

# Eight Questions, Innate Seconds

We asked newly appointed Dr. Pauline Fairclough eight rather personal questions, each of which she had to answer within eight seconds. Here are his answers:

- 1) Very well thank you... It's a lovely day.
- 2) Way too much pressure!
- 3a) Beethoven *Pastoral Symphony*
  - b) Oh no, the Muppets, I've still got it.
- 4) Tahiti Trot
- 5) [long pause]... I'm really struggling... I had a ball gown in my first year at Huddersfield that was quite fancy.
- 6) It's empty... Not even turned on.
- 7) World's End Lane in Clifton.
- 8) Five

**Questions:** 1) How are you? 2) If a sandwich shop was doing a 'baguette of the day' what flavour would you hope it would be? 3a) What was the first recorded music you bought? 3b) Really? That's well sophisticated innit... It can include non-classical music 4) Shostakovich's *Tahiti Trot* or *Piano Sonata No. 2*? 5) What's the fanciest piece of clothing you've ever owned? 6) What is in/on your music playing device right now? 7) Which is your favourite street in Bristol? 8) what is your shoe size?

### Down

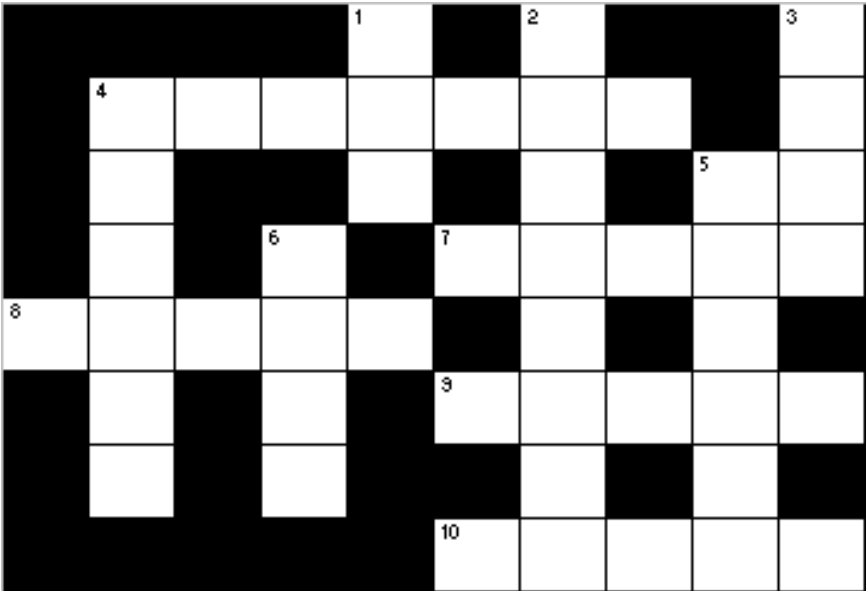
- 1) Probably the most divine muse in the history of music. (3)
- 2) Finnished composing on that popular computer program yet, Jean? (8)
- 3) Repeating section of tape; adds to the jumbled pool of tools available to a composer. (4)
- 4) This took Medgar Evers' blood according to Bob Dylan's (apparently chess-themed) protest song. (6)
- 5) Type of early film that marks a great technological leap forward (which also proves that Americans shouldn't be allowed to name anything). (6)
- 6) The ONLY music to listen to when you're driving your mother's Honda. (4)

### Across

- 4) This Russian chemist-composer was leant a very raucous sound. (7)
- 5) The first syllable of Hamlet's favourite pencil density. (2)
- 7) "Second verse, same as the first" or a response to an e-mail with a title describing a type of headgear. (5)
- 8) Ed Reardon's cat is named after this moustachioed British or rather English bassoonist composer. (5)
- 9) Men wear it in orchestras, some women wear it as fashion (particularly in the twenties) but men also have them attached to their bodies. (5)
- 10) The pictured singer would easily have a role in Figaro's celebration; not the best man but... (5)



Last Weeks Winner:  
**LIAM TAYLOR-WEST**  
Congratulations!  
Your mother must be so proud –  
and rightly so.  
We hope you enjoyed your Skittles.



# ctogenarian

Willkommen, willkommen, willkommen!

Willkommen Bach to the 21st issue of Octogenarian, your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol's music scene! Why mention Bach you wonder? Well, apart from 'why not', it's because Bristol is teeming with performances of the grand master over the next two weeks and you can choose where and how to get your fix of music's embodiment of 'vorsprung durch technik' from our table below outlining almost all of what's on in Bristol over the coming fortnight. We have for you in this issue Jibretta Golding's account of an afternoon concert given by the London Phil (no less!) with all the frustrated agenda thumping you'd expect of such a rabble-rouser. We also present reports on the goings on at St. George's with rumination on the FREE series of Thursday lunchtime concerts attended and written about generously by Stefan De Jackson.

Now then, big news, big news! We have our first prize winner of the year: taking home a full(ish) packet of Skittles was ~~Liam Taylor-West~~ who completed last issue's crossword quicker than anyone else in the whole wide world and has his name emblazoned here in Curlz MT, the font that separates the men from the boys. This week's prize is a KitKat chunky – if you're lucky the peanut butter variety (those with peanut allergies will be given a can of 'man-up' instead). So get your answers in at [www.octogenarian.co.uk](http://www.octogenarian.co.uk) for your confectionary pick-me-up.

Please take head of this notice, it is a grave matter. Following a crackdown by the fashion police **Octogenarian is in need of new contributors.** Please do get in touch to contribute with, for example, one short review every now and again – not too much of a commitment but one that may mean this measly, foul-mouthed, vagabond of a pamphlet can continue to spread its malcontent. Cheers. Now, all that is left to say is: enjoy the next fortnight's music and, to get in touch with your letters of complaint, visit our freshly updated website.

Thank you.

### Upcoming Concerts:

When?	Where?	Who?	What?	How Much?
7.30pm Friday 19th October	St. George's	Angela Hewitt (piano)	Bach/Beethoven	£11 cheapest student
7.30pm Monday 22nd October	St. George's	Viktoria Mullova (violin)	Bach	£13
1.05pm Tuesday 23rd October	Colston Hall 2	Evelyne Berezovsky	It's a surprise!	£5
6.30pm Tuesday 23rd October	St George's	Matthew Barley (cello)/Reinis Zarins (piano)	Beethoven	<b>FREE</b> for students
1.00pm Thursday 25th October	St George's	Harriet Mackenzie/Philippa Mo (violins)/ Sarah- Jane Bradley (viola)	McDowell/Moeran/ Patterson/Matthews/ Bridge	<b>FREE</b> for students
3.00pm Sunday 28th October	Colston Hall	Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra	Prokofiev/ Khachaturian/ Dvořák	£8 student concession
6.00pm Sunday 28th October	St. George's	Kate Gannon (soprano)/The Katona Twins (Guitar)	De Falla/Chapi/ Tosti/Gluck	£10 cheapest student

### Pick of Your Nose:

7.30pm Saturday 27th October	St. George's	English National Baroque Ensemble	Stanley/Vanhal <i>Bassoon Concerto/ Bach Brandenburg no.4</i>	£12
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Mandhira de Saram (violin)/Nathan Williamson (piano) St George’s – 11.10.2012, 1.00pm FREE	***	London Philharmonic Orchestra, Vassily Sinaisky (cond.), Sol Gabetta (cello) Prokofiev Symphony No. 1, Elgar Cello Concerto, Sibelius Symphony No. 2 Colston Hall, Sunday 14 October 2012, 3pm £8	*****
It’s funny the musical things you can surmise about a musician from the way she/he does things that aren’t musical. For example, when Nathan Williamson took a bow alongside Mandhira de Saram before their lunchtime recital, I had a sneaky suspicion that he mightn’t be the most sympathetic of accompanists. I don’t know whether it was the air of smugness or the slow motion with which he lowered then raised his torso before a St. George’s lunchtime crowd that perhaps he thought he was too good for, but something didn’t quite add up. My hunch was proved right immediately, when he began Bartók’s <i>Six Romanian Folk Dances</i> (arranged by Zoltan Szekely) so heavy-handedly that de Saram, playing low in the violin’s register, was almost entirely drowned out. A more experienced recitalist would’ve hit back with some mean glaring, but the young violinist’s confidence seemed to have taken a bash early on from which it would never recover. It was a poor piece of musicianship to start what was to be a very sub-standard concert, and not what we have come to expect from Thursday lunchtimes at St G’s. However, it would be cruel for me to pin all my disappointment on the pianist’s bow and dynamic insensitivity, for de Saram was insecure throughout the dances, with the exception of the crystalline, haunting slow dance, in which the violinist plays nothing but harmonics (and moreover, in which Williamson showed he can accompany both subtly and beautifully when he wants). This smacked of under-preparedness, as did a last minute programme change that meant we didn’t hear Vaughan Williams’s <i>Violin Sonata</i> but Edvard Grieg’s <i>Sonata no.1 in F Op.8</i> . Before this more extended work, however, de Saram showed off Tchaikovsky’s wonderfully rich violin writing in <i>Meditation Op.42</i> , a piece that	resonates with many references to the composer’s magnificent <i>Violin Concerto</i> . The pair was most at ease with this ultra-Romantic work, but de Saram, whose stratospheric playing was strong and well intoned, showed a weakness in the mid-high register, both in terms of tone and intonation, as she had in the Bartók. None of it sang as it should have. Before the Grieg, de Saram addressed the audience, and described the piece accidentally well when she said something like ‘It’s a very youthful piece, very excitable. That’s about it, really...’ The piece, and I’m afraid, the performance, too. There were moments of very convincing playing, but then there would be a half-embarrassed, half-insolent shrug of the shoulders as she missed the final, top note of a passage. I’m sure there were no defeatist gestures, or indeed any cause for them, in front of the Oxford Professors at her prize-winning final recital, which just makes their presence here all the worse. But the audience must have been less precious than me about all this, because after three bows at the end of this wholly unconvincing recital, there was enough applause to gain an encore from the pair, and my ears and heart fell at the first strains of what was to be a very slapdash <i>Salut d’Amour</i> .	3pm on a Sunday afternoon is a strange time for a full-blown orchestral concert. No doubt this is the reason Colston Hall was only half full (I'd like to think I'm a concert-hall-half-full kind of guy), even despite what must surely be a relatively popular set of works, and the first visit of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in over a decade. But this seems to now be a regular thing – this term, the Dresden Philharmonic play on Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> October; the Philharmonia on Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> December – so we may as well get used to it. A reminder: students and those under 26 years of age can get the best available seat for a measly £8 (my particular ticket this time thus costing me £23 less than it would have done had I been older and doing something worthwhile with my life); those eligible should really take advantage of such generosity while they can.  Bread-less cook Vassily Sinaisky (sadly not French but Russian, hence why this was rejected as a clue for the crossword) got the concert underway with Prokofiev's First Symphony, a neoclassical work perhaps best described by the words 'short and sweet', and performed here with a playful lightness of touch that served the intricate detail of the score well. Musically, the contrast to Elgar's stunning Cello Concerto was a marked one, and yet soloist Sol Gabetta's playing was in its own way light and effortless. Her performance, though, was still (somewhat paradoxically, definitely impressively) invested with the sense of immense and intense emotion that the piece seems to demand. This was a fantastic rendition. (Incidentally, the orchestra's principal bassoonist was sporting a magnificent and rather Elgarian moustache.	Elgar played the bassoon himself. If ever there were potential for a tribute act, surely it is here.)  The tell-tale sign of an afternoon concert was that the interval queue for coffee was far longer than the queue for the bar, so here's an Octogenarian top tip: daytime drinking is good for you. Back in the hall, Sibelius's Second Symphony presented another contrasting challenge, and one that was met equally well by the orchestra, their reading exuding power, atmosphere, and other deliberately broad and largely meaningless words. Sibelius certainly milked his last-movement material in particular for all it was worth; this is a piece that sounds as if it's about to end several times before it actually does. A bit like the third <i>Lord of the Rings</i> film, then, though unlike it in the sense that one is glad on each occasion the Sibelius continues. In fairness, on Sunday I wasn't sat next to a large sweaty man and desperate for a wee (as I had been in the cinema), but the point is that the symphony is undoubtedly marvellous, verging on 'guilty pleasure' territory but in the end just a wonderful thing to experience live.  All in all, this was a concert that will take some beating over the rest of the season. I remain to be convinced about Sunday afternoons (not for myself – I'm a total lost cause with absolutely nothing better to do with my weekends – but more generally speaking), but I'd rather then than not at all.
	Stefan De Jackton		Jibretta Golding

\* Drug Pusher

\*\* Being in a Rusher

\*\*\* Right in the Musher

\*\*\*\* Library Shusher

\*\*\*\*\* Pictures of Usher

**Rant of the bi-week: Programme? Programme? £8.50 a Programme?**

The enraged smatterings of Caroline Trodd

Everyone knows that it’s the quality of the music that makes a concert. But the quality of its programme can help: if not to make, then certainly, to break a performance. Sit me down five minutes before a concert and give me a thin booklet with a pretty picture on the front and a list of the pieces to be performed, with one, two, or even three paragraphs of well-written, contextualising prose on each, briefly informing me about the dates and whereabouts of the composer when she/he/it/they penned the music. Add any interesting ideas about what might’ve been spinning round in the inside of his/her/its/their skull like a tumble drier in order to provoke this outpouring of notes, and I’m in pre-concert heaven. Hell, you can even add a passage on the performer and what she/he/it/they like to do besides practise. Pop an advert on the back: it don’t bother me none.

What DOES bother me (yes, here it comes) is glossy books so large they’ve got an ISBN, stuffed so full that they’re overflowing with pictures of places I should pay lots of money to look after my children, who will turn out so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and perfect that they will be able to come up with catchphrases like the ones emblazoned on these adverts, like ‘breeding inquisitiveness’ or ‘nurturing good nature’ or ‘potentially inspiring’; detailed analysis of every bar of music, telling me (in words, of course) exactly what the first four notes of the first subject does (they always rise, you know) and then what chord the next five notes imply, and then the next eight harmonic twists and turns, and then the integration of a rhythm the composer heard when he/she/it/they was in the queue for the toilet once, and what that means when she/he/it/they puts it in retrograde inversion; endless, endless, endless information on where this performer learned their art, and who taught them, and then who else taught them, and then who taught them in a very staged, impersonal, general sort of format, and then who they performed this with, and who they performed that with, and how many totally meaningless competitions they’ve come third in, and how many children they’ve inspired, and how many CDs of how many works on how many different labels they’ve recorded; and then charge me £4.99 for the privilege to have the option of reading this mass of literature and milk-teeth instead of listening to the music, and then throw it in the bin about 7 weeks later and then feel bad about not recycling it. And then half of the time they don’t get the order of the pieces right, and say Mozart died in 1971.

STOP using programmes to make me annoyed at how ridiculously copious everything about them is, and just let me go to a concert with good information on who and what and a little bit of why.

Many thanks, Caroline Trodd