



SOUNDBOARD

*Newsletter of the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall
and Museum*

No. 37, SUMMER 2019



THE FRIENDS OF ST CECILIA'S HALL AND MUSEUM

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Front cover: Natural trumpet player extraordinaire Jean-François Madeuf and the Rossetti Players performing at St Cecilia's Hall as part of the Sybert Summer Concert Series. See p. 4 for review. (Photos: Daniel Wheeldon)

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New members

The Friends of St Cecilia's Hall are always happy to welcome new members. Please do encourage your friends, family members and colleagues to join us.

They will find a joining form on our website:

www.stceciliasfriends.org.uk.

Alternatively, anyone interested in joining the Friends can **write**, requesting the necessary forms, to: The Treasurer, The Friends of St Cecilia's Hall,
St Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street, Edinburgh EH1 1NQ.

From the Chair's Desk

Greetings Friends! Once again the summer is running away with us and the Fringe is only just around the corner – I hope many of you will have already seen the Fringe Brochure (and booked your tickets!) but it is also nice to be able to include this year's flyer in your copy of *Soundboard* along with further details of the concerts. We have an exciting mix of new performers and seasoned favourites, who will be using instruments from across the University collections. So hopefully there is something for everyone! And as usual, please do get in touch if you are able to give some of your time to help with the running of the concerts – there is no longer any washing up required (hurray!) but we do need people to help with the box office, and with the doors on the day. Please do email concerts@stceciliasfriends.org.uk if you are able to lend a hand for one or more of these dates.

We've also had another retiral from the committee since the last edition of *Soundboard*: Dr Gill French, who has been a stalwart of the Friends and has often given her time at concerts and other events, retired from the committee as of the May committee meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Gill for all the time she has given, and I am sure we will still see her at many of our events being a supporter – especially as her husband Roger is our excellent Webmaster.

The rest of this editorial will be dedicated to a short report on a trip I was very pleased to be able to make in February this year – to attend the first performance on an instrument which I feel I have been a small part of since its inception.

A Swedish Claviorgan

Nearly 10 years ago, during the Edinburgh Festival, I met with Magnus Kjellson, the director of Göteborg Baroque, when he visited St Cecilia's Hall. His purpose for visiting was to consult with me and with Dr Grant O'Brien about an instrument he was hoping to commission, and to study one of the instruments in the collection – the John Crang claviorgan (the inspiration

for my own research on the instrument). Magnus hoped to commission an instrument for Göteborg Baroque emulating one that G.F. Handel was believed to have used in the Drury Lane theatre in London. Claviorgans combine stringed-keyboard instruments (such as harpsichords or pianos) with organs, allowing the portions to be played both separately and together.

Whilst only the briefest of references to this historical instrument survive, when a grand celebration service was staged in Westminster Abbey in 1784 a harpsichord was joined to an organ behind the orchestra for the performance – and the conductor Mr Joah Bates led the vast orchestra from the harpsichord keyboard. This has been termed a ‘long-movement’ with a mechanism to join the two parts running along the floor. It was particularly this kind of claviorgan with a chamber organ at a distance from the harpsichord that Magnus wanted to have built to explore the vast possibilities that it offers in terms of continuo performance. No such instruments have survived, but the Crang harpsichord that is part of the Mirrey collection was originally part of a more conventional claviorgan where the organ pipes and bellows sat underneath the harpsichord.

Over the following years, as Magnus and I both pursued various avenues for projects (all involving commissioning an instrument), we stayed in touch and tried to include some opportunities for each other in our respective funding proposals. It was therefore to my great delight when I found out that Göteborg Baroque had secured funding for an instrument from the Sten A Olsson’s Foundation for Research and Culture (the family that own the Stena Line ferry company). I was even happier when I managed to organise a trip to Göteborg in February this year to attend the inaugural recital on this world-unique instrument – the first time such a claviorgan has been constructed in over 200 years.

As part of the building project, Magnus and the instrument builders produced a series of videos (in Swedish but with English subtitles) which discuss more the process of designing the instrument. Another useful feature that they have built into the instrument is the provision of additional notes to the octave, in part inspired by another Edinburgh instrument – the organ by Thomas Parker – which has separate pipes for C# and Db, for D# and Eb, for Ab and G#, and for A# and Bb. These extra notes allow for much purer tuning systems, but also mean that the Göteborg instrument is very flexible when it is transposed between A415 and A465 depending on the repertoire and other instruments that are being accompanied. These videos can be watched on

Göteborg Baroque's website – <https://www.goteborgbaroque.se/claviorganum/> – and are absolutely fascinating.

Needless to say, I was very excited when I arrived at the Tyska Christinae Kyrka (also known as the German Church) on a surprisingly sunny day towards the end of February 2019. The church sits quite near to the big river that runs through the middle of Göteborg and is almost next door to the *Göteborgs stadsmuseum*, which was originally the offices of the East India Company and houses in its collection a piano claviorgan built by Johann Andreas Stein in the 1770s.

The programme itself started with a solo set of Choral Variations by Pachelbel on *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* which Magnus used to show off the different colours or *timbres* available on both the harpsichord and organ, and indeed how the two elements sounded together. This was followed by J.C. Bach's Wedding Cantata *Meine freundin, du bist Schön* – and after an interval where the audience gathered around the instrument and asked lots of questions the final work in the concert was the glorious cantata *Christ lag in*



The Göteborg claviorgan in situ at the inaugural concert

Todesbanden BWV 4 of J.S. Bach. This was just the icing on the cake of the trip – and the soloists and orchestra were absolutely fabulous.

Sadly, it is not really the done thing to ask a continuo player if you can take his instrument apart (especially during the interval), but I did have a chance to meet up with Magnus as well as Joel Speerstra (who was also closely involved in the design of the instrument) after the concert and celebrate the christening of the claviorgan with them and with the other performers. It was also a great chance to catch up with old friends, and from this I was invited to return to Sweden in October to attend the Göteborg International Organ Academy, which will again be celebrating the claviorgan. By then of course Magnus and his colleagues will also have a lot more experience with the instrument – and I am looking forward to asking many many questions about it! This trip in October is being funded by a Reid School of Music Clutterbuck award (which is available both to current students and to graduates of the department) for which I am very grateful.

Eleanor Smith



Sypert Summer Concert review

The concerts in the Sypert Summer Concert Series, generously supported by George and Joy Sypert, were of particularly high quality this year. Moira Landells who organises these for the University of Edinburgh put together a particularly fine line up, which began with a return visit from the duo of Susanne Ehrhardt (early woodwinds) and John Kitchen, then explored the *Splendours of the Baroque Mandolin* with Ensemble Pizzicar Galante, and concluded with Jean-François Madeuf (natural trumpet) and the Rossetti Players. Daniel Wheeldon, previous bursary awardee and member of the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall, has written a short review of this last concert which captures the excitement of the evening.

Music at the Habsburg Court – Rossetti Players



Listening to historically informed musical practice often involves a lot of effort from the audience. I quite frequently feel exhausted after a natural horn ensemble's attempts at playing Telemann or something, always wondering in the back of my mind whether they're playing out of tune or if I'm simply used to modern harmony and temperament.

I came to hear the Rossetti Players completely unaware of what I was about to experience. The performance began with a hearty and sophisticated fanfare full of every desirable flourish by Jean-François Madeuf,

leaving the hall breathless. This set the tone for the rest of the evening as I settled in to enjoy the musical acrobatics. The Rossetti Players were exceptionally sensitive and interesting in their performance but from my perspective the evening was all about Jean-François Madeuf.

After satisfying the most stringent music critics in the room the trumpeter dismissed his work so far as mere introduction, explaining that now he would begin to use the clarino register and going on to demonstrate his complete mastery of this new palette. The higher clarino register allows the natural trumpet to play in diatonic and even chromatic scales, and of course I knew this in theory but to see it performed so proficiently was truly gratifying. The harmonic series is notoriously difficult to control and in trumpet clarino playing the technical mastery needed to bring this in line with a desired pitch is staggering.

Madeuf may have adopted a relaxed pose with his left hand on his hip raising the trumpet up with a refined underhand grip, but on closer inspection his body was hard at work. Every muscle in his head and every tendon in his neck were at work like the fingers of a violinist performing music that would be technically challenging to proficient valve trumpet players.

The players were adored by the audience who erupted with rapturous applause at the close of the performance.

Daniel Wheeldon

FESTIVAL FRINGE CONCERTS 2019

All concerts are 3–4pm at St Cecilia's Hall (venue 77)

✧ SATURDAY 10TH AUGUST ✧

Sir Nicholas Shackleton Memorial Concert – Andy Saunders (French horn)

This year's Shackleton memorial concert features horn player Andy Saunders playing the Courtois horn from circa 1840. The programme will include the Horn Trio by Brahms.

This concert is generously sponsored by the University of Edinburgh, in memory of Sir Nicholas Shackleton.

✧ WEDNESDAY 14TH AUGUST ✧

Handel Revenged – Masumi Yamamoto (harpsichord)

Handel was famous for making unauthorised quotations of musical material from other composers in his own works. Gottlieb Muffat (1690–1770) responded by “improving” Handel's Eight Great Suites and making revisions to the great master's works. Masumi Yamamoto performs suites in F major and E minor as well as works from Muffat's own *Componimenti Musicali* (1739).

✧ SATURDAY 17TH AUGUST ✧

Masters of the Concerto – Anthony Robson, Gerry McDonald and John Kitchen

The accomplished and versatile team of Anthony Robson, Gerry McDonald and John Kitchen present a programme of virtuoso concertos in miniature by five undisputed masters of the genre: Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann and Corelli. Featuring various combinations of flute, recorders, oboe, oboe d'amore and both continuo and solo harpsichord. ‘Pure delight’ (*The Scotsman*).

✧ WEDNESDAY 21ST AUGUST ✧

Pamela Jackson Concert – Spinacino Consort

At the turn of the 16th century, the first music ever to be printed was published by Ottaviano Petrucci in Venice. Petrucci printed popular chansons from across Europe by famous composers of the day, including Josquin des Prez, Alexander Agricola and Heinrich Isaac, and his publications served as inspiration for the first printed lute books by Francesco Spinacino.

The Spinacino Consort takes inspiration from Spinacino's *Intabulatura de Lauto, Libro Primo e Libro Secondo*, reinventing this repertory for instrumental ensemble and exploring the interactions between various Venetian traditions.

✧ SATURDAY 24TH AUGUST ✧

'If it chance' – Gordon Ferries (guitar) and Stuart Murray Mitchell (tenor)

The Scottish guitarist/composer Gordon Ferries returns to St Cecilia's with tenor Stuart Murray Mitchell, performing Ferries' new songs from 'A Shropshire Lad' and from poems by Byron and Shelley. Also featuring solo music by the great Spanish 19th-century guitarist Dionisio Aguado.

Tickets: £12 (£10 concessions). Under 18s free (ticket required)

Available from the Fringe Office (0131 226 0000),
online via <https://tickets.edfringe.com/>,
or at the door.

NB Pre-booked tickets must be collected in advance
from the Fringe Office.

*See the following pages for more about the concerts
on Wednesday 14th August and Saturday 24th August*

Handel Revenged

Almost exactly six years ago in the summer of 2013, I had the pleasure of performing at St Cecilia's Hall twice in quick succession: once with The Marian Consort directed by Rory McCleery performing Purcell and his contemporaries, and again with the Akenside Players as part of our winners' concert tour after being named winners in the Fenton House Keyboard Ensemble Competition in London the previous year.

I remember being absolutely mesmerised by the sheer number of historical keyboard instruments in the collection, and I cannot express my excitement on having another opportunity to visit and play a solo recital this summer!

It is well known that George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) made many quotations of musical material from other composers in his own works. Gottlieb Muffat (1690–1770) responded by publishing “improvements” to Handel's Eight Great Suites in 1736. My recital will present the updated version of Handel's E minor suite with numerous added ornaments and other revisions. In order to make the comparison clear and interesting, I have decided to intersperse Handel's originals in this performance, only playing Muffat's version on the repetition of the dances. Where there is no opportunity to present both because of a lack of repeats as in the opening movement, I will present Muffat's version.

Gottlieb Muffat was the youngest son of Georg Muffat (1653–1704) whose writings on the French style after studying in Paris are still considered invaluable for anyone who wishes to be historically informed today. Gottlieb was a pupil of Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741), an authority on counterpoint, and it is interesting to see some of the changes in voice leading that Muffat makes on Handel's music. He also makes modifications to the distribution of the hands

Masumi Yamamoto (harpsichord) performs *Handel Revenged* on **Wednesday 14th August** at 3pm as part of the Edinburgh Fringe 2019 'Sounds of St Cecilia's'.

in order to make the instructions clearer for the player, and to reflect Handel's contrapuntal writing.

The programme will also include two works from Gottlieb Muffat's own *Componimenti Musicali* (1739) which Muffat himself described as "the most beautiful product to be met within all of Germany" and from which publication Handel made further quotations. These can be found in Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* and the Op.6 Concerti Grossi, and the quotations are taken



from the very suite I have chosen to play in this recital. According to William Boyce (1711–1779), Handel "took other men's pebbles and polished them into diamonds". In the case of Gottlieb Muffat and Handel, however, these "borrowings" happened both ways and they appear to be a result of an amicable professional relationship, each benefiting by building upon the other's work.

Masumi Yamamoto

Masumi Yamamoto was born in Osaka, Japan, grew up on Australia's Gold Coast and has been based in the UK since 2001. She was a prize winner at the International Harpsichord Competition in Bruges, and this year gave a solo recital in the London Handel Festival.

Masumi holds a PhD from the University of York, and was on the panel of judges for the Broadwood Horniman Harpsichord Competition in April 2017 along with harpsichordists Sophie Yates and Robin Bigwood. She has played with orchestras such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, St James's Baroque, Yorkshire Baroque Soloists, and the International Baroque Players. Masumi is now the Artistic Director of a Baroque concert series 'Sydenham Concerts' and is Teacher of Harpsichord at St Paul's Girls' School.



'If it chance'

For this year's Fringe concert series at St Cecilia's I will be performing a new programme of solo guitar music and songs with the fantastic tenor Stuart Murray Mitchell. The programme will feature first performances of two sets of songs for tenor and guitar composed by myself. The newest, and also the title of the concert, '**If it chance**', comprises three songs set to poems from A.E. Housman's '**A Shropshire Lad**' (1896). The three poems I have chosen don't appear in any of the more famous settings but work very well as a group. They are:

No 30 '**Others, I am not the first**'

No 44 '**Shot! So quick, so clean an ending**'

No 45 '**If it chance your eye offend you**'

Housman's poetry cycle '**A Shropshire Lad**' (contrary to its somewhat upbeat title) inhabits a dark terrain with a surprisingly high body count. The three poems in my set seem however to take this to a new level in terms of subject matter.

No 30 explores the author's tortured and ambivalent feelings towards his own sexuality. The poem mixes sensuality with self-loathing and desire with guilt, all accompanied by the ever present spectre of death which looms large over the entire cycle of 63 poems.

Nos 44 and 45 are thematically linked to the same event, the forced suicide by a military 'Honour court' of a young Rochdale cadet for homosexuality. Given Housman's difficult and repressed relationship with his own homosexuality and his long-suffering unrequited love for a fellow Oxford student Moses Jackson, this event obviously had a particular and painful resonance for him.

Gordon Ferries (guitar) and Stuart Murray Mitchell (tenor) perform '*If it chance*' on **Saturday 24th August** at 3pm as part of the Edinburgh Fringe 2019 'Sounds of St Cecilia's'.

No 45 uses material from Christ's 'Sermon on the mount' (Matthew 5.29): 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out'. Housman's skill in using this quasi Biblical voice to justify what he obviously found inhuman and execrable is chilling indeed but he takes this technique to a new level in No 44. This poem is narrated by the voice of an authority figure (very likely the officer or officers concerned) who speaks in a congratulatory tone to the dead soldier for having put an end to 'the household traitor'. This strikes me as a highly audacious move on Housman's part, using irony to express the opposite of the speaker's words, especially given late 19th-century attitudes to homosexuality.

It is difficult to imagine, given the immense popularity of '**A Shropshire Lad**' among World War One soldiers, the way in which this poem was perceived: even the hardest of hearts would be at pains to interpret it literally and even more so to sympathise with the narrator's brutality, even though the words no doubt express much in contemporary thinking, especially in the upper ranks of the British army.

I have set all three songs strophically with an interplay of motifs between the guitar and voice. Two of the songs feature a tonal or stylistic shift in the final stanza. It is a particular delight to accompany Stuart on my original Panormo guitar of 1839, the style of which was still very current during Housman's lifetime.

This is equally true for the second set of three songs featured in the concert, entitled '**Meditations**'. This features settings of poems by Byron, Shelley and the less familiar Theodore Wratislaw.

'**There is a pleasure in the pathless woods**' is a famous and oft quoted stanza from the closing lines of Byron's '**Childe Harold's pilgrimage**', perhaps the archetypal Romantic work. It reflects beauty and melancholy of the twin Romantic notions of solitude and untamed nature. This song is through composed but uses a passacaglia ground bass as its starting point and moves through various modal harmonies towards the end of the song. Byron was in many ways the starting point for my own compositions which began in 2014 with the song cycle '**Sun of the sleepless**', featuring nine of his poems. These days Byron's reputation as the ideal Regency rake and brooding outsider – 'Mad, bad and dangerous to know' – have somewhat eclipsed what he was so famous for in the first place and his sublime poetry is always a joy to set.

I first came across 'Eros Dante' by Theodore Wratislaw as the epigraph to a short story '**Rue Barrée**' in Robert W. Chambers' fantastical collection of

1895 '**The King in yellow**'. Its obvious sensuality seems to conjure an almost hallucinatory atmosphere upon the reader, as the poet meditates upon the object of his desire. I have set the poem in 7/8 in an attempt to capture the disorientating effect of the words. The song, dedicated to my good friend and wonderful musician Rob MacKillop, begins with a short prelude for guitar which explores the forthcoming song.

The final song in the set uses the great poem '**Ozymandias**' by Byron's close friend and fellow Romantic P.B. Shelley. The poem meditates ultimately on the futility of human existence and its pretensions of power when contrasted with the huge sweep of the passing centuries. Written in the form of a sonnet, '**Ozymandias**' (the Greek name for Ramesses II) describes a traveller's feelings on coming across the broken remains of a gargantuan statue of the great Pharaoh in the desert. At the climax of the poem 'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings', I have tried to set the words devoid of all majesty and menace and rather as a voice, long lost to the mists of time, struggling to be heard. Shelley's poem is perhaps one of the most profound utterances on human existence.

Alongside the songs I will be performing solo guitar works by the great Spanish guitarist/composer Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849), a contemporary



of both Byron and Shelley. Like his friend, duo partner, house mate and fellow Spaniard, the great Fernando Sor, Aguado made his home in Paris. Unlike Sor, however, Aguado had avoided the conflict with Napoleon by moving with his mother to a small village outside Madrid to concentrate on his guitar studies. Also, unlike Sor's extensive and varied output, Aguado's compositions are for solo guitar only. Much of his work is didactic in purpose and in keeping with Sor's output of a similar nature is of the highest musical quality; his studies and exercises (a selection of which appear in this concert) contain some of his most beautiful music. His '**Nuevo método para guitarra**' (1843) contains much of what is now considered modern technique. Aguado also clearly had an ability to compose short and highly attractive works in a popular idiom, including his **6 Menuets and vases** opus 12 (three of which begin the concert). For some inexplicable reason Aguado's works are unjustly neglected on the concert platform today. His music does place technical and musical demands on the performer but is entirely worth the effort for both player and listener alike.

The programme is completed by a short work for solo guitar composed by myself entitled '**Manfred suite**'. It consists of three short movements with titles taken from Byron's Faustian drama '**Manfred**' of 1817. The play had a profound effect on numerous composers including Tchaikovsky and Schumann. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, perhaps inspired by its Alpine setting as well as its melancholy, wrote music for piano duet inspired by the play. The titles in my piece are all taken from the incantation in Act I.

The eponymous hero of '**Manfred**' in many ways typifies the Byronic archetype – a brooding Romantic figure, cast out from society and tortured by forbidden, lost love and the unspecified sins of his past. The desolate isolation of the play's Alpine setting and supernatural elements further enhance the otherworldly atmosphere captured so beautifully by Byron.

It is always the greatest pleasure to play in the fabulous setting of St Cecilia's Hall, which seems to provide an oasis of calm and contemplation alongside beautiful music during the sometimes overwhelming tumult of the Fringe. I have been performing as part of their Fringe programme for many years now but I find it to be a space which constantly reinvents itself for me as a performer.

Gordon J.S. Ferries



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