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Welcome to our newsletter

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Chamber Music Club Newsletter. As usual, we offer a variety of articles. Andrew Pink writes about the life and career of Carl Friedrich Abel to complement his account of J.C. Bach in our previous issue; Bill Tuck provides items on two contrasting topics, the Venetian Renaissance composer Giovanni Gabrieli and recent balletic (and other) approaches to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*; Helene Albrecht reports on the Club's two highly successful piano masterclasses which took place in the spring term; and Dace Ruklisa reviews the fascinating recent book by Ian Bostridge on Schubert's *Winterreise*. The latest in the 'meet the committee' series is a wide-ranging and thought-provoking interview with Tabitha Tuckett, whom many of you will have heard performing as a cellist in CMC concerts.

Our seventh issue is scheduled for October 2016, and already we'll be pleased to receive offers of contributions, especially from members who have not written for the Newsletter before. Full-length articles (maximum 3000 words) or shorter pieces, book or concert reviews, letters to the editors - all are welcome, and items do not have to be related directly, or indeed at all, to music at UCL. It is a good idea to let us have a proposal or at least an indication of what you have in mind before you actually start writing. Please contact any member of the editorial team: Dace Ruklisa (dd.rr.tt@btinternet.com), Helene Albrecht (helene.albrecht@gmx.net), Jill House (j.house@ucl.ac.uk) or me (rabeemus@gmail.com).

Once again my thanks go to all contributors, and especially to Dace, Helene and Jill, for their dedication and hard work in putting together this issue. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Roger Beeson, Chair, UCL CMC

Piano masterclasses at UCL – a review

It won't come as a surprise that the piano is the most popular among all instruments. According to a study from 2015 twenty-one million Americans play the piano; in 2013, forty-one million Chinese children were learning the instrument. The list of famous people who played the piano includes politicians such as US Presidents Nixon and Truman, the Polish Prime Minister Paderewski and the recently deceased German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, together with Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison and the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. These findings are somewhat reflected in UCL's Chamber Music Club: among current members, pianists outnumber all other players and come from varied backgrounds from civil engineering to philosophy and natural sciences. No wonder that the idea to run piano masterclasses for enthusiasts could easily be put into practice and became a successful start of an educational novelty for the CMC on UCL territory that in future hopefully might also benefit other instrumentalists, singers or chamber music ensembles.

As tutor, the Chamber Music Club lured Annabel Thwaite from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she enjoys a long-standing career as pianist, accompanist, teacher and coach of chamber music ensembles. During the CMC masterclasses Annabel not only responded to a wide range of pianistic challenges but also demonstrated expertise and empathy regarding a diverse repertoire of piano music that stretched from Johann Sebastian Bach to Iannis Xenakis. During two afternoons eleven UCL pianists delighted the audience and were guided through their performances, whereby in particular the intense encounter between members of an academic research and teaching institution and a representative of the world of performing arts seasoned the experience.

The opening masterclass took place on a sunny Saturday afternoon in UCL's Haldane Room in late January 2016: Robbie Carney (Department of Philosophy) presented the first movement of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto No.12 in A major, K.414/385p, and was accompanied by Roger Beeson (CMC Chair) on a second keyboard. The lyrical character of the concerto's piano part which was already well communicated by Robbie brought deeper questions about phrasing into focus: how to vary similar phrases, how to use harmonic progressions as a shaping force and foremost how to revive the original process of creation during a performance? The latter, according to our tutor Annabel, had to distinguish Mozart's rather improvised and disorganised writing from performances of Beethoven's organised and detailed scripts. Accordingly the subsequent performance of the third movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata No.17 in D minor, Op.31 No.2 ('Tempest') raised issues of transparency and score observance. Kelvin Fang (Physics and Astronomy) managed to bring new contrasts and clarity into his delicate and electrifying playing when encouraged to consider the piano

as an orchestral instrument with direct implications for the player's posture and spatial field of activity.

The interpretation of Frédéric Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op.27 No.1 by Helene Albrecht (Alumna, UCL School of Law) again pointed to the accuracy of Chopin's notation, in particular with regard to his pedalling. Chopin's performance indications, if taken literally, proved to open new space for the mastering of technical challenges such as left-hand octaves and their smooth transition back to the wide-set accompanying arpeggios.

After a short tea break attendees were beautifully seduced by Michael Vasmer (Physics and Astronomy) who performed Claude Debussy's Prelude No.4 from Book 1, 'Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir'. Translating odour into sound became the issue, asking the player not to indicate the slightest impression of physical work in the accomplishment of a dense and complex texture. Annabel and Michael also revealed to us the secret of conscious and directed key releases and the conscious anticipation of sound production.

A two-fold approach to Johann Sebastian Bach's music followed and raised questions of style and its pianistic implications during two different periods in music, the Baroque and the post-Romantic era. Bryan Solomon (Head of Project Delivery Services) played the Prelude of the composer's English Suite No.2 in A minor BWV 807 most impressively in a driving and pulsating manner. We all benefited from Annabel's advice on creative methods of practice, highly important to avoid a tiring and monotonous rendering of Bach's repetitive patterns, and learned about playing a piece on the offbeat and applying differentiated accentuation and about the capability to beneficially analyse musical structures while playing. Mapping the score and getting started each time at different textual points proved also to be useful tools towards a balanced and self-controlled performance. In contrast, the subsequent demonstration of Bach's famous Chaconne in D minor for violin solo in the arrangement for piano by Ferruccio Busoni enjoined the breathtaking participation into musically expressed struggle for life on us. Written on the death of Bach's first wife the Chaconne requires the balancing of emotions from deepest depression to terrifying outbreaks on various levels, all brilliantly conveyed by Jeremy Cheng (Philosophy and Economics). An accumulation of racing technical challenges was dealt with by referring to Schenkerian analysis and the better understanding of harmonic anchors. Questions remained, though, as to the appropriate historical perspective on the piece; the question as to whether it should be taken from a Baroque or Romantic point of view revealed the true challenge of this particular jewel of piano music.

The second piano masterclass, which was held almost one month later at the same location, turned out to be equally rich in experience and knowledge transfer. Nick McGhee (Assistant Director – Governance and Secretariat) started off with a most elegant and versatile interpretation of Chopin's Waltz in A flat major, Op.69

No.1. As in previous discussions, Chopin's own indications as to varying accents, dynamics and phrasing gave clues towards an even more dynamic and breathing playing. The following most skilled interpretation of Xenakis's almost unknown *Six chansons pour piano* by Yvonne Cheng (Alumna, Bartlett School of Architecture) led into a fascinating world built on folkloristic components and meticulous construction. Yvonne who shares her background in architecture with the Greek composer was advised to develop even further her observation of the compositional particularities of each of the miniatures from the very beginning and to evolve their polyphonic structure from this starting-point.

Problems of architecture also occurred in the first movement of Chopin's Sonata No.3 in B minor, Op.58, which was compellingly performed by Davide Napoli (Classics). According to Annabel Thwaite the sonata can be seen as one of the most challenging pieces by the composer (if not indeed the most challenging), with an overwhelming accumulation of technical hurdles and textural densities. As previously where such complexities were involved, the player was advised to refer to Schenkerian analysis in order to mark crucial harmonic progression and to reduce effort by identifying understandable and elementary meanings that underlay Chopin's interlaced musical language.

The problem of language recurred in another context in the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata No.1 in F minor, Op.2 No.1, which was performed with great transparency and structural awareness by David J. Galton (Professor Emeritus of Genetics). Dedicated to Joseph Haydn and also known as the 'Little Appassionata' the sonata demands the consolidation of Classical musical structure with budding Romantic thoughts; the resulting musical message was in addition interpreted by David as the gradual emergence of a future great master of his art. Both approaches were convincingly gauged by player and tutor through fresh observations of details and an orchestral understanding of the piano score.

Ilan Adler (Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering) took the audience into neighbouring realms with his sensitive and transparent interpretation of Mozart's Fantasia in D minor, K.397. Once again we were pointed by Annabel to Mozart's apparent arbitrariness and spontaneity which from the pianist requires the concurrence of an overview of the entire structure and immediate responses to the texture. We acquired insights into the importance of relentless and comprehensive analysis of possible difficulties that, although rising from different angles such as musical style, instrumental techniques, players' individual dispositions and the particular situation of a performance, can only be successfully tackled in an interconnected and holistic manner.

The finale of our second piano masterclass was presented by Jeremy Cheng performing Franz Liszt's 'Dante' Sonata, also known under the French title *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*. The sonata explores with all imaginative pianistic finesse two dividing thematic parts which – roughly speaking –

represent heaven and hell and in this capacity cannot but burden any interpreter with life-long work in progress. Jeremy Cheng who already has a reputation for his musical competence and evident pianistic facility benefited from the breaking down of the work into smaller units by redefining their courses of direction and rehearsing an immediate response to the latter.

Piano masterclasses communicate high levels of mutual cooperation, exchange and understanding once pianists are released from their status as lone warriors and are enabled to share their experiences on a common platform. This precisely was the case during the first two UCL CMC piano masterclasses. The level of piano playing and attention to style and sound delicacy at UCL are stunning; the classes' atmosphere was welcoming and inspiring, raising hopes towards similar activities in the near future. Thank you to all who made it possible!

Helene Albrecht

Death in Venice: the musical legacy of Giovanni Gabrieli

Giovanni Gabrieli died on 12 August 1612 in Venice after suffering poor health for some years with kidney stones. He was fifty-eight years old. Denis Arnold's fine book on the composer gives a very moving account of his death and of the events that followed: his positions at St Mark's and at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco were rapidly filled by others; his last pupil, Heinrich Schütz, to whom he had given his ring while dying, left Venice within a few months. Gabrieli was dead and out of fashion. The lavish *concertato* style for which he had become famous, with multiple choirs involving both voices and instruments (wind instruments – cornetts and sackbuts – in particular), had been replaced by a simpler format of voices and continuo. By 1613, Gabrieli was already forgotten in Venice, and there is no indication that his music was ever played again in St Mark's or anywhere in Venice for the remaining 180 years of the Republic.

It is little surprise therefore that it took three years for the final collection of his manuscripts to appear in print, the editorial work being carried out jointly by his executor and a former pupil. As a result of their labours Book 2 of the *Symphoniae Sacrae* was published in 1615 by Bartolomeo Magni. To celebrate the 400th anniversary of this event, in the summer of 2015 a group of musicians, including both singers and instrumentalists, travelled from England to Venice to create a concert of Gabrieli's works from this publication, along with compositions by some of his contemporaries and predecessors. The concert was held in the Chiesa of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, where Gabrieli himself had served for nearly thirty years. Even today Venice does not hear much Gabrieli (unlike Vivaldi, concerts of whose music can be found somewhere in the city on almost any day of the

week!). This is a great pity, given that by contrast so much contemporary visual material – art and architecture – is on permanent display there, but perhaps not surprising given the nature of the musical forces required.

Part of the reason for this neglect is that fashions had changed and the sackbuts and cornetts of Gabrieli's bravura style were no longer called for – at least not in such numbers. But another reason may well have been the difficulty of finding both suitable musicians and the instruments on which they played. Gabrieli's chief collaborator throughout his career had been the brilliant virtuoso cornettist (and fine composer in his own right) Giovanni Bassano. Some five years younger than Gabrieli, he had been appointed to St Mark's at the age of eighteen in 1578, and became leader of the wind ensemble there in 1601, after the retirement of Girolamo Dalla Casa (another cornettist). Bassano died in 1617 and no replacement of comparable ability could be found (indeed, things became so bad that in 1640 a special bursary had to be offered to find someone willing to study the instrument). The skill of the trombonists which had made Gabrieli's canzonas possible seems much less of a requirement for the church music of Monteverdi and the later Venetian composers. There were still virtuosi to be found, of course, but on violin rather than cornett, and the records of St Mark's show a slow replacement of one with the other (see Selfridge-Field).

Another factor that may have complicated the picture and contributed to the eclipse of wind instrumentalists was the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. This is likely to have led to the disruption of the trade links with Nuremberg, where all trombones were manufactured at that time. Even worse were the terrible ravages of plague in the 1630s, which led to the deaths of around a third of the population of Venice, musicians included, while the siege of Nuremberg in 1631 led to a similar fall in population.

But if Gabrieli and his music had died in Venice, then his style and much of his music survived and flourished in the German lands to the north. Heinrich Schütz and a number of other German composers had studied with Gabrieli and were instrumental in carrying his style (along with copies of his music) back to the German courts from which they had come. The most valuable body of unpublished music by Gabrieli is to be found in the Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek at Kassel, a relic of the link between Gabrieli and the Landgraves of Hesse, so firmly cemented by the studies of Heinrich Schütz (see Arnold). In style too, the earlier compositions of Schütz employ similar instrumental forces to those of Gabrieli, with cornetts and sackbuts occupying prominent roles alongside the voices. Later however, as Schütz's letters attest, the ravages of the war led to a shortage of instrumentalists (as well as singers) through conscription into the armies of both musician and instrument – it being easy to convert a sackbut into a military trumpet! There is a clear change in style of Schütz's compositions in this period, as they become sparser, needing fewer forces, both vocal and instrumen-

tal. Only later, after the war had ended and peace been restored with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, does he regain the scale of his earlier work, but now subdued in tone and with violins more prominent than trombones.

In modern times there was a significant revival of interest in Gabrieli's instrumental works in the 1960s, with brass players taking enthusiastically to the performance of his canzonas and sonatas, such as the well-known *Sonata pian' e forte* for eight instrumentalists. It has taken longer, however, for the vocal works to achieve similar popularity. This may partly have been because modern brass instruments create a serious dynamic imbalance between the voices – singing one to a part, rather than as a massed choir – and the instruments. As well as having the 'wrong' sound, modern wide-bore brass instruments are just too loud! Recovery of the great choral pieces, such as *In ecclesiis* or *Buccinate in neomenia tuba a 19*, or the *Magnificat a 17*, which are intended to mix substantial instrumental forces with relatively few voices, required the training of skilled cornett and sackbut players that has only taken place over the last couple of decades. Even with proper Renaissance instruments, a dynamic balance with the voices can be hard to achieve.

Works by both Schütz and Gabrieli, on 'original' instruments, have been featured in the concerts of the Chamber Music Club over the past few years. At the Christmas Concert in 2010 we performed Schütz's *Christmas Oratorio* along with Praetorius's *In dulci jubilo* (featuring six natural trumpets!). In 2012 it was Gabrieli's *In ecclesiis*, and more recently the two great Schütz pieces for four trombones and bass voice: *Fili mi*, *Absalon* and *Attendite, popule meus*. Such works can all be regarded as part of the legacy of Giovanni Gabrieli. A commemorative tombstone lies in the floor of the parish church of San Stefano in Venice (replaced with a 'true copy' of the original in 1957, curiously close to the beginning of the revival of interest in his music). Of his colleague Giovanni Bassano there is no trace, though the family name lived on among the court musicians of England, where an earlier group of Bassanos had emigrated to serve under Henry VIII (see Lasocki and Prior).

The Venetian High Renaissance – along with its German offshoot – was a very significant period in the Western musical tradition and is certainly worthy of continued exploration and revival. A fine recording of many of Giovanni Gabrieli's sacred symphonies has recently been issued on the Hyperion label by the Ex Cathedral choir and the combined sackbuts and cornetts of Concerto Palatino and His Majestys Sackbuts and Cornetts, all under the direction of Jeffrey Skidmore.

Bill Tuck, Venice, September 2015

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Hampstead Garden Opera: spring production 2016

MASCAGNI – *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA*

LEONCAVALLO – *PAGLIACCI*

For the first production in our new home at Jacksons Lane we have chosen powerful one-act operas by two late nineteenth-century Italian composers, both of whom, in their distinctive ways, tell stories of life as it was when they were writing, with no holds barred. The music is as full-blooded as the emotions of the characters, and both works are steeped in memorable tunes. When you emerge from the theatre after two hours you will have had a veritable package-tour of Italian and Sicilian passions.

Oliver-John Ruthven will conduct the Hampstead Garden Opera Orchestra, and Bruno Ravella will direct the production of this famous double-bill (popularly known as *Cav & Pag*).

Ten performances at Jacksons Lane Theatre, 269a Archway Road, London N6 5AA between 13th and 22nd May: 13th , 14th , 17th , 18th , 19th , 20th , 21st May at 7.30pm and matinees on Sundays 15th & 22nd May at 4pm and on Saturday 21st May at 2.30pm.

Unreserved tickets for May 13th & 14th – £21 (concessions £19) or £28 for premium seats. Tickets for all other performances – £21 or £28 for premium seats. On-line booking: <http://hgo.org.uk/current-opera/tickets/> (booking fee applies). Booking by phone: 0800 411 8881 (open 24/7; booking fee applies) – please quote the venue as ‘Jacksons Lane’.

Carl Friedrich Abel: London's great gamba player and friend to J.C. Bach

During the musical celebrations of 2015 that marked the 330th birthday of J.C. Bach – the so-called 'London Bach' – the figure of his good friend and business partner Carl Friedrich Abel has been largely overlooked, even though in Bach's lifetime the two men's careers were closely linked. This biographical sketch forms a companion piece to my article on J.C. Bach that appeared in the previous issue of this newsletter, No.5 (October 2015). A full account of the Bach-Abel London partnership can be found in that article.

Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-87) is little known today, except perhaps as the last great professional performer on the viola da gamba, an instrument that was a forerunner of the cello, and known in eighteenth-century England as the bass viol. But Abel is worth remembering as having made a valuable contribution to music history – and to London musical life in particular – as a composer, impresario and viola da gamba player. Unfortunately, much of Abel's surviving published work for the viola da gamba was produced for a largely amateur market, and so does not adequately reflect the contemporary reports of his great skill with the instrument, both as a performer and as a composer. Only in his now rarely played works for orchestra and for chamber ensembles can we appreciate his considerable musical skills.

Abel was the son of Christian Ferdinand Abel (1693-1737) who played the viola da gamba and violin at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen in Germany. Here Christian Ferdinand would have known Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) and his family since J.S. Bach was employed there as Court Composer in the years 1717-23. According to the eighteenth-century writer and musician Charles Burney, Abel had been a pupil of J.S. Bach, presumably at Leipzig, where Bach worked from 1723, the year of Abel's birth.

By 1743 we find Abel (now twenty years old) employed in the court orchestra at Dresden, the capital of Frederick Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. Abel's connection with the Bach family continued here not only because Bach's son Wilhelm Friedemann (1710-84) was an organist in Dresden until 1746, but also because J.S. Bach himself held the title of Court Composer there from 1736. Burney tells us that the Dresden court opera composer Josef Adolph Hasse (1699-1783) was also one of Abel's teachers.

Abel left Dresden sometime in 1757/58 during the ongoing attacks on that city by the army of the Prussian king Frederick the Great. Abel's whereabouts during this period are unclear; Burney tells us only that he went to three neighbouring princely courts in succession, 'remaining at each only long enough to acquire a sufficient sum to defray his expenses to a new scene of action' (Burney 1782, II 1018-

19). We do know that he visited the family home of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) in Frankfurt, and it has been suggested he also visited Mannheim as well as Paris.

By the season of 1758/59 Abel was in London, which was to remain his home for the rest of his life. Abel's first public concert there was on 5 April 1759. At this debut he demonstrated his musical versatility not only by performing on the viola da gamba, the harpsichord, and the 'pentachord' – a cello-like instrument invented by Sir Edward Walpole, the former British Prime Minister's son – but also because he was the composer of most of the music he performed that day. That Abel had very quickly become well connected with influential patrons in London is further borne out by the following facts: in 1760 he was able to dedicate his Op.2 harpsichord sonatas to the senior royal courtier John Hobart, the Earl of Buckinghamshire; in that same year Abel was granted a royal privilege (and thus secure copyright) for the publication of his music in London; and he was employed in the service of the King's brother Edward Augustus, the Duke of York and Albany.

The composer J.C. Bach (1735-82), the youngest son of J.S. Bach, had settled in London in the summer of 1762, and a friendship with Abel was firmly established by 1763. The two men shared a home, first in Meard Street, then in King's Square Court, Soho, until 1771, when they moved into separate residences. Abel went first to 201 Oxford Street – from 1776 sharing with the Mannheim violinist Wilhelm Cramer before Cramer's second marriage – and then in September 1778 to 6 Duke Street; both of these addresses, though modest, were in new and fashionable areas of the town.

The years 1764 to 1782 saw the establishment, flourishing and eventual decline of the 'Bach-Abel' concert series (as well as numerous other music-making engagements for royalty, aristocracy and the general public). By the time of Bach's death in 1782 the enterprise was faltering, but Abel managed to continue the concerts under his own name for the rest of that season. (Bach's widow, despite facing large debts, declined Abel's public offer of assistance after her husband's death.)

The importance of the Bach-Abel concerts cannot be underestimated, since they had successfully introduced London audiences to many influential continental musicians and new styles of performance, and while Bach's influence can be seen in the choice of singers, many of the instrumentalists had known Abel at Dresden or known his older brother Leopold August Abel (1718-94), the leader of the orchestra at the court of Ludwig, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin at Ludwigslust. Abel seems to have visited Paris with some regularity in the 1770s and 1780s where he was reported to be teaching the viola da gamba to a *fermier-général* there, and it was probably Abel who introduced to London the several performers from Paris who featured at the Bach-Abel concerts. Abel and Bach between them composed much of the music that was played at their concerts; and some of Abel's

share of it appeared among his published works.

While Burney tells us that during his life Abel 'had as many scholars as he chose to undertake', his only known pupils (of counterpoint) were the pianist Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), William Linley (1771-1835) – who was the youngest son of the composer Thomas Linley the Elder – and the composer and flautist Johann Georg Graeff (c1762-1824) who was the owner of one of the earliest known copies in England of J.S. Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues* (Tomita 2004, 80 & 135). Arguably, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91) was also a pupil of Abel since when the Mozart family lived in London during 1764/65 both Abel and Bach were on very close terms with them and we now know that Abel's Symphony in E Op.7 No.6 was copied by the young Mozart, perhaps as an exercise. For many years this symphony was mistakenly considered to be Mozart's own early work, formerly appearing as K.18 in Köchel's Mozart catalogue.

From 1765 onwards Robert Bremner was Abel's principal London publisher. He reissued all of Abel's already published work and thereafter issued the first London editions of Abel's music. Abel was primarily a composer of instrumental music – his few vocal pieces are relatively unimportant – and his oeuvre includes forty-five symphonies, fifteen solo concertos, eighteen string quartets, twenty-four trios, and over fifty sonatas. Most of his works are in three movements, the remainder in two; he usually wrote in major keys, and there is little trace of *Sturm und Drang* in his work.

At the end of the 1782 season Abel left London for two years to visit his homeland, leaving the concert series in the hands of Lord Willoughby Bertie. He saw his brother in Ludwigslust and probably his younger brother Ernst Heinrich in Hamburg, and it was Ernst who later claimed Abel's possessions after his death. Abel also spent some time in Potsdam in the circle of Friedrich Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Prussia (brother of Frederick the Great). Abel had already dedicated his Op.15 quartets to the Prince in 1780, and when they finally met Abel so impressed him with his playing that Abel received from him 100 *louis d'or* and a gold snuff-box.

From the beginning of 1785 until his death Abel was again active at the Hanover Square Rooms (the venue of the Bach-Abel concerts), with a new series called the Grand Professional Concert, which was in effect the successor of the Bach-Abel series. The Grand Professional Concert maintained the same personnel, among whom Abel was billed as the principal composer and viola da gamba player. Sadly Abel's 'new symphonies' that were performed in this series remained unpublished, and are now lost. Abel's last concert appearance was on 21 May 1787 as a viola da gamba virtuoso at a benefit for the soprano Elizabeth Billington (1765-1818).

That final concert is indicative of Abel's generous and agreeable nature. He often supported charity concerts and regularly organised and took part in benefit concerts for fellow musicians, such as that on 20 April 1769 held at Almack's Great Room for the London-based Bohemian musician Antonin Kammel (d.1784) and the

oboist Johann Christian Fischer (1733-1800).

Through his concerts Abel helped to launch the careers of many young English professionals. The most famous among them were the cellists John Crossdill (1751/5-1825) and James Cervetto (1748-1837) for whom Abel provided a showy duet in 1778. With the violinist Wilhelm Cramer, the oboist Fischer, and Abel and Bach themselves, these musicians for many years formed the core of the Bach-Abel troupe.

Abel's generosity to his fellow musicians was equalled by the attachment to his friends, one of whom was the painter Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), himself a keen amateur viola da gamba player, and their friendship resulted in a mutual exchange of music and paintings. Perhaps the most magnificent likeness of Abel is Gainsborough's portrait of him with a viol, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777 (now at the Huntington Library, California). Other portraits of Abel include one of him at the harpsichord by Charles Jean Robineau, now in the royal collection in London, and an anonymous painting in the Music School at Oxford University.

Abel it seems had a particular fondness for art and artists. It was perhaps with the encouragement of two artist friends Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727-85) and Francesco Bartolozzi (1727-1815) that on 13 February 1778 Abel, with Wilhelm Cramer, joined a lodge of freemasons called the Nine Muses lodge, whose regular meeting place was the Thatched House tavern in St. James's Street, London. Cipriani and Bartolozzi were already members, having joined on 23 January 1777 and 13 February 1777 respectively. J.C. Bach soon followed, joining the lodge on 13 June 1778. These men's entries in the lodge records show that they were already freemasons elsewhere, but those locations are so far unknown, and nothing in Abel's musical output relates directly to freemasonry. Yet in his professional life Abel was often in the company of musician freemasons and his natural quality of goodwill combined with a practical concern to help others make him the epitome of an eighteenth-century freemason.

Following his last concert appearance in London on 21 May 1787 Abel died unmarried on 20 June 1787. Throughout his life Abel had maintained a highly respected position in London society, at court, in the homes of the nobility, in fashionable circles, and among his fellow musicians. The several obituaries that followed his death spoke unanimously in their praise of him as a musician. Abel – like his friend Bach – was interred in the burial ground of the old St Pancras church in London.

Abel's reputation as a performer was closely connected with the viola da gamba, which was considered an archaic instrument even in his own day. His obituary in the *Morning Post* of 22 June 1787 remarked that 'his favourite instrument was not in general use, and would probably die with him'. During Abel's lifetime the instrument still had enthusiastic players in amateur circles, and it is for these players that most of his published work for the viol was designed, since

we know that many of his solo performances on the viol were improvised. Burney wrote: 'I have heard him modulate in private on his six-stringed base [sic] with such practical readiness and depth of science, as astonished the late Lord Kelly and [J.C.] Bach, as much as myself' (Burney 1782, II 1020). Abel did not emphasize technical display in his performances; his artistry depended on subtlety and beauty of tone and he was much praised for the way he could sustain and embellish adagio playing. Burney lovingly recalled Abel's performances in which 'the most pleasing, yet learned modulation; the richest harmony; and the most elegant and polished melody were all expressed with such feeling, taste and science' (Burney 1782, II 1020).

Andrew Pink

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A sizeable number of scores of works by Abel are freely available to download at <http://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Abel,_Carl_Friedrich>

SUGGESTED LISTENING

In the 1990s and 2000s the German ensemble La Stagione Frankfurt recorded brío-packed performances of Abel's orchestral and instrumental works on the CPO label, including his pioneering keyboard concertos, Op.11. These well-priced discs are still available.

Attractive performances of Abel's gamba sonatas are available on a 2006 CD entitled *Mr Abel's Fine Airs*, performed by Susanne Heinrich (Hyperion Records, CDA67628).

YouTube <www.youtube.com> remains a key source of otherwise unavailable performances.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author published a longer, fully referenced version of this article in French in Charles Porset and Cecile Revuager (eds.) *Le Monde maçonnique des Lumières (Europe-Amériques) Dictionnaire prosopographique* (Paris: Editions Champion, 2013). This edited English version is published here with permission.

Collegium Musicum of London presents works by Constant Lambert and Jonathan Dove

Collegium Musicum of London's next concert pairs Constant Lambert's ever-popular *Rio Grande* with Jonathan Dove's new choral work *Arion and the Dolphin*.

The concert takes place on 18th June, 7.30pm, St James's Church, Piccadilly, W1J 9LL.

Premiered in Manchester in 1929, Constant Lambert's dazzling setting of Sacheverell Sitwell's poem *The Rio Grande* has become a favourite with audiences and singers alike. Jazz rhythms are used wittily in this brilliant work, arranged in this performance for two pianos, choir and five percussionists. Lambert, who admired Duke Ellington and proclaimed his harmonic roots in Frederick Delius, was a fearless reconciler of what the academies and Tin Pan Alley alike presumed to be eternally opposed.

Jonathan Dove is one of the country's leading composers. *Arion and the Dolphin*, his most recent choral work, is a dramatic cantata for countertenor solo, children's choir, adult mixed choir, two pianos and percussion, told in lively verse by Dove's long-time collaborator Alasdair Middleton.

Collegium Musicum of London joins forces with some leading instrumentalists, counter-tenor David Allsopp, and St Catherine's College Cambridge Girls' Choir, for what promises to be a spectacular evening's music making in one of the capital's best-loved concert venues.

Tickets for £16 and £12 (concessions) available on the door. Booking in advance on 07812 599340 or online <<http://coll-mus-lon.org.uk/future-concerts/>>.

Meet the committee – Tabitha Tuckett

Helene Albrecht: *Tabitha, when did you join the UCL Chamber Music Club and what has changed since you have become a member of the committee?*

Tabitha Tuckett: I joined three or four years ago when I started working for UCL. One excellent development since I've been a member of the committee is the establishment of a mailing list for players of Baroque instruments – the inspired idea of fellow committee-member, Dace, and welcome to me as I've worked as a Baroque 'cellist for many years.

Although I would like to have more time to contribute to other aspects of the work of the committee, my main contribution so far has been as a performer. I do believe it's important for a university of UCL's international stature to present well-prepared music performances by its own staff and students, and the Chamber Music Club's role in classical-music performance is crucial, in the absence of a formal music department at the University. The Club encourages performers of all levels to work together, with an amazingly positive and tolerant spirit, and I hope even more new performers, and new combinations with longstanding performers, have got involved over the last couple of years.

Another recent development has been the fantastic work the Club has done exploring the use and scope of the terms 'classical' and 'Western' music in programming recent concerts of non-European and contemporary works. This seems particularly apposite given the international environment at UCL.

That said, the classic works of the intimate, small-scale, 'chamber' music that gives the Club its name are one of the riches of the world's music, and the Chamber Music Club's free, public concerts are an opportunity for everyone to come along and see what they think about the huge variety of music that comes under this term. It seems that the Club's recent audiences have become more varied. In a city where a ticket for a concert at the Royal Festival Hall or Wigmore Hall is currently often cheaper than a ticket for the cinema, perhaps we can persuade some of our new audiences to try a professional London classical concert for the first time.

HA: *What have been the most enjoyable and important events for you among UCL CMC's activities?*

TT: First of all, helping to organise the last two new members' concerts. I have admired the courage of the performers, especially those who have not studied their instrument in a highly competitive, performance- and solo-oriented atmosphere yet have come forward to share music they love with a new audience.

Having the opportunity to perform such a wide range of solo and duo repertoire for 'cello, from Beethoven to Greek folk music, has been wonderful, but getting to know our talented student musicians and working with them on chamber

music has also been very rewarding, despite timetables and lack of facilities often working against us. And of course it has also been a pleasure to work with so many alumni and former staff members who, in retirement or part-time work, have chosen to dedicate so much of their time to organising the Club's activities with quiet experience. Without these people's hard work, I don't think the Club could survive.

HA: *You have been organiser and active participant in recent collaborations of the Chamber Music Club with other departments at UCL. Can you tell us about these experiences?*

TT: The Chamber Music Club is one of the few points of contact between UCL departments and classical musicians from all sectors of the University – students, staff, alumni, and public audiences. I thought more could be made of this, so I began by organising an event of music and readings to launch an exhibition in the Octagon Gallery on the main campus. The exhibition was on the number '8' – a convenient topic for music – and was curated by a group of academics from a number of humanities departments, who selected material from the rare-books and manuscript collections I help to curate at UCL Special Collections, alongside other collections at UCL; this was complemented by music from the Club's performers.

The collaborative partners came from a very wide range of sectors at UCL, and many were new to the Chamber Music Club's activities. I'm pleased we have been able to develop this model in other events such as the launch of an exhibition of French Revolution prints at UCL Art Museum and collaborations on Scandinavian-focused and SSEES events.

I hope the benefits work both ways. Last year I was able to invite the Club and its audiences to our annual Treasures Day to view our medieval music fragments and the ink-blotched letter by Beethoven held in UCL Special Collections where I work, and perhaps I can persuade some singers from the Club to perform a snatch of Elizabethan music from an early printed book I'm hoping to show this year at the Festival of Culture in May.

There are many possibilities for collaboration by the Club across UCL, but substantial hard work is involved from committee members in putting together suitable programmes and arranging music, so it's important that, if such events are not included as part of the Club's free events programme and open to the public, the musicians' work and professionalism is properly rewarded and credited.

HA: *Your relationship with your instrument, the 'cello, seems to be of a particular intensity; tell us, please, what role the instrument has played in your overall personal and professional development.*

TT: Actually I didn't really know what a 'cello was when I started learning it at school, and my parents didn't play instruments, so I am extremely grateful to the

county music scheme which offered hugely subsidised lessons, instruments and youth orchestras to children from ages seven to eighteen. I was incredibly lucky to grow up at that time. Without such opportunities in the UK, we shall miss out on the next generation of home-grown talent.

However had I known how cumbersome and expensive the 'cello would prove to be in the future, perhaps I would have chosen something smaller. I was rather a slow developer on the 'cello but as a teenager I found myself on a chamber-music course with a group of very talented children, many from the Menuhin School and from families of professional musicians, and that changed my understanding of what might be possible on my instrument and what role playing music might have in one's life. The course focused on chamber music for piano and strings and, over several years of attending, it gave me a love for chamber music as well as lifelong friends and opportunities to play with some wonderful musicians.

I was also lucky to have some inspiring teachers who introduced me to Baroque music, and as a result I went on to work as a Baroque 'cellist. They included two wonderful music teachers at school, one of whom literally pushed me onto the stage, concert after concert, until I got used to performing (I was very shy), and the other of whom taught me to play basso continuo in Baroque music. That meant I had the opportunity of playing 'cello continuo when I went to university, not only for the boys' choirs of the Oxford colleges but also for many of my contemporaries who went on to be very innovative in the historical-performance movement. At the time, specialist courses in Baroque performance weren't yet available, but I've been lucky enough to have had two fantastic Baroque 'cello teachers – Jennifer Ward Clarke and Alison McGillivray – from whom I learnt huge amounts about music and life.

Playing the 'cello has always been important, but it hasn't always been easy to recognise how to combine it with other activities. For example I wasn't sure I was doing the right thing when I was doing postgraduate and postdoctoral work in classics, philosophy and Renaissance literature, but in fact it was during those years that I not only developed academically but also had some key musical collaborations that nudged me towards improving my playing. This included playing in ensembles with friends who were similarly combining music with other activities such as Ian Bostridge who was then studying history; being lucky enough to study with the wonderful 'cellist, Johanna Messner, whose focus is always on helping pupils to play better whatever path they find themselves on; and being chosen by Nigel Kennedy as a duo partner over several years. The sincerity of his musicality was disarming and made me think carefully about what was most important to me at that time. The result was that I decided to continue working as a musician alongside my other activities at the time, and I feel very lucky in the musicians and 'cello pupils I have had the opportunity to work with since then.

HA: You are not only an apparently very knowledgeable performer of Baroque

music but you have also presented a considerable number of modern works in our concerts such as Anton Webern's 1914 Sonata for 'cello and piano and Paul Hindemith's Sonata Op.11 No.3 for 'cello and piano, not to mention a recent presentation of the ancient Greek lyra in a concert exceeding Western classical music's boundaries. How did this broad approach to music evolve in your career and what have been decisive steps and influences on your musical path?

TT: I'm not sure I have consciously taken any decisive steps or even stuck to a path. We like to think we can control what happens in our lives, but I think more often than we want to admit we are bumping into people and opportunities (especially if carrying a 'cello on one's back, of course) that send us off in unexpected directions. For seven or eight years I worked on a music-and-health project I co-founded with a jazz singer. It involved performing in health-care settings in the North East of England, from intensive-care units to elderly psychiatric-care wards to hospital laundries, with all sorts of audiences including staff and relatives as well as patients. We always played informally and only at an individual's request, and at first I had assumed few people would ask for classical music, and probably then only very well-known pieces. I soon learnt not to make such assumptions on other people's behalf. The range of requests was enormous, and the demand for classical music of all sorts on the 'cello so great that we ended up being on-call in one hospital a day a week. It was a privilege to be asked to play to these audiences, and a great lesson in not worrying too much about genres of music, just about playing and communicating as well as you can whenever you perform.

You mentioned the lyra: the instrument I played at the recent Chamber Music Club concert is not the ancient lyra, which I understand was a plucked instrument, but the post-classical lyra, which is a bowed instrument, similar in some ways to a rebec, and found all over southern Europe, the Baltic and the Middle East. I spent a lot of time in Greece when I was growing up, and while on Crete in the town of Chania, I was lucky enough to learn lyra with the fantastic virtuoso, Ross Daly. Unfortunately, once at university, I didn't have much time to continue working on the instrument, but I did learn a bit about modal music, microtones and improvising in Crete. I learnt a lot more when I worked more recently with the fantastic Baroque and folk group Horses Brawl, in particular the fiddler, recorder player and composer Laura Cannell, and guitarist Adrian Lever, who at the time had just started studying the tamboura in Bulgaria.

I have always enjoyed playing contemporary works and have been lucky enough to have had a few written for me, but the Webern and Hindemith you mentioned, which are of course now a hundred years or so old, were also the result of collaborations. The first was the inspiration of the UCL Chamber Music Club looking for works written on the eve of the First World War. The second was the result of a Hindemith project suggested by a friend who had been working on some more typical Hindemith for some professional quartet concerts. For light relief, we dis-

covered Hindemith's humorous works, and I decided to find out more about the early 'cello piece you mentioned.

Thinking of decisive steps, an example of collaborations that occur without design is the duo-playing I've been lucky enough to do for the UCL Chamber Music Club with the pianist and UCL alumnus, Philip Pilkington. When I started my current job at UCL, I was living in Oxford and struggling to fit everything into a finite amount of time. A former colleague from the Warburg Institute, where I did my library training, was at the time running a reading group on early Arabic philosophy. One day he suggested he and I play music together with a pianist from the reading group, and I was very grumpy about the prospect of more traveling with my 'cello. The pianist turned out to be Philip, who was taking a bit of time out from piano-playing to attend the Arabic philosophy reading group. From his musical generosity and the sharp ears of Minkey Pilkington have come many projects, support and advice, including on performing the music of their lifelong friend, John Tavener, whose *Chant* I played for a UCL concert. I can honestly say that no decisive steps were taken by me to make this meeting happen, not even learning early Arabic, but I am very glad things turned out the way they did.

HA: *Your position at UCL looks rather colourful, too. You are the Rare-Books Librarian at UCL Special Collections and in this capacity fulfill a range of interesting tasks. Can you tell us more about your job at UCL?*

TT: UCL Library Services has one of the largest university collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives in the South East of England outside the deposit libraries. The collections are superb and very wide-ranging, from medieval manuscripts through incunabula to the George Orwell Archive and beyond. My job involves curating the early printed books, including cataloguing and collection management, but also encouraging awareness and use of all the collections. I do a lot of teaching, introducing students in all sorts of subjects to our collections; one of the first conversations I had with the CMC committee's double-bass player, Jamie, was about the first edition of Newton's *Principia* that my colleagues and I brought to one of his first Physics lectures. I also do a lot of exhibition work, for exhibitions both at UCL and in museums and galleries elsewhere in the UK and beyond. I run a public events programme, workshops for school children, and education collaborations with museums at UCL and elsewhere in London, facilitate the appearance of our books on TV programmes such as the recent documentary on Ada Lovelace, and I also have input into digitisation programmes and fund-raising events. I work one day a week at The National Archives, where the collections are currently housed. From this month, I will start a new role focusing specifically on academic support and events alongside curating.

HA: *Finally, what are your future aspirations as committee member of the Chamber Music Club? What pieces would you like to perform and which overall musical aspects would you like to address and highlight?*

TT: I'm working on music for 'cello and piano by Schumann at the moment. The coming term will include a concert on the transformations made to Baroque music, and Bach in particular, after the Baroque period.

It would be good to encourage more chamber ensembles in future concerts. Part of the problem with this is the difficulty of accessing rooms large enough to accommodate more than one or at a push two people, especially with piano. Another hurdle is that forming chamber groups needs assistance from the Club, as many people don't know others who might be suitable to play with. Perhaps we could have a dedicated chamber-music day or regular evenings.

The same hurdles apply to encouraging more use of the Baroque list to form period-instrument groups within the Club. Maybe one day we might even get larger rehearsal spaces where the pianos and harpsichord can be safely kept and used.

The Club has done a lot in the past year to help solo pianists work on their playing, but some have less experience of playing with others. I would very much like to see these pianists discovering chamber music by working in duos, trios or quartets as equal partners with other instrumentalists and singers. The repertoire is very wide-ranging, with works suitable for all levels of technical ability.

Finally I hope the Club can continue to encourage the formation of new groups that combine new performers with longstanding players.

HA: *Now, this is a wealth of aspirational and inspirational thoughts; thank you very much, Tabitha, for sharing so many valuable ideas and experiences with us!*

Schubert's Winter Journey: Anatomy of an Obsession by Ian Bostridge (Faber & Faber, 2015)

A REVIEW

From the shapes of ice crystals and exiled poets of Schubert's time to the history of charcoal burning and a hallucinogenic description of horn atmospherics by Clemens Brentano – such is the breadth of themes in Ian Bostridge's book about Franz Schubert's *Winterreise*. Within its twenty-four chapters connections are explored between the songs and their historical context, political allusions and other forms of art and science. The freedom of writing matches the varied course of Schubert's wanderer and the main achievement of this book is to reveal and emphasise the diversity of ideas and motifs hidden within the cycle. Thus this work becomes a significant challenge to conceptions of *Winterreise* as a monochrome and mono-themed composition, and complements more musicologically focused analyses of the score.

Bostridge's own experience of rehearsing and performing the song cycle is a recurrent thread in the book – he has sung *Winterreise* regularly throughout his three decades of giving recitals, beginning with the performance while he was still a history undergraduate up to the recent collaboration with composer Thomas Adès at the piano. This experience is a source of insights into various aspects of the score and into challenges in interpretation. Thus the testing length and repetitive nature of the first song ('Gute Nacht') is explored – the author advocates singing it in a consistent moderate tempo while resisting any increase in dynamic range, all in order to emphasise the walking pace and to make the transition to a major key towards the end of the song a poignant culmination. When studying the score I noticed a regularisation of the rhythm in the piano part at the very end (notably this is not a link to any previous material) – a detail that seems to support Bostridge's interpretation. Similarly, the singer's experience suggests not to unsettle the tempo of 'Die Wetterfahne'; inconstancy that is alluded to in the poem is already expressed in the composer's extremely finely-tuned rhythms. It was also interesting to read about a recital at which several well-known musicians were checking scores and conversing while 'Wasserflut' was sung – apparently there had been a disagreement about the rhythmical pattern of overlaid triplets and dotted quavers that is used consistently in this piece. The dilemma posed by this song is whether the dotted quaver and semiquaver rhythm in the piano should be taken as a triplet rhythm to match the triplet rhythm of the singer, or to allow the piano semiquaver to come shortly after the singer's triplet quaver; choices made by different performers are thoroughly analysed in this chapter. I am leaning towards Bostridge's view that if Schubert had wanted to hear several triplets simultaneously he would have opted for another notation and that the angular and somewhat disconcerting rhythmic effect was intentional. But the most unexpected insights are saved for the end of the book. Bostridge avoids rehearsing the final song 'Der Leiermann' before concerts in order to retain openness towards the circumstance and to be able to respond to the progression of the cycle more freely. He describes how he has sometimes imagined 'Der Leiermann' as a Bob Dylan song and has subtly introduced borrowings from pop music into his manner of singing – it seems compellingly logical given the piece's simple harmonic structures and the acute message about the place of a musician in society. But then another surprise follows – the Bob Dylan song with the strongest associative link turns out to be 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'.

Associations play a significant role in Bostridge's manner of writing, in particular in connecting various themes. It also means that ideas can be scattered unpredictably throughout the book, leading to a number of revelations. In the first chapter the theme of wandering is discussed: amidst parallels with legends of the Wandering Jew and the Flying Dutchman, Bostridge establishes the indebtedness of the author of the *Winterreise* poems, Wilhelm Müller, to works by George Gordon (Lord) Byron (Müller wrote major essays on *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*). The

influence of Byron can be keenly felt in the obscure history of the protagonist, and also in the lack of a linear or sometimes any narrative within the sequence of songs. After this introduction of the cycle's main theme the reader is ushered towards a discussion of the word *fremd* that begins the first poem – it means 'foreign', 'alien', 'strange', and soon invokes German nationalist's feelings of being foreign within a Habsburg empire and afterwards a mention of Samuel Beckett. In the chapter on 'Die Wetterfahne' there is an unexpected and beautiful passage on poems by Hölderlin that also use the image of the weathervane (they have been set to music by Benjamin Britten and Hans Werner Henze). It is probably inevitable that some associations will seem subjective and tenuous, and that different readers will have varied affinities to them. To me, frequent references to paintings by Caspar David Friedrich seemed slightly arbitrary – Bostridge does not clarify whether they have been an influence on Schubert himself, although the time of creation is roughly contemporary.

Some of the most compelling insights of this book are related to history and the historical context of Schubert's work. In relation to 'Rast' the hut of a charcoal burner is discussed in detail. It is deemed plausible that Müller intended the charcoal burner to allude to the *Carbonari*, a secret political group in Italy that opposed the Habsburg regime and advocated a constitutional government. Thus this song might comprise a reaction against the censorship and the stifling political climate in Vienna, and the new state laws after the Restoration settlement of 1815. The exploration of dance rhythms in 'Täuschung' swiftly leads to a discussion on waltzing in Schubert's Vienna, with a description of hazardous health effects ascribed to the waltz at that time: physical and mental exhaustion, damage to lungs due to swirling dust, provocation of syncopes and spasms in irritable women. Furthermore, dancing during Lent could lead to an encounter with authorities, in particular the police.

It is always a challenge for a writer to reveal something new about well-known compositions. The most famous song of the cycle, 'Der Lindenbaum', is analysed by exploring the rich symbolism of a linden tree (Romantic love, women, a point of communal gathering) and discussing the temptation of death encapsulated in this piece. In this context allusions to twentieth-century history and German identity are probably unavoidable, and many are mediated through references to Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, published in 1924. The protagonist of Mann's novel also undertakes a winter journey in the Alps with an obscure purpose of escape, and sings and listens to 'Der Lindenbaum' – these acts convey a horde of ambiguous meanings. However, the most surprising passage ties a linden tree with memory: Bostridge recalls the episode from Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* where eating madeleines evokes past experiences, and he reminds us that traditionally madeleines were dipped in an infusion of lime flowers.

Bostridge also mentions Schubert's renderings of physical phenomena in sound,

especially in the piano part (it seems that the voice in *Winterreise* tends to assume a more abstract role and that its primary task is to communicate alienation, irony and observations). It is not an unusual practice for a present-day composer to intertwine text and music in this way, and it is easy to forget that it was less common to work with poetry in such concrete detail in Schubert's time. So 'Die Wetterfahne' contains capricious piano lines, reminiscent of random moves of a weathervane amidst gusts of wind. In 'Die Post' calls of a post-horn are imitated in the piano and it seems that the wheels of a swiftly passing carriage can be heard (Bostridge explains that this song could be inspired by the recently introduced mail coach that was much faster and presumably also louder than its predecessors). A horn call, but this time at a distance, is also audible in 'Der Lindenbaum' (an association with memory and longing and even a suggestion of loss). There is an interesting parallel with Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, in which a natural horn is played from off-stage. And then there is 'Letzte Hoffnung', in which descending and fragmented series of piano chords, laid out in brief rhythmic patterns with misplaced accents on weak beats, represent falling leaves (a rather synaesthetic relationship as leaves fall without a sound; the author suggests a similar type of synaesthesia in the graphic poem of E.E. Cummings in which a cascade of 'falling' syllables, part-syllables and letters spell out '(a leaf falls) loneliness'). Of course, Schubert's sound effects are at their prime when the barking of dogs and rattling of chains is immediately audible in the piano introduction to 'Im Dorfe'.

The book dwells on several intriguing images within the cycle. The most prevalent image is of ice and then more generally of water in various forms. Thus frozenness and tears in 'Erstarrung' are elaborated in detail. These images are linked to manifestations of sexuality and the symbolism of repressed emotions. Bostridge draws parallels with an earlier Schubert song 'Der zürnenden Diana', which is a setting of a poem by Johann Mayrhofer and retells a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of a hunter Actaeon spying on Diana while she is bathing. Conveying of a sexual excitement and impatience demand similar intensity when performing both songs. This is contrasted by a discussion of ice and glaciers in the context of 'Auf dem Flusse'; in Schubert's time significant scientific advances in understanding of the age and movement of glaciers were made (this eventually led to a conclusion that the Earth is much older than previously thought), and contemporary writers were fascinated with glaciers (note the imagery and setting of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*). Ice is also present in 'Die Nebensonnen' – refraction of light through hexagonal ice crystals in the air create an illusion of three suns in the sky. The image of a will-o'-the-wisp is more episodic: in the ninth song of the cycle ('Irrlicht') flickering lights are luring the wanderer through woods and marshes. This natural phenomenon was scientifically explained by a contemporary of Schubert, Louis Blesson, and, of course, has attracted the attention of Milton and Goethe. Probably a crow is the most memorable image both in the cycle and in Bostridge's writing. This type of bird first emerges in 'Rückblick' where

crows seem to throw snowballs at the protagonist's hat (from every house!). A raven is unceremoniously waking up the wanderer from sleep in 'Frühlingstraum', to flowers of ice. But particularly captivating is the idea that in 'Die Krähe' high registers on the piano embody a bird circling up in the air, and that a listener can share the experience of floating in the sky. There is an interesting insight into a film on *Winterreise* by David Alden (1997), in which the director has chosen to look at the wanderer from above; the spread of his coat resembles black wings. The author advocates persuasively that this song crosses boundaries between the identities and viewpoints of a crow and a human – the crow is both faithful and signals death.

The scope and variety of themes in Bostridge's writing is both remarkable and invites responses, further research and criticism. It is easy to imagine that the book will generate a considerable quantity of more focused articles that attempt to clarify questions raised in this work. Some links between divergent facets seem relatively solid while others are more loose. There is much more emphasis on aspects that can be heard when either performing or listening to *Winterreise* than on the score itself – this approach works very well due to Bostridge's vast experience with this composition. The book's customised structure according to which material is grouped associatively and by individual songs, and a lack of references between chapters can present some difficulties. Nevertheless, Ian Bostridge's winter journey is engrossing, surprising, ironic, broad and reflective, and treads at least as many paths as are explored by the *Winterreise* wanderer.

Dace Ruklisa

Three Rites (in one month)

For the Chamber Music Club, recent seasons have produced several memorable concerts featuring music from the eve of the First World War. Included amongst these was a virtuoso presentation of the four-hand piano version of Igor Stravinsky's music for the ballet *The Rite of Spring*, played by Michael Round and Roger Beeson (8 February 2013). The first part of this piano arrangement was first heard in June 1912 at a private apartment play-through by Stravinsky and Claude Debussy and on completion this became the first published version of *The Rite*. After a further year of composition, orchestration and rehearsals, the complete ballet, now in its familiar full orchestral form, was premiered in Paris on 29 May 1913. However, with the onset of war and the departure of Vaclav Nijinsky from Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes Company, the original choreography was lost. This article is an account of some recent attempts to revive the ballet, both in its original form and as a newly choreographed work.

Although the season was quite wrong, one recent month (November 2015)

seems to have been filled for me with *Rites of Spring* – three to be exact. The first was a wonderfully illuminating account by Millicent Hodson of how she, together with her husband Kenneth Archer, had worked over several decades piecing together the original Nijinsky choreography of the first performance, which took place in Paris one year before the outbreak of the First World War and was the occasion of the celebrated riot. Millicent's talk was presented at a European Association of Dance Historians (EADH) conference in Belfast in November 2015 where she was the invited speaker. Her forensic reconstruction involved examination of an extraordinary range of materials, from costume designs to the personal accounts in letters and memoirs of the original members of the Ballets Russes, along with the few surviving annotated scores. One of these, of particular importance, was from Marie Rambert (founder of the well-known Ballet Rambert). This was thought to have been lost but was recently discovered amongst other abandoned possessions in the back of a closet. Marie Rambert had been instrumental in helping the Ballets Russes dancers to count! She was studying Dalcroze eurhythmics in Switzerland at the time and was brought to Paris by Diaghilev for the specific purpose, not to dance, but to help the dancers with the tricky rhythms of Stravinsky's music. The rediscovery of her notated score provided crucial evidence for reconstructing Nijinsky's choreography.

The first attempt to present the reconstructed ballet was by the Joffrey Ballet company in the 1980s (available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF1OQkHybEQ). The latest reincarnation of this work can be seen in a performance by the Ballet of the St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, now also available on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVPlkvHKRB8. It had always puzzled me why Stravinsky's music might have given rise to the famous near-riot on opening night, for it seems these days to be all rather innocuous, even if rhythmically adventurous, though in my view not all that far from Mahler or many other composers of the pre-war period. The answer, I realised, after watching a video of the Mariinsky Ballet performance, was not the music but the dancing: to an audience brought up on the aesthetic of nineteenth-century romantic ballet the choreography created by Nijinsky must have seemed revolutionary and outrageous.

Unfortunately, Nijinsky's choreography for this and other pieces was lost, partly through the disruption caused by First World War, but also through Nijinsky's replacement as lead male dancer in the Ballets Russes Company by Mikhail Fokine, who stipulated in his contract that he would not be required to dance any of Nijinsky's roles or choreographies. Thus the piece was lost, at least in its original form, though beginning with Léonide Massine in the 1920s numerous versions or reinterpretations have been produced. A totally fascinating story!

My second *Rite* followed just one week after returning from Belfast. Sasha Waltz (wonderful name for a dancer!) and her dance group from Berlin were staging a new choreography to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at Sadler's Wells. This had

been widely touted as a new and adventurous production – the most recent in a long line of choreographies to this iconic score. It did indeed live up to expectations as a bold and energetic reworking, with a suitably climactic ending as the sacrificial maiden was pierced by an ominous jagged icicle that slowly descended from above the stage, the solitary object in an otherwise bare set. A video of this version can also be seen on Youtube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9ERIwzSoP4>.

The dancing in this reworking was fine; it was very expressive and certainly captured some of the ‘tribal’ quality of the original. But it lacked the ‘primitivism’ of the Nijinsky version (as represented by the Mariinsky Theatre company) and the style was almost too familiar in its employment of the moves of ‘modern’ dance to have the impact of novelty that must have been present in the original.

What I was most aware of while watching this performance, however, was the extraordinary ‘narrowness’ of the vertical field of view. The performance space was wide, certainly, for the revamped Sadler’s Wells has a splendidly wide and deep stage. Yet this only makes one even more aware of the vertical limitations: even from the sixth row of the stalls the dancers occupy no more than five percent of the vertical space, the rest being filled either with a blank backdrop or, in this case, a looming icicle. Perhaps it is for this reason that dance can be so much more rewarding seen on the cinema screen (and most of my recent excursions to ballet have indeed been via the cinema). The raked stage of an eighteenth-century theatre may have gone some way to correct this problem, but this solution has largely been abandoned these days. What I long for is the reconstruction of a ‘vertical’ performance space as in the Dorset Garden theatre of Purcell’s day, with its ‘music from above’ and devils emerging from traps in the stage below!

A not altogether successful attempt to create such a ‘vertical performance space’ was experienced at the aforementioned EADH conference in Belfast, held in the Sonic Arts Research Centre of Queen’s University. This extraordinary space is essentially three cubes stacked one on top of each other with open grills separating the floor and ceiling of the middle cube from the spaces above and below. Opened in April 2004 by Karlheinz Stockhausen no less, it was designed to allow sound to come from both above and below, as well as from all four sides. An interesting concept and great, I am sure, for experimental theatre, or even for an imaginative reworking of the *Rite of Spring*. But the problem for conference participants was that not only was it rather scary sitting on open grill-work above a twenty-foot drop but there was no way of retrieving your pen if it should inadvertently fall through the ‘floor’! Still, it did serve to focus our minds on the problems of ‘performance space’ when considering the reconstruction of historical dance and the *Rite*, in particular.

My third *Rite* (one week later) was not a dance, as such, but a novel, which illustrates the extraordinary impact that this half-lost work has had on twentieth-century thought and serves as a useful coda to my review. For some time I have

been fascinated by the evolution of the quadrille from its familiar form associated with the English nineteenth-century ballroom to its more exotic cousins to be found in the Caribbean, and Cuba in particular. A book about the famous Cuban musicologist and novelist Alejo Carpentier was launched at a lecture at the Spanish Cervantes Institute. It was a study by the University of Manchester musicologist and political theorist Katia Chornik entitled *Politics, Music and Irony in Alejo Carpentier's Novel La consagración de la primavera* (The Rite of Spring) (1978). There is no room here to even try to outline the gist of her argument (you can read the full text of her talk on the website <www.academia.edu>). It is enough to say that, partly because of its cultural isolation over the past fifty or so years, Cuba serves as a fascinating laboratory in which to study the evolution of musical and dance forms – a sort of cultural ‘Galapagos’. Carpentier’s *Rite* (yet to be published in English) encapsulates the unique way in which a place such as Cuba responds to this seminal work and it is with great interest that I await the next reworking of *The Rite of Spring* – this time by Carlos Acosta, now that he has returned to his Cuban roots!

Bill Tuck, January 2016