

WESTBOURNE ORCHESTRAL WORKSHOP 14TH JULY 2006 REPORT No 25

St Ambrose Church Westbourne, West Cliff Road Westbourne.

According to a recent survey carried out by the Music Industries Association (MIA) there are an estimated 18 million lapsed players in the UK; of these, just over 11 million gave up their instruments aged 11 to 16. Yet of all those questioned, 8.5 million said they would like to start playing again.

Furthermore, you are never too old to learn. In another survey by Dr Agnes Chan of the Chinese University of Hong Kong found people who take up a musical instrument when young demonstrate better verbal memory than those who do not.

There is no doubt that making music together with friends is one of the great joys of life. Perhaps in a small way the **challenging but fun WOS annual evening workshops** encourage a few frustrated musicians to fulfil their dreams.

25 inexperienced or rusty instrumentalists, **aged between 10 and over 65**, attended the phenomenally successful **fourth WOS Annual Workshop**. This is the greatest number of Workshop guests so far and demonstrates how popular these events have become.

7 Violins, 4 Violas, 1 Cellos, 1 Double Bass, 4 Clarinets, 4 Flutes, 2 Trumpets, 1 Piccolo and 1 Trombone.

At least two of the attendees are multi-talented in that they are able to play more than one instrument. Included in the above was 10 year-old trumpeter **Thomas Kidman** who acquitted himself very well indeed. Also two regular players harpist **Liz Kier** and French horn player **Gill Slater**, both of whom for personal reasons have recently taken up the viola. The orchestra is always looking for violists, as they are in short supply in this area.

In her introduction timpanist **Tricia Davis** extended a very warm welcome to the special guest instrumentalists to the **fourth Workshop**. She thanked them for coming and introduced Deputy Conductor **Dave Brooks** who was responsible for the rest of the evening's entertainment.

The Workshop rehearsal proper actually started off with the playing and singing of "**Happy Birthday**" for leading violist **George Barker** who was 88 years young on July 14th.

The programme this time was selected from Tchaikowski's "Swan Lake" ballet suite and Eric Coates "Three Elizabeths" suite chosen by deputy conductor **Dave Brooks**. Finally, the Orchestra, guests and audience moved to the Church Hall where refreshments had been prepared.

In his closing speech **David Portsmouth** thanked Committee members especially music librarian **Stella Hughes** as well as **Jane Wyborn** and "Friends of the Orchestra" **Noreen Price** and **Robert Griffin** who assisted **Tricia Davis** in organising the Workshop and **Jean Budd** for the refreshments.

15 guest players completed a questionnaire and the answers will be of considerable help to the WOS committee in organising next year's Workshop. All guests gave positive answers to the questions and a number of guest players stated that they would like to join the Orchestra when rehearsals start again on the **8th September**.

This was indeed a very happy experience enjoyed by Orchestra Members and guests alike.

The retiring collection together with a small contribution from the Orchestra resulted in a donation of £75 for that worthy charity, the **Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)**.

Questionnaire Workshop 14th July 2006
Summary of answers

Name15 completed the questionnaire.....

- 1.) Did you find the programme
 - a.) Too hard 2
 - b.) Acceptable 4
 - c.) Just right 9
 - d.) Too easy 0
- 2.) Were you able to join in at this level in order to enjoy the Workshop? Yes 15 /No 0
- 3.) Did you welcome the opportunity of playing with the orchestra? Yes 15/No 0
- 4.) Is the length of time given to the Workshop. (tick as applicable.)
 - a.) Too long 0
 - b.) Just right 13
 - c.) Too short 2
- 5.) If answer a.) or c.) How long would you suggest? 1 – 2.1/2 hours 1 – 2 hours
- 6.) Assuming you have not seen an orchestral part before did this Workshop help to provide a goal to work for? Applicable to 6 only Yes 6 /No 0
- 7.) Will you consider coming again to next years Workshop? Yes 15/No 0
- 8.) May we contact you again for next years WOS Workshop? Yes 15 /No 0
- 9.) Would you join this Orchestra or a similar one? Yes 9 /No 2
1 said I am in another Orchestra 3 said possibly 2 said sorry not up to standard
- 10.) Any ideas for improvement?

P.G. Trombone - Is it possible to have a workshop for different sections of the Orchestra?

M.N. Flute said - Yes please! - against the question for joining the orchestra-and gave her phone number and email address again.

M.S. Clarinet -.most enjoyable evening - such a change from band playing.

S.M. Clarinet - very enjoyable - unfortunately I did not have an A Clarinet.

D.S. Violin - I found it (the workshop) quite hard, but could play it with practice

B.M. Double Bass - Great night-wish I could play on a regular basis. Living in Cheshire 50/50 is a problem at present.