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Welcome to our newsletter

Welcome to this, the first issue of the UCL Chamber Music Club's Newsletter. We're hoping to produce the newsletter once or twice a year, containing information about the Club and its activities together with articles of interest.

Thanks are particularly due to committee members Helene Albrecht and Dace Ruklisa, without whom this project would not have got off the ground, and who have both contributed articles to this issue.

For the newsletter to thrive, however, it will need input from our members, not just from a handful of enthusiasts on the committee. So if you would like to contribute an article, or something shorter, on a topic that you think might be of interest to members, please don't hesitate to contact Helene (helene.albrecht@gmx.net), Dace (d.ruklisa@ucl.ac.uk) or me (rabeemus@gmail.com).

Roger Beeson, Chair of UCL CMC

Concert dates 2013-14

All concerts start at 5.30 pm unless otherwise stated.

Autumn term

Thursday 3 October

Tuesday 15 October (starts at 6.00)

Wednesday 30 October

(joint concert with Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club, starts at 7.00)

Friday 1 November, lunchtime

Thursday 14 November

Friday 22 November, lunchtime

Thursday 5 December

Tuesday 10 December

(Christmas concert, starts 6.00)

Spring term

Thursday 9 January

Thursday 16 January

Thursday 30 January

Thursday 6 February, lunchtime

Thursday 20 February

Thursday 13 March, lunchtime

Summer term

Tuesday 29 April

Thursday 22 May, lunchtime

Thursday 5 June

Winds, songs and explorations or trends of the 61st season

Concerts every second week plus special events at the end of each term have been creating numerous dilemmas for the dutiful members of UCL community last year: how to arrange meetings around the CMC activities, how should ensemble rehearsals be planned, and which is the fastest route to be taken to the Southbank Centre for the second concert of the same evening? In the course of our busy season challenges of piano literature have been successfully undertaken (Sonatine by Ravel, Bagatelles by Beethoven) and solo songs have regularly featured in programmes (Dowland, Schubert, Fauré and Peter Warlock to name some). Adventurous projects have been pursued, like staging of the Symphony in D major by Salieri, whose instrumental parts were reconstructed by CMC members from the full orchestral score.

Although CMC's main focus is on the music of classicism, romanticism and early 20th century, the actual range of the periods represented in concerts is often broader, this season spanning from the Tudor music to newly composed pieces. Sometimes this involved CMC members switching to different types of instruments (baroque flutes and natural trumpets in the last concert of the season, sackbuts and theorbo in music of Monteverdi and Gabrieli).

The geographical range of performed pieces has been equally broad: some events were closely linked to English and French composers, while others celebrated Turkish and Albanian music. A lot of interesting and infrequently played repertoire resurfaced, like *After Ariadne* by Richard Rodney Bennett.

The last CMC season saw the prominence of wind instruments rising amidst the activities of the club. Several themed concerts revolved around the sounds of winds, most importantly, the concert of French music of the first half of 20th century, incorporating the Sextet for piano and wind quintet by Poulenc. Writings for flute and piano by composers such as Claude Arrieu, Lily Boulanger and a 20th century arrangement of Schubert's Sonata in A minor, 'Arpeggione', comprised a significant part of autumn concerts.

Every year several concerts are arranged in close collaboration with other musical societies such as UCLU Music Society and Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club. A UCL students' concert showed abundance of vocal talent in the repertoire of sacred and secular baroque arias and excerpts from operas by W.A.Mozart. Some of these singers perform in the annual UCL opera production as well, which is one of the biggest events in the university's musical calendar. The joint concert with Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club highlighted instrumental chamber ensembles. The programme ranged from clear, expressive Bagatelles by Adrian Cruft written for flute, oboe and clarinet, to the Piano Quartet in A major by Brahms

and the Nonett for wind instruments by Gustav Schreck. In particular the latter, extensive wind ensemble was formed by combining the expertise of both music societies.

Some of the CMC events engage in thorough exploration of the work of selected composers. A separate concert was devoted to the music of Gershwin, where his works were played in arrangements for violin and piano, made by various composers. In order to mark the centenary of the premiere of *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky's own version of the work for piano, four hands, was played. Britten's *Lachrymae*, for viola and piano, which is based on a song by Dowland, was featured in a spring term concert, thus marking the centenary and 450th anniversary of the respective composers.

Concerts of vocal music performed by the CMC choir are becoming an indispensable part of the CMC's activities. English Renaissance music by Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, Morley and other period composers was sung in the last concert of the Spring Term. Traditionally vocal-instrumental forms are staged at the Christmas concert – last year works by Giovanni Gabrieli were at the centre of the programme. Our own CMC composer Roger Beeson has been writing specifically for CMC choir – *O Regem caeli for choir*, cornett and sackbuts was premiered last December.

The plans for the forthcoming season are taking similarly multifaceted shape, with events staged with the same frequency and enthusiasm. In the autumn term of the forthcoming season Annika Lindskog (contralto) will present a programme "Scandinavian Landscape in Song", which is steeped in her research at the UCL. Wagner's anniversary will be highlighted by a performance of *Wesendonck Lieder*. A themed concert will explore adolescence in music, through the prism of works by Mahler, Ravel and Janáček, either dedicated to youth or written in their youth. Fauré's 1st Piano Quartet, his first major chamber work, will be at the centre of another programme. Songs and piano music will be performed in an event dedicated to the music of Schubert. CMC's autumn term will be finished by a Christmas concert, with Christmas music by J.S.Bach, Corelli's *Christmas Concerto* for strings and a newly composed work by Roger Beeson.

Dace Ruklisa

Membership benefits - discounts

On proof of their membership UCL CMC members receive a 10% discount on printed music and books at the following shops:

Academy Chimes	Barbican Chimes	Kensington Chimes
Royal Academy of Music	Cromwell Tower	9 Harrington Road
York Gate Building	Silk Street	South Kensington
Marylebone Road	EC2Y 8DD	SW7 3ES
NW1 5HT	Tel. 020 7588 9242	Tel. 020 7589 9054
Tel. 020 7873 7400	barbican@chimesmusic.com	kensingtonchimes@music.com
Academy.chimes@ram.ac.uk		

Our Treasurer Annika Lindskog has secured a one-off offer of £5 tickets for all CMC members to the Joyful Company of Singers' next concert on 17 October, 7.30 pm at St Sepulchre Without Newgate, Holborn Viaduct. Annika writes: 'The programme is Poulenc's *Figure Humaine* - the last in our French season - together with Jonathan Harvey's *Forms of Emptiness*, as well as Roxanne Panufnik and the winning piece in our young composer competition. *Forms of Emptiness* is performed in commemoration of Harvey, who was a JCS patron.' The offer is for tickets purchased on the concert night, on production of valid CMC membership and subject to availability. For further information see: www.jcos.co.uk.

Website and membership

The Club's new website is finally live! Many thanks to committee members Daniel Heanes and Liz Mooney for their hard work on this. Visit the site at www.ucl.ac.uk/chamber-music for information about the Club, our concert diary, membership and much more.

You can join the Club or renew your membership by post or personally at a concert; but our preferred method is now via the UCL 'Online Shop', and everyone is encouraged to make use of this facility. The membership page of the website has a link to the Online Shop; from there, click on 'Product Catalogue' and choose 'UCL Chamber Music Club'. The rest of the procedure is very straightforward. Thanks are due to our Treasurer Annika Lindskog for helping to set up this arrangement.

Opportunities for fine-tuning: some thoughts on chamber music at an institution for higher education

Asking musicians to explain their passion for chamber music they will point you to the intimacy and intensity of this genre that no other form of music making can offer. The shared experience of waves of emotion and resonating aesthetic acts as multiplier of individual enjoyment and passion: chamber music offers communication and agreement beyond academic discourse and political debate. Chamber music exceeds boundaries of space and time and simply is fun and fulfilment. No wonder that a country such as Britain engages in countless chamber music activities stretching from glamorous festivals to intimate venues, traditional clubs and educational settings.

Looking at the history and the idea of chamber music, the genre has its root in 16th century secular music that, according to John Herschel Baron's *History of the Idea of Chamber Music* used 'subtleties of musical expression avoided in church music'. Initially performed as soft vocal ensemble music in the houses of nobility it later comprised all music, whether sacred or secular, that was performed at court, before chamber music moved into the private homes of an emancipated citizenry from the late 18th century onwards. In 1771 the German composers Johann Mattheson and Johann Scheibe referred to chamber music as 'the most serious kind of music because it concentrated on the music as music'. Chamber music has always driven epochal musical progress, think of the extension and dissolution of musical form in Beethoven's late string quartets or in Opp. 115-120 by Brahms; it also best reflects composers' artistic development from an adolescent age to maturity, so in Shostakovich's piano trios or Fauré's violin sonatas. Including both public and private platforms and being written for private purposes and formal events, in what particular context might chamber music be embedded at a place for higher education such as UCL?

Chamber music activities in university environments have been popular since the age of Romanticism and run in parallel with the spread of chamber music repertoire throughout European salons and drawing rooms. When in the mid 19th century scholars, composers and musician socialised night after night in Berlin, Leipzig and Weimar in order to try first prints of Schubert's, Mendelssohn's and Schumann's lieder, these and more avant-garde music were soon exported to Britain together with modern philosophical thought as in the case of Johanna and Gottfried Kinkel who escaped prosecution during the German Revolution of 1848. In Russia the composer Borodin founded his own chamber music ensemble when reading medicine between 1850 and 1856. While working as full-time chemist and professor of medicine, he composed a series of string quartets inspired by Beethoven and Mendelssohn. As Borodin blended Viennese and German classics with Russian colours and rhythms and he essentially contributed to the develop-

ment of a Russian musical style. In the United States German and Austrian settlers had imported chamber music alongside Humboldt's educational ideal, though the country was quickly to give birth to its own national composers, starting with Anthony Philip Heinrich, and followed by composers such as Edward MacDowell and Charles Ives, all moving away from the tradition of West Gallery sacred music towards 'pure' music featuring intimacy, soloistic and ensemble play.

Following the 19th century period of unprecedented musical creativity the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club was founded in 1899 by two Oxbridge graduates. Located in London the club won the violinist Joseph Joachim as its first president and explored a distinguished list of Honorary Members, including Lord Balfour, Sir Frederick Bridge, Sir Hubert Parry, and Sir Edward Elgar among others. As the club later relocated its premises at Leicester Square to University College London so the focus of music making has changed over the decades, moving from the mere enjoyment of playing to the presentation of ever more ambitious and varied programmes. Nowadays chamber music might even explore new relations to contemporary scientific research and academic discourse. So, what is the crux of playing chamber music?

In the words of violinists George Stratton and Alan Franck 'the art of playing chamber music depends largely upon the faculty of thinking "chambermusically"', in other words, upon the capacity 'to anticipate common pitfalls and show the means of avoiding them.' Accordingly, 'the symbol of chamber music is a hydra, many-headed, each head as important as another, but all joined to one body'. In chamber music 'every player is individual, but they must work and feel with each other: yet there can be no reliance on an outside governing power (such as the conductor of an orchestra) since a chamber music ensemble is autonomous.' No wonder that chamber music is the perfect model for current societal demands in networking, consensus finding and the mastery and demonstration of competence and expertise. *The Place of Music in the 21st Century from a Global View* by the National Society for the Study of Education identifies numerous contact points for interdisciplinary and reciprocal enhancement. Cecilia Ferm Thorgersen from Uppsala University and Eva Georgii-Hemming from Örebro relate music making and learning to life-world-phenomenology emanating from Edmund Husserl and the *Phenomenology and the Foundations of Science*. For Paul Woodford from the University of Ontario music as medium of social communication is 'expressive of someone's cultural, aesthetic, political, and other values and sensibilities at particular points in history'. When playing chamber music unifies players in the revival and experiencing of cultural narratives as thought through in Alfred Einstein's essay *Words and Music* from 1954 we yet travel into a further sphere of utmost relevance: the functioning of our brain in its complexity. As music is distributed throughout the brain it touches upon fundamental questions as to the origin of consciousness and mind and the processing of information. While ac-

According to Daniel J. Levitin 'musical understanding implies awareness and knowledge of its [music's] significance in our lives beyond appreciation of structure and involves assembling and coordinating a wide variety of different kinds of information such as pitch and rhythm patterns, expressive devices, conventional socio-musical meanings, lyrics, self-knowledge, awareness of other people's intentions and also relevant social, historical and political information' these societal advances are increasingly underpinned and backed up by scientific research.

In a detailed disquisition in *Brain and Music* the German author Stefan Koelsch looks at the physiology of the ear and hearing before applying his findings to musical perception, syntax, and semantics. His research identifies a music-language continuum based on features such as generativity and complexity; it also points to universality grounded in humans' innate learning capabilities for the effortless acquisition of music and language. The idea of universal pre-conditions of our perception and understanding of music is taken further in Steve Larson's *Theory of Musical Forces* where the author equates the embodied experience of physical forces such as gravity and inertia with the understanding and perception of musical motion and meaning. What may be described as 'careful balancing of musical intuition and hard science' excitingly points to the promising but long-time neglected reality that emotions and intellect are not mutually exclusive but co-act as two poles of one universe based on the harmonious interplay of biological, neurological and physical conditions that are common and universal properties of the human species.

Playing chamber music in a vibrant academic environment that brims over with interdisciplinarity and diversity cannot be but exciting: spotting players', listeners' and UCL CMC members' genuine connotations, professional backgrounds and overall motivation to join in this genre might turn into a life-long passion, if not obsession. Which takes us back to the point of playing chamber music: the profoundest and most genuine reason for doing it within a university relates to music's very own authenticity. After all, as Abram Loft, first violinist of the Fine Art Quartet put it, 'your ensemble is a musical organism'. In other words, there is no need for chamber musicians to argue or to agree on politics, scientific theories and educational concepts in order to achieve fine-tuning and delightful results for themselves and their audiences. The significance and merit of chamber music as self-standing body within the competitive and challenging environment of a high calibre university appears to be obvious.

Helene Albrecht

The UCL Chamber Music Club - a very brief history

Chamber Music in UCL goes back a long way. The Chamber Music Club's archive contains a paper written in 1952 by Professor Frank Winton entitled Notes and Comments on Musical Activities in University College London from 1919 onwards. He wrote: 'As far as I remember, it met three times a term and one of the three concerts was a students' concert. At the other two concerts the performers were usually friends of Professor and Mrs. Platt [*Platt being Professor of Greek and President of the Music Society*], mostly professional players, and the programmes were all of the chamber music kind, including solo pianoforte, songs, and anything up to about string quintets or piano quintets.' Winton went on to describe the chamber concerts he arranged in the 1920s (while a research student in Pharmacology and then Lecturer in Physiology) under the auspices of the University of London Music Society; after a period at Cambridge he returned to UCL as Professor of Pharmacology in 1938, and from 1944 to 1948 he again organised chamber concerts as part of the programme of the University College Music Society.

At an informal meeting in February 1952, called by Professor Winton, it was agreed to establish a Chamber Music Club, open to both students and staff (the Music Society being now an entirely student-run organisation, under the UCL Union). Subsequently a good deal of discussion went into finding a name for the organisation, 'University College and Hospital Chamber Music Club' eventually being decided upon. The inaugural meeting took place on 1st May 1952, beginning with a performance of Mozart's String Quartet in D (the programme does not specify whether this was K.499 or K.575), followed by a business meeting to discuss the aims and running of the Club. A further meeting on 12th June had a similar format, this time with Beethoven's String Quartet in G, Op.18 No.2, preceding the business. A set of ground rules was agreed, officers and committee elected, and the Club's concert series began officially in the autumn term, with a concert (16th October 1952) consisting of Mozart's Oboe Quartet and Dvořák's 'American' Quartet. It was clear from the outset that the remit of the Club went far beyond performances of the standard classical and romantic chamber repertoire: the very second concert of the 1952-53 season, on 6th November 1952, consisted of Italian madrigals (sung in English), a suite by Telemann for recorder and strings, and settings by Rubbra of madrigal texts by Thomas Campion.

Concerts were held in the Joint Staff Common Room, as the Haldane Room was previously called, at a rate of approximately eight per year. They generally started at 8.00 pm, and in due course became full-length affairs with an interval, during which coffee was served. The Winton Quartet, led by Bessie Winton (née Rawlins) – herself a professional solo violinist – with Professor Winton playing the cello, gave one concert per term until 1972. Their favoured works included late Beethoven and some of the Bartók quartets; a typical programme, uncompromis-

ingly scaling the heights of the string quartet repertoire, is that for 8th December 1956: Mozart's K.589 in B flat, Bartók's No.6 and Beethoven's Op.130 in B flat. From an early stage informal sessions were also held in which members were invited to bring along music to play or to join in playing through particular works. For a number of years the first concert of the season would be a 'Club evening', involving both formal performances and items open to all: for example, on 20th October 1960 the programme consisted of Mozart's String Quintet in C, K.515, followed by 'a concerted item (a Brandenburg or a Handel concerto grosso) in which members of the club are invited to perform.'

Relations with student musical groups within the College developed from an early stage, with performers from the College Orchestra presenting Brandenburg Concerto No.5 and Spohr's Nonet in 1956 under the direction of Trevor Harvey, a well-known conductor of the time. Our friendly relationship with the UCL Music Society continues to this day, with mutual benefit.

In due course the pattern of events through the year came to include not only the full-length concerts at 8.00 pm but also shorter concerts ('One Hour of Music') in the early evening – at 5.15, then eventually 5.30 pm – initially for the benefit of members for whom the later time was difficult. They became a regular feature from the 1971-72 season, and by 1978-79 most concerts took place at the early evening time, as remains the case today. Lunchtime concerts were an occasional feature in the early years, and more recently the Club would regularly present a lunchtime concert in December to round off the autumn term UCL Lunchtime Lectures series. This tradition had to be discontinued some time ago because of the demand for lecture dates, but since then lunchtime concerts, at a rate of four or five per year, have featured as a regular and successful part of our concert season.

The Club changed its name in 1987 to 'University College Chamber Music Club', and in the first decade of the present century the name 'UCL Chamber Music Club' emerged and is formally enshrined in the new constitution adopted in 2010. The post of Honorary President, created in 1992, was held by the internationally renowned pianist Tamás Vásáry until 2011, when the post was offered to, and accepted by, the then Provost of UCL, Malcolm Grant, for a five-year period.

In its early days the Club built up a music library, and acquired a set of stringed instruments (which had to be sold off in the mid 1980s when they became a security problem). The harpsichord, acquired with the assistance of a grant from the Friends of UCL, was inaugurated on 20th March 1986 at a concert entitled 'Baroque Music: Song and Dance', in which two of our long-standing members, Bill Tuck and John Lindon, took part, playing baroque flute and harpsichord respectively. A few years later, under the Chairmanship of Nicolas Coldstream, and with help from the then Provost, Sir James Lighthill, the antiquated Bechstein piano, which had been used since the inception of the Club, was replaced by the present Steinway. The Bösendorfer practice piano, which belonged to Gertrude Keir (Senior

Lecturer in the Psychology Department), who was Chair of the CMC, 1968-85, was donated by her husband after her death. A 'boudoir grand' piano belonging to the late Nicolas Coldstream was donated by his widow, and a substantial amount of his sheet music also came to the Club. This piano currently resides in Chandler House, Room G15, and is now available to members at limited times in the early evening. While the practice room with the Bösendorfer is a valuable and much used asset, the room in which the harpsichord was originally kept was lost to the Club in 2008, and the harpsichord is currently housed in the Provost's office – an arrangement for which we are most grateful, but which we sincerely hope will be temporary!

The Chamber Music Club is proud of its history and of its existence for an uninterrupted period of more than 60 years. As an institution which does not have a Music department, UCL nonetheless has a varied and flourishing musical life, and we believe that the CMC will continue to have a vital and secure role in this. In 2002 the Club's half-century was celebrated with a concert featuring the Mozart and Dvořák works which had been played at the beginning of its first season in 1952; on 1st May 2012 our 60th birthday concert included a Mozart quartet in D major, which may (or may not!) have been the one played at the inaugural meeting on 1st May 1952. We look forward to many more such celebrations.

Roger Beeson

(This article incorporates material prepared by John Lindon and Jill House for the 2002 and 2012 anniversaries.)