

# HARMONY

No 254

October - December 2016



THE  
MUSIC CLUB  
OF LONDON



The Media Centre at Lord's Cricket Ground

# HARMONY

Quarterly Journal of the Music Club of London  
No 254 – October to December 2016

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## A Traditional Pre-Christmas Visit to Dresden 4th to 9th December 2016

\*\*\*\*\*

*If you are interested in overseas travel events, please let me know. I will keep you informed, which will give you an opportunity to book before the offer is sent to all members*

I have for some years been trying to go to Dresden for my pre-Christmas Music Club travel. This has always fallen through; usually because hotels were full or I could not get enough theatre tickets. Because I have been holding hotel rooms for nearly a year now, and the opera house has just confirmed its winter programme, I think I have what it takes to offer a traditional pre-Christmas trip to members. The Dresden Christmas Market has been held for hundreds of years; people travel from far and wide to visit it. I have always felt it is one the Music Club should visit too. The Semper Oper usually offers a traditional programme of performances at this time of year, and they are doing just that this year. To add to the interest of the programme I have arranged a visit to Meissen, to see the town and visit the famous porcelain company. A tour of Dresden and two lunches are included. I do hope you will be able to participate. As I shall soon be under pressure to release hotel rooms an early response would be wise!

- Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Check-in at London Heathrow for an early afternoon flight to Berlin. Transfer by coach from Berlin Tegel airport to the Westin Bellevue Hotel in Dresden, where we have B&B accommodation in their superior en suite rooms.
- Mon 5<sup>th</sup> Tour of Dresden with an English-speaking guide, followed by lunch at a local restaurant.  
Evening performance of *La Bohème* (Puccini) at the Semper Oper.
- Tue 6<sup>th</sup> Visit Meissen with an English-speaking guide, an introduction to the town, a visit to the Meissen porcelain factory and lunch at a local restaurant.
- Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Free day, until the evening performance of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Offenbach).
- Thu 8<sup>th</sup> Free day, until the evening performance of the ballet *The Nutcracker*.
- Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Coach transfer to Berlin Tegel airport. Check-in for an early evening flight to London Heathrow.

\*\*\*\*\*

### You are responsible for your own travel and health insurance

Cost: to include all of the above:

£1100 per person sharing a Twin-bedded or Double-bedded room.

£1200 per person in a single room.

Payments: All-in-one payment on booking, or

£900 pp by 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Balance by 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (£300 single room, £200 pp sharing).

You may like to send me post-dated cheques for the further payments when making your booking. I will not cash these until the due dates.

Apply to: Bryan Suitters, The Music Club of London, 24 Burywick, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2AH.

Cheques payable to *The Music Club of London*

# ALDEBURGH

The Mastersingers Company & the Music Club of London

*present*

**“SOUNDS, AND SWEET AIRS”**

**23-26 September 2016**

There are still places available for hotel and self-catering packages.

Please contact Rosemary Frischer for details:

Tel: 020 7700 7999; Email: [rfrischer@onetel.com](mailto:rfrischer@onetel.com)



**MCL ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER**  
*at*  
The Royal Air Force Club  
*on*  
**WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER**

**Guest-of-honour: John Suchet**

*See enclosed application form for details*



## PUBLICITY LEAFLETS

A number of years ago the Music Club had some publicity leaflets printed, consisting of an A4 page folded in three, a trifold. Ann Archbold has been trying to get these trifolds into all the public libraries in London, as well as musical venues and churches that hold concerts. As you can imagine, this is proving impossible, so, if you would like to help, perhaps you could let Ann know if you are willing to take a number to put into your local or main library or church, and to keep an eye on them from time to time to see whether they need to be replenished.

## 47th ANNUAL TORBAY MUSICAL WEEKEND – 18-21 NOVEMBER 2016

*For more than 40 years music-lovers have gathered in Torquay to meet old friends and make new ones, and to listen and talk to a wide variety of people from the world of music, such as critics, performers, composers, broadcasters, presenters and writers. In fact two MCL favourites, Tony Palmer and Terry Barfoot, have recently been part of the programme. Enjoy 4\* hotel accommodation with excellent food at the historic Palace Hotel, Torquay with no extra charge for single rooms. **Rosemary Frischer***

I feel that I should give this weekend a 'plug'. This will be the fourth time I have attended this splendid event held in my favourite venue, the **Palace Hotel, Torquay**. I lived in Torquay for many years in my youth and the Hotel brings back many happy memories. Unfortunately, this will probably be the final year at the Palace as it is up for sale for £10 million for redevelopment. Since 1921 the **Palace** has been a leading Torquay hotel but is actually a considerably extended version of a private house built in 1841 in the Italianate style. During the War it was selected as a hospital for RAF officers but in October 1942 a German bomber scored a direct hit on the East Wing, severing it completely from the rest of the building. Tragically, the hotel was full with 203 patients and 64 people were killed. The hotel was then evacuated but sadly there was another raid in 1943 and the building was abandoned for the remainder of the war. The hotel re-opened in 1948 and virtually all the pre-war personnel applied to rejoin. With 70 staff and most of its facilities restored, the Palace was reborn as one of the South-West's leading hotels.



War Damage



Present-day Hotel

### PROGRAMME

*This always opens with a Welcome Reception before dinner on the Friday night.*

**The Hanover Band** – Caroline Brown, Founder & Artistic Director, will give an in-depth talk with musical highlights about this distinguished British period instrument orchestra

**Jacqueline du Pré** - Chairman, John Isaac, takes a brief look at the life and music of the naturally gifted cellist cut down by multiple sclerosis in her mid-twenties

**Notable Live Performances** - Dr Jonathan Maw will present a variety of live performances with intriguing aspects, covering concerts in USA, USSR, France and Scotland

**Six Degrees of Separation** - It is said that everyone and everything is six or fewer steps from any other person in the world. *Gramophone's* Editor-in-Chief and BBC3 presenter, James Jolly, tests the theory and reveals some surprising connections within the world of classical music

**Connections: Grieg, Delius and Grainger** - Dr Lionel Caley, Adviser and Hon. Archivist of the Delius Society, discusses how the lives of these three seemingly diverse composers became closely entwined in the European musical scene at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

**Saverio Mercadante – The Neglected Genius of Bel Canto** An introduction by Andrew Borkowski to the superb music to be found in the operas of Mercadante, who was for a while the most important opera composer in Italy. Those who admire Verdi will find Mercadante a revelation

**Recital by the Comberti-Cole Duo** (cello and piano) in a programme which will include works by Beethoven, Haydn and Schubert

**Elisabeth: A Misunderstood Diva?** Maureen Greenhouse explores the controversial life and career of the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, with recordings taken from across her varied musical output

**Cheltenham Music Festival, past and present** - Since its first concert in 1945 this Festival has become one of Europe's most admired summertime celebrations of classical music. The Artistic Director, Meurig Bowen, discusses some of its many high points over the years

**Grip your Garlic and Crucifix - an agent's viewpoint** - Patrick Garvey is an ex-professional musician who has run his own classical agency for the last 26 years. He will talk about the relationships between artist/agent and promoter/agent - with a twinkle in his eye

**A Pleb's Guide to Classical Music** – David Wherrell presents a musical autobiography of an ordinary man, the effect of classical music on his formative years and how the ageing process brings changes in taste. Not for the faint-hearted, this irreverent journey cuts a swathe through classical music as we know it

**The Music of Sir Patrick Moore** - He was known for his record-breaking broadcasting and passion for all things space and science. Music Archivist, Christopher Beaumont, explores the late British icon's other great passion – his fascinating music compositions. In an illustrated programme, Christopher on Xylophone and Effects and Peter Rhodes on Piano will perform examples of Sir Patrick's wide range of music. Also included are interesting anecdotes, history, images and stories

*For details of this weekend, please contact Gillian Babbs: Email: [gillianbabbs@waitrose.com](mailto:gillianbabbs@waitrose.com)*

## EVENTS – OCTOBER to DECEMBER 2016

### October

16 Dover Quartet  
21 RPO, Cadogan Hall  
27 Fauré Requiem  
31 *Mavra & Iolanta*

### November

8 Walk: St John's Wood  
10 Duruflé Requiem

### November (contd)

12 *Anastasia*  
15 *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*

### December

4 – 9 Christmas Market, Dresden  
14 Christmas Dinner  
18 A Christmas Cracker

## TRANSACTION CHARGE

*For tickets please apply on the appropriate form to the person named.  
An administration charge of 50p per ticket (to a maximum of £2.50) should be added  
to the ticket total. There is NO extra charge for Events/Visits.  
Please enclose an SAE with your form and payment. Cheques should be made payable to **The  
Music Club of London** with an upper limit in case of price change*

### 16 October, Sunday at 11.30am

Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street

### DOVER QUARTET

**Dvorak**

String Quartet in F Op. 96, *American*

**Smetana**

String Quartet No.1 in E minor, *From my life*

Smetana and Dvorak were pioneers of Czech music when their homeland fell under Austro-Hungarian rule. Their works helped shape a distinctive national cultural identity and attracted worldwide interest. The Dover Quartet, winner of the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, pairs Dvorak's String Quartet in F Op 96 with Smetana's autobiographical String Quartet No. 1 in E minor. Please indicate on the booking form if you would like to have lunch at a nearby restaurant after the concert.

**Tickets: £13.00, £11.00** (concessions), incl. programme and coffee/sherry/juice.  
Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**21 October, Friday at 7.30pm**  
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace  
**ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Mozart</b> | <i>Don Giovanni</i> Overture             |
| <b>Mozart</b> | <i>Ave verum corpus</i>                  |
| <b>Mozart</b> | Piano Concerto No. 20                    |
| <b>Haydn</b>  | Mass in B-flat major, <i>Heiligmesse</i> |

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Hilary Davan Wetton</b> | Conductor |
| <b>Alexandra Dariescu</b>  | Piano     |

**City of London Choir**  
Vocal soloists to be announced

Back by popular demand, Hilary Davan Wetton conducts the leading City of London Choir for another instalment of music from masters of the Classical era. What better way to open the concert than with Mozart's *Din Giovanni* Overture, full of orchestral gravitas? Also joined by vivacious pianist Alexandra Dariescu, the programme includes Mozart's immensely popular and influential Piano Concerto No. 20, his exquisite *Ave verum corpus* and Haydn's majestic and moving *Heiligmesse*.

**Tickets: £11.25** including programme. Show your ticket at the RPO table to claim your programme.

Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**27 October, Thursday at 7pm**  
St Clement Danes Church, Strand

**FAURÉ REQUIEM**

In association with The Music Club of London

**Brandenburg Singers and Brandenburg Festival Chorus**  
conducted by **Robert Porter**

St Clement Danes is situated across from the Royal Courts of Justice on the Strand. It is one of the two 'island churches' the other being St Mary-le-Strand and is claimed to be the one in the nursery rhyme '*Oranges and Lemons*' – and indeed the bells do play that tune! The church was completed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1682, but was almost completely destroyed during the London Blitz on May 1941, its interior gutted by fire. Following an appeal for funds by the RAF, the church was completely restored, and reconsecrated on 19 October 1958 to become the Central Church of the Royal Air Force.

**Tickets: £18.00**

Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.



**31 October, Monday at 7pm**

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Silk Street Theatre, Silk Street  
**STRAVINSKY: *MAVRA* and TCHAIKOVSKY: *IOLANTA***

A double bill of contrasting Russian masterpieces, which both composers (who were famously self-critical) considered among their best works. Stravinsky's *Mavra* – dedicated to Tchaikovsky – is a neoclassical opera buffa of disguise and trickery and contrasts perfectly with Tchaikovsky's own touchingly beautiful tale of Iolanta's journey from blindness to enlightenment. The Tchaikovsky will be in Russian; the Stravinsky, as directed by the composer, in the vernacular.

**Tickets: £15.00.**

Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**8 November, Tuesday at 10.50 for 11am**

Meet at St John's Wood Underground Station  
**GUIDED WALK: ST JOHN'S WOOD**

Join Ann Archbold for a 2-hour walk around "leafy" St John's Wood, home of cricket at Lord's, but especially known as the place where many artists chose to live and where Edwardian gentlemen housed their mistresses.

**Tickets: £9.00 members, £10.00 guests.**

Please apply by letter to Ann Archbold.

**10 November, Thursday at 7.30pm**

St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, Holborn Viaduct EC1  
**DURUFLÉ REQUIEM**

**MONTEVERDI *Beatus vir* and MOZART *Missa Brevis***

In association with The Music Club of London

The choir of St Mary's Wimbledon will be conducted by Max Barley. St Sepulchre is the largest parish church in the City of London, with a history dating back to 1137. It was rebuilt in 1450, only to suffer in the Great Fire of 1666. Its shell was rebuilt by Wren's masons in 1670-1671. The Execution Bell – a hand bell on display in the church - was rung by the St Sepulchre's bellman at the midnight of an execution at the nearby Newgate Prison. In the 20th Century, St Sepulchre's became known as the National Musicians Church.

**Tickets: £18.00.**

Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**12 November, Saturday at 1.30pm**  
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden  
**TCHAIKOVSKY and MARTINU: ANASTASIA**

The Royal Ballet presents Kenneth Macmillan's powerful three-act telling of the true story of Anna Anderson, a disturbed and withdrawn psychiatric patient, who sensationally claimed to be the youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, having survived the Romanovs' brutal assassination in 1918. The ballet originally began with Andersen's identity crisis as she grapples with her memories in an asylum, provoked by archival footage of the Grand Duchess Anastasia. Two preceding acts were later added that bring to life through splendid designs by Bob Crowley the Romanov family's cosseted Imperial world. Should we believe Anna? MacMillan and now an exciting new generation of Royal Ballet Artists leave us to decide. The principals will be Lauren Cuthbertson, Sarah Lamb and Steven McRae.

**Tickets: £21.00** Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**15 November, Tuesday at 6.15pm**  
Barbican, Cinema 2, enter via Beech Street  
**LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN**  
Relayed live from the Royal Opera House

The splendid cast for Offenbach's opera is led by Vittorio Grigolo in the starring role of Hoffmann. The three different women who inspire him are Sofia Fomina (Dr Coppelius's astonishing mechanical doll), Christina Rice (the sensual seductress Giulietta) and Sonya Yoncheva (an angelic singer with a fatal flaw). Thomas Hampson plays the Four Villains – each a different incarnation of the nemesis who steals Hoffmann's loves from him. The staging is full of theatrical magic and the famous *Barcarolle* is just one of the many highlights of Offenbach's melodious and dramatic music.

**Tickets: £21.00.** Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

**18 December, Sunday at 3pm**  
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace  
**A CHRISTMAS CRACKER**  
**Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

|                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Nick Davies</b>     | Conductor |
| <b>Anna-Jane Casey</b> | Vocalist  |
| <b>Graham Bickley</b>  | Vocalist  |

This festive concert is back for a delightful performance of festive songs and music. With Sloane Square in all its festive glory, A Christmas Cracker is sure to fill you with good cheer and get your Yuletide celebrations off to a joyful start.

**Tickets: £13.50**, including programme. Show your ticket at the RPO table to claim your programme. Please apply to Marjorie Wilkins.

## MCL TOUR OF THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE - 5 AUGUST 2016

Ann Archbold organised a small group on a tour of the Royal Court Theatre which was conducted by Adam Lawler, their Front of House Manager.

Adam detailed the extensive history of the theatre starting with the first incarnation of the present building in 1888. It was quite a large theatre initially but its use changed to that of a cinema in the 1930s until it was closed by bomb damage in WW2. It re-opened in 1952 under the aegis of the English Stage Company, who still run it. That company's third production, which opened in 1956, was John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Although opening to largely empty houses and terrible reviews, it is now regarded as stimulating the beginning of modern British theatre. It was followed by another Osborne play, *The Entertainer*, commissioned by Laurence Olivier, who took the lead. Issues of censorship plagued the company in the 1960s, causing them to turn the theatre into a private club until such censorship by the Lord Chamberlain was abolished in 1968. The theatre has made a name for itself by launching many playwrights who would otherwise have not found a stage for their work because of the modernist nature of their scripts

Having split into two smaller theatres in the 1960s, a large grant from the Arts Council enabled a complete reconstruction in 1995. The theatre continues to attract new and different audiences. A good example of this is that at the time of our tour the entire theatre building was being used as a Festival for young theatricals for three weeks.

The major anti-Semitic scandal caused by Caryl Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children* in 2009 now seems to have been forgotten in that she is still currently being asked to introduce her new works there. Similar outspoken productions are regularly played at the theatre, including one recently criticised for its depiction of modern Germans acceptance of the atrocities of their Nazi past; and another about intolerance towards London's modern Muslim community.

The tour included all the backstage areas, which certainly caused one to have admiration for the complex productions that the company manages to stage in such cramped quarters!

The walls of many of the rather vertical staircases in the theatre are covered with posters from old productions, most having ticket prices of around 7s 6d! Needless to say, ticket prices today are dramatically different from those, but the theatre does still encourage adventurous audiences with special pricing every Monday for purchases online after 9am at only £10. This is a real bargain, especially considering the unusually comfortable seating in the main theatre. An even greater bargain is the standing tickets for all performances at only 10p each!

**Robert Mansell**

**SHAKESPEARE SINGS!**  
**ST GABRIEL'S CHURCH, PIMLICO, 16 JUNE 2016**

In the handsome surroundings of the lovely Victorian Gothic church of St Gabriel's, Robert Mansell presented his own contribution to the Shakespeare Quatercentenary celebrations, in the form of a fascinating and illuminating lecture illustrated by songs from his musical play, *Love in the Life of Shakespeare*. He took as his premise the fact that very few solid facts are known about Shakespeare's life. This has given him a certain amount of latitude in creating a story for his play, which is a judicious mix of known facts, probabilities, possibilities and downright dramatic licence.

After a brief description of what is known about Shakespeare's early life, Robert's first piece of dramatic licence is for Shakespeare to be entranced by a group of travelling players on the Stratford town green. Having reached London, he makes friends with Christopher Marlowe and falls in love with his Dark Lady, who, according to Robert, is Emilia Lanier, the Italianate wife of a court musician who published her own poetry - clearly more of a kindred spirit for the young Shakespeare than his hapless, uneducated wife, Anne Hathaway, back in Stratford. Marlowe's horrific murder in a Deptford tavern is also factual, but only in the musical does Shakespeare witness it. Robert surmises that the dual tragedies of Marlowe's murder and the death of Shakespeare's young son Hamnet combined to darken his later works, which even quote some of Marlowe's lines. The musical traces Shakespeare's growing success as a writer alongside his dual romances with Emilia and with his patron, the Earl of Southampton, both of whom are believed to have been the subjects of certain of the Sonnets, and his rivalry with the older playwright Thomas Kyd, who also wrote plays on the subjects of King Lear and, possibly, Hamlet. In the musical, Kyd is enraged that Shakespeare has 'stolen' the plot of the latter, and in revenge publishes the Sonnets, creating a scandal so great that Shakespeare has to leave London, though not before James I proclaims Shakespeare's company "The King's Men", giving the opportunity for an extended, optimistic finale to the first half. The second half deals with Shakespeare's return to Stratford and his discontented wife, his famous will which leaves poor Anne only his second-best bed, his death, and the publication of the Folio which will ensure his immortality. As Robert pointed out in his summing-up, nothing about Shakespeare is as definite as it seems. We have no definitive portrait of him; even the memorial bust in Stratford church has been subject to alteration over the years, the only surviving words in his handwriting are six scrawling signatures, and the authorship of his plays has been hotly debated down the years. But surely his existence and his authorship are authenticated beyond doubt by the fact that his theatrical colleagues thought so highly of him that they financed the publication of his works after his death, including a number of glowing eulogies, most notably from Ben Jonson.

Robert's astonishing skill in distilling many of his lyrics from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, with occasional borrowings from Marlowe, testifies to his deep knowledge of the Complete Works. I was fascinated to hear how he dovetailed his own words with those from a variety of Shakespearean sources into an apparently seamless whole. The style of the musical numbers is wide-ranging, taking in the British and Broadway musical theatre traditions, with entertaining, grateful, above all enjoyable pieces such as the witty duet for Emilia and Elizabeth I, "Men, men, men!"; the two beautiful love scenes for Shakespeare

and Emilia; and Anne Hathaway's scathing commentary on her marriage, "Second Best Bed". Other pieces are positively operatic, especially Shakespeare's stunning aria, "When in disgrace", sung on the road home to Stratford, Elizabeth I's rumination "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow"; Anne's lament "Love is Blind", the impressive Act I finale, "Fame and Fortune", and, my personal favourite, the shimmering fantasy quartet "Two Loves", which was surely inspired by Verdi. I also especially liked James I's catchy little ditty, "Brevity is the Soul of Wit", in which he presumes to lecture Shakespeare on the art of playwriting. I would love to see Shakespeare's death scene, "Here we wander in illusions", performed onstage as Robert described, with the dying writer surrounded by ghostly characters from the plays.

The singers were superb. Adam Marsden took full advantage of the operatic range and power of Shakespeare's music, and Janet Fischer's strong soprano created two musically and dramatically diverse characters in the lyrical, passionate Emilia and the disillusioned Anne. Mae Heydorn's sumptuous mezzo made me wish that Queen Elizabeth's role was larger. Christopher Turner excelled in the comedy of James I's song and his voice soared in "Two Loves", and Julian Debelieu, a singer new to me, contributed a gorgeous black-toned bass as Burbage, Kyd, and Shakespeare's lawyer Collins. They were nobly backed by four excellent instrumentalists, Petar Dimov, Leon Keuffer, Alison Holford and Simon Tong.

This was an evening in which I learned much about a subject I thought I knew already, and heard enough of Robert's score to make me wish that I could witness a full performance sometime.

### **Katie Barnes**



(Photograph by Sam Hu)

## TOUR OF LORD'S CRICKET GROUND – JUNE 2016

About a baker's dozen of us repaired to the Grace Gate, Lord's Cricket Ground, to be met by the indefatigable trouper Ann Archbold. We arrived promptly to witness the hustle and bustle of tradesmen and officials busying themselves with preparations for the forthcoming test match, England versus Sri Lanka.

Our guide for the 100-minute tour, Graham, was a real scream; he was entertaining, witty and above all very knowledgeable on all aspects of the "wonderful game". The tour commenced with a visit to the MCC museum, which is located on two floors. We were shown the famous Ashes Urn, the Prudential Trophy and many other cricketing artefacts. Our guide explained in infinite detail the history of cricket and the Lord's Cricket Ground, whose illustrious history goes back to around 1780. Having been swelled with facts and figures, we moved on to the famous Lord's Real Tennis Court adjoining the museum to see a game in play at a fast and furious pace.

The next part of the tour was the MCC pavilion with its famous "Long Room". Designed by Thomas Verity and built in 1889–1890, the pavilion has achieved Grade II architectural status. Like the rest of Lord's, the pavilion is owned by Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) but is also used by Middlesex County Cricket Club and the England national cricket team. The current pavilion was opened in 1890 at a cost of £21,000, after the original pavilion was destroyed by fire. Until 1999 women, with the exception of Queen Elizabeth II, were not permitted to enter the pavilion as members during play, due to the gender-based membership policy of MCC. The 1998 decision to allow female MCC members represented a historic modernisation of the pavilion and its club. When Lord's is hosting a test match, only members of the MCC are permitted in the pavilion. However, for all other matches, members of Middlesex and their opponents are permitted in the pavilion, with the option of bringing two guests. The dress code in the pavilion is notoriously strict. Men are required to wear "ties and tailored coats and acceptable trousers with appropriate shoes" and women "dresses; or skirts or trousers worn with blouses, and appropriate shoes". This policy has been criticised by some MCC members, who complained that the dress code was being flouted on *Twenty20* match days by members' guests. The seating is unique too, in that they are high-backed bar-type stools with superior backs and arm rests.

The pavilion features many interesting facilities including the Long Room, described as "the most evocative four walls in world cricket", a room players walk through on their way from the dressing rooms to the field, a walk which is notoriously long and complex. Our guide humorously related how, on his Test debut in 1975, David Steele literally got lost "and ended up in the pavilion's basement toilets"! The "dressing rooms" are designated for home and away teams.

Each dressing room has its own balcony, from which players waiting to bat or other team personnel can watch the progress of the game. Our host advised us of the preferred seats of the good and the famous of the “wonderful game”. If a player manages to score a century or take five wickets in a test match innings, their names are placed on the Lord's Honours Board, located in the dressing rooms. England players' achievements are recorded on boards in the home dressing room and all other nationalities in the away dressing room. However, several notable players, such as Shane Warne and Sachin Tendulkar, have failed to have their names placed on the Honours Board.

With time running away, we had a brisk walk to the opposing end of the pavilion, referred to as the Nursery End, to visit the futuristic-looking media stand built to celebrate the millennium, the J P Morgan Media Centre, which became an instant icon in the world of cricket. The preserve of journalists and commentators on match days, it offers a great opportunity for entertaining, with panoramic views of the ground. As the world's only single-shell aluminium building, this ultra-modern pod is an extraordinary engineering feat achieved through the precision of shipbuilding technology. It opened to international acclaim and won the prestigious Stirling Prize for architecture in 1999. Our genial host explained the layout of the playing field showing the weather vane “Old Father Time” in grim reaper stance, or Death personified, perched next to the Mound Stand. Holding his scythe over his shoulder and one bail over the stumps in a skeletal hand, he enacts Law 16(3) of cricket: *'After the call of Time, the bails shall be removed from both wickets.'* Beneath Father Time, the slope runs across the playing area from north to south down a drop of two and a half metres, known as “The Lord's Slope”. The size of the incline of the slope means that even when Middlesex CCC and England's tallest player, Steven Finn (who measures 6'8”) is fielding on the lowest boundary, his teammates fielding opposite him on the highest boundary are standing above the top of his head. To conclude our tour we made our way back to the Grace Gate for our lunch at the Lord's Tavern.

Thank you, Ann, for being an MCL rock and yet again organising a wonder tour...On a personal note...it is Ann and others who organise these events, which, dare I say it, make the Music Club of London tick.

**Michael Badger**





The  
Lord's  
Museum

Ready for  
lunch at  
the Lord's  
Tavern



(Photographs by Margaret Hilton)



The Royal  
Court  
Theatre

(See Robert Mansell's report on page 11)



***IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA*, GLYNDEBOURNE, 22 MAY 2016  
and  
*L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI*, GARSINGTON, 4 JUNE 2016**

In search of that elusive 'feel-good' factor

It is easy to understand why summer festival companies choose to stage Rossini operas. The spontaneity, the familiar tunes and general 'joie de vivre' are guaranteed to put audiences in a joyous mood, to send them home with feet tapping and a smile, if not a whistle, on their lips. There's the theory. However, perhaps each and every Rossini libretto should have a plain cover and, written on it in large black typeface, 'Health Warning – realisation is more difficult than it at first seems'.

*Il Barbiere* was not a success at its Rome 1816 debut, was considered derivative and resoundingly booed by fans of Paisiello's earlier and much-loved work of the same name. Rossini claimed it took him around 13 days to compose and that he was paid 1,200 Francs plus a hazel-coloured suit, so he would look good whilst conducting. It is perhaps surprising therefore that this opera buffa has survived to become one of the most popular and most performed works in the standard repertoire.

The first-night performance of Glyndebourne's new 2016 production showed great promise, which one hopes was fulfilled during its run. With a colourful, modernist stage set somewhat reminiscent of that used for last year's production of *Der Rosenkavalier*, the players are given full rein to project their roles on to this semi-abstract backdrop. Baritone 'bari-hunk' Bjorn Burger as the Barber Figaro appears dressed and acting as if he has just stepped out of an expensive West End hair salon, the tools of his trade hanging from his on-trend leather belt. American Taylor Stayton as Count Almaviva/Lindoro matches the Barber in terms of good looks and sartorial elegance as he transforms himself, under Figaro's guidance, from impoverished student to drunken soldier to priestly music teacher and back to wealthy aristocrat. The youth, good humour, friendship and on-stage chemistry between Figaro and Almaviva is palpable. One also senses an autobiographical element in the role of Almaviva as he woos and wins his beloved Rosina, Rossini doubtless drawing on his own amorous exploits to give the role credibility.

Danielle de Niese brings a mature approach to the role of Rosina, more cougar than ingénue and with all a woman's wiles brought to bear on the besotted Almaviva, as well as the greedy and grasping guardian Dr Bartolo.

Where this production fails is in the direction, which has characters acting out towards the audience, rather than interacting with one another. The attempt at spontaneous gaiety is also heavy-handedly imposed – why all those pianos at the end of Act 1 – and why little or no reference to the satire implicit in Rossini’s (and Beaumarchais) original – those priests, notaries and officers were much derided elements in Italy’s then ruling reactionary regimes.

The first night of Garsington’s *L’Italiana in Algeri* drew gasps of admiration from an enthusiastic audience for the stylish, original stage set (a lengthy ornate staircase) and well-designed costumes, which paid more than a nod to the Italy of the 1950s. *L’Italiana* was written three years before *Il Barbiere*, and in an equally short period of time, for the Venice Carnival and a theatre that had experienced a series of flops. Rossini, conducting from the pit, was covered with flowers and declarations of love by an ecstatic first night audience. No such plaudits for Garsington’s David Parry for whom prolonged applause for the orchestra had to suffice. Clearly channelling her inner Sophia Loren, Ezgi Kutlu as the eponymous *L’Italiana* (Isabella) brought a self-assured mature attractiveness and deftness of tone to the role. Quirijn de Lang, as the handsome and arrogant Bey, in turn brought a fresh sexiness to his portrayal, while the doughty Mary Bevan as his wife Elvira sang beautifully and looked divine. Difficult to imagine why such a creature had ‘shattered his eardrums’ and ‘bored him to death’!

Of the leads, only Luciano Botelho as Lindoro, Isabella’s captive suitor, disappointed. Perhaps it was first night nerves, but Botelho appeared to struggle with both tone and projection. An unfortunate resemblance to Alan Partridge almost made one wish for Isabella to enter the Bey’s harim rather than plan an escape back to Italy with this unfortunate Lindoro.

Like *Il Barbiere*, *L’Italiana* contains elements of satire, mocking the emptiness and pomposity of new titles, such as those endowed on Taddeo and the Bey, which were such a feature of Napoleonic rule. This production contains an overall sense of vanity, of somewhat ridiculous dressing up, of larger than life stock characters, which is perhaps the best that one can expect in today’s environment.

Which production was more fun however? Which had the greater feel-good factor? Each is flawed, but, despite the energy of the Glyndebourne staging, it is the Garsington Rossini that most closely meets the brief. The tunes may be less recognisable, the plot less well known, but it is a production that draws one in, makes one care about the characters, brings a smile to one’s lips and sends one home in a joyous mood.

**Hilary Reid Evans**

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