

• The wonderful, excellent, unique concert series ‘Eleckrostatic’ begins its fourth season TONIGHT at Colston Hall, in their atmospheric, ‘decayed classic’ Room 2. This is the only contemporary music series to be found in Bristol and has built impressively from series to series. This really is the only chance to hear exciting and thoughtful programmes of contemporary music played to a high standard in the South West. Furthermore, all concerts are “must-sees” because they include premières of pieces that aren’t available on Naxos, they’re not on Rob Cowan’s hit list, they aren’t cluttering the dusty shelves of Granny’s record cupboard, there won’t be another chance; this is the continuation of classical music in its purest form - the canon continues... In times when all are turning their back on the Arts, stage your protest, make your stand, further the canon and GO TO ELEKTROSTATIC.

• Last Wednesday saw the return of the wonderful, omni-popular Lunchtime Concert series at the Victoria Rooms. Whilst this publication is primarily concerned with reporting and promoting the concert scene outside this splendid building, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the ever-impeccably dressed Roger Huckle and his band of merry Bristolians for providing us meagre students with such a delicious start to what promises to be a popular and successful concert series.

• Dead this fortnight: Claire Raynor
Dame Joan Sutherland
Elizabeth North

• Sales of the one time hit single ‘Earache My Eye’ by the legendary comedy duo Cheech and Chong were up a massive 1300% this week after this publication disclosed that a distinguished member of the Music Department once appreciated the single. According to Sally Gunnel, one time hurdler turned statistician, this is the first time since 1985 that the song has ever been played. The band are said to be overjoyed, although apprehensive that another bought of fame might upset their collective digestive system.

• The astounding CAVATINA discount returns to certain chamber music concerts at St. George’s. This scheme provides students under 25 years old FREE tickets to experience some of the best music Bristol has to offer, in one of the finest acoustic for chamber music in the whole wide world. Keep an eye on the concert listings on the front of the *Octogenarian* to find out when you can take advantage of such an amazing opportunity.

• There have been reports that the Russian musical community in Old Market, Bristol, has been further boosted this week by the defection of Vladimir Ashkenazy. Rumours are that he has opened a specialist polo-neck jumper selling store in the heart of Old Market with the financial backing of recent emigree Valery Gergiev. Ashkenazy is looking to sell to exclusive inhabitants of the south-west, and that local celebrity Nicholas Cage was his first customer. A baked bean close to the sauce has leaked Cage’s initial reaction: “Ooooooooo, very snazzy”

• Friday 22 October, 7:30pm Wickham Theatre, Cantock’s Close: “Lysistrata”. A modern re-telling of Aristophanes' masterpiece, Lysistrata, promises to be an absurd laugh-out-loud romp as Actors of Dionysus bring the battle of the sexes to a stunning climax. Combining physical theatre, slapstick and circus, the show displays human nature in its entirety.

Across:

3. Stop going on and on, and start plucking! (4)
5. Carl’s eccentric speciality: a kind of Biryani (4)
7. Half a cheesy crisp. Short note. (10)
11. Hurry! In short, get quicker (5)
12. A confused female deer, a type of written verse (3)

Down:

1. Dmitri, Russian and short (4)
2. Skip to the end, chasing your tail (4)
4. Lovely little piece, for violin and piano, say (7)
6. Roza F, muddled but armed with strength, is part of Giussepi’s destiny (5)
8. Green man, opera lover (5)
9. (Don’t turn your) ____, Arnold (3)
10. The age-group of concert goers (3)

Submit solutions to ak6750@bristol.ac.uk
first correct response wins a Kit-Kat Chunky

The lucky winner last time (of a snickers) was:



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



Octogenarian

Tervetuloa, tervetuloa, tervetuloa!

Tervetuloa to the sixth issue of *Octogenarian* – your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol’s music scene. Following a summer drought music has returned to Bristol in plentiful supply: St. George’s was half-empty for Ivan Illic’s astonishingly one-sided attempt at a piano concert (see Grondo Funkel’s report), Colston Hall was half-full when the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra played at ‘number 11’ (F. C. Dirgen tells us all about it, and demonstrates why one should never write a review when hungry); and was jim-jammy-packed as another Russian luminary graced Bristol’s premier stage – Vladimir-cat Ashkenazi (read ahead for Helmstrum Stroft’s petal-like blows and Petunia Clarke’s ‘Focus on Fashion’). Furthermore read on to hear why Solomon Bunce was a trifle disappointed with his free trip to chamber-music-land.

Returning to the fray this issue is the feature ‘Rant of the Fortnight’ - a cross between Radio 4’s ‘Thought for the Day’ and 1984’s ‘Two Minutes Hate’. Having received over three thousand complaints (including death threats and ‘dirty’ protests outside the music department’s post-graduate common room) the editorial team wish to take this opportunity to apologise to those of you dissatisfied with its recent absence, we hope that this issue’s particular angst delivered by Gabon’s one-time despot Omar Bongo is acerbic enough to help you vent spleen in a controlled fashion. Our apologies also extend to Dr. Guido Heldt whose office faces the post-graduate common room, and who was unfortunately caught in the cross-fire caused from some unacceptable retaliation to what was a very dirty protest... sorry Guido – Soido.

In this week of watershed moments we have had our first ever prize-winner, the lucky Benedict Godd has won a 65g Snickers bar and the choice of font for his name as reward for his rapid completion of last week’s crossword. This weeks prize is a Kit-Kat chunky, get your answers in to ak6750@bristol.ac.uk first and you too could be enjoying some lovely confectionary and deciding what font your name will appear in.

Finally, I’m going to give in to the temptation for the first time and tell you all a joke: A Freudian slip is when you say one thing but mean aMother. Thank you.

Upcoming Concerts:

| When? | Where? | Who? | What? | How much? |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Wed 20-Sat 23 October | The Hippodrome | Welsh National Opera | 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 |
| 7.45pm Thursday 21 October | St. George’s | Corelli Orchestra/ Evelyn Tubb (soprano) | Bach/Vivaldi/ Handel/ Telemann | £10 student or £5 BUMS |
| 1.05pm Tuesday 26 October | Colston Hall 2 | Quintabile Brass | Who knows...? | £5 or £3 BUMS |
| 7.30pm Wednesday 27 October | Colston Hall | Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow Radio | Svensen/ Rachmaninov/ Shostakovich | £8 under-26 |
| 7.45pm Wednesday 27 October | St. George’s | Bristol Ensemble | Gershwin/ Mendelssohn/ Sibelius | £7 or £5 BUMS |
| 1pm Thursday 28 October | St. George’s | Timothy Orpen (clarinet)/ Simon Lepper (piano) | Mozart Widmann/ Bärmann/ Milhaud | FREE (Cavatina discount) |
| 1.05pm Tuesday 2 November | Colston Hall 2 | Emily Andrews (flute)/ David Massey (guitar) | Piazzola/ Castelnuovo-Tedesco/ Robert Beaser | £5 or £3 BUMS |

PICK OF THE NOSE:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 7.30pm Friday 29 October | St. George’s | Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment | Corelli/Handel/ Vivaldi | £11 or £5 BUMS |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|

Ivan Ilić – piano
St George’s Thursday 7 October 1pm £4

Early October midday sunshine streamed in through the large, elegant windows of the fabled St. George’s church-turned-concert-hall as the tall, dashing figure of Ivan Ilić, his hair sweeping gracefully, gloriously glinting in those golden rays, gave his pre-concert speech. Informative and philosophical, his delicate Californian accent charmed old and young alike. Even before playing, Ilić had swept his audience off their feet as if they were a lock of his hair, and on a mental journey through their own beloved Bristol. As they accompanied him on his evocative “jog of discovery”, they saw the city in fresh and wonderful new ways, through the discerning eyes of this spritely debonair. Back in their seats, briefly, while Ivan took his at the piano, the audience recovered their breath before the maestro launched them on another – this time, musical – journey. They soon realised, however, that this was to be no regular recital: the journey’s evocation would depend solely upon the pianist’s left hand, for their guide’s right hand remained poised firmly yet effortlessly upon his right thigh, whilst Scriabin’s charming *Prélude et Nocturne Op. 8* wove its way from fingers to keys to hammers to strings

to ears, to souls. Next, the travellers were treated to a French excursion by four delightful French songs by Henri Duparc and Ernest Chausson, transcribed by Ilić himself for his own four fingers and thumb. The unique opportunity to hear these songs in this form stemmed from Ilić’s burning desire to expose this music to his audience, in spite of the current trend for piano recitals (and especially left-hand only) and the regretfully relative unpopularity (read un-sellability?) Especially French ones. Thus it was that our hero took matters into his own hand and treated his lucky audience to this rarity; and well worth it it was. Finally, Chopin made a dazzling appearance, in the guise of Léopold Godowsky’s arrangement of eight *Etudes* for left-hand only. Ilić’s perfect note weighting was really a sound to be heard, and the already expressive music certainly became all the more indulgent and luscious with the constant *rubato* and spread chords that are the very nature of one-hand piano music, particularly such complex and virtuosic music as this. The end of the concert was met with rapturous applause, and it must be stated that Ivan Ilić had provoked such a reaction single-handedly.

Grondo Funkel

8 Questions innate seconds:

We asked Phil, our friendly new porter, eight questions, here are his 8 answers:

1. Fine, thank you

2. Listening to the music & meeting the students

3. The Beatles

4. Beef... Or Smokey Bacon

5. Park Street

6. The Queen

7. Nice cup of tea

8. Once Upon A Time In America (Enio Morriconi)

Questions: 1.How are you? 2.What’s the best thing about being the new kid on the block in the Vic Rooms? 3.What was the first C.D./tape/record you ever bought? 4.What is your favourite flavour of crisps? 5.Which is your favourite street in Bristol? 6.Who is the most famous person you’ve ever seen? 7. What’s your preferred tipple ?8.What’s the C.D./tape/record in your car stereo right now?

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Colston Hall 07 October 2010 7:30pm £8
Beethoven 1
Ravel Piano Concerto in G
Shostakovich 10

71% off! 71% off! That is a figure to be praised indeed, and that is the figure under 26 year olds can expect at every concert in Colston Hall’s classical season. So, as I sat down next to the zimmer-frame toting, non-ironic-moustache wearers having paid £8 to their £28, to say I felt like I’d beaten the system (merely by virtue of something so arbitrary as my D.o.B.) is something of an understatement. And it was in these high, ‘schadenfreuden’ spirits I sat down to hear Beethoven’s seldom played Symphony no 1. Interesting more than life affirming, this piece informed more than it enlightened, but it was played well and as sensitively as a raccoon suckling her young.

Next up was Ravel. Having recently heard his other piano concerto written at the same time, the contrast was academically interesting whilst the piece itself had wooshes and zooshes the like of which I’d not heard. Ravel is fast becoming one of my favourite trips to the concert hall, his mastery of orchestration, that I’d so often been told about, comes out live in a way incommunicable through CD and speakers. The good seats helped too, a clear vantage point and balanced listening position (and of course none of the M&M scoffing,

wheezing, texting, scratching peasants one normally has to deal with) really adding to my experience.

On to Shostakovich’s Tenth Symphony... It’s great, it’s as good as cake and BSO played it brilliantly and, in Bob Dylan’s frustrated words, “f*~ing loud”. BSO’s new conductor was energetic, entertaining and produced some fantastic results from this extraordinary piece; particularly when teasing out the languorous, casserole-like woodwind solos cooked up by DSCH, that really wash over the listener like dough. The ensemble perhaps ‘believed’ in Shostakovich’s dissonance (read dissidence) a trifle too much and at the crunchy moments over-egged the pudding (apparently a known and oft-maligned trait of non-Russian ensembles playing Shostakovich) though this exuberance created some electric moments.

What a shame it was though that, yet again, the hall stood empty. Roughly 58% of seats were sat in whilst the rest stood vacant. So, attendees score 1 star – could try harder, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra score four – well done.

F. C. Dirgen



Evva & Emma Duo

St. George’s Thursday 14 October 2010 1pm £0
Evva Mizerska ('cello)/Emma Abbate (piano)



It is a thing most wonderful to walk into St. George’s concert hall and to take a seat in the most expensive price-bracket without having so much as made a gesture of motion towards one’s back pocket. The Cavatina discount is a truly remarkable opportunity to be made the most of. It was thus with a light feeling of self-satisfaction that I awaited the arrival on stage of the Evva & Ema Duo, for a programme of music by two two-hunder-year-olds who had a knack for composing for this marvellously expressive pair of instruments: Chopin and Schumann, 'cello and piano. However, as the concert began to unfold, I realised that something was just a little wrong. The music wasn’t connecting with me in the deep, emotional, romantic way I had so expected it to. Chopin’s *Study in C sharp minor* (transcribed by Glazunov) was rather unremarkable; in fact, I barely remember it now. The same composer’s *Cello Sonata in G minor* that followed was more memorable, though I’m afraid to

London Phillharmonia
Cond. Vladimir Ashkenazy
Colston Hall Sunday 17 October 2010 3pm £8
Sibelius Finlandia Suite
Greig Pianio Concerto no. 2



Sunday saw the arrival of the Phil., perhaps the best Orchestra in the Country & if Carlsberg did orchestras, well... Anyway, instead of a report on how well they played Mummy Pickard’s favourite, (Rach 2) we’ve allowed Petunia Clarke her ‘Focus on Fashion’:

Arriving almost late to a classical concert is always problematic, primarily because it always ends (as the concert begins) with forcing a couple of rickety elderly concert goers to stand up so you can get to your seat. This happened to me yet again on Sunday afternoon. After the tutting and groaning had stopped and everyone settled I looked down from the balcony to behold a sea of white hair and bald heads bobbing along to Rachmaninov’s Symphony no 2. The hair that was once on the top of the men’s heads seemed to have migrated to their ears and noses – not really à la mode.

But enough of hair and make-up, the audience’s wardrobe told us that for the ladies, pastels are still in as is the twin set and pearls. Both Laura Ashley and Country Casuals made an appearance, the tweed skirt proving a popular choice along with the Ombre Crinkle Blouse from CC’s Merrion Cove

Rant of the fortnight:

What is music *about*? by Omar Bongo

Programme notes are almost always nauseating. Often they’re sycophantic, sometimes they’re pretentious; sometimes (joy of joys!) both. However, the prize-winning get-the-concert-off-to-a-bad-start type of programme notes are those written in order to explain to the audience what the music they’ve not heard yet is... *“about”*.

This gets my goat, and in the case of last Thursday my gast was flabbered to read Terry Barfoot’s twatterings on Shostakovich’s Tenth. Apparently it is *“about”* Stalin – the second movement being a caricature of the dictator. Why bother with this nonsense? Even if it were definitively true, this is not the way to listen to music; context is one thing, assigning narrative and a specific, tangible ‘meaning’ to bits of delicious, abstract sound, quite another. It’s actually not far from Susan McClary’s “Beethoven was a rapist” patter. And here is the problem: that passage in the programme sparked the quack-interpretors sat to my left to ask each other at the start of movement 2 “is this the bit *about* Stalin?”... I was spitting feathers.

The writer’s hypothesis is qualified by stating: “In the book *Testimony*, his memoirs, Shostakovich wrote *‘I composed the music right after Stalin’s death; it’s about Stalin...’*” Terry Barfoot should Google the books he reads; a lot of (Pauline Fairclough’s!) time, effort and tax-payers money has gone into proving that Testimony is a fraudulent text written by an entrepreneurial charlatan (Solomon Volkov) profiting from the seemingly boundless enthusiasm of Westerners for tit-bits about the *real* Shostakovich, the dissident, the outright, forthright, whiter than right, always-right capitalist stalwart, who fought the regime with every note he wrote!... Mr. Barfoot has ignored scholarship post-1980 and has decided he likes his (illogical) version of Shostakovich and that everyone else should buy into Volkov’s lunacy. My verdict? – piss-poor. Programme writers, stop saying that everything that Shostakovich wrote proves that he was “on our side” & try to read a book written in this millennium.



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