

• *Monday Morning Music* on BURST radio Mondays at 11am:

Local enthusiasts, Janice and Jed (fake names have been used to protect identity) begin a new endeavour this Monday morning, BURST radio (Bristol University Radio Station) welcomes their new show *Monday Morning Music*, a two-hour romp of classical music between 11am and 1pm. The show promises a mix of lively conversation about local concerts, including full length performances of pieces from recent and near-future concerts; an interview with a special guest, who brings some favourite music alojng in their satchel, hears it played and then natters a bit about it (this week will welcome Gemma Chance, president of BUMS); and ends each week with a ‘*Work of the Week*’ to send you into the afternoon musically refreshed.

The girls/boys are notable members of the music department and we salute their endeavours. This show will be the first broadcast of the year for BURST – something of a coup for a classical music show, we hope you all tune in, we certainly will.

• *Orchestra Cube*, rehearsal 03.11.10 17:30, The Cube Cinema (normally every two/three weeks):

That stalwart of ‘alternative’ the *Cube Cinema Microplex* continues its project *Orchestra Cube*. They hold “A regular free rehearsal... Musicians and non-musicians of all standards and backgrounds are welcome. If that sounds scary then come anyway. If you haven't played your instrument for years or you don't think you're very good, rummage it out and come anyway. If you think this isn't for you, you're wrong, come anyway. Bring your instrument, your voice, your noise machines, pots and pans and any ideas you have for Orchestra Cube”. Few ventures have such an inclusive ethos & the *Octogenarian* reminds readers of it’s mantra, “if a thing is worth doing at all, it’s worth doing badly”.

• Well done to the music department for hosting the very first *Best of Bristol* lectures, Professor James Ladyman gave a fascinating talk validating (or perhaps not?) the endeavour of Centuries of philosophers – praise you Ladyman... Praisyman

• It seems Terry Riley has begun a counter movement to the Russian Music Association of Old Market (RMAOM). Following last weeks performance he too has taken up residence in Bristol, buying up a small chain of businesses in Easton, adjacent to Gergiev and Ashkenazy’s Old Market. He has quickly formed rival chamber music groups that do battle in the side streets between these rival gang lands, residents on the fault line between these warring factions are delighted, they said “we used to have to go to town and pay for top quality chamber music, now its on our doorstep”.

Despite the enthusiasm of local residents, police cite a number of drive-by string quartets as indication of how serious this rivalry has become and are stepping up their efforts to ensnare the rival composer/conductors. Nonetheless, Riley has promised to bombard Old Market with culture until Gergiev and Ashkenazy submit control of Old Market. Worrying times indeed.

Mini joke:

Q. What do you get if you throw a grand piano down a mine shaft?

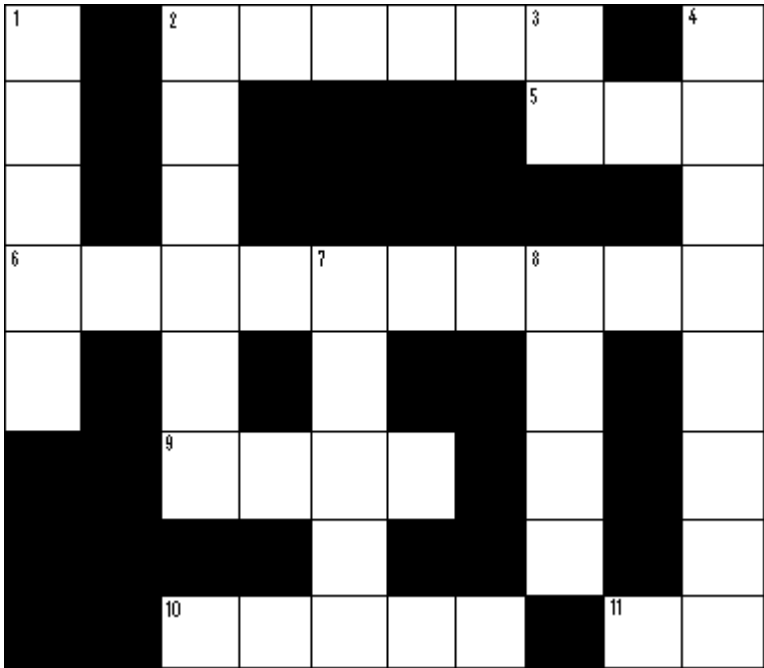
A. Ab minor

8 Questions innate seconds:

We asked Megan Holmes, our new, admirable administrator eight questions. Here are her 8 answers:

1. Good thank you
2. Very well, really enjoying it here.
3. Salt and Vinegar (unless it's monster munch and then it has to be pickled onion!)
4. It's not a street but one of my favourite places is Queen's Square.
5. Probably something annoying and catchy like Wham's 'Wake Me Up Before You Go Go'
6. Feeder, O2 Academy
7. Costello Music, by The Fratellis
8. Bucks Fizz (that was a very long time ago!!)

Questions: 1.How are you? 2. How are you settling in? 3. What is your favourite flavour of crisps? 4. Which is your favourite street in Bristol? 5. What song have you sung most in your life? 6.What's the best concert you've been to this year? 7. What's the C.D./tape/record in your car stereo right now? 8. What was the first C.D./tape/record you ever bought?



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:
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Octogenarian

Croeso, croeso, croeso!

Croeso to the seventh issue of *Octogenarian* – your friendly reviewer and lobbyist for Bristol’s music scene. This bumper issue brings *all* the usual goodies you’ve come to expect, Megan Holmes faces the no-nonsense interview panel’s 8 questions, tyrant Józef Chlopicki’s rant unashamedly as regards society’s lack of qualitative value judgements (phew!), there are reviews from Lemming Mellonstrophe of Bristol ensemble's Gershwin gathering (easily winning the ‘most pretentious review of the year’ award), B. G. F. Hetherington-Smithe’s report on Baroque music at St. George’s, Pandit Mahatma Kapur tells us all we need to know about Terry Riley’s South-West adventure & Theodore Lapotiou’s muses on WNO’s production of Fidelio in the Hippodrome’s more-popular-than-ever week of opera.

Now though, before we get to the good stuff, we have what can only be described as a call to arms, a cry for help, a plea for mercy: following recent budget cuts the Octogenarian has lost over 98% of its work force. Voluntary redundancy has been taken by over 599 of the 602 staff members (there have been murmurings that the package on offer – a selection box - was far beyond the market rate) and the two of us that are left are somewhat overworked, putting in jeopardy the very existence of this rogue pamphlet. If you have any inkling that you might like to contribute to this sterling publication, on a regular basis, an irregular basis or as a one-off, please do get in touch (ak6750@bristol.ac.uk). There are numerous reward schemes and an excellent pension plan, all of which pales in comparison with the satisfaction of knowing that out there, in Bristol, there are perhaps two people who have lingered on your thoughts for more than three seconds - that's the stuff of dreams. Sod essays, write for the Octogenarian.

Finally, all that is left for me to say, at the end of the day, without further ado, is congratulations to **libbie Jackson**, this weeks crossword winner who takes home a Kit-Kat chunky and has chosen a delightful Bauhaus-inspired font. This issue’s prize is a must for any peanut enthusiast – a Starbar. Thank you.

Upcoming Concerts:

When?	Where?	Who?	What?	How much?
1pm Thursday 4 November	St. George’s	Galitzin Quartet	Haydn/Beethoven	FREE (Cavatina discount)
8pm Thursday 4 November	St. George’s	Adrian Utley Guitar Orchestra	Terry Riley <i>In C</i>	£13 or £5 BUMS
7.30pm Friday 5 November	Clevedon Court	Sevenside Composer’s Alliance	Landscape Studies and other music from the South West	FREE
8pm Saturday 6 November	Arnolfini	Artists of <i>Room40</i>	Music in and around the margins of experimental pop, sound-art, improvisation and electronics	£9
7.30pm Sunday 7 November	St. George’s	Exultate Singers	Rachmaninov <i>Vespers</i>	£9 student
1.05pm Tuesday 9 November	Colston Hall 2	Eva Ganziante (sop) Marek Ruszczyński (piano)	Who knows...?	£5 or £3 BUMS
1pm Thursday 11 November	St. George’s	Adam Walker (flute) Sally Pryce (harp)	Spohr/Hovhaness/Krumpholtz/Damase	FREE (Cavatina discount)
7.30pm Friday 12 November	Colston Hall	Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	Nyman: an Anthology	£8 under-26
7.30pm Friday 12 November	St. George’s	John Williams (guitar)	Villa-Lobos/Brouwer/Bebey/Williams/Mangoré	£9 or £5 BUMS
7.30pm Saturday 13 November	St. George’s	Bristol Music Club Orchestra	Handel/Haydn/Vaughan Williams	£5
1.05 Tuesday 16 November	Colston Hall 2	Irvine Saxophone Quartet	Debussy/Albeniz/Singlee/Bach	£5 or £3 BUMS
8pm Wednesday 17 November	Colston Hall 2	Elektrostatic	<i>Twisted Blues</i> Frank Zappa	£7

PICK OF THE NOSE:

When?	Where?	Who?	What?	How much?
1pm Thursday 11 November	St. George’s	Emma Kirkby (sop) Michael Chance (counter-tenor) Musica Petropolitana	Vivaldi/Bach/Pergolesi	£9 or £5 BUMS

libbie Jackson

Congratulations to you & yours & your Kit-Kat Chunky

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment: A Grand Tour of Italy
Friday 29 October 7.30pm St. George's

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is a pretty unique musical ensemble, not just because of the eccentricity of its name. For this performance of Italian baroque music, a stellar cast was assembled including Susan Sheppard (remember exquisite Bach 'cello suites at last year's lunchtime concert?), Annette Isserlis, Chi-Chi Nwanoku MBE, and soprano Rosemary Joshua. Directing this band of baroque specialists was principle violinist Kati Debretzeni. A virtuoso of the most breathtaking ability, Debretzeni is a true master of the baroque violin and a incredibly vivacious personality; her enthusiasm for the music was as infectious as chickenpox, and the OAE obviously felt it as strongly as the audience. This produced a veritably vibrant performance of Archangelo Corelli's *Concerto Grosso in D*, which fizzed like potassium in a bowl of water in an A-level chemistry demonstration. The ensemble redefined communication: these instrumentalists really lived and breathed as a single organism, in which each limb was not only aware of the others' existence but knew the way they worked, the way they felt – their very essence. The instrumentalists were then joined by the glamorous Rosemary Joshua who sang three arias from Handel's *Il trionfo del Tempo e*

del Disinganno, the second of which, *Lascia la spina*, was serenity itself, and the third, *Un pensiero di pace* contained some of the fastest, fieriest, most furious coloratura about, which was matched only by Debrtzeni's flying fingers. More finger-flying was in store in Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto in D 'Il Grosso Mogul'*, which contained the most virtuosic and humorous violin-playing this reviewer has ever heard. Indeed, the orchestral players themselves were clearly basking in Debretzeni's genius and revelling in her humour, indulging in percussive double bass 'bow-beating' and high-speed chitarrone strumming. Infectious is the word. After a well needed breather, more Vivaldian virtuosity was in store: the 'Cello *Concerto in C Minor* was impeccably played by Jonathan Manson; and, after another 'alkali metal in aqueous solution' orchestral number by Pietro Locatelli, Joshua returned to sing the Red Priest's well-known Italian Motet *Nulla in mundo pax sincera*. The work's vocal fireworks provided a pyrotechnical ending to this astronomically brilliant concert – one that even the most discerning critic would have to rate as exceptional.

B. G. F. Hetherington-Smithe



WNO at The Hippodrome – 22.10.10 19:30



Beethoven, Fidelio

Mortified is not a word I use terribly often, but it describes perfectly the way I felt when I rocked up casually at The Hippodrome Box Office on Thursday afternoon and complacently asked for tickets to Saturday's performance of WNO's widely advertised, wacky-looking performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Mortified I was not only because of my own arrogance and ignorance in assuming that the Bristol public wouldn't lap up Mozart's delightful opera performed by Wales's finest, but also because I couldn't get a seat: a complete sell-out. ('What?! The Octogenarian doesn't have a box reserved for its contributors?') So it was that I had to make do my mortification and – Alas! Alack! – with Beethoven. This said, the ridiculous price of £3.75 was some consolation. *Fidelio* is the Great Master's only opera, and it's not because he couldn't do it (although – surprise, surprise – he did go through sketch after sketch, misgiving after misgiving). It is a bit of an opera of the unexpected, though; not only because of its spoken passages and cross-dressing, but also because the love upon which the opera is based is not that of two tragically-fated-upstart-young-whippersnappers–

with-stars-in-their-eyes-and-hearts-pierced-by-painful-arrows-fired-from-Cupid's-bittersweet-bow, but the staunch love and loyalty of a middle-aged, married couple. Beethoven's mature heroin(e) Leonora (or Fidelio) must be one of the most morally wholesome rôles in all opera, and the music she sings is worthy of her, as was Lisa Milne's performance. I was particularly struck, however, by the fantastic orchestral writing and equally wonderful playing throughout the opera. And yet, by far the most emotionally stirring moments were provided by the Chorus; in fact, they stole the show. Their singing moved me close to tears of sadness in act I, as the political prisoners emerged from the bowels of the earth and basked for fleeting moments in cherished rays of sunshine, and close to tears of joy as they celebrated their release from the grasp of the scoundrel Pizarro (brilliantly sung by Robert Haywood) in act II. These are truly powerful moments where Beethoven is at his very best: emotionally, politically and musically. This was an astounding performance of an opera I wasn't previously familiar with: I would've been truly mortified to have missed it.

Theodore Lapotious§

Bristol Ensemble & Bristol Youth Players
St. Georges, 27.10.10 7:30pm £7
Gershwin Cuban Overture
Mendelssohn, Violin Concerto
Sibelius 2nd Symphony



Regardless of what I say about this concert (which of course is going to be good, this is the Octo after-all) congratulations must go to all that had a hand in putting it on... Raising money for the Bristol Ensemble's schools project 'Preludes' and giving previous and ongoing beneficiaries of this scheme (children) the chance to play alongside the ensemble is a terrifically 'nice' thing. It was much less irritating than it sounds too, the expected hours of weepy explanation of the scheme, with dreary stats and emotional blackmail that make me want to run away and defiantly waste all my money never materialised. An understated outline of the scheme is all we got, and I was delighted.

Following this delightfully pithy introduction the conductor leapt into some strange and choppy waters; he decided to introduce each piece with explained/analysed snippets, à la Radio 3's *Inside Music*. I am not terribly keen on this format even when done well, and this was not done well; instead of a pithy insight into the music's progression we got one 5 second snippet from each movement – each accompanied by a one sentence 'explanation' that really was too ambiguous, brief and 'safe' in its analysis to inspire any thought apart from "get on with it". But get on with it they did, and a raucous, noisy Gershwin was played convincingly and with a good sense of fun.

Lukas Hank then approached the front of the stage carrying a violin. This child of no more than 17 then looked confidently out at the audience; I expected him to make an announcement or ask for "more" in a Dickensian, urchin-like way but no... He played the violin. He played Mendelssohn's violin concerto from start to end without stopping for a beaker of cordial because mum said he shouldn't play for too long without a drink or distractedly fingering a spent Milky Way wrapper in his pocket. He was incredibly good. Toward the end he tired, was left behind by the orchestra and ended up proverbially running after the school bus, and if I'm to be picky and cruel (which I am) he was out of tune at the start, presumably because he got the willies in front of the bigger boys. But it was an incredible effort, played with real musicality and supported excellently with some vibrant playing in the ensemble.

It occurred to me as I mused over a smoke in the interval (Ed. apologises for the extreme pretention) that I don't know whether I'd rather listen to a programme I really like being played "pretty well, not amazingly"... Or, a programme that is not so much to my taste but played "fabulously, darling". It is a question that I'm sure has a *right* answer for the purist, but I am content to let it run.

The second half tested my instinctual answer (to prefer to hear a good piece played averagely) to its limit. Hearing this triumph of a piece, Sibelius's delicate, monolithic beast played out of time and tune was a difficult experience, and not one I relished. BUT (and there is of course a but) I must say that it could have been worse – there were moments (normally the loud bits) that pleasantly tickled your humble narrator's ear hair – and that to expect much more of child-amateurs in such a demanding programme would be as ridiculous and unreasonable as expecting Ricky Ponting not to be a nauseating, smarmy, Aussie git.

Concert over, I left with ultimate respect for the sterling work the Bristol Ensemble are doing within these schools, long may this model continue. With this in mind I was left with a new ponderable, the answer to which perhaps reveals something about my character: should I give a review-score based on unequivocal, definitive benchmarks set by the best in the world, meaning that amateurs just have to accept their comparative weakness (the Craig Revel Horwood model)? Or, should each case be judged on its own merits, benchmarks set on relative scales and a level of generosity given when the best simply can't be expected (the kindly neighbour who says "he's good for his age" model)? My answer?... Sod 'em, they're kids, (who's talent I'm really quite jealous of) they'll bounce back, 1½ stars!

Lemming Mellonsthrope

Rant of the fortnight:

Józef Chlopicki's violent hunt for truth: *What's wrong with Quality?*

There's no accounting for taste. Whilst this quasi-liberal maxim does appear to account for the value of all tastes, it is clear that it implies and alludes to an established hierarchy of tastes. Without wanting to be snobby (and failing), it is clear that in middle-class Europe and the USA, 'Classical' music is considered the apex of this hierarchy within music. The Western Musical Canon, established in the early 19th century by the bourgeoisie, predominantly in Germany, remains the most and longest revered body of music ever. Bach to Beethoven to Brahms (and perhaps, in England, to Britten's 'Sea Interludes'). Of course, now we are all realising that its prominence is strongly reliant upon the social context of its establishment, that is, a white, middle-class, male-dominated society. And inevitably, this body of works is nowadays under attack from what stern Canon-militant Harold Bloom calls the 'School of Resentment'. It has become socially and morally unacceptable to mention that one's favourite composer is Beethoven without stammering a few words of apologys. One doesn't want to be seen to endorse the values of the early 19th-century bourgeoisie, for evident reasons: no one likes misogyny and societal elitism, and so much the better. But it does seem to me a great shame that the music of Beethoven, Mozart and Mendelssohn suffers bad press because of this, to the point that it seems that liking the music of the 'Great Masters' is well and truly out-of-fashion. Ask, for example, ten music students here at Bristol whether they like Mozart's music, and the ratio of positive to negative (or rather, indifferent) responses, will be small indeed. 'It's too perfect', many would claim. This is rubbish. Firstly, nothing can be *too* perfect, because perfection cannot be quantified or surpassed; it is an unachievable ideal. Secondly, not liking something because it's too perfect is like not liking your Mum's lasagne because it's too delicious. This resentment for established Canon music smacks of wannabe post-modern intellectualism, a bit like this rant. There is nothing wrong with value judgements, nothing wrong with well-formulated opinions, nothing wrong with liking quality music for Quality's sake. There is something wrong with bandwagon-riding and pretending to hide the fact that qualitative differences between pieces of music do exist.

California Kirana: The West Coast Legacy of Pandit Pran Nath – Terry Riley, George Brooks, Talvin Singh – St. Georges, 28th October, 8pm



The day started out with a mild disappointment as the question and answer session arranged by the department with Terry and the boys unfortunately never materialised. Though towards the end of the rehearsal we were eventually treated to some warm-up jams and dupstep on tabla drums.

At show time, it was delightful to see that St. George's was packed out with many millions of music students and several lecturers for what would be a very interesting concert. At 75, Riley, dressed head to hoof in Indian robes complete with a plaited beard and a rounded belly full of bhaji had fingers hotter than Vindaloo, whilst fellow Pran Nath pupil George Brooks looked disappointingly un-Indian.

It was unusual to hear Indian raga performed (at all... let's be honest), but even more so when

it's performed in arrangements for voice, piano, saxophone and percussion infused with some hot and spicy solos and jazzy harmonies as the na'an bread holding it all together. The music during the concert was so good that it couldn't be affected even by George Brooks' continual moaning at the tekkies for not having any tabla in his monitor and Mr Singh having the occasional cheeky peek at facebook in between pieces. One particularly keen kidney bean was so pleased with a tasty tikka of a solo he took it upon himself to spontaneously burst into applause, leaving everyone else in the room to reconsider their perspective. Are we listening to Raga or to Jazz? Whatever it was we were listening to, by the end of the second half the music had left us all needing a tall glass of milk to cool off.

Pandit Mahatma Kapur

★ Terryble ★★ Terence ★★★ Terry Wogan

★★★★ Terry's Chocolate Orange

★★★★★ Terry Riley's in the sea