

Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter

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A delightful summer's AGM

This summer's AGM, always the highlight of the LBS year, was an especially charming occasion. The Rasumovsky Academy of Kensal Green, London, kindly hosted us for a third consecutive year.



Left: Rupert (left), Petroc (centre) and Julian address the meeting. Right: Anthony presents the financial statements.

The concert was performed by oboist Adam Bager and pianist Paul Guinery, both of whom were friends of the Berkeleys. In addition to performing a beautiful selection of works, they were able to share insightful and amusing memories of Lennox Berkeley that the Society greatly appreciated.



Petroc interviews Paul (centre) and Adam before their performance.

Members were encouraged to bring guests along for the day, and from among these guests, we are delighted to have welcomed at least FOUR new members into the Society! These included active musicians who have performed Berkeley's works themselves.

We hope that future AGMs can be similarly fruitful opportunities to bring fresh faces into the Society, helping our work to continue into the future. To that end, this year's beautiful concert, the performers' charming recollections of the Berkeleys, and the delicious refreshments – now featuring sushi alongside the traditional cheeseboard – certainly made the invitation appealing!



Paul (piano) and Adam perform works by Berkeley, Say, Bowen, Richardson and Dring.

Returning the Torch

Back in 2021, the Society was contemplating making a grant to the Sinfonia of London to help fund the recording of Berkeley's *Divertimento in Bb*. As the album would also include a work by Adam Pounds, who was our Chair at the time, Adam stepped down to avoid any possible appearance of a conflict of interest. Since then, Julian Berkeley kindly led the Committee.

During this time the Society has made great progress in its work, including commissioning new orchestral parts, promoting the recordings of the *Divertimento* and the incidental music from *The Winter's Tale*, and entering discussions about a Composition Challenge to foster future composers. An increasing number of our Journal articles have also been made available to read on www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk – presented with their illustrations intact – forming an accessible library for musicologists and other Berkeley enthusiasts.

The album containing the *Divertimento* has since been released – to ongoing critical acclaim, with the music broadcast by radio stations around the world. Now that the production of this album is complete, Julian has officially handed the metaphorical torch back to Adam, who is once again the Chair of the Committee. We are deeply grateful to Julian for his leadership.

Rainbow Dickinson Trust

In memory of our late member, Peter Dickinson – composer, pianist, teacher, musicologist, writer and much more besides – we have received an extremely generous donation of £3,000 from the Rainbow Dickinson Trust, which Peter co-founded in 1996.

Peter was a staunch champion of Berkeley's work throughout his long life; beyond it, we are deeply touched to receive this additional support from his Trust.

Songs for Peter Pears

Signum has just released a new album, *Songs for Peter Pears*, featuring Berkeley's *Five Housman Songs*. These are performed by tenor Robin Tritschler, accompanied by pianist Malcolm Martineau.

Reviews by Gramophone and The Art Music Lounge are stellar, calling attention to the “*devastatingly personal*” nature of this work for Berkeley, and finding “*the highest level of intensity*” in this performance.

Polish Festival of British Music

At the AGM, the conductor David Wordsworth – former Chair of the Society – announced that he is curating a festival of British music in Poland, taking place in the autumn of 2025. He hopes to include Berkeley's *Songs of St Teresa of Ávila* and the *Serenade*, amongst other works.

David is also working on a suite of choruses from the opera, *Nelson*, to be published by Chester Music.

Michael Berkeley: Collaborations

Meanwhile, Michael Berkeley has just released a new album too. Entitled *Collaborations*, this compilation presents a selection of Michael's works that were born from or inspired by collaborations with other artists.

The album features a recent song for Ukraine, *Zero Hour*, written with Neil Tennant, who inspired the idea of an album of Collaborations. Other featured artists include David Gilmour, Owain Park and the BBC Singers.



We'll be back in touch in the autumn. Thanks for reading!

Ash (Editor)