

16 concerts, 4 walks, 107 volunteers, 4,565 tickets, 17% income rise and £60,000 raised for charity



The statistics for the 2010 Proms at St Jude's Festival tell their own story of success. In a wonderful year for what is now a Suburb institution, not only did the organisers manage to choose dates when not a single drop of rain fell – for the first time in Proms history – but all the

financial targets were met too. Consequently, this sunny Proms brought smiles to the faces of concert-goers, walkers on the heritage trails, sponsors, advertisers and all involved with the Festival's two target charities – Toynbee Hall and the North London Hospice.

The good weather meant that the innovative relaying of music from the church outside to Central Square could really be appreciated and it was a pleasure to see picnics springing up. This extra broadcasting was particularly valuable when performances sold out, enabling

those who might otherwise have been disappointed, to still enjoy the concerts.

Among a packed programme, smiles were particularly wide for Sir Willard White's tremendous song recital 'Paul Robeson Re-explored'. The renowned bass sauntered through the life of his hero, illustrating his career with examples from his repertoire.

Another highlight was the traditional Last Night of the Proms, with the Southbank Sinfonia. With St Jude's all decked out in bunting, the flag-waving audience gave rousing cheers as Jerusalem echoed through the church and out into Central Square.

The Proms were delighted again to host local stars, with Robert Max conducting the Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra on the Opening Night, Proms Patron John Lill receiving a warm reception for his piano recital and Robert Cohen excelling on cello on the Last Night.

Local celebrity Jonathan Ross gave an entertaining introduction to the evening of Music from the Silver Screen and delighted partners from sponsor John Lewis by posing for photos with them.

Retaining its reputation for providing something for all tastes, the Proms brought us jazz with Clare Teal and her Band and an excellent programme of free lunchtime events, including recitals on the organ and on the accordion. The liveliest event was the Children's Concert, where conductor William Carslake managed magnificent audience participation with kids from Anne Mount, Garden Suburb Infant School and other local schools.

Those interested in finding out secrets were well served on the four guided walks that formed part of the Festival. Around the Suburb and the Heath, the HGS Trust's Architectural Adviser David Davidson, the Trust's Estate Manager Nick Packard and Heath Superintendent Simon Lee all led different tours taking even long-standing residents to discover hidden gems of whose existence they were unaware. In the East End, Blue Badge guide Julia Male showed visitors the area in which Dame Henrietta Barnett lived and work before creating the Suburb and Toynbee Hall chief executive Graham Fisher talked about the work of his charity.

Planning is now under way for the 2011 event, which will run from 18-26 June. Already lined up are Sir Thomas Allen and Dame Felicity Lott. One thing organisers can't yet promise is the same sunshine as this year – but they're working on it.

You can become a Friend of the Proms and benefit from priority booking by calling 8455 1025 or email friendspsj@gmail.com.

RON FINLAY



NIGEL SUTTON

The garden suburb tradition is alive and well in Germany

Janet Elliott, chairman of the HGS Residents Association travelled to see Mannheim's own garden stadt. Here she shares her experiences with us:

As we know from our own happy Centenary in 2007, the heyday of the Garden City movement was in the first two decades of the twentieth century. What is sometimes easy to forget is just how many countries were touched by the architectural and social objectives of the movement.

Garden cities such as Welwyn and Letchworth, which set out to provide all the occupational and social needs of the residents, are few, but the ideas of Ebenezer Howard and his associates also struck a chord in many countries outside the UK and 'garden suburbs' under a variety of names were built around the peripheries of many cities in many countries, and most of them are still there today.

For some years the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust has been a member of the European Cities Garden Suburb Network. This results in interested visitors arriving here at HGS and, from time to time, travelling to join a particular garden suburb in celebrating its centenary year. Mervyn Miller, President of the HGS Trust, joined Hellerau, a suburb of Dresden, for their centenary celebrations in 2007. In May I agreed to attend another such invitation – this time from Garten Stadt Mannheim, a suburb of the ancient Rhineland city of Mannheim – to join them for their centenary celebrations.

As in HGS, the centenary celebrations of Garten Stadt Mannheim were planned to take place throughout the year. The May events focused around a one-day conference on the costs and issues surrounding the renovation of older buildings in conservation areas with an added emphasis on how to make them more energy efficient.

Both speakers and delegates came from a number of other German garden cities as well as Austria and Italy and myself from the UK. Unlike HGS, it appears that a majority of the houses and apartments in these areas are tenanted. Though in Mannheim I saw houses 80 to a 100 years old which are owner-occupied and had clearly been up-dated, most of the issues at the conference concerned the renovation of groups of properties, akin in HGS to the modernisation of Emmott Close and Queens Court. I came away with the view that for that audience, renovation with energy efficiency in mind was only for properties owned by trusts or municipalities and that their deep pockets were being severely restricted by current economic problems. The idea of property development companies applying to undertake such renovation as has become increasingly the case in HGS, did not seem to feature.

However, my hosts did not intend that their guests should concentrate entirely on such issues. On Saturday morning both visitors and local residents went on a coach tour of the city of Mannheim, visiting the main Jugendstil buildings in the city

centre and what is claimed to be the largest baroque palace in Europe, now the university. We also visited baroque churches and were given a brief excursion to the port area of Ludwigshafen on the other side of the Rhine, which also incorporates its own garden stadt.

That afternoon, back in Garten Stadt Mannheim, we took a walking tour of public buildings including a Bauhaus-style kindergarten and local churches rebuilt post World War II. (The latter provided an interesting contrast to the dominating presence of St Jude's and the Free Church in HGS.)

The next day saw local celebrations in the garden stadt 'town centre', followed by a tour of the 'Art for All' exhibition taking place on the streets and in the houses of local artists who opened up them up so that visitors were able to come inside to see their work.

In the evenings we were guests at the associated social programme: on the first evening this was a popular entertainment by the Claus Eisenmann Trio, whose leader was given the reception due to a well-known local celebrity. Two days later we saw the opening night of a locally organised musical production of a well known German film of yester-year (Die Drei von der Tankstelle). Both these events took place on warm and sunny evenings in the large local open air theatre, the 'Freilichtbühne'. This can accommodate an audience of some hundreds and is closer to the Open Air Theatre in Regents Park, in its earlier incarnations, than our much loved but diminutive Little Wood Theatre.

The committee also organised informal buffets and drinks parties before and after events either in the open air at a venue close to the Theatre when the weather was warm and dry or indoors at the local Bürgerhaus. This modern community building is roughly equivalent to Fellowship House as envisaged by the HGS founders, rather than as now, reserved principally for the over-sixties.

Throughout my stay Heinz Egermann, chairman of the Bürgerverein and all my hosts were very welcoming, generous and helpful and did their utmost to ensure that I had both an interesting and enjoyable few days in their midst. I hope that there will be other occasions here or in other garden cities to meet up and exchange ideas.



NIGEL SUTTON

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