

Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter

Issue 7

June 2025



Annual General Meeting

The highlight of this season for the Society was our Annual General Meeting, held once again in Oleg Kogan's beautiful and hospitable Razumovsky Academy, in Kensal Green.



Rupert (left), Petroc (centre) and Adam address the meeting. As a conductor, Adam waves his arms a lot.

This year's concert was given by guitarist Emmanuel Sowicz and pianist Yuko Sano, featuring Berkeley's *Quatre pièces* for guitar (1927) and *Toccata* for piano (1925). They also gave splendid renditions of works by Poulenc, Roussel and Dandrieu (arr. Godowsky), and a delightful duet for the two instruments by Ponce.



Yuko Sano (piano) and Emmanuel Sowicz (guitar).

Along with a briefing on the Society's activities and finances, and the excellent concert, the AGM was a lovely opportunity to catch up with fellow Berkeley enthusiasts – with a guest, Charles Kingsley-Evans, joining the Society after attending the AGM, and with a new member, Dr Georges Kaye, joining the Committee.



Left: Michael shares a detail about the Mont Juic Suite. Right: Historian Michael Bloch and artist Ania Czepulkowska-Abse, friends of Freda Berkeley, socialising during Elizabeth's buffet.



Journal Articles on the Website

As I've reported previously, we've had most of our Journal articles republished on our website, forming an accessible source of information about Berkeley and his music for musicologists, performers, enthusiasts and any other reader. The online layout respects their original printed format, carefully positioning the illustrations as originally intended. With only the 2008-13 Journals' articles still to republish, the online collection is nearly complete.

The articles are certainly finding an audience out there. We were delighted to receive an email from a masters student at China's Xi'an Conservatory of Music, telling of how he had been led to our website after finding little Berkeley research material in his local academic platforms. He hopes to "introduce the 20th century British composer to China [and] let Chinese music students understand the charm of Berkeley and his music" – we have welcomed him to the Society wholeheartedly!

Interestingly, our website's activity telemetry reveals that the article most often read in 2025 appears to be [Julian Berkeley on Lennox Berkeley's 'Missa Brevis'](#), with 183 views as of late May. The [Biography](#) by our late friend and supporter Peter Dickinson followed with 160.

More Berkeley performances – and a guest article!

Last month, Berkeley's song *Counting the Beats* was performed in Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, in a concert commemorating the 50th anniversary of Sir Arthur Bliss, a friend and colleague of Berkeley. Rarely performed, the song sets words by Robert Graves on the theme of mortality, the fleeting nature of time and the fear of impending doom. Berkeley wrote it in 1964 for a festival organised by the Poetry Book Society.

Coming up soon, on 5th July 2025 in Stoller Hall, Manchester, the Gorton Philharmonic will play the *Mont Juic Suite*, the set of four Catalan dances that Berkeley and Britten wrote together after meeting in Barcelona in 1936. Their programme will also include Wagner, Brahms and Elgar – an *appassionato* mixture!

Meanwhile, conductor and former LBS Chairman David Wordsworth is preparing a British Music Festival to take place in Warsaw in November 2025, to feature Berkeley's *Stabat Mater* and *Horn Trio*, and possibly some songs. Other composers due to feature in the Festival include Elgar, Parry, Walton... and our own Michael Berkeley.

Closer to home, we learnt that the Grade 6-8 String Class at the Derby Arts Festival was won by a young cellist playing Berkeley's *Andantino*: Christian Hackett, aged 12, Grade 7 (distinction). He has performed the work on other occasions too, and has now recorded it for us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgO4kcAUzIM>

Christian's mother was a friend of Kathleen Walker, co-founder of this Society, and she has performed Berkeley works as a concert pianist in Malaysia, Brunei and Europe. She has sent us a highly engaging essay about the *Andantino* by Christian himself. We present a lightly edited edition below, as an appendix to this Newsletter.



We'll write again in the autumn. Until then, I'll leave you with some words from Christian Hackett about the *Andantino*. Thanks for reading, as always!

Ash Bridges (Editor)

My mum (Carol Barker) has always talked about Lennox Berkeley's music and about her research and performances of his piano pieces. However, the story that sticks in my mind is how Mum thought she **might have performed to the composer** when Lady Berkeley invited her to tea at her flat in 1994 and my mum played Lennox's piano. At the time I couldn't really work out what Mum meant by this as she said Lennox Berkeley had already passed away by then!

Fast forward to now, Mum and I came across Lennox Berkeley's *Andantino Op. 21 No.2* arranged for cello and piano. I could only find two professional recordings of this version on YouTube, but I fell in love with this music straight away.

I really enjoy performing beautiful, atmospheric music and I love this *Andantino* arrangement even more than the original version for voice and organ taken from his *A Festival Anthem*. I feel like it fits the cello perfectly as I can really make the cello sing using all the full possibilities of my cello from the very lowest notes up to the highest notes of the treble clef. The beautiful, colourful sounds of the piano really help me express every note on the cello.

I have really enjoyed performing this piece in several different venues, as well as recently winning the Strings Grades 6-8 Class at the Derby Arts Festival with this piece. I feel honoured to be doing my bit to introduce Lennox Berkeley's music, particularly to a younger and wider audience. In fact the head of my school enjoyed my *Andantino* performance so much that he said he was going to go home and look up Lennox Berkeley's music on Spotify! Even though this piece is on the ABRSM Grade 7 cello exam syllabus, I'm surprised there are no amateur recordings available on YouTube of this arrangement. So I'm excited that the Lennox Berkeley Society have asked me to [make a YouTube performance](#) for them to enjoy. My mum also learnt from Tony Scotland that a string orchestra version has recently been completed of the *Andantino* and maybe one day, a solo cello and string orchestra version will be available to play too!

...and not forgetting to finish Mum's story about playing to Lennox Berkeley on his piano: My mum found Tony Scotland's article ([A Look Back at the Funerals of Lennox Berkeley and his friend Benjamin Britten, 2024](#)) where she showed me that 'Freda placed Lennox's ashes in an oriental urn **on Lennox's piano** in her new flat' in 1992 'where they remained till shortly before her death'... so it looks like it's true after all!

Christian Hackett, 2025