



Octogenarian

Bienvenido, Bienvenido, Bienvenido!

Bienvenido to the 4th issue of *Octogenarian* – your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol’s music scene. This week, you’ll be pleased to hear, we’ve managed to scale down to our more manageable one-page format. This is not to suggest that Bristol’s music scene has in any way failed us, far from it; with luminaries such as Angela Hewitt and events like The Golden Hour’s literary cabaret performing on the same evening we are spoilt(ed) for choice. No, this reflects the intense period of academic activity facing students at this, the sunny time of year. Nonetheless, if there’s time for you to research and adopt this season’s revision vogue – ensuring that your clothes are filthy, pretending to need lots of tea and rubbing your eyes before somebody sees you for that devastating “hard work” look – there’s probably time for a little ‘brain rinse’ (as my mother would say), perhaps at a lunchtime concert?! That is why we’ve collated the week’s concerts into a digestible, bite-size nibble of a list overleaf. This week Herr Esslöffel van Linz reviews the ever-so-loved-by-the-middle-class-of-Clifton Angela Hewitt playing Bach (what else) in what we agreed was one of the best concerts we’d been to in a long old time. Also this week our newest reviewing recruit fresh-faced following his unceremonious dumping from hit show *Neighbours* waxing lyrical about Scriabin and allowing us ‘normals’ a glimpse into his world of fame and glamour and tubas and yachts where he seems to be on first-name terms with the pianist!

Thank you.

NB// All proceeds go to charity. As yet, our model doesn’t support gain, financial or otherwise (least of all intellectual or spiritual) and as such we give nothing to charity. Anyone wishing to suggest an alternative model should e-mail to the usual address or write to PO Box 7 Give-A-Shit

Friday 21 May, 7.30pm, St. George’s
Chamber Orchestra of Basel/Angela Hewitt, piano



J S Bach Keyboard Concerto No 3 in D
Frank Martin Pavane Couleur du Temps (1920)
J S Bach Keyboard Concerto No 7 in G minor
Frank Martin Etudes for String Orchestra
J S Bach Keyboard Concerto No 1 in D minor

I was saying to my Mum how amazing it was that you can put a German town on the end of the phrase ‘Orchestra of...’ and automatically know that it’s going to be a top-class ensemble. She agreed, then subtly let me know that Basel was actually in Switzerland. My ignorance aside, the hunch I had that this Chamber Orchestra was going to be of the highest quality was indeed held to be true. So too was my hunch that, joining forces with the Canadian pianist Angela Hewitt and the music of the Granddaddy, J.S.B., this string group would put on one of the finest concerts of 2010. Standing around the open-topped Steinway, communication between the players and the pianist was evident: visually, audibly and, I propose, even metaphysically. Daring proposition, I know, but this is Bach I’m talking about. We were treated to two keyboard concerti in the first half, and one to finish of the second (plus, oh joy of joys! an *announced* encore!) In between times, Madame Hewitt left, the orchestra synchronised a boogey-ing dance move (to swap baroque bows for modern ones) and we were treated to two fantastic pieces by 20th-century French composer Henri Martin. These were, surprisingly, the perfect companion to the *Maestro’s* works,

thanks particularly to the exciting use of experimental counterpoint in *Etudes for String Orchestra*. The orchestra maintained the gracious fluidity and vivacious sonorities of the Bach throughout the Martin, exploring some more modernist techniques and harmonies but never at the expense of the ‘delighting-in-life’ that defined this marvellous concert. One could wax lyrical about Hewitt’s interpretation of Bach’s genius for all eternity. Just know that it was stunningly beautiful. My neighbour, who turned out to be a critic from the guardian, voiced some issue with the anachronism of the whole event. But I, being a lowly reporter for a meagre publication, am happy to say that the whole experience, despite the Canadienne’s 40s hairstyle and 70s dress, was utterly and completely wonderful.

Herr Esslöffel van Linz



This is an action figure of Beethoven. I have experience of buying an action figure of Mahler, it made an excellent present. I would recommend it to any aspiring gift-buyer.

We welcome submissions of reviews from all; to submit a review, to write regularly or to subscribe(!) and receive this publication by e-mail please contact: ak6750@bristol.ac.uk

The Bi-Weekly RANT:*The negative capabilities of despot Diane Keaton:*

Concert reviews. The very *raison d'être* of this absurd little publication, and thus, one might have thought, hallowed ground; protected from criticism within these pages at least. But no. What, after all, is the point of them? A review of a CD has the potential to affect a future decision, namely that of whether to purchase said CD. What effect can a concert review have? Should I have been saving up for that DeLorean?! Oh, of course, I can avoid future concerts given by such and such an orchestra; they made a mess of the Ligeti, so they're *bound* to fumble embarrassingly through the Mendelssohn. Next year. With a different conductor. But it keeps the artists on their toes, I hear you say! Perhaps if this were the Times, yes. The Octogenarian, readership: 7? Maybe not. Some semblance of quality might help matters, but the fact is that the reviews here are written by a bunch of half-wit students with a dubious command of the English language. These imbeciles have so little of value to say that they dress up their pitiful attempts at comment with infantile humour and empty simile. (Why must the string playing have been 'as light as the wings of a beautiful angel'? Why not just 'light'?) And what gives them the authority to judge in the first place? The phrase 'those who can, do; those who can't, criticise' comes immediately to mind, but these reviewers fail to be adequate at even that.

Down with the Octogenarian!

Sophia

Thursday 13 May 2010 1pm, St. Georges



Scarlatti - Sonata in D K119
 Schumann/Liszt - Widmung
 Schumann - Sonata No. 2 in G minor
 Chopin - Mazurka No. 11
 - Barcarolle in F# Major
 Scriabin - Feuillet d'album
 - 2 Dances Op. 57
 - Vers La Flamme Op. 72

Tucked into the corner of the St. Georges, Sophia opened with a token Scarlatti sonata that sparkled but didn't dazzle. Luckily she was clearly more comfortable with the remaining repertoire since the Schumann/Liszt Widmung transcription was magical; it's painfully rare to hear Liszt handled so sensitively.

Schumann's 2nd Sonata had no drama and was unmemorable except for some cheeky una-corda in the finale, yet was heartily applauded but many who no doubt remember the work's premiere in 1835. Chopin's 11th mazurka was slow but had well handled rubato and the Barcarolle's pedal work was so smooth you'd think she was an automatic.

The Scriabin seemed to have left the audience in shock since there was no applause between the first and last of his pieces despite an opportune gap after the haunting Op. 57 dances, which was instead filled with an awkward silence. What's wrong with you Bristol? Regardless, her Vers la Flamme, was possibly the best performance I've ever heard; surpassing even old Horowitz (and she's much easier on the eyes). Her sizzling fingers matched her fiery hair and we were given a delicate and original interpretation of Chopin's posthumous C# minor Nocturne as an encore.

Wunderschönen.

Harold Bishop

When?	Where?	Who?	What?
1pm Thursday 27 May	St. George's £5 students	Masumi Yamamoto & Takako Minami (harpsichords)	Krebs Couperin Bach
8pm Thursday 27 May	St. George's £11 student, £5 BUMS	Portico Quartet	Jazz (for to make the eyes bleed)
7:30pm Friday 28 May	St. George's CAVATINA discount (£3-5, under-22s)	Raphael Wallfisch (`cello) & John York (piano)	Shostakovich Barber Beethoven
Sunday 30 May to Wednesday 2 June	Vic Rooms and Racks bar FREE	Student performers & composers	Purcell's Fairy-Queen and much more, see Vic Rooms for details