

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY



Registered Charity no 1067071

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 37 SPRING 2017

Memorial Tribute

Family and friends of Dr Christopher Wynn Parry MBE were joined by members of the Piano Trio Society, the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine and members of the Dyers Company in a memorial concert celebrating his life on Saturday 11 February.



This was held in the beautiful setting of St Peter's Church, Notting Hill and took the form of a concert given by musicians who had been helped by Dr Wynn Parry to overcome their problems in order to carry on with their professional lives. Included was a performance of the new trio by Adrian Williams which was commissioned by the Piano Trio Society and dedicated to the memory of Dr Wynn Parry.

Performers were the Renaissance Singers, the Fidelio Trio, percussionist Snowboy, Andres Lafone (bass guitar), Neil Angilley (piano) and John Williams (guitar). There is a full report of the event on page 4.

Piano Trio Day

Our annual Piano Trio Day took place on Sunday 5 March at the Purcell School with tutors Susanne Stanzeleit, Pal Banda and Bobby Chen. Trios taking part came from RNCM, Birmingham Conservatoire, RWCMD and two from Trinity Laban. Repertoire included trios by Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. A full report on the day can be found on page 6.

Menuhin School Concert

The new piano trio by Christopher Brummeld, which had received its première by the Bedriska Trio on 26 November, was included in the programme by the trio at the Menuhin School on 15 December. The concert for the Overseas Masters Winter Piano Academy was arranged at the invitation of Bobby Chen and included trios by Howard Blake, one of our Vice Presidents, and Rimsky-Korsakov.



The Bedriska Trio with Christopher Brummeld

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Piano Trio Profile.....Gould Piano Trio

Lucy Gould - violin, Alice Neary - cello, Benjamin Frith - piano



The Gould Piano Trio, recently compared to the great Beaux Arts Trio for their “musical fire” and dedication to the genre in the Washington Post, have remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for well over twenty years. Having been launched by their First Prize at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and subsequently selected as YCAT artists, they made tours in Europe and the USA as “Rising Stars”,

making a highly successful debut at the Weill Recital Hall, described by Strad Magazine as “Pure Gould”. In recent years they have developed a close relationship with London’s Wigmore Hall, performing all the Dvorak Trios in a Czech Series, giving a recital in the BBC Radio 3 lunchtime series and now looking forward to their Beethoven Trios cycle in the 2017.2018 season

Their discography includes trio cycles by Beethoven (Somm), Brahms (quartz), Hummel (Naxos) and Dvorak (Champs Hill) and have been complemented by the late romantic works of Stanford, John Ireland, Robin Milford, Cyril Scott and Arnold Bax. A disc of contemporary works by Maxwell-Davies, Beamish and MacMillan was released last year, all helping to bring British music, and many world première recordings to an international public.

Through their annual festivals in Corbridge, Northumberland, now in its 18th year, and Cardiff at the RWCMD, where they are Artists in Residence and recently made Fellows, the trio take inspiration from playing a wide range of chamber music with colleagues and coaching aspiring young ensembles. Giving Masterclasses in Dartington Hall and Aldeburgh have been rewarding ways of passing on their years of experience. The Trio has been given the opportunity, as Artistic Directors of the 2017/2018 Leeds International Chamber Season, to curate a series of 6 concerts throughout the season. Invited artists as well as themselves will be performing works from pre-revolution Russia marking the 100th anniversary of the historic revolutions of that year.

The trio has been keen to commission new works, recently Sir James MacMillan’s Second Piano Trio, premièred to much acclaim at the Bath International Festival in 2014, with other recent commissions from Simon Rowland-Jones, Huw Watkins and Mark Simpson, whose trio has been chosen for the New Music Biennial in Hull and at the South Bank, London as part of the City of Culture Celebrations in 2017. A fitting way to mark the 25th anniversary of this celebrated ensemble!

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Piano Trio People.....

Congratulations to composer member **Ian Wilson** who has been presented with a Major Individual Award from the Arts Council Northern Ireland, the highest honour given by the arts development and funding agency. The awards are given in recognition of the contribution an artist has made to creative life in Ireland.

Two festivals at which our members are featuring will be held during the last weekend in May. Many of the concerts at the Frinton Festival, Friday 26th to Monday 29th May, organised by the **Barbican Trio** are already sold out. Further details at www.frintonfestival.com **Fidelio Trio** will be performing at the English Music Festival on Saturday 27th May, when their programme includes trios by Moeran, Harty and Stanford plus the new trio by Adrian Williams. The concert is in the Silk Hall at Radley College at 2.15pm. www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Fidelio Trio recently toured USA with visits to New York, Florida International University, Youngstown Ohio, and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. A busy summer includes performances at Swaledale and Kilkenny Festivals and a visit to Cape Town in August.

The **English Piano Trio** celebrates its 27th season with concerts in London, Bristol, Chichester, Norwich and Brighton. Our founder and violinist with the trio, **Jane Faulkner**, has also been appointed Artistic Director for a new series of concerts at The Orangery at Great Saling. In addition to a performance by the English Piano Trio on Friday 23 June, these include a recital by one of our members, the distinguished pianist **Angela Brownridge**, on Friday 12 May. Further details: <http://galleryinthegarden.co.uk/index.php/friday-concerts>

The **Gould Piano Trio** will be performing works by Mark Simpson, Beethoven and Rachmaninov in Cheltenham's Pittville Pump Room on Thursday 6 July at 11 am as part of the Cheltenham Music Festival. www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/music

Clare Hall at the University of Cambridge was the venue for the world première on 18th February of "That when I waked" by **Chris Brammell**. Performers were Donna Lennard (soprano) and Benjamin Graves (clarinet).



It is many years since composer **David Matthews** came to talk to us about his piano trios, so we were interested to learn that a new CD by the **Leonore Piano Trio** of his *Complete Piano Trios* was the Gramophone Editor's Choice in the April 2017 edition. **Toccata TOCC0369 @ £14.25**

Heleen Verleur was in UK for a Suzuki Course from 2 to 6 April. Heleen has written more Piano Trios for Young Players and we hope to publish further details shortly.

We were interested to learn that Manchester based composer **David Dubery** is in the process of writing a three movement piano trio drawing inspiration from his many visits to the Lake Como region of northern Italy. We await further news on this.

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Memorial Concert for Dr Christopher Wynn Parry MBE

Saturday 11 February, St Peter's Church, Notting Hill, 3.00pm

Review by Chris Brammell

St Peter's Church in Notting Hill was the venue for a heart-warming concert on a bitterly cold day in February. Hosted by the Piano Trio Society, this was a memorial concert for the late Dr Christopher Wynn Parry, who, in addition to his outstanding achievements during a medical career spanning over 60 years, was a founder-member of this society and its first Vice President. Members of Kit's family were joined by invited guests and members of the society, as well as a host of fabulously talented musicians, all of whom were touched by Kit's work in some way during their professional lives as performing musicians.



After a welcome by our Vice President, Christine Talbot-Cooper, pictured left, Ian Winspur spoke about Kit's life and achievements, leaving no one in doubt that we were here celebrating the life of a truly inspirational person. He spoke with great respect and knowledge, to warm applause.

The wonderful Renaissance singers were first to take the stage, and we were first treated to the *Agnus Dei* from William Byrd's Mass for Five Voices. There can be few musical experiences more satisfying than hearing choral music like this sung in a church or cathedral, particularly when it is executed with such precision and commitment. The singers' voices blended perfectly, and lines mellifluously wove around the space. Next was Orlando Lassus's *Iustorum animae*, before the ensemble concluded with a fine rendition of Thomas Weelkes's lively *All people, clap your hands*.



The Renaissance Singers in rehearsal



Fidelio Trio applaud Adrian Williams after their performance

Performer-members of the Piano Trio Society, the renowned Fidelio Trio, are regular performers at our events. In November 2016 they gave the premiere of a newly commissioned Piano Trio by Adrian Williams. The piece was commissioned by the society in memory of Kit, and to mark the 21st anniversary of the society. A dramatic and atmospheric piece, the music at times seems to evoke images of darkened landscapes (Williams lives in the Welsh marches). Fragmentary material wisps around us, and surging piano arpeggios are sometimes punctuated by heavy, dissonant chords. The piece begins quietly however, with deep and mysterious A major arpeggios, above which the violin and cello introduce thematic material which will be returned to later on. The players of the Fidelio

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Trio play this music with the same commitment and knowledge as you would expect from a Trio playing the favourite Beethoven Trio – but then again these are musicians with a formidable reputation for playing and interpreting contemporary music. The medium of the piano trio is a hugely difficult one to write for, and to perform. String instruments are ostensibly ill-equipped to compete with the sound of a modern piano, but this combination of composer and performers made any such concerns irrelevant. Adrian was at the concert to witness the second performance of his piece, and received a warm welcome from the audience.



The jazz trio who performed next could not have taken us into a more different soundworld. Percussionist Snowboy was joined by bass guitarist Andres Lafone and pianist Neil Angilley. Snowboy prefaced their set with a heartfelt tribute to Dr Wynn Parry, describing the treatment he had undergone under his guidance. Their first piece was a composition by Angilley himself, *"Pequeñita"*. Opening with an expansive rhapsodic piano improvisation, the piece soon settled into its gently grooving head, accompanied by congas and jovial bass line. The trio concluded with Abdullah Ibrahim's famous *"Chisa"*. This deceptively simple and uplifting piece was expertly performed, and all three musicians took solos.



I'm sure it is understating things to say that hearing John Williams play was something of a treat for everyone in the room. He too spoke about his experience of Kit's treatment, before playing a selection of three pieces, the first of which was an original composition by himself. Entitled *"Madrugada"* ("Early Morning"), the piece was a serene and gentle depiction of that time of day, tinged with nostalgia and fading imagery. After a beautiful *Andante* by J.S. Bach, Williams ended with the famous and beguiling *"La Ultima Canción"* by Paraguayan composer and guitarist Agustin Barrios Mangoré.

Following the concert, which was received with great pleasure by all gathered, there was a reception with champagne and sandwiches. The champagne was kindly provided by The Worshipful Company of Dyers, of which organisation Kit was Prime Warden from 1981-82.

Everyone raised their glasses in a toast to Kit. This was a wonderful occasion – thoroughly enjoyed by all – and surely a most fitting tribute to a truly remarkable man, and anyone who came into contact with Kit was surely privileged indeed.

Well done, as always, to Christine Talbot-Cooper for organising the concert.

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Piano Trio Day - Sunday 5 March - Purcell School

A review of a successful day by Chris Brammell

The annual Piano Trio Day is an important event in the Piano Trio Society's calendar, and always one to look forward to. We welcome young aspiring Trios from across the country to a day of public and private masterclasses with leading and renowned musicians. This year's tutors were violinist **Susanne Stanzeleit**, cellist **Pal Banda** and pianist (and Trustee of the Society) **Bobby Chen**.



First into the spotlight of the public masterclass was the **Nemesis Trio** from Trinity Laban Conservatoire, who were playing the first movement of Beethoven's Trio Op 1 No 3 in C minor. This ensemble played with a great deal of confidence and conviction, showing excellent communication skills and musical sensitivity. Pal Banda began by talking with the players about the development of the genre from Haydn's earliest examples – essentially piano sonatas with melodic contributions from violin and bass line from cello – through to

the later work of Beethoven and Brahms, as well as the general issue of balance between piano and strings. He encouraged the group to instil the opening of the piece with a sense of mystery and expectation, getting them to be freer in their approach to counting rests in between the short phrases. They also put this into practice at the start of the development, where Pal discussed the idea that Beethoven is asking questions of his own material. The players were receptive to suggestions and were capable of changing the way they played with apparent ease. Some work was done on dynamics, Pal encouraging less use of vibrato in *piano* sections before a sudden *forte* section, to emphasise the extremes in the dynamics. He also asked the string players to think more of a change of colour in *piano* sections, rather than allowing the physical sound to disappear too much.

The **Iris Piano Trio** (Royal Welsh College) were participants in last year's Piano Trio Day, and are clearly an advertisement for the benefits of this sort of coaching, for they played with more maturity and sense of ensemble. They were performing the stormy first movement from Rimsky-Korsakov's momentous Piano Trio in C minor – not a million miles away from the predominant mood in the previous Beethoven – but seen through an unmistakably Russian lens. The Trio played this music with great conviction, and Bobby Chen first spent some time addressing the balance between the piano and strings, encouraging pianist Melanie Wong to play much more quietly to heighten the sense of drama. He asked the ensemble to think much more imaginatively about the mood and character of the opening of the piece, which made a great deal of difference to the ensemble's sound and resulting sense of scale at the start of this huge musical journey. In the second subject, Bobby got Melanie to omit the left hand accompaniment of the piano part, so that the players could better understand the sense of dialogue required in this section. He also challenged the group to instil a change of character into the music along with changes in tempo, to which they responded positively.



Next to take the stage, also under the guidance of Bobby, was the **Wyss Piano Trio** from Birmingham Conservatoire. This ensemble performed the first movement of Tchaikovsky's immensely powerful Piano Trio in A minor with a great sense of purpose and poise, if not with a little too much volume at times. Bobby asked the players to think about the core of the piece, and about how the main theme should sound and feel

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

different each time it is heard. The Trio were incredibly receptive to his suggestions, and their high level of musicianship and sense of ensemble enabled them to put his suggestions into practice. Bobby encouraged pianist Joe Ordish to play with rubato and a greater sense of rise and fall within phrases, against the accompaniment of the strings. But before that, the opening was scrutinised, and cellist Jonathan Madden was challenged to find and exploit the personality of the cello's initial statement of the theme.



Some work was then done on the dialogue between the string instruments, as the violin takes over the cello's melody before both instruments play together. Bobby encouraged violinist Sebastian Wyss to think of the shape and line of phrases, rather than counting too literally. Finally, the whole ensemble was asked to think about the bleak emotion conveyed in the movement's coda.

Susanne Stanzeleit worked with Trinity Laban's **Adelia Trio** on the third movement of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor Op 49. This ensemble played with a great deal of character and clearly understood the music. However, Susanne first addressed the issue of tempo. The music can still feel fast, she said, without playing at break-neck speed. Pianist Paola Cammarota was asked to think of the inner pulse of the music at the opening, trying to achieve a sound that is lively but not rushed. Susanne encouraged the players to find other ways of bringing out the spritely character of this piece. Issues of balance within the ensemble were addressed again, and Paola was encouraged to think of matching the legato sound of the strings. Susanne spoke about the horizontal nature of the way the string instruments produce their sound, and the vertical action required by the piano, and asked the players to consider the technique of the other members to produce a more blended and finely balanced sound and sense of ensemble. Working with the group on dynamics (thinking of shouting for fortissimo and whispering for piano), Susanne asked all three players to think about the body language, and how we convey changes of dynamic and mood by adopting a different stance. She compared the mischievous character of this piece to the same composer's Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream, and challenged the string players to be responsible for the visual theatricality of the music.



The coaching sessions ended with a lively performance of the third movement of Haydn's "Gipsy Rondo", Hob XV:25, by the **Valette Piano Trio** from RNCM. Here Susanne talked to the trio about the importance of knowing the historical background of a work as well as studying other works by the composer and spent some time familiarising the players with this aspect of the work. She suggested that the players needed to be more aware of each other and that although technically competent, greater thought was needed on interpretive elements.



The day concluded with a stirring concert by all the participants after which the tutors were thanked for their work and were presented with bottles of wine. Jane Faulkner was thanked for dealing with the refreshments and also being on hand as page turner and Christine Talbot-Cooper for her organisation of the day. We were pleased to be joined by Melvyn Cooper and by Chris Brammeld whose help was much appreciated and who has kindly written this appreciation of the day.

PIANO TRIO SOCIETY

Welcome to new members

We offer a very warm welcome to the following new or returning members:

BAPAM - The British Association for Performing Arts Medicine - has joined as a Corporate Member. BAPAM is a healthcare charity giving medical advice to people working and studying in the performing arts. BAPAM help people overcome (and preferably avoid) work-related health problems, and are dedicated to sharing knowledge about healthy practice. The Piano Trio Society has worked with BAPAM on numerous occasions and will be including a feature in a future Newsletter.

We are also delighted to welcome as a Corporate Member the **Beethoven Piano Society of Europe**. Our two societies have worked together on many joint events and look forward to further co-operation.

We are delighted to welcome back the **Gould Piano Trio** which has joined our roster of professional piano trios and is our featured trio on page 2.



Gould Piano Trio



Nick Roberts

Cellist **Nick Roberts** has been a tutor at several of our Piano Trio Days and was formerly in the Bernard Roberts Piano Trio, so we are glad to welcome him as a member of our Society.

Our composer membership continues to grow and we are pleased to welcome **Adrian Williams**, the composer of our recently commissioned Piano Trio, and Scottish composer **Edward McGuire**. We hope to include details of their work in future issues.

John Ireland and his wife **Shahla** both enjoy attending chamber music concerts and have become joint members of the Society after our introduction at the Memorial Concert for Dr Wynn Parry. Mr Ireland is a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon.

News and articles of interest for our Newsletter are always very welcome. Please contact the Editor, Christine Talbot-Cooper via our website or email info@pianotriosociety.org.uk