

# Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter

Issue 5

December 2024



## ***Divertimento*, one year later**

It's been a year now since we began this Newsletter, and over that time, Berkeley's *Divertimento in B♭* has been enjoying far more popular attention than before, courtesy of the recording by John Wilson and the Sinfonia of London, released this year.

As we've previously reported here, orchestras have been including the work in their programmes – a real sign of growing public awareness and appreciation – and their performances will be aided greatly by the newly typeset orchestral parts released this year. Both the orchestral parts and the recording were co-funded by the Society.

The promotion of the *Divertimento* will continue, as the Academy of Great St Mary's is scheduled to perform it in Cambridge in 2025, under the baton of our Chairman, Adam Pounds. I play in that orchestra myself, as a violinist, and I remember performing the *Divertimento* back in 2018, using the archaic orchestral parts that were in circulation at that time. Reading those parts gave us real difficulty, a point about which Adam spoke at the Society's subsequent AGM, perhaps planting the seeds for our recent project to commission a new edition. Looking forwards to 2025, it will be a pleasure to revisit the *Divertimento* when we can focus on bringing forth the beauty of the music, rather than on peering at notes!



Following our 2018 performance, Adam published an article about the *Divertimento* in the Society's Journal, sharing insights as both a conductor and a composition student of Berkeley. The article can be read online: [www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/articles/pounds-berkeley-divertimento](http://www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/articles/pounds-berkeley-divertimento)

The *Divertimento*, with an intensely haunting Nocturne for its second movement, also features in Rob Barnett's excellent article on Berkeley's night music: [www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/articles/lennox-berkeley-and-nocturne](http://www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk/articles/lennox-berkeley-and-nocturne)

## **Lennox Berkeley Composition Challenge**

The first edition of this Newsletter introduced the Lennox Berkeley Composition Challenge. A year on, we're delighted to share the news that we've been in discussions with the Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, about making this opportunity available to students via his College.

Details are still very much under discussion, but the broad plan is to invite students to compose short pieces, drawing inspiration and learning techniques from Berkeley's works.

Their compositions would be performed in a workshop event held in a new venue that Pembroke College has recently developed, and which they seem (provisionally) willing to make available "at cost", in support of this worthy initiative.

We are keen that the project be effective in promoting Berkeley's music, in accordance with the aims of the Society. To that end, participants may be invited to explain how their pieces are influenced or inspired by Berkeley's works.

Setting up such a project will take time. Among other considerations, the schedule for the event must respect the students' academic commitments – the College would not appreciate a distraction around exam season! – and it must fall at a time of year when the students are generally present in Cambridge. Furthermore, once the Challenge is announced, the participants would require ample time to familiarise themselves with Berkeley's work and write their own music. We will therefore aim to schedule this during the 2025-26 academic year.

It's possible that the workshop could be linked to the Society's AGM for 2026, if the timing and location are appropriate. Whether or not that becomes the case, our members will certainly be invited to attend, in order to enjoy the compositions and support the new generation of composers.



Thanks for reading, once again. Until next time, a very Happy Christmas from all of us on the Committee.

Ash Bridges (Editor)

## Appendix

Each edition of the Newsletter has used musical quotations as paragraph dividers. As the Newsletter's year draws to a close, I'll finish with a list of the Berkeley works from which they were taken – though perhaps eagle-eyed readers will have recognised them all already...

### December 2023

*Six Preludes for Piano, No. 3*



*Divertimento, movement 1*



*I Sing of a Maiden*



### March 2024

*Sonatina for Flute*



*Sonatina for Guitar*



*Divertimento, movement 4*



### June 2024

*Sonatina for Recorder*



### September 2024

*Divertimento, movement 3*



*Five Housman Songs, The Half-Moon Westers Low*



### December 2024

*Look up, sweet Babe*



*Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano*

