



The Alkan Society

Registered Charity no. 276199

www.alkansociety.org

President: Stephanie McCallum

Vice-presidents: Anne Smith, Hugh Macdonald, Nicholas King, Richard Shaw

Honorary Officers: Mark Viner *Chairman*, Nick Hammond *Treasurer*, José López *Secretary*

Bulletin 100: April 2020

President's welcome

Stephanie McCallum



On the occasion of the 100th Bulletin of the Alkan Society, I am enjoying re-reading the early issues. The first one (February 1977) details the initial planning meeting for the Society on January 18, almost exactly one year before I arrived in London to work on pianism in general, and Alkan's works in particular, with our first President, Ronald Smith. More than forty years later the Bulletin has widened its reach and continues to disseminate fascinating research helping us to understand the complexity of this striking musical innovator.

The record of landmark moments is precious, from Ronald Smith's release of the op. 39 Etudes recording and his groundbreaking books, through to publishing of Alkan's letters, especially the later finding of those between Alkan and Masarnau. There are also reports of live performances, recordings and reviews which give the picture of increasing worldwide awareness and activity around Alkan over the decades. Read on in this

issue for the news that my previously accepted Op. 76 *Trois Grandes Études* premiere (1985) was actually pre-dated by the prodigious John Ogdon thirty years earlier.

Bulletin No 36 from October 1988 shows the build up to the celebrations for Alkan's death centenary. It contains John White's description of his germinal ideas for a society, a first Alkan piano competition, and a flurry of recording and concert projects. Of particular interest is a Letter from France discussing the comparative delay in French interest in Alkan's work, and also the progress of the *Société Alkan* whose bulletins began in 1985. Bulletin 89 from May 2013, the bicentenary year of Alkan's birth, notes now wide international spread with events in Finland, Germany, Italy, France and throughout England (and Wales), Switzerland, Canada, the USA, Chile, South Korea, Belgium, Slovakia, Scotland, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Australia and Mexico, as well as important new books in French and many celebratory recordings.

The most recent Bulletin (99) notably calls for a new editor to step up as a younger generation carries on and refreshes study and performance of Alkan. Performances on the pédalier and original straight strung Erard pianos recently give further insights into Alkan's sound world and textural shaping which may inspire a renewed exploration and understanding.

Alkan was of course famous for his reclusiveness, and now we are all having a taste of his austere lifestyle as we stay at home practising or composing, following our study plans and of course improving our cooking.

Our first Bulletin from February 1977

Note that all issues of the Bulletin are available on our website at:

www.alkansociety.org/Publications/Society-Bulletins/society-bulletins.html

ALKAN SOCIETY

On Tuesday, January 18th, four enthusiasts met Ronald Smith to discuss ideas concerning the proposed Society. They were:- Robert Collet (Guildhall School of Music), Martin Ball (Dulwich College), John Snelling (Blackheath) and John White.

Suggestions were:-

1. There should be three classes of members:-
 - (i) Those in the London area who can attend Meetings:
 - (ii) Those well out of London who could but rarely attend Meetings but are in sympathy with, and wish to support, the project:
 - (iii) Full-time students (in any faculty).Subscriptions might be £2, £1 and 50p respectively.
2. There should be three Meetings per year in London - say October, January and April - at each of which a talented Alkan enthusiast would give an illustrated talk on some aspect of Alkan's life and work.
3. The arrangements should run for one year and then, in the Spring of 1978, an official Business Meeting would proceed to elect Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and members of a small Committee. By that time, people would know one another better and the membership should have increased.

These, and other matters, will be presented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Society, when further suggestions will be invited. This Meeting may be held in London late in the month of May* - a little while before Ronald Smith's Alkan Recital at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Thursday, May 26th. It might well be combined with a talk by Ronald Smith on the Alkan music he will play on the 26th.

* Probably in the week beginning May 16th.

J.H.White

(Acting Temporary Hon. Secretary)

35 St James's Drive,
LONDON SW17 7RN

NOTES:- Ronald Smith has just recorded, for E.M.I., the whole of the Studies in minor keys Op.39. Discs should be available in September.

(3/2/77)

He has also recorded, for the B.B.C., four talks on Alkan to be broadcast at some future date on the Third Programme. They will deal with the Op.39 and the "Grande Sonate" Op.33.

Concert report

Joint Societies Dinner-recital: 28th January 2020, London

A small but enthusiastic cadre from the Alkan Society joined members of the Liszt Mahler, Schubert, Strauss and Wagner Societies for a most enjoyable evening of music and socialising.

Performers included Christian Andreas Adolph (baritone), the Andrews Massey Duo (Emily Andrews and David Massey), Alicia Cadwgan (soprano), Iain Farrington (piano), Jad Grainger (piano), Leslie Howard (piano), Mark Viner (piano) and Simon Wallfisch (baritone).



Mark Viner played three of the more lyrical Préludes from Alkan's op. 31 (*Ancienne mélodie de la synagogue*, *La chanson de la folle au bord de la mer*, and *J'étais endormie, mais mon cœur veillait*), once again demonstrating his immaculate sensitivity and sense of timing. The final piece of the recital proved to be quite a contrast to the Alkan: Liszt's *Grand galop chromatique* in the arrangement for four hands (S616), played with magnificent bravura by Leslie Howard and Jad Grainger. The vocal contributions were of the highest level, as we have

come to expect at these annual gatherings. An intriguing contribution was the performance of three Schubert songs arranged for flute and guitar performed by the Andrews Massey duo: perhaps *Standchen* (D889) was the most successful in this format (an arrangement by the flautist Theobald Boehm), although *Gute Nacht* from *Winterreise* (D911) and *Die Taubenpost* (D965a) at least had the merit of novelty. A most entertaining evening with exceptional music and exceptional performers.



The Society Bulletin can only flourish with a steady flow of input from its members. All members are encouraged to send articles, letters or comments to the Editor (Nick Hammond, email: treasurer@alkansociety.org, or by post to: Woodend House, High Stittenham, York YO60 7TW, UK)

Esquisses de nos jours: Twenty-five motifs inspired by Alkan

In each of the preceding three issues of the Bulletin, members were invited to compose a short piano piece inspired by Alkan's *Esquisses*, op. 63, with the intention that the pieces would be compiled into a volume and published by the Society for free circulation to all up-to-date members.

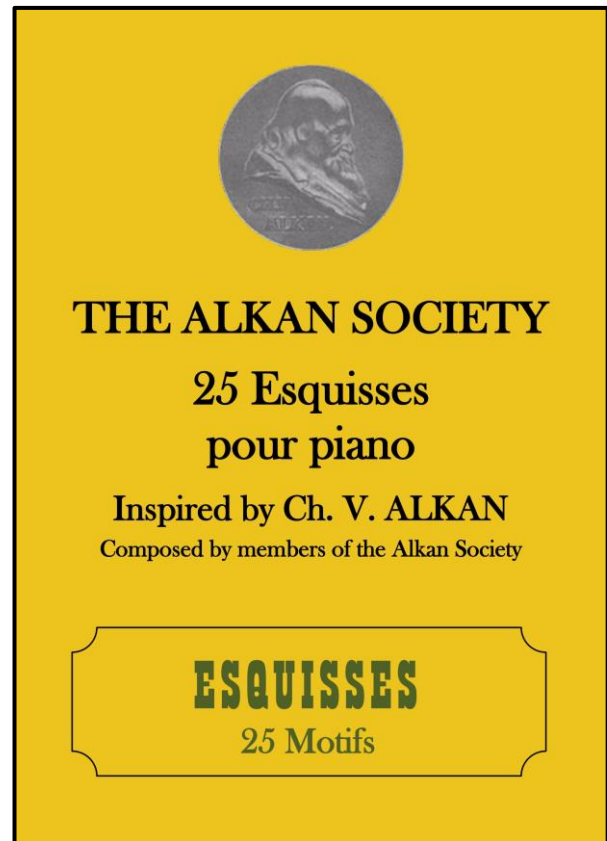
The Society announced in the very first Bulletin (February 1977) that Ronald Smith had recorded the complete minor key studies (op. 39) – a world first – and in this our 100th issue, 43 years on, we can now announce that our collection of 25 *Esquisses pour piano*, inspired by Alkan and composed by Society members, has been published – in its own way another world first.

This volume of pieces, based on a proposal by Richard Murphy and produced by an editorial team of Nick Hammond (UK), José López (USA), Richard Murphy (UK) and Richard Shaw (UK), was timed to coincide with the 100th issue of the Bulletin. The number and variety of submissions certainly exceeded the expectations of the editors: 25 submissions were received and all were accepted without alteration. Most were hand-written, and these have been expertly transcribed by our Honorary Secretary, Dr José López. The pieces are published anonymously: the decision to do so was made early on both to encourage amateur composers and to allow contributions to be appreciated free from bias. With the contributors' permissions, we hope to publish the names at a later date.

We are also planning to put together audio versions of the compositions: information about this will be circulated to members in due course.

All in all, the editors feel that the collection demonstrates how Alkan's *Esquisses* can spark an imaginative compositional response. We would like to receive and, in Bulletin 101, publish both your immediate reactions to the compositions and your more considered views, perhaps using the project guidelines found in the preceding three issues.

Please send your views and comments to the Editor, Nick Hammond, at treasurer@alkansociety.org.



Notes on a forthcoming recording of Alkan's organ music

Joseph Nolan¹ (Australia/UK)

It is with sincere regret that Charles-Valentin Alkan has remained an obscure figure in my musical life for so many years. However, the email below from Seth (surname and email redacted) arrived at Signum Records HQ and he was to point me down the path of enlightenment...

I've recently been listening to the marvellous CD recitals by organist Joseph Nolan and wanted to ask you (or the artist himself) if he would ever consider recording some of the very individual and original works by Charles-Valentin Alkan, many of which sound like nothing else in the repertoire. Both Widor and Dupré held Alkan's organ/pédalier music in high esteem. It is known that Guilmant improvised on a theme by Alkan at one of his concerts, and that Saint-Saëns played alongside him when the composer was in his latter years. Recordings of Alkan on the organ are very limited, and it would be wonderful to hear the composer's organ music being played on a Parisian instrument he would have been familiar with. Many thanks. Seth

I was intrigued by Seth's message and started thinking about Alkan's life, aided by two excellent books by Ronald Smith and Dr William Alexander Eddie. Having found Alkan's *Benedictus* and *Prières* for myself, I was instantly smitten by his music.

From this moment on Alkan became an obsession in my life and I have been fully committed to learning and performing as much of his music as may be performed convincingly on the organ. I regard Alkan's *Impromptu sur le Choral de Luther* (op. 69) to be a masterpiece that equals, or surpasses, the Reubke Sonata (organ) or the Liszt 'Ad Nos'. Although Alkan's *Impromptu* is clearly intended for the piano-pédalier or three hands at one keyboard, its musical rewards are worth the diabolical technical challenges placed on the solo organist.

This preparation is leading me towards the famous church of La Madeleine, Paris for recording with Signum Records, the Gramophone Label of the Year, on June 8th-12th 2020². The sound engineer will be the Grammy award-winning Mike Hatch, and producer the respected Tim Oldham. This combination has proved to be a winning formula for previous discs for Signum from St Sernin, Toulouse, St Étienne Du Mont, Paris (the church and organ of Maurice Duruflé) and at St Bavo, Haarlem (the famous Müller organ 1738).



I am fortunate to know the organ of La Madeleine, Paris, having recorded the complete organ symphonies of Widor there over five nights in May 2011 (the picture on the left dates from that occasion). My choice to return to the church of La Madeleine is a felicitous one in relation to Alkan. Both Saint-Saëns and Lefébure-Wély (pictured on the next page) were organists at La Madeleine. Also, Alkan dedicated his feared *12 études pour les pieds seulement* to Lefébure-Wély.

The dedication from Alkan to Lefébure-Wély is open to some conjecture. Lefébure-Wély's organ compositions are infamous for their one-foot *oom-pah* figurations for the left foot, requiring only a minimal pedal technique. That Alkan should dedicate such fiendishly difficult études (though the études are actually wonderful pieces of music

beyond their circus-like technical challenges) to Lefébure-Wély with this context in mind is a revelation. Was this some kind of wicked joke by Alkan at Lefébure-Wély's expense? Or was Lefébure-Wély a far greater virtuoso than he was often given credit for being, on the basis of his own entertaining but mediocre organ compositions?

¹ See www.josephnolan.org

² Due to current travel restrictions, the recording sessions have been postponed until September or October 2020

Lefébure-Wély often improvised storms, pastorales and sorties of apparent dubious musical taste. However, Lefébure-Wély's improvisations and technique were celebrated in his day. I can find no written evidence that Lefébure-Wély ever played a piano-pédalier, but it is recorded that he won a first prize in organ at the tender age of 17 at the Paris Conservatory (Alkan won a first prize in organ at the age of 19 from the same institution).

Does this suggest that Lefébure-Wély possessed a prodigious and precocious talent and could find his way around a pedal-board? The title of these études is also confusing: *12 Études d'orgue ou de piano à pédalier pour les pieds seulement*. The pedal compass of the compositions, combined with the articulation and dynamic markings, are clearly not designed for the organ.

I cannot find any documented proof that Alkan knew or played the organ himself at La Madeleine, Paris. However, Alkan did have strong connections with Saint-Saëns, Lefébure-Wély and Franck, and might he have found his way into the organ lofts of the most famous churches in Paris? We can be certain that Alkan attended the funeral of Chopin in 1849 at La Madeleine, Paris.

I am particularly excited about the opportunity to create colours using the sounds of a Parisian organ with which Alkan may well have been familiar. Alkan's piano-pédalier music is not a Widor organ symphony where the registrations are dictated by the composer and the performer follows 'the tradition'. As with the organ works of Bach, the performer is therefore able to use his or her imagination with regard to colour and combinations of stops.

The one restrictive factor in using the organ of La Madeleine Paris is the limited compass of the keyboard and pedalboard. This has inevitably resulted in the rearrangement of some keyboard octave and pedal passages exceeding the organ's compass that are clearly designed for the piano-pédalier.

It should also be noted that the church of La Madeleine houses a significant acoustic with the potential to blur musical details. Alkan's written instructions for organists regarding playing his music are therefore crucial, especially with regard to tempi and articulation. As a final point regarding performance practice, Alkan applied great emphasis on rhythmic discipline and eschewed rubato.

In my entire career, I cannot recall anticipating a project with this much excitement. To my mind, Alkan is a towering genius and I am indebted to Seth for his initiative in writing to Signum Records.

Dr Joseph Nolan is a multi-award winning organist. Gramophone Magazine recently awarded Dr Nolan's recordings of the complete organ works of Charles Marie Widor benchmark status citing 'Nolan's combination of vivid virtuosity, towering technique and inspired interpretative intensity makes his the current yardstick in Widor symphony recordings'.



A note on Alkan research and performance in Russia

The Russian pianist Venyamin Smotrov has recently been in touch with Society member David Conway and writes as follows:

“I am a musicologist, composer and pianist: I graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory (2012, composer faculty), and later from graduate school at the State Institute of Art Studies (Moscow, 2018).

I wrote a dissertation on the work of Alkan, the defence of the work will be held on February 28, 2020 at the State Institute of Art Studies in Moscow.

In addition, I am engaged in the performance and popularization of Alkan’s music in Russia. Together with my colleague pianist A. Bakhvalova during the 2018-2019 season, I organized a subscription series, in which the music of Alkan and his contemporaries was presented. The concerts of the cycle “Charles Alkan and Piano Paris of the 19th Century” were preceded by my detailed lectures, in which I talked about the work of Alkan, about his compositions, about the music of other composers that we performed. Concerts were held in the hall of the Dutch church in St Petersburg in Nevsky Prospekt (the building belongs to the V.V. Mayakovsky State Library).

We also repeated some works performed during the subscription in a Moscow venue (the A.P. Bogolyubov Art Library).”

Venyamin has sent David a copy of his thesis (entitled *Charles-Valentin Alkan: Personality, Aesthetics, Works*, in Russian, 425 pages long) which David hopes to write about in a later Bulletin. In the meantime, Venyamin has written a little more about his thesis:

“Of course, the Bulletin articles were helpful! I read the newsletters in great detail, I refer a lot to articles from there, including yours. It will be very important for me to get your comments on the dissertation. It will no longer be possible to make changes to the text of the dissertation itself, but I thought in the future, perhaps to rework it as a book, and to eliminate all the shortcomings in the preparation of the monograph.”

He also provided details of his concert series in St Petersburg, and a poster for a recent event in Moscow in which he performed with Anastasia Bakhvalova (see opposite).

Here are the programmes of his recent concerts:

1st December 2018

Alkan. Barcarolle G minor op. 65 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Field. Two Nocturnes (Venyamin Smotrov)

Alkan. Nocturne B major op. 22 (Anastasia Kurtakova)

Alkan. Selection from *Esquisses* op. 63 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Chopin. Nocturne 9 (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Chopin. Sonata for Cello and Piano (Lyudmila Gutsevich, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Alkan. Grand concert duo for violin and piano (Anton Borisov, Venyamin Smotrov)

Государственное бюджетное учреждение культуры города Москвы
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127030, Москва, Суцеская ул, 14

Ваш email

Главная / Афиша / «Шарль-Валантен Алькан и Фридерик Шопен. Друзья-соседи»

«Шарль-Валантен Алькан и Фридерик Шопен. Друзья-соседи»

05 ноября
Вторник | **19:00**

Место проведения: Малый зал

Платный. 300 руб. (200 руб. льготный)

Цикл концертов-бесед «Три столетия фортепиано». Лекция-концерт.

В программе: Ш.-В. Алькан – Сонатина для фортепиано. Пьесы, этюды, Ф. Шопен – Соната для виолончели и фортепиано. Мазурки, прелюдии.

Исполняют лауреаты международных конкурсов: **Анастасия Бахвалова** (фортепиано), **Венямин Смотров** (фортепиано), **Данила Попов** (виолончель).

Рассказывает музыковед, композитор **Венямин Смотров** (Санкт-Петербург).

29th January 2019

Alkan. Trio for violin, cello and piano (Anton Borisov, Lyudmila Gutsevich, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Alkan. Hallelujah op. 25 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Alkan. Concert Sonata for Cello and Piano (Artem Tamanyan, Venyamin Smotrov)

Alkan. Several pieces from the cycle "Esquisses" op. 63 (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

5th March 2019

Alkan. Fantasietta alla moresca, from op. 32/1 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Mendelssohn. Fantasy for piano duo (Venyamin Smotrov, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Mendelssohn. Andante & Variations B flat major for piano duo (Venyamin Smotrov, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Hiller. Sonata No. 3 in g minor for piano (Venyamin Smotrov)

Gottschalk. Memories of Havana (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Gottschalk. Memories of Andalusia (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Onslow. Sonata for violin and piano No. 1 (Anton Borisov, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

30th April 2019

Alkan. The cycle "25 preludes" (Venyamin Smotrov, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Kalkbrenner. Rondo Es-dur (Venyamin Smotrov)

Steibelt. Pastoral Rondo, Concert Concerto for Piano and Orchestra "The Tempest" (Venyamin Smotrov)

Saint-Saens. Sonata for violin and piano (Tatyana Tsypysheva, Anastasia Bakhvalova)

21st May 2019

Alkan. Etude "Funeral March" op. 39/4 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Alkan. Etude Concerto - 2nd movt. op. 39/9 (Venyamin Smotrov)

Alkan. Sonatina op. 61, first and second parts (Venyamin Smotrov)

Liszt. Mephisto-waltzes No. 3, 4, Mephisto-polka, Bagatel without tonality (Venyamin Smotrov)

Hertz. 3 Characteristic Nocturnes (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Bellini-Thalberg. Transcription of Norma's aria (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Thalberg. Tarantella (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Chopin. Scherzo No. 1 (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Wagner/Liszt. Death of Isolde (Anastasia Bakhvalova)

Alkan. Two Barcarolles (op. 70, op. 65) (Venyamin Smotrov)

Call for a new editor of the Alkan Society Bulletin

This issue of the Bulletin is the tenth under my editorship. It is a great pleasure and privilege to engage with members and other Alkanists to commission, encourage or cajole them to write articles, submit news, contribute letters and conduct reviews. Over the years, there have been some innovations – for example helped by the introduction of regular email *News Digests* which allows the *Bulletin* to focus on more substantive pieces. However I feel the time is approaching when the Bulletin would benefit from the influx of new ideas and fresh perspectives. I therefore intend to resign the editorship in due course, but not until a new editor, or editorial team, is in place. I am happy to continue in the role until such arrangements are made.

Any member who wishes to be considered for the post of editor should contact the Honorary Secretary (José López, secretary@alkansociety.org), stating what they would bring to the role. Members who have suggestions on how the role of editor or the Bulletin more broadly might be developed are also invited to contact the Secretary with their ideas. Please send you application or ideas by 30th June 2020. The appointment of the new editor will be a matter for the Committee.

If you wish to discuss the role and its requirements in more detail, please contact me, Nick Hammond, at treasurer@alkansociety.org.

Liszt's and Schumann's review of Alkan's *Souvenirs – Trois Morceaux dans le genre pathétique*, op.15

Mark Viner (London, UK)

A large part of the work involved in preparing each volume of the Alkan series your Chairman is recording for Piano Classics requires preparing accurate and fulsome sleeve notes: something which, I'm sure many of you are aware, I insist on doing myself. Much of this labour includes returning to original sources and, more often than not, much fresh translation. In preparing the notes to my recording of the *Souvenirs - Trois Morceaux dans le genre pathétique*, op.15, I felt listeners really ought not be without full translations of both Liszt's and Schumann's reviews and, as far as I am aware, a full translation of neither one seems to have been reproduced anywhere, but merely quotations. We present them here in their entirety for readers who haven't yet been able to examine either one, be it in their original languages or in translation:

F. Liszt, Revue Critique. Trois Morceaux dans le genre pathétique, par C.-V. ALKAN. Œuvre 15, 3e livre des 12 Caprices. Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris, 4e année, no.42, 22nd October, 1837, translation by the author:

When the traveller has long walked alone in an unknown land, when the end of the road is still distant, and when by the glow of twilight he sits casting a tired glance at the horizon which seems to ever flee, he sometimes hears, around the corner of the path, the robust voice of the labourer who has just ploughed his last furrow, or the broken songs of the goatherd who descends the hill, pushing before him his herded flock; sometimes also other travellers like him pass by offering him a cordial word. He feels then that he is not alone; utterances of the human voice, which ever stir the heart of man, chase away sadness and discouragement from the breast; he resumes his walk with a more alert step and thinks himself already arrived at the places where he shall see his friends and brothers again. There is something analogous in the impression made on me, in hours of reverie and solitary work, the thought of an absent friend who sent me a noble and beautiful work to which he had associated my memory. I was singularly moved by this mark of sympathy from an artist of heart and intelligence. And suppose that the work had been mediocre, I would have still liked to know that, while I thought myself alone, another had been watching with me, and that his affectionate glance was turned towards my retreat: but that should not limit my satisfaction; the caprices of M. Alkan, read and reread countless times since the day they brought me such joy, are compositions which cannot be too highly praised and, all friendly prejudice aside, are likely to arouse great interest among musicians. The first of the three pieces is entitled Aime-moi; the second, le Vent; the third Morte. We will not decide whether they join and are bound one to the other in a single poetic rendition, even though several things, the return of the first tune at the end of the third piece among others, makes us suppose so. Examined independently, each one of them forms a complete whole in which the principal motif, skilfully crafted, developed with wisdom, always governs alternating and accessory melodies, abundantly clustered around. The tune of the first piece is simple, tender, full of melancholy; the accompaniments in semiquavers in the right hand, page 6, bars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, which are repeated later on by the left hand, page 6, fourth line, fifth line, etc.; the modulation on page 14, line 1, 2 and 3, and the whole figure which forms the peroration of the piece, pages 11, 12, 13 to 17, are charming things, which, well executed, must produce a great effect.

The second piece is the more romantic of the three. Through uninterrupted volleys of chromatic semiquavers, the author has marvellously rendered the effects of those prolonged winds which blow for days on end drawing from the heather and the forest grasses a monotonous lament. One can almost hear the rain trickle down the oaks, and one listens with contemplation to the song which hovers over these muted murmurs like the song of the lover or the poet who attends without sadness to the mourning of nature for he feels within him the sweet radiation of a memory or a hope. We do not know whether it is on purpose that M. Alkan has omitted to make stand out the top notes which form the melody in arpeggiating with the first of the triplet quavers, or whether it's a simple negligence of the copyist; whatever it may be we think that the way indicated hereafter would be more satisfactory:

D, D, D, D,
F, F, F, F, F, etc., etc.,
B.

The third caprice, Morte, begins with the plainchant of the Dies iræ, which is at first followed by some lines of pathetic recitative. Next comes a bleak and lugubrious tune in the bass strings, accompanied a little later on by triplet chords in the left hand and repeated Bs in the right hand which chime like a death knell. These two pages, as well as the two following ones where the new theme is presented in octaves by the left hand are something of a prologue to the Presto finale that follows whose design is that of many sonata finales, with the exception however of the two last pages where we find the second half of the Dies iræ and some bars of the first caprice.

In the whole of this piece, which contains many beautiful things, it seemed to us that M. Alkan was too unconcerned with detail. The transition passages, thrown down like bridges, from one idea to another (pag. 45, lines 3, 4, 5; and page 47 and 48, lines 6, 7, etc., etc.), are a little negligent. One sees that the author considers them of a mediocre importance. There he's wrong; it shouldn't be believed that certain sections gain from the negligence of certain others. There is a relative perfection for all; for the furrow as for the ridge, for initial plans as for second ones, for the days as for the shadows, from which the artist never loses sight and whose realisation is his constant goal; he who, be it laziness or false calculation, abandons the details, will never make, whatever the superiority of the superior sections might be, but an incomplete work, inferior to those whose sections will be balanced. Another observation we make to M. Alkan is on the absolute omission of signs indicating tempo and nuance. All throughout the course of the fifty-three pages of these caprices, it is impossible to find something which resembles a P or an F.

R. Schumann, C. V. Alkan, 3 Große Etuden. Op.15, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, no.43, 29th May, 1838, translation by Elgin Strub-Ronayne:

After a brief glimpse into this publication it is obvious that the style of this Neo-Franconian is reminiscent of Eugen Sue and G. Sand. One is appalled by such inartistic unnaturalness. Liszt at least characterises with intelligence; Berlioz, who in spite of all his eccentricities displays a human heart every now and then, is a libertine full of strength and impertinence; here we find nothing but weakness and unimaginative vulgarity. The Studies have titles, 'Aime moi', 'le Vent' and 'Morte' and distinguish themselves throughout the fifty pages by providing only the notes without any expression marks. The Caprice can escape such censure, as one knows anyway how this sort of music should be performed; but the internal vacuum highlights the outer emptiness and what is left? In 'Aime moi' a watery French melody with a middle section that in no way befits the title, in 'le Vent' a chromatic howling on a thought from the A major Symphony by Beethoven and the last piece 'Morte' a repellent desolation, with nothing but wood and sticks and a hangman's noose, this time borrowing from Berlioz. We protect a misguided talent if there happens to be one, all that remains is a little music although even this is doubtful as none is apparent, only black on black and we must turn away dismayed.

While we all know that, as dedicatee, Liszt could afford to be magnanimous in his praise and that Schumann's diatribe ultimately says more about him than it does Alkan, I found it more revealing to let both speak for themselves, side by side, where, once the more famous quotations are put into context, a clearer assessment can be made of the views and aesthetics of both authors.

Note: Mark's CD, which includes Alkan's op.15, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin.

Alkan's manuscript correction in *Les regrets de la nonette*¹

Richard Murphy (London, UK)

The image on the right² shows a detail from the first page, fourth system, first bar, of the manuscript of *Les regrets de la nonette* for piano in G minor, dated 7 July, 1854. Pen and black ink on commercially produced manuscript paper from Paris c. 1850. Six notes, two dots, stem, tie before first note, beam, slur, and cross-hatching with border.



The dedication to Louise at the top of this particular page may indicate Alkan's attempt at a fair copy when transcribing from a dedication-free draft – though, by definition, a fair copy would be correction-free.

We see the original 14th bar with right-hand notes only. The three chords are C and E flat, B flat and D, B flat and D.

This last chord may be the error Alkan made, as all similar figurations fall typically by step, i.e., no preceding notes immediately repeated. A lapse of concentration perhaps – very easily done when copying. Was he annoyed with himself? Whatever, Alkan made the decision to continue writing after this correction, and not to start a new page. He also left a sizeable blot on the bass clef in bar 11. Without scientific examination, neither bar seems to have left evidence of the use of a blotting substance, leaving these marks with a strong colour profile.

The blot indicates that Alkan may well have used a dip pen. The nib would have had an oblique cut of perhaps 15 degrees from top right. This gives vertical lines the much thinner width-variation used for note stems than the thicker horizontal lines used for beams. He would have been practised in the technique of rotating the pen slightly to facilitate these differences. It appears that he used a rounder nib for the cross-hatching and its border. The black note-heads are neat roundels. The concluding minims each have a two-stroke form – a shorter upper and longer lower curve. Alkan's border work takes precedence over the cross-hatching grid.

Unambiguously isolating this bar from the rest of the music was a forcefully articulated process of containment and offers a striking visual focus to the page.

¹ A version of this article is included on the inside back cover of *25 Esquisses pour piano inspired by Alkan* (Alkan Society, 2020).

² This image and its context is on view at IMSLP: see [imslp.org/wiki/Les_regrets_de_la_nonette_\(Alkan%2C_Charles-Valentin\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Les_regrets_de_la_nonette_(Alkan%2C_Charles-Valentin))

CD review

Alkan: Complete piano music Vol.3

Grande Sonate, Op. 33

Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique, Op. 15

Mark Viner, piano

Piano Classics PCL10209, released March 2020, length 67 minutes

Recording: Op. 33 on 23 September 2019; Op. 15 on 17 March 2018

Grande Sonate “Les quatre âges”

1	20 ans: Très vite	5'39
2	30 ans Quasi-Faust: Assez vite	11'29
3	40 ans Un heureux ménage: Lentement	10'49
4	50 ans Prométhée enchaîné: Extrêmement lent	9'09

Souvenirs – Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique, Op. 15

5	Aime-moi	9'41
6	Le vent	7'37
7	Morte	12'53

Editor's note: In view of the significance of this release, we commissioned two independent reviews

Review by Seth Blacklock (Lisburn, Northern Ireland)

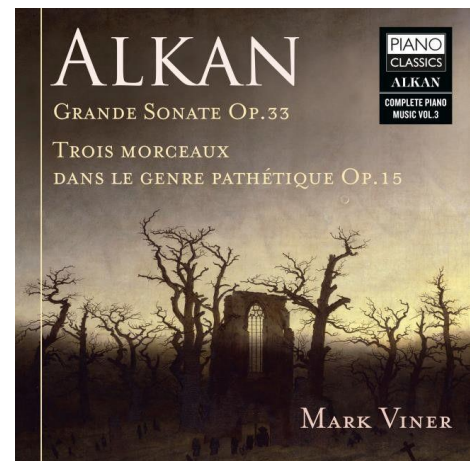
Before I give a brief review of Mark's latest Alkan disk, I hope readers won't mind if I begin with a personal note of reflection.

I first heard Mark Viner's playing about 12 years ago when I believe he was still in training (at his request I was humbled and delighted to upload his earliest private studio recordings of Alkan's music to YouTube). But I knew of Mark from at least a couple of years previously, where our paths briefly and indirectly crossed when we both attended a concert of Alkan's music in London (the first for me, and a rare privilege) given by Tom Wakefield.¹

Even then, Mark made an impression on me. Though we didn't talk, I noticed him and was keenly aware that he was a different breed of youth (he had to have been, being interested in Alkan!). From what I remember, his presentation on the occasion evoked for me suggestions of a young man from a time gone by. And over the intervening years it has become apparent that Mark, of whom I had that sense of someone with a passion for things of yesteryear, is also a different breed of young musician – a man of very fine tastes, a linguist, a scholar – in short, an artist who, though full of the inquiring of youth, seems in some respects (and in a very good way!) to have an 'old soul'.

I suppose what I'm trying to get at is that, in small ways, Mark reminds me of the composer he has most ardently championed since I first heard his pianism those few years ago: Alkan. Humble, unassuming, grateful for the opportunities that have come his way, sensitive and probing as a musician, someone who believes in the minor (the forgotten and neglected²) as well as the major (the renowned and canonical) and who seeks to explore the richness of the repertoire for his instrument and for the better.

For all of the above reasons and more – his projected 'complete piano music' of Alkan³ notwithstanding – it seems to me that Viner is the ideal Alkan interpreter. With this, the third disk in



¹ For readers even less familiar with him than I, Tom Wakefield is a seriously underrated and under-known British pianist, a true musician and scholar, self-deprecating to a fault, whose exploration and knowledge of unsung composers is undervalued. Tom's two recordings that I'm aware of include music by George Frederick Pinto and wonderful piano transcriptions of orchestral works by Tchaikovsky by Wakefield himself, excellently performed. (Not to forget, too, his brilliant recording of the Beethoven-Alkan Concerto movement on the Symposium label.) It is regrettable that there is not more of Tom's full-blooded and erudite pianism captured on disk.

² Aside from Mark's other recordings to date of Thalberg and Chaminade (to whom we shall soon add Blumenfeld), his repertoire extends to the true byways of music, from the Romantic era especially, encompassing compositions by composers such as Doehler and Méreaux to name but two, both of whom I hope he finds time to record in the future.

³ Readers may be aware that Daniel Capelletti – who to date has given us one of only two complete acoustic recordings of Alkan's *Les Mois*, in the composer's centenary year of 1988 – was also planning to record all of Alkan's piano music before the project came to an early end.

the series of Mark's Alkan releases, he continues to prove his pedigree and to convince that – despite the growing number of contributions to the Alkan discography by excellent young pianists⁴ – he is his generation's rightful 'heir to the throne' of the major Alkan champions in the stereo era, carrying on the wonderful legacy of pianists such as Lewenthal, Smith and Hamelin, musicians Viner clearly admires.

And so, to the recording itself:

Including two of Alkan's most imposing and symbolic works, let me start by saying I believe this release as a whole stands shoulder to shoulder with any of the preceding recordings I have heard (which is saying something, given the artistic and pianistic heights reached in some of those recordings). In a recent social media response to me, Mark himself said that he is "very proud of this one", and it is easy to see why.

As with his previous releases, the booklet notes he has provided show a thorough knowledge of both works, their history and historical context, reception and musical and extra-musical outworkings. He has included quotes translated from the original French and German, from Alkan himself, Schumann and Liszt, which help to illuminate each work. And useful again is his essay format, which includes footnotes to expanded information. I am also under the impression that the cover image of Caspar David Friedrich's *The Abbey in the Oakwood* was also one that Mark wanted for this recording. So the level of his involvement in the overall project, too, is to be noted and commended.

To give a brief overview of Mark's performances then, in the *Grande Sonate*, Mark's quick-fire dispatching of the *Très vite* first movement is technically impeccable. His hugely impressive 'Quasi-Faust' second movement – a piece of music he describes in his notes as "terrifyingly difficult" – is a testament to his pianistic arsenal, including some especially satisfying massive leaps traversed at speed. Every time I hear the *cantus firmus* 'Redemption' theme towards the end I'm awestruck by its complexity and genius, impressions that Mark communicates wonderfully. *Un heureux ménage*, the third movement, is the perfect foil to the turbulent second, and Mark's playing here is very sensitive, never giving way to sentimentality. The wonderful final movement, *Prométhée enchaîné*, is, in Mark's hands, as close to ideal as I've heard – his pacing carefully considered and his three final chords perfectly judged in terms of articulation. Mark is faithful to the score and to the composer's directions as much as possible, letting the music speak for itself.

For many years, Ronald Smith's was my go-to interpretation of this work, but now (even considering the incredible recordings by Hamelin and Maltempo⁵) Mark's is a rendition that I am happy to add to Smith's pioneering recording as my personal reference points. His traversal of this important piece amplifies how strong the work is on its own merits and when considered alongside other much more well-known sonatas in the repertoire. Its interconnectedness, not simply in terms of its motivic treatment, but also in terms of its symbolism and character, is unique. Indeed, this recording, and no doubt the series, I would venture, is one that Alkan himself would be quietly proud of having been made.

Turning now to the *Souvenirs: Trois morceaux*, I am in agreement with Mark's summation that the work is a "startling achievement and [...] constitutes Alkan's first important work." It is astonishing that the composer penned this work at age 21! The two other recordings that I digested alongside this were those by Hamelin and Maltempo and, where Mark perhaps doesn't reach the dizzying, fantastical heights of Hamelin (whose storytelling, grasp of structure, and gradations of tone and dynamic constitute my personal benchmark), or Maltempo, Mark's interpretations are important because, for me, where we can imagine Hamelin and Maltempo giving each piece performances one might perhaps associate/align with Liszt's more 'romantic' playing, Mark plays in a way that, intentionally or otherwise, eschews that approach for a more classical feel in performances that I can imagine come closer to what Alkan may have intended in terms of his own approach to piano performance.

⁴ Aside from the more well-known examples of Vincenzo Maltempo and Yui Morishita, I would personally highlight the insightful contributions by Shaghajegh Nosrati, Etsuko Hirose and Satu Paavola.

⁵ Another favourite interpretation of mine, for reasons of the pianist's story as much as anything, is that by Albert Franz.

Mark's *Aime-moi* displays some highly artistic touches throughout. I appreciate the opening to this piece, treated in a more funereal way than either Hamelin or Maltempo, which gives the music space and time to sink in and take hold. In general, the pedalling here is wisely careful – lighter so as not to allow the texture or leading melodies to be obscured. Mark's voicing, too, is clear throughout and there are certain instances where his phrasing and articulation lend a refreshing, improvisatory feel to proceedings not found in other recordings. My only reservations are that the lighter pedalling mentioned above becomes too clipped in the major section preceding the coda, and that this major section is itself a little too rushed for my taste.

In *Le Vent*, Mark is technically excellent, although I would have liked a greater degree of dynamic variety throughout (Hamelin is untouched in this respect). For instance, the final climactic howl towards the end could have been built up more effectively. The second section, for me, is also a little too slow. But again, as with *Aime-moi*, there is a funereal feel to Mark's interpretation that just 'works'. Mark's suppression of the opening song is an especially welcome touch.

Morte, I have come to appreciate since being stupefied on first hearing the work under Hamelin, is very hard to get right. I can certainly see the point in Liszt's constructive criticism of the piece and I don't yet feel that a definitive interpretation has quite been reached. Nevertheless, Mark's reading is very fine indeed. His opening bell tolls (and tolling bells throughout the piece) are, again, wonderfully funereal, and his stifling of the 'Dies Irae' theme deathly sombre. There's a real sense of drama from the outset (and it's here where I feel the cover image feels particularly relevant). There are march-like elements in the piece that Mark brings across to great effect, communicating very movingly the grief inherent in the piece. Some clever use of articulation helps to punctuate the waves of sustained sound. And Mark's final, declamatory 'Dies Irae' powerfully conveys the sense that death has won out.

All in all these pieces do work very well together and where I find Mark's sense of nuance comes across strongly. When listening to Mark's performance, I hear the deep wound Alkan experienced, referenced in the note he wrote to Santiago de Masarnau (included at the end of the booklet note).

An inventive, closely thought-out and convincing programme in outstanding performances, then, by Mr Viner, and one to which I will return again and again. Where Hamelin astounds with virtuosic feats and a sense of the 'romantic', Viner's scene-setting and adherence to Alkan's model of pianism are second to none and make this release very special. Finally, as usual from this label, the sound quality is exemplary. I very much look forward to further releases. Long may this series continue!



Review by Laura Snyderman (Bethesda, MD, USA)

After hearing Chairman Mark Viner play the *Grande sonate* live this past June (see Bulletin 99, 1-2), I am thrilled to provide further commentary on his extraordinary rendition, and even more elated to hear his recording of the Alkan's *Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique*, Op. 15. Mark's performance achieves a musical elegance and finesse that is practically insurmountable considering the technical fortitude necessary to play these monstrously challenging works.

Viner's accompanying liner notes provide an illustrative depiction of the *Grande Sonate*. He remarks on the challenges and the musical genius, particularly behind the motivic symbolism and development in the *Quasi-Faust* movement, as well as providing a detailed harmonic analysis of *Prométhée enchaîné* which is well worth a careful reading. In part as a result of the French Revolution of 1848, the *Grande Sonate* remained, unfortunately, unperformed until Ronald Smith's revival in 1973. Markedly, Liszt's Sonata published two years after Alkan's *Grande Sonate*, depicts a comparable Mephistopheles theme from Alkan's *Quasi-Faust* movement. Liszt's Sonata, of course, became part of the standard piano literature, unlike Alkan's remarkable work.

The *Grande Sonate* consists of four movements: *20 ans- très vite*, *30 ans- quasi-Faust*, *40 ans- un ménage heureux*, and *50 ans- Prométhée enchaîné*. Individually the movements aim to depict a loose portrayal of a

man's stages of life at twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty years of age. Unlike the standard sonata, Alkan's movements progressively slow down from movement to movement, concluding with a sombre finale.

20 ans très vite commences with a flighty passage in D major. Mark Viner gracefully glides through uncanny, gruelling passagework with a feather-light touch, especially depicted in his impeccable trills. Viner's lyricism projects particularly in the brief B minor section, with a ripening tonal palate, paired with perfectly paced phrasing. His concluding chordal jumps highlight the quirky harmonies Alkan is most known for.

30 ans quasi-Faust according to Raymond Lewenthal⁶, "forms the apex of the sonata and is the longest and most difficult movement. It stands very well by itself and no one performing it without the other movements need fear being criticized for serving up a bleeding chunk." Without failing at maintaining a strong rhythmic pulse, Viner paints a melodically-driven performance, tackling challenging octave leaps and enervating passages with sensible musical "breath". Viner paces dramatic development well, especially shining at the slower lyrical sections, bestowing tonal clarity and untarnished voicing consistently. Viner eloquently reveals seldom noticed countermelodies, especially relevant at the conclusion of this movement.

40 ans un ménage heureux (a happy household) offers a sweet release from the gripping previous movement. Viner's delightful light touch is noticed especially in the flurried parts, combined with a warm tone in the recapitulation of the initial theme. Viner's pacing is immaculate, with thoughtful phrasing and attention to cadences. Viner illustrates immense control, notably in the brief minor section and the conclusion with his sensitivity and careful voicing.

50 ans Prométhée enchaîné (Prometheus bound) illustrates a man's morbid ending. Viner's performance depicts the tragedy of this movement, with controlled dynamics and pacing. The stark octave ending exhibits clear musical direction to its bitter decaying conclusion.

Trois Morceaux dans le Genre pathétique, Op. 15, is a suite consisting of three movements, *Aime-moi* (love me), *Le vent* (the wind), and *Morte* (dead). As with many of Alkan's works, these technically challenging pieces are practically piano études.

Aime-moi shows remarkable Chopin influence, with a lovely melodic theme in A flat minor. Viner's performance provides clarity and direction, particularly with the rhythmic build-up with the ever increasing subdivisions. The musical pacing at cadences is extraordinarily well-timed. The rising arpeggios sound eased and charming, quite a feat given the technical merit necessary to perform them.

Le Vent, one of Alkan's more well-known compositions, received a dynamic response at its first reception – Robert Schumann responded with a vitriolic review, regarding the works as shallow. Franz Liszt, however, praised the same work for its elegant effects. Both Schumann's and Liszt's reviews are thankfully provided by the pianist in the liner notes. Viner eloquently performs the chromatic scales with ease and dramatic intention, carefully building up to the apex of this piece with dynamic control and fluidity. The second theme in D Major illustrated a particularly lovely tone, accompanied by careful voicing and musical shaping.

Morte, considered by Sorabji⁷ "the most remarkable number of the set ... a moving and tragic elegy or dirge ... full of astonishing *hardiesses*, both technical, pianistic and harmonic, and its ending is as weirdly uncanny as it is original and daring". The piece features the *Dies Irae* motif, and a constant B flat knell, which preceded Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* by seventy years. Viner gracefully performs these dense chords, trills, and tremolo passages with ease and perceptible objection, precise voicing, and inspiring musical clarity.

In short, Viner's performance marks a new zenith in incomparable technical proficiency coupled with expressive musicianship. A marvellous achievement, and a definite must-have for any recording collection.

⁶ Lewenthal, R. (1964). *The Piano Music of Alkan*. Schirmer Inc: New York/London.

⁷ Sorabji, K. (1932). *Around Music*. Unicorn Press: London, pp 214-215

Review of new music edition

Alkan: *Le Festin d'Ésope* (op. 39 no 12)

Norbert Gertsch (Editor)
Vincenzo Maltempo (Fingering)
Wolfgang Rathert (Preface)

Published by G. Henle Verlag in 2020
Urtext Edition (paperbound, 28 pages: HN 1394)
Also available in Digital (tablet) format
ISMN 979-0-2018-1394-3
Price €14.00

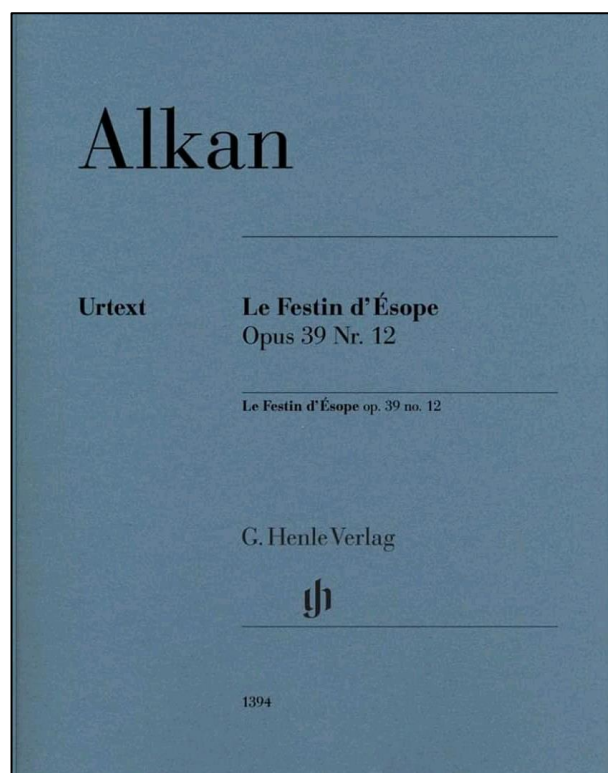
Reviewed by Mark Viner

Finally! I can honestly say I thought I'd never see the day: Alkan published by the edition of editions – the trusted G. Henle Verlag which has been used, it seems, since time immemorial as the go-to text for the standard repertoire. Its appearance has changed little over the years and its uniform blue covers and clear, elegant typeface are ubiquitous and instantly recognisable.

What's this new edition like and how is it different you might ask. Well, very little is different – it has been re-engraved, so the typeface and pagination are different but in terms of the text itself hardly anything has been altered. The lack of a manuscript has seen to this so the only thing the editors could rely on were the plates of the original Richault pressing we're all familiar with. The only change in terms of notes appears in bar 211 of Variation XXV where an A sharp is added in the right hand second quaver chord. A footnote at the bottom of the page suggests a possible oversight here and this is something I've also often pondered. Aside from this, it benefits from some expert fingerings from Vincenzo Maltempo while Alkan's fingerings are respectfully preserved in italics, added phrase markings are given in brackets and translations to Alkan's sometimes outré Italian performance directions are sensibly given throughout. The only error seems to be in bar 183 of the Variation XXII where a muddle seems to have occurred with both the fingering and the signs indicating distribution of the hands though I imagine this to be an oversight of the proofreader.

One might ask whether Alkan's music loses something of its idiosyncrasy through re-engraving: well, I'm the wrong person to ask as I'm terribly sentimental about these sorts of things – Raymond Lewenthal in the pioneering volume he edited for publication by G. Schirmer in 1963 had a similar feeling about this, citing Godowsky and Grainger as other composers who have a unique appearance on the printed page, hence why they simply cleaned up the original plates. But what could possibly be lost when we have the original? Nothing at all; in fact, it can only benefit – the old fashioned crotchet rests (which appear as backwards quaver rests in the first edition) have been standardised and, what's more, they have even gone to the length of preserving Alkan's idiosyncratic *acciaccature* in Variation XIII with their three strike-throughs on the grace note. In essence the whole thing has been modernised and made more accessible – something sorely needed – though without any undue interference.

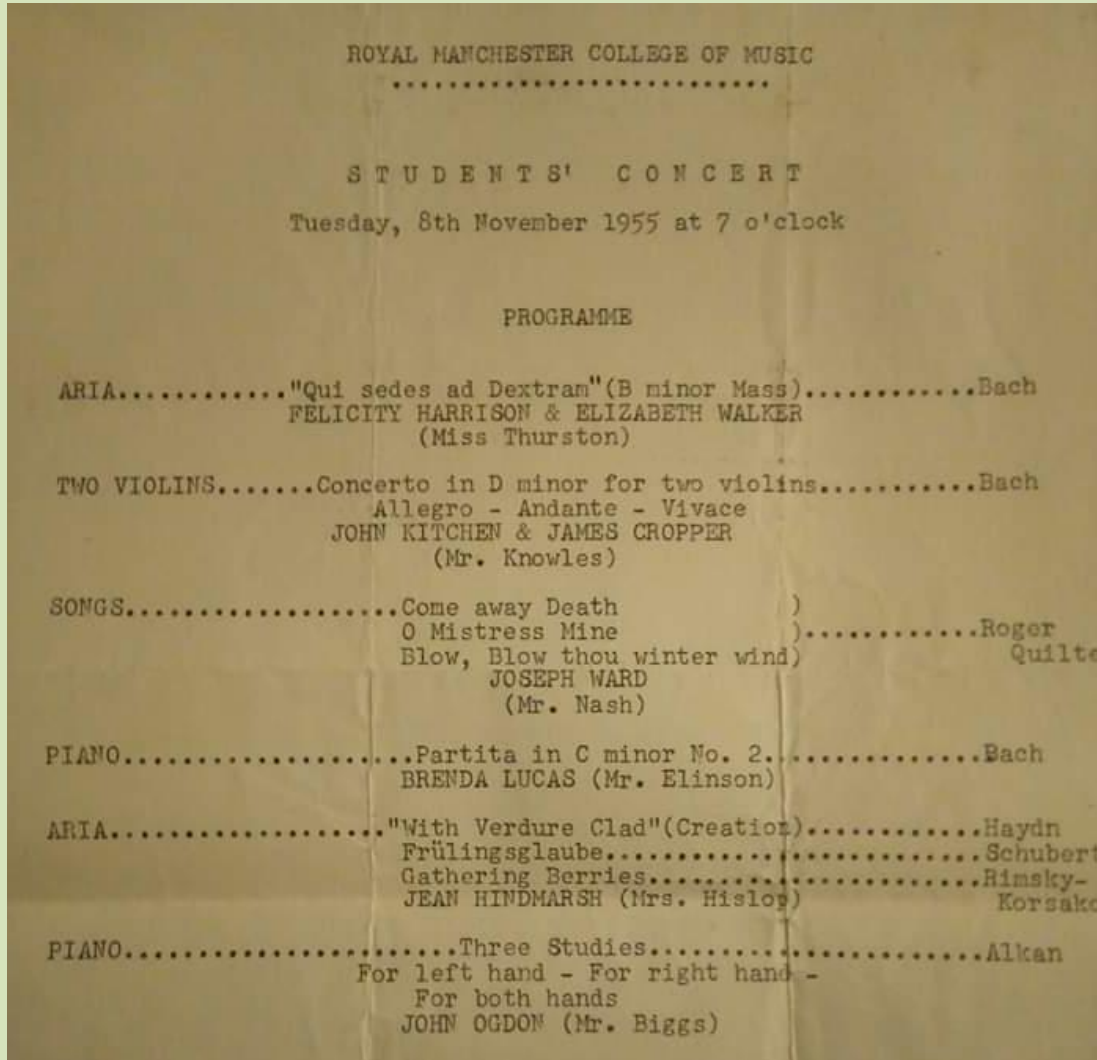
This is a tremendous step for Alkan. In securing a footing with one of the most famous music publishers in the world, his name is finally, unequivocally, being ranked shoulder to shoulder alongside the names we've always known. I'm also given to understand that this publication is the first of several more to come – I await the following with bated breath!



Letter to the editor

Sir,

I'm sure that fellow members will be interested in this posting that appeared in my Facebook feed recently:



Quite something, the item in question, the more so when just scrolling down idly. The posting was from an old student of the *Royal Manchester College of Music* (RMCM) which was later to metamorphose into the *Royal Northern College of Music* (RNCM). She had come across an old concert programme from 1955 and wondered if it might be of interest to others, or indeed if anyone had attended the concert itself.

My eyes fair popped out at seeing the last item on the programme: John Ogdon, no less, playing the complete Alkan op. 76 études. Rather quaintly to our eyes, his tutor's name appears in brackets after his name. (*Mr. Biggs*) refers to Claud Biggs, distinguished teacher and former pupil himself of Egon Petri, who played Alkan and made a first recording of the *Symphonie*.

Earlier in the programme, Brenda Lucas, who became John Ogdon's wife, had played Bach's Partita no. 2.

John Ogdon would have been just 18 in 1955: a remarkable achievement⁸. I had previously thought that Stephanie McCallum had given the first complete performance of op. 76 in 1987, but John's programme counters this.

Perhaps Claud Biggs introduced Ogdon to the études (maybe courtesy of Egon Petri), but it is possible that he discovered them himself, browsing in the well-stocked library that is the Henry Watson Music Library in Manchester. How fascinating that he took them up.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Hick, Stockport

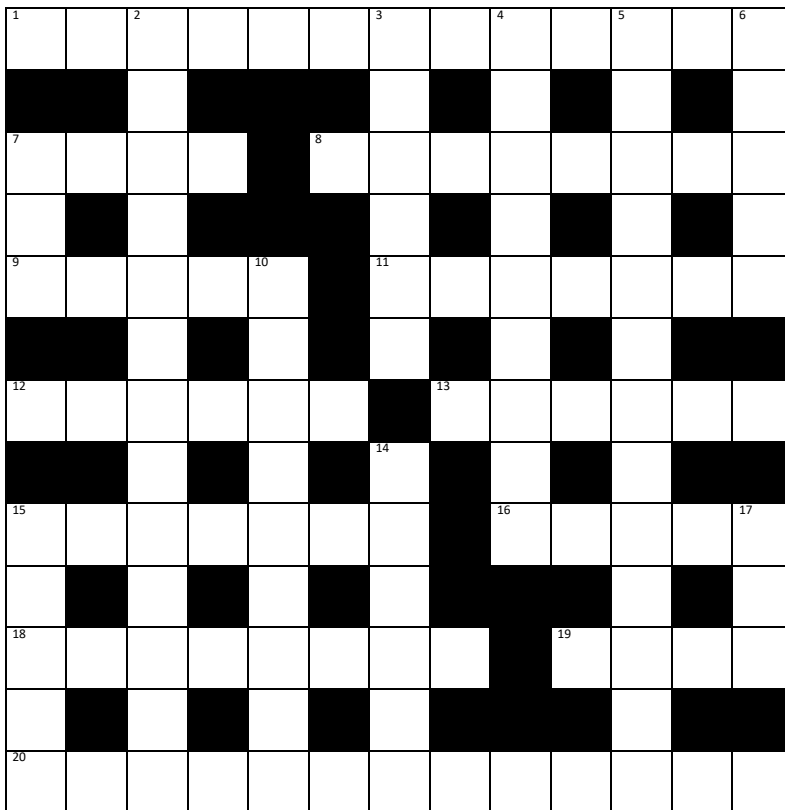
Distractions and diversions

Solution to Prize Crossword number 6

	D	H	I	V	E	R		D	E	T	E	
R		O		I		I		U		E		S
E	A	R		P	R	O	M	E	N	A	D	E
T				E		E		T		S		
R	O	G	E	R		S	U	R	L	E	A	U
A		R				K		I		B		N
I	N	O	P	U	S		L	O	P	E	R	A
T		S		N		N				A		L
E	X	T	R	E	M	E		A	P	R	I	L
		E		N		V		S				I
L	E	M	O	U	R	A	N	T		A	C	E
A		P		I		D		A		S		D
	T	S	E	T		A	U	G	U	S	T	

⁸ Charles Beauclerk (2015), in his book *Piano man: a life of John Ogdon* (Simon & Schuster), recounts as follows: One fellow student recalls Biggs sitting in the concert hall listening to John playing Alkan's Etude for the left hand, music which had been forgotten for 100 years, and saying to everybody: "How does he do it? I don't know how he does it!"

Prize Crossword number 7 (Set by En Songe)



Notes:

- Most across clues have a family resemblance.
- Completed grids can be sent to the editor* to arrive by 1 August 2020. The first correct solution (drawn randomly from a hat) will win a CD of a rare performance of the *Symphonie* from op 39.

* treasurer@alkansociety.org, or
Nick Hammond, Woodend House,
High Stittenham, York YO60 7TW, UK

Need further hints? Send an email to *En Songe* at: EnSonge.Alkan@gmail.com

Across

- 1 Father (5, 8)
- 7 Family of instruments in *Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un pappagallo*, all four double (4)
- 8 Middle (8)
- 9 Mother first (5)
- 11 Brother (7)
- 12 Brother (6)
- 13 Brother (6)
- 15 Sister (7)
- 16 Grandfather and brother-in-law (5)
- 18 Brother (8)
- 19 Inside, you've a middle layer of the eye (4)
- 20 Son, possibly, part (4, 9)

Down

- 2 Genuflecting Italian artist, keep lining lip? (8, 5)
- 3 1 across is a rare rhyme for this reputed Presidential colour (6)
- 4 Confused shrew made recommendation on bees approaching (4, 5)
- 5 It isn't for HMRC, plus one big golf club: better book an Uber? (3, 4, 6)
- 6 Little 12, premium bonds computer or Morecambe partner? (5)
- 7 Back jam holder for Brits in India? (3)
- 10 Assay lead for a quick healthy meal (4, 5)
- 14 Flinch at gunfire kickback (6)
- 15 Hidden craft in Meccano engineering (5)
- 17 Early Asian dynasty, perhaps 11a (3)

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