by Tchaikovsky with enthusiasm.

This concert, conducted as always by former BBC CO leader Martin Loveday, clearly demonstrated the professionalism of this amateur orchestra.

Their next concert will be on Sunday December 6th, again at St John's. For further details or to join their mailing list, call 07990 510102 or alternatively email your details to: info@barnetsymphony.org.uk

Arts in Flitwick: Summer Classics, Saturday July 11th at the Rufus Centre.

Under the baton of BBC CO violinist David Beaman, described as “*one of the most sought after and exciting conductors of the younger generation*”, Symphonia Academica made their annual appearance at Flitwick to a capacity audience.

This was an excellent programme, catering for every musical taste. Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, Bach: *Violin Concerto in A Minor*, Mendelssohn: *String Symphony No10 in B Minor*, Monti: *Czardas – executed to perfection by Peter Bussereau* – Elgar: *Salut D’amour, Chanson de Nuit, Chanson de Matin*, Warlock: *Capriol Suite*, and ended with the light hearted piece by Prof Teddy Bor, entitled “*McMozart’s Eine Kleine bricht Moonlicht Nicht Musik*”.

(It was good to see several Club Members at this event, shows some of you read your magazine! Now how about the rest of you.....?)

To find out more about Symphonia Academica and Camerata Quartet or to join their mailing list, call 01582 882 159

The next “Saturday Serenade”
for Club Members will be on Saturday 26th September
(see back cover for details).

CD REVIEWS

By Dave Daniels.

Despite the fact we are no longer allowed to sell CDs at concerts, we shall continue to keep you informed about recent new releases from the BBC Concert Orchestra. The past year has been a very sad one for British music with the death of 3 great conductors – Vernon Handley, Richard Hickox and most recently Sir Edward Downes.



Dave Daniels

Good Friday this year saw the passing of Richard Arnell a composer whose music made a considerable impact in the 1940s and 50s, but who became unfashionable in the face of avant-garde trendiness. In the last *Soirées Musicales*, I mentioned the release of a CD of some of his ballet scores with the CO, and now the ever enterprising people at Dutton have issued another (CDLX 7227). This contains 2 ballet scores “Punch and the Child” 1947, and “Harlequin In April” 1951, written for the Festival Of Britain. This disc is completed with Arnell’s 2nd Violin Concerto, never played in this country until this recording with the excellent soloist Lorraine McAslan. These recordings, along with the Symphonies with the RSNO all conducted by Martin Yates reveal Arnell to be a major figure of his time with a personal style and something strong to say.

All lovers of English music owe such a debt to the Dutton Label for unearthing so much we never hear otherwise. CDLX7216 is a case in point. 2 Viola Concertos, one by Stanley Bate and one from William Henry Bell both feature soloist Roger Chase and conducting is our own Stephen Bell, If you enjoy Vaughan Williams represented here by his “Romance”, you will enjoy the rest.

David Lloyd Jones takes up the baton on Dutton CDLX7226 for more discoveries, this time some of the early music of Frederick Delius. “Hiawatha” a Tone poem followed by “Florida Suite”, written after his 2 year stay in America in 1888, but has had to wait until now for a first performance. The Suite for violin was written in the same year but only had to wait till 1984 for a performance! The soloist here is Philippe Graffin who

also features in the Double Concerto for Viola, Violin and Orchestra with Sarah-Jane Bradley.

And so to Dutton CDLX7228 entitled “Her Song” and featuring Orchestral songs and Arias from the likes of Elgar, Ireland, Parry and Eric Gritton – Grandfather of the soloist Susan Gritton, Soprano. Susan won the Kathleen Ferrier Award in 1994 and is recognised as one of the finest singers of her generation, As one whose tastes often lie in non vocal music, I have to say I really enjoyed this offering with superb playing from the Orchestra under Martyn Brabbins.

Finally in complete contrast and to demonstrate the unique gift of the BBC CO – versatility! – the show they gave with the band “Elbow” from Abbey Road. This was broadcast on Radio2 and on the “Red Button” on BBCTV. We often complain about the pop gigs the Orchestra does but sometimes a gem does appear and this is one such. I cannot say it is Lehar or Novello but it does have a true quality of its own. The CD/DVD set issued by Polydor called “The Seldom Seen Kids” is a box set NOT available so I understand through normal outlets, but only from the Elbow website : <http://www.myspace.com/Elbow>.

I don’t often disagree with Andrew Connolly, but to suggest that this sort of exercise has evolved from the 1950’s and 1960’s Light Music Festivals is not right in my opinion. Each is a separate entity in its own right. ENJOY BOTH!!

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Website : <http://www.cosc.co.uk>

MEMBERS REFLECTIONS.

After a recent concert at the Mermaid Theatre earlier this year, I began to think our BBC Concert Orchestra had merged with the BBC Big Band. As we took our seats and viewed the orchestra before us, I noticed an additional five saxophones seated behind the piano. As the pianist that evening was Andrew Vinter who at one time was the regular pianist for Big Band, I thought are the powers at the top of BBC trying to tell us something? In this uncertain climate, who knows?

However we very much enjoyed the concert as we have a wide musical taste from Big Bands to classical, Ellington to Elgar, and Rodgers to Rossini.

Then at a recording on 16th March at Watford we were treated to a more traditional FN. Conducted by Richard Balcombe and introduced by Ruthie Henshall with singers Faryl Smith (what a voice for a 13 year old!), John Owen Jones and a Welsh Youth Choir. The Orchestra performed works by Sidney Torch, Arthur Sullivan Eric Coates and Johann Strauss. True FNIMN - light music at its best. A special mention to Lindy Harris, her oboe solo in "the Watermill" was truly delightful. A medley of Richard Rodgers music, and the Choir's songs from the "Lion King" concluded a great evening.

Two different but both enjoyable concerts, it was a privilege to be there.

Clive Busby.

As we finish the programmes in the "Big Yellow Book" for the year we would just like to reflect on the wonderful hours of pleasure we have had from the BBC CO and the variety of performance, too.

We started the year at Proms In The Park with highlights from "Maestro", passed on to Ultimate Classics, American Light Music, Discovering Music, Christmas Classics, Fabulous Fun Day at Watford (always a special delight) FNIMN in glorious abundance and the more unusual performances at QEH. How can we forget the sounds of the Orchestra playing in the dark and Bob Cooper singing, plus a sight that will stay in my memory forever – the bare toes of some of the male members of the Orchestra at Kurt Weill's "Lost In The Stars"!!

The music has been fantastic, the stars many and varied, but above all the brightest stars are the members of the wonderful BBC Concert Orchestra who work so hard and with such good humour to entertain us.

Looking forward to another fabulous year.

Monica Gardner.

MUSIC IN OUR LIVES

Club Members Shirley and Bernard Ecker reflect on how music entered their own and their family lives.

When Jenny suggested I could write an article for the Magazine, I just laughed. What do I know about music that would interest the readers of Soirées Musicales? I could write about my many humorous experiences in the hotel management, perhaps a few words about my National Service in the RAF, or even at a push something on the railways in the Eastern counties – but music? Never!!

Then having given it a bit more thought my wife Shirley and I then pondered on the way music has touched our lives from schooldays until the present time, in all sorts of ways.

Shirley and her family are far more musical than my forebears. She started to learn the piano at age 5 and continued until Grade 6 (RAM). She was a member of the famous Walthamstow High School Choir, who on several occasions performed on BBC radio including Children's Hour. Whilst her father showed no musical talent, her untrained mother could play the piano by ear and could pick out a melody whether classical or popular with great ease and skill.

Having said that about her father, his elder brother David was a professional violinist and played with the Albert Sandler Orchestra in his younger days before leading his own small "restaurant quintet" during the late forties and fifties. David married a saxophone player who was a member of the Ivy Benson All Girls Band. Needless to say their daughter was musical and also played the saxophone as well as the clarinet professionally. She in turn married a jazz drummer – a truly self contained musical family.

My interest in classical music began at infants school in Norwich, when on wet and cold days, for exercise the class would march around the school hall to the strains of the "Slow March from Aida" (and other popular marching tunes) played on the teacher's wind up HMV portable gramophone. As it so happened I worked some 30 years later for the parent company of HMV, namely EMI Limited.

At Grammar school in Norwich, I studied music for 3 years, alas without the opportunity to play any instruments, although my father could scrape a tune on a violin, and he did try to encourage me to play – but football and cricket were much preferred. Incidentally our music teacher was named Mr Doe (no his forename wasn't Ray).

What really set me on the road of appreciating classical music while at school was Benjamin Britten's "Young persons Guide To The Orchestra", which we listened to initially an LP record , later saw it on film and finally a live performance by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, I believe conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargeant at St Andrews Hall in Norwich, to which local schools attended in large numbers.

Actually my paternal Grandmother's maiden name was Sandler and that has set me on a genealogy trail to see whether I'm related to the aforementioned Albert Sandler.

Shirley's musical connections continue with the brother of her maternal grandfather who emigrated from London to the US in 1908, married and had a son Alvin Morris (Shirley's 2nd cousin). On leaving school Alvin embarked on an instrumental career playing the saxophone in several dance bands including Isham Jones where he played alongside the then little known Woody Herman.

Alvin Morris gradually became the band's vocalist and soon the singing took over from the sax playing. With it went the name a change of name to Tony Martin. As well as a broadcaster and recording star, he appeared in many films together with the like of the Marx Brothers, James Stewart, Lana Turner and Judy Garland. His first marriage to Alice Faye didn't last long because according to Tony she thought more of her pet dog than her husband. In 1948 he married dancer / actress Cyd Carisse who only died last year having been married over 60 years. Cyd on a visit to London gave Shirley a pair of ballet shoes she had worn in a film. At age 97 Tony Martin still entertains at Old peoples homes in Beverley Hills, Hollywood.

Our son in law shares the same surname as his distant cousin George Fierstone, the famous jazz drummer who played with the Skyrockets Orchestra (formerly the RAF Dance Band during WW2) and had accompanied Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra during shows at the London Palladium.

Joel our eldest grandson is learning the flute – so watch out James Galway!
Finally our musical interest continued when we first attended a recording of FNIMN at the Golders Green Hippodrome about 11 years ago, joining the membership of the BBC CO Club a year later – and have thoroughly enjoyed every concert attended and other Club events ever since.

© 2009 Bernard Ecker.

(Amazing – and he said he couldn't write about music! ,So we can look forward to future articles from Bernard – hotel management, RAF or railways. Splendid..... other Ed)

It is a great shame that Marilyn Hill-Smith has not featured in FNIMN for several years now, although she can still be heard occasionally on “Melodies For You”. We have reported concerts Marilyn has done at Stevenage Theatre in previous editions of Soirées, but members often ask what she is doing these days. Here she writes about her recent cruise on “Oriana”.

Silver Jubilee P&O Music Cruise



We set sail on Oriana at 17.30 on Monday 20 April and, having quaffed a small glass of celebratory champagne on deck, as we watched the band on Southampton’s dockside fade into the distance, the “Music Festival at Sea” team met up in the cabin of our manager Stephannie Williams. First and foremost was host Richard Baker, along with his wife Margaret – a wonderful couple, of whom I have grown very fond, since the first cruise we enjoyed together 24 years ago.

My fellow singers were beautiful mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge, tenor Ben Segal and Owen Webb, all new to cruising. Our concerts were accompanied by Ingrid Surgenor, who will be known to viewers of the Cardiff Singer of the Year as their official accompanist until recently.

Also on the team were superb clarinettist Angela Malsbury with her delightful pianist husband David Pettit, the virtuoso violinist Vanya Milanova and concert pianist Margaret Fingerhut. Sadly, poor Margaret never quite found her sea-legs and felt unwell for much of the cruise. We did have a couple of “lumpy” nights, but I’m pleased to say I felt fine throughout. I was often sick at sea in the past – not ideal for a performer –



but my problems ended after I visited a hypnotherapist, and I now go for a top-up session before every cruise.

Over the course of our 16 days on Oriana, we performed 5 morning concerts on days when

we were at sea, and these required each of us to provide just a couple of items each. My repertoire included some Delius, Gilbert and Sullivan and Ivor Novello. We visited seven Mediterranean ports and, since a lot of passengers leave the ship and go on coach excursions, there are seldom concerts during port days. We did have to fit in rehearsals, of course, but the ship did not usually set sail until about 18.00, so we had time to see Malaga, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Messina, Naples, Cadiz and Civitavecchia (from here enjoying a wonderful day-trip to Rome).

There were other daytime concerts on sea-days, and for our offering, we singers put together “An afternoon in old Vienna” comprising operetta and Lieder. The instrumentalists gave more formal recitals, whilst Richard worked extremely hard: he delighted his audience with an amusing and informative talk about his career, hosted a “Desert Island Discs” session with the ship’s Captain, and reminisced with Stephannie about the past 25 years of P & O music cruises, (the first having been hosted by the clarinettist Jack Brymer). In addition, Richard introduced all the concerts as well as hosting a quiz: all executed with his inimitable charm, efficiency and wit.

Most evening concerts have to be repeated, to accommodate different dining times. The singers were only involved in three of these programmes. Always included is a special Opera Gala which begins at 22.30 – the late start is to ensure that all passengers can attend, whether they have first or second sitting dinner. The theatre is always filled to capacity with guests in evening dress. We are directed each day as to the dress-code: formal, semi-formal or smart casual, the latter usually on port days, so passengers can feel relaxed after an exhausting day ashore.

For those of you who may not be familiar with life on board, one can actually eat 24 hours around. There are two formal large restaurants (providing breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner), a large buffet-style restaurant which is open from 6a.m. till 10p.m. (serving hot and cold food of every description), a small coffee shop, (which serves snacks whenever the buffet is not open) and two small speciality restaurants where, for a nominal extra charge one can enjoy superb grills or cuisine designed by Gary Rhodes. In addition there are three restful bar areas, a pub-style bar etc... With the exception of the pub, I am able to report that I have tried them all, and they are, without exception, excellent!

This is beginning to sound like a commercial for P&O cruises, but we did

Music Festival at Sea 1984 - 2009
25th Anniversary Year



Front Row: Margaret Baker, Richard Baker, Stephannie Williams
3rd Row Down: Vanya Milanova, Owen Webb, Marilyn Hill Smith
2nd Row Down: Ingrid Surgenor, Angela Malsbury, Kate Woolveridge, Margaret Fingerhut
Back Row: Benjamin Segal, Gwyn Williams, David Pettit, Nigel Polmear

have a splendid time, as always. By the way, I was lucky enough to sing on the first music cruise Richard hosted 24 years ago.

©2009 Marilyn Hill-Smith

GETTING TO THE MERMAID

Although Blackfriars underground station will be closed for refurbishment from March for 3 years, Thameslink and main line services will NOT be affected.

There are three underground stations within a short walk of the theatre, St Paul's on the Central line and Temple or Mansion House on the District and Circle lines (the next stop to Blackfriars).

The following buses stop outside the station:-

45 Kings Cross or Clapham Park via Brixton.

63 Kings Cross or Honor Oak via Liverpool Street.

100 Elephant and Castle or Shadwell via Liverpool Street.

388 Hackney Wick to Embankment via Liverpool Street and Bethnal Green. You can pick this one up at the Embankment and Temple stations on the District / Circle lines.

Website : <http://www.cosc.co.uk>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

MOLTO MUSICA CONCERT, SUNDAY 25TH OCTOBER 7.30PM.

We are pleased to advise members that Molto Musica will be performing at the Menuhin School in Cobham, Surrey on 25th October at 7.30. The programme will include Metamorphosen by Richard Strauss and the String Sextet in flat major by Brahms.

Molto Musica was created to bring together the best of the best from the London and European classical music scene. For the first time Members are invited to see a dream team of musicians brought together to produce the highest quality and virtuosic performance.

All the performers are either Leaders or Section Principals of Orchestras, or established soloists.

For this concert the ensemble will include Zsolt-Tihamer Visontay (Leader Philharmonia Orchestra) and from the BBC Concert Orchestra Charles Mutter (Associate Leader) and Dominic Worsley (Principal Double Bass). Tickets will be £16, and there are only 300 seats available. For further information contact the box office on 08700 842020.

Peter Bussereau has notified the following concerts during November:-

MONDAY 2ND: 7.45 LUTON LIBRARY THEATRE, ST GEORGE'S SQUARE, LUTON, LU1 2NG

Symphonia Academica Leader Peter Bussereau and Conducted by David Beaman, perform concertos for violin and oboe by Bach and Richard Sisson, the Christmas concerto of Corelli, Mozart's Divertimento in D K136, Karl Jenkins' Palladio and Holst's St Paul's Suite.

SATURDAY 14TH: 7.30 ST LUKE'S CHURCH, LUTON, LU4 9JY
Symphonia Academica perform by candlelight Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

SATURDAY 28TH: 8PM ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH HALL, BARTON-LE-CLAY, MK45 4LA

Quartet Camerata perform Vaughan-Williams' quartet in G minor and Brahms' quartet in A minor.

*For further information or to book for any of the above,
contact 01582 882159*

BARNET SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Their next concert will be held on Sunday 6th December at St John's Church, Friern Barnet Road, London N11 3BS at 7.30 pm. Conducted as always by Martin Loveday. Programme to include works by Glinka, Mozart and Bruckner.

Further details from their website www.barnetsymphony.org.uk. or call 07990 510102.

FRIDAY NIGHT FLASHBACKS

As you know this club is 25 years old so I thought it might be interesting to find out what was happening a quarter of a century ago.

The BBC Concert Orchestra's conductors were many and varied in those days and included James Lockhart, Stanley Black, Kenneth Alwyn, Iain Sutherland and Nicholas Cleobury.

The guest singers included Geoffrey Chard, Forbes Robinson, Joan Savage, Marilyn Hill Smith, Cynthia Glover, Maryetta and Vernon Midgley.

Military bands were a regular feature in the eighties and included The Band Of The Scots Guards, The Central Band Of The Royal Air Force and The Metropolitan Police Band.

Pieces of music that were often played then but are seldom heard now were the well remembered tango "Jealousy", Robert Docker's "Tabarinage", Sidney Torch's "Trapeze Waltz" and Suppé's overture "Pique Dame".

One thing that was almost permanent at this time was the announcer. This was of course Robin Boyle (former president of this club). He did in fact present the programme for about 30 years. Happy Days!!

SATURDAY SPECIAL.

26th September
Finchley Methodist Church, doors open 6.45.

JUNE BRONHILL OBE **Her Life and Career**

Club Member Geoff Bowden covers the life and career of this celebrated Australian entertainer who grew up in the Australian Outback and became one of the most colourful and famed performers Australia produced in the last century. Her glorious soprano voice made her a favourite of Sadlers Wells Opera and Covent Garden and her glittering career covered opera, operetta, musicals, music hall, films, television, concerts, straight drama, and situation comedy. No stranger to radio listeners, June was a favourite on Friday Night Is Music Night and many other BBC programmes.

This illustrated talk will feature extracts from June's musical repertoire and rarely heard interviews with June from Australian radio.

After a short interval, when light refreshments will be available,

**Members of the BBC Concert Orchestra
will entertain us.**

**This event is completely FREE for Club Members
and you are welcome to bring along any friends who may be
interested. No need to book, just turn up on the night**

Getting to Ballards Lane Methodist Church.

Northern Line:- Northbound (High Barnet and Mill Hill East branch) to Finchley Central. Exit right through the ticket hall, and walk up to the main road. Cross over and pick up any double decker bus 82, 125 or 460, outside Tesco. 2nd stop is at the Church. Or you can walk it in 5 minutes.

Drivers:- the Church is situated opposite Victoria Park on the corner of Ballards Lane and Essex Park. Parking available.