

Music at Fellowship House

ANDREW BOTTERILL

Music goes from strength to strength at Fellowship House despite many of the 5,000 Suburb households seemingly having little idea about this gem in their midst.

The Autumn Chamber Concert Series restarted in October for its 11th year and ran over six consecutive Sunday afternoons. Artistic Directors Barry Millington and Deborah Calland again arranged a stellar line up of professional talent taking time in their UK and international schedules to come to the Suburb.

At the time of writing there have been three enthusiastically received concerts after which the complimentary champagne flowed at the outside bar to provide a convivial finale to each afternoon's musical offering. All this for an incredibly modest £12 a seat and available to all residents.

If somehow you missed all the publicity, get yourself on the mailing list for next year by emailing

music@fellowshiphouse.co.uk. It's an up close and personal experience of an intensity hard to replicate in larger venues.

In SN145 we reported how last February we managed to open up a locked down Fellowship House for rehearsing musicians led by Noah, part of the Suburb Max musical dynasty. The deal was that no money would change hands but a free concert would be provided by the musicians for Suburb residents. This is planned for next spring.

A photo of one of these rehearsals featured pianist Thomas Kelly. Thomas went on to become the first British finalist for 20 years at this year's Leeds Piano Competition – one of the most prestigious in the world. Did some Fellowship fairy dust brush off on him? We trust we'll see him again.

For many years now every Friday afternoon at Fellowship House there has been a Music Appreciation session for Members only where CDs or DVDs were played. It has been decided to

upgrade these sessions and open them up to non-member residents as well. On an experimental basis a number of Suburb musicians – composer David Matthews, pianist and former Head of Keyboard at the Purcell School, Roshan Magub, pianist David Trafford, Cellist Robert Max, opera lover Mike Milner, trumpeter Deborah Calland and Wagner authority and critic Barry Millington – have been leading more enhanced sessions since last month. If these attract more interest, then this approach will continue. (At the time of writing, David Matthews had just given his talk at a very well attended session, dissecting Debussy and tracing influences on the composer through to his own works – with some amusing anecdotes along the way).

Entry is free for members and £2 for non-members. Tea and biscuits are included.

To keep abreast of all upcoming music events at Fellowship House, go to www.fellowshiphouse.co.uk.



First Concert: Simon Rowland-Jones, Tim Horton and Gemma Rosefield (Photo: Andrew Botterill)



Echo Ensemble with Thomas Kelly rehearsing in February (Photo: Andrew Botterill)

Book review: Budgie Wore My Jacket by Martin Silverstone

ELEANOR LEVY

This engaging novel invites the reader to re-enter the youth culture of London in the 1970s. The title of the book recalls the Adam Faith TV series of the day, with its hapless young protagonist.

Silverstone evokes the kaleidoscopic world of the capital's 'scene' i.e. drugs, fashion, availability of the pill and enticing commodities for the young of that day to spend their money on.

The author draws his readers into the world of Mark, a teenage student living in North East London. In the face of his friends' bravado, Mark feels insecure as he seeks to negotiate his contemporary world of friendships, drugs and sex and is, in many ways, in free fall.

Silverstone's autobiographical choice of Gants Hill, Chigwell Debden/Loughton as the setting of the story adds a further layer of interest and complexity, with suburban contrasts of wealth.

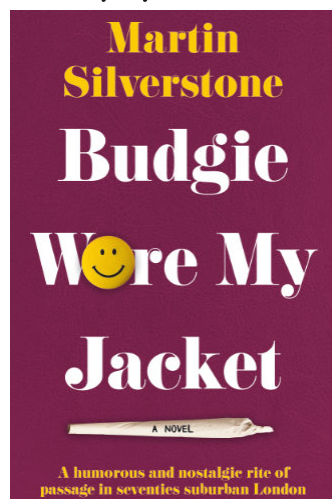
There are also differing political affiliations. At a college Student Union meeting, the Young Conservatives group are promoting the Common Market, whilst Mark and his friends heckle the speaker and join an anti-government student demo, with no real idea of what they will be protesting about.

References to Hare Krishna, hippies, Afghan coats and the opening of the first Virgin record shop in Oxford Street, are snap shots of London circa 1970. The author is to be congratulated for having drawn on the many differing facets of choice, opportunity and experience that existed in the metropolis of the 1970s.

The book implies that Mark and his friends' parental generation had transitioned from the East End to the suburbs, via their hard graft and aspirations.

Local youngsters were freely able to host large parties in very expensive family homes; Mark's parents apparently imposed no sanctions on their teenage son.

Martin Silverstone is a gifted story teller, and hopefully will be encouraged to write a follow up novel, examining the lives of Mark and his companions at the time of the new millennium. I look forward to reading it.



Summer reading challenge

MARC HULL

In spite of another difficult year with Covid restrictions we successfully maintained our Click & Collect service and we also managed to run the Summer Reading Challenge which is organised by The Reading Agency. This is our ninth year and it incentivises children aged 3-12 years old to read six or more books during the school holiday.

They receive prizes at each two-book stage and win stickers, book-marks and fridge magnets. Finally, after reading six books, they are rewarded with a medal and named certificate. This year we increased the number of participants to 42 with 19 completing the Challenge.

As an additional incentive the Library donated extra prizes for those competing in the event. Their names were put in a draw to win a further prize of a Bug Hotel

and paint to decorate it. Here you see our lucky winners. You can look forward to seeing some very happy bugs around the Suburb!

Our Library is now fully open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am till 5pm. In addition to our normal library service we offer photocopying and printing, either from your email, USB memory stick or direct from your mobile phone. Just pop in and have a chat or visit www.gardensuburblibrary.org.uk.



HGS U3A is bringing back its much appreciated monthly Topical Talks in 2022 and we are delighted that Dame Jenni Murray, the well-known broadcaster and author, will be giving the first Topical Talk on Zoom on 20 January at 3pm. Her subject will be her latest book 'Fat Cow, Fat Chance: How I Took Control of the Battle with Obesity – the Science and Psychology of Size'. This Talk is open to members of HGS U3A – if you wish to attend register on the Meetings page of our website hgsu3a.uk/events. If you are not a member and would like to join go to: hgsu3a.uk/join.