
AD LIBITUM

A Journal of
THE AMATEUR CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY INC.



April 1996
Number 2

Published by the Amateur Chamber Music Society Inc.
PO Box 156, Woy Woy
NSW 2256 AUSTRALIA

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Nils Korner - Editor

CONSERVATORIUM DAYS - LINDLEY EVANS

Cedric Ashton

1

FIFTY YEARS MUSICA VIVA - A RHAPSODY IN FOUR SECTIONS

Gaston Bauer

3

THE LAMENT OF THE HAPLESS HARPISST

Diana Owen

6

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN LUTE

John Bertram

9

THE ALL NEW AMATEUR CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

SELF-GRADING QUESTIONNAIRE

Vivienne Jones

11

CHAMBER MUSIC IN AFRICA

Bill Walker

13

THE CLARINET

Denis Radford

15

OLD VIENNA (1900-1938) MUSICAL MEMOIRS OF

RESERL SPITZER

Interviewed by Nils Korner

17

CARTOONS

Vivienne Jones

2, 14, & facing 1

© 1996

All material in "Ad Libitum" is covered by Copyright and must not be reproduced, stored or transmitted by any means without written permission from the Amateur Chamber Music Society Inc.

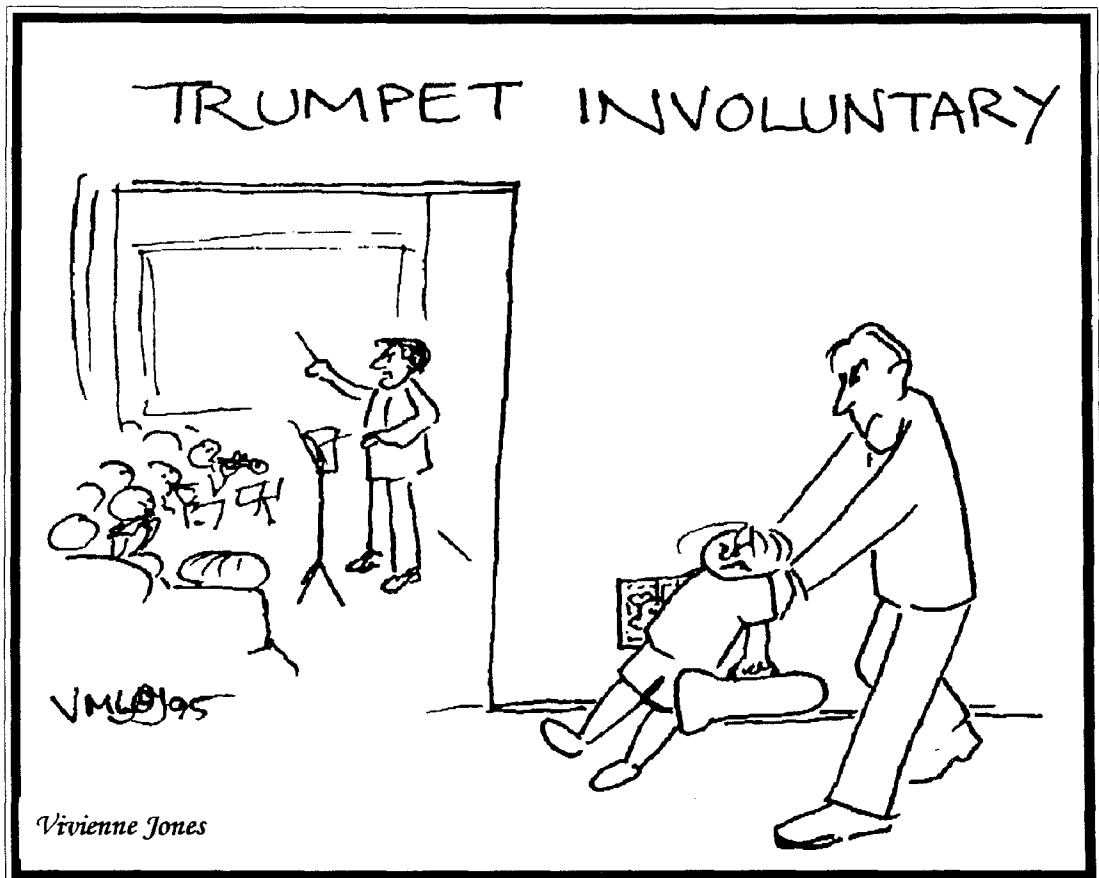
FOREWORD

The second issue of *Ad Libitum* brings fresh and varied contributions which I hope will be widely enjoyed. We are guided through the ancient history of the European lute and the mysteries of the evolution of the clarinet. We learn that the Harp, though played by angels, is the very devil to keep under control. From contributors outside the Society comes the story of the development in Australia of Musica Viva, the world's largest Chamber Music Society, and a lively account of what it was like to be an amateur of chamber music in Vienna in the first part of this century. Perhaps it has always been what it remains - a mixture of delight and frustration !

We get a glimpse of medicine and the realities of life in Africa and hear an echo of its music. There are a good few laughs, prosaic and pictorial, and a win at the races. And if you are complacent about your own cosy little niche in the Society's Categories of Instrumental Skills, having clawed and self-assessed your way up the charts from F (for Fumble - Fingered) to E (for Enviably Exquisite), test yourself against Vivienne Jones' new Gold Standard Questionnaire - her probing research and revolutionary analysis will make us *tremolo* in agonising reappraisal !

All who have put pen to paper deserve our grateful thanks - including those whose contributions could not be included for lack of space. Please feel inspired to stay on friendly and productive terms with the literary Sister of the musical Muse and keep writing.

Nils Korner - Editor



CONSERVATORIUM DAYS - LINDLEY EVANS

by Cedric Ashton

I recently read Lindley Evans' autobiography "Hello - Melody Man". The following incident is not included in the book but it is worth telling. Lindley recounted it to me personally.

The date was Tuesday 2nd November 1936. Lindley, one of the Conservatorium's best known piano teachers, sat in his studio waiting for his next pupil to knock on the door.

He looked at his watch ; it was 2: 25 pm and she was due at 2: 15. She was ten minutes late. Maybe she's waiting outside in the corridor, he thought.

He opened the door and peered up and down the corridor. Not only was his pupil not there, but there wasn't a soul in the usually busy corridor.

Puzzled, Lindley strolled up to the vestibule - no one there. He went to the enquiry office counter ; no one. He put his head into the enquiry office and called out ; no answer.

Mystified, he was about to return to his studio when a lone figure appeared. It was Bede Connelly, the flute teacher, who came running towards him.

"I can't stop, Lin - I've got to get to Tom Evans' cottage before 2 : 40."

"Where is everyone ? "

"Well, where would you think?"

Lin shook his head.

"Lin, don't you know what day it is?"

"Yes, it's Tuesday 2nd November."

"That's right - the first Tuesday in November - Melbourne Cup Day - and it's going to be run in two minutes and I want to place a bet with Tom Evans before 2: 40. Come along, be in it and have a bet."

He grabbed Lin's arm to hasten him along.

"Bede, I don't know anything about horse racing. I don't know one end of a horse from the other. I've never had a bet in my life!"

"Well, today's a good day to start," said Bede.

As they hurried along, Bede pushed a copy of the Herald into Lin's hand.

"There they all are, 16 of them. The favourite is " Talking " 3 to 1 " .

They entered Tom Evans' cottage. Tom was the caretaker and possessed the only wireless set in the Con. His small cottage was crowded with most of the Con staff.

Bede said to Tom, " £ 10 on " Talking " .

He turned to Lin : " Quick, it's 2: 40 - pick a horse!"

Lin glanced down at his list and a blur of names and suddenly saw "Wotan". There flashed into his mind the music of Wagner's "Ring of the Nibelungen" and "The Ride of the Valkyre" - a musical horse?

"Quick, quick!" urged Bede.

"Righto, £10 on Wotan," said Lin, laughing. He gave Tom £ 10. Tom shrugged his shoulders.

"It's an outsider," he said, "I feel that I'm robbing you."

"They're off!" went the cry on the radio.

The voice rose in pitch as the race progressed. He rattled off a stream of names in double quick time, then said excitedly :

"Who's this coming up on the outside ? It can't be ! Yes it is ; coming neck and neck with

"Talking" --- it's "Wotan" !
"Wotan wins the Melbourne Cup, 1936 ! "

They waited for the odds. The announcer spoke.

"Wotan the winner at 100 to 1."

"My God," said Tom, "who the hell brought Lin Evans down here. This'll break me ! "

"Lin, I'll have to give you a cheque."

There and then he wrote out a cheque for £ 1,000.

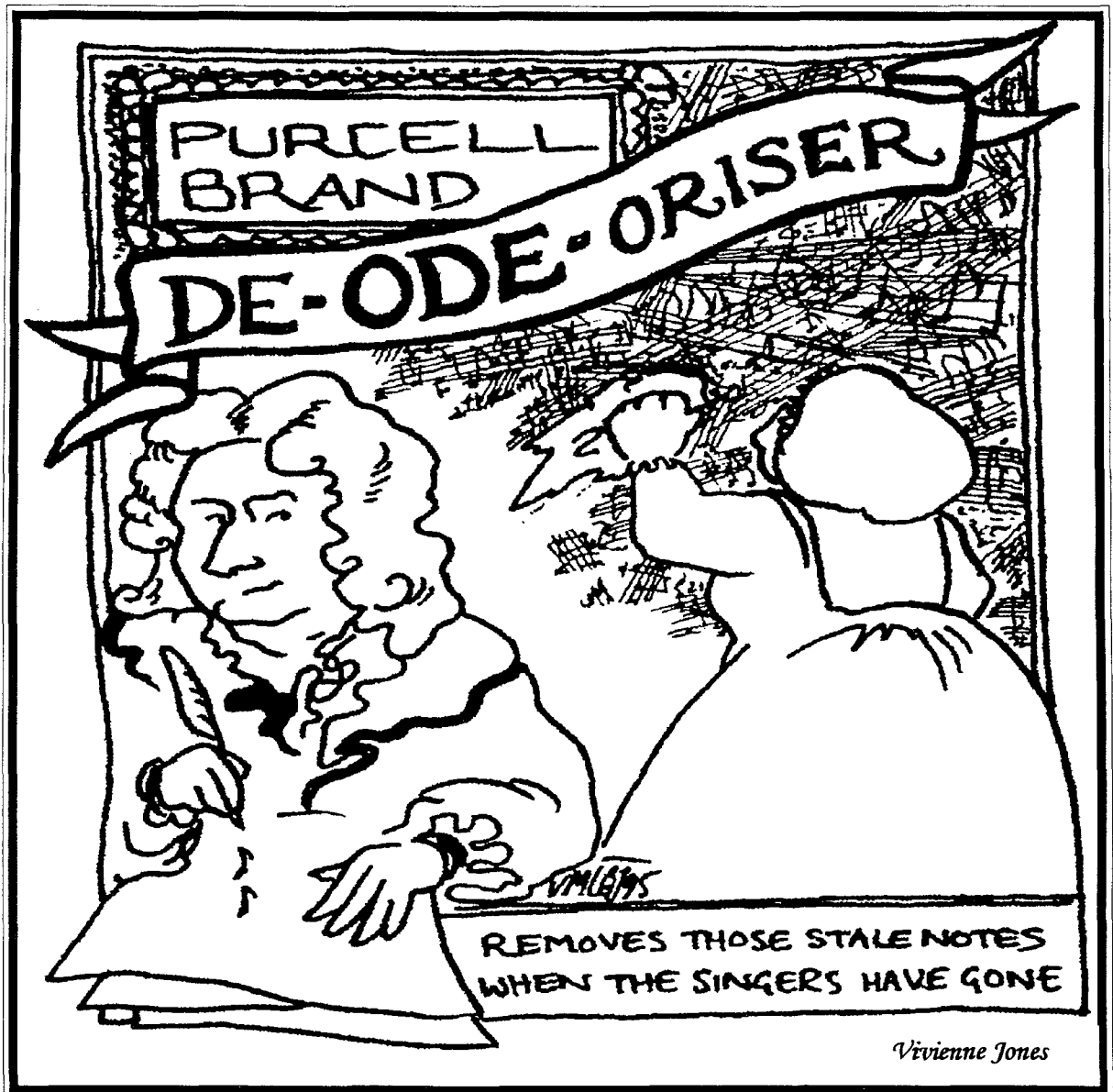
Recounting the above, Lin concluded :
"Cedric, I'd never had a bet on a horse up till then, and I've never had one since.

"When my erring student appeared the following week, I gave her £50.

" Mr Evans, what's this for ? "

" If you hadn't been late for your lesson last week, I would be £ 1000 poorer ! "

* * * * *



FIFTY YEARS MUSICA VIVA A Rhapsody in Four Sections by Gaston Bauer A.M. M.D.

- I. Andante con moto - misterioso (1945 - 1954)**
- II. Lentamente ma non troppo (1955 - 1969)**
- III. Scherzo con brio - vivace (1970 - 1981)**
- IV. Finale - marcia trionfale (1982 - 1995)**

I. Andante con moto - misterioso (1945 - 1954)

There was chamber music in Australia before Musica Viva but it was sporadic, more often of an enjoyable amateur rather than a professional standard. Ensembles who performed in public were often drawn from established orchestras or based upon music schools or conservatoria. They were brought together on an occasional basis, their performances displayed varying levels of skill, enthusiasm frequently exceeded musicianship. The influx of European migrants in the immediate pre- and early second world war period was a significant stimulus for change and progress as it provided a pool of new performers and a classical music hungry audience.

Chamber music highlights during the years 1939 to 1945 included sonata recitals by the English violinist Thomas Matthews (who incidentally was an excellent soloist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Elgar and Delius concertos) and his Australian wife Eileen Ralph and the occasional performances by the Monomeeth String Quartet which consisted of Phyllis McDonald, first violin, Andrew Hoffmann, second violin, Richard Goldner, viola and Kathleen Tuohy, cello. Of highest international standard were the piano recitals by the Polish virtuoso Ignaz Friedman who toured and was stranded in Australia in 1939 when war broke out following the invasion of his homeland by the German army.

After months of planning Richard Goldner, businessman, inventor and musician, assisted by Walter Dullo, master-minded Musica Viva's inaugural concert which took place on the 8th December 1945, shortly after the end of World War II. Seventeen string players, billed as the Richard Goldner's Sydney Musica Viva offered a programme consisting of

- Purcell: Chacony,
- J.S. Bach: E major violin convertto,
soloist Haydn Beck, leader of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra,
- Mozart: Fantasia in F minor K 594,
arranged for string orchestra by Mr W.Dullo,
- Beethoven: Great Fugue, in B flat major, Op. 133.

An audience of 900 invited guests attended this presentation concert which took place in the Sydney Conservatorium during one of the frequent post-war electric power failures. I was an usher on the balcony showing patrons to their seats with a hurricane lamp.

The success of the concert led to the introduction of a Musica Viva chamber music subscription series from 1946 to 1951 performed by local artists soon to be joined by recent arrivals such as Robert Pikler who had spent several years in the Dutch East Indies as a prisoner of war. Robert and the well-known Hungarian pianist Lili Kraus, arrived in Sydney in the beginning of 1946. They were joined by the Vienna-born Theo Salzman, previously principal cellist of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra founded by Bronislaw Hubermann, forerunner of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, and by Szymon Goldberg, ex-leader of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra who had performed chamber music with Paul Hindemith, viola and Emanuel Feuermann, cello.

The 4th subscription concert of the inaugural 1946 season featured the first Australian performance of the Bruckner F major string quintet. The players were R. Pickler and E. Cockman, violin, R. Goldner and W. Krasnik, viola and Kathleen Tuohy, cello. Lili Kraus joined the Musica Viva Players in three 1946 concerts. In 1948 Hephzibah Menuhin appeared on several occasions, including one featuring the "Archduke" Trio and the Brahms F minor piano quintet. Concert series were given in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and New Zealand.

The desire of several local key musicians, including pianist Maureen Jones, to seek international careers, coupled with financial difficulties, led to the temporary cessation of the concert series in 1951. A core management group including Miss Regina Ridge, manager, Mr. Charles Berg, honorary secretary and Mr. Ken Tribe, vice-president to Mr Justice Macfarlan, maintained a small office in the city and planned the resumption of concert activities.

II. Lentamente ma non troppo (1955 - 1969)

Sponsors and guarantors were recruited, outstanding among them Mr Fred Turnovsky, the Prague-born president of the New Zealand Chamber Music Federation and Mr Paul Morawetz who played an important part in securing the success of the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956. The subscription series recommenced in 1955 with a healthy mix of Australian and overseas artists and has continued, without interruption, to the present time. The first Sydney concert featured Robert Pickler, violin, Joyce Hutchinson, piano and a young clarinet player by the name of Gabor Reeves. The 1955 overseas string quartets included the fine French Pascal Quartet, which gave the first Australian public performance of the beloved Ravel string quartet, and the Koeckert Quartet, four Bohemian-born, Munich - resident musicians.

In 1955 the Council of the Society was presided over by B.P. Macfarlan, Q.C., Vice-Presidents were W.A. Dullo, R.L. Ernst, R. Goldner and K.W. Tribe, the Hon. Sec. Charles Berg,, Manager Regina Ridge. 1956 saw the return of the Pascal Quartet and the visit of the LaSalle Quartet. The Czech influence became strong in 1957 with the first tour of the acclaimed Smetana Quartet followed two years later by the visit of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under Karel Ancerl, co-managed with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. It was at that time that I was invited to join the Council of the Society and, together with my wife Phyllis, became increasingly involved in the day to day affairs of Musica Viva.

In subsequent years the world's best known chamber musicians toured Australia under Musica Viva management: the Amadeus, the Budapest, the Guarneri, the Julliard, the Melos, the Tokyo, the Cleveland, the Bartok and the Alban Berg to name just a few of the top quartets, the Beaux Arts Trio, the Piano Quartetto Beethoven di Roma, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, I Musici, I Solisti Veneti, Concentus Musicus of Vienna, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, the King's Singers, the Deller Consort, the Choirs of King's College and St. John's, Cambridge, and many others.

Local musicians were encouraged and offered engagements, Australian composers were given commissions, a major effort was initiated to bring good music to schools and young audiences. Music camps were organised which from 1961 onwards developed into the Mittagong Easter Festivals where professional artists, talented musicians and a keen audience of Musica Viva supporters were able to mix, exchange ideas and listen to fine chamber music. For some years Spring Festivals were held in Canberra where artists, management and audience rubbed shoulders with politicians and Australian National University academics. Regrettably these pleasant and typically societal functions became victims of budgetary constraints or perhaps a gradual diminution of enthusiasm in securing venues and audiences. Nonetheless they assisted the organisation to secure national and international importance in the musical and artistic world.

III. Scherzo con brio - Vivace (1970 - 1981)

By 1970 I had been elected to the Executive of the society and Vice-President. In 1973 I became the third Chairman of the Executive (my predecessors were Norman Schureck and Ken Tribe), a position I held until 1981. Our activities were expanding, the number of concerts and recitals continually increasing. Standards of performances remained at the highest level. Government grants, Commonwealth and State, were limited to less than 20% of the total budget and largely restricted to special projects.

On the 6th December 1970 Musica Viva celebrated its 25th birthday with an Anniversary Concert presented by the Robert Pikler Chamber Orchestra which presented a repeat of the inaugural event. Before the concert Mr. Charles Berg gave an excellent outline of the history of the Society and Mr Richard Goldner was honoured by the Austrian Ambassador by the award of his country's Cross of Honour for Science and the Arts. Soloist in the Bach E major concerto was the prodigious 15 year old Bill Hennessy who was lauded by one of Sydney's most respected music critics as a violinist of exceptional promise but was chided for having succumbed to "some tense and distracting mannerisms that he ought to be encouraged to eliminate before they become ingrained". Bill Hennessy has since had a most illustrious career in several States and is now first violin of the acclaimed Australian Quartet. Prior to that concert Phyllis and I had had the honour of hosting a garden lunch in our Roseville home.

During the same year Regina Ridge retired as General Manager after more than 20 years of dedicated and extremely successful service. She was succeeded by other exceptionally capable art administrators including Donald McDonald, Kim Williams, Philip Henry and most recently Ms Jennifer Bott.

In 1971 we assisted in arranging the first Nicholson Museum Concert, a gala event held in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney to raise funds through the efforts of the Association, later the Foundation for Classical Archaeology and the Friends of the Nicholson Museum, for the scientific and publication activities of the Department of Classical Archaeology directed by Professor Alexander Cambitoglou. The concert, held on the 15th May, was given by the Zurich Chamber Orchestra conducted by Edmond de Stoutz, the programme included a suite from "The Old Bachelor" by Henry Purcell, the Divertimento in F major by Joseph Haydn, Rondo in A major for Solo Violin and String Orchestra D 438 by Franz Schubert (soloist Nicholas Chumachenko) and Concertino by Pergolesi. The Nicholson Museum Concerts have continued to be an annual artistic and social highlight in the musical activities of the University of Sydney, Musica Viva Society members and the Sydney chamber music lovers. The 1972 concert was presented by the Academy of St.Martin-in-the-Fields, directed by Sir Neville Marriner, the list of subsequent presenters reads like a veritable "Who's Who in Chamber Music": the Berlin Philharmonia Octet, the Smetana String Quartet, Concentus Musicus of Vienna, the John Aldis Choir, the Bartok Quartet, the Melos of Stuttgart, the Tokyo Quartet, the Chiligran, the Vienna Chamber Ensemble, the Borodin Quartet and the Quartetto Beethoven di Roma which presented the Silver Jubilee Nicholson Concert. Australian artists have assisted in maintaining the highest standards including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Australia Ensemble and the Maureen Jones, Brenton Langbein, Barry Tuckwell Trio.

IV. Finale - Marcia Trionfale (1982 - 1995)

My direct involvement in the affairs of the Society came to an end in 1981 with the incorporation of Musica Viva Australia and the appointment of a National Board. The organisation is now established as being the largest chamber music society in the world presenting more than 2000 concerts per year with subscription series in all major Australian centres. Outreaching to more than 300,000 school children, providing engagements for local artists and commissions for Australian composers remain the highlights of an enterprise initiated by an idealist, dreamer and visionary, a truly great adopted son of this country. Thanks to him and his legacy **MUSICA VIVA VIVAT.**

The Lament of the Hapless Harpist

by Diana Owen

Abstract: *Compared to harpists who are undervalued, overworked, overloaded and constantly harassed by well-meaning jokers, all other musicians are (to use current management jargon) underperformers.*

Recently I read an article written by a cellist rendered bitter and twisted as a result of all the cheap jokes he had to suffer whilst struggling to manhandle the unwieldy bulk of his cello. Ha! Some folks don't know when they are well off! As a harpist, I have on many similar occasions, but with far greater justification, felt on the point of coming completely unstrung.

At the innocent age of 6 years, by some malicious stroke of ill-fortune, I was struck dumb at the sound of a harp on the sound-track of a film. The harp didn't even make an appearance. The sound was enough. Once I had ascertained the name of the instrument responsible for this mesmerising sound I immediately registered my urgent requirement for a harp. Since this would have entailed putting the family home up for auction, no harp was forthcoming, so I stashed away in my mental "when I grow up" file the urgent need to acquire a harp. No amount of piano lessons, appreciated as they were, ever erased the dream. It was only with hard-earned financial stability and the relentless approach of middle age (which I then gloomily regarded as preliminary training for the hereafter) that I was able to acquire a small non-pedal harp and locate an expatriate English harp teacher.

From there, it was all downhill, and burdened as I was with a classical piano background, it was only a short step to jeopardising any chance of permanent solvency through the acquisition of a full-size concert harp. Everyone to their folly! Little did I know that this instrument requires a small but regular stipend all its own. Any unassuming stringed instrument is satisfied with 4 strings but this one has no less than 46. Superior and vastly more expensive models run to 47. You can all do multiplication so I won't bother you with a detailed breakdown of the cost of string

replacements. Multiplication can also be applied to the minor matter of tuning. Yes, we have to do the tuning ourselves every time we play and often in between as well.

Speaking of breakdowns, the possibilities with this instrument are endless. From informed sources, I know that a pedal harp has no less than 3,000 moving parts. Given that we in Australia live in the wrong hemisphere, we have to wait for a harp technician to come from the right hemisphere from one of the few harp factories in the world to regulate and repair harps. This is usually timed to coincide with the return of Halley's comet. Regulation can be likened to an oil and grease or regular service on a car. If it is not done on a regular basis, things are more likely to get out of alignment and frightening symptoms will develop. This instrument is the greatest musical malingeringer of all time.

It is therefore understandable that at the slightest buzz or clunk, the wretched harpist is likely to hang him or herself from the harp column by a broken string. Here I make a plea to fellow musicians to please make allowances for the fact that any harpist you might encounter in a chamber music group is already in a highly unstable mental state and that is before a string has even been plucked. Add to this the fact that the harpist has been reduced to a state of severe physical exhaustion, if not contortion, just through the sheer effort of being present together with the monster. This particularly applies where the harpist is a female. If you notice that she is slung across her chair like a dismembered rag doll and is registering only a disengaged expression, it is because she is contemplating the possibility of pawning the harp to pay her chiropractor and physiotherapist bills.

When the harpist is finally revived by the whiff of rosin in the air, she will undoubtedly be faced with a representative sample from the unspeakably difficult and limited chamber music repertoire for harp. Sightreading is not a realistic proposition. Driving this machine is a bit like piloting a jumbo

jet without the radar and computers. As well as two handfuls of strings the harpist controls two feet on seven pedals, each with three settings (flat, natural and sharp) requiring both setting and cancellation, often in a series of two at a time and in rapid succession. This operation I would grade as more hazardous than skiing moguls on a black run.. Plotting pedal changes cannot be achieved by a cursory glance at the score. It generally requires a complete absence of dysfunction in distinguishing the left from the right foot and no less than expert application of the critical path method.

Then of course there is the erudition required for interpreting all those mysterious signs. Every instrument has them but in the harp world they are not standardized. The dark secret is that there are schisms. Let me give you a simple example. A harmonic may appear on the staff where it is to be played or it may appear an octave higher where the actual sound is represented. It is up to the harpist to know what is intended by the particular composer concerned, to consult whatever microscopic explanatory notes might or might not be buried in the preface or appendices, or to toss a coin. With modern composers there has been a proliferation of special symbols for the harp to the extent that some scores are not immediately recognisable as a pieces of music and bear more resemblance to the print-outs of a seismograph run amok. For those who think they have a superior command of musical notation and all related matters, I will assume that you are *au fait* with the signs which require the harpist to strike the harp strings with the back of a frying-pan or to draw strips of paper through the strings. Harpists are really vicious percussionists in disguise. Forget this at your peril.

I will now turn to the notes. While most of the rest of you are putting all your efforts into the pathetic production of one note at a time on one stave and in one clef, the harpist is confronted with vertical columns of notes piled upon notes on two staves, all to be played simultaneously or in rapid succession with the speed of a hyperactive centipede on the run. In other words, we have more notes per square inch than the rest of you

have in a linear mile of score. Not content with two staves, the harp drifts off the edge of the map of the known musical world in a flurry of blurring leger lines at either end of both staves. Before all you pianists go on the defensive, just let me finish. Lurking below the music is a veritable quagmire of pedal changes with a set of symbols and charts all their own.

In this context, I will now give you some examples of the misplaced wit I have encountered. Be warned. Some of us have developed counter strategies. When someone opens the bowling with "have you heard the joke about the harp/harpist..." I assure them that I have heard every harp joke ever invented. Having got that off my chest, I have to confess that I am still caught unawares at times. On one such occasion I was checking in at the local airport en route to Hobart, with a suitcase and a large wooden instrument case containing a non-pedal harp. As I requested fragile stickers, the check-in person enquired as to the contents of the odd-shaped case. When I confessed that it was a harp he immediately quipped "How high do you expect to fly?" At least it was original. If you want to chat up a harpist, *never* mention the one about a harp being taken to a party - not unless you want to be garrotted on the spot with a wire-wrapped 6th octave harp string.

For some, the harp is beyond any kind of recognition. En route to the ski resort of Charlotte's Pass, I was taking my seat in the snow cat and lugging a non-pedal harp in a water-proof cover when another passenger asked in a friendly holiday mood "What's that ? A toboggan ?" She was serious.

Then there is the affront of mistaken identity at a more specialised level. "I've never been this close to a harpsichord before..." (obviously not)...or from a hotel receptionist casting a glance at the mystery instrument - "Did you say it was a cello?" Now would I say that?

The helpful types should not be overlooked and can often be an occupational hazard for female harpists. The natural habitat of the "shining

knight” is wedding receptions and functions where this species, often in a semi-inebriated state, will gallantly offer assistance in packing up the harp and will bolt with the harp trolley, like a Roman soldier in a chariot race, decapitating the poor hijacked instrument at every doorway and leaving a trail of detached pedals like teeth left out for the tooth fairy. Other more cautious souls approach this task in a more scientific away. “I suppose it collapses so that you can transport it ...”

In your dreams.

There are those with unrealistic expectations. They are found at orchestral concerts and will pounce on the harpist at the end of a concert which has concluded with what I call a general shindig, i.e. a very loud and triumphant “tutti” number. “Tutti” in an orchestral score means that the harpist is required to compete with 76 trombones, as many horns, trumpets, flutes, bassoons, and clarinets as can be mustered, 100 stringed instruments in small, medium, large and one-size-fits-all, as well as a complete battery of timpani, percussion and miscellaneous pieces of rattling cutlery. (Any omission here is purely accidental). This feat reduces the harpist’s hands to a pulp of rising blood blisters. Just as she is wiping the blood from the strings our friend will approach with a disappointed air and remark that he couldn’t hear the harp. How extraordinary! How I wish I had long finger-nails for such occasions but they are forbidden for classical harpists. I now have a well-rehearsed and restrained response. With a solicitous tone of voice I ask said friend whether he was able to hear the second violin fourth from the left in the second row. At this he will usually beat a speedy retreat through the thicket of music stands whence he came, in search of remedial treatment for his deficient pair of lug holes.

You might think bumper bar stickers are ephemeral trivia which do not rate a mention in a scholarly journal but this is a gross underestimation of the power and strength of the better quality stickers now available. In the harp world there are slick adaptations of the usual

crude and common slogans. The connection between harpists and the adverb derived from the word ‘heaven’ and the more distasteful slogans on bumper stickers I will leave to your imagination. I would have none of them and opted instead for a classy, multi-lingual sticker bedecked with red hearts which proudly proclaimed “I love harps” from the rear bumper of my harpmobile. It caught the attention of a viola player who was sharing the drive with me on the annual chamber music trek to Wollongong. “What’s this?” he teased. “I love herpes?” Mortified, I tried every cleaning and scouring agent stocked by Woollies. That bumper sticker was indestructible. It had a more permanent quality than the hieroglyphics in a pharaoh’s tomb. I felt a distinct empathy with Lady Macbeth and took to sleep-walking and muttering “Out damned spot”. There was nothing else for it - in the end I had to sell the vehicle. It wasn’t easy, draped as I was like a bimbo from a TV car ad. across the rear bumper bar until the deal was concluded.

Heavenly connotations for the harp are inescapable. I am reminded of the story of a little boy at an air show, who as he watched the breathtaking acrobatics of swooping supersonic jets shouted in excitement, “Mum, when will we get to see God?” But I digress. Suffice it to say that I will know I have made it to heaven when I can play the harp exquisitely, effortlessly and with nothing going wrong. The odds are not good.

Playing solo at an event recently, I noticed a little girl standing close by and staring at the harp in the concentrated way of small children. At the end of my performance she edged closer and finally asked if she could touch the harp. I showed her how to play a glissando by drawing her finger over the strings. She looked up at me, eyes wide with wonder, and struggling to find the right word, she stammered “It’s like a mmmmiracle!”

It is indeed. What, I wondered, have I started ?

* * * * *

A Brief History of the European Lute

by John Bertram

The European lute derives its basic form as well as its name from the Arabic *oud* that is still used in the classical music of Middle Eastern countries (the name is from the Arabic for wood, *al 'ud*). The lute, probably introduced to Europe in the eighth century by the Moors when they invaded Spain, and also believed to have been brought back to Europe by Crusaders returning from the Holy Land, spread throughout Europe and eventually became the most popular instrument of the Renaissance era.

Like the oud, the earliest lutes had four single gut strings, which were struck with a plectrum or quill, allowing single line melodies and occasional chords to be played. The strings later became pairs tuned in unison (known as courses), and extra strings were added to increase the range. By about 1500, the classic form of the European lute had developed with six double-strung courses, except for the top course, which was usually a single string. Also by this time, the strings were usually plucked with the right hand fingers instead of a plectrum, enabling the use of elaborate counterpoint. Like the oud, the European lute has a pear shaped body with a rounded back, a pegbox bent back almost at a right angle to the neck and an elaborate rose carved into the soundboard.

Lutes are made in several sizes, the most common being the tenor tuned G-c-f-a-d'-g'. The strings run from the pegbox to a bridge that is glued to the top of the soundboard. They are of a light gauge and the back and soundboard are thin as well, resulting in a very light instrument, which gives the characteristic clear, bright sound that was sought after by the early luthiers.

Music for the lute was notated in tablature, which consists of a staff of six horizontal lines representing each course and letters or numbers indicating the strings to be played with the right hand and the frets to be stopped with the left. The first printed tablature was the publication of solo works by Spinacino in 1507, and many other publications followed. In addition to published

music, a lot of music was distributed in manuscript form, often music that had been written out by tutors for their students.

During the Renaissance, composers wrote in a variety of forms, perhaps the favourite ones being based on dance (*pavans*, *galliards*, *almans*, etc) and arrangements of popular ballads. Composers also made use of the contrapuntal possibilities of the lute to transcribe three and four part choral music. Lutenists were judged by the quality of these transcriptions, which were known as intabulations. Also common was the *fantasia* or *ricercar*, which was a purely instrumental form, not based on the vocal or dance forms.

John Dowland (1563-1626) was considered to be the greatest lutenist of the Renaissance era and wrote lute solos, songs with lute accompaniment and music for a consort of viols and lute. Other lutenist/composers of the Renaissance era include Thomas Robinson, Francis Cutting, Anthony Holborne in England; Francesco Canova Da Milano, Simone Molinaro, Vincenzo Galilei (father of the astronomer Galileo) in Italy; Hans Neusidler, Elias Mertel, Hans Judenkunig in Germany; and Adrian Le Roy, Pierre Attaignant, Guillaume Morlaye in France.

During the transitional period between the Renaissance and Baroque eras, the lute underwent significant changes, one of which was the addition of even more bass strings to increase the range. The extra bass strings, known as diapasons, were tuned diatonically. During the sixteenth century, lute strings were all made of plain gut, however, the tone quality of the larger diameter gut strings was poor, and this limited the number of diapasons that could be added. To overcome this, luthiers added a second pegbox on an extension to the neck to increase the length of the bass strings, resulting in instruments such as the theorbo and archlute, which were used as continuo instruments.

After a period of experimentation, the tuning that became the standard for the Baroque era was

A-d-f-a'-f, which is known as the D-minor or Baroque tuning. Around the same time, gut strings overwound with metal wire were developed, which then allowed the use of extra bass strings on a single pegbox. By the eighteenth century, lutes had between 11 and 14 courses, the top 6 strings using the D-minor tuning and the bass strings tuned diatonically below the sixth course. This was the classic form of the baroque lute, which was to become extremely popular among French composers. Some of these composers include Ennemond Gaultier, Dennis Gaultier and Charles Mouton. Their repertoire made great use of ornamentation and broken chords (known as *style brisé*) and influenced composers for the harpsichord (including Purcell).

During the eighteenth century, the lute began to decline as a solo instrument, though it was still commonly used for continuo playing. After a period of inactivity in Germany, there was a renewal of interest, which culminated in the compositions of Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1686-1750), the last great lutenist / composer.

Among the works of Johann Sebastian Bach are a number of pieces for lute, including four suites, and some miscellaneous pieces. However, it has been disputed whether Bach had intended them for the lute, particularly since they were notated using the standard treble and bass clefs instead of lute tablature. Indeed some of the titles of the sources describe them as being for "the lute or cembalo". Bach, realising the decline of the lute, may have meant the suites for either instrument. Some of them are arrangements; the fourth lute suite is a transcription of the E major Partita for solo violin, while the third is an arrangement of the fifth suite for solo cello. Bach was acquainted with some of the German lute composers, particularly Weiss, so he would have been familiar with the instrument.

By the end of the Baroque era, the lute went into its final decline before the modern revival. There are several reasons for this decline, the most significant being the increasing popularity of keyboard instruments. As well, musical tastes had

begun to change from the ornate *style brisé* (to which the lute was well suited) to the new *style galante* that was simpler and which developed into the style of the Classical era.

The modern revival of the lute probably owes much to Arnold Dolmetsch (1858-1940) who was born in France to a family of instrument makers and who studied music as well as instrument making. Dolmetsch took a great interest in historical instruments, and began to research the methods of making and playing early instruments, including the lute. Later, English lutenists such as Diana Poulton and Julian Bream revived the playing of the English repertoire. Much of the historical repertoire has been recorded by a younger generation of lutenists including Hopkinson Smith, Jakob Lindberg, Paul O'Dette and Nigel North. As well, facsimile editions of original manuscripts and historical publications have been produced enabling modern players to explore a vast repertoire that in some cases had remained unplayed for centuries.

References

1. Nigel North, 'Continuo Playing on the Lute, Archlute and Theorbo', Indiana University Press, 1987
2. Percy A. Scholes, 'The Oxford Companion to Music', Tenth Edition, Oxford University Press, 1986
3. Stanley Sadie, 'The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians', 1980
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Fifth Edition

* * * * *

The All New Amateur Chamber Music Society Self-Grading Questionnaire by Vivienne Jones

1. Score a point for any work for which you can say "I haven't played this, but I know how it goes."
2. When playing, how do you keep time?
 - a) instinct
 - b) tapping your foot
 - c) watching someone else's foot
3. If you are lost how do you remedy the situation ?
 - a) panic wildly, stop playing, burst into tears and quit the scene
 - b) soldier on regardless
 - c) stop playing and ask pointedly if everyone knows where they are
4. If you can tell that someone is lost, what do you do ?
 - a) ignore them
 - b) yell bar numbers
 - c) stop everyone and explain in great detail what went wrong
5. How much practising do you do ?
 - a) at least half an hour a day
 - b) you would practise every day if you had time
 - c) you don't need to practise
6. To whom or to what do you tune at playing days ?
 - a) whoever's loudest
 - b) the "A" of the group next door
 - c) the piano (if there is one), not otherwise
7. How many sessions can you play before you collapse ?
8. What goes first: arms / embouchure*/ fingers / brain

** if you gave this answer and you are a string player, you are probably holding your instrument the wrong way.*
9. Score a point for each of the following questions that you can honestly say YES to:
 - a) Can you sight read ?
 - b) Can you put up a music stand ?
 - c) Do you bring your own coffee mug to playing days ?
 - d) Do you have lessons ?
10. Deduct a point for each of the following questions that you can honestly say YES to:
 - a) Have you ever forgotten a playing day?
 - b) Have you ever forgotten your instrument?
 - c) Do you still have one part of someone else's music?
 - d) Did you eat the last chocolate biscuit?

11. What, in your opinion, constitutes chamber music?

- a) Haydn et al. - Beethoven et al.
- b) Bach et al. ----- Schumann et al.
- c) Machaut et al ----- Ross Edwards et al.

Bonus points

If you are under the age of thirty, give yourself 2 points for youthful arrogance

If you are over the age of thirty, give yourself 2 points for age and experience

Give yourself a point for every instrument you play, no matter how badly

If you are self taught, give yourself an extra 2 points for enthusiasm

Give yourself a point for every clef you can read, double points if you do it simultaneously

Viola players and bassoon players should add 2 points to their score

Flute players and piano players should deduct 2 points from their score

Scoring

Q1. be honest

Q2. a) 10 b) 5 c) 1

Q3. a) 4 b) 16 c) 73

Q4. a) -8 b) 5 c) 17

Q5. a) 12 b) 15 c) 0

Q6. a) 3 b) 440 c) 12

Q7. 1 point per session

Q8. you deserve a point if you have an embouchure

Q9. +1 per Yes answer

Q10. -1 per Yes answer

Q11. To get a score subtract the date of birth of the first composer from the date of birth of the second composer.

Results

Negative score: Are you sure you play an instrument ? Maybe you should join a chess club.

0 - 32 (F) Keep going ! We'll soon have you playing Berio with the best of them.

32 - 64 (C) The backbone of the Society, the salt of the earth !

64 - 96 (G) Generally gentle and generous, jolly and genial .

96 - 1000 (E) A race apart. Treat with caution, tempered with chocolate biscuits and liberal applications of fulsome praise.

over 2000 You definitely cheated ! Go back and answer the questions truthfully !

Your final score should give some indication of how pleasant you are to play with and is probably inversely proportional to your self-grading per the official ACMS questionnaire

- E exhausting
- G genial
- C comfortable
- F feeling your way

CHAMBER MUSIC IN AFRICA

by Bill Walker

There are very few listed chamber music players in Africa belonging to the Amateur Chamber Music Players of New York Inc., the international organisation based in U.S.A. of which I am a member. Many African countries have no listed members. In 1989 I visited Malawi on a mission to provide a Plastic and Reconstructive surgery service to that country. Malawi is a nation of nine to ten million people and is land locked with a large lake on one side, bordering on Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The country was originally an English colony called Nyasaland, and has a mainly agricultural economy with little or no secondary industry. This makes it one of the poorest of African countries and there is an incredible shortage of medical services with few specialists and no plastic surgeons.

My work involved treating difficult cases of severe burn contractures, mainly of the face and limbs, as well as congenital abnormalities such as cleft lip and palate conditions. I also taught junior and senior doctors how to do basic plastic surgery. I had been invited to visit by a Rotarian friend who was there on a project building a handicap centre and who could see the great need for my expertise. The hospitals were in a poor state compared with Australia, there being shortages of everything including ; gloves, suture materials, antibiotics and things we take for granted in Australia. I had been forwarned and took twenty kilograms of supplies. Theatres are very inefficient with frequent stopages and long breaks for lunch so that one can only get about half as much done per unit of time as in Australia. Surgeons tend to be "jack of all trades" doing literally all branches of surgery to the best of their ability and they are very good at what they do.

There is no television or worthwhile radio and few picture shows in Malawi so that entertainment tends to be home based with house parties, occasional arts and crafts and of course chamber music. In 1989 I met Dr Michael and Mrs Elspeth King who are listed in the American Chamber Music Society in Blantyre, Malawi. Dr King at that time was the senior surgeon in Malawi and his wife Elspeth, a PhD., teaches at the university and plays violin and viola.

On my first visit they provided me with a borrowed cello and we had many pleasant hours playing string trios together. Mrs King taught music and had a group of male

black university students learning stringed instruments, about eighteen or twenty in number, all very keen to learn.

On my second visit I took my oldest cello and left it there to make up for a shortage of cellos in their string ensemble. At the airport the customs officials were absolutely intrigued by this "big box" and had me open it to inspect the contents. They had never seen or heard of a cello before and asked "What is it?". I explained and offered to play it for them, an offer they declined ! "It's a big guitar" said one of them and we passed through customs without any further problems or paying any duty or bribes.

Mrs King had arranged a playing session for her chamber orchestral group to show me how they were progressing and I was to play lead cello with them. Many of them learnt and practiced their instruments in the most primitive conditions with kerosene lamps as their only light source after dark. We gathered at Mrs Kings' house and played some simple arrangements of folk songs and the major work for the evening was a chorus from Handel's "Messiah". The students played at about 4th grade AMEB standard and intonation, timing, and ensemble left a lot to be desired but a good time was had by all.

They were impressed with my cello playing and I was asked to give a short master class on the art of playing the cello. As a non-teacher this was quite a new experience for me but it was obvious that the cello students had not had the benefit of a cello teacher, having been taught by a violinist, Mrs King. I demonstrated several techniques mainly of bowing and how to get a good sound out of the instrument and how to avoid the many mistakes I had seen them making. I introduced them to the art of "vibrato" and showed them how to work on it. They were highly delighted with my one and only "master class" and I would have liked to have stayed on and given more, but it could not be organised. Several of these students went on to become reasonably good string players but unfortunately the group was broken up by several of its politically active members being goaled for anti-government activities. They have all since been released.

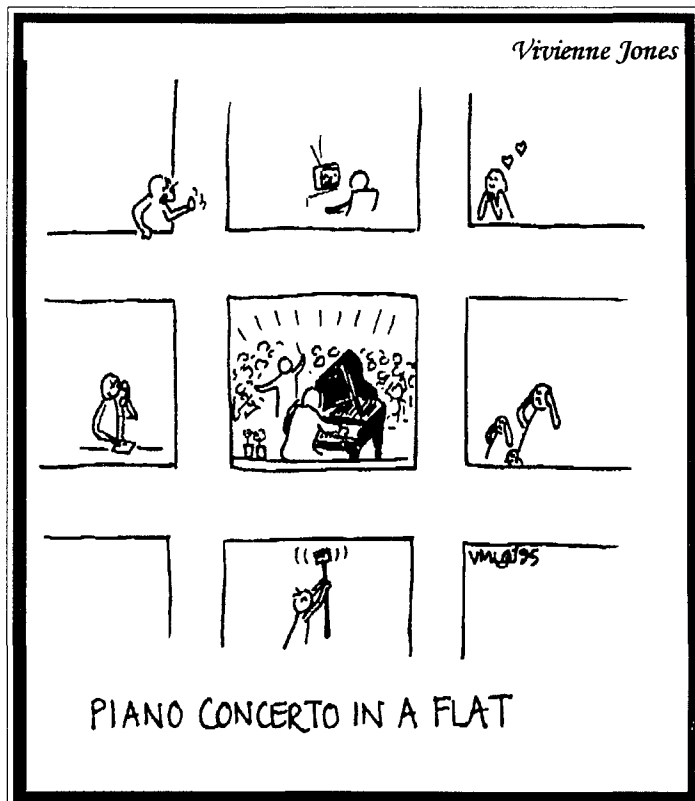
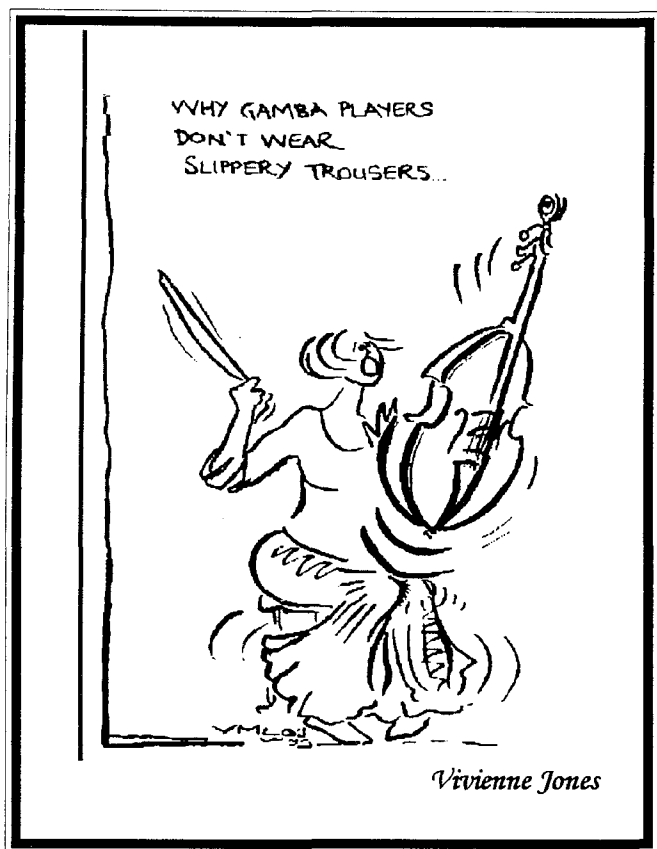
In Malawi, and in many other places in Africa one can hear the magnificent sound of the unaccompanied human voice. It comes in the form mostly of church music, hymns,

gospel songs and folk songs. They sing in their local languages with a male or female lead singer singing the first line of the chorus followed by the congregation singing from memory in amazingly beautiful harmony which has to be heard live to be fully appreciated.

At times choral groups are accompanied by a drum band with sometimes simple home made instruments like a bamboo flute or recorder or a small harp like instrument. They can't afford to buy instruments so make their own.

Their folk tunes and rhythms are amazing and they often dance in groups along with their singing and music. Drums form a prominent part of African music and often four to six drummers may be present in one group. They could give us a lesson in percussion and complicated rhythms any time.

We in the West do not get enough exposure to African music. It's great !



THE CLARINET

by Denis Radford

When you're listening to a solo clarinet performance in a concerto or chamber work for that instrument, have you ever wondered about the origins of the musical instrument we know as the clarinet, or by devotees as the liquorice stick ?

When it first appeared on the musical scene around 200 years ago it was called the clarinet, because the higher notes in its upper register had the brilliant timbre associated with the clarion trumpet, which has a tone more acute and shrill than the standard trumpet.

The low register of the clarinet is still referred to as the chalumeau (pronounced sha-lee-mo) register because its timbre is like that of an instrument of earlier origin called the chalumeau, referred to by some as a "rustic reed pipe", and from which the clarinet evolved. The chalumeau, which had a range of just over an octave, is the true antecedent of the clarinet.

Comparing the clarinet with the oboe, a close orchestral cousin which was in vogue before the clarinet, there are two essential differences between them. These are :

(a) the bore of the clarinet is cylindrical whereas that of the oboe is conical (narrow at the reed end and widening towards the bell) and

(b) the clarinet is energised by a single reed as against the oboe's double reed.

These two differences provide the clarinet with a much wider range of fundamental frequencies and its timbre is sweeter and more mellifluous. The range of the clarinet (written notes) is from the E below, to the C three octaves above, middle-C. This is four semitones less than four octaves, the largest range of all the woodwinds. The corresponding range of the oboe is from the B flat below, to the G two octaves above, middle-C, that is three octaves less three semitones.

It may be surprise you that to know that the the clarinet is able to produce notes higher than the

oboe. In practice both instruments are rarely asked to play the top three semitones of their respective ranges because the timbre tends to be unacceptably shrill. If such high tones are required, they are usually played on the piccolo, or small flute.

Referring now to the construction of the clarinet, early forms used a fairly simple lever system, rather like recorder fingering with extended levers operating the lower tone hole keys. As with other wind instruments the length of the vibrating air column is varied by covering or uncovering holes along the length of the tube. The large range of notes requires a length of vibrating air column which is longer than can be stretched by the average human hands so the lowest notes are produced by closing pads which block holes beyond the reach of the fingers. These pads are actuated by means of a lever system operated by the little finger.

In later forms, the lever / ring system invented for the flute by Theodore Boehm, a flautist attached to the Munich court in the nineteenth century, was adapted to the clarinet, resulting in the so called Boehm system clarinet. The early Boehm system clarinet is referred to as the "simple system" instrument, still used in some military bands. Subsequent improvements have been made so the modern instrument bristles with levers and rings. The extra levers have duplicated some levers so that they may be operated by either the left or the right little finger, making transitions easier. This version now has seventeen (in some instruments 18) levers and also a number of rings which operate through a system of levers when certain holes are covered by fingers and operate pads elsewhere which the fingers cannot reach.

At first sight this would seem to complicate things further, each little finger now controlling four levers, selecting one at a time. However, the arrangement greatly facilitates some finger movements once the player has established familiarity with the instrument.

The parallel bore causes the clarinet to “overblow” a twelfth (i.e. one and a half octaves) instead of an octave, which is characteristic of the other “reeds” namely oboe, saxophone and bassoon. It also means that the fingering of any one note, e.g. C, is different in each of the four octaves. The complex lever system also provides alternative fingerings for many individual notes. For example the note E flat in the chalumeau register has four alternative fingerings. The choice of fingering is then decided by what notes precede and follow the E flat.

Another complication is that of transposition. The chalumeau was very similar in construction to the recorder. Its simplicity made changes of key very difficult for the player. It became necessary to change instruments to match the key in which the musician was required to play. Instruments were made in several lengths arranged so that performer always played in the written keys of Bb major, F major or C major to correspond to the instrument being played.

To explain that further, the scale of C major involved the simplest fingering sequence, as on the piano (i.e. no black notes). When the player fingered the note C (to correspond to written C) the sound was at pitch C for the C clarinet. This is true of the oboe, flute, and bassoon. So that the fingering did not have to be changed and therefore relearned, the pitch of the notes read by the clarinetist playing on the Bb instrument are raised a tone. So, for example, if the orchestra is playing in the key of C the clarinetist will have his part raised to the key of D thus adding two sharps to the key signature. This adjustment is called transposition. These complications were passed on to the early clarinets for similar reasons to those applying to the chalumeau.

By Mozart’s time the available clarinets were pitched in C, Bb and A. The choice amongst these was dictated largely by the technical (playing) difficulties involved although there is a small difference in the timbre of these variants. The key

chosen by the composer for a work does in some cases depend on which timbre suits the work. The well known clarinet concerto and clarinet quintet of W.A.Mozart are written for the A clarinet so the orchestra / string quartet is reading in the key of A whilst the clarinetist reads in the key of C. The key for the clarinetist was kept simple largely for technical reasons in Mozart’s time. Today clarinets in C are as rare as the proverbial hen’s teeth and the choice is now between Bb and A, the C clarinet having virtually disappeared. This choice is still desirable for technical reasons. Playing in six or seven sharps or flats even on modern instruments is very difficult. These difficulties can be obviated by changing from the A to the Bb instrument or vice versa.

The lower the pitch, the longer the vibrating column of air needed and the longer also the tube required. The A clarinet is about 4 cm longer than the B flat. Other versions have also been produced, these being the basset horn in F, the alto in Eb, the bass in Bb and the contrabass in Bb, instruments which are appreciably longer than the standard A and Bb instruments. A clarinet choir consists of a combination of all these instruments and produces a luscious sound.

There are a number of other variants many of which are displayed in das Deutsches Museum in München.

Next time you are watching a suspense movie, notice how the bass clarinet, often playing solo, is introduced where the action is suspended and everyone is holding their breath waiting for something diabolical to happen. Its sound adds just the right sensation of mystery and expectation.

* * * * *

OLD VIENNA (1900 -1938)

Musical Memoirs of Reserl Spitzer interviewed by Nils Korner

Reserl (Therese) Spitzer was born in Vienna in 1900 and celebrated her 95th birthday in Sydney in December 1995. She came to Australia in 1938 with her husband and two children as refugees from Austria's Anschluss with Hitler's Germany. Since her childhood in Vienna and later in Australia, she has been deeply involved with music, first as an amateur of the piano and cello, later as a teacher and accompanist.

Vienna at the beginning of this century was renowned throughout the world for its musical life. The city's association with the lives of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, with Schubert, Brahms and many other famous names, gave it an enchanted aura. The quality of its orchestras, opera, operetta, conductors, theatre, art, was legendary.

Its reputation as the home of chamber music, professional and amateur, was another jewel in this musical crown. Reserl spent her youth and early adult life in that atmosphere. The following is a slightly edited version (translated from German) of conversations and taped interviews held between July and December 1995 in which she gives her account of those times.

(Explanatory notes are in italics.)

Nils My first question is to ask you what kind of people played chamber music in Vienna? How did you get to meet these people? Who were they?

Reserl In Vienna where I was born and grew up there was a violin, a viola or a cello virtually in every second house. I played piano and cello and as a result got to know a lot of people with whom I came to play chamber music. I knew many of them from my childhood. Through one group I met others and consequently I played with 3 or 4 different ensembles each week. So we played almost the entire chamber music repertoire - all the Beethoven quartets, the 10 famous Mozart quartets, about 20 or 30 of Haydn's 83 quartets.

The moderns went as far as Ravel and Debussy....

Nils That was very modern in those days ...

Reserl Verdi was one of the most up-to-date. Those chamber music evenings were almost my greatest enjoyment, they supplanted my theatregoing. Of course we also went to the theatre or to a concert, but chamber music was my major pastime in Vienna. My husband was also a cellist - perhaps he didn't play quite as well, so in the Schubert Quintet he would play the second cello and I played first and so on I went through all phases of chamber music - for example I met an excellent clarinetist with whom we could play the Brahms and Mozart Quintets.

Nils Where did you usually play?

Reserl We usually played at my home or someone else's - it was always at a private home; we started around 8 PM and at 9 we had supper and then played on till 10 or a little longer. There were 2 sisters, Elsie Stein and Wally Stein, who played violin and cello respectively, not just for fun but also professionally, whom we invited from time to time. They were very good, semi-professional, but they were pleased to play with us. Wally also played the piano and was an accompanist. They went to America and I lost touch with them.

Nils Did you ever invite friends or give a private performance?

Reserl No, not really, though very occasionally we invited friends or acquaintances if we knew that they were interested in chamber music - mostly we played for ourselves. One of the violinists sometimes brought her son or I took my husband if we played somewhere else - but we really kept it in the family.

Nils People lived in apartments...could one play in the evening without disturbing the neighbours?

Reserl The walls and ceilings were very thick and the buildings were solid. One could play until 10 or 11 without any problem, perhaps not till midnight.

Nils I'm still not sure whether chamber music was part of the popular culture or whether it was reserved for an elite ?

Reserl No, the masses weren't interested in chamber music ; they liked the zither, folk songs, but not chamber music. The fact that one played violin, viola or cello put one into a somewhat classier category. One had to have command of one's instrument but though one could play Strauss waltzes the chamber musicians didn't have much to do with Volksmusik - popular folk music.

Nils You said that there was a musical instrument in every second or third household. Was it really like that ?

Reserl Yes it really was - there were many people who were good violinists and also played the viola - then they went over to the viola which more or less became their forte. I had a childhood friend with whom I went to primary school who was a cellist. She was already very good when I started the cello - her household was very musical. She also sang and her brother played the piano - it was almost a music society. In every household there were 2 or 3 people who had some connection with music.

Nils Your brothers were also very talented pianists

Reserl There were three of us and I have to say that my two brothers and I were all rather talented and therefore we had an unusual interest in music. Both my brothers were excellent pianists, my older brother played professionally before Hitler and after the war. My younger brother did it only for enjoyment but he also played very well.

Nils Did you play with him ?

Reserl Yes of course, he played the piano

part, in the Schumann Quintet or the Trout Quintet for instance. There was one time of which I was very proud when he asked me about a melody which kept going through his head and which he couldn't identify - I knew it at once. It was the "rock" motif of Richard Strauss' *Alpine Symphony*. He was very pleased that I rid him of this torment. It was the only time that I knew something which he didn't know.

Nils Was there anything like a Chamber Music Society ?

Reserl There was a Society for Modern Music, the so-called Schönberg Society [*the Verein für Musikalische Privataufführungen, (Society for Private Musical Performances) founded by Schönberg in 1918 - disbanded due to the Austrian currency crisis in 1921*]¹ to which I belonged . I was very young and thought it was amusing to get to know new works. In retrospect I am inclined to think that I am not very enthusiastic about this modern music. The best work of Schönberg's was the sextet *Die Verklärte Nacht* which we played. We could find nothing agreeable in Alban Berg's works .

Amongst the members of this *Schönberg* Society there were a few excellent pianists, Eduard Steuerman for example. Another member was Erika Wagner, a very good actress - who performed in *Pierre Lunaire* by Schönberg. These were really the only modern piece which appealed to me. I don't enjoy modern music, I like the Classical and the Romantic period - the 19th Century, not the 20th.

Nils Was much chamber music performed in Vienna or was there more emphasis on Orchestral concerts and Opera.

Reserl In the Musikverein Hall there were a lot of Orchestral concerts and most chamber music was performed in the intermediate Konzerthaus Hall. There were 3 halls in the Konzerthaus - one very large, a medium size and a small one - the medium hall could hold about 500 people and that's where one mostly heard chamber music. The best quartet was the Rosé

Quartet - Rosé was Mahler's brother in law, having married his sister [Justine]¹ and was the leader of the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Court [later State] Opera orchestra. Rosé had three wonderful colleagues in the quartet. [Between 1905 and 1920 the quartet consisted of Rosé, Fischer, Ruzitska and Buxbaum]¹. That was their home ground but they also went on tour. In those days it wasn't so easy, they had to go by train, not by aeroplane. The "Home" Quartet was held in great honour and esteem, the Rosé quartet was really the best one could imagine, not only technically but musically.

Nils Where did one study music - was it at school? Tell me about the general experience as well as your own.

Reserl Some studied in the Conservatorium but mostly one learned from private teachers. My brothers and I learned from a private teacher who won a piano in a competition run by the Bösendorfer Klavier Company. She was very good. The cello I studied with Joachim Stutschevsky [with Kolisch formed the Wiener Streichquartett - later known as the Kolisch Quartet]² - he was a Russian and an excellent cellist and played in the Kolisch Quartet [Rudolf Kolisch, later leader of the Pro Arte quartet. His sister Gertrude married Schönberg in 1924. By 1927 the members were Kolisch, Felix Khuner, Jenö Lehner, Benar Heifetz]¹. The Kolisch Quartet played everything off by heart without music. Consequently they could sit very close to one another, it was a pleasure to hear them. Kolisch's left hand was injured in childhood and he had his violin rebuilt so that he bowed with the left hand and fingered with the right - that was Kolisch. Perhaps he didn't play so beautifully but it was a pleasure to hear him and to see that he was able to play - it was a great achievement.

Nils Who were the instrument makers and repairers? How did you get or buy your instruments?

Reserl There were 3 or 4 stores or establishments - I don't remember the names. People didn't play on a Stradivarius or Amati but

there were fine instruments and they were handled very well by several stores, there were excellent repairers

Nils How was life for music teachers - were there many people who took lessons?

Reserl It wasn't easy to make a living, there weren't too many people who could pay. Teacher's pay was much worse in Vienna than here, far worse. But the music teachers were pretty good and several of course were famous; the Viennese Piano makers Bösendorfer, had excellent tuners and also teachers.

Nils Who taught at the Vienna Conservatorium?

Reserl There were some very good Professors who attracted a lot of people to Vienna to study music. I met there two English ladies from London who studied with Prof. Emil Sauer, an excellent teacher of the piano. Many of the teachers were members of the Philharmonic.

Nils What about wind instruments?

Reserl Flute and clarinet were taught but I know little about that. My teacher there was the cellist of the Rosé Quartet [Buxbaum]. As a teacher he wasn't too good but the name made a big difference. Let me think who else there was... Kleineke was also a Philharmoniker - Finally I was taught by Stutschevsky [born Romny]²; he was a "Little Russian", that's to say from Odessa. He fled from there and came to Vienna and was an excellent teacher ... I learned most from him in my last 2, 3 years of study, also when I was already married.

Nils How much did you practice? Did you practice daily?

Reserl Naturally I practiced and had to prepare myself like any student. I didn't do exams but I learned a great deal from him - for example the Haydn and the Saint-Saëns Concertos. I did my homework.

Nils Did you usually sight read when you

played quartets ?

Reserl We read by sight for the first time; then we practiced at home - a Brahms quartet, for example, is not so easy to sight read, so we practiced - and then we played the quartet again once or twice - and showed some improvement. Some like Haydn, we sight read, others, like the famous Mozart quartets we had to practice together. We played all the quartets, Dvorak, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Smetana, Schubert - all the famous ones - finally, as the most modern, we played Ravel and Debussy.

Nils Did you "inherit" music from your parents - were they also musical ?

Reserl Yes, my mother was extremely musical.

Nils And did she also play an instrument ?

Reserl No she didn't but if, for example, I sang a song she could sing the second part straight away. She was the one who insisted that we children should learn everything, know everything, do everything. My father was much quieter and more modest in this respect. She was the driving force - a marvel. Everything that we achieved we owe to her.

Nils When you were a child did your parents take you to hear a Quartet or a Trio....?

Reserl My parents took me wherever there was good music. In those days there wasn't much offering in the way of Quartets but there were Operas and Orchestral Concerts - I went to Concerts when I was only 6 or 7 years old and enjoyed it very much. Quartets came later, and I enjoyed them too. The Rosé Quartet gave many performances - it was a Jewish quartet - one of the most famous and most widely known. We had a subscription and went throughout the year. That was later when I was 13, 14 years old.

Nils There was a lot of Jewish culture in Vienna - were there social or religious barriers which determined with whom one played ? - was that a

factor as to whether one played music with Jews or Christians ?

Reserl I must say that it did not matter. We played a lot with Jews because we were in social contact with fellow Jews, but there was no barrier and also no bias.

Nils So there was no kind of segregation ?

Reserl No there wasn't. For example our clarinetist wasn't Jewish. The Steins and Grete Tämmer were Jewish but if one found a non-Jew one was delighted to play with them - there was no prejudice. The music was what counted.

Nils I'd like to ask you whether you included singers in your chamber music - for example did you play Lieder ?

Reserl Actually no. Later on here in Australia I was an accompanist - there weren't many accompanists here and so I was in demand because I was very restrained in my playing and people liked that. But I didn't accompany in Vienna.

Nils When did you start to take an interest in vocal music - and how did it come about ?

Reserl I knew a lot of singers - Lily Geröfi and Olga Süssland and above all Annie Erhardt, who really introduced me to Hugo Wolf. At that time I knew very little of Hugo Wolf as a composer of Lieder and it was through Annie Erhardt that I came to know his work well.

Nils Were Lieder recitals popular in Vienna ?

Reserl Yes, but not privately. Lieder were performed professionally.

Nils There were wonderful Orchestras in Vienna - were there also any Amateur Orchestras as there are here in Australia ?

Reserl There was a Ladies' Orchestra [*Wiener Frauensinfonie-Orchester*]³ consisting only of women, whose conductor was Julius Lehnert. That was after the first War. Lehnert, the

conductor, was the only man, otherwise it was entirely female. It was a pretty good orchestra.

Nils How did it come about ? Was it a manifestation of Feminism ? Who founded it ?

Reserl Word got around that an all female orchestra was to be formed - so all sorts of people wanted to join - the good players were accepted and the bad ones were left out. Lehnert founded it. He was a good conductor, perhaps not in the top rank, but very competent and he maintained good discipline. I didn't play in it but heard it often - it was a fine orchestra.

Nils Was it commercial - did they sell tickets ? How long was it in existence ? It was obviously highly original.

Reserl One had to pay for tickets when they gave a performance. I don't know exactly how long it lasted - about 4 or 5 years. It was very original, a good standard and noteworthy. Many of the players were very good; the first violin, for example, was excellent.

Nils I know that there was also a Doctor's Orchestra.³

Reserl Yes that's so - but they were very private, I don't think they gave performances where one paid for tickets. It was a good orchestra, only doctors but they played very well ; I don't remember who conducted them.

Nils What about the suburbs of Vienna; were there any amateur orchestras as there are in Sydney, for example here in Willoughby ? I ask because many of the chamber music players here have come from the amateur orchestras.

Reserl The Willoughby Orchestra is excellent. In Vienna I didn't know of any amateur suburban orchestras. [*Dr. Otto Biba, Director of Archives of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien writes that there were in fact numerous Amateur Orchestras -personal communication*].³

Nils How widespread was amateur

chamber music in the provincial cities ?

Reserl I think it was mainly in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, also in large towns like Salzburg, Linz, Graz, Klagenfurt etc., not in the smaller towns.

Nils Was it expensive to buy the music scores for playing chamber music ? Who were the major publishers ?

Reserl Music was not expensive - it has become so now. At that time it was totally affordable. For some works, like the Strauss Waltzes, there was an enormous market - for the piano or violin and piano - not perhaps for quartets.

Nils Who were the big publishers ?

Reserl Peters and Universal Edition. Peters was German and Universal Edition was Austrian. Peters is perhaps today still the largest.

Nils What other diversions and interests did young people have ?

Reserl They often went to the theatre and the Opera, where the young could get very cheap standing room.

Nils When did the cinema arrive in Vienna ? I heard that 1995 was the 100th anniversary of the first cinema performance, which I believe took place in France.

Reserl I was probably 3 or 4 years old, so in 1903 or 1904. Later it was mainly Charlie Chaplin, he was the big attraction for 4 or 5 years.

Nils Did one go dancing ?

Reserl Yes, there were dance halls, sometimes with an orchestra or if they didn't have the money just with a pianist. I never went to a dance hall because I learned dancing privately. I was a gifted child and had to perform when someone came who was interested in taking lessons. The teacher was a very tall man and I was

a tiny child so it looked very comical to have him dancing around with me. But people liked it and so there was generally a new pupil for the school - hence I was quite important there. I still remember the teachers name, Mr. Kadur. A second Dancing School was Kopetzky - that was a large establishment and also very popular.

Nils So I want to conjure up a picture of the world in those days - there was little in the way of cinema and virtually no Radio....

Reserl Radio didn't exist at all, that only came around the 1920's. One had to put a needle exactly on the right spot on a crystal - the crystal set. One could hear music but the sound wasn't very good or interesting.

Nils Did people give Dinner parties ; or were they inclined to entertain with afternoon teas (coffees) [*Jausen*]⁴ ?

Reserl People were invited to dinners, but the main social format was afternoon coffees [*Jausen*]. They started at 3 or 4 and lasted till 6 or 7 pm. Dinners were fairly early, around 7.30, and lasted till 9.30 or 10.30. They were quite frequent.

Nils Viennese cooking was famous

Reserl First there was a soup, then meat, fowl or fish, all garnished, then a first class dessert, a Malakoff or a cake. Everyone boasted about having the best cook. Such a dinner took place about once a month. Social life and entertainment were a substantial part of life in Vienna. Apart from concerts one went a lot to the theatre and the opera.

Nils What about cafés [*Kaffeehäuser - Coffee-Houses*] ? Was that just for the men or also for the ladies ?

Reserl No, it was also for the women. They were an institution... one drank a coffee and could sit with it for hours and read the papers and do all sorts of things - make business deals or meet one's friends.

Nils Did you go to the Kaffeehaus before you were married ?

Reserl I wasn't a great frequenter of the Kaffeehaus but I still had rendezvous with friends there sometimes

Nils And could one still go there when one was married with children ?

Reserl One went with one's spouse. And the maid or the nursemaid was at home, so one could go out whenever one pleased.

Nils How many people were there at home ?

Reserl Husband, wife, two children then there was the cook and the nursemaid, and a cleaner came once or twice a week to do a thorough cleaning. Nowadays it is quite impossible to imagine it, but in those days that's how it was

Explanatory Notes & Sources

- 1 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Edited by Stanley Sadie, 1980*
- 2 *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians. 8th Edition Rev. by Nicolas Slonimsky, Schirmer 1994*
- 3 *Dr. Otto Biba, Director of Archives, Gessellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien (Society of the Friends of Musik, Vienna) Personal Communication. See also Hesses Musiker-Kalender eg. 1935.*
- 4 *A Jause was a veritable feast, consisting of a variety of good things ranging from open sandwiches to a large array of pastries and cakes, laced with lashings of whipped cream [Schlag] and washed down with excellent coffee.*

* * * * *