

Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter

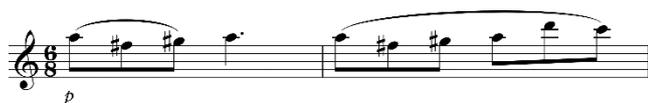
Issue 2

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An Auspicious Start to 2024

Since the inaugural Newsletter in December, it's been an exciting time for the Lennox Berkeley Society – the new CD containing Berkeley's *Divertimento* has been released to critical acclaim, and we have further good news on the new orchestral parts for this work!



Sinfonia of London

In February, Chandos released the new recording of Berkeley's *Divertimento in Bb*, performed by John Wilson and the Sinfonia of London – one of Britain's most talented orchestras, who also recorded Berkeley's *Serenade for Strings* in 2021.

This new release juxtaposes three composers who are linked by their musical heritage – Maurice Ravel was a significant influence on Lennox Berkeley, who in turn tutored our own Committee member, Adam Pounds. Thus Berkeley's *Divertimento* is bookended by Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and Adam's 3rd Symphony.

Reviews have been overwhelmingly positive, with the Sunday Times expressly hailing the *"balletic fluidity, astringent strings and skittish inventiveness"* of the *Divertimento*, while The Guardian describes it as *"an elegant, many-faceted work, with French accents, worthy of a place in the mainstream"*.

Meanwhile, in Classical Music Daily's Spotlight column, Geoff Pearce found the *Divertimento* *"a very enjoyable work and beautifully orchestrated for chamber orchestra"*, which *"receives a very fine performance with this marvellous ensemble"*.

Popular success is also indicated, with the CD reaching **#1 on the Official Specialist Classical Chart**, and thousands of streams logged via Spotify alone.

While our Society's focus is naturally Lennox Berkeley, it is fantastic to see the simultaneous success of Adam's *Symphony No. 3*. Written in response to the COVID pandemic and the national lockdowns that ensued, the symphony has received universal acclaim on this première recording. In particular, the British Music Society finds it *"utterly compelling"*, complimenting the Sinfonia's *"searing conviction and intensity"*, while

Gramophone praises the *"powerfully compassionate threnody to victims of the pandemic"* and the composer's *"clean-cut craftsmanship"*.

The artistic and commercial success of this CD can be expected to bring Berkeley's music to a far wider audience, and it is truly wonderful to witness the emergence of what an American reviewer, David Rowe, pronounces a *"terrific (and important) new British symphony"* from Berkeley's student, our dedicated Committee member and friend, Adam Pounds.

The CD, featuring extensive and insightful notes by musicologist Mervyn Cooke, is widely available for purchase, and the music can also be streamed online.



Orchestral Parts

In the last Newsletter, we reported that the orchestral parts of Berkeley's *Divertimento* were frustratingly difficult to read, wasting the Sinfonia's precious time as they recorded the work! Michael, Julian and Adam therefore contacted Wise Music Group to discuss the publication of a more legible edition of the *Divertimento*.

Since then, negotiations have proceeded apace, and the production of the orchestral parts is now imminent, partially funded by a contribution from the Society. We have asked that these be promoted as a joint LBS/Wise Music Edition in order to increase awareness of the Society.



In Other News...

Following the last Newsletter, Adam has continued discussions with the Director of Music at Gresham's School, Holt, regarding a Composition Challenge to encourage the next generation of musicians. Meanwhile, Thomas, our webmaster, continues to republish articles from our annual Journal on our website, making them a far more accessible resource for potential readers.

Thanks for reading, and we hope to see you soon at the Razumovsky Academy for the AGM on Tuesday 28th May.

Ash (Editor)