

## **SHROPSHIRE MUSIC TRUST- Quintets at Twilight**

**Quintets at Twilight** was the title of a concert in the Adam Room at Shrewsbury's Lion Hotel, presented by Shropshire Music Trust. The musicians were members of Innovation Ensemble, every one of them highly esteemed chamber players. There were two works, Bruckner's only quintet and Mozart's third in C major.

Bruckner wrote his quintet between 1887 and 1889 in response to insistent requests from an important Viennese violinist. Bruckner was far better known as a composer of symphonies-mostly of epic proportions. In fact, he was working on his 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> symphonies although it pre-echoes his mighty 7<sup>th</sup> symphony. The concert could equally well have been called "Epic to Intimacy" for this work was of truly epic proportions; in the opening movement there was a slight unease before the players were fully in their stride but the exquisite slow movement showed them at their finest. Cellist Richard Jenkinson-often a welcome visitor to Shrewsbury-played his part to perfection, ably joined by violinists Ben Nabarro and Martin Cropper and viola players Robin Ireland and Sarah-Jane Bradley. This movement has been arranged for string orchestra and, in that form, shows why Bruckner was most at home with the symphony.

Mozart was a composer comfortable in every genre and the last five of his six string quintets are works of genius. The C major opens with the first violin and cello giving us some lovely interchanges which go through a series of key changes, retaining the beautiful lyrical nature of the work. It may have been written for the cello-playing King of Prussia who enjoyed performing for his court. The delight of all five musicians was obvious from the opening moments of the lengthy first movement to the sublime Menuetto Allegretto. The duet between first violin and first viola was glorious before we were treated to the finale, a high -spirited romp which often tricks us into believing that it is about to finish. This was a lovely performance a fine example of Mozart's most intimate music making.

**Andrew Petch 21.01.19**

## **EX CATHEDRA CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT 7.12.18**

Ex Cathedra's Christmas choral event, "Christmas by Candlelight", is always an eagerly awaited programme in the calendar of Shropshire Music Trust. As usual, the 2018 concert was held in St. Chad's Church, a setting which offers Jeffrey Skidmore and his singers a fine acoustic.

We were offered the familiar blend of something old, something new, well-chosen readings all delivered with style and enthusiasm. One work which provided a blend of old and new was the carol by A.C. Adam, "Minuit, Chretiens"- perhaps better known as "O, holy night" which was sung to a jazz-influenced arrangement. The singing here, as throughout the evening, was superb. The stratospheric voices of the sopranos were never less than exquisitely beautiful while at the other end of the vocal spectrum the basses thrilled with a sonorous, organ-like sound.

The soloists were on fine form; Imogen Russell, a soprano who is an Ex Cathedra scholar making her public debut with the ensemble, sang "Coventry Carol" beautifully. The same was true of her fellow soprano Angela Hicks, an experienced soprano who soloed in "Stars", a composition by Erik Esenvalds dating from 1977.

The programme celebrated both the centenary of female suffrage and the same anniversary of the armistice which ended in 1918, including a marching song sung in the trenches. On several numbers Mr. Skidmore added a minimalist percussion pulse which emphasised the superbly rhythmic singing.

This was an evening to cherish; much of the music was spine-tingling but the final choral work, "How shall I fitly meet thee" by JS Bach was a profoundly spiritual moment. It was sublime, though we loved the dancing vitality of "We wish you a happy Christmas" with which Ex Cathedra signed off.

**Andrew Petch 10.12.18**

## **STRING BEATS 26.11.18 at the Lion Hotel**

**Animal noises; sounds of the sea; high octane jazz drumming; a few bars of Beethoven and the sounds of birds. All of these, and more, were conjured up by Dean Yhnell using just his voice and a microphone. With violinist Angharad Jenkins, Dean is half of a duo called String Beats. They gave a lunchtime performance at the Lion Hotel, an adventurous piece of programming for Shropshire Music Trust which attracted a large audience -some of them very young.**

**Angharad played on a conventional violin for all but one number for which she used an electric fiddle. Her tone is rich, gloriously sonorous and as rhythmically secure as her partner's. They played some traditional Welsh tunes, a bit of hip-hop and some rap. Rhythm was the key to every number; about 8 young children stood on their chairs and clapped in time; Dean rewarded them by bringing them to the front and getting them dancing! It was a delight to see such obvious pleasure and proved what a superb communicator and teacher Dean is. On this visit, String Beats are also running the programme at several schools and care homes.**

**Before we all joined in, we learned that Beat Boxing started in 1980's New York as an attempt to mimic drum machines with the human voice. The range of sounds possible is amazing and often, along with the fiddle convinced us we were hearing several instruments.**

**Angharad explained that she had spent longer than intended on an island off the west coast of Scotland - she wrote a hauntingly beautiful tune called "Stranded". It was exquisite, as was their final number, "The Sea Monster" by Welsh musician Simon Owen. This featured the fiddle and the sound effects which brilliantly portrayed the sounds of the sea. A fitting end to a gig which the audience loved, not least because it gave them plenty of scope for joining in – a lovely lunchtime event .**

**Andrew Petch 28.11.12**

**Shropshire Music Trust**

**LONDON MOZART PLAYERS with JAMAL ALIYEV, cello 27.10.18**

**On Saturday 23 October in the 2<sup>nd</sup> concert of the 35<sup>th</sup> Shropshire Music Trust series, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury hosted the London Mozart Players together with cello soloist Jamal Aliyev in a pan-European programme of classical greats for string orchestra.**

**Grieg's Holberg Suite - a tribute to an adopted Danish author by the grandson of a noble Scot - is a masterpiece for strings in the classical style and the LMP rose to the occasion with restrained passion and purity of tone while still expressing the baroque-style emotion of the slow movements. The interplay of the lead violin and cello solos was particularly notable.**

**Award-winning cellist Jamal Aliyev from Azerbaijan next presented a stunning performance of Haydn's Cello Concerto which since its discovery in 1961 has become an established virtuoso work. With the LMP under leader Ruth Rogers matching style and dynamic to the soloist there were episodes not just of technical brilliance but of sheer beauty of performance and fidelity to the classical idiom.**

**Departing from the relative austerity of both Norwegian/Scot Grieg and Austrian Haydn (not to mention Azerbaijani Jamal), Tchaikowsky's 'Souvenir de Florence' brought the audience into the Romantic era. Perhaps this concert could have been sub-titled 'East Meets West'! The complexity of the work in terms of composition and the demands on the dynamic required stretched this small string orchestra to the utmost. The result was overwhelmingly exciting and amazing in the strength and subtlety of expression. Once again the leads in violin, viola and cello sections played with heartfelt passion in their solos with balance directed from the leader's chair.**

**The next Trust concert 'The Corelli Phenomenon' by Collegium Musicum 90 is on Sunday 11 November**

**Richard Duncan 29.10.18**

**'FERDINAND THE BULL' and other stories 27.10.2018**  
**Family Show by London Mozart Players**

**Shropshire Music Trust, always keen to introduce children to classical music, invited the string trio from London Mozart Players to perform a 40 minute concert for 2-10 year olds before their evening concert.**

**At 2pm, St Alkmund's Church was full with young families, buggies and babies. Kneelers became cushions and all eyes were fixed on the expressive and exciting playing of violinist Ruth Rogers as she brought matadors to life in the tale of Ferdinand the Bull who would rather smell flowers than perform in the bull ring. The second story, also narrated by cellist Sebastian Comberti concerned a classic fairytale complete with handsome princes, selfish sisters, witches and - a magic violin. The trio, completed by Megan Cassidy on viola wove the enchanted tale round a medley of favourite classical pieces, from Saint Saens to Massenet and more.**

**Lots of families stayed on and were joined by others invited to watch the beginning of the rehearsal by the full orchestra too playing with the outstanding young Turkish charismatic cello soloist Jamal Aliyev. It was altogether an excellent combo of a special event for young people, followed by an appropriate experience of the larger group, which also became a taster for the evening...**

**Harry (6) and Flo (3) next to me, sat entranced, eyes shining and "more events like this, please" said mum Kate.**

**Katriona Wade 29/10/18**

## **SHROPSHIRE MUSIC TRUST**

### **ZOE BEYERS AT COUND CHURCH 12.10.2018**

**Almost a year to the day, violinist Zoe Beyers opened the Shropshire Music Trust's season with a recital of JS Bach's music for solo violin. The programme was called "Bach by Candlelight", the setting the beautiful, slightly austere parish church at Cound. The candle-lighting provided the perfect setting for the capacity audience to be moved by this unique music.**

**Zoe prefaced the recital with an eloquent statement; she has a lifelong commitment to Bach's work, an endless study which constantly reveals new facets of the compositions. She ended her remarks by dedicating the last item to the memory of her father.**

**Bach authority Julian Haylock described these works as standing at the very pinnacle of Bach's creative achievement. I suspect Ms. Beyers would agree with those thoughts, for it seems miraculous that four strings can produce fugues which are every bit as impressive as compositions for ensembles of any size.**

**Just like last year, Zoe's playing was the result of profound study allied to a feeling of freedom of expression which seemed almost improvisatory. Her tone was rich and mellow and always rhythmically alive. Once again they were performances of great delicacy and maximum virility; surely the writing of the greatest composer of western classical music.**

**Shropshire Music Trust's next event is on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October when the London Mozart players will be at St. Alkmund's Church at 7.30, after an afternoon of fun called "Ferdinand he Bull" for 2 to 10 year olds (and parents and grandparents!)**

**Andrew Petch 14.10.18**

## **NEW SEASON LAUNCHED BY SHROPSHIRE MUSIC TRUST 21.9.18**

**A 35th Year Pre-Season Launch was held recently by the Trustees of Shropshire Music Trust at the Trinity Centre, in Meole Brace, Shrewsbury. Patrons and Friends of the Trust, together with other supporters and guests were welcomed at an informal reception to launch the 2018-19 Season.**

**David Harris, Chairman of Shropshire Music Trust regaled attendees with stories about the famous musicians that had appeared over the 35 years and amusing events that had taken place behind the scenes.**

**Patron, Andrew Bannerman gave a speech on the new season's events that include everything from Orchestral concerts with prestigious soloists, to musical theatre by Mid Wales Opera and Pop-up Opera, a Song Recital, and Lunchtime performances including Beatboxing and Welsh folk music – all at some superb venues across Shropshire.**

**Director of Shropshire Music Trust, Kate Hogwood said: "It was a real pleasure to greet over hundred supporters and a fun occasion to welcome in the new season. One kind Patron said 'I don't know how I'd get through the winter without your wonderful and varied schedules of musical delights!' and we look forward to seeing many more music-lovers too both old and new to enjoy events this season which we are pleased to see is booking like hot cakes".**

**The Season contains a whole host of events – and full information together with substantial discounts and special Saver Offers can be obtained on the Shropshire Music Trust's website at [www.shropshiremusictrust.co.uk](http://www.shropshiremusictrust.co.uk) Mailing List (postal & email) for full details of all the 2018 /2019 Season events: SMT Freepost SY169, Shrewsbury SY5 6BR, Email:[info@shropshiremusictrust.co.uk](mailto:info@shropshiremusictrust.co.uk) -or please call (01952) 510375.**