



# U3A MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP



## 6<sup>th</sup> NEWSLETTER – March 2009

The Thursday session on 19<sup>th</sup> March, despite the brilliant weather, was well attended by 8 new members but with only 8 regular members. I understand that many of the regular members were on other U3A activities.

Musical Families were the subject of the first session of our sixth gathering. Keith devoted the first half of this to 18<sup>th</sup> century families: Bach, Hayes and Linley. The Bachs must be the most prominent musical family of all time, led by JS Bach and his sons. Keith circulated a family tree showing about 70 Bachs, of whom over 50 were musicians! We heard excerpts from CPE Bach's Magnificat and JC Bach's Concerted Symphony, and also a JS Bach Fantasia arranged for jazz trio by Jaques Louissier.

We came across William Hayes in November, and we heard more of his music before and during the session. We then heard the world's first piano concerto, composed in 1769 by his son Philip Hayes. Keith explained the specific criteria for a successful piano concerto at this time, based on the limitations of the early square pianos.

The Linleys were the principal English musical family of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The star composer among them was Thomas Linley junior, who played violin concertos from the age of 7 and started composing soon afterwards. He is shown here with his sister Elizabeth in one of the portraits that Gainsborough painted of the Linleys. We heard part of one of his 20 or more violin concertos and some of his impressive vocal and choral works. It is a great tragedy that he drowned at the age of only 22.



The works by the Mendelssohn and Schumann families highlighted the obstacles that 19<sup>th</sup> century female composers faced. Fanny Mendelssohn was prevented by her parents from following an "outside" career in music, instead mainly composing songs for musical soirees at home. On the other hand, Clara Schumann had been encouraged by her father and became an international concert pianist as well as an accomplished composer. But her father was far less keen on her marriage to Robert.

After a brief interlude from Johann and Josef Strauss, Keith ended the session with works by William Lloyd Webber (played by his son Julian) and Andrew Lloyd Webber. A concert of their music by the Marlow Choral Society is coming up on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

After outlining the circumstances which heralded in the "Romantic Period" (1820-1900) in all the arts and in particular "Romantic" music, I explained how it influenced Wagner and his music. I demonstrated how very soon in his composing career he became deeply involved in the Theatre and in particular the Opera. I played orchestral excerpts from four Operas: Tannhauser, Parsifal, Lohengrin and Der Ring des Nibelungen. Due to time constraints I confined my offerings mainly to the Preludes to these Operas. Just before the Nibelungen I played a hilarious parody of the Opera - which everybody enjoyed - by Anna Russell.

## Future Sessions

On 16<sup>th</sup> April, starting promptly at 10.00, Keith will introduce music associated with Animals, Birds or Insects. Either side of the tea/coffee break, I will then present a selection of music by Stainer, Rimsky-Korsakov, Wagner, Carl Jenkins and John Rutter with an Easter flavour. If you would like to bring along a CD/Minidisc/Vinyl record or video/DVD of your favourite Easter music please let me know as soon as possible (484099). To end, Keith will reveal the identities of the animals, birds and insects together with some discussion on how well these are depicted in the music.

A provisional programme for next four sessions is provided below.

Month	Keith	Brian
16 April	Animals, Birds and Insects. Includes optional quiz.	Easter music
21 May	Beethoven Piano Concerto No.4 ** and Beethoven Symphony No.7 **	Tchaikovsky and the "Famous Five" Russian composers
18 June	Johann Nepomuk Hummel	Modern composers and origins of Jazz
16 July	Hubert Parry	Jazz part 2

\*\*preparation for City of London Sinfonia concert

## Concerts

Just as we were about to book for the City of London Sinfonia concert on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at Wycombe Swan, we learned of the change of programme, which is now as follows:

**Mendelssohn** Overture: The Fair Melusina  
**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.4 *Soloist: John Lill*  
**Beethoven** Symphony No. 7

Therefore I am proposing to reconfirm the list by the beginning of April and then book for those interested members. Please let me know as soon as possible (484099) if you would like to add your name to the list.

If you would like to have a copy of the digital score of the Beethoven and/or Mendelssohn, please contact Keith or bring along a computer memory stick to our next session.

We will reassess the demand for Concert Option 2 (Nielsen/Dvorak/Elgar, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009) in due course.

Happy listening!

Brian Humphrey