

THE ALKAN SOCIETY

THE BULLETIN : APRIL 1985

Registered Charity No. 2761991

President: Ronald Smith

Secretary/Treasurer: Brian Doyle, 27 Fawcett Street, London SW10 9EY
(Tel: 01-351 3924)

Editor: Charles Hailstone, 7a Alder Road, Mortlake, London SW14 8ER

Editorial Notes: First of all we would like to congratulate John and Monica White on their Golden Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on St. George's Day, 23rd April. They gave a luncheon at the Savoy for family and friends and some members of the Society, including our President Ronald Smith and his wife Anne. John is a founder member and Vice-President and takes an active interest in the Society, attending meetings whenever possible.

It is very heartening to see that in more recent musical reference books, Alkan's importance is now being recognised, whereas in the past he has often been given scant mention and sometimes not at all. In the recently published 'Makers of Nineteenth Century Culture 1800-1914' - ed. by Justin Wintle (Routledge & Kegan Paul) there is an essay on Alkan by Malcolm MacDonald which begins 'Amongst the composers rescued from obscurity by the revival of interest in 19th century romanticism, Alkan is almost certainly the most valuable discovery. Long dismissed as a writer of mere technical exercises, his music, performed by a few dedicated artists, has amply confirmed Busoni's judgement that he stands with Liszt, Chopin, Schumann and Brahms as one of the five greatest piano composers since Beethoven'. Later on he describes the **Concerto for Solo Piano** as 'undoubtedly one of the greatest piano works of the nineteenth century'.

REPORT OF THE MARCH MEETING: This was a talk illustrated by recorded music on the life and work of the pianist and composer **Egon Petri**, given by **James Methuen-Campbell** at Trinity College of Music and Drama on the evening of Wednesday 6th March. 15 members were present.

Mr. Methuen-Campbell, a distinguished critic and author, was introduced by Charles Hailstone. He is a regular contributor to Music & Musicians and the Musical Times, author of 'Chopin playing from the composer to the present day' (Gollanz) and author of a Catalogue of Recordings of Classical Pianists Vol. I (Disco Epsom Ltd.)

Egon Petri, who died in 1962, was born on 23rd March, 1881 in Hanover, a German of Dutch descent, taking up tuition on the violin at the age of five, and piano at seven. At the age of twenty he conceived the piano as his true vocation, in which he was greatly encouraged by Ferruccio Busoni, a close friend of the family. He carried on Busoni's principles of technique and in 1921 appeared with him in a concert for two pianos in London. His interest in neglected composers found expression in his revival of Henselt's Piano Concerto in 1938. During that year he gave four recitals for the B.B.C. devoted entirely to Alkan. The programmes were as follows:-
I. **The Symphony for Solo Piano.** II. **Five preludes** - nos. 13,14,7,6 & 20, **Etudes** nos. 1,2,3,4, & 5. Op. 35. III **Concerto for Solo Piano.** IV. **Le Tambour bat aux champs, Le Chemin de fer and Le Festin d'Esopo.**

Petri was amongst the great teachers of the Piano and in 1947 took up a position with Mills College, Oakland in California. His compositions include a Konzertstück and he left many recordings of which some were included in Mr. Methuen-Campbell's lecture. Amongst these was a rare private recording of Petri's playing of Alkan's **Symphony for solo piano**.

In his Alkan researches Mr. Methuen-Campbell found, at the Wigmore Hall, several performances of Alkan, early this century - Jose Vianna da Motta, played the **Concerto for Solo Piano** and three transcriptions. Harold Bauer played **Le Vent**, Rudolph Ganz, **le Chemin de fer** and **Le Tambour bat aux champs** and William Murdoch - **Allegro Barbaro** and **Le Festin d'Esopo**.

Charles Hailstone moved a vote of thanks to the speaker and also thanked Elliot Levin who presided at the turntable.

MARK LATIMER PLAYS ALKAN: The young pianist Mark Latimer is to play the **Alkan Concerto for Solo Piano** on Monday July 1st at 7.30 p.m. in the Purcell Room. The programme also includes Chopins Concert Allegro and Balakirev's Sonata in B flat minor. Mark Latimer studied at the Royal College of Music under Angus Morrison and his other mentors include Albert Ferber, John Ogdon, Yonty Solomon and John Vallier. He has taken part in master classes with Tamas Vasary. He has won many awards including the Worshipful Company of Musicians Young Artists Award, and has given concerts throughout Europe and America and has broadcast for B.B.C. Radio and T.V. He is a professor at the London College of Music. This enterprising recital at the Purcell Room deserves a large audience and so we hope that as many members as possible will attend. Mark Latimer has very kindly offered to play for us at one of our future meetings.

LA SOCIETE ALKAN is now properly established and has recruited over 20 members and are expecting to double this in the near future. The Society has arranged to give an Alkan concert on June 18th at the premises of the publishers Billaudot. This recital will mark the inauguration of the private recital room at Billaudots. The concert is to be advertised on France-Musique and in the musical journals. They are hoping to publish a book on Alkan written by Jean Yves-Bras in collaboration with other members and are looking for a publisher.

Members may recall that sometime ago we wrote to the French authorities requesting that a plaque be placed on Alkan's house in the Square d'Orleans. They agreed to our request but were unsure as to which house Alkan had resided in, but thought it was no. 10. The French Society are going to follow this up for us and hope to settle the matter.

ALKAN FESTIVAL 1988: We have contacted the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts. They advise companies, who register with them, on sponsorship opportunities and bring them into contact with organisations seeking sponsorship. They also administer the Governments Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme which gives financial support to encourage businesses to sponsor the Arts. We hope that they will eventually help us to find sponsors for our planned concerts in 1988. We hope soon to have ready a brochure to send out to various businesses to stir up interest in our project.

So far the response from members to our appeal for donations to the Festival Fund has been poor. Without sufficient funds it will be difficult to get the project off of the ground. We do hope that many members will, if not covenanting to the Society, at least consider sending a donation.

RONALD SMITH: Our President's latest Alkan recording is due for release this month on HMV (L.P. EG 2701871 or cassette EG 2701874). There are 25 short works - 8 **Esquisses**, 5 **preludes**, the **Gigue Op. 24**, **Le tambour bat aux champs Op. 50**, **Nocturne in b major Op. 22**, **Marche No. 1 Op. 37**, two **barcarolles**,

Petit Conte, three pieces from **Les Mois Op. 74**, **Fa Op. 38** & **Toccatina**.

Ronald will be giving a lecture/recital in the Emma Cons Hall, Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1, on Saturday May 4th - lecture 4.30 - 5.15, wine and food 5.15 - 6.00, recital 6.00 - 7.00 p.m. The programme is as follows:- Balakirev's Sonata in B flat minor, Alkan's **Petit Conte**, **Toccatina** and the first performance of the **Scherzo Op. 16 no. 1** and Beethoven's 'Appassionata' (tickets £2.50). Also in the pipeline is an all-Alkan recital to be given by Ronald at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in July 1986. This is being sponsored by B'hai Brith, a Jewish musical foundation, as part of an international music festival.

Alkan Vol. II will be published in the Autumn. A generous discount will be available to members.

ALKAN'S CHAMBER WORKS: We have recently contacted John Ogdon with regard to him taking part in a performance of Alkan's chamber works and a possible recording. Nimbus are very interested in recording them. Mr. Ogdon is enthusiastic about the project and thought that he might be able to arrange a performance in Manchester.

Billaudot's the publishers of Alkan's works, have reprinted Alkan's **Piano Trio**, which has long been out of print. It can be ordered through the distributors, Universal Edition, 2/3 Fareham Street, Dean Street, London W1V 4OU. New editions of the **Violin Duo** and **Cello Sonata** are in preparation.

THE MAY MEETING: At our next meeting at the Kensington Central Library, on Thursday May 2nd, Margaret Pitts and Peter Grove will be playing a selection of Alkan's lesser known works. Margaret will play Nos. 1 & 2 of the **Trois Andantes Romantique Op. 13**, **Marche No 3 Op. 37**, **Marche Funèbre Op. 26**, Alkan's transcription of Haydn's minuet from the string quartet No. 1 Op. 76, **Etude No. 10 Op. 35**. Peter Grove will play **Les Mois Op. 74** (complete) and **Réconciliation Op. 42**.

STEPHANIE AND PETER McCALLUM have been very busy since their return to Australia. Stephanie gave a recital only four days after her arrival. She is giving a recital at Macquarie University where they have requested **Le Festin d'Esopé**. On the university staff is Denis Henig whose Oxford dissertation on Alkan's Op. 35 & 39 is mentioned in the Grove bibliography. Peter has found considerable enthusiasm for Alkan amongst his students, though many had not heard of him. As mentioned in our last Bulletin, Stephanie is returning to England in November for a concert tour. This may include a recital at the Purcell Room and an Alkan recital for **La Societe Alkan** in Paris is being arranged.

DR. ALKAN from Israel spent a few days holiday in London early this year. The Israeli radio programme on French 19th century Jewish composers, which includes Alkan, is being broadcast this July. Dr. Alkan has been helping the producers with information and recordings of Alkan. They are so enthusiastic that a programme devoted to Alkan is planned for 1988. He has written to the Jewish Music Council on our behalf, telling them of our activities.

ROGER SMALLEY: The distinguished composer and member of the Society is returning to England from Australia, where he teaches, for a sabbatical. It is hoped that a recital of his transcription for two pianos, of Alkan's **Pedalièr** works can be arranged during his stay.

CASSETTE OF RARE PIANO ROLLS: It will be recalled that Eliot Levin produced a cassette of four rolls of Alkan's music with the kind co-operation of Frank Holland of the Musical Museum, Brentford, Middx. (see Bulletin October 1983). Eliot who has now assigned the number CA 1002 to this cassette to tie up with his Symposium issues, suggests that in the next edition

of the Alkan discography, cassettes should be included in order to list all sound recordings, particularly as some might contain material not available on disc, and it is hoped to follow this up.

ALKAN'S LES CLOCHES (from the Esquisses) has been arranged by Brian Herisford for an album of organ works.

RICHARD MURPHY: Richard, a member of the Society, took part in a discussion on Steel Bands on Radio 3's Music Weekly programme. Richard, who teaches and arranges for steel bands, made a fascinating arrangement for this medium of Alkan's **Marche Triomphal** Op. 26b.

WILLIAM WATERHOUSE a Society member, is the soloist in the Hummel Bassoon concerto in F at the Queen Elizabeth Hall at 7.45 p.m. on the 15th May.

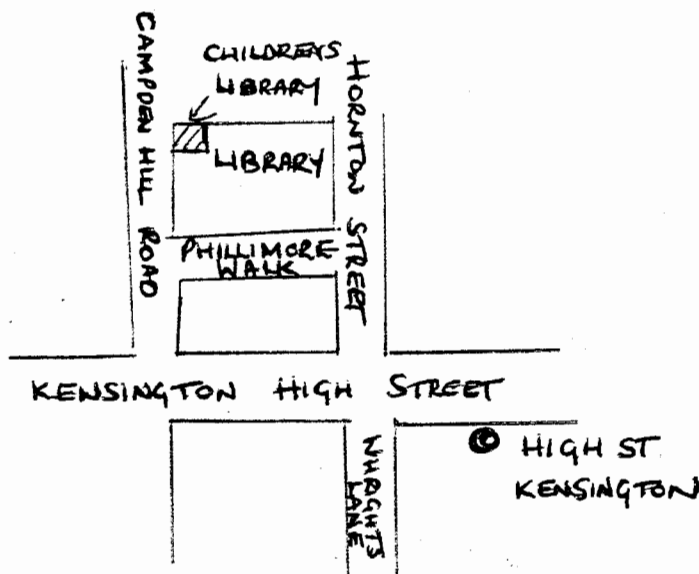
NEW MEMBERS

- John Duggan, Co. Clare, Ireland
- Cecil Ewing, Sackatoon, Canada
- George Hitching, Co. Clare, Ireland
- Alexander Wilson, Columbus, Ohio
- Charles Wilson, Edinburgh

Subscription: £5 for London and Overseas members (payable in sterling)
£3 for members out of London & students (both these rates cover husband and wife membership).

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday May 2nd at 7.00 p.m. recital by Margaret Pitts and Peter Grove at the Meeting Room, Kensington Central Library, Phillimore Walk, W8. Tube - High Street Kensington. Buses - 9,27,28,31,33 & 52. The library is just a few minutes walk from High Street Kensington Underground Station - turn left into Kensington High Street, cross over at pedestrian crossing, second right into Campden Hill Road, the library is 100 yards on the right. The Meeting Room is through the Children's library.



Wednesday July 17th at 7.00 p.m. The Annual General Meeting at the Abbey Community Centre, 29 Marsham Street, London SW1