

Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter

Issue 10

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The last few weeks have seen quite a spate of Berkeley performances around the country, and also beyond! Our website's News section contains listings for all the events of which we become aware:

<https://www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/news>

Our late co-founder and Patron, Kathleen Walker, always did a fantastic job researching performances of Lennox Berkeley works. We'd like to continue promoting such events to our members, so if you learn of a Berkeley performance or recording coming up, we'd be very grateful to hear from you.

You'll find a handy contact form on our website's home page (<https://www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/>) or you can drop an email to webmaster@lennoxberkeley.org.uk.

In the meantime, here's a round-up of the latest news...



Missa Brevis

Berkeley's *Missa Brevis* was sung in Portsmouth Cathedral at the Eucharist on Sunday 22nd February, by the Cathedral Consort Choir.

One of their members, Sally Kirk-Stephens (alto), writes: "I am new to Berkeley despite a lifetime of choral singing, and am in awe of its fresh, modern feel, whilst retaining dignity and reverence."

The *Missa Brevis* was also sung on Sunday 15th March at the morning Eucharist in His Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace.

In his 2023 article about this Mass, Julian quotes Michael describing the work as "music created through fervent devotion to the meaning of the text", an approach to writing sacred music that has helped keep the work in the liturgical repertoire for over 60 years. The article tells of the excitement of the young Julian and Michael as choristers preparing to record their father's new Mass for the BBC, and reveals how the choir's Continental sound inspired both this work and Benjamin Britten's own *Missa Brevis*. First published in our Journal, the article is now available to read on our website:

<https://www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/articles/missa-brevis-first-performance-review>

In Wintertime

Originally commissioned by Stephen Cleobury and the world-famous Choir of King's College, Cambridge, this choral work has now made its way to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the USA!

The Choir of Plymouth Congregational Church sang *In Wintertime* at their morning service in January.

Sonatina for Flute & Piano

Our Patron, Emily Beynon, Principal Flute of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, has released a new recording of Berkeley's *Sonatina*, accompanied by Andrew West, Professor of Ensemble Piano at the Royal Academy of Music.

Written in 1939 for recorder player Carl Dolmetsch, this charming neoclassical work is full of wit and melody. It has become a staple of the repertoire for both flute and recorder, popular for its qualities of Stravinskian energy, lyrical beauty, and playfulness.

The new *Sonatina* recording is the lead work on a disc of *Second World War Masterpieces for Flute & Piano*, published by Zefir Records in their Project Paloma series.

Closer to home, you may also enjoy this performance by our own Committee member, Dinah Pounds (flute):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkGS8d-lnX4>



Variations on an Elizabethan Theme

The London Choral Sinfonia, which specialises in performing and recording lesser-known British repertoire, performed the *Variations on an Elizabethan Theme* on 20th March in London's Wigmore Hall.

Commissioned by Benjamin Britten to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, this is a collaborative work in which Berkeley, Walton, Britten, Tippett, Oldham and Searle each contributed a variation on an Irish dance tune called *Sellingier's Round*, harmonised by William Byrd and orchestrated by Imogen Holst. It was first performed alongside Berkeley's *Stabat Mater*, under the baton of Benjamin Britten at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1953.

Sonatina for Guitar

Kianush Robeson (guitar) performed Berkeley's *Sonatina* in a concert of 20th century guitar music organised by the Hertford Music Club on 15th February. The programme also included works by Michael Berkeley.

Trio for Horn, Violin & Piano

On 14th March, the Pixels Ensemble performed Berkeley's *Trio* for Horn, Violin & Piano in Stapleford Granary, along with works by Elgar and Beethoven.

Our Chairman, Adam, was conducting a programme of Brahms, Mendelssohn and Britten that evening just 3 miles away. No competition was intended!

Divertimento in B♭

Looking far ahead, the Bushey Symphony Orchestra is planning a performance of Berkeley's *Divertimento* on 21st March 2027, to take place at the Clarendon Muse Concert Hall, Watford Boys' Grammar School. Their intended programme will include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2* and Saint-Saëns' *Cello Concerto No. 1* in A minor.

Their director, George Vass, has previously conducted Berkeley's *Partita* and the *Serenade* for String Orchestra, along with the *Divertimento*.

On a final note, we hope you'll be able to join us for the Society's Annual General Meeting, taking place on **Wednesday 13th May 2026**.

Once again, this will take place in the ever-hospitable **Razumovsky Academy**, 56 College Road, Kensal Green, London NW10 5ET. It's just a few minutes' walk from the Kensal Green station, which is served by the Bakerloo and Overground lines.

This year's concert will be given by pianist Kasparas Mikužis, who will perform works by Berkeley, Ravel and Beethoven.

Members are invited – nay, strongly encouraged! – to bring friends along for the day, to enjoy the music and share in the conviviality. Please RSVP to our Secretary, Rupert, to help us cater appropriately:
rupert@rupertrobertson.co.uk



Thank you once again for reading. If we won't see you at the AGM in May – though we certainly hope we will! – do keep an eye out for pictures of the event in our next Newsletter, in June.

Ash Bridges (Editor)