



# USA MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP



## 8<sup>th</sup> NEWSLETTER – May/June 2009

At our session on 21<sup>st</sup> May, I welcomed two new members and explained the arrangement of the meeting. I also introduced Roy Souster who served with me as a musician in the Royal Horse Guards. In October, I hope that Roy together with a Mr Van Ryan - a brass instrument maker - will give us some insights into brass instrument construction and Brass Band playing.

Keith introduced the two main works for the City of London Sinfonia (CLS) concert on the following Sunday: Beethoven's 4<sup>th</sup> Piano Concerto and 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony. He concentrated more on the piano concerto, as this is generally not as well known as the symphony.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Piano Concerto received its first performance in 1808, with Beethoven as soloist. This was a momentous concert, as it also featured the premieres of his fifth and sixth symphonies and the Choral Fantasia, and marked a major step in the transition from the classical to the romantic musical era. Using extracts from the score, Keith highlighted the main themes of both works and their development, as well as the dialogue between piano and orchestra in the concerto. He also highlighted developments in piano design during Beethoven's lifetime (Beethoven rewrote his main cadenza for the concerto much later, after the bigger, more sonorous Broadwood pianos became available).

I then presented two pieces by Tchaikovsky – Variations on a Rococo Theme and the Fantasy Overture Romeo and Juliet. The Rococo variations are for cello and orchestra and I started out by playing the Theme and asking everybody to listen very carefully to the way Tchaikovsky wove this theme into all eight variations. I then went on to the Romeo and Juliet Overture initially playing the main themes including the Friar Lawrence, fight, love and funeral themes before playing the whole Overture.

### ***Future Sessions***

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, starting promptly at 10.00, Keith will present the first in an occasional series on less famous composers who perhaps should be better known. He will introduce chamber music, choral works and concertos by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, who was the most famous Austrian pianist, composer and conductor of his time at the crossroads between the classical and romantic periods. I will then introduce the origins of Jazz and the early years (up to the 1920s), with music from New Orleans bands of that period including Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.

We have altered the programme for the July session to make way for works by Aram Khachaturian, as suggested by Mike. In the next few months I would like you all to bring along a CD/MD/vinyl record or video/DVD of your favourite music. I will contact you individually to arrange this and put two or more sessions together. Even better, if you would like us to help you to put together a session on a particular composer, period or genre, please let me or Keith know as soon as possible (Brian 484099; Keith 891507) so that we can work together with you and schedule it in one of the autumn/winter sessions.

A provisional programme for next few months is provided overleaf.

Month/ Date	Provisional Programme
18 June	1. Chamber music, choral works and concertos by <b>Johann Nepomuk Hummel</b> ( <i>Keith</i> ) 2. Modern composers and <b>origins of Jazz</b> ( <i>Brian</i> )
16 July	1. Orchestral music by <b>Aram Khachaturian</b> ( <i>Mike and Keith</i> ) 2. <b>Jazz during the late 1920s to the 1940s</b> , including Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke and Count Basie ( <i>Brian</i> )
(no meeting in August)	
17 Sept	1. <b>“Selections 1”</b> based on favourite music from members of the group ( <i>Brian will invite members to contribute pieces and say a few words about them</i> ) 2. Orchestral, choral and chamber works by <b>Sir Hubert Parry</b> , including a review of his five symphonies ( <i>Keith</i> )
22 Oct	<b>Brass Bands and Instruments</b> - see first paragraph on page 1

## Concerts

Eleven of our group attended the CLS concert on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May at Wycombe Swan. The soloist in Beethoven’s 4<sup>th</sup> Piano Concerto was John Lill – a Beethoven specialist. Several of us attended the pre-concert talk, at which the Manager of the CLS, the conductor Andreas Delfs and John Lill outlined what we were about to hear and answered questions from the audience. The concert also included Mendelssohn’s attractive Overture *The Fair Melusina*, and Beethoven’s rhythmic 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony with Andreas Delfs (music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra) conducting. I think that we all enjoyed the evening and that the orchestra and soloist gave first-class performances.

The CLS will be returning to Wycombe Swan for another season of concerts commencing on 18<sup>th</sup> October with:

**Britten**            *Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes*  
**Mendelssohn**    *Symphony 5 (Reformation)*  
**Elgar**              *The Music Makers*

Please let me know if you would like to attend this concert. If you have any suggestions for other orchestral, choral or chamber music concerts that we could attend as a group in the next 6 months, please let me know as soon as possible.

Happy listening!

Brian Humphrey

P.S. Don’t forget that you can view what we have done at previous sessions at our web site:  
<http://www.marlowu3a.org.uk/id12.html>