



# U3A MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP



## 7<sup>th</sup> NEWSLETTER – April 2009

Brian welcomed all the new members and explained the reason for signing in. He hoped the new members would enjoy the session and come back again.

Keith opened our April session by playing 20 short pieces or extracts, each of which had a connection with Animals, Birds or Insects. This was structured as an optional quiz, with visual clues as well as the musical clues. To end, Keith revealed the identities of the animals, birds and insects together with some discussion on how well these are depicted in the music.

The animals/birds/insects that most people recognised from the musical extracts were:

- ♪ Lark: *The Lark Ascending* by Vaughan Williams, which has been voted Number One in the Classic FM Hall of Fame for the third consecutive year
- ♪ Bee: *The Flight of the Bumble Bee* by Rimsky-Korsakov
- ♪ Trout: *The Trout* by Schubert (Keith played the song, but it is also well known as part of a piano quintet)
- ♪ Elephant and Swan: *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saëns
- ♪ Blackbird: *Bye Bye Blackbird*
- ♪ Dogs and Rooster: from *The Tempest* by Thomas Linley
- ♪ Cuckoo: *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* by Delius.

Most of the group did very well in the quiz, and there was a tie between Tony and Wendy with 18 correct answers recognising the animals, birds or insects. Tony identified more of the composers and therefore won the small prize (a CD of Thomas Linley's *Lyric Ode on the Fairies, Aerial Beings and Witches of Shakespeare*, part of which we heard in March).

But only two listeners identified the real star of the show. The eleventh of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* was partly about Dan, a bulldog belonging to his friend George Sinclair (GRS), who was organist at Hereford Cathedral. Elgar said "*The first few bars were suggested by Dan (a well-known character) falling down the steep bank in the River Wye; his paddling upstream to find a landing place; and his rejoicing bark on landing. GRS said 'Set that to music!' I did; here it is!*"



Either side of the coffee break, I presented a number of musical compositions that had a direct or indirect association with Easter. I explained about the pieces I had chosen which were from Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Wagner's *Parsifal*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, and Mascagni's *Easter Hymn from Cavalleria Rusticana*. I then played an unusual march by John Phillip Sousa called "*Easter music on the White House Lawn*" which is associated with the "Annual Easter Egg Roll". I finished up by playing two short pieces from the *Requiems* of John Rutter and Karl Jenkins.

## Future Sessions

On 21<sup>st</sup> May, starting promptly at 10.00, Keith will introduce the background to the two Beethoven works that we will hear at the forthcoming City of London Sinfonia concert, as well as some of the key features of these two works. I will then present two interesting pieces by Tchaikovsky – *Variations on a Rococo Theme* and the *Overture Romeo and Juliette*. If there is time available I will also touch upon the background to the Russian “Famous Five”. If you would like to bring along a CD/Minidisc/Vinyl record or video/DVD of your favourite Russian music of this period, please let me know as soon as possible (484099).

A provisional programme for next three sessions is provided below.

Month	Keith	Brian
21 May	Beethoven Piano Concerto No.4 ** and Symphony No.7 **	Tchaikovsky and the “Famous Five” Russian composers
18 June	Johann Nepomuk Hummel	Modern composers and origins of Jazz
16 July	Hubert Parry	Jazz part 2

\*\*preparation for City of London Sinfonia concert

## Concerts

We have booked and distributed the tickets for the City of London Sinfonia concert on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at Wycombe Swan:

**Mendelssohn** Overture: The Fair Melusina; **Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.4, *Soloist: John Lill*;  
**Beethoven** Symphony No. 7.

If you would like to have a copy of the digital score of the Beethoven and/or Mendelssohn, please contact Keith (891507) or bring along a computer memory stick to our next session.

Related to our Musical Families and Easter Music presentations, we mentioned the Marlow Choral Society’s concert on 9<sup>th</sup> May at All Saint’s Church, Marlow at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 (from Lakes or at the door). The programme is:

**Andrew Lloyd Webber** Requiem; **William Lloyd Webber** The Prince of Peace

If you enjoyed the excerpt from the Enigma Variations that Keith presented on 16<sup>th</sup> April, a reminder that you can hear this together with *Nimrod* and the other Variations at a Misbourne Symphony Orchestra concert on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 7.45pm at Dr. Challoner’s High School, Little Chalfont. Tickets are £10 (Tel.01494 784479) and the full programme is:

**Nielsen** Helios Overture; **Dvorak** Cello Concerto *Soloist: Nicola Tait*;  
**Elgar** Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)

Happy listening!

Brian Humphrey

P.S. Don’t forget that you can view what we have done at previous sessions at our web site:  
<http://www.marlowu3a.org.uk/id12.html>