

Jane Dodgson 90th birthday concert – 1pm Friday 23rd March 2018, St Mary's Barnes

François Couperin (1668-1733) – *Les Moissonneurs, Les Baricades Mistérieuses, Les Bergeries, Le Moucheron* (6th. Ordre)

François Couperin's 350th birthday is on 10th November this year. He said his harpsichord pieces were ideas that had occurred to him. *Les Moissonneurs*, The Harvesters and *Les Bergeries*, The Shepherds, are typical subjects of the pastoral divertissements written for the royal family and the nobles, who enjoyed playing at being peasants. *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* refers to a divertissement, *Le Mystère ou les Fêtes de l'Inconnu*, in which the duchess of Maine was the mysterious presence who appeared masked. *Le Moucheron* again refers to the Duchess who played the character *Fine Mouche*, a sly minx, in another divertissement. A *moucheron* is a very small fly, the Duchess was famously small.

Francesco Geminiani (1686-1762) – Sonata in C major Op. 5 No. 3

Geminiani, born in Lucca, set off for London in 1714. A virtuoso violinist he played concertos for George I, insisting that Handel should be at the harpsichord. His Op 5 cello sonatas were published in Paris where the cello was overtaking the viola da gamba. In London Geminiani had aristocratic pupils, including the earl of Essex, who rescued him from prison after he ran into debt through art-dealing. He lived in Dublin for a time where he opened a Concert Room, the upstairs rooms used for music and the ones below for art-dealing.

Stephen Dodgson – Inventions Set 2 No.5 'Plush & Roses', Set 1 No. 5 'The Worm'

Stephen was persuaded to write for the harpsichord by Stanislav Heller, a Czech refugee and fellow student at the Royal College of Music. He gave the first performance of Set 1 of the Inventions at the Wigmore Hall in 1956. Stanislav was responsible for the nickname The Worm, I think because it looks like a worm on the page. Set 2 was also first performed there by Trevor Pinnock in 1971 and I gave the first broadcast. I was practising at a friend's house who said: 'That sounds like plush and roses'. Thanks to Julian Perkins, these nicknames have stuck.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) – *Les Trois Mains*

Rameau claimed, with justification, to have invented hand-crossing. In this he influenced Domenico Scarlatti who visited Paris in 1724. *Les Trois Mains* is a fandango, doubtless introduced to France by one of the visiting Spanish guitarists. Three hands was a term used in some of these dances.

Stephen Dodgson – *Cor Leonis*

This piece (The Lion's Horn) was commissioned for the Leggett Prize for brass players. Recorded by J. Bernardo Silva, his CD notes tell us: 'The piece was composed in August 1990 under the sign of Leo. Although the music is not programmatic, a romantic spirit is concealed beneath the title's pun. *Cor Leonis* proposes a solution to an old enigma, how did Leo lose its horn? The answer: It got lost when it regained its heart.'

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) – Sonatas K 208 in A, K9 in D minor, K105 in C

Born in Naples, Scarlatti spent the second half of his life in Portugal and Spain. Profoundly influenced by the folk music of Andalusia where he spent his first four years in Spain, K208 is based on an Andalusian cradle song. K9 is perhaps the most perfectly Italian of all the sonatas. It takes the listener to the world of the Arcadian Academy of his father Alessandro, who wrote many pieces in this pastoral vein. K105 is one of the few that could be based on a *Jota*, a dance from Aragon.

As an impecunious student I was lucky enough to land a job playing for a Spanish folk dance group directed by a distinguished ethno-musicologist, Lucile Armstrong. Made to write down flamenco from any visiting Spaniard she could capture, to learn guitar chords which I often strummed beside the far more expert poet, Laurie Lee, whose wife Kathy was the star dancer, and to play the piano accordion in Portuguese dances at the International Folk Dance Festival in the Albert Hall, it was all wonderful experience.

When I later played the harpsichord and ‘met’ Scarlatti I thought: ‘I’ve been here before’. I recognised the chords, rhythms and tunes of music I knew so well. Unwise enough to argue with a BBC producer he challenged me to do a programme which, to my great surprise, got a rave review in *The Listener* and sent me off all over the USA and Europe, again wonderful experiences.

Taken to a lecture on Couperin by Wilfrid Mellers, whose book on the composer is still unsurpassed, I was at once hooked. Fascinated by the titles of his harpsichord pieces, I still am over fifty years later. Persuaded to write a book by Lionel Salter, backed by Wilfrid Mellers, I embarked on this hazardous enterprise. The book, again to my surprise, is translated into Japanese and Polish and about to have a third edition. This has again taken me far and wide. I wake up every day thinking how lucky I have been.

But the greatest luck was, of course, meeting Stephen which had nothing to do with the harpsichord. My mother had invited him and his family, who had just moved to the next Suffolk village, to tea on Christmas Eve. Deeply suspicious of ‘modern’ music I had to learn fast. In 1959 I married both Stephen and Barnes.

We both met Julian Perkins many years ago and have watched him progress from a student at the RAM to the distinguished harpsichordist, clavichordist and conductor he is today. He worked with Stephen on his clavichord suites, editing them and recording them, he commissioned a cantata for his group Sounds Baroque and he will conduct Stephen’s opera Margaret Catchpole (a Suffolk story) at Snape next year, a concert performance to be recorded for Naxos.

Jonathan Farey has just recorded Stephen’s sonata for horn & piano with the Magnard Ensemble, for Toccata Classics. He played it so beautifully I asked him to take part in this special concert. Being surrounded by these brilliant young musicians is something I wish Stephen could share.

Josh Salter plays a baroque cello on loan from The Cherubim Music Trust. Stephen’s trust contributed to their concerts last year and wonderful videos of his *In Search of Folly* and *Pastoral Sonata* are on YouTube. Josh does not only play the baroque cello, as those who attended his concert in St. Mary’s last week will know. His recital with Adrian Brendle was a very impressive occasion.