

ALKAN SOCIETY

(Reg Charity No 276199)

BULLETIN - October 1980

Report of Meeting held at the Thomas Coram Foundation, 40 Brunswick Square, on Thursday, 22 May 1980 at 7.30 pm.

Twenty-four Members were present with four guests. Our President first invited Jean Bartholomew and John White to play the Three Marches for four hands Op 40. Among those who had not heard these pieces before, No 3 proved to be the most appealing. Then Ronald Smith played the first march of the Three Marches for two hands Op 37 and then a mystery march that sounded Alkanish in places but was certainly not composed by that Master. Few would have guessed that it was by Schubert - March in E for two hands (nearly all Schubert's Marches were written for four).

After this martial introduction, our President gave us a full and penetrating analysis of the Symphony (Op 39 Nos 4,5,6,7). Most listeners would be aware that all four movements form an integrated whole - but would not realise how cunningly Alkan brings this about. Certain note sequences are to be found in each movement as well as phrases which are treated quite differently but contribute to the cohesion of the work as a whole. He showed how the composer will digress from a given point, come back again, then digress in a different manner before returning to the same point. The audience listened spellbound as all things seemed to be made plain as only Ronald Smith could do.

After the coffee-break, our President played the four movements and we listened to them with new ears. Even the little Broadwood tried to sound like Ronald's favourite Steinway. The audience was delighted to hear that the President may give us his analysis of another big Alkan work next year.

Patrick Lee expressed the deep gratitude of all present for another unique and fascinating evening. One wished that it were possible for all members to be present.

The meeting finished about 10 pm.

Report of the Annual General Meeting held at the Abbey Community Centre, 29 Marsham Street, SW1 on Tuesday, 15 July 1980 at 7.30 pm. Jan Hoare was in the Chair.

Apologies for absence were received from Jean Bartholomew, Alan Cowie, Peter Grove and Audrey King.

There were twelve members present, including the Vice-President, Richard Shaw.

The Honorary Secretary read a Summary of Proceedings at the 1979 AGM and then gave a brief review of the events of the past year. In the absence of the Hon Treasurer he distributed copies of the audited accounts which showed that, after payment of the hire of room for the May meeting there was a balance of about nineteen pounds. The £80 on deposit was already producing a little interest. About £60 had been spent on the Reference Library during the past year. The members asked the Secretary to send a letter of special thanks to the Auditor, Keith Craft, who had prepared a meticulous statement with little time to do it. An Honorarium of £15 (same as last year) was voted. The Secretary reported that membership was almost static - new members merely filling places of those who drifted away. He then gave a summary of events planned for the 1980/81 Session. It was agreed that Herr Helmut Ganteführer should become an Honorary Member. It was decided that there should not be a new edition of the Discography during the coming year. It was also agreed that some contribution should be made to the expense of providing permanent covers

for sheet-music in the Guildhall School Library - accepting the Chairman's suggestion that £20 could be found in the autumn with a possible further sum later in the year. All agreed that next year (ie 1981/82) the subscription rates ought to be increased.

Ably led by Jan Hoare, there followed fruitful discussion on several points including: How to attract new members, how to keep those we have (including gentle reminders of subscriptions not paid), how to make the Society better known and how to do more to carry out its'object - the education of the public with regard to Alkan and his music.

The meeting closed about 9 pm.

#### Alkan Reference Library

Dr F T Barclay has kindly presented to the Library a photocopy on loose sheets of A3 of Huit Prières Op 64 (there were thirteen in the original set) arranged by J Vianna da Motta for pianoforte - two hands.

Largely due to the generosity of Helmut Ganteführer, Frank Lioni, Alan Cowie, Audrey Godfrey and Brian Doyle, we have been able to buy the remainder of pieces that are now in print. These include: Op 54 Benedictus; Op 37 Trois Marches; Désir (Fantaisie); Chapeau Bas; Préludes & Prières by Alkan arranged by César Franck for organ (Books 2 & 3); Oeuvres Choiesies by Alkan freely transcribed and arranged for organ or harmonium in two books by Albert Renaud (Organist - St Germain-en-Laye) 1916. Book I 22 pieces; Book II 20 pieces. Published by Costellat.

I had not seen these last two books before and, strangely enough, Renaud does not give the works from which he has taken them. Most are easily identifiable - but not all. Many come, as one might expect, from the Esquisses.

It might be a help, now, to list the pieces for which we are still looking: Op 3 Il était un p'tit homme; Op 8 Six Morceaux Caractéristiques; Op 21 Grand Duo; Op 26 March funèbre; Op 27 Marche triomphale; Op 30 Trio for pf, vr, cello; Op 32 4 Impromptus; Op 55 Une fusée; Op 60 (bis) Le Grillon (4e Nocturne); For pedaler or piano 3-hands: Op 64 13 Prières; Op 66 11 Grandes Préludes et une transcription du Messie de Handel; Op 69 Impromptu sur le choral de Luther; Op 72 11 Pièces dans le style religieux. Piano 4-hands: Op 26? Fantaisie à quatre mains sur 'Don Juan'; Op 47 Saltarelle from the 'cello sonata; Op 66 Neuf Préludes (arr. da Motta).

Transcriptions: Mozart Concerto en ré mineur; Andante du 8 me quatuor; Menuet de la Symphonie en sol mineur; Gluck Gavotte d'Orphée; Haydn Finale du 38e Quatuor; Weber Scherzo du Trio Op 63; Weber Choeur - Barcarolle d'Oberon

I shall soon be in touch with one or two well-known people who deal in, and look for, copies of music now unobtainable.

Gramophone record: Brian Doyle has kindly presented the Lewenthal disc M 30234 which includes the Marcia funèbre sulla morte d'un pappagallo.

#### Discography

There is nothing further to report under this heading. We shall not contemplate the preparation of a fourth edition this session.

#### News Items

Our President hopes to be able to give another of his masterly analyses - probably the Concerto this time - at the November meeting 1981. A North American concert tour has been arranged for him, to include New York and Toronto for February 1982.

All members will be delighted to hear that Dr Hugh Macdonald has been appointed to the Gardiner Chair of Music at Glasgow University from 1 October 1980.

I am glad to report that Helmut Ganteführer has been offered Honorary Membership and he has accepted with pleasure. He hopes to be in London in November and may be able to attend our meeting on the 20th of that month.

Alfred A Kalmus Ltd (Universal Edition) has now published an official list of all Alkan music at present available through them but it is disappointing that "Alkan in Miniature" is not mentioned.

The New York Public Library has asked for a copy of our Alkan Discography.

I have seen a few pieces newly<sup>f</sup> bound for the Alkan Reference Library. They look most attractive with a thick transparent front cover of plastic material and a strong brown backing. The cost of each is now £1.60.

Annual Subscriptions are now due and should be sent to the Hon Secretary

Programme of Meetings 1980/81

November Meeting. This will be on Thursday, 20 November 1980 at 7.30 pm at the Thomas Coram Foundation, 40 Brunswick Square. This is at the NE corner of the Square, next to Coram Fields; nearest Underground Station is Russell Square (turn right when leaving the Station).

On this occasion the whole of the Trente Chants will be explored and about half of them heard in their entirety. Usually one person will be given 20 minutes to deal with one book, playing two pieces right through and sketching in the other four. The fifth and last book will be played right through. Those taking part will be Op 38(i) Peter Grove: Op 38(ii) Jean Bartholomew: Op 65 Sheila Hoare and John White: Op 67 Martin Ball: Op 70 Stephanie McCallum.

January Meeting. This will be held in the Lecture/Recital Room at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Probable date will be Thursday, 29 January 1981 from 7 - 9 pm. Refreshment bar open at 6.30 pm. It is hoped that a mainly Alkan programme will be shared by Margaret Pitts (a pupil of our member, Audrey King) and Jack Gibbons.

March Meeting. This should give us a chance to hear some of the earlier Alkan recordings - an evening arranged by Charles Hailstone. Date, place and time still to be fixed.

May Meeting. Still to be arranged.

Annual General Meeting. Usual place and time Wednesday, 15 July 1981.

J H White - Hon Secretary.