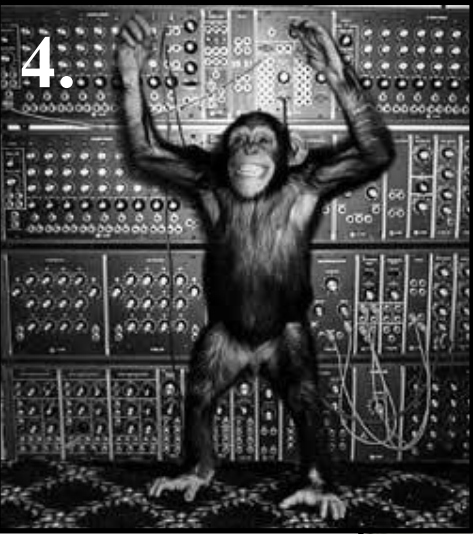




Submit responses to [ak6750@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ak6750@bristol.ac.uk). Submit as many or as few responses as you wish - the funniest individual caption will win both a tube of Smarties & a dark chocolate Kit-Kat!



We welcome submissions of reviews from all; to submit a review, to write regularly, to receive this publication by e-mail or for any other query please contact: [ak6750@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ak6750@bristol.ac.uk)



# Octogenarian

Vitajte! Vitajte! Vitajte!

Vitajte to the fifteenth issue of Octogenarian, your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol’s music scene. The end is drawing nigh on this term’s antics and I hope we’ve all learned a thing or two. We here at the Octo have learned that roving reporter Jolyn Gebbolia never wastes her time on rubbish concerts as her reports invariably come back with the full five-star compliments – this fortnight she has been drooling over exuberant percussioning in Birmingham of all places. We also have a review of Freddy Kempf’s strict hair from his concert with the Bristol Ensemble (who really are becoming a tasty orchestra) last week at Colston Hall. Obscure(ish) composer of the fortnight makes a return now that Mary J. Blige is back on our payroll following a rather sticky expenses scandal and back she is in fine form, giving a personal perspective on Alexander Knaifel’s music.

The prize competition this week is particularly special... as there were no responses for our fiendish little crossword last time the prize is a rollover... Winners this time can expect both a tube of Smarties AND a dark chocolate Kit-Kat - a prize to be reckoned with, I should suggest. HOWEVER we must make you work a little more for it and so have replaced the usual crossword with a caption competition – on the back page is a picture, the funniest caption submitted to [ak6750@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ak6750@bristol.ac.uk) will win the winnings and be the winning Michael winner. You have all of the holidays to come up with the best response you can, the winning caption will be published in the first edition of the summer term.

Happy Easter & thank you.

## Upcoming Concerts:

When?	Where?	Who?	What?	How much?
7.15pm Wednesday 30 March and Friday 1 April	The Bristol Hippodrome	Welsh National Opera	Johann Strauss II <i>Die Fledermaus</i>	£3.75 cheapest student
1pm Thursday 31 March	St. George’s	String Soloists of the OAE	Ucellini/Castello/ Gabrieli/Merula/ Corelli/Geminiani/ Locatelli/ Vivaldi	£5 student
7.15pm Thursday 31 March and Saturday 2 April	The Bristol Hippodrome	Welsh National Opera	Verdi <i>Il Trovatore</i>	£3.75 cheapest student
7.30pm Friday 1 April	St. George’s	I Fagiolini	<i>25th Birthday Cocktail ‘It don’t mean a thing’</i>	£11 student or £5 BUMS
7.30pm Sunday 3 April	St. George’s	International Baroque Players	<i>Journey of Discovery ‘Limitless Exuberance’</i>	£7 student
1pm Thursday 7 April	St. George’s	Elizabeth Kenny (lute)	Dowland/Holborne/ Johnson/Perrichon	£4 student
7pm Saturday 9 April	St. George’s	Exultate Singers/ Chamber Ensemble	Bach <i>St Matthew Passion</i>	£9 student
8pm Wednesday 13 April	Colston Hall 2	Elektrostatic	<i>Dreams from the East</i> Works influenced by Eastern music (featuring a premiere of Michael Ellisson’s <i>Kubla Khan</i> )	£7 student
1pm Thursday 14 April	St. George’s	Soloists of the OAE	Pallavicino/Corelli/ Handel/Finger/Vivaldi/ Stradella/Torelli	£5 student
7.30pm Thursday 14 April	Colston Hall	Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	Karl Jenkins <i>Palladio</i> and <i>Stabat Mater</i>	£8 under-26
7.30pm Friday 15 April	St. George’s	Madras String Quartet	<i>Raga Saga</i>	£13 student
7pm Monday 18 April	St. George’s	Margaret Leng Tan	Cage	£15 or £5 BUMS
8pm Tuesday 19 April	St. George’s	Tania Chen/Steve Beresford/Stewart Lee	Cage <i>Indeterminacy</i>	£13 or £5 BUMS
7.30pm Wednesday 27 April	Colston Hall	Philharmonia Orchestra	Mozart/Mahler	£8 under-26
7.45pm Wednesday 27 April	St. George’s	Bristol Ensemble	<i>Beethoven by Candlelight II</i>	£7 student
7.30pm Thursday 28 April	St. George’s	Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment	Mozart/Beethoven/ Schubert	£11 student or £5 BUMS

## Pick of the Nose:

11am Sunday 17 April	St. George’s	Charles Hazelwood et al.	Satie <i>Vexations</i> (420 repeats)	£10 day ticket
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------

London Sinfonietta Thomas Adès (cond.)  
Symphony Hall, Birmingham  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011 7:30pm

Adès: *In Seven Days*  
Reich: *Music for 18 Musicians*

Before getting on with the review proper, I must first present to you a contender for the award of 'most nauseating concert-goer smart-arsery'. The relatively young audience at Symphony Hall made for a nice change (though as only the bottom two levels were open, I did wonder if it was essentially just the regular concert-going audience with all the 'eugh! I can't stand that modern racket!' oldies filtered out), and a bit of enthusiasm is always welcome. A pre-concert (poorly-executed) rendition of Reich's *Clapping Music* (followed by that jovial 'oh look at us aren't we clever' laughter) isn't.

I wasn't sure what I would make of Adès's *In Seven Days*, a 'Piano Concerto with Moving Image' (with video art by Tal Rosner, Adès's partner). In the interval I overheard a gentleman loudly proclaiming the video element to be 'crap' and 'distracting', while the lady sat next to me told me she'd had to close her eyes as 'it was all too much to take in'. Surely, though, the two elements are to be taken as an inseparable whole, which raises an interesting question: can an artwork distract from itself? Maybe this one did, as now I can't recall much about the piece at all. I must say, however, that at the time I found the whole experience completely spectacular, and I'm desperate to see/hear/sear it again. Overwhelming, yes, but in a good way.

That pleasant surprise out of the way, the real reason I'd travelled to Birmingham (which, I'll have you know, is

\*\*\*\*\*

not 'up North' as many of you disturbingly claim) was *Music for 18 Musicians*. (I wasn't deterred by notices on the website, over the phone, and on the tickets that STEVE REICH WILL NOT APPEAR IN PERSON AT THIS EVENT. Still, Adès 1 – 0 Reich.) I've heard the piece many times on CD, but attending a live performance struck me as an entirely different proposition. Now, I'll admit that I find Reich's music fascinating, even *exciting* to listen to (even for going on an hour), and accept that I may well be in the minority there. But I defy even the most ardent opponent of the music to not appreciate the performance that allows it to be heard. I can barely imagine the levels of stamina and concentration required to play such a piece, with the direction (as there is no conductor as such) coming through a series of clandestine nods and gestures, seemingly always emanating from a different member of the ensemble. And within that whole, it is perhaps in hearing phrases, parts so apparently simple performed so outrageously perfectly that one can truly appreciate great performers (which the members of the London Sinfonietta are; they probably played the Adès well too). Wow.

What to do when it was all over, though? The standing ovation the performers got was fully deserved, but really I just wanted to sit there in contemplative silence for 20 minutes. At least nobody shouted 'bravo!' immediately after the final note. To bring my review back to Bristol, the conclusion is this: anyone who chooses not to go and see *Drumming* at Colston Hall in May is a fool; anyone who simply can't go should start feeling sorry for themselves.

Jolyn Gebbolia

## 8 Questions innate seconds:

We asked University Radio’s answer to Rik Waller – ‘David Fay’ eight questions, here are his eight answers...

1. Very contented bordering on smug, thank you
2. I have a huge old-school-3-cd-player: Disc 1 is Herbie Hancock’s “River: The Joni Letters”, Disc 2 is Herbert von Karajan conducting Tchaikovsky Symphonies 1 - 3, and Disc 3 is Third Eye Blind's ground-breaking album "Blue" (the lead singer is not called Herbert, unfortunately).
3. Salt and Vinegar, please.
4. Gloucester Road because I think I'm cool enough.
5. Blink-182 "Enema of the State". Alas I was too young to appreciate/understand the pun
6. Tea, wee bit of milk, no sugar, with an Ainsley Harriott Chocolate Heaven Bar please
7. I would stain the pages of the Hardy with wine and tears, to be democratic.
8. None of the above. I would try and sneak past unnoticed because I'd be scared he would use his Anchor-tattooed forearms to smash my puny face in. But if hard pushed it would be *A*.

**Questions:** 1. How are you? 2. What’s the C.D./tape/record in your CD/tape/record/mp3 music playing device ght now? 3. What is your favourite flavour of crisps? 4. Which is your favourite street in Bristol? 5. What was the first C.D./tape/record you ever bought? 6. Tea or coffee? 7. Leather-bound copy of Thomas Hardy, a wine-stained A4 print out of Phillip Larkin or tear-stained tab book of 'Scouting for Girls' songs? 8. hat would you do with a drunken sailor? A) Write him a stiff letter explaining his inappropriate conduct and demanding an apology, B) take him to the nearest St. John Ambulance, C) buy him some grog and take him home to meet the parents?

Bristol Ensemble (cond. Jonathan James) with  
Freddy Kempf (Piano)  
Colston Hall 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 **£1**

What a shame that pianists aren’t as famous as footballers, if they were Freddy Kempf could have a successful 90’s advertising campaign for L’oréal behind him – his bouncing centre-parting is definitely worth it at £1 a ticket!

Pleasingly, there were many more things than follicles to admire at Bristol Ensemble’s first concert in the complete cycle of Beethoven’s piano concertos. Bristol Ensemble played brilliantly – crisp, understated and assured the only distraction being the number of lookey-likeys – William Hague played flute, Bassoons were manned by Katie Derham and Mr. Proctor (my old maths teacher), Molly Ringwold played second violin and Gordon Jackson made a high-spirited standing up cameo on the double-bass.

Held to ransom by the £3 price tag for a programme, (three times the price of my ticket? – I’d have been a mug to get one) I have absolutely no idea what the first piece played was – suffice to say that it was nice... a trifle saccharine for the taste of this old curmudgeon but a good way to prepare for the Beethoven.

There is a danger when reviewing works by the great canonical composers that one avoids the music – we know already it’s ‘good’ – and we focus on fashion or other unimportant things like the ice-cream salesman, the temperature or the lighting. We should in fact be lauding Kempf’s exquisite touch or the perfectly judged balance between orchestra and soloist that was carefully managed with a light touch by Jonathan James... And most importantly that this music

oozes quality, every climax feels perfectly judged, throughout there is the right level of tension, release, tension, release and it never ends up sounding over done, too long or boring.

Returning after the break the ensemble indulged us with a delicate rendition of Fauré’s Pavane – this was a delightful sorbet (not meant as a pejorative) played with a truly delicate touch. The third concerto felt a little more unwieldy than the first, and the crisp, together playing that I hadn’t expected did rather slacken – though perhaps this shows my ears to have become de-sensitised to the beauty.

The main feeling on leaving the concert hall was that the Ensemble and Kempf had provided a beautiful evening’s music, so assured and considered. A large part of the success came from the appropriately small forces not straining to make more of the music than necessary. This concert proves that Beethoven does not have to be played loud and slow to produce magical results from the score – really terrific to hear.

Susie Karavanovic

## Obscure(ish) Composer of the Fortnight:

*Enjoying an Eye-full, by Mary J. Blige:*  
AlexanderKnaifel (b. 1943)

Leaving Moscow Conservatoire as Khrushchev was replaced by the more hard-line Brezhnev, Knaifel had studied his trade during the thaw. He belongs to a core of modernist post-Stalinist Soviet composers that embraced the western post-war musical developments revealed to them as censorship slackened with so much relish as to give everyone heartburn. Regardless/because of this modernist stance Knaifel has some highly acclaimed and wonderfully expressive music in his brief list of works. My favourite? Monodia for solo Soprano, this 10 minute singathon is a piece of high virtuosity, expressing religion (as was the newly brazen/liberated artists of the 70s wont) with a dramatic, personal touch – a delight to behold. To listen to this piece is an intense experience (more tense than a camp-site) and to sing... well, it’s not for the faint of heart. How dearly I would love to hear it live... alas getting hold of a score is even more difficult than completing an Octogenarian crossword and I doubt if I’ll ever enjoy such an experience. Still active today Knaifel enjoys most of his success in Eastern Europe and Ireland (!).

Thank you for those inaccurate, irrelevant and inappropriate revelations about Soviet musical life