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Newsletter No 156

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BGS News

The fact that this is the February newsletter signifies that our next meeting on Sunday February 11th sees our AGM. Whilst these meetings are not everyone's favourite occasions, they are an opportunity for the Society to take stock so do please come along and let us hear your views.

This year the AGM will be preceded by a short Extraordinary General Meeting to consider an amendment to the constitution extending our ability to offer tickets to our concerts at a discount.

All being well the formal business won't take long and will be followed by a members evening, with no particular theme - so do bring along something to play. However as we've got a busy evening ahead of us please get there promptly.

DIARY 2007

The diary for 2007 accompanies this newsletter. The plan for the year contains many of our long time favourites such as the Spanish Circle on May 25th but there are some different events to look forward to. In March the Rosewood Trio will be entertaining us during the second half of our meeting, and in October Petros Andreou has agreed to join us in an evening with a Greek flavour.

MYSACE

The Society has well and truly joined the 21st century with a new presence at the leading edge of the Web (that may be somewhat over the top, but hopefully you know what I mean). Anyway thanks to Steve Christmas we have a site on MySpace.com:

<http://www.myspace.com/BerkshireGuitarSociety>

This should complement our existing website well and in particular be useful as a marketing tool - our list of "friends" has grown at a remarkable rate and has already generated interest from some potential performers.

JOHN MILLS AND COBIE SMIT

Don't forget that international concert guitarists John Mills & Cobie Smit join together for our first concert of 2007 on Saturday 3rd March at 7.30 pm in the SHP Recital Room. John & Cobie will be performing works by Poulenc, Telemann, Castelnuovo-Tedesco & Granados.

John Mills studied with Andres Segovia, John Williams and Julian Bream and now is one of the UK's leading recitalists having given well over 2,500 concerts around the world. He is also Head of Guitar at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. Dutch-born Cobie Smit studied at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. A respected teacher, she also performs extensively as a soloist and in duo.

Tickets are available from South Hill Park Box office - 01344 484 123 - at £8.00 for BGS members.

Meeting 14th January

We started the New Year in a rather chilly Dance Studio at South Hill Park with our first ensemble session for a while.

For some of us it was pre-determined that we were going to have a go at playing the recently acquired "Amalgama" by Roque Carbajo. This is a piece arranged for four guitars which is full of Venezuelan influences, and as we were soon to become aware while the notes are not that difficult the rhythms certainly require some getting used to. Anyway Richard Butters, Gary Jordan, Michelle Cole, Dave Stinchcombe and myself were joined on this occasion by Ruth Perfitt making her debut with the BGS - welcome Ruth and we hope to be seeing you again.

Whilst Amalgama was being worked on Cheryl Slater, Allan du Feu, John Parr and Michael Hickey had selected a volume of Derek Hasted pieces to prepare - an eminently sensible choice, as we would hear later.

When those of us playing Amalgama (is it pronounced AmALgama, or AmalGAMa, one wonders?) had decided that we could prepare no further and the 2 groups came together to hear each other's efforts, we first heard the Hasted pieces - The Jolly Miller, What if a Day or a Month or a Year, and Lass of Richmond Hill - all played very well by the ensemble. This left us with the Amalgama, which we performed in a manner which shall we say leaves plenty of scope for improvement and invites re-visiting as the piece will undoubtedly grow on us.

As a by the by, if you go to the following web page about 2/3 of the way down you will find an MP3 excerpt of Amalgama which gives a rather better idea of how it should sound

http://www.roquecarbajo.com/Editions_en.htm

We had time for a few solos, Richard gave us 3 pieces by Vicente Sojo - Cantico, Aguinaldo and Galeron, followed by Allan with Carulli's Waltz in E and finally Gary Jordan closed the evening very nicely with Brouwer's A Day in November.

David Massey

Along with 90 or so others I attended the recital given by David Massey at South Hill Park on Sunday 28th January.

David was born in 1988 and in 2006 became only the second guitarist to reach the concerto final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. He is in the first year of studies at the Royal Academy of Music.

I thought that for one so young David delivered a remarkable performance, with a varied programme ranging from works by Dowland right up to music from modern times. I particularly liked his performance of Nikita Koshkin's Usher Waltz, and throughout I thought he displayed remarkable energy and range of tone and dynamics.

David thoroughly deserved his encore and gave us a highly entertaining performance of Rondo Rodeo from Gary Ryan's Scenes from the Wild West which went down really well with the audience.

David's career should definitely be followed with interest.

The recital was organised by the Bracknell Forest Music Society and originally placed in the Wilde Theatre, which seemed a bit optimistic and no doubt the decision to move to the Recital Room was a wise one. However the evening did demonstrate that it is possible to fill the Recital Room with a classical guitar concert