

# The Suburb's own Proms breaks all

The Proms at St Jude's 2004 were a resounding success. A superb season of concerts – both evening and lunchtime, which received excellent reviews from the local press. And just more of everything:

Attendance up by 10% (in spite of the fact there being one concert less). The reserved seats for six out of eight of the evening concerts were sold out.

Profits, to be distributed to the designated charities, up by 25%. Last year we raised £30,000. This year £38,000 will be given to Toynbee Hall (75%) and North London Hospice (25%). Since the Proms started 12 years ago, over £150,000 has been distributed between various charities.

Sponsorship up, which enabled the booking of celebrity musicians and professional orchestras.

A 50% increase in membership and funds from Friends of the Proms.

A 10% increase in income from refreshments, by the catering team, under the guidance of Anthea Davidson and Jan White.

Plus superior ambience and surroundings – enhanced by the creative and atmospheric lighting provided by Terry Tew Sound & Light and operated by Paul Seaton and the sound system provided by Better Sound Ltd and operated by Richard Kemp. Stylish plant arrangements were generously provided by Capital Gardens, the Proms' principal sponsor.

Finally, programming plans are already well underway for Proms 2005. Dates to put in your diary are June 11 to 19. We hope to see even more of you next year. Watch this space.

YVONNE BAKER

## THE MUSIC

On the artistic side, this year's festival must also rank as the most successful to date. David Sonin, music critic of the Ham & High (one of the sponsors), described the Proms as: "an event that has grown in stature and musical quality over the years as well as generating tens of thousands of pounds for the two charities... The Proms are devised, managed and staffed by volunteers in what is best described as a model of community action and one that offers a broad spectrum of quality musical entertainment in the relaxed and amiable traditions of a summer English house party."

**Extracts from David Sonin's reviews:**

### Saturday 12 June

#### Gala Opening Night

#### ALESSIO BAX (piano)

#### Southbank Sinfonia, conducted by Simon Over

"With barely a vacant seat, the twelfth season of the Proms at St Jude's opened... in a richly romantic mood... In the performance by the Leeds International Competition winner Alessio Bax of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, (he) was expansive in the opening movement and justifiably made much of the beautiful secondary melody with delicate, lyrical phrasing... The Adagio was intensely poetic... The finale was full of dash and verve. Simon Over directed a warm and expansive account (of Brahms's Second Symphony), with a youthful freshness and carefully woven light and spacious textures."

### Sunday 13 June

#### DAME GILLIAN WEIR (organ)

"This was the second time I have heard the church's refurbished organ and the initial impression of an instrument rich in colour and power was doubly endorsed by Dame Gillian's performance. She is a consummate artist... Rich texture was clear and resonant in the church's splendid acoustics."

### Tuesday 15 June

#### ENDELLION QUARTET:

#### Beethoven String Quartets

"An all-Beethoven programme is certain to attract a full house, and the Endellion's offering of early (Op 18 No 6), middle (Op 59 No 3 Rasumovsky) late (E flat Op 127) quartets just fell short of a sell-out... The Rasumovsky quartet lacked nothing by way of vitality, artistry or focus, with alert and assured playing and without any extremes of tempi."

### Wednesday 16 June

#### HUMPHREY LYTTTELTON AND BAND

#### Stacey Kent and Jim Tomlinson, guests

"Humph is one of those musical institutions for which time seems to have stood still. Now in his 80s, he has been the stalwart of British jazz for some 60 years, though to hear him play, dressed in red imitation tartan trousers, and deliver his inimitable repartee, you would pitch his age at 20 years younger. His band, with the exception of the young tenor saxophonist Karen Sharp, has an overlay of venerability about it and the performance skills that only time can perfect. Yet between Humph and the singer Stacey Kent and her saxophonist



husband Jim Tomlinson, the age gap meant absolutely nothing as their combined talents merged into a sparkling ensemble."

### Thursday 17 June

#### Celebrity Piano Recital

#### PETER DONOHOE

"It is now more than 20 years since Peter Donohoe (was) joint winner of the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow. His career since then has been global and his reputation as a great communicator has been enhanced. It is this aspect of his talent that stood him in great stead for his performance of works by Debussy, Ravel, Chopin and César Franck... A series of distinguished performances in every way."

### Friday 18 June

#### LONDON COMMUNITY

#### GOSPEL CHOIR

"After this performance one wondered if their performances and sing-along might be better... a cappella. It is the verve and style of the singers that carry both the strong and vibrant rhythms and the emotional message of the lyrics and, with just drums and piano, the accompaniment seemed to be almost an irrelevance."

### Saturday 19 June

#### THE BARBICAN PIANO TRIO:

#### Gaby Lester (violin), Robert Max (cello) and James Kirby (piano) with James Boyd (viola) and Mary Scully (double bass)

"The Barbican Trio plus James Boyd opened with Mozart's familiar E flat Piano Quartet K 493, which was given a happy and convincingly spontaneous reading... (Hummel's) Piano Quintet in E flat minor has charm, some bravura and the odd surprise here and there... The performance concluded with Schubert's Trout Quintet... Overall, full of the joys of spring."

### Sunday 20 June

#### LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

#### Alon Goldstein, piano; Melanie Marshall, mezzo soprano; Finchley Chamber Orchestra, conductor David Lardi

"This has become a real fun event of the Proms season... with a mix of music on the serious side and then a burst of patriotic flag waving. The (first half) was crowned by the Grieg Piano Concerto... played by Alon Goldstein, who made much of the underlying poetry of the work. The second half opened with an arrangement

of Bizet's two Carmen suites... The Seguidilla, Habanera and Chanson Bohème were sung by Melanie Marshall, but with the lyrics of Carmen Jones... She returned to sing (Rule Britannia and) Jerusalem, to which the capacity audience of 500 added lustily."

#### YOUNG ARTISTS

#### AT THE PROMS

"The youth platform at the Proms at St Jude's has become a desirable opportunity for young instrumentalists and singers to perform in a well-regarded venue and before audiences that have become larger year by year.

The recital programme was opened by the pianist Juliet Allen... a musician of formidable technique and one who has keen communication skills... Jeannine Thorpe, at 15, has undoubted talent as a violinist... Tom Raskin is a young lyric tenor beginning to make his way in the operatic world. His programme... revealed his acute sense of the dramatic and an ability to deliver passion... The series concluded with promising clarinettist Catriona Scott and the pianist Catherine Milledge. A recital to linger a long time in the memory."



Gospel rhythm



Maxine and Douglas Blausten

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