

CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust

Crucially at the absence of young faces at chamber music concerts resulted in the launch of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust by my wife Pamela and myself, both of us dedicated lovers of chamber music. The thought that this wonderful form of music might disappear with the older generation caused us a great deal of anxiety.

At the same time many new and excellent ensembles were emerging from the conservatoires. What future would these young groups have unless audiences were renewed with younger faces?

In 1998, I invited the iconic Director of Wigmore Hall, William Lynne, to lunch to see if we could pin forces to change the situation. We went on each other's shoulders over a good lunch, but did not rub anyone's eyes. Lynne felt that chamber music starts appealing to people in mid-life; I who had heard my parents play violin and piano duets throughout my childhood, felt that the seed for appreciating chamber music could be planted at an early age.

The outcome was the introduction of a CAVATINA Ticket Scheme at Wigmore Hall for a selected number of chamber music concerts. Schools visited by CAVATINA-supported groups were encouraged to take pupils to concerts there. This modest beginning of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust resulted in diverse developments of the project, which are branching out in different directions to this day.

The name 'Cavatina' comes from the wonderful fifth movement of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 130 in B flat major, and we chose it as it was one of our most cherished pieces of music. People who are not familiar with this 'air' have never had the quintessence of chamber music at its most sublime.

CAVATINA's mission was now crystal clear—to attract young people to chamber music concerts. But to achieve such an objective was not easy. A considerable amount of thought and planning was invested in the choice of the most suitable strategy for attaining the mission. Having now reached 30,000 young people through school concerts and free-ticket

schemes, the project has obviously had no small success in its 12 years of existence.

The motto of the Trust is 'Bringing Chamber Music to Young People and Young People to Chamber Music'. CAVATINA's approach to this challenge has been ambitious and multi-faceted. Briefly, the main components of the Trust's strategy are:

- 50 School Concerts are given by CAVATINA-trained professional ensembles, who impart their enthusiasm and love of chamber music to children. These sessions are instructive, interactive and entertaining.
- 27 venues are affiliated to the CAVATINA Chamber Music Scheme whereby young people aged 8-35 can attend FREE and the venues receive a subsidy. The rules of affiliation are rigorous, but the award generous.
- Around 15 Family Concerts are organised every year. Attendance has grown significantly.
- A new venue for the Swiss Cottage concerts will be announced shortly, and a new series will start at the French Institute in South Kensington.
- Around 300 CAVATINA Friends provide useful income and represent an admirable network of like-minded people. The membership fee is modest, and new Friends are welcomed with open arms.
- CAVATINA Ambassadors are recruited to represent the mission in universities and other places of learning. These Ambassadors have proved to be a very powerful tool in meeting the Trust's objectives among the young. The number of these Ambassadors has grown so much that the 'Ambassadors' Co-ordinator has been appointed to

manage and guide them. Modern social networking facilities (Facebook and Twitter) are used extensively.

In addition, CAVATINA sponsors chamber music competitions: Trinity Laban (22 May 2011) and the Greenwich Intercollegiate String Quartet Competition (1 May 2011). These help to raise the profile of chamber music among the students. CAVATINA also supports the very exciting ChamberStudio project of masterclasses at Kings Place. These are open to the public.

While CAVATINA has made immense strides in 12 years, it has only 'scratched the surface' in rejuvenating the audiences for chamber music. Yet green shoots are sprouting all around the country, and in some areas, especially in university towns, the results are dramatic.

For further information please see www.cavatina.net

Simon Majaro



LCMS is delighted to report that Pamela and Simon Majaro were both made Members of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours List for their creation and development of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust.



Quartet of Peace

On 5 December last year the LCMS Sunday concert was performed by the Quartet of Peace in aid of the charity MuseumQuality, which works to fund music education for disadvantaged children in the developing world. The instruments of the quartet, made by Brian Lissus in honour of South Africa's four Nobel Peace laureates, have travelled in Europe and beyond, and are played by different distinguished players for each concert. We are pleased to advise members that £200 in donations was collected at the Hall 1 concert, and that LCMS was able to donate £1,650 box-office revenue towards helping this charity to promote hope and understanding through music. MuseumQuality have expressed their 'heartfelt thanks.'

Members not only enjoyed a memorable concert but also a stimulating pre-concert film and talk, and we wish the charity every success. Further information can be found at www.museumquality.org

Chris Bradshaw

Bringing New Work to Life

Paul McKay considers the role of Music Haven, a music publisher and forums: www.musicshaven.co.uk

The LCMS can be proud of its tradition of presenting new works to thoughtful and enquiring audiences over the past century. There will have been, I am sure, the usual mix of controversy and debate over the merits on offer during this time. But the process of creating new music is akin to painting for gods: in among the arts it is the odd gem that can be self-referencing and lasting.

The audience plays a vital role in the creative cycle of the composer. Their responses, both positive and negative, provide the composer with some sense of the boundaries of communication. These boundaries constantly change because both the composer and the audience feel compelled to constantly test those boundaries and to look back on their development.

Music Haven was brought into being specifically to develop new works. Yes, it produces and sells scores and parts—the traditional function of the publisher that is still as important today as it has always been—but that is one part of a much bigger process of bringing a new work to life. At the start careful thought and consideration to the full potential of that new work—from commission to premiere to repeat performances and recording—need to be made with the composer.

It is a wide remit, but one that is necessary to ensure that new works are properly funded, well represented to musicians and venues, and thoughtfully introduced to audiences. In essence, it is to give composers an opportunity to fully and reasonably present their work—and themselves—to open, interested and knowledgeable music lovers. I emphasise 'and themselves' because the composer's role extends beyond creating new work and assisting the musician's interpretation to reaching the audience as well.

I strongly feel that concert going is as much a social activity as an intellectual one. Seeing and talking to composers always add to the experience, and most important, help me to understand them and their music. I recommend to LCMS member to approach composers, ask them about their music, other people's music, musicians, venues, festivals and about bringing new works to audiences. In fact, please feel free to approach me about that last point—it is an incredibly exciting and rewarding dimension to music that is worth sharing.

Members' Voices A Musical Adventure



The LCMS concerts at Kings Place are a delight. As a regular attendee at the Sunday evening concerts, I find there is always wonderful music to be heard. There is as much pleasure to be gained whether the music is played by long-established groups of musicians we have heard many times before or from younger and less familiar groups. This pleasure is enhanced by the beautiful and inspiring concert hall, with its excellent acoustics.

It was learning to play the piano as a young child that began my love of music, although it was in the games (my grandfather and his brothers formed a popular dance orchestra in the Manchester area). However, it was my mother who inspired my passion when she took me, at age six years, to see "Swan Lake" at the Manchester Opera House. It is a passion that lives with me today!

Shortly after my husband died, a long-standing friend introduced me to LCMS, then at the Conway Hall. It has been a revelation. Not only has it enabled me to familiarise myself with a wide repertoire of chamber music and with the styles of many composers, it has also increased my enjoyment greatly. This has been possible because of the reasonable price of the tickets.

Kings Cross - Seeing the Future

More than a year ago, a house in my street started undergoing refurbishment. As the months have gone by I've seen scaffolding, workmen, skips, paint, bricks, cement mixers, etc. Well it never ends! Well, I sometimes think of this when I look at the Kings Cross development and wonder—will it never end?

In fact, Kings Cross is making great strides, and will soon be the hub of an exciting and innovative development. The plans are not just for anonymous new office blocks; they include refurbishment of some of our old Grade II listed heritage, such as the Granary building, the Gasholder Triplet and the two Transit Sheds. Important salvage work has been carried out in order to preserve industrial structures and artefacts. The gasholders, for example, are being re-erected to form residential units in two circular structures, and a third is destined to be a flexible, open event space with a beautiful water feature. The Eastern Transit Shed will include studio units and lecture and theatre space. In addition to ten new public spaces and three new bridges, 20 new streets will enhance access for all.

In a couple of months' time—yes, September 2011—the new campus of the University of the Arts, including Central St. Martin's, will be complete, together with the adjacent intriguing-sounding House of Illustration. Old Grand Square, next to the canal and university, will also be opened to the public at about the same time, and over 1,000 solar-powered fountain jets are promised! The following year the renovation of the Great Northern Hotel will

be completed, the street-level arcades being already finished. This building is one of London's oldest hotels, and dates back to the 1850s.

The Construction Skills Centre is already complete and is offering training and qualifications for the construction trade.

I recently had an interesting visit to the local gym—nothing too energetic; this was the Old German Gymnasium of 1864 in Pancras Road. Here you can find more information and exhibits about this exciting development. I was particularly impressed with the trees and planting that are envisaged around the open spaces, not only continuing the London tradition of spacious greenery but also complementing the wildlife park at Canley Street, the Somerset garden project, and the urban food gardens designed for No. 1 Goods Street, not to mention skip gardens growing fresh produce, which will move location within the Kings Cross site.

So there is an end in sight to the somewhat desolate feel of 'vast builders' yards and never-ending "works in progress." We can look forward to a truly multi-use site of housing, culture, education and entertainment. A visit to the website—www.kingscrosscentral.com—or better yet, a personal visit to the Old German Gymnasium to see for yourself is recommended (Tuesday-Thursday, 10:00 am to 5:30 pm; Friday, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm).

Margaret Cunningham



Chris Bradshaw

Abouson Classical

Vicky Yannoula, who has performed for LCMS and is a regular attendee at LCMS concerts, is the founder and director of a new, global classical music network. Akouson Classical is open to students, performers, enthusiasts, music colleges, venues, societies, agents and organisations involved in classical music. It was created in order to provide a unique and dedicated classical music platform through which members can interact with one another, promote their classical music activities internationally, learn about other members' musical activities, and attend educational and performance events such as masterclasses, concerts, music teaching seminars, and competitions organised by Akouson Classical for its members. The first series of events starts in June 2011.

For full details and to sign up, visit www.akouson-classical.com

CHAMBER MUSIC NOTES

ISSUE 4 AUTUMN 2011

The LCMS Newsletter



Welcome!

Casting my eye over this issue, I am struck by how it celebrates creativity in various musical guises.

Rafael Todes of the Allegri Quartet reflects on his responses to performing the complete cycle of Beethoven's quartets for the first time. He sings the praises of the 'Cavatina', the fifth movement of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 130 in B flat major.

The 'Cavatina' also inspired Simon and Pamela Majaro of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust. In his article, Simon tells us how he and Pamela came to start the Trust,

which is devoted to "Bringing Chamber Music to Young People and Young People to Chamber Music." He also reports on successful new initiatives among students.

Last year Richard created ChamberStudio, responding to the need he saw for high-level coaching opportunities for post-college chamber groups in the early stages of their careers. ChamberStudio has taken off at high speed, providing four masterclasses every Sunday afternoon during the LCMS season.

Paul McKay of Music Haven, music publishers brought into being specifically to develop new works, reminds us that the audience plays a vital role in the creative cycle of the composer. And one longtime member of our audience, Margaret Cunningham, recounts her pleasure at her musical development through attendance at our Sunday evening concerts.

One of our trustees, Chris Bradshaw, reports that even the development of Kings Cross is coming along nicely. She invites you to go along to the Old German Gymnasium to take a look for yourself.

Of course, there is more to be found in this issue, not least Peter Fribbins' highlights of the coming LCMS season. We hope that you enjoy Chamber Music Notes, and that you will join us in the autumn and help us create beautiful music together!

Nell Johnson
Executive Chairman



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Behind the Notes

I am pleased that our 2012/13 season was such a successful one. Amongst many personally pleasant musical memories is the experience of being invited by Jonny Byers (cellist of the Badke Quartet) onto his beautiful canal boat, moored at Kings Place for the evening concert. Jonny is the only one of our artists (as far as I know) who sails to our concerts in his own home and bjoju rehearsal studio. Another delight was in becoming acquainted with the famous Kodály Quartet, and in particular becoming friends with their leader, Antti Falva. A Hungarian friend called Antti is surely something to boast about.

But I digress. I am confident that our next season should be just as inspiring as the last. The Autumn season opens on 2 October with the Sikovitsky Piano Trio. The Sikovitsky caused such a sensation when they performed for us in 2010 that we have invited them back for a three-concert residency. The first concert will consist of Haydn, Beethoven and Brahms, a veritable Viennese mélange of sound.

Other piano trios are also appearing in the autumn. At the end of October regular visitors the Rosamunde Trio will play Debussy, Brahms and my own D.M. Lawrence Quartet 'Softly in the Dusk' which they played this piece in so many different countries. It has become one of my most performed works. Also in November the wonderful young musicians—Tamsin Naley-Cohen, Gemma Rossfield and Simon Crawford-Phillips—will present a programme featuring 'Prospero's Isle', a new work by James Francis Brown.

Also in November the wonderful young ensemble Quartet from Switzerland, and in the UK, the Barbirolli and Allegri quartets. The Allegris are continuing, of course, their highly impressive Beethoven-Shostakovich quartet cycle. Each of the Allegri's concerts is illuminated by Robert Hanson's excellent pre-concert talks in the St Pancras Room, all illustrated live by members of the quartet.

A further highlight of the season is the Frith Piano Quartet, with a fascinating programme that includes the London premiere of a new piece by Mark-Anthony Turnage, John Lubbock and the Orchestra of St John's and OSJ Voices. Each of the Allegri's concerts is illuminated by Robert Hanson's excellent pre-concert talks in the St Pancras Room, all illustrated live by members of the quartet.

In December, the Turner Ensemble return with a programme that features Vaughan Williams' famous Housman setting for tenor, piano and strings and the wonderful Piano Quintet by Brahms, always a pleasure to present in our series. We also welcome back the Wallfisch-Tork cellist and piano duo in a cycle of 19th-century classics, including some Liszt in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his birth.

I cannot end without mentioning that on 13 November our friends from the Royal Opera House chamber kindly perform a fundraising concert for the London Chamber Music Society, with three Bach Brandenburg Concertos and Strauss' remarkable 'Weberiana'. Each of the programmes should look as impressive as it will inevitably sound.

Peter Fibbens, Artistic Director

On First Performing a Beethoven Cycle

We are now two-ninths of the way through this most absorbing of marathons, and I feel like I am back at university, studying for an MA in Beethoven and being examined on every aspect of the great man's life!

I have always associated Beethoven with Shakespeare. In his 30-something plays, virtually every facet of human nature comes under the spotlight, and in Beethoven there is a strong parallel—particularly in the area of human struggle. In so many of his quartets, Beethoven fights, and sometimes, as at the end of the first movement of the 'Harp' Quartet, Op. 74, after ratcheting up the struggle by a series of diminished chords, he emerges triumphant. Then, by contrast, by the end of the first movement of the 'nouvelle-cuisine-like' Op. 95, which follows the 'Harp' Quartet, the struggle dissipates into thin air and is not fully resolved, almost as if he gave up raising what the fuss was about. (Incidentally, the last time we played the 'Harp' Quartet, I was called up by the venue and told to play the 'nouvelle-cuisine-like' Op. 95, which follows the 'Harp' Quartet, the struggle dissipates into thin air and is not fully resolved, almost as if he gave up raising what the fuss was about. (Incidentally, the last time we played the 'Harp' Quartet, I was called up by the venue and told to play the 'nouvelle-cuisine-like' Op. 95, which follows the 'Harp' Quartet, the struggle dissipates into thin air and is not fully resolved, almost as if he gave up raising what the fuss was about.)

We have recently been preparing Op. 130, and this holds perhaps one of the most beautiful movements of them all, the 'Cavatina'. Beethoven creates a startling palette of emotions here, from a sentimental regret, to one of the most extraordinary passages in the entire quartet literature where the lower three voices play steady triplets, and the first violin, as if completely disconnected from the other parts, goes off into another world. It was an effect that Brahms was to copy in the slow movement of the A minor Quartet. It has an emotional honesty about it that takes us to Beethoven's opera.

In the late quartets, there is often a tension between Beethoven's proclaiming the way the world should be and the way it actually is. There is a fascinating passage in the middle of the first movement of the A minor Quartet, Op. 132, when all of a sudden, Beethoven has some reticative-like music, which also appears virtually verbatim in 'Lento', his most altered and only opera. There is something of an opera about this piece with the recitative that comes just before the last movement, it is as if Beethoven was using the opera as a continuous narrative. I remember playing

this in an education project to some eight-year-olds, and getting them to talk about the opening of the first movement. One kid said: 'It's like an old man sitting in his room feeling sorry for himself, and suddenly he bursts into anger.' For me that hits the nail on the head!

One of the most unusual of his music comes in the slow movement of this quartet, when he uses references to Gregorian plainchant to create a hymn of thanks to the deity for recovery from illness. It is a double-edged sword, as the movement, the film being the recovery—"feeling new strength," as he writes—on the other layers being a progressively more intense version of the hymn. By the time he gets to the final statement of the hymn, there is a high first-violin line up against it, and it is one of the most spine-tingling moments in all the quartets. It is almost like someone's final moments, before a last struggle, leading to eternal peace. It has an earth-shattering profundity, which dissolves into the surprise march that follows as the next movement.

The so-called 'heroic phrase' is nowhere better represented than by the great last movement Fugue of Op. 59 No. 3, a quartet figure of epic proportions to end all fugues (until he wrote the 'Grosse Fuge'). By taking this baroque form and infusing it with huge quantities of manic energy, he makes one feel the structure of the piece almost splintering at the seams!

In the early Opus 18s, there are glimpses of what is to come in the late quartets, but through the eyes of a younger man. The ever popular *Szum* and *Drang* Op.18 No.4, a first movement seems to capture the angst of a young man, which feels so different from the angst of an older, world-weary person facing death.

There is humour galore: in the very last of the quartets, Op.135, Beethoven takes the words "Muß es sein! Muß es sein! bel?"—supposedly an objection given by a servant for something rather trivial—and turns it into a massive philosophical question massively before proceeding to have a good laugh about it. It is with this most bizarre movement that Beethoven says goodbye to the medium of quartet writing, which so captured his inner thoughts and workings.

Rafael Todes, Allegri String Quartet

The Allegri (L-R: Oly. Falva, Rafael Todes, Donatona Vopali, Katherine Parkinson)

Immerse Yourself in Chamber Music on Sundays

LCMS Sunday evening concerts are now preceded by chamber music masterclasses at ChamberStudio at Kings Place.

Established by Richard Ieland in October 2010, ChamberStudio offers coaching and support to aspiring, up-and-coming post-college chamber groups who are no longer under the tutelage of an institution. The masterclasses are given by eminent chamber performers and teachers from this country and abroad. Most of the tutors are familiar to LCMS audiences as premieres of the Lawson Piano Trio quartets, such as the Chilingirian, Wilson, Lindsay, Dartie, Endellion, and pianist Susan Tomes of the Florestan Trio. The list of tutors is led by Shmuel Ashkenazi, former leader of the Vermeer Quartet, present faculty member of the Curtis Institute. Richard Ieland was Ashkenazi's teaching assistant in the USA for three years.



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the dates of the LCMS concert series. The coaching sessions are heavily subsidised to make them as financially accessible as possible to the young musicians: £60 divided by the group for one and a half hours of expert chamber music coaching is less than a round at the pub afterwards!

No wonder so many groups are returning customers, and many of them already have a busy concert schedule. For example, the Solstice Quartet won the 2010 Royal Overseas League Competition; the Wu Quartet was selected by the European Chamber Music Association and the Lawson Piano Trio quartets will be one of eight finalists to appear at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in July this year.

ChamberStudio's value is clearly appreciated by its participants.

- ChamberStudio is a fantastic platform for young musicians to play to legendary artists... The level of teaching is incredibly high, but above all the atmosphere makes it an inspirational place to develop as a quartet in the wonderful setting of Kings Place—Mu Quartet.
- ChamberStudio has provided us with the opportunity to work closely with some of the world's leading chamber musicians, helping us in a short space of time to improve hugely as an ensemble. We have also been able to talk to the professors more informally than would normally be possible, receiving invaluable advice about career-related questions, and the scheme has also provided us with wonderful concert opportunities—Lawson Trio
- After graduation, when you are left on your own, you suddenly realise how important it is to constantly re-visit knowledge and guidance... ChamberStudio has made that possible for us! —Greenwich Trio
- ChamberStudio has offered us a lifeline—a chance to work with world class coaches regularly in London for an amazingly good price. We love it! —Solstice Quartet

A central goal of ChamberStudio is that the masterclasses remain as affordable as possible to the young musicians, and the scheme relies on donations from keen chamber music supporters (please see www.chamberstudio.org/donations). Observers are welcome at ChamberStudio, and it is possible to move quietly in and out of the sessions at any time. Information about who is coaching, which groups are being coached, and what they are playing is listed on the website at www.chamberstudio.org/calendar.

If you wish to observe, ChamberStudio requests that you inform them by using the 'Contact Us' tab on the website or by leaving a message on Tel: (020) 7393-4377. The atmosphere is informal and informative, and very accessible to LCMS audiences. If you have not already done so, why not make plans to arrive earlier in the afternoon to enjoy chamber music in the making at ChamberStudio, followed by refreshments in the cafe or bar in the Kings Place foyer, and finishing the early evening with the LCMS Sunday concert?

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At the time of writing, ChamberStudio is preparing to present its first Showcase concert at Kings Place at 8pm on Sunday 22 May, the first Sunday following the end of the LCMS season. Three of the most exciting new young chamber groups in the UK will perform: the Cavalei Quartet (www.cavaleiartquartet.com); the Lawson Trio (www.lawsontrio.com); and the Wu Quartet (www.wuquartet.com).

In addition to Peter Millican's endorsement of ChamberStudio by offering the venue, Simon and Pamela Majoro of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust also gave invaluable support, as did the Richard Game Trust. Richard is also extremely grateful for the support and encouragement that Neil Johnson and the Lawson Chamber Music Society have given to the scheme as close neighbours at Kings Place.

There are four masterclasses on Sunday afternoons, divided between two tutors and held in the Limehouse and Wrenlock Rooms and sometimes in Hall 2. Each of the tutors gives sessions from 2.30-4.00pm and 4.30-6.00pm, making it possible for four groups to receive coaching each week, in parallel with

Richard Ieland is also collaborating on behalf of ChamberStudio groups with concert promoters such as Sheffield-based Music in the Round and the North Norfolk Music Festival. These days it is a struggle for music societies across the UK to survive, and Richard believes that by encouraging and enabling new-generation chamber groups to get their careers off the ground, these young groups can help to create a good balance alongside the more famous names in the music society concert diaries.

The door is now also open for junior groups to LCMS audiences on the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd of these special events in the year. The first of these took place on 23 January. Movements by Shostakovich, Schubert, Borodin and Beethoven were played by string quartets and piano trios from Junior Trinity, Sevenoaks, Wycombe Abbey, and North London Collegiate schools. They were quite obviously delighted to have been chosen to appear in these masterclasses, and in turn delighted the audience of family supporters and other observers. In the relaxed and friendly atmosphere, they gained many new musical ideas of balance and phrasing, and were encouraged to capture up pictures they imagined the music painted.

They were also urged to take advantage of the opportunity to observe the more advanced groups that were working in the other teaching room with Peter Cropper. Following the success of this first session for junior groups, another was planned for 1 May this year.

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Maryam Ballovi

Advanced coaching the first quartet



Leon Levy Meets Sofya Gulyak

In September 2009 Sofya Gulyak won first prize and the Princess Mary Gold Medal at the 46th Leeds International Piano Competition, in itself a remarkable achievement. But there is more—she was the first woman to achieve this distinction in the history of the competition.

Since then she has been in demand all over the world, and she is now well into the jet-setting busy life of the top-class international musician. I managed to track her down during a brief visit to London before she flew off to Italy for a recital series.

She speaks fondly of her early life in Russia, where she was born in Kazan, a city 800 kilometres to the east of Moscow with about 1.1 million inhabitants. Her main claim to fame is that it was chosen as the Sports Capital of Russia as well as the Third Capital in 2008. But the city is also ideal for the budding musician with a highly respected Special Music College and State Conservatoire, and this is where it all began for Sofya.

She at first showed no liking for music. Then her grandmother bought her an upright piano. From this point on, with the support of the rest of her family, there was no stopping her, although it was some time before she realised that she really wanted to become a professional musician.

At the age of ten, she went to a special college for gifted children in Kazan covering all aspects of music, including performing. Having passed through the local music institutions with flying colours, she went on to the Alfred Cortot College in Paris, the Imola Piano Academy in Italy, and the Royal College of Music, continuing to win the highest honours and prizes and studying under several distinguished teachers. This is the story, certainly in terms of a highly-musical career, of better late than never rather than of child prodigy.

Competitions are a subject Sofya is well placed to speak on. Since the age of 20 she has won many herself, and now has crossed to the other side as a juror, which she describes as being either very satisfying or tedious. Whilst technical perfection is important, she looks for character and imagination in performance. She looks for musicians who have something to say of their own and who can tell their own story via the music.

Once in a while, she comes across a budding exceptional performer, and this is always a magical moment. She described the winner—a young Canadian pianist—of one particular recent competition as a genius and the experience of hearing him as a revelation. She did not mention his name.

But competitors can be very stressful for the performers, and this of course affects their playing. The Leeds competition lasts three weeks, and in her year there was an initial shortlist of 69, chosen from the participants'



recorded submissions. The competitors live together for three weeks, and relations are not always as cordial as they appear to be on television.

I asked Sofya about the greatest influences in her life, and she unhesitatingly named her family, her school, and then of course her great teachers. Her heroes include Plácido Domingo and Jack Nicholson, as well as pianists Sokoloff and Lichner and Rachmaninov, a great pianist in his day as well as an astonishingly versatile composer.

The subject of pet hates always throws up some interesting comments. Sofya's include airports (where she inevitably spends much time) and audiences who clap and cheer bad performances. Although she has an exhausting life of travelling, rehearsing, performing, and practising, she has never been in any doubt but that it is what she wants to do.

When asked about the greatest moments in her life, she naturally mentioned winning the Leeds competition, but she relishes above all returning home to see her family after being away for such long periods. Certainly the worst moment of her life was six years ago, when her father died at the age of 53.

And what about modern music? Sofya has considerable doubts as to the development of music after Shostakovich. She looks that much of it is for effect and does not go to the heart. As a form of relaxation she is interested in jazz, but listening rather than performing.

At the time of writing this article, we were looking forward to hearing Sofya perform for the LCMS on 1 May. We were disappointed, however, when due to unforeseen circumstances, she was unable to perform. We hope that in the near future we will be able to see and hear for ourselves how this modest and dedicated young woman performs. I am sure we will not be disappointed.

Getting to Know You

Intriguing members of the LCMS/Kings Place community.

Scott Myers

Technical Director, KPMF



His principal duty at KPMF has been to create, recruit and manage the Technical Department, which comprises Production Management, Stage Management, Lighting, Sound, Audio Visual, Video Recording, Editing and Broadcast, Audio Recording and Broadcast, and Technical IT. He champions the development and use of new and emerging production technologies, such as the live streaming (audio and HD video) that he suggested and organised worldwide for the LCMS Quartet of Piano concert in 2010 in order to enhance the reach of the concert and increase awareness. As he does for all events at Kings Place, he gave direction to the entire technical crew and stage management for the concert, as well as designing the sound, audiovisual and video systems.

He has worked in various arts venues, including The Screen on the Hill, Earls Court Exhibition Centre and Olympia. Hervé has a passion for films, particularly European cinema, and a love of music and the arts.

"I love working at Kings Place as it is a truly amazing building with a wonderful team and exciting programming. Sunday nights are good fun with the LCMS series—working alongside Vivian, Leon and all the team."

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Box Office Supervisor



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