

Our Neighbours: Kings Cross Update

When you pass the former Central St. Martin's (University of the Arts) building in Holborn, there is a blue plaque recognising the architect William Lethaby. the first principal of the school (1896-1911). The university moved in September 2011 to its new site in the Kings Cross Development next to Kings Place, but the name lives on in the new Lethaby Gallery, providing a link between old and new. And this is a feature of the whole development, a feeling of using old structures for new uses.

Although much of the site is still under construction, there are clear routeways around the area (including "Eat Street"!), and it is well worth strolling around the campus to see the great progress being made. A good place to start is the Viewing Platform, which gives a panoramic view of the sweep of steps leading from the canal to Granary Square on one side, and the station development on the other. The university is now 'inhabited' and the huge atrium of the main building, the Granary, is an impressive light-well, with natural light and huge old brick walls recalling the old transit sheds and grain store it replaces. The brickwork provides a warm and interesting texture to balance the modernisation, and you can still see the old shunting tracks and turntables.

The main university entrance leads out to Granary Square and its steps and seats descending down to the canal, the perfect place to watch the world - at least, the canal and its barges - go by. This huge square is completely pedestrian with banks of fountains bubbling away and an enticing café. At the time of writing the summer installation - Felice Varini's "Across the Buildings," a series of geometric shapes crossing nine heritage buildings – had gone, making way for seasonal decorations of large 'snowflakes' in the trees, with more to come

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There is still much to be done, of course, but redevelopment is moving fast, with Kings Cross Energy Centre scheduled to start generating electricity as part of the area's planned energy infrastructure. The Great Northern Hotel of 1854 is open, and the Arthouse complex welcomed its first residents in 2013, offering modern amenities as well as tranquil walks to Regent's Park and Islington. By 2016 it is estimated that up to 30,000 people will be studying, living and working at Kings Cross.

There are two gardens of interest: the Skip Garden, which produces vegetables and herbs for local outlets, including their own café; and Handyside Gardens, open in December 2013, a newly planted area to complement the ambitious tree programme. There is a display of plant illustrations indoors on easels and another outside on a shiny metallic 'mirror wall' adjacent to the plot. with horticultural information on everything from Elephant's Ear to Angel's Fishing Rod.

For the future, it will be fascinating to see how the restoration of the gasholders progresses - the triplet will be re-erected in the north of the site and apartments built inside them, and the single gasholder originally serving Pancras Gasworks will be an event space. A major newcomer to the site will be the new Google HQ, an ambitious building between Kings Cross and St. Pancras stations, scheduled to be ready in 2016 I think conducted tours would be very welcome as the building is rumoured to have the most innovative, flexible workspace ever, enough to make most other office workers green with envy.

Place, so do go and have a look – access across the bridge from Goods Way.

Chris Bradshaw

LCMS Strategy Planning

have been a trustee of LCMS for a year. When I joined the Board I was asked to look strategically at how we are set up and how we operate. I have helped others in a similar exercise in the past, and my way of doing this is to take time, talk to as many people as I can, and try to understand the organisation in depth. It's a slow ousiness, but I'm beginning to feel hat I have got to grips with LCMS as living organisation.

All organisations have to change.

ose that try to stand still, in my experience, gradually metimes not so gradually – wither away. Those that try to shrink eir activities also often tend to shrink out of existence. So, my ask is to help the Board identify how LCMS can grow and how it eeds to change.

There are two ways to change - dramatically or incremental Dramatic change is hard to manage and you need a reason for it, usually because the organisation is in serious decline. That is certainly not the case with LCMS. It is a well-established, wellrespected charity with good artistic values and a loyal audience.

Another reason, though, for dramatic change comes when an oportunity arises that cannot be resisted. That presented itself to CMS with the opportunity to move from Conway Hall to Kings Place, and we can see that this has, overall, been very beneficia Ithough not without its issues. LCMS is a small charity with only one part-time paid person. At Conway Hall, it was a relatively straight-forward exercise in programme-planning and hall-booking At Kings Place we work in partnership with a complex profession set-up, and what we do has to mesh with the Kings Place out they are themselves hard-pressed and there are limits to wha we can ask of them.

hat Kings Place can offer – including a great hall, a great marketing team and a wide potential clientele – we need ourselve to become more professional and, perhaps, entrepreneurial. At the ame time, we don't want to lose the "family" atmosphere that I feel is a distinctive feature of our concerts. We also want to maintain our adventurous artistic policy while building our audiences. That has to be seen in the context of ever-increasing competition – chamber music, while appealing to a relatively smal clientele, is growing, so there are more events chasing that clientele. We need to market ourselves, and to do this we need survive on box-office alone – at least not if it is to have a coheren and satisfying artistic offer with high-quality artists - we need to attract funding that enables us to plan ahead with confidence. Concerts are planned, and committed, up to two years ahead, and hat sometimes requires an act of faith

I think everyone agrees that we need to consolidate our position, so change needs to be incremental. Our strategic planning, therefore, has to be focussed on developing the longer erm sustainability through marketing and fund-raising. We do no have the resources to employ people to do this, and in any case that would go against the culture of self-help that distinguishes LCMS. The drive needs to come from within, but we do not at present have the skills available to us to do this.

So what does this all come down to? A plea for people with come forward to add to what we have already - a dedicated and devoted team of trustees. We need just that little extra resource t enable us to build on what we have and secure it for the future. Is that you? To discuss or volunteer, please contact me at

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Richard Gold

Members' Voices Three Generations



On 2 April 1957 my father, Harold Rich, then in his early 30s and an economics graduate working in the motor industry, wrote to his uncle in Johannesburg. My parents were newly engaged, and my father wanted to tell his uncle something about his wife-to-be. My mother, Dina Kafka, who had come to live in London in the 1950s, had been born in Prague, a city she had left for Denmark as a refugee at the age of 15 in 1939.

My father wrote: "[Dina] shares my passion for chamber music – alas, we are both listeners, not executants. I imagine that when you lived in Bloomsbury you were familiar with the South Place Sunday Concerts at the Conway Hall. These we

rarely miss." My great-uncle's reply hasn't survived, but it's very likely that he did attend the concerts during his years as editor of the Jewish Chronicle in the early 1930s. In his very modest childhood home in Stoke-on-Trent at the turn of the century music would only have come from the wireless and occasional concerts, so it isn't difficult to imagine the influence of the Sunday concerts in the formation of a lifelong music-lover.

This makes me the third generation of my family for whom the concerts have been part of our lives. None of us are "executants" but all of us, of whom I am the only one to have grown up in London, have taken something from the wealth of musical life in London, and from the Sunday Concerts, which introduced audiences to serious music without great ceremoniousness or expense. My parents' copy of 'The Story of A Thousand Concerts', published by the South Place Ethical Society in 1927, explains:

Sunday Popular Concerts, but why the word 'Popular" was introduced into the title must have been a cause of bewilderment to many. ... [It] was, in fact, a misnomer, for the music has always been of the most consistently unpopular character. It must also be remembered that when the concerts were first commenced public taste was all for the lighter forms of music, and that actually South Place did a vast amount of spade work in creating an appreciative audience for chamber music."

1950s, but they would have heard performers such as the Aeolian String Quartet and Dennis Brain Wind Ensemble, before Dennis Brain's early death in an accident later in 1957. In the late 1960s and 1970s we would often make an impromptu Sunday trip to Red Lion Square, a random selection of

Behind the Scenes



My journey with LCMS started in 2008, when the organisation moved to Kings Place and hired me a ts Administrator. Over the five years that have no assed, along with such routine jobs as filing, ooking rooms and arranging meetings. I have h he privilege of working with a vast range and number of people: musicians, agents, administrat production managers, and trustees. A useful and enjoyable part of my job has also been developin contacts with people at Kings Place itself. Publicity is also an area in which I am involve I email our members to remind them of imminent s, and keep our new website up-to-date—this is very important as m

Occasionally there are problems, such as when the email system does k or the time when I realised that a narticular artist was coming in a fe ndia also add that this job definitely neips with practising patience and namess. Fremember when we were having iny daughter Eld's christeni inday and artists were calling me minutes before I left for church. Most important to me is that I have had an opportunity to listen to

Most important to me is that I have had an opportunity to listen to sor of the best chamber music in the world. The performances I remember most vividly include the Carducci Quartet playing the first movement of Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80, the Allegro assai— Presto, and the Allegri Quartet playing the last movement of Beethoven's St Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, the Allegro appassionato—Presto. My role as the Administrator for LCMS is a unique combination of jobs: from concert production, administration and marketing, through graph

bs: from concert production, administration and marketing, through graph esign, fundraising and management of our website. The role without doub wivid one and changes from hour to hour. I have learned that there is a lu

one and changes non-noun to noun, mave learned that mere is a nork 'behind the scenes' when you visit a concert hall to hear music! I feel privileged to work for an organisation with such a long history. I at there is a shared responsibility between all engaged in the management the LCMS to continue our theme of celebrating between all engaged in the manageme the LCMS to continue our theme of celebrating some of the best British and international chamber music and sharing this music with London audiences affordable prices

Thanks to this job I have started playing the piano myself. I couldn't as be a page turner for LCMS, but I'm slowly getting there.

Karolina Ozadowicz

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"The concerts were called the South Place My parents kept no programmes from the late

Books

OF

miniature scores of well-known works in the back of the car. The interior of Conway Hall would not have changed very much since the late 1950s, and in my adolescent mind its earnest, secular, 1920s aesthetic became indissoluble from the experience of listening to chamber music – the distinctive wood-panelling, the fringed lamp casting a circle of light on the performers, and the large inscription of 'To Thine Own Self Be True' forming a constant backdrop. The audience, although not entirely made up of a certain Bloomsbury intellectual type dressed like Michael Foot at the Cenotaph in 1981, had a similar earnest, secular air about it. I would observe a certain thinning of listeners in the direction of the pub next door during the more avant garde or obscure works in the programme, returning for the more familiar piece with which the concert usually ended. Chamber music had less of school, or the Bach instrumental works and Beethoven piano sonatas my more proficient contemporaries played, and it was a long time before I really chose to listen to the Sunday concert programme

All this is a long way in time and place from Kings Place, where the LCMS and the Sunday concerts now flourish. It is a short walk from my home, and far from being the child amongst older people, I am an inconspicuous middle-aged woman in the audience, happy to hear both performers of breathtaking skill and longevity such as Levon Chilingirian, and the enthusiastic and talented younger ensembles promoted by the LCMS. I hope that the next generation of our family will still be listening to them with pleasure in years to come.

Barbara Rich

the easy tuneful or participatory appeal than the Messiah and Mozart Requiem we encountered at

Welcome!

Looking over the articles in our Newsletter always reminds me of the importance to LCMS of the cooperation and support we receive from our partners. As both musicians and their audiences know, playing chamber music well entails more than just musical skills. It is no less true that the promotion of chamber-music concerts requires multiple skills, high among them the ability to work in harmony with one's partners. In the 'Getting to Know You' column of Chamber *Music Notes* we always highlight the contributions to LCMS of our multi-talented Kings Place partners. This issue, which

This issue of the Newsletter contains a number of other examples of harmonious relationships. In 'Behind the Notes' Peter Fribbins points out how each of the ensembles taking part in the LCMS International Quartet Series enhances the myriad of different possibilities in the music we hear. Walter Rudeloff's interview of Wajahat Khan, the sarod maestro and composer, illuminates how Khan and the long-time LCMS favourites the Allegri Quartet are bringing together two great musical traditions in our last concert in May.

Esther Ainsworth is a Kings Place duty manager for our Sunday concerts. She is also an artist, and she has written a fascinating piece for us about a project she did recently in Slovakia and Hungary to bring two border towns together through sound.

Richard Gold, an LCMS trustee, reports in this issue on his strategic look at how the Society is set up, how we operate, and how we might need to change. One unsurprising conclusion that he had reached is our need for help with marketing and fund-raising in order to develop our longer-term sustainability. So, let me add my voice to his plea for people with skills in these areas to come forward to add to what we have already – a dedicated and devoted team of trustees.

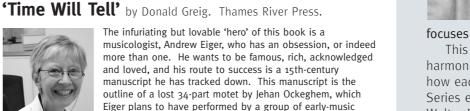
Finally, I wish you all a harmonious 2014. I hope you enjoy all the articles in Chamber Music Notes and of course all the concerts this season.

music+art+restaurants

Neil Johnson

Executive Chairman

focuses on Hannah Cooke and Ruth Shwer, is no exception.



singers called Beyond Compère. Such is the bizarre set of circumstances in the plot that I had to reassure myself that Jehan Ockeghem did in fact exist: and, yes, there he is in the music dictionary (c1410 - c1499)

along with Compère, du Fay and Desprès.

Andrew is very sensitive and secretive about his find but does eventually manage to gain the musical interest of Beyond Compère's director, Emma, who is in principle willing to arrange a performance. All does not go smoothly, and Andrew's plans are complicated by his extreme jet lag and social blunders, coupled with a drunken evening in Tours.

A love element in the story? Well, yes and no. Andrew's wife is at home in America and Emma's friend is a singer in the group, and their stories are woven into the plot, which descends into farce as we try to keep up with the destiny of the manuscript. I think that the reader like me will wonder quite how the motet. Andrew's ambition and Emma's performance will ever coalesce in the end. We are even introduced to a numerology strand in the story to complicate things further.

In many ways at first I found Andrew quite an unlikeable character, but I warmed to him and his quirky obsession. I really enjoyed reading a novel set in such an unusual musical background. However, it's not necessary to have any indepth knowledge of music, and the author has achieved a good balance of academic and lay terminology, all very approachable. The background travails of music performance underlie the plot - the travel, hotel, concert venue, rehearsal, feedback, networking. It's always sobering to think of the behind-the-scenes work of any ensemble when all we, the audience, experience is smiles and, one hopes, some hours of fine music

Interleaved in the main plot are various excerpts from the memoir of a certain Geoffroy Chiron, which gives insight into the world of 15th century musicians and especially of Ockeghen, Chiron's 'mentor and patron in music,' not all of it by any means flattering. The memoir manuscript surfaces for real at the end of the book, contributing to a neat ending to this rollercoaster story.

Chris Bradshaw



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CHAMBER MUSIC NOTES

The LCMS 1 ISSUE 9 WINTER/SPRING2014 ISSUE 9 WINTER/SPRING2014

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Behind the Notes

Autumn 2013 finally produced something I have been working towards for a long time: a whole orchestra on the Kings Place stage in an LCMS concert, on this occasion the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sir Roger monington. In truth, we overdid it, with 36 musicians, timpani, harpsichord and conduct more musicians than could comfortably fit, with

somewhat nervous that Roger Norrington might fall off the edge of the stage! But what a memorable concert and great sound in the hall. We also managed, in December, to arrange

irs ago! – thanks to the Allegri Quartet and the ellent completion and embellishment of lliam Drabkin. What a fascinating event.

It has been good to have more internati ternational Quarter Series, with a number of intries already represented and many more t e: our first concert of the 2014/15 season w with the night longthan Plowright and the

ce even though we may well live in the 21s ntury cyber-global village, the national errees in culture, attitude, interpretation a Czech quartet bring something rather al to Czech music, a French quartet provic

ossibilities in the music we hear I look forward to telling you more about

Adventures on the Border

Esther Ainsworth has been part of the team at Kings Place since 2008, when the venue first started out. She works as a Duty Manager for concerts and events, and outside of Kings Place, works as a practising artist. She enjoys the evolving, diverse programming at Kings Place and can regularly be found on Sunday evenings working with LCMS, with whom, she reports, she's been delighted to have the pleasure of working for the past five years.

In spring this year I set out upon an adventure which took me deep into the heart of Europe to pursue a three-month appointment as an Artist in Residence at the Bridge Guard Residency, Štúrovo/Párkány, Slovakia.

The residency is designed to support artists and musicians who work on projects which emphasise uniting, connecting, and bridging communities. Artists draw inspiration from the Maria Valeria Bridge, which spans the Danube and connects the two towns of Štúrovo/Párkány, and Esztergom, as well as bridging the Hungarian/Slovakian border.

The bridge is hugely significant to this part of the world due to its troubled history, spending a great deal of time in a state of disrepair. After its destruction during the war, all connections between the two towns on both sides of the border were severed.

My work here began as a sonic diary, collecting field recordings whilst exploring the two locations, always via the Maria Valeria Bridge. I recorded everything, including bells, traffic, birds, horns and conversations. These recordings became a starting point for a series of sound works intended to create a virtual bridge between the two towns and countries. I considered the medium of sound a way to transcend language differences in mixed lingual communities as well as enjoying the fluidity of sound to move through borders and cultures carrying its unique message without geographical restrictions.

The process of making new observations and listening to the environment became a pursuit to understand a spirit of place and capture the rhythms underpinning the way the towns move and live. Each sound recording, only a few moments, created a series of snap shots, like photographs.

l created two arrangements from my recordings, one for Štúrovo/Párkány and the other for Esztergom. Both arrangements consider subtle rhythms and repetitions. Silences within the arrangements are symbolic of the absence of structure when the bridge was destroyed and the flow of communication between the two locations was brought to a standstill.

This material then was transformed into a number of performances, which developed throughout the residency. The first was for the event AquaPhone, which took place in June. AquaPhone brings together musicians, writers, thinkers and structural engineers to reflect on a time when the bridge was destroyed and it was impossible for relatives and friends on each side of the Danube to communicate with each other. People would go to the river and



Peter Fribbins

Jwen and Kalya Apekisneva with percussionists Dadro Sogundo and Goorgo English in the amaz

Bartók sonata for those forces, a work I have

wanted to programme for more than a decade now. We shall also have heard Brahms' On or

hoputiful and poignant music in the Western

classical canon, alongside other works for the

Vicky and the other musicians.

mention is the wonderful baroque group

n 11 May, an intriguing East-meets-West conce

maestro Wajahat Khan (see 'Marriage of Two Gr Musical Culturos' in this Newsletter) | feel this I

harp trio called La Mer Trio, with the harpist

in the guise of the Allegri Concert with sar

oncerts every bit as interesting, or course, an or

allow the water to carry the sound of short messages, often encoded, to the other bank half a kilometer away

In response to this phenomenon, I mixed samples from the two arrangements, finding interesting points where sounds overlap and link to create a joining and overlaying of two locations. My role became a metaphorical bridge blending together the voice of two places. The performance also included participation from the local community in both Štúrovo/Párkány and Esztergom. Contributors recorded sound samples via mobile phone as part of a series of workshops and sound walks.

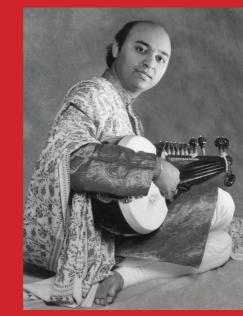
Further performances took place as collaborations formed with other artists and musicians. The performance 'Water&Mark' was developed for Museum Night in Budapest at the School of Fine Arts. This was a reworking and extension of the AguaPhone performance, but delivered as a live improvisation with Budapest musicians Dóra Attila and Szurcsik József, with whom I continued to work throughout my residency. Full documentation of my work during this residency can be discovered on my website at www.estherainsworth.com More information about this residency programme

is available at **www.bridgeguard.org**

Following my return to London, new projects develop, and I have been very happy to come back to Kings Place and rejoin my friends and colleagues. who have all given me such amazing support. I am very much looking forward to working on the winter concerts with LCMS, whom I would like to thank for inviting me to write this article for the newsletter.

Esther Ainsworth

Marriage of Two Great Musical Cultures



World-renowned sarod maestro and composer Wajahat Khan is performing with the Allegri Quartet at the LCMS concert on 11 May 2014.

Walter Rudeloff *Could you tell us about the* illustrious musicians from whom you descend and your family's position in Indian *music today?*

Wajahat Khan I feel most privileged that my family is one of India's, and indeed one of the world's, first musical families, which goes back through a line of illustrious musicians to the 16th century. My father (Ustad Imrat Khan) and uncle (late Ustad Vilayat Khan) are legendary doyens of Indian classical music and the sitar. My three brothers are also world renowned. Our family ensemble, the '50 Fingers of Imrat Khan and sons', has performed worldwide. including at the BBC Proms. The many important innovations and musical evolution that came through my family, especially in the last three generations, have largely shaped and influenced instrumental performance of Indian classical music up until today.

WR Does your style of playing have a name?

WK This style is called a 'gharana.' My gharana is known most popularly as the 'Etawah gharana' (from Etawah, where my great-great-grandfather lived); or the 'Imdad Khani gharana', after my great-grandfather Ustad Imdad Khan, who was one of the first musicians ever recorded.

'Gharana' literally means 'household', but refers to a particular family or style of singing or playing. There are only a handful of authentic gharanas left in India today, as traditionally a gharana can only be called a gharana if it has *more than* three generations of musicians who have been actively involved in performing and contributing to the cause of Indian music or a particular style of singing or playing.

WR Who were your masters?

WK My teacher has always been my father, who plays a difficult dual role as both my father and my guru. I also learnt from my and my grandmother, who was a very knowledgeable singer, as well as being nfluenced by several great masters of Indian classical music.

WR What was the learning process for becoming a master sarod player? Coming from the vocal and sitar traditions, how did you get into sarod?

WK I started as a child prodigy singer, but I ventured out to playing the sarod in my early teens. My father put me through a vigorous training process on the instrument. Even though my family is mainly known for the sitar, vocal style and the surbahar (a bass sitar, invented by my great-greatgrandfather), I was the first family member to specialise in the sarod. Many prominent sarod maestros had already been following and been influenced by my family, and we also had several sarod-playing students.

WR Tell us something about the sarod. Do you play other instruments?

WK Sarod is one of the most beautiful, yet challenging instruments of India. It evolved from the Afghan rabab, a lute from Central Asia. It is made of wood, with a metallic and fretless finger board. My instrument has 22 strings, including five melody strings, as I have introduced a fifth melody string to the bass register. I play on the edge of my nails, with a coconut-shell plectrum. I play the sitar and surbahar, a bit of rabab and tabla as well. But in performance I

WR Having written and performed three you like the idea of chamber music for East and West?

WK I was always charmed by string quartets music than orchestras, and so had been wanting to write a sarod quintet for a long time. I am grateful that the piece has been receiving such great admiration and critical acclaim worldwide.

Kings Place.

WK The first half will consist of a traditional two sons, who are learning to play the sitar 'Evening Raga', played by me on the sarod with tabla accompaniment, as well as Beethoven's Opus 18 No. 4, played by the Allegri Quartet; both pieces are based on a C minor scale. The sarod quintet will be performed in the second half of the concert. My idea is to give the listeners a unique opportunity to listen to pure and authentic

forms of classical music of both in the first half, and then in the second half to see how we bring the two traditions together.

WR How did the piece you are going to play with the Allegri come about?

WK This sarod quintet, called 'Raag Desh, for Sarod and String Quartet', was initially premiered with the Medici Quartet at the Wigmore Hall. It has also been performed by some great quartets of Europe, including the the piece has beautifully grown even further. The Allegri are such a fantastic quartet, who year, so I am very much looking forward to performing with them.

WR Tell us more about your piece: is there improvisation, and if so, how does it all "keep together"?

WK My sarod quintet is a marriage of two great musical cultures - Indian and Western classical music. It is based on a much-loved and popular traditional Indian Raga, called 'Raag Desh'. I have tried to blend the two traditions in a way where you would find yourself in new musical spheres, while also retaining some essential values of each of the traditions. I have composed the piece in Monsoon Memories, Romantic Journey and *Celebrations,* while it essentially remains within the framework of the Raga. There is an ample element of improvisation in the piece. We keep together with some very challenging and fantastic forms of coordinations, cues and mutual understandings. Music for the Quartet is mostly written down, with some myself though, as my sarod playing is largely improvised, while I play my composed parts entirely by memory.

WR With a busy international career, where are you mainly based?

and felt that they were much closer to Indian **WK** I am based mainly in London for Europe and America; and use Kolkata as a base when in India and Southeast Asia. I teach as well. Along with lectures and outreach workshops at various educational institutions, I give lessons on a one-to-one basis, as well as on-line lessons on Skype. I **WR** <u>Tell us more about</u> the 11 May concer at mostly teach sitar, sarod and Indian singing, but also give general Indian-music lessons to students playing non-Indian instruments. My and sarod respectively, will, I hope, carry on the tradition to the next generation!

his music, visit: www.wajahatkhan.com

Leon Levy Meets Alexander Sitkovetsky

And so this time to West London to Uxbridge, famed for being at the end of the Metropolitan Line and the home of Alexander Sitkovetsky, leading solo violinist, chamber musician, family man and favourite of LCMS audiences.*

Sasha, as he is popularly known, was born in Moscow into a very musical family: his mother, father and grandfather were all musicians, and his musical career was just 'meant to be'. He started playing the violin at the age of five and began his studies at the prep school attached to the Moscow Conservatoire. However, this did not last long. When Sasha was seven years old, Yehudi Menuhin heard him on a visit to Moscow and invited him to the Menuhin School in the UK together with his mother and teacher. His guitarist father had already left Russia to pursue his career as a rock musician in the USA.

He described his eight years at what was for him a boarding school as very happy and very instructive. It was natural in Russia to pursue a career in music from a very early age and to treat it with utmost importance. Therefore, as he had never experienced anything different, the level of pressure at the Menuhin School seemed normal. Throughout this period, he played regularly in public, including at the age of eight, the Bach double concerto with Menuhin, and at 13, the Mendelssohn concerto.

One of the positive features of the school was the fact that chamber music was encouraged from a very young age, and Sasha already had a young string quartet at the age of eight. This proved to be excellent training for his later career. He moved on to the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied for a Bachelor of Music degree, followed by masterclasses and private lessons with a wide range of teachers in Russia, Austria, Italy and Germany, notably Pavel Vernikov and Ana Chumachenco.

Sasha's career didn't happen overnight. It is one of gradual progression, and he was therefore not drawn to seek success via competitions. Once established, in 2011 he did win one of the most prestigious duo competitions in Europe, the Trio di Trieste, with pianist Wu Qian, which, as well as the prize money, led to an extensive tour in Italy and a debut recital at the Weill Hall in Carnegie Hall.

And so to the Sitkovetsky Trio. Sasha first met his two colleagues, pianist (and now wife) Wu Qian and cellist Leonard Elschenbroich, at the Menuhin School, but they did not play together at this stage. They gradually came together, and since the Trio was formed in 2007 they have gone from strength to strength. They have won many prizes, and are now supported by many musical foundations and trusts.

They have recorded their first CD, and in 2014 will embark on a tour of Australia, both performing and giving masterclasses. This led to the inevitable question as to

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how a married couple like Sasha and Qian combine a successful career in music with the demands of a family with a fivemonth-old daughter. They are lucky to have grandmothers living not far away. but a trip to Australia? The answer was simple – baby comes, too.

I asked Sasha about the main influences on his life. As expected, teachers played an important part, but above all his mother has been a strong influence, supporting him and trying to keep him on the right path, and always putting him first.

Sasha has no real dislikes where music is concerned. He is receptive to modern classical music, but finds it useful for the composer to be present at rehearsals as explanations are often required. He does not perform such music often, but would love to do so, if asked.

He finds that all audiences are special in their own way. However, being from Russia, he loves playing for the Russian public because of their love for music and the energy he feels from them, as well as the traditions that go back 100 years to some of the greatest artists.

Kings Place and Wigmore Hall figure among his favourite venues, and he shares the widely held view that London is very much in need of a large concert hall with superior acoustics to compare with other major cities both in the UK and beyond.

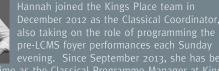
Sasha and family are now well settled in the UK, which he regards as his home. I first saw him play accompanied by his mother many years ago in one of those magnificent chateaux on the Loire on a lovely autumnal Sunday afternoon. Some years have gone by since then, but in a relatively short time his career has blossomed and he is now in demand all over the world.

*Alexander Sitkovetsky played at the LCMS concert in the Purcell Room on 20 October 2013



Getting to Know You

Hannah Cooke



part time as the Classical Programme Manager at King palancing this with a busy freelance singing career. lannah played the violin from the age of three, and started singing seriously as an undergraduate in the choir at Gonville Caius College, Cambridge, alongside her degree in modern languages (German and Russian). During her time in the choi Hannah sang on several recordings and on live broadcasts for on international instrumentalists, conductors and composers, a

well as younger emerging artists. After six years in the field of artist management, Hannah wa keen to shift the focus of her work into programming, and to make more time for her singing. A part-time role in the programming team at Kings Place seemed the perfect young emerging groups with a performance platform in the pre

As a freelance singer, Hannah works with a variety of ensembles and groups, including the Tallis Scholars, Dunedin Consort, Ovford Camerata, Swnergy, Vocals, Oxford Baroque, Chapelle du Roi and others. Much of her singing focuses on the baroque nd renaissance periods, but she is also busy in the contemporary field, including singing on numerous film scores. When she is not singing or at Kings Place, Hannah enjoys film, books, running, body-boarding in the Cornish sea, and spending time in Sweden, where she has been singing and visiting friends her whole life



Kuth s employment at

a few years earlier. In the intervening years, he had moved on to become head of Stage Management at Kings Place, and instantly did what he could to get her on board. As a result of this fortuitous meeting, Ruth has held a position as a stage manager at Kings Place for almost three years. During this time, she has regularly overseen concerts curated by the LCMS, enjoying wonderful performances by a truly international body of chamber ensembles.

background in music and performance. She began her musical training as a cellist, and holds a degree in this discipline from Victoria University of Wellington, where she graduated with the University's String prize. She went on to complete a Masters in Ethnomusicology. During this time, Ruth participated in both th New Zealand National Youth Orchestra and Choir, and capaging he chorus for O<u>pera New Zealand. She played in a variety of</u> chamber ensembles, on both modern and baroque instruments. While the 'All Blacks' lost the Rugby World Cup final, Ruth was a On completion of the tour, she attended Trinity College of Musi where she attained both Postgraduate and Advanced Postgraduate Diplomas in singing, with high distinction, and went on to study on the English National Opera course, Opera Works. As a professional soprano soloist she has performed regularly in recitals, operas and oratorios.

uth also enjoys writing and creating art using experimental