

# Success for the sixth Proms at St Jude's

The sixth season of the Proms at St Jude's opened with a flourish. The London Bass Virtuosi, directed by David Honeyball, lived up to their title in a scintillating programme of music, dated from the 16th century to the present day. The sheer sight of ten shining instruments, four trumpets, four trombones, a tuba and one French horn, golden and gleaming was enough to arouse a keen sense of anticipation.

Starting appropriately enough for brass players with Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, the repertoire took the performers through a variety of pieces, providing the opportunity for them to demonstrate their skills and to show the differing quality of sound produced by each section. Two trumpets were soloists in a work by Giovanni Gabrieli. The full ten-piece ensemble then played a composition by the contemporary Derek Bourgeois. The UK premiere of *Jazz Concerto* by Henry Lowther had solos for flugel horn and tuba. Paul Patterson, contemporary of Lowther, was the composer of *Deception Pass*, an evocative work conjuring up images of a spectacular site off the northwest coast of the USA.

A series of well-known classic works arranged for brass ensemble followed after the interval, ranging from Mozart's aria 'Queen of the Night', with solo piccolo trumpet, *The Londonderry Air*, with solo trombone to, believe it or not, Rimsky Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*, for solo tuba.

Tunes from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* completed the programme. In response to public demand for an encore, the ensemble gave a riotous rendering of the overture to *William Tell* by Rossini. As the players then left the stage one by one, in the manner of Haydn's *Farewell Symphony*, the tuba player being the last to go, one could not help being reminded of another tuba/cartoonist, the late Gerard Hoffnung, who told

a merry tale of delays at the ticket barrier en route to France, having lost his ticket inside his instrument.

## Friday June 26

The recital by Tamsin Little and Martin Roscoe provided a rare treat for the mainly local-based audience. This immensely gifted violinist has a totally assured style. Graceful and poised, she has a brilliant technique, yet is unassuming, a welcome change from the rather more flamboyant performances prevalent on the concert stage today. She played the entire programme from memory and prefaced each work with a brief and witty descriptive note.

A specialist in the work of Delius, she gave a sublime performance of his sonata in B major, with fine support from her pianist partner.

There followed a short work by Szymanowsky, a composer much loved by violinists, which gave full scope to the virtuosity of the soloist.

A brief piece by Paul Patterson opened the second half of the recital. A theme with variations, it made big demands on the player with some complex left-hand pizzicato, harmonics and double-stopping. Tamsin Little tossed these off with seemingly effortless ease.

The last work in the programme was César Franck's celebrated sonata in A major. Opening with a quiet, unstressed reticence, the soloist's performance of the Allegretta gradually



David and Barbara Honeyball with composer Paul Patterson, Martin Roscoe, Tasmin Little, Rev Alan Walker and Proms founder Susie Gregson.

increased in intensity, effectively carried on to the following Allegro. Drawing on her special poetic qualities, she gave a moving rendering of the Fantasia and reached a dramatic climax in the stunning Finale. The audience was enraptured and an ovation followed.

JOCELYN SELSON

## Saturday June 27

The Saturday concert at the Proms at St Jude's was given by the London Chamber Orchestra sponsored by the HGS Trust.

This group of young soloists, who playing standing up and without a conductor, gave a thrilling performance of Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony*. This piece is not heard in its entirety so often now though *Playful Pizzicato* is well known. The London Chamber Orchestra's playing brought out the good humour and high spirits. It

contrasted with the *Serenade in E Minor* by Edward Elgar and the lovely *Serenade for Strings in C Major* by Tchaikovsky.

The programme started with *Divertimenti in D Major* by

Mozart and the beautifully played *Concerto in A Minor for two violins and strings* by Vivaldi. The encore was a lively gipsy piece by Sarasate.

The lunchtime concert on Friday was a truly delightful occasion with Grace Davidson singing songs set by Purcell, Bach, Mozart, Elgar, Gurney and Argento. She has a lovely pure voice and beautifully brought out the differing moods of each piece. She was accompanied by Naomi Wright and Jennifer Fisher. The cellist, Naomi Wright, impressed with her playing of Martin's *Variation on a Slovak Theme* and produced a lovely sound. She was accompanied by Miako Hashimoto at the piano.

LÉONIE STEPHEN

## Sunday June 28

The last concert in the series provided a big contrast to the others. No less than 70 children, aged from eight to 18 adorned the platform. Formidably well trained by their conductor, Ronald Corp, they knew exactly what they were doing. Singing from music, but also by heart, they faced an exacting programme. They sang in tune, rhythmically and with enthusiasm. There were some delightful solos: Sarah Brown in *Widmung* by Schumann, Poly Jackman and

Melissa O'Donnell in songs from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and a boy soprano, Henry Manning, sang *Where'ere you walk* by Handel.

The programme was well thought out. There were a number of works by 20th century composers, written especially for children, as well as some classical pieces by Mendelssohn, Vivaldi and Franck.

The major work was Britten's *Golden Vanity*, sung by the Senior Choir, with some remarkable solo performances, notable being that of the cabin boy, Deji Akiboye, whose purity of tone and accuracy of intonation in the complex interval structure, was especially appealing.

The final work by Ronald Corp brought a delightful evening to a close. Spike Milligan's *Grannies* was an inspired choice to end the event, not with a bang but a whisper.

Two lunchtime recitals were part of this year's Proms. On Wednesday June 24, Andrew McCrea, resident organist of St Jude's played splendidly and on Friday June 26 two students from the Royal Academy, Grace Davidson, soprano and Naomi Wright, cello gave a delightful joint recital. Admittance was free for these two events and there were good audiences who contributed generously to the retiring collection.

JOCELYN SELSON



The New London Children's Choir

## North Square party



Above: Residents of North Square and Erskine Hill enjoyed a rather classy street party organised by Diana Woodfield (left) and Norma Milner.

Below: Dipak Lal and Miki Watkins enjoying the company, as well as one of the few fine weather days of summer so far.



SHEILA MCMICHAEL

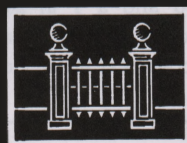
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