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ALKAN SOCIETY

(Reg. Charity No. 276199)

BULLETIN - OCTOBER 1981

Report of Meeting held at the Thomas Coram Foundation, Brunswick Square, on Wednesday May 6th at 7.30 pm.

This was a joint Meeting with the Liszt Society which attracted a splendid audience of about 75 people; of these twenty-two were Members of the Alkan Society with seven of their guests.

Dr White, Hon. Secretary of the Alkan Society, gave a brief introduction and then called upon Vice-President Richard Shaw to give a brief talk on the relationship between Alkan and Liszt. Following this, Hamish Milne gave a brilliant account of three of Liszt's lesser known compositions:-

Petrarch: Sonnet 47	(1839?-1846)	S.158
Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses	(1834)	S.154
Réminiscences on Halévy's 'La Juive'	(1835)	S.409a

After the usual break, when coffee and biscuits were served, Jack Gibbons played an Alkan programme with his usual cheerfulness and panache:-

- Morte: (from 'Trois Morceaux dans le genre pathétique' Op. 15 (1837))
- Esquisses Op. 63 (pub. 1861): No. 4 'Les cloches'; No. 21 'Morituri te salutant'; No. 48 'En songe'
- Concerto for solo piano from Op. 39 (pub. 1859): No. 9 Adagio (second movement); No. 10 Finale ('Allegro alla barbaresca')

The gratitude of the audience for such an unusual and enjoyable Recital by the two pianists was appropriately expressed by Alan Paul, a member of the Council of Management of the Liszt Society and one who had greatly contributed to the arrangements for the evening's success.

The Meeting closed about 10 pm.

Report of the Annual General Meeting held at the Abbey Community Association, Marsham Street, SW1, on Wednesday July 15th at 7.30 pm. Patrick Lee was in the Chair.

There were only ten Members present - just a quorum!

Apologies for absence were received from Jean Bartholomew, Alan Davidson, Audrey Godfrey, Charles Hailstone, Audrey King, Richard Shaw. The Hon. Secretary read a summary of proceedings at the 1980 A.G.M. and then, in the absence of a Treasurer, presented the audited accounts. At the end of the financial year there was a small surplus of £24. Special donations had exceeded the total subscriptions during the year but the new rates of subscription should achieve a better balance. There is now £89.59 in the deposit account. A vote of thanks to the auditor, Keith Craft, was passed and it was agreed

that an honorarium of £20 should be sent to him. Chris Dench and Jan Hoare have left the Executive Committee and Vice-President Richard Shaw has joined it. The new Hon. Treasurer is Mr B.P.Doyle. No one having offered to take on the Hon.Secretary's duties, Dr White is to continue for one more year. No reply had been received from the French Authority to the letter concerning the state of Alkan's tomb. Dr White reported on the splendid progress made with the binding of the various items in the Alkan Reference Library at the Guildhall School of Music. It was agreed that, whenever possible, Meetings should start at 7 pm. - this for the convenience of faithful Members who come from some distance. The new rates of subscription were approved (see Section on 'Finance'). An article on the shorter compositions of Alkan may well appear in the "Piano Journal" (EPTA) next February - contributed by the Hon. Secretary. Details of the Society should appear in the "British Music Yearbook" in 1983. The Hon. Secretary spoke of some arrangements made for the new session. After some general discussion the Meeting ended about 9 pm.

Finance

Although we finished the financial year with a credit balance of £24 our heads were only kept above water by generous donations from kindly people. This year, for example, we received one from one of our earliest Members - Goodwin Sammel of Berkeley, California. We are very grateful to him and the other kind friends. However, we ought not to continue like this and, coupled with rising costs of all sorts, we have to increase the annual subscriptions. The following table was approved at the A.G.M.:-

Members' children still at school	No charge
Full-time students	£1.00 pa
Members not in the London area	Single £1.50 pa
	Man & wife £2.00 pa
Members (London area) who can attend Meetings	Single £3.00 pa
	Man & wife £4.00 pa

Subscriptions for the 1981/82 session are now due and should be sent to our new Hon.Treasurer:-

Bryan Doyle
27 Fawcett Street
LONDON S.W.10

Alkan Reference Library

At the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Senior Librarian, Paul Holden, is continuing with the binding of our numerous items. The sheet music is given a hard card back with a transparent front cover. Larger volumes, such as the Preludes and the Studies have a cream-coloured hard back cover with gold lettering. Very generous donations have been received from two of our Members in West Germany -

Knut Franke and Helmut Ganteführer.

Vice-President Humphrey Searle, who contributed the entry on Alkan in the 1954 "Grove" has, out of the kindness of his heart, presented to the Library two items that we have been seeking for some time:- A Costallat edition of Op.60 bis "Le Grillon" (4th Nocturne) and an old edition - probably a first - of Op.26 Marche Funèbre.

H. Baron (London N.W.2) has managed to find for us a first edition of Alkan's Op.4 (1833) published by Henry Lemoine. "Rondo brillant" for piano and string quartet. The parts are engraved throughout and show no sign of use, the margins being untrimmed. This was a chance we could not miss and the Library and our Society are sharing the cost.

Discography

There have been no new additions but the disc from Harmonia Mundi No.927 has been released for sale in this country. Bernard Ringeissen plays nearly all the pieces published in Georges Beck's "Oeuvres Choiesies" (Heugel-Paris). It includes the splendid "Saltarelle" Op.23, the Sonatine Op.61, the "Scherzo diabolico" Op.39 No.3 but not the "Chemin de fer". Its price is £2.70? This recording has been added to the others in the Reference Library.

News Items

Our President is giving a Recital at the Wigmore Hall on Wednesday 14th October at 7.30. It is part of a series of Russian music and he will be playing:- Balakirev: Sonata in B flat minor; Prokofiev: Sonata No.7; Scriabin: Sonata No.9 'Black Mass'; Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition.

He leaves in early February for Toronto where he will give Recitals (including Alkan items) and Master Classes. Finally he goes to New York where, in two concerts he will play the whole of the Alkan Symphony and the whole of the Concerto. This will be the first time that New Yorkers have had the opportunity to hear these works in their entirety (seven numbers from Op.39)

Members interested in local history may like to know that our worthy discographer, Charles Mailstone, is having a book published in December - "Alleyways of Mortlake". The research has taken him ten years.

New Members are reminded that:-

Any Member can make use of the Alkan Reference Library at the Guildhall School on making him or herself known to the Librarian. Any Member can bring a friend to any Meeting.

'Alkan in Miniature' a collection of 14 short works edited by Ronald

Smith is obtainable from Universal Edition Ltd, price £2.75.

Programme of Meetings 1981/82.

November Meeting: This will be held at the Thomas Coram Foundation, Brunswick Square, on Tuesday November 10th at 7 pm. Four or five of our Members will relate how they came to be interested in the music of Alkan and what features particularly interest them. Talks will be illustrated where possible. This type of programme was held at the T.C.Foundation in November four years ago and aroused considerable enthusiasm.

First Meeting of the New Year: This is likely to be on Tuesday February 2nd at 7.30 when Ronald Smith, just before leaving for Canada, hopes to give his long awaited and keenly anticipated talk on the Alkan Concerto. The Meeting will be held in the Lecture/Recital Hall at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

March Meeting: The provisional date for this is Friday, March 26th, starting probably about 6.30, and it will be held in the Lecture Hall at the Trinity College of Music, Mandeville Place. Our discographer, Charles Hailstone, will be arranging another Recital of Recordings on the lines of last year's Meeting.

May Meeting: This is likely to be on Monday, May 24th at 7 pm when Dr William Eddie (Edinburgh) will give a talk on a subject quite different from anything that we have had before:- "Analysing Alkan's Music - How and Why?" It will be held at the Thomas Coram Foundation.

Annual General Meeting: This will be held as usual at the Abbey Community Association, Marsham Street, SW1, on Wednesday July 14th.

Confirmation and details of the Meetings in 1982 will appear in the January Bulletin, which I hope to send out to Members before the postal charges rise again.

J. H. White
(Hon. Secretary)