

Opening Concert – Sunday 22 September, 7.30pm



We are delighted to welcome **Angela Hewitt** on her long overdue first visit to the Club - a starry opening to the 2024/25 season.

Angela's recordings on Hyperion are numerous - indeed too numerous to include here. Many have won prestigious awards, especially those of keyboard works by J S Bach. This month her second recording of the legendary Goldberg Variations is to be released by Hyperion. Tonight's Partita BWV825 is to be found on CDA68271-2 as part of her recordings of all six Partitas. It was BBC's Recording of the Month in February 2020, and also BBC Radio 3's 'Building a Library' choice.

If you would like to explore more Scarlatti, then Hyperion have two volumes of his Sonatas played by Angela. She has also recorded all of Ravel's piano music, and there is an ongoing cycle of Beethoven Piano Sonatas.

Rather different is her *Love Songs* album, her lockdown project. It features piano arrangements of many well-known songs, including her own arrangement of the Adagietto from Mahler's Symphony No.5. Needless to say, this too received approving reviews from the critics.

Annual General Meeting

At the Club's AGM in July, Richard Price was re-elected as Chairman. Simon Payton retired as Treasurer after many years' service (including a period when he doubled up as Membership Secretary), having truly professionalised the Club's accounting. Roger Usher stood down as Secretary to replace Simon as Treasurer. Alison Hunka was elected as Secretary in his place. Bryan Ratcliff and Simon Allen continue as Membership Secretary and Publicity Officer respectively. The other Committee members are Sue Beverley, Janet Hay, Linda McKinley and Hilary Winter.



As our new Secretary, Alison (pictured) takes over the key role of planning future concerts and the nerve-racking task of ensuring all goes well on concert days. She joined the Committee last season, having moved to Malvern from London. For some years she has helped the Club as page turner for the pianist when required on concert nights. A music teacher and choir director, Alison's musical knowledge and background will be invaluable.



Next Concert - Sunday 27 October

Our next concert is again at 7:30pm (the winter concerts will be at 3.00pm). It will feature the renowned **Nash Ensemble** playing two much-loved quintets for piano and winds, the first by Beethoven, the second by Mozart. Even if you don't know these works well, you will probably recognise the tunes! There will also be works by Poulenc, Ibert and Stravinsky, to make up a varied and fascinating programme.



NB. If you have yet to renew your membership, please subscribe again at the Members' Table in the Foyer on concert night. You can pay by cash, cheque or card. It is also not too late to join the Club and enjoy one of the special offers available to new members in their first year (see the last page of our 2024/25 brochure for details).



Concert Programming

The task of the Secretary in planning the Club's programmes is like three-dimensional chess! Or perhaps trying to juggle. You might be interested to learn about some of the challenges.

The Club is a charity, and its main object is to promote chamber music. The overall structure for achieving this has for many years been to run a season of six Thursday evening concerts in Malvern, spread out as evenly as possible between September and May. To this was added a seventh (Sunday) concert and a smaller 'Coffee and Cake' concert on a weekday morning - both aimed at attracting a different audience. The six Thursday evening concerts (currently having to take place on a Sunday) are the core of the offer, and what follows relates to them.

The Club's policy has been to promote a mix: the majority of concerts to be instrumental, but with at least one each season for voice. 'Instrumental' covers a wide field. We always want to include at least two string quartets, a solo piano recital and, to add variety, a concert of duos or trios; these often include the piano, which we hire in. If we can, we like to offer a wind group from time to time and/or some earlier or baroque music. Choirs are a difficult proposition, as they can be expensive due to their numbers.

The Secretary works to a budget set by the Committee, approaching agents to fit artists into the above structure and contracting them to appear at prices we can afford. This is not easy, because artists can be elusive as they are always on the move around the globe. Agents vary! Dates sought will be for one, two or even three seasons ahead, as that is many artists' planning horizon.

Our policy is to seek a mix of established or 'famous' artists, and those who are just as talented, but younger and up-and-coming. The BBC New Generation Artists scheme and major competition prize winners are helpful sources in this respect; and fees will usually be more modest.

The next part of the puzzle is: will Malvern Theatres confirm the dates we want? They have their own scheduling to do, often not as far in advance as ours. Later, there follows a host of practical issues. Where are the artists coming from, and where are they going to next? Do we pick them up at the station, or get them into the Theatre car park? Will they want rehearsal time (invariably they do) and, if so, when? Will they need overnight accommodation? When will we feed them? Do they have any allergies? And so on.



The next dimension is repertoire. The Secretary and our Honorary Music Adviser, Joseph Brand are the main players here and will have their own ideas. We need to keep an eye out for significant anniversaries both for composers' births and deaths, and matters relating to Club history. The Elgar Centenary Concert in 2019 was a good example of the latter. The Secretary keeps a searchable database (kindly created by John Stack) of works previously played at Club concerts - we don't want just the same old warhorses. On the other hand, the great masterpieces are there to be gloried in. Balance, balance . . .

Some artists will be flexible about what they might play. Some like to restrict their output rigorously - for example, a pianist might devote a whole year to concentrate on the Beethoven sonatas. Yet over any one season we want a healthy mix of works, old and new. We were keen to hear more Bach, and did so. We want to explore byways - Nielsen, as well as Mozart, Gurney as well as Britten, Louise Farrenc or Mel Bonis from the neglected female composers of the past. Finally, we need to find room for contemporary composers such as Andrea Torrodi last season, or Lena Sierova next April. Here, we are very much in the hands of the artists: they need to know and champion such pieces.

We expect our concerts to last for around two hours (including the interval): not too long, and certainly not too short - we want value for money. That's another dimension to juggle with as repertoire is chosen.

The final hurdle for the Secretary is the Committee, whose members will have their favourites, and who will make suggestions. So, the wise Secretary (and ours are wise) will consult constantly with the Committee, to ensure a smooth sign off in good time for the next season's programme to be designed, proofread and printed, for distribution to you eager members.

Then on concert days there are always worries, although the Secretary will have issued a checklist to Committee members, who all assist on the night. Final arrangements for the performance need to be confirmed, including lighting, microphone, music stands, etc, in addition to those mentioned earlier.

So, all hail to our Secretaries! Their work (and this is just a part of their duties) takes a great deal of time, effort, patience, tact and diplomacy - and a splash of obduracy too!



Other music - Malvern Theatres

Thursday 3 October	7.30pm	Armonico Consort - <i>Naked Byrd</i> . Music includes his <i>Ave Verum Corpus</i> and parts of his five-part Mass, plus Allegri's <i>Miserere</i> , Sheppard's <i>Libera Nos</i> and music by Rachmaninov, Monteverdi, Elgar and Hildegard of Bingen.	
Saturday 5 October	6.00pm	Offenbach <i>Les Contes d'Hoffmann</i>	The Met ropolitan Opera <small>HD</small> <small>LIVE</small>
Saturday 19 October	6.00pm	Jeanine Tesori <i>Grounded</i> (Met Premiere)	The Met ropolitan Opera <small>HD</small> <small>LIVE</small>
Saturday 19 October	7.30pm	Stephen Hough (piano) plays two Chopin Nocturnes, his Scherzo No.2, Schumann's <i>Fantasia</i> , Liszt's Sonata in B minor and one of his own works.	
Friday 25 October	7.00pm	BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Ben Gurnon, Jennifer Pike (violin). Schubert, Bruch and Mozart.	



Other Music - Elsewhere

Saturday 28 September – Sunday 29 September		Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa If you missed the Brodskys' Shostakovich marathon here, or want to hear them play all his string quartets again over one weekend, visit www.leamingtonmusic.org	
Saturday 5 October	10.00 – 17.00	Alice Ottley Hall, RGS Worcester Come and Sing Handel's <i>Saul</i> , hosted by Elgar Chorale, directed by Piers Maxim. Details at www.elgarchorale.com	
Sunday 6 October	3.30pm	Angel Centre, Worcester Spinacino Consort play 'Music for a Renaissance Princess' www.earlymusicworcs.org	
Sunday 13 October	3.00pm	Huntingdon Hall, Worcester Villiers String Quartet play Haydn, Vivian Fung and Beethoven www.worcserenade.co.uk	
Wednesday 16 October	7.30pm	Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham Carducci Quartet play Mozart, Ravel and Shostakovich www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk	
Sunday 20 October	3.00pm	The Great Hall, Malvern College European Union Chamber Orchestra - director Hans-Peter Hofmann Sellenger's Round (variations on an Elizabethan theme) Mendelssohn, Mozart, Holst, Bartok Tickets from www.malvern-theatres.co.uk	