



THE ALKAN SOCIETY

(Registered Charity number 276199)

<http://www.alkansociety.org>

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BULLETIN no. 76 September 2007

Forthcoming Society Events

Recital by Kevin Bowyer, 10th October 2007

With the kind cooperation of Toccata Classics, Society members are invited to an organ recital by **Kevin Bowyer** to launch volume II of his complete recordings on CD of Alkan's oeuvre for the organ. The recital will take place at **City of London School, Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 3AL** on **Wednesday 10th October** and will commence at **18.30**.

Alkan Society Competition, 3 November 2007

The Annual Alkan Society Competition is to be held as usual at **Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge**, on **3rd November 2007**. This year it is planned to arrange, subject to the interest of members, a lunch, to be followed by the competition itself in the afternoon (including tea); in the evening there will be a recital by Thomas Wakefield. **We should be grateful if interested members could notify the Secretary, either by post or by e-mail.**

For other forthcoming events see end of Bulletin.

Bulletin Overview

First, apologies for the delay in bringing forth this edition of the Bulletin. In mitigation I adduce the wealth of material – such that the present is in effect a ‘double issue’ – and also a profusion of personal affairs, notably the wedding of my daughter Claudia. I would not normally mention such matters in this august publication but I am moved to do so by two Alkan connections: the first, that some may remember Claudia as singing Alkan's ‘*Trois anciennes mélodies de la synagogue*’ and ‘*Verset de Psaume 42*’ at the concert in celebration of Ronald Smith at the Royal Academy of Music; the second, that the bride chose as her processional the ‘*Ancienne mélodie*’ from op. 31, and the part of the ceremony involving this (played by a *klezmer* violin and guitar) may be seen by the curious on YouTube (see the link on the Society's website).

A remarkable series of recitals since the last issue is reviewed below, from the unusual organ recital at the Society's AGM to Hamelin's *tour de force* at the Cheltenham Music Festival, sponsored by the Society. The Bulletin also contains some recording reviews, notably Hamelin's new recording of the Concerto. Not only that, but we have a rarity, a new publication devoted to Alkan, which Society members are able to obtain at a special discount (see review and separate flyer). We also continue our translations of Alkan's correspondence with Fétis, publish a response to Stephanie McCallum's thoughts on Alkan's mental health, and note an important new (and free) internet source for the music of Alkan and others.

Looking forward, we anticipate Kevin Bowyer's organ recital in October to launch volume II of his Alkan organ *intégrale*, and the 2007 Alkan Society Competition in Cambridge on 3rd November.

And looking yet further in the future, your Committee has begun to think of the forthcoming Alkan Bicentennial in 2013 – we invite readers' ideas and opinions on how we might help to celebrate this!

DC

Alkaniana

Alkan to Fétis (III and IV)

We continue our series of translations of the letters of Alkan to the critic Fétis, of which the originals are held in the Fryklund collection at Stockholm. As before, the footnotes are translated from those provided by François Luguénot of the Société Alkan.

Letter III

[Paris, Monday ..., 1849]

If you can be here again on 5th May, my most dear and illustrious Sir, you would be welcome to come and hear a few of the little compositions of which you have so kindly said such flattering things.

Believe me in any eventuality your most devoted and grateful admirer –

C: V: Alkan aîné.

Letter IV

[Paris 24 October 1852, on the headed paper of the Erard firm]

Dear and illustrious maître,

I had a Spanish friend living in Paris, a very erudite fellow, both knowledgeable and intelligent [*sachant beaucoup et sachant bien*].¹ He was amongst other things an excellent musician; and, discussing rhythm with him one day, I told him that, unlike some others, I had absolutely no objection to five-in-a-bar. He responded that we knew nothing of five-in-a-bar rhythm, only bars of two and then three beats. He cited as proof the excerpt from *La dame blanche* which you mentioned in today's *Gazette*.² He was certain, he said, that the rhythm of five-in-a-bar was natural to man; for in a great part of the Basque region there is a national dance, named the Zorcico, which has five beats. I saw clearly, by his knowledgeable discourse, that he perfectly distinguished what he called 'five-time' from 2 + 3 time. He learnt

¹ This could be Santiago de Masarnau, the dedicatee of the *Tre Scherzi* op. 16, published by Richault in 1837.

² I.e. no. 43 of the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, of 24 October 1852.

this dance and its music carefully, as was his way. He even learnt to play the special flute which led it, which has only three holes and is held in one hand (the other beating out time strongly on a tambourine), which however has a range of two octaves. The same airs that are in 5 in such localities often take on a new rhythm, or rather lengthen one of their beats, and become 6/8 in the civilised Spanish centres [*les centres civilisés Espagnols*].³ In any case here is one of the Zorcicos which my friend copied for me; and every time I have played it to a resident of, or a traveller from, the Basque country, he has perfectly recognised it: [extract missing].

Chatting on another occasion with a Basque about the orthography of the word zorcico, which some write Zortcico, Zorzico, & c., I asked him to write down a few zorcicos for me; but as he wasn't much of a musician, I couldn't make anything out of what he gave or sang to me. However he told me of a story in his family that Haydn, having heard of such airs, asked them for some: they sent them to him, but he couldn't understand them at all: which I can well understand if they were anything like what this fellow communicated to me.

Gradually my recall of the accentuation my Spanish friend gave to these airs has somewhat faded; however a few years ago I published with Brandus, under the title '*Second collection of impromptus*', 3 airs in 5 time and one in 7. Not remembering where the strong beat fell in the counter-melody, I placed the accent differently in each of the 3 5-time airs. As for the one in 7-time, looking at it later I realise that it is only a theme in 6/8 with the last beat, so to say, making something of a prolonged repose. Here are the themes of the 3 others, in 5-time:



Then follows a trio accented as the return of the 1st theme, & c. The second is accented only in the second bar:



Lastly the 3rd is accented as follows.

³ Today the spelling 'zortziko' is often used. It is a popular Basque song or dance, in fast tempo, five in a bar, the second and fourth beats often accented. There is a 6/8 version. It is generally played on the *txistu*, a three-holed flute (two at the front, one at the back) which is held in the left hand, the right hand beating a *tamboil*, a cylindrical double-headed drum suspended from the left arm.



I have played no. 1 from time to time, and like my friend Hiller, I have met people whom it seemed to please, and others for whom it was extremely disagreeable. In your article of this morning, dear and illustrious master, there are references to examples which I had not seen at all and which would render doubly superfluous all that I allow myself to write to you....⁴ I read the *Gazette* at the café Vachette⁵, so didn't see the examples which perhaps accompanied this last article, separated from the main body of the paper. As I haven't gone home, I got this paper, for the heading of which I apologise, at Erard's; (I've been working there for a while, in a studio which they furnish with a pédalier piano [*piano à Clavier de Pédales*] for those who wish to use it for the grand and marvellous organ compositions of Bach).⁶ Please believe that I had no pretence of furnishing you with a new idea; but perhaps only the shade of a nuance. Were that to be the case, I should be proud to have supplied a drop of water to the immensity of your ocean. Permit me in any case to recall to your memory your most humble, deeply-devoted and most grateful servant -

[signed] C: V: Alkan aîné

11 rue de la Bruyère
Paris, Thursday evening
24 October 1852.

Concerts

2007 AGM and Concert, 29 March 2007

The Society's Annual General Meeting was this year a very special occasion. At the kind invitation of Sir Bryan Thwaites, the meeting was held in his set (as apartments are named there) in The Albany, the magnificent building in Piccadilly originally designed by William Chambers, and was followed by a recital by Nicholas King on the remarkable organ constructed for the set by Robin Jennings. We are enormously grateful to Sir Bryan for extending his hospitality to the Society for this, the eighth of his Albany Organ Soirées.

Due to the size of the premises, the number of attendees was limited; all the same, the result was a significantly larger AGM attendance than has been the case in the recent past! In the circumstances, as may be imagined, the formal part of the proceedings was swiftly effected (although, needless to say, in an appropriate and thorough manner).

We quote the programme note for a description of the Albany Organ, which has Great and Swell manuals and pedals. It 'was conceived in 2004 with three imperatives. First, unlike many small chamber organs, it was not to be primarily a practice instrument but one capable of performing reasonably effectively much of the standard repertoire. Second, it had to be voiced at a level appropriate to its domestic situation at to good neighbourliness. And third, its

⁴ At the end of the issue of the *Gazette* there were two piano pieces written by Fétis.

⁵ I find no trace of a café Vachette save for no. 27 Boulevard Saint-Michel, the rendezvous of the poets such as Jean Moréas, Verlaine, Huysmans, Hérédia and Coppée. But this café was not founded until 1865.

⁶ 'A while' [*quelques temps*]; but exactly how long was Alkan established at Erard?

case work and general appearance had to be in keeping with the architecture and décor of the room in which it was to go.

‘An alcove, some 15 feet wide but only two feet deep, was the obvious place for it. Since this shape precluded mechanical action, the consequential electric action enables a specification based on the extension principle.

‘Thus from 6 ranks of pipes are derived 27 discrete stops, Each rank has been assigned a colour which is then use don the associated stop-knobs so that a player can easily choose combinations of stops to overcome some of the potential disadvantages of extensions. There is some interchanging between the three departments but each stop operates individually over the full range of manual or pedal without any borrowing’.

The organ was placed in a wider context by the organ consultant Ian Bell in a brief talk before the first half of the recital, and its construction and nature were discussed by Sir Bryan before the second half. But the test of the instrument was the programme of Bach, Liszt and Alkan played with aplomb by the Society’s Secretary.

For this auditor, the opportunity of hearing a remarkable instrument in such an environment, and thereby experiencing new aural perspectives, was itself a source of both pleasure and fascination. These were enhanced by Mr. King’s distinguished performances.

In the first half, devoted to Alkan, Mr. King selected items from the *Prières* op 64 (no. 13), the *Grands Préludes* op. 66 (nos. 9 and 11) and the op. 72 *Pièces dans le style religieux* (nos. 7, 9, 10 and 11). Despite the religious atmosphere which their titles seem to indicate, Alkan’s organ collections in fact range across a wide variety of emotions and effects, which these renditions vividly conveyed. The *Prière* in G which ends op. 64 is evidently the appeal of a bluff soldier, with a triumphal cadence at its climax. The op. 66 *Préludes*, dedicated to César Franck, were originally written for pédalier piano. No. 9, in D flat, bears the tempo marking in German , *Langsam*, and its insistent compound triple pulse – especially hypnotic given the proxemics of our venue – emphasize the piece’s haunting beauty. The 11th piece, in F sharp major, begins with a mysterious recitative on the pedals which is transformed to splendid light at its conclusion.

The op. 72 set of 1867 is perhaps more modest in scale than the other organ albums – Ronald Smith suggests, on the basis of its character and its two-stave presentation, that it may have been originally intended for harmonium. But this does not mean that the set fails to display the composer’s originality. If no. 7 and the extensive no 9 are tinged by pastoral, no.10 is a savage dance, far more pagan than *religieuse*; whilst no 11, with its bleak textures, hesitant progress and mysterious chorale in 5 time, repeatedly held up by the policeman’s hand of a bald octave and petering away into silence, is about as enigmatic as one can get.

Your editor was alas unable to stay for the second part of the recital, but can place you in the unimpeachable hands of the Society’s Chairman for the following report:

‘Liszt’s *Prelude and Fugue on the name B-A-C-H* is a work for which this reviewer had hitherto little sympathy, finding it more bombastic than musical. In the event however he underwent a Damascene conversion; the combination of player, instrument and registrations, and ambience revealing a structure and musical logic which he had not previously heard. Nicholas King then explained that for a long time he had held the view that a number of Alkan’s shorter preludes might have been intended as introductions to works by other composers in the same keys, and he therefore played Alkan’s *Grand Prélude* in F (op. 66 no 1) to be followed after a brief moment by Bach’s *Toccata* in F (BWV 540). (He added that he would not be playing the Fugue in F, a less interesting piece). The experiment worked well;

whatever one's expectations, the mid-19th century French work and the early 18th-century German work went well together.

'As an encore, both astonishing and generous, our Secretary regaled us with a splendid performance of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor'.

DC/EL

Trinity College Recital, 23 April 2007

An appreciative audience of some forty people enjoyed *Alkan: A Celebration of Piano Music* in the Peacock Room at Trinity College of Music on 23rd April, following a delayed start because a previous booking in the room had over-run. Sponsored by the Society, the concert was arranged by our President, Yonty Solomon, and featured seventeen pupils from the College, taught by several Professors from the Keyboard Department.

Most of the audience comprised teachers and friends of the performers; it was especially warming that so many TCM teachers were present to support their pupils, for this is not always so at other conservatoires. Some may well have been there as much out of curiosity as anything else, for Alkan is (regrettably) still something of a rarity amongst those conservatoire staff who prefer to keep to well-established standard repertoire, and we can only applaud the fact that this event will have increased awareness of Alkan at all levels. The generous welcome and introduction given by Douglas Finch, Head of Performance, amply demonstrated the commitment of TCM to the occasion.

It was good, too, to see several members of the Society in the audience, including some who had travelled a considerable distance. Those who were not there missed a treat.

The reviewer of student concerts will often need to make allowances for the relative inexperience of the performers, especially in such circumstances. On this occasion, few such allowances were necessary. The more advanced of the first study students handled their challenges with competence and confidence, even aplomb; those who were clearly second study students had nonetheless chosen appropriately, and in almost all cases performed creditably. If one were to offer a general criticism, it might be that some of the performances were more concerned with the notes than the music; but that is a common reservation in all but the most high-flying student performances, and probably inevitable at an event such as this, especially when one is likely previously to have heard many of the pieces only from the most experienced of professionals.

The most familiar items in the programme were three of the major key studies from op. 35 and five of the minor key studies from op. 39. From op. 35, Christopher Stokes gave an instinctive and authoritative reading of *Presto* and *Allegro Barbaro*, showing a thoughtful approach, despite a memory slip (which he covered well) towards the end, and Amit Yahav was always in control of the deeper musical features of *Chant d'amour*, *chant de mort*.

From op. 39, Christina McMaster showed a well-considered understanding of *Comme le vent*, intellectually rigorous, though her tempi sometimes varied under challenges of technique, and Leo Nicholson delivered a capable, if under-stated, reading of *Étude en Rythme Molossique*. Maria Marchant demonstrated assured fingerwork and passion in *Symphonie: Finale*, in which your reviewer's only reservation was that the overt nature of the performance might have been better-suited if playing the movement as part of the complete *Symphonie*, rather than on a stand-alone basis.

Tom Bielinski was less comfortable in *Scherzo diabolico*, finding some difficulties of inconsistent rhythm, misreadings (or nerves) and tangled fingerwork, and Alex Bryson had

memory lapses in *Le Festin d'Esope*, coupled with left-hand inaccuracies and a lack of musical conviction. Both of these performances will assuredly improve with time.

In many respects, the star attraction was a rare performance of the *Fantaisie à quatre mains sur Don Juan*, given by Panayotis Archontides and Natalie Tsaldarkis. The music had been obtained for the occasion from François Luguenot of our sister-organisation the Société Alkan, to whom our thanks are due, and proved to be a remarkable performance, even if the players seemed to be somewhat unmatched in authority.

From less demanding repertoire, especial mention should be given to Matthew McCombie for a well-controlled reading of *Capriccio alla soldatesca*, Annie Ball for a thoughtful approach to four of the *Esquisses* op. 63, and Catherine Herriott for a sensitive and evocative *La Chanson de la Folle* from 25 *Préludes*. Babatunde Sosan (*Une nuit d'hiver* from op.74) and Philip Modinos (*Deuxième Nocturne* from op.57) performed creditably, and Joao Lima Duque (one of the few to use the music) was comfortable, if factual, in *Barcarolle* op. 65 no. 6. Sotiris Louizos was distinctly less at ease with *Duetto* op. 70 no. 1, despite using the music, whilst Tommy Harrington's *Romanza*, transcribed by Alkan from Mozart's *Piano Concerto in D minor* K.466, was probably the least convincing, with several errors, erratic changes of tempo and other evidence of insufficient preparation.

Trinity College of Music had produced an attractive printed programme, which will surely find its way into many collections; it was a pity that it could have been proof-read more thoroughly, and presented with more consistency of style in such matters as titles of pieces and the collections from which they were drawn.

All in all, this was an evening to remember. Our special thanks are due to all who were involved in presenting it, and to Yonty Solomon for master-minding the occasion. We hope that it will not be too long before there is another such event, and that the other conservatoires may feel encouraged to take a leaf out of Trinity's book.

Nicholas King

Jonathan Powell at St. John's, Smith Square, 22 June 2007

Jonathan Powell is a bold pianist who makes demands on his own stamina as well as his audiences, and it was good to see a respectable turn-out for a programme in which Alkan, Albéniz and Scriabin provided the best-known music. He began with a forceful and convincing performance of Charles Ives's *The Celestial Railroad*, which makes an excellent introduction to the wild style of Ives to listeners who might find the length of the *Concord Sonata* daunting. The useful narrative provided in the programme helped one to follow the piece, which had the usual collage of discords and well-known tunes such as *Columbia*, *Gem of the Ocean*, familiar from the 2nd and 4th Symphonies, as well as the *Popeye* cartoons.

He played two Sonatas by Alastair Hinton, the keeper of the Sorabji Archive and a follower of the composer-pianists such as Busoni, Godowsky and Medtner. His style is generally tonal and easy to grasp on a first hearing. For me, the 8th Sonata, which came after the interval, was more approachable than the 4th, having more recognisable themes and gestures. He played both works extremely well, with ample technique for their obviously demanding virtuoso passages.

John White, whose 70th year was celebrated in a memorable day of performances last summer, is an eclectic (as well as eccentric) composer who numbers Alkan among his many influences. His 138th (!) sonata played here was a delightful piece which conveyed very well the atmosphere of the Molière comedy which inspired it (*Les fourberies de Scapin*). I particularly liked the quick figures on the white notes which put older music into a new

context. Would it be too much to compare Alkan's *Allegro Barbaro* here, which uses the same effect of an all-white piece in a key which usually uses one flat?

The several "Alkanians" in the audience had of course come to hear a rare live performance of the *Symphonie* for piano solo, and they were not disappointed. The first movement had the right "orchestral" approach, with a steady tempo and a good range of dynamics. The Funeral March was also very convincing, with mournful outer sections contrasting well with the heart-felt central major-key passage. It was a pity that some small memory-lapses smoothed out the extraordinary harmony at a couple of points. The Scherzo lacked a little of the devilish atmosphere that one heard on the early Lewenthal recording, but in a live context one can forgive a certain caution. My only reservation – though other listeners disagreed – was with the finale. Perhaps it was unwise to give away the metronome mark in the programme and then play it so much more slowly. Then again, there is no point in randomly splashing away and hoping for the best. The last few pages did build up in impressive style and received a well-deserved enthusiastic round of applause.

Scriabin's 8th Sonata is one of his later compositions in which the experimental harmony and neurotic rhythms have come to the fore. Another technically demanding work, it was given an excellent performance which held the attention throughout its episodic one-movement span. Jonathan Powell has an obvious flair for his music and this came through clearly.

Albéniz's *Azulejos* was an unknown piece to me, and I am a great fan of *Ibéria* and *Navarra* as a concert-goer, as well as the *Suite Espagnole* as a pianist of modest abilities. It was his final composition, completed by Granados, and returned to a less extravagant and virtuosic style than *Ibéria*. It was good to hear it, and in a highly expressive and restrained performance which made a good interlude between the extremes of piano technique elsewhere in the programme.

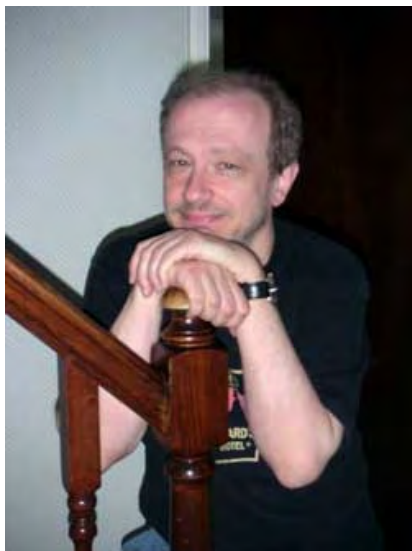
Finally we heard the world premiere of Sorabji's transcription of the final scene from Richard Strauss's *Salome*. Anyone who knows Sorabji's version of Chopin's "Minute" Waltz would have known what to expect: namely, far too many notes with the original piece just about discernable. But this was a piece in which the extravagant and exotic textures were justified, and Jonathan Powell managed to make sense of it in a remarkable way. I can think of no-one else who can make such a chaotic forest of notes seem quite lucid, and it will send me back to the original opera with renewed interest.

A short jazzy encore by Radamés Gnáttali maintained the "rarity" count of the programme, taking us beyond 10 o'clock, but this had been an excellent recital, which for all the obscurity of its content had a great deal of appeal and was greatly appreciated by all. I shall certainly look forward to hearing the Ives, Scriabin, Albeniz – yes, and even the Strauss/Sorabji – when they are included in his programme for the Husum festival of Rarities this August.

Peter Grove

Marc-André Hamelin at the Cheltenham Festival: 8 July 2007

Let me place the superlatives up front – where they most deservedly belong. All those who had the fortune to attend Hamelin's performances at Cheltenham on 8th July were rewarded by a magnificent musical experience. In the same evening we heard wonderful renditions of three of the mightiest peaks of the piano repertoire – Charles Ives's *Concord Sonata*, Schumann's op. 17 *Phantasie* and Alkan's op. 39 *Concerto*. Each performance was a true recreation of the work, in which the performer communicated to his audience with commitment, passion and a faithful spirit three very different musical worlds.



The performances took place in Cheltenham's Pump Room as two separate concerts, the Ives starting at 6.00 to allow a supper-break before the 19th-century pieces. It was heartening to see an audience almost as full for the *Concord* as that for its predecessors. Even today Ives's music makes few concessions to its listeners; one is challenged to take Ives's series of Transcendentalists – Emerson, Hawthorne, the Allcotts and Thoreau – at exactly their own (and the composer's) evaluation; challenging, affirmative, quirky, strong of an inner morality, great even in their inconsistencies. When I listen to Ives I often think of Walt Whitman's fearless statement – 'Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself / (I am large – I contain multitudes).' The *Concord Sonata* contains multitudes, and Hamelin sculpted them for us in his passionate rendition. This is music the pianist

has grown up with since his early teens; every passage showed that the technical problems of playing it have become subsumed in a deep understanding of, and commitment to, its narrative power and celebration of the spirit of New England. The rollicking of the Hawthorne movement, with its whirlwind changes of perspective, crackled like fire – but in the final magical moments, as Thoreau's flute dies away across the waters of the Concord, we were brought irresistibly to Ives's destination.

In the Schumann I found Hamelin gave one of the most convincing performances I have heard from him of a piece from the core romantic repertoire. As with the Ives, the virtuoso elements of the piece were subsumed within a considered and sensitive poetic, 'speaking', interpretation. The slow waltz with which the *Phantasie* ebbs away has rarely sounded to me so haunting, so much on the edge between fulfilment and heart-break.

All the qualities of technique and sensitivity revealed by Hamelin in the previous two works were brought to Alkan's *Concerto*. Peter Grove's review of the recent recording (see below) highlights many of Hamelin's technical strengths. Yet again I was struck by the way in which these strengths were used to serve, and to communicate, a conviction of this amazing music's structure and message. This piece is suffused throughout with echoes and hints at the music of Alkan's contemporaries, Schumann, Liszt, Chopin and Mendelssohn, as if he were surveying these alongside himself as constellations in a musical firmament. Hamelin conveyed these 'parallel voices' without for a moment compromising the integrity of the composer's most original voice and vision. The audience rose as one in acclamation of this breath-taking and compelling interpretation.

The Alkan Society, which was one of the two sponsors of this event (the other being AS member John Eaden) can I think be justly proud of its part in enabling this historic event, but the laurels were earned a hundred-fold by Hamelin and his artistry.

DC

Trout Fishing and After.....

Ken Iisaka has contacted us to let us know his introduction of the first movement of the Alkan *Concerto* to some rather unsuspecting audiences.

The first occasion took Ken himself by surprise. Having spent the day fishing he turned up for a concert at Santa Rosa, California, where the listed performer was injured shortly before curtain-up and had no way of informing the concert-manager; but the latter, recognising Ken

in the audience, invited him to fill in. Fortunately, Ken just happened to have been practising the first movement of the Concerto for the forthcoming Van Cliburn Competition for Outstanding Amateurs, where he was one of the six finalists (for his day job, he's an investment analyst). Despite his 'hands still smelling like trout' his performance had the audience on its feet, according to the local papers.

For his performance at the competition, (at Fort Worth, Texas), we can do no better than to cite the competition blog (<http://www.cliburn.org/blog/?p=132>), about which – in the interests of trans-Atlantic amity - we will refrain from comment:

Ken's off and running now, having cruised through the first 30 bruising pages or so. In some of the lyrical spots, this sounds like stream of consciousness Chopin. And then, suddenly — *wham!* — it blasts off again sounding like one of those 88-fisted robots breaking in a piano action at the Yamaha factory. Some of the textures are Saint-Saens like. No doubt I will never hear this piece played better, in part since I can't imagine ever hearing it played again.

Ken's command of the piece is genuine, and he's making as much music as one can. It's a considerable feat to play it from memory. But what a fascinating and rare glimpse into the bizarro world of one of the most enigmatic pianist-composers of all time. Sort of a precursor to Sorabji. Or Nancarrow.

I predict the tuner will have a look at the piano after this.

We're up to page 58 now. There's about 10 pages of machine-gun repeated notes coming now. What a strange piece. I'm struck by Alkan's inability (maybe indifference would be a better word) to find a winning melody, or develop a larger form.

Ken is hurtling towards the finale now. It's going to be a biggie... Mercy!!!

All kinds of bravos and a great throng of standing fans, too. It's safe to say that the prize for Loudest Performance Ever of the Most Unusual Romantic Work is all buttoned up.

And yes indeed, here comes the tuner for a spot check.

By the way, the blog also includes an amusing photograph 'reconstructing' the old legend of Alkan's demise, with about as much historical accuracy as it deserves.

Ken tells us he is now working up the complete concerto and we look forward to news of his future performances. We wish him every success, and thank him for letting us know about his adventures with Alkan.

DC

Tomasz Kamieniak

Tomazs Kamieniak is a Polish pianist and composer, a prize-winner at the 2003 Liszt International Piano Competition in Weimar. We learn that he was chosen to give the opening recital on August 16th at Wroclaw of the 14th International Master Course for Pianists, when he included in his programme Alkan's *Le festin d'Esope*, together with music by Liszt and Weiniawski. Earlier this year, in a series of recitals for Polish Liszt society in Oborniki slaskie, Wroclaw and Brzeg, he also included *Le festin* with two barcarolles of Alkan (op. 38/6 and 65/6), alongside music by Liszt and his own *Suite*, op. 37. He has also given performances in Poland of the *Concerto* from Alkan's op. 39, and is, we understand, now working on the *Symphonie*. We hope to hear Mr. Kamieniak performing Alkan in the 'Levočske BabieLeto' festival in Levoča, Slovakia in October 2008 (see end of Bulletin).

DC

Book Review

Alkan newly surveyed

Charles Valentin Alkan: His Life and His Music, by William Alexander Eddie. Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot. £55.00 (25% discount for Alkan Society members – see accompanying flyer).

Alkanistes have had until now only two essential works of reference: Ronald Smith's pioneering two part essay (1976-1987) and the essay compilation edited by Brigitte François-Sappey (1991). We can perhaps add to these Schilling's virtuous, but slightly arid, essay on Alkan's music as part of the virtuoso tradition (1986). It is over 15 years therefore since there has been a major overview of a musician who, in the intervening period, has at last entered the recognition he has deserved, due in part to those earlier works but also to a spate of recordings and the dedication of a number of outstanding artistes in including his work in their repertoires and performing it world-wide.

Dr. Eddie's work is therefore timely. Although he has little new to say on the composer's life, his comprehensive review of the works, and the context in which he places them, plus his chapters on reception and performance practice, makes his work a most valuable contribution. Not least important, he is sufficiently confident of Alkan's genius not to shirk his comments when he finds the master nodding.

In the period since François-Sappey's work, much new information on the composer has been published in the present Bulletin and in that of the Société Alkan, and it is gratifying to see these credited in Dr. Eddie's pages. What is disappointing is that little on Alkan has appeared in 'mainstream' musical academic publications and journals. Eddie's bibliography shows there is just a handful of these (with the exception of reviews of recordings); the *Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (1998) spares Alkan just two mentions in passing. Eddie however elucidates a number of perspectives which it is to be hoped will stimulate the necessary academic debate.

His initial chapter, on the 'historical and social background' covers the composer's life but relies principally on already published work and does not really advance our knowledge of Alkan the man much beyond Smith's 'enigma'. The materials to give us more sense of the man exist, in my belief, but are scattered and still require detailed research, work and transcription. Stephanie McCallum, in her assessment published in ASB 75, has also indicated new approaches. On Alkan's personality, these 25 pages do not break new ground. But Eddie is surely absolutely right to remind us in his opening paragraphs of the ways in which French taste moved in the early nineteenth century 'away from baroque and classical [to a] more melodious mode of musical expression epitomised by the romance, where a vocal-type melody was gently accompanied by arpeggio-like figure'. This succinctly epitomises the musical landscape in which Alkan, the only French-born virtuoso of the period still remembered to day, but with a strong leaning towards the German 'classical' tradition, sought to establish his domain.

Most of the rest of Dr. Eddie's book (pp. 27-172) is taken up with a detailed examination of Alkan's compositions. This invites a direct comparison with Smith's *Alkan: The Music*. It would perhaps be invidious to try to give marks to either author. Smith's approach is broadly from a performer's perspective (which of course is not to deny his many profound musicological insights): Eddie's is perhaps overall somewhat more academic. But he also gives some broader context in terms of music history as regards types of instrument, pointing out how the composer was working to the particular strengths of his instrument. He also offers some comparisons with works of contemporary, 'B-list', composers such as Kalkbrenner,

Meyer, etc. In fact he does not perhaps go quite far as he might in this respect; the works of some now-neglected composers of the immediately preceding generation, such as Moscheles and Reicha, also have something to tell us about Alkan's harmony and techniques; but it is surely a step in the right direction of broadening Alkan studies.

One chapter takes us from his earliest publications to the *Six morceaux caractéristiques* op. 8 (1838), later to become part of *Les mois* op. 74. Other chapters cover the *Études*, the *Sonate* and *Sonatina*, the miniatures which Eddie classes as '*morceaux caractéristiques*' (except for the *Esquisses* which have a chapter of their own), the arrangements, the music of organ and pédalier, and the chamber music, with one brief chapter for the remainder.

Eddie's comments on the structure and harmony of the music are accurate and often lively if not always probing. His analyses of the major pieces, for example the *Symphonie*, extend to surveys of form, motivic links, large scale tonal and harmonic landscapes, and the harmonic 'micro-ecologies' of some passages. He does not, for example, seek the 'hidden references' to other piano works by Chopin, Schumann, etc, which Kenneth Hamilton believes underlie the *Concerto*. In other words, Eddie is a highly-informed guide, rather than an ideologue, which at the present stage of Alkan studies is by no means undesirable, even if a romantic like myself is a sucker for flights of fancy. In some cases I would have welcomed a more intensive look at some of the Alkanian by-ways. The *Scherzo focoso* for example is mentioned more or less in passing in the chapter on the *Grande sonate* and the *Sonatina*; its egregious structure and technique make it perhaps deserving of a more extended discussion. Eddie's pages on Alkan's transcriptions are welcome. These works are important not only because of the light they shed on Alkan's technique, but also for what they tell us about his mind-set.

Of great value are the chapters on, respectively, reception and performance practice. The former contains a very thorough survey of the reports of Alkan's contemporaries and of the 'dead years' before the revival led by Lewenthal and Smith, with some extracts from more recent commentators. The latter is preceded by a necessary overview of French piano technology allowing Eddie to explain why, for example, the Erard pianos of the period were particularly suitable for Alkanesque passage-work. (Incidentally Eddie mentions Alkan's own Erard pédalier, now owned by the Conservatoire, but does not mention that, disgracefully, it is apparently presently in a basement in pieces and desperately in need of restoration – yet another objective for the Alkan bicentenary?). A section on interpretation of Alkan's playing instructions is perhaps open to controversy, but it is always risky to appear doctrinaire on such subjective issues. The present writer would certainly not agree, for example, that Alkan's pieces with 'Jewish based themes [...] require much intensity and emotion from the performer'; the organ prelude op. 66/7 cited here by Eddie is in fact a deliberate parody of contemporary synagogue practice; but perhaps here, as elsewhere, Eddie has been misled by conjectures of other writers about Jewishness in Alkan's music.

Everyone has their own favourite (and less favourite) Alkan pieces, and Eddie to his credit does not seek to disguise his own. I was delighted that he is one of the few who today champion *L'incendie au village voisin* (op. 35 no. 7) which has always been a favourite of mine, although looked down on by many. (Ronald Smith was distinctly luke-warm towards it.) He also warmly recognises the superior quality of the Cello Sonata op. 47. But he does not hesitate to censure the composer when, as from time to time (let us confess), he runs on empty. Eddie's book therefore, whilst generally academic by nature, is by no means dry or unopinionated. It effectively summarizes and sets out the ground on which a new wave of Alkan research must build, and will be an important resource for contemporary and future Alkan scholars.

Finally a grouse about proof-reading: we are accustomed these days, alas, to missed accents or misspellings of proper names, but they were in this book a bit more prominent than I would have wished. Alkan himself was of course both proficient and vague when it came to opus numbers, but when one reference (op. 8) is used in the text, it is confusing to have another (op. 74) used for the musical examples. Even worse, in the musical examples illustrating *Le festin d'Esope*, the texts for the Alkan citation and a putative original of its theme are transposed. Should the book go to a deserved reprinting, I hope that these and other small errors can be corrected.

Alkan Society members have kindly been offered by the publishers a 25% discount on the book's listed price; the order form can be found in the flyer going out with this Bulletin.

DC

Recordings

A new recording of the Concerto by Marc-André Hamelin

Marc-André Hamelin has added to his Alkan collection for Hyperion with a new recording of the Concerto for Solo Piano, Op. 39 Nos. 8-10, together with the 3rd collection of *Chants*, Op. 65, on CDA 67569. It is due to be released in September [*it is now available – Ed.*]– I was able to buy an advance copy at his recital in Cheltenham and have enjoyed assessing it alongside some of the other recordings of the Concerto.

Members will recall that he recorded the Concerto for Music and Arts back in 1992, and if you have this already, is the new version worth having? His interpretation has not changed substantially over the years: the timings of the outer movements are almost the same, while the slow movement is a little shorter by about half a minute, though still a little below Alkan's metronome mark. The sound of the new recording is a great improvement: the Music and Arts disc, recorded on a Yamaha piano in Montreal, is rather dry by comparison. The earlier recording also contained only the one work, and Hyperion has included a most welcome set of *Chants* to bring the total time to about 68 minutes.

One hardly needs to say that Hamelin displays his usual astonishing technique in the Concerto, and it is tempting to enjoy his performance as a high-wire act for its own sake. But his sensitivity to lyrical passages is also to be savoured. The first movement is very close to Alkan's metronome mark and he never needs to slow down for tricky passages. He does seem to allow more time for the melodic episodes, while still giving a good grasp of the architecture of this vast movement. Overall he knocks about a minute off Ronald Smith's timing, which is not that significant in a half-hour piece. I do still prefer Ronald Smith's steadier and less varying tempo, but since this is a "concerto" rather than a "symphony", one can support both approaches. As to textual accuracy, I noticed two small misreadings: the first at 18:30, a literally tiny B natural for B sharp in a group of grace-notes (page 50, end of line 3), and the second at 26:10, an F natural instead of F flat, giving a diminished 7th instead of (I think) a "German" 6th (page 67, beginning of line 3). One other oddity has carried over from the earlier recording: in the coda, when the repeated notes become a rumbling dominant pedal, why does he play the final occurrence of what Ronald Smith called the "happy and glorious" rhythm (26:27, page 68) almost as double-dotted? It does seem to lose its monumental feel as a result. I have misgivings about the use of the sustaining pedal in the opening "solo" scale passage (3:11 and its reprise at 18:16), but in general the pedalling is discreet and keeps things "honest". There is no need for any disguise of difficult passages here.

The middle movement is given a really fine performance, with long phrases and a well-judged climax. Even in the thickest textures, the playing and recording keeps everything clear. He is much closer to Ronald Smith's timing here: both are a notch below Alkan's marking of crotchet = 60, but we need not be too literal about it. The movement is marked *Adagio*, after all.

When we come to the finale, *Allegretto alla barbaresca*, we see some of the most hair-raising difficulties that even Alkan wrote. Performances and recordings of this movement are rare enough; to sail through it the way Hamelin does is miraculous. He achieves Alkan's metronome mark and even exceeds it at times, knocking 10% off Ronald Smith's timing. But I have some reservations. Quite often he needs a small hiatus between passages to change register, when a slower speed would maintain the momentum. He starts the coda with the dactylic (tum-ti-ti) bass ostinato too quickly at 6:41 (page 113), so that when we turn the page and see Alkan's sadistic instruction "Un tantino poco più mosso", it has to be at the same speed. In the nit-picking department, at 7:13 he has transposed one little left-hand figure (the first of two entirely logical appearances of a triple sharp!) up two octaves to make it consistent with the one two bars earlier (bottom of page 114). I accept that, because it uses the extra high notes available on a modern piano, but now wonder why he did not take advantage of the high B flat at 0:54 (as Ronald Smith did), when the "solo" theme shifts from D to B flat major (page 94, line 2). I envy his large hands which can stretch the fiendish "Scotch snaps" in that section (0:41), and the strength which – as we saw at the live performance – enable him to avoid the awkward crossed hands at 2:34. And the final glissando, even if it is not specified in the score, is a superb gesture if the skin is thick enough to take it!

I have been a little critical only because Hamelin sets such high standards. In conclusion, my benchmark for the Concerto will always be Ronald Smith's recording of 1977, made in the Wigmore Hall for EMI and still sounding good – available with the rest of Op. 39 on APR 7031. Remember too that in the days of LPs, the detailed editing of the digital age was not available, and Ronald Smith's accuracy is admirable. His preference for long "takes" also shows in the way the "architecture" of these long pieces is conveyed so well. But this new recording is one to take very seriously too, and to be recommended, especially with the bonus of the book of *Chants*.

As for the *Chants*, these are wonderful pieces which receive excellent performances. They follow the key-sequence and style of the first book of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words. The opening *Vivace* has some beautiful touches, with some written-out "rubato" making much use of rests to delay the melody notes. Its use of key-changes is typical of Alkan, as is the doubling of the melody in the bass. Hamelin is sensitive to the darker side in the coda. *Esprits follets* is a thoroughly Mendelssohnian piece which is lightning-fast and delicate, and always clear. *Canon* is slightly more academic in intention, but another unfamiliar piece well worth getting to know – and quite playable by pianists of more modest abilities, too. *Tempo giusto* is more of a virtuoso piece, notable for its irregularly spaced accents and outbursts recalling larger pieces like the first movement of the *Grande Sonate*, but with lyrical episodes giving a good balance. *Horace et Lydie*, as suggested by our founder Dr. John White, is probably an interpretation of an Ode by Horace in which one speaker replies to another in the same number of verses, but tries to out-do him. Alkan certainly provides the ammunition for that. Finally comes the well-known *Barcarolle* which has long been a favourite of Mr Hamelin and many others. He plays it with a great deal of rhythmical freedom and I think I prefer a steadier tempo, but the sensitive and restrained expression is very moving. He follows Lewenthal's suggestion of omitting the repeat of the first section, the only repeat omitted in the entire set. It was obviously not because of limits on the time, so it is a deliberate choice. Whether you agree is a matter of taste.

In conclusion, this is a most welcome recording, particularly valuable for the Chants, and with enough to admire in the Concerto to make it a worthy rival to all other recorded performances, often outdoing them in sheer virtuosity and *joie de vivre*. Jeremy Nicholas's booklet notes are admirable, with a good historical introduction as well as details of the works. He makes due acknowledgement to his sources, especially Ronald Smith's book. He does re-tell the story of Alkan's death by bookcase, but I suppose it really is just too good a tale to forget, whatever new research may have told us. He gives a useful guide, with timings, to the first movement of the Concerto for listeners who do not have the score, which was expensive enough for a student when I bought it for 75 shillings (£3.75) in 1968. I am not sure what Alkan would have thought of the grotesque cover picture – a lurid “Kiss of the Vampire” by Boleslas Biegas – but it certainly provides a talking-point. Altogether this is another fine release from Hyperion, and a worthy addition to Marc-André Hamelin's discography.

Peter Grove

This recording was chosen as ‘Disc of the Month’ in the September *BBC Music Magazine*. The review by Christopher Dingle (a lecturer at the Birmingham Conservatoire) is headed - ‘With his new recording of the epic Concerto for solo piano by the extraordinary Alkan, Mark-Andre Hamelin has struck gold’. (Thanks to Brian Doyle for spotting this). The recording also popped up unexpectedly on Radio 3 following a request from new AS member Dave Hutchings –

I phoned in to request some Alkan the other day on Rob Cowan's Breakfast show on Radio 3. Though I asked for something played by Ronald Smith, he chose the three Chants on the new recording by Marc Andre Hamelin [...] I found the second of these three pieces bore a certain resemblance to the Scherzo from the Sonatine. I thought the third was exquisitely beautiful.

Readers are invited to let the Bulletin know of any further sightings of this, or any other music of Alkan, in the press or on the radio. You can buy the new recording simply from the front page of our website at www.alkansociety.org – Ed.

Alkan recordings from Sweden

Until now the main Swedish connection to Alkan was the correspondence with Fétis held in the Museum of Music (see Bulletins 74, 75, the present issue, etc.). But now we have two CDs featuring the music of the composer played by Swedish pianists and issued by Swedish Radio. On SRCD 2021 Johann Ullén plays *Le festin d'Esopé* as part of a programme including Liszt, Chabrier and Ravel; whilst SRCD2028 offers a live performance of the *Concerto op. 39, 8-10*, coupled with a studio recording of the *Sonatine op. 61*, played by Stefan Lindgren.

Ullén was born in 1972 and was appointed Artist in Residence at Swedish Radio in 2000-2002, having studied in Sweden and Finland. His recital on this disc shows him to have formidable technical gifts, which serve him best in *Le festin*. In this performance, a trifle slower than many (10' 8" against, say, Hamelin's 8' 40"), we can hear with great clarity every note and rhythm in the score; the mechanism is laid bare and we are led throughout by a lucid monologue, *senza licenza quantunque* as instructed by the composer. But as with the other works on this disc, one senses about as much emotion as from a BBC announcer circa 1950. In Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* I am sure that one must feel the descent in the crashing climax of *Ondine* as a helpless, post-orgasmic collapse – but with Ullén one almost senses the ropes and precautions of a professional abseiler. The dispassion suits *Le gibet* in some ways, but Ullén's *Scarbo* is without menace or malice. Of the other pieces, I did not really get the point

of the three *Pièces pittoresques* of Chabrier (as, to tell the truth, I have problems in seeing the point of Chabrier in general); whilst the performance of Liszt's *Réminiscences de Norma*, again unimpeachable for accuracy, left me cold – or am I just extrapolating from knowing the pianist's origins? Overall I felt that he lacks the non-technical, but very vital, quality of panache to render convincingly the Gallic repertoire, which clearly fascinates him. Nice recording quality anyway, with a tangy bass register.

Lindgren is well-established as a pianist in his home country, who has recorded works by Godowsky and Scriabin amongst others, and is also a composer in his own right. His Alkan CD however has a rather dry, boxy recording which does not favour him. Both the *Concerto* and the *Sonatina* are given accurate performances not lacking in élan, but which emphasise urgency at the expense of expression. The *Sonatina* in particular suffers in a rendition which seems starved of the oxygen of wit, an essential element of its concept; where it should sparkle, Lindgren lets it come perilously close to relentless. The *Concerto* comes over better; Lindgren clearly believes in the work and has a convincing sense of its architecture. Moreover he believes in Alkan's metronome settings (at 28' 42" he is just 14 seconds – less than one per cent - broader, in the first movement, than Hamelin's new recording). But as in the *Sonatina* there are 'breathing' problems; he doesn't carry off all the gear-changes to total satisfaction; and there is a tendency to put in 'commas' which hold up the flow. Nonetheless I should have enjoyed being at the actual performance (in Stockholm in November 2000) and the pianist certainly deserves the acclaim of which a portion can be heard after the final chord.

The recordings are available on-line at <http://www.swedishmusicshop.com>.

DC

➤ *The next issue of the Bulletin will carry a review of the complete Op. 39 Etudes recorded by Stephanie McCallum.*

Internet News

International Music Score Library Project

Bulletin readers with access to the internet should investigate the International Music Score Library Project (http://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page). This is a wiki site (i.e., one compiled by the site users, as with the well-known on-line encyclopaedia, Wikipedia). Its ambition is 'to create a virtual library containing all public domain musical scores, as well as scores from composers who are willing to share their music with the world without charge'.

Since its foundation in February 2006 it has now succeeded in making available (at the time of writing) 8,250 scores, covering 4850 works. This includes no less than 65 scores by Alkan, including all the major piano works and many of the more obscure ones. The scores are downloadable in Acrobat PDF format – for those who don't have it the PDF reader programme is available free by download from the internet (via the members' section of the Alkan Society website amongst other locations).

But this of interest not only because of Alkan. Sheet music by many of his contemporaries, including items now very difficult to obtain, is also available – including, for example, Reicha's remarkable *36 fugues op. 36*, and music by Moscheles, Heller, the organist Lefébure-Wély, and very many others. Visitors to the site are sure to find material of interest to them, much of which is unavailable even in many specialist libraries.

Amazon

Members are reminded, in the run-up to Christmas, of the advantages of making all Amazon purchases through the Alkan society website. You get the full advantage of all Amazon discounts, but the society also reaps a reward in the form of a small percentage commission from Amazon. To access, just click on the Amazon logo on the web-site's front page.

YouTube

The number of Alkan sightings on YouTube is proliferating. Perhaps the most alarming is a version of the op. 76 no.3 Etude '*pour les mains réunies*' played as a piano duet 'after four beers' by Isaac Holbrook and friend. This is certainly the first manifestation of punk Alkan – but as it has been viewed (at the time of writing) no less than 67,597 times, it is also probably the biggest publicity that Alkan has ever received. You can find the link on the YouTube listings on the society's website at www.alkansociety.org/ayt.htm.

DC

Letters

Alkan as misfit?

Dear Sir,

Stephanie McCallum's in-depth study of Alkan [Bulletin 75] made fascinating reading, but are we as a result, particularly in view of the grim tone of the 'essential background' warning, in danger of changing our impression of him from what I have always called an 'extraordinary' man, to a clinically investigated misfit who nowadays might be 'sectioned' under the Mental Health Act for his own safety?

Trying him for size in three separate serious mental illnesses and giving the impression that he might have suffered from certain aspects of all three, suggests, respectfully, a degree of over-kill.

After his unexpected early set-backs, and increasing revulsion to the superficiality of the salons (cf. working ballet staff vs. balletomanes!), he chose for himself the life he preferred to lead, using a constant semi-humorous commentary on unspecified health problems to justify his withdrawal from a society in which he could otherwise have played a useful and instructive part.

One has only to spend time in a mental hospital ward full of bona-fide DSM IV victims, or in the company of a psychotic murderer, to understand the real problems they have to face. I have vivid personal experience of the various comparisons I have made, and am not glibly trying to write-off Ms. McCallum's rigorous approach.

Personally I shall continue, into the indefinite future, to play Alkan's fascinating music to the best of my ability, without the faintest qualms as to his state of health!

Yours sincerely,

Barry Elliot.

29.4. 2007

As the person responsible for the 'grim warning', (and as one who was for many years a panel chairman reviewing cases under the Mental Health Act), I would just make a couple of comments on Mr. Elliot's stimulating letter. First, and most importantly, I do not feel that Mr. Elliot's view, and Ms. McCallum's potential explanations, of Alkan's withdrawal are

necessarily incompatible – for what it is worth, I believe that both may have played a part. I don't sense, in Ms. McCallum's article, that she was claiming that these were the only factors to be considered, nor was she inviting us to regard Alkan as an outsider or an outcast – and certainly not that we should have qualms about his mental state in experiencing his music. Rather, that we might consider these elements as possible contributions to explanations of Alkan's creative forces and biography, much as we allow considerations of Schumann's illness or Tchaikovsky's sexuality, the natures of both of which continue to be debated without I think impugning either's musical achievement. The wider debate – on the nature of the relationship, if any, of artists' biographies to their creativity – is beyond the scope of these pages.

There is also an issue of degree. I am sure, from Mr. Elliot's letter, that, like me, he will also have come across many who suffer from mental health problems that fall far short of the level of psychosis of the cases he outlines. Such cases (as Alkan's might have been) are of course highly unlikely to be 'sectioned' – however they will be eligible for medical and/or social care support. Whether or not such support is good for all cases is a different matter again – suppose Alkan's mental problems (if such they were) were diagnosed as remediable by, say, Prozac, we might have been robbed of some great music! – Ed.

Future Events

- **10th October 2007 – Kevin Bowyer recital**, London: see front page
- **3rd November 2007 – Alkan Society Scholarship Competition and Recital**, Cambridge – see front page.
- **16th December 2007** (Sunday) '**A Sunday with Charles-Valentin Alkan**', Musée d'art et d'histoire de Judaïsme, Hôtel de Saint-Aignan, 71 Rue du Temple, Paris. A celebration of Alkan, organised by the Société Alkan and the Central Consistoire.
15:00 - **Conference**, with participants **Brigitte François-Sappey, François Luguenot and Anne Hélène Hoog**.
17:00 **Concert of music by Alkan** to include: Adagio from the Cello sonata op. 47; Piano Trio op. 30; *Trois anciennes melodies juives*; and choral and piano works.
- **27th September-7th October 2008** The music festival '**Levočske BabieLeto**' (Indian Summer in Levoča [Slovakia]) is hoping to present a varied programme of 19th-century music to include performances of Alkan by Nicholas King (organ) and Petronel Malan and Tomasz Kamieniak (piano). Further details in future issues of the Bulletin or via the festival website: www.lblfestival.eu.

The Editor welcomes all comments on, and contributions to, the Bulletin.

NB Members who paid the 2007 subscription by credit card have had their payments processed during August/September and should see the payment on a statement at this time, marked as 'Symposium Records'.