

Muesli News & Events:

• A ginormous welcome to Megan Holmes who joins Margaret in the HQ of the Music Information Helpdesk Centre with Additional Support Sub-Services and Resources Centre. We welcome you with warm arms. Hello.

• All 606 members of the Octogenarian staff would like to wish Ruth Hill a very happy retirement. We all remember fondly the friendly, frank & helpful support she offered us, and countless other students, during her time here at the Victoria Rooms. She will be sorely missed.

• A ginormous welcome to Dr. Michael Ellison who arrives as new teaching staff in composition and musicology. Most of the Octogenarian staff hope that he and his family are settling into Bristol and that the sunnier climes of Istanbul are not in too stark-a-contrast with our countries drizzlier, decidedly more bracing choice of weather. Hello.

• Following Valery Gergiev’s triumphant debut at Bristol’s Colston Hall he has taken up home here. Having fallen in love with the City and its people he has decided to take early(ish) retirement and has secured a bed-sit in Old Market. He said “It’s alright.” Long may his love affair with our City continue. Bless you Valery... Blalery.

• Wednesday 13 October, Wickham Theatre, 7:30pm: *One Flea Spare* is an event organised by the department of drama. Described as “both installation and performance” this piece – set in London, 1665 (plague central) – guarantees a laugh a minute.

• Tuesday 12 October Victoria’s room, Victoria Rooms, 4:30pm: Dr. Michael Ellison presents his inaugural research seminar where he will talk about his recent music, preceded by coffee and bickies; a favourite event not to be missed.

• A recent survey has shown that 92% of living composers prefer onion to shallot and the most common addiction amongst musicologists is for Welsh Rarebit; Stephen Hawking, who headed the research said “They can’t get enough of the stuff”.

• The ‘Best of Bristol’ lectures will begin this month. To be held in the Victoria Rooms every Thursday lunchtime, staff from varying departments will give a free, open lecture on topics in their field. The first lecture, given by the enigmatic Professor James Ladyman, is entitled *Philosophy: Why Bother?* and will take place on Thursday 28 October at 1:10pm in the auditorium of the Victoria Rooms. Many of us may have helped make this idea a reality by signing the petition and voting for our favourite lecturers last academic year, hopefully students will support this endeavour in a more tangible, sustaining way than merely as a principle to be voted for pre-event and not actually attended... I await disappointment.

Across:

- 1. Performance direction, becoming slower (10)
- 4. Abbrev. mute
- 7. Musician’s trouser material. Major, minor etc. (5)
- 8. “Yes! Yes!” cry the Italian Bees. (2)
- 10. Tristan bought her, I... (6)

Down:

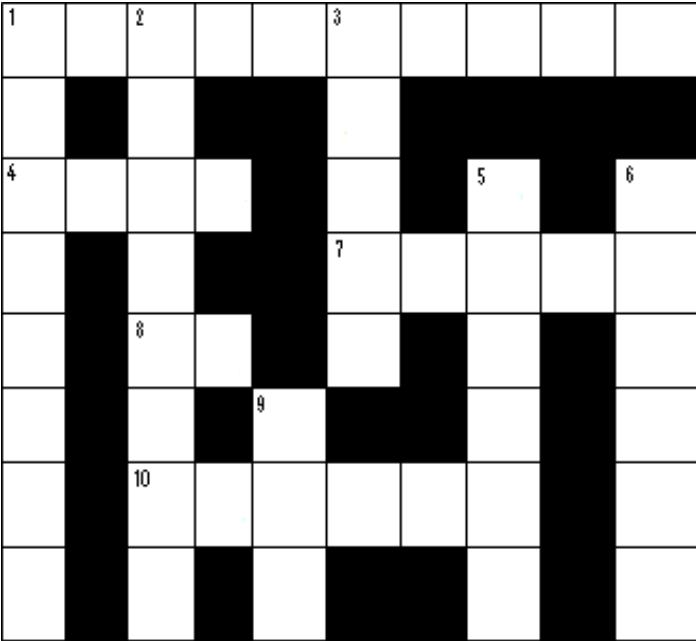
- 1. Composer pining for Rome (8)
- 2. Richard \_\_\_\_\_. American musicologist, this guy single-handedly wrote the history of Western Music! (8)
- 3. Play it sweet! (Italian) (5)
- 5. Poor man’s trumpet (6)
- 6. Crotchet equals not very much (2<sup>nd</sup> movement) (6)
- 9. Mozart’s Giovanni is the... (3)

Submit solutions to [ak6750@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ak6750@bristol.ac.uk) first correct response wins a 65gram Snickers Bar

The lucky winner last time was:

Cza Cza Gabor

congratulations to you and yours



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

Bienvenuti, Bienvenuti, Bienvenuti!

Bienvenuti back to our fifth issue of *Octogenarian* – your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol’s music scene. To those of you returning we trust that the summer break has been wonderful, and to those of you appearing for the first time like the crowning head of an infant – welcome; we hope that the turmoil of the birth – fresher’s week – will not leave you screaming in shock, covered in somebody else’s body fluid.

This week’s ‘Summer Special Octo-bonanza’ sees us break our promise and report on some non-Bristol concerts, namely the Proms. As Bristol students vacated their adopted city we thought the publication itself may benefit from a little holiday; some travel, fine food etc... a mind-expanding, life-changing ‘gap summer’ if you will, and submitted here is new staff member David Boost’s ranty report on a (very) small selection of the eighty-nine concerts as well as old-timer Michael J. Fox’s take on Roger’s Hammertime. We also have Gladwyn Jebb’s thoughts on the opening concert in Colston Hall’s ambitious autumn programme – the LSO under the husky Ruski Valery Gergiev.

In other, egocentric news, our diminutive publication has found its way onto the internet... a worthwhile blogger has mentioned our little cause, referring to it as “valiant” (sort-of) we are all very proud and are so pleased to have found a like-minded propounder of nonsense that we feel strongly enough to recommend this e-institution to you, check out [smallportions1.typepad.com](http://smallportions1.typepad.com). Thank you.

It will not have escaped your notice that following our summer escapades we have returned somewhat different; we have a new format and extra features alongside our tried (read tired), tested (read failed) and hated regular features – we hope you like, of course if you don’t, don’t ‘vote with your feet’, write to us! Our lines are always open at *Stranraer Polytechnic Facility for the Enhancement of Pond Life*, P.O. Box 6234

Editor would like to apologise for the continued interruption of regular sized font with tiny font this is a one-off due to a spasm developed in March, it will not be repeated.

Upcoming Concerts:

When?	Where?	Who?	What?	How much?
1pm Wednesday 6 October	St. George’s	Ivan Illic (piano)	Chopin/Debussy	£5 BUMS
7.30pm Thursday 7 October	Colston Hall	Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	Beethoven/Ravel/ Shostakovich	£8 under-26
7.45pm Saturday 9 October	St. George’s	Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra	Sibelius/ Tchaikovsky/ Nielsen	£12 or £5 BUMS
1pm Thursday 14 October	St. George’s	Evva Mizerska (cello)/Emma Abbate (piano)	Chopin/Schumann	<b>FREE</b> (under-26 students)
7.45pm Saturday 16 October	St. George’s	Bristol Ensemble	Villa Lobos/Piazzolla/ Rodrigo/Da Falla	£7 student or £5 BUMS
1.05pm Tuesday 19 October	Colston Hall 2	Aoife Miskelly (soprano) Chris Hopkins (piano)	Grieg/Argento/ Walton/Rimsky- Korsakov	£5 or £3 BUMS
19-23 October	The Hippodrome	Welsh National Opera	19 Strauss <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> 20 & 22 Beethoven <i>Fidelio</i> 21 & 23 Mozart <i>The Magic Flute</i>	£3.75 cheapest student ticket
8pm Wednesday 20 October	Colston Hall 2	Bristol Ensemble plus guests	Elektrostatic: The Graphic Score	£7 student

PICK OF THE NOSE:

3pm Sunday 17 October	Colston Hall	Philharmonia Orchestra/Vladmir Ashkenazy	Sibelius/Grieg/ Rachmaninov	£8 under-26
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London Symphony Orchestra  
cond. Valery Gergiev  
Thursday 23 September 2010 7:30pm Colston Hall



London’s pride (orchestra), Russia’s premiere (conductor) and Bristol’s best (middle class audience) all witnessed the inaugural concert of the mighty Colston Hall’s biggest, most ambitious Classical series to date, which got off to a thoroughly bizarre, though not unappreciated start. Rodion Shchedrin’s arrangement of Bizet’s *Carmen Suite* is certainly a work that isn’t shy of raised eyebrows, faces of bewilderment and chuckles of approval, and it provoked all three and more, as the sound of the vibraphone and drumsticks blended (or not) with the strings of the LSO. Bizet may have been turning in his grave, but punters agreed that this mightn’t be a bad thing.

Question’s of whether this monumental moment in the musical history of the South West could’ve been marked with a more orthodox, less whimsical, dare I say ‘better’ piece were hushed as the trumpet-call opening to Mahler’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony heralded greater things. Memories of memories of that *femme fatale* Carmen were dispelled by an almost entirely spell-binding performance of Mahler’s mammoth five movements. Trumpets tooted (mvt. 1), Horns honked (mvt. 3) and strings sounded schmaltzy (mvt. 4) as Gergiev gestured, baton-less but brilliant (silly rabbit, sticks are for kids), and the applause erupted as the curtain fell on the first of what promise to be many fine concerts to come to Colston.

Gladwyn Jebb



This is the advert for a fantastic little opera festival run by the company têteatête

The point of including it here is to point out the pun in the festival’s nautically themed tag line:

“Baton Down the Hatches and Prepare for the High Cs!”

Oh how we laughed.

Prom 49: A Celebration of Rodgers & Hammerstein  
John Wilson Orchestra / Maida Vale Singers / Soloists / cond. John Wilson  
Sunday 22 August 2010



The unique selling point of this concert was, for me at least, the opportunity to hear these scores in their movie orchestrations (which were completed by studio orchestrators, as was common practice at the time – the title 'A Celebration of Rodgers & Hammerstein' was perhaps slightly off-the-mark in this sense). We can hear the theatre music anytime we like – as I write, Oklahoma! has just finished a run at the Hippodrome, and R&H are a perennial favourite of shoddy am-dram companies – but this was a rare (unique?) opportunity to hear the film versions 'remastered' in the best sense: in live performance by a massively excellent orchestra.

more chance to stretch their legs in gloriously over-the-top arrangements. But the enjoyment of the players was still obvious to see in this slightly more restrained soundworld, and is undoubtedly a major reason why they sound so damn good (and why Wilson has the pick of the best musicians in the country). The vocalists were also impressive, though otherwise-massively-excellent Kim Criswell's rendition of 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain' had to be rescued by the encore; it is, in fairness, a dreadful song however good the performance – other than this, the programme, though strictly chronological, seemed to work very well.

There are undoubtedly still those who believe that this sort of thing doesn't belong at the Proms; in fact, I fear that my relationship with the Babbitt-worshipping zealots who form the majority of the Octogenarian's staff may turn somewhat sour with the publication of this review. So, what the heck, 5 stars. Massively excellent.

M. J. Fox

## 8 Questions innate seconds:

We asked Dr. Michael Ellison eight questions, here are his 8 answers:

1. Not phlegmatic thank you.

2. Carefully, yet distinctly.

3. What is a crisp?

4. A toss up: Asmali Meseid or Sair Latifi Sokak

5. Ne

6. Hamza El Din

7. Car?

8. You don’t include records? For that, at age 4 the 45 ‘Earache My Eye’ by Cheech and Chong attempted to pay in Canadian dimes in the U.S., which were refused (... for CDs – Bach Gamba Sonatas with Anthony Newman and Nathaniel Rosen (‘cellos))

**Questions:** 1. How are you? 2. How are you settling in? 3. What’s your favourite flavour of crisps? 4. What’s your favourite street in Istanbul? 5. What’s your favourite two-letter Turkish instrument? 6. Who’s your favourite Ud player? 7. What’s the C.D./tape/record in your car stereo right now? 8. What was the first C.D. you ever bought?

Prom 15 – BBC SO cond. Oliver Knussen Wed 28 Jul 2010 7:30	Prom 46 – Philharmonia cond. Esa-Pekka Salonen Fri 20 Aug 2010 7:00	Prom 47 – BBC Scottish SO cond. Ilan Volkov Fri 20 Aug 2010 10
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Stockhausen, <i>Jubilee</i> Birtwistle, <i>Sonance Severance 2000</i> Colin Matthews, Violin Concerto Luke Bedford, <i>Outblaze the Sky</i> Zimmermann, <i>Rheinische Kirmstänze</i> Schumann, Symphony No. 3 'Rhenish'	Mosolov, <i>The Foundry</i> Pärt, Symphony No.4 <i>Los Angeles</i> Ravel, Piano Concerto for Left Hand Scriabin, <i>The Poem of Ecstasy</i>	John Cage, <i>First Construction (in Metal)</i> Cardew, <i>Bun No. 1</i> Feldman, Piano and Orchestra Howard Skempton, Lento
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The Proms, or the ‘Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, presented by the BBC’ as they are officially known, should be devoured with as much relish as a Jason Donnervan ‘cheese’ burger, and can cost almost as little. Despite their London location the Proms really can be student-friendly; for the measly sum of £7 one can pre-book a seat in a really fine concert hall, for the paltry sum of £5 one can turn up on the day and queue for a standing ‘promming’ ticket. In total, an example trip as a weekender allowing you to take in four concerts and be back at home in time to catch Sunday evening’s 93<sup>rd</sup> episode of QI costs £68.80 including trains, tubes, tickets, a little beer and one meal a day. (NB// This estimate assumes attendees are able to stay at a friends house in the capital, and builds in the ‘price’ of two beers a day for the host, this is said to be the standard rate as confirmed by a Govt. think tank). So all in all the Proms can be a relatively inexpensive way of hearing the best orchestras play great music in a gorgeous place, and to support/enjoy a great ‘British institution’. (ed. Note: we apologise for giving credence to the over-used term British institution’ apparently Dame Judi Dench is an ‘institution’ wtf?) The alternative of course is to listen to the eyebrow wiggling, dripping Katie Derham on the radio.

The three concert programmes outlined demonstrate the extraordinary programming possible at the Proms, a case made in full and elegantly by Ivan Hewitt in the Telegraph 22.04.10. The highlights here were the Stockhausen and Schumann, John Cage’s head-banging *first Construction* (a piece ‘for six percussionists and an assistant’ using only metal percussion) and Mosolov’s LOUD The Foundry (the simple truth is that as sophisticated as us concert-going types are, really we’re like children: louder and bigger will always impress us). After this piece opened the concert, all in attendance were more excited than an excited simile writer admitted to Blackadder’s script writing team just as the producers said “we need more similes”.

The particular success of Oliver Knussen’s concert can be attributed to its ambitious, perhaps bizarre, programming that I felt really worked. Stockhausen’s Jubilee immediately captured my intrigue as we were immersed in a strangely beautiful and fantastical, glimmering, shimmering soundworld (ADJECTIVE ALERT). This oddly ephemeral piece made 16 minutes feel like 2 as it maintained its excitement throughout under the immensely bearded, grandfatherly figure of Knussen.

The middle section highlighted three British composers of whom I’m intensely jealous so will not mention how engaging their work was, particularly Colin Mathew’s violin concerto showcasing to your previously cynical narrator how well virtuosity fits in to contemporary thinking. Birtwistle’s three minutes of intense, grandiose music managed not to feel silly or pompous but serious and joyful. After the second interval Zimmerman’s funny folk song interpretations were a great foil to such unashamed ‘serious’ music and the Schumann symphony to finish was, simply put, delicious.

This series is such a flag bearer for classical music, old and new: there was, a weekend dedicated to Bach, all of Schumann’s symphonies, six of Mahler’s ten, Chopin’s complete Nocturnes, stacks of Pärt and 31 premières/commissions. It is a treat that comes round once a year and should be embraced, embraced, embraced.

The concern all Prom enthusiasts share is the restructuring of the BBC’s funding model. The argument is oft made that if public funding is removed a transition to an American-style private patronage model could be seamless. I don’t quite buy this; I doubt that there are enough people with serious amounts of money in this Country. All we can hope for, regardless of how it is funded, is the continuation of a Proms whose ethos places creating daring programmes of exciting, world beating music at the forefront, that champions under-appreciated music, that has reverence for grand masters in spades whilst supporting the development of contemporary composers and investing in and extending the musical canon... Not an ethos that regards bums on seats as the marker for success.

David Boost