

ALKAN SOCIETY

BULLETIN - September 25th 1978

Report of Meeting at the Thomas Coram Foundation April 26th at 7.30

The President took the Chair and introduced the speaker, giving Dr Macdonald a very warm welcome. The title of the talk was "Compiling an Alkan Catalogue". Recently, Dr Macdonald had been preparing the entry on "Alkan" for the new Grove's Dictionary to be published next year at a cost of c.£600. As a guide to contributors (extent of coverage, detail etc.) composers are graded from A to E. Members were delighted to hear that Alkan was put into category A. This classification entailed the preparation of a list of all known works in the correct chronological order. As the Alkan opus numbers are notoriously unreliable, Dr Macdonald gave a fascinating account of the detective work involved in carrying out his task. A variety of factors, such as dates of, and information in, early editions, plate numbers, dedicatees, local circumstances and letters, all have to be considered; but sometimes there is a complete blank. The lecturer had with him a most interesting early imprint of "Le Grillon" Op.60(bis) and this was circulated three or four times to illustrate various points. Many beguiling issues were discussed between lecturer and President and excerpts from "Le Festin" and the Op.60 pieces ("Ma Chère Liberté" and "Ma Chère Servitude") were played. Before the Meeting closed at about 9.30, Jan Hoare expressed the heartfelt gratitude of the Members to Dr Macdonald for coming from Oxford to give such an intensely interesting talk.

Annual Subscriptions for 1978/79 are now due and, if not already paid, should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer - John Snelling, 19 Liskeard Gardens, Blackheath, S.E.3. Please make cheques and postal-orders payable to the Alkan Society.

News Items

Ronald Smith's next Q.E Hall Recital is on Thursday, October 12th. The programme will include some Alkan pieces - No. 1 of the Three Marches Op.37, the first Nocturne Op.22 and six of the Esquisses - and the Liszt B Minor Sonata.

Martin Ball has been co-opted to become a member of the Executive Committee.

I am glad to say that Mr Humphrey Searle has joined the Society and has expressed his willingness to become a Vice-President. Mr Searle contributed the entry on Alkan to the last edition of "Grove".

I have had enquiries from other parts of the world including Canada and Denmark. Prof. Dott. Carmine Faienza from Parma, Italy, has joined the Society. So also has Dr W J Alkan (Israel) whose forebears hailed from Strasbourg. He may well be connected with our Alkan family.

Members can help our cause by asking for attractive recorded Alkan pieces on the various broadcast "request" programmes.

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Charitable Status

Arrangements are proceeding satisfactorily but, if we are to become a recognized Charity, there must be a few amendments to our Draft Constitution (previously circulated to all Members). They are:-

- Clause 2 OBJECT "The object of the Society shall be to advance the education of the public in the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the life and work of the French composer and pianist C.V. Alkan (1813-1888)."
- Clause 3 MEMBERSHIP (line 8) Before "Subscriptions" insert "Annual"
- Clause 12 DISSOLUTION (line 5) Insert "Charitable" before "Musical Societies".
- Clause 13 AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION At the end of this clause add "and provided that no amendment shall be made to the objects (Clause 2), the dissolution provisions (Clause 12) or this clause, and no amendment shall be made which would cause the Society to cease to be a Charity in law."

An Alkan Reference Library

Richard Shaw (St. Andrews, Fife) has suggested that there should be set up, at some accessible place in London, an Alkan Reference Library where, little by little, could be assembled as complete a collection as possible of Alkania - books, sheet music, recordings etc - which would be available to Members of our Society. The Executive Committee warmly welcomes the suggestion and negotiations have already begun. I hope that the project will be started during the coming winter. Full details will be given as soon as possible.

Programme of Meetings 1978/79.

Any Member may bring a friend to all our Meetings except the A.G.M.

November 1st Wednesday at 7.30. At Chelsea Old Church (by kind permission of the Vicar) Martin Ball will talk on some of the Alkan organ and pedalier pieces from Op.66 and Op.72. "Bombardo-Carillon" will also be included.

Chelsea Old Church is a short distance from the northern end of Battersea Bridge. No underground station is near but buses 19, 39, 45 and 49 pass near it.

January 16th Tuesday at 7.30. At the Thomas Coram Foundation, our President will talk about Alkan as a miniaturist and, hopefully, introduce a new selection of pieces which he has edited and is to be published by Billaudot.

The House of the Coram Foundation is situated at the N.E corner of Brunswick Square. It is three minutes walk from Russell Sq. Underground Station (Piccadilly Line - turn right when leaving the station). Coffee and biscuits available during the interval.

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March 15th Thursday at 7.30. Also at the Coram Foundation a Members' evening. Contributing to the programme will be two lady pupils (from Australia) of our President (who hopes to be present himself). Jean Bartholomew (presenting "Benedictus" Op.54) and Peter Grove (from Salisbury) who will be playing some lesser-known short pieces.

May Meeting Date and place not yet fixed. Our hard-working discographer, Charles Hailstone, assisted by one or two other Members, is to organize an evening with some interesting Alkan recordings. Rather on the lines of a Members' Evening but without live performances. Many of our Members are not pianists and have come to Alkan only by listening to recorded music.

Annual General Meeting July 18th Wednesday as last year in the Music Room at the Abbey Community Association, S.W.1. at 7.30.

J. H. WHITE
Hon. Secretary