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Saturday 19th March 1994

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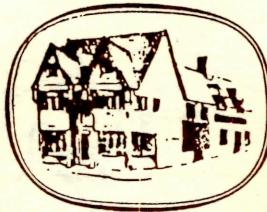
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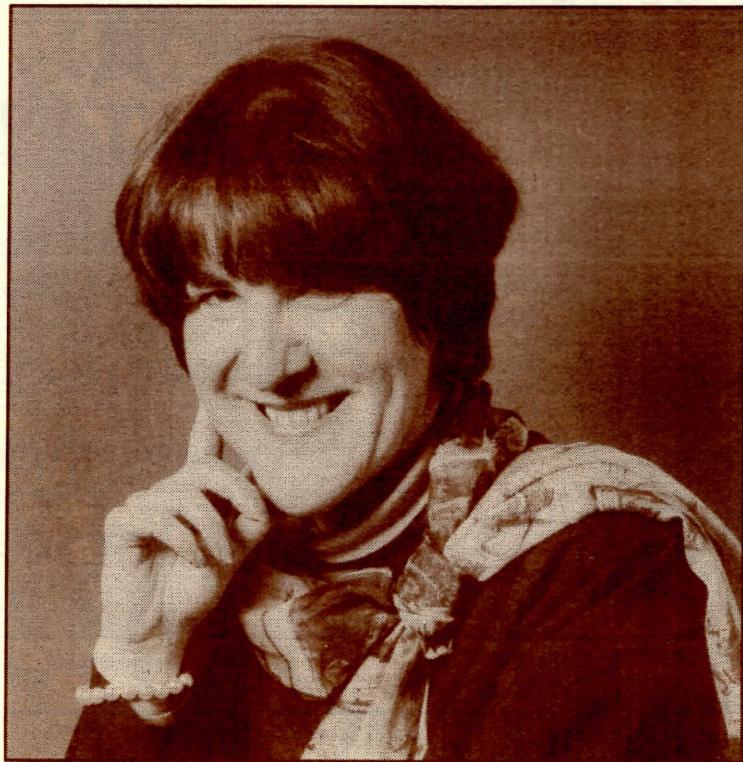
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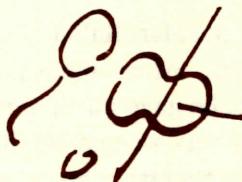
Wendy Holden

Wendy Holden spent a number of years in education before a recent career move allowed her to devote much of her time to singing. She now works in the Music section of the Bodleian Library.

Following Masterclasses at Dartington International Summer School and the Great Elm Festival with such fine singers as Esther Salaman and Laura Sarti, Wendy embarked on a period of study with April Cantelo, of Sutton Courtenay, her present teacher. She has also been taught by Raymond Head.

Wendy is a frequent visitor to the concert platform, both in the local area and further afield, where she is quite at home in a wide variety of styles. Recent operatic experience has included "The Magic Flute" and "La Boheme", both with Stowe Opera. In February she won two prizes at the Oxford Music Festival.

Banbury Symphony Orchestra



Raymond Head

Raymond Head has been with the Banbury Symphony Orchestra for over four years. During this time he has introduced all kinds of music into the orchestra's repertoire, from 18th century to modern music. The orchestra has given first performances, such as David Pope's *Never Such Innocence* and John Foulds' *Chinese Suite* which was later broadcast by the BBC World Service. At other times it has performed rarely heard works, such as Parry's *Second Symphony*, of which it gave the first modern performance two years ago.

Raymond is very interested in training the orchestra through the help of professional players. In the past the orchestra has had help from the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, from Lorna Windass and from Peter Walden, oboist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Raymond's musical career has been honoured with awards from the Holst Foundation, the British Academy and Yale University. He has broadcast for the BBC and appeared as an accompanist and recitalist in Britain and Europe. The BBC recently commissioned an article by Raymond to accompany the current Proms season. He conducts at the Dartington International Summer School of Music.

Rossini
(1792-1868)

Overture: La Gazza Ladra
(The Thieving Magpie)

This popular Italian composer achieved enormous success in his lifetime. After composing thirty-six operas by the time he was thirty-seven, he gave up altogether and never wrote another opera. *La Gazza Ladra* was written in 1817, and is the story of a French peasant girl called Ninetta who is wrongly accused of stealing silver from her employer. Condemned to death, she is reprieved only at the last minute when the stolen silver is found in a magpie's nest. The overture begins with a march which, in the opera, is Ninetta's march to the scaffold. Hence the ominous rolls on the side drum, but the work ends happily with great jubilation.

Elgar
(1857-1934)

Sea Pictures

1. Sea Slumber Song
2. In Haven
3. Sabbath Morning at Sea
4. Where Corals Lie
5. The Swimmer

Soloist: Wendy Holden

These songs were written in 1899 for the celebrated contralto Dame Clara Butt, and were first performed at the Norwich Festival in October of the same year. In June of that year, Elgar's Enigma Variations had achieved a first performance and the first resounding success of Elgar's career. He was forty two. After years of turmoil, Elgar's talent had at last found a perfect expression. The Sea Pictures show Elgar exploring the themes of love, impermanence and the solitary desire of the evolving human soul to travel uncharted seas, fight the storms, and at last arrive at the harbour "where no light wearies and no love wanes". It was an intuition of the difficult years that lay ahead of him.

Sea Slumber Song

*Sea birds are asleep,
The world forgets to weep.
Sea murmurs her soft slumber-song
On the shadowy sand
Of this elfin land;
"I, the Mother mild,
Hush thee, O my child,
Forget the voices wild!
Isles in elfin light
Dream, the rocks and caves,
Lulled by whispering waves,
Veil their marbles bright.
Foam glimmers faintly white
Upon the shelly sand
Of this elfin land;
Sea-sound, like violins
To slumber woos and wins,
I murmur my soft slumber-song,
Leave woes, and wails, and sins,
Ocean's shadowy might
Breathes good-night,
Good-night!"*

Hon. Roden Noel

In Haven (Capri)

*Closely let me hold thy hand,
Storms are sweeping sea and land;
Love alone will stand.*

*Closely cling, for waves beat fast,
Foam-flakes cloud the hurrying blast;
Love alone will last.*

*Kiss my lips, and softly say:
"Joy, sea-swept, may fade to-day;
Love alone will stay."*

C. A. Elgar

Sabbath Morning at Sea

*The ship went on with solemn face:
To meet the darkness on the deep,
The solemn ship went onward.
I bowed down weary in the place;
For parting tears and present sleep
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.*

*The new sight, the new wondrous sight!
The waters around me, turbulent,
The skies, impassive o'er me.
Calm in a moonless, sunless light,
As glorified by even the intent
Of holding the day glory!*

*Love me, sweet friends, this sabbath day,
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn, unaltered,
And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul
Because your voice has faltered.*

*And though this sabbath comes to me
Without the stoled minister,
And chanting congregation,
God's Spirit shall give comfort. He
Who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation.*

*He shall assist me to look higher,
Where keep the saints, with harp and song,
An endless sabbath morning,
And, on that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids raised too long
To the full Godhead's burning.*

from a poem by Mrs. Browning

Where Corals Lie

*The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spry,
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.*

*By mount and mead, by lawn and rill,
When night is deep, and moon is high,
That music seeks and finds me still,
And tells me where the corals lie.*

*Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well;
But far the rapid fancies fly
To rolling worlds of wave and shell,
And all the lands where corals lie.*

*Thy lips are like a sunset glow,
Thy smile is like a morning sky,
Yet leave me, leave me, let me go
And see the land where corals lie.*

Richard Garnett

The Swimmer

*With short, sharp, violent lights made vivid,
To southward far as the sight can roam,
Only the swirl of the surges livid,
The seas that climb and the surfs that comb.
Only the crag and the cliff to nor'ward,
And the rocks receding, and reefs flung forward,
Waifs wreck'd seaward and wasted shoreward,
On shallows sheeted with flaming foam.*

*A grim, grey coast and a seaboard ghastly,
And shores trod seldom by feet of men -
Where the batter'd hull and the broken mast lie,
They have lain embedded these long years ten.
Love! when we wandered here together,
Hand in hand through the sparkling weather,
From the heights and hollows of fern and heather,
God surely loved us a little then.*

*The skies were fairer and shores were firmer -
The blue sea over the bright sand roll'd;
Babble and prattle, and ripple and murmur,
Sheen of silver and glamour of gold.*

* * * * *

*So, girt with tempest and wing'd with thunder
And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
And strong winds treading the swift waves under
The flying rollers with frothy feet.
One gleam like a bloodshot sword-blade swims on
the sky line, staining the green gulf crimson,
A death-stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun
That strikes through his stormy winding sheet.*

*O, brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs, on your high-arched manes.
I would ride as never a man has ridden
In your sleepy, swirling surges hidden;
To gulfs foreshadow'd through strifes forbidden,
Where no light wearies and no love wanes.*

from a poem by A. Lindsay Gordon

Interval
(refreshments will be served in the Church House)

Tchaikowsky
(1840-1893)

Symphony no. 5 in E minor

1. Andante: Allegro con anima 2. Andante cantabile
3. Waltz: Allegro moderato 4. Andante maestoso: Allegro vivace

It is easy to see why this Russian composer has become so popular world-wide; his melodies have instant appeal, his music has vitality and it encompasses a range of emotions with which we can all identify. All of these attributes are expressed with supreme skill and a good ear for orchestral sound that was wholly refreshing and original when first heard in the late 19th century.

The fifth symphony is one of his most popular works and certainly one of his most optimistic. It was written in 1888 and first performed in November of the same year.

There is undeniably a programme in this work. The motto theme, played by the clarinets, which opens the work is taken from Glinka's opera "A Life for a Tsar" where it is put to words "Do not turn in sorrow". It becomes a theme of "fate" which always threatens to intercede in the general happiness, even exuberance of the work. The second movement is a virtual love song in all but name. However, here again "fate" threatens to end the bliss of love. The rapturous, sunny waltz alone is free from any hint of despair. Tchaikowsky greatly admired the Viennese waltzes of Johann Strauss and wrote his own examples which he placed in works like the First Piano Concerto and The Nutcracker whenever he wished to capture the feeling of idyllic happiness. The last movement is again dominated by the "fate" theme, but the finale is blazingly and insistently triumphant. This was not true of Tchaikowsky's own life.

Notes by Raymond Head



SUMMER CONCERT

Saturday 25 June

with *Emma Johnson*

Weber: Clarinet Concerto no.2

Vaughn Williams: Sinfonia Antarctica

NEXT SEASON

proposed works include:

Rachmaninov: Symphony no.2

Mozart: Bassoon Concerto

Berlioz: "Harold in Italy"

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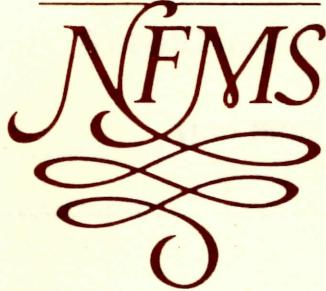
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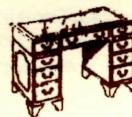
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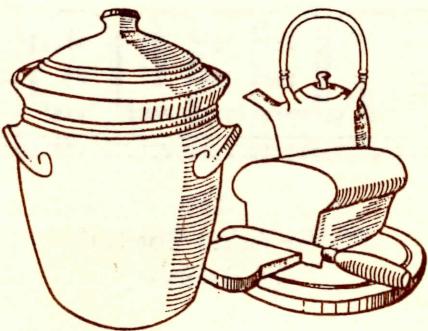
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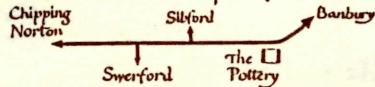
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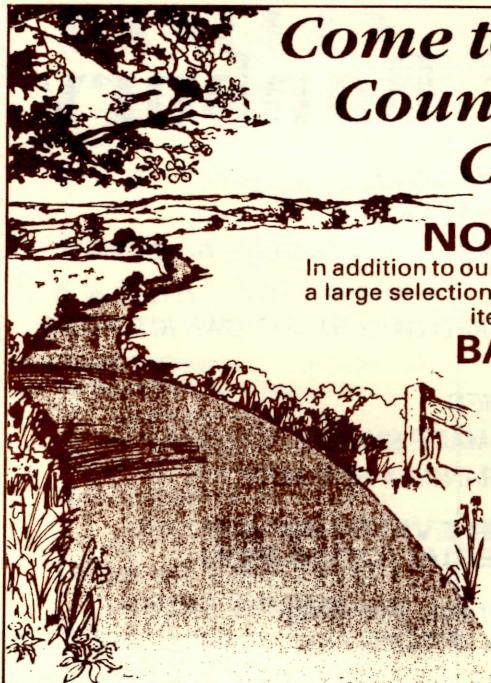


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