

World premiere at Proms 2011

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN REDDHOUGH



Ronald Corp



Maria Friedman



Alessandro Taverna

This year's Proms at St Jude's features a world premiere. The Wihan String Quartet – with guest cellist Raphael Wallfisch – will play Ronald Corp's String Quartet No. 3 (2010), never before heard in public. The composer, 60 this year, founded the New London Orchestra and is Artistic Director of both the London Chorus and Highgate Choral Society. He will be interviewed on stage by local journalist Sue Fox before the concert on June 23. This event is free to ticket holders.

Concert goers will also have the chance the following day to sit in on a free pre-performance interview with Maria Friedman. The singer has won three Olivier Awards – for her one-woman cabaret, for starring in Stephen Sondheim's *Passion* and as best actress in the musical *Ragtime*. She will be exploring the Great British Songbook and performing works by Sondheim.

Another highlight of the Proms will be the chance to hear Alessandro Taverna. Born in Venice in 1983, the pianist has won numerous awards in international competitions, including in 2009

1st prize in the Minnesota International Piano Competition, 2nd in the London International Piano Competition and Bronze Medal at the Leeds International Piano Competition. His recital on June 21 will include pieces by Bach, Chopin, Beethoven and Stravinsky.

If you want to support artists from Hampstead Garden Suburb, come along to the Last Night of the Proms to hear Masayuki Tayama as solo pianist and to the free lunchtime concert on 22nd June, where master cellist, Robert Max, will be performing with three of his former students.

And don't forget that the midsummer Proms at St Jude's Festival also includes several guided walks to give you a fresh look at the area we live in. Four walks are planned, covering everything from examples of the Trust's work in protecting the Suburb to information on trees and hedges, the Artisans' Quarter and Hampstead Heath. They take place in the morning, finishing at Central Square in time for the free lunchtime recitals. There are also two heritage walks in the East End, about the link between Toynbee Hall and our own Suburb.

'Honk' was delightful

'Honk' by Antony Drew with music by George Stiles, the story of the Ugly Duckling, made a delightful evening in the theatre. Tim Solomons not only produced but also designed the excellent set.

The Garden Suburb Theatre has also acquired some actors who sing rather well.

Emma Pleass played Ida, the mother duck who tries to protect her unusual offspring. She also arranged some good dance routines such as the Goose Squad and the Frogs and Froglets. Amanda Franklin was nicely feline as the Cat. Owain Rose, the poor bewildered Ugly, was in excellent form and the meeting with his Swan parents was quite moving.

Frances Musker and Jeanne Solomons created some very good costumes to portray an amazing variety of fishes, frogs, geese and ducks. The young cast obviously enjoyed wearing them and performing.

Stiofan Lanigan-O' Keeffe directed the small orchestra of five from the keyboard.

RON FINLAY

LEONIE STEPHEN

Creswick Walk celebrates

"It's Jonathan Ross," was heard from visitors on seeing Thomas Creswick's 1828 self portrait. The Suburb Gallery recently hosted an exhibition to mark the bicentennial of the Sheffield-born artist and the hundredth anniversary of the Suburb walk named after him.

Quintessentially Victorian, Creswick was born 5th February 1811 on the day the Regency came into being. He died 28th December 1869 and is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.

The Suburb Gallery right on the doorstep was perfect for the exhibition. It was launched on Creswick's anniversary with a message of warm good wishes from Councillor Alan Law JP Lord Mayor of Sheffield. George

Lister Sutcliffe, the architect for the Walk also featured in the collected imagery.

Advice and material came from Museums Sheffield Curator Liz Waring, Eton College Archive, civic amenity institutions and Suburb sources.

Angela Filmer, leader of a USA art course, proud owner of some Creswick art and likely distant relative of the painter, dropped by.

For the future Janet Elliott Chairman of the RA saw more possibilities in the rich tapestry of Suburb names. They frame and bring colour to the Suburb. Perhaps Creswick has sketched out exciting new horizons for the Gallery.

LESTER HILLMAN

Rainwatch

At the time of writing (in April), it is possible to wonder what on earth is happening to our weather. The last column was written hoping that early 2011 was not going to be like early 1963, when we all felt winter would never end. Now, after above average temperatures in February and well above average in March, April days are turning out to be more like pleasant summer ones. We are threatened with a water shortage and low water levels in rivers already.

Here, in the Suburb, in March, we experienced the second lowest monthly rainfall amount since these North London records began. Only in 1990 was the total of 0.35 inches lower than the 2011 figure of 0.58 inches. The wet January meant that the

total of 6.6 inches for the first three months of the year was not much lower than the mean of 7 inches. However, the nearly 13 inches for the winter months of October to March was considerably less than the norm of 16 inches. Add to that the miserable 0.07 inches in the first three weeks of April, and it seems fair to say that we need more rain soon.

The trees reinforce a fear of coming drought from the old saying, "If the ash is out before the oak, we shall have a thorough soak; if the oak is out before the ash, we shall have a little splash." On the Heath extension, the leaves of the oaks have definitely begun to unfurl before the leaves of the ash.

DIANA IWI

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THE GARDENING YEAR

Your Garden in May

✿ Sharpen your hoes and stay on top of the weeds now, with a weekly ruffle through beds and borders. Although they may look untidy for a few weeks, don't cut off the foliage off your Spring bulbs or you will weaken the bulbs. If clumps of bulbs are not flowering well, lift and divide them.

✿ By the second week in May, it is safe to begin hardening off summer bedding plants. They will be safe enough in a cold frame with a sharp eye out for late frosts, ready to be planted out in the last week of May.

✿ Prune back Spring flowering shrubs as they finish flowering. Use the prunings to increase your stock: most shrubs will root in a few weeks if non-flowering shoots about four or five inches long are dipped in hormone rooting powder and stuck firmly into damp soil.

✿ Put clean straw round strawberries to protect the fruit from getting splashed with mud. Sow French and runner beans outdoors and put up sturdy canes for them to romp away. Raspberries are a very easy crop to grow and a few bushes will furnish masses of fruit for Summer puddings. Thin out canes to half a dozen shoots per plant and give them a nice mulch of home-made compost.

Your Garden in June

✿ The weather should be getting warmer now, so keep an eye on newly planted bedding plants and give them plenty of water. They have not yet anchored themselves to the soil and will die of thirst if allowed to become too dry.

✿ Feed sweet peas regularly with a good general fertiliser. These too must never dry out, so ask friends and neighbours to water if you are on holiday.

✿ Keep lawn edges tidy. If this can be done at frequent intervals, the trimmings need not be swept up but you will need to wheelie-bin trimmings that are weedy or full of creeping grasses.

✿ Give your house plants a Summer holiday; re-potted in good compost and stood out of doors in a shady corner, they will grow sturdy and survive for years.

✿ Shrubs and other plants growing under trees often suffer from a shortage of water, partly because the trees keep off the rain but also because they are competing with the tree roots for whatever moisture there is in the soil. Water the soil well, and when the water has soaked in, water again so that the water penetrates deeply. Wherever possible, use waste water from baths and kitchens.

Your Garden in July

✿ As roses approach the end of their first flush of flowering, improve the quality of the second flush by giving them a good feed of special rose fertiliser or a general organic fertiliser.

✿ From now onwards, dead flowers should be removed regularly from plants as one walks around the garden; this encourages the plants to produce more flowers and, of course, keeps everything neat and tidy.

✿ Take cuttings of pelargoniums to overwinter for next year.

✿ Stake and feed dahlias regularly; they are greedy plants and will appreciate doses of composted manure.

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