



AGS News

8 Summer 2007



Welcome to the latest edition of AGS News, the forum of The Armstrong Gibbs Society, which covers events, people and music.

From the President

Saturday 19th May 2007 was a memorable day in the life of the Society. The AGM was carried through briskly under the able chairmanship of Christopher Kingsley. It was very pleasant to have with us two who had known my father and sung with him in the local choirs, namely Norma Burroughs and Matthew Radford. Also Robert Atchison, leader of the London Piano Trio, attended and was helpful in discussion.

The annual meeting in the church hall was followed by the launch of the Altamira recording* of Gibbs' four trios for Violin 'Cello and Piano. This had been well organised by the Secretary and members of the Committee. Over 50 people attended. Angela Aries, Christopher Kingsley and Robert Atchison gave short talks on the background to this recording. The music had had to be produced from the original manuscripts held in the Britten-Pears Library. Michael Pilkington's work in printing out some of the material had been very helpful.

A small exhibition of photographs and memorabilia of the Gibbs family had been set up by the Secretary and Laurette Guest and an excellent buffet lunch followed so there was plenty of time for everyone to relax and mix up in general discussion.

* *Altamira CD - AS 1230105 titled Armstrong Gibbs Complete Piano Trios*

Peacock Pie

by Lorna Burroughs

Peacock Pie - A suite for String Orchestra and Piano

1 The Huntsmen

Evocative as a Stubbs painting, these huntsmen immediately attract attention with their fun-loving trotting horses eagerly returning home.

2 The Sunken Garden

This drifting, nebulous melody (in 6ths?) evoked, for me, a typically English summer with streaky grey/white clouds wafting over the somewhat mysterious depths below.

3 The Ride-By-Nights

I don't agree with the programme notes in the accompanying booklet (which I read after listening to the music) for this third piece; I certainly heard sinister

undercurrents, not exactly vicious, but sufficiently malevolent for me to feel relieved when I heard the lively finish with the bells chiming that told me "All's well".

Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra

The first movement is pure romanticism, first with an almost Rachmaninoff intensity, then typically English understated romances interspersed with quirky English witticisms; no other nationality could have composed these!

The second movement is 'simply' warm-hearted, brooding, passionate, whilst the last movement perfectly depicts an English country festival gone wild!

The above notes are my reactions on hearing – to paraphrase Delius – 'The First Peacock in Summer'.

Perhaps I can finish with a quote from another Englishman – Edward Elgar.

'My idea is that there is music in the air; the world is full of it, you simply take as much as you require'.

Lorna writes: I recently bought the CD Peacock Pie and thought you may be interested in my notes on same for the Newsletter ... Perhaps you could ask other people to write in with their reactions either to the music or to my comments. Then there is also the CD of complete Piano Trios which several of us bought at the launch.

Contributions welcome – the Editor.



Lakeland Pictures

At the end of 2006 Mrs Tessa Abrams contacted the Society with the information that she had some Gibbs manuscripts of piano music and asked if we would be interested. These MSS had belonged to her mother, Mrs Dosia Verney née Cropper (the daughter of Margaret Cropper whose verse was set by Gibbs). She was kind enough to send me copies of what she had: a Ballade in Db which was completely new to all of us, and four of the Lakeland Pictures. The Ballade has now been printed out, and copies can be obtained from the secretary. The Lakeland Pictures provided an opportunity to see if any corrections were needed to the set published by Thames Music in 1997. Lyndon Rust provided the manuscript used for the printed copy. As a result of careful comparison I can now offer a list of

corrections to the Thames score. Mrs Abrams MSS are of numbers 1, 2 and 7, numbered and dated as in the MS of the complete set, and number 5, undated, which appears to be a draft version. This therefore has not been used as a source.

It seems probable that the MSS of Nos 1, 2 and 7 are the original finished versions, all starting on a new page and dated and numbered as in the whole set. Perhaps the remaining five Pictures are still out there somewhere. The MS of the complete set appears to have been written out at a later date, since many of the numbers start on the same page as the end of the previous piece. Also, in most cases the Abrams MSS seem to be the better versions.

In the list below A refers to the complete MSS given to Jim Noble and B to the MSS from Mrs Abrams. Editorial additions in the printed edition confirmed by B are not noted here.

Sources: A and B.

No. 1. Page 3, bar 2, RH note 6: natural to g' in B; bar 7: no *mf*, *cresc.* hairpin in B; bar 8: *mf* in B; bars 17-18, RH: c''s tied in B.

Page 4, bar 2: no *mf* in B; end of bar 7: breath marks in B; bar 15, RH crotchet b's tied in B; bar 16, LH last note b not d'# in B.

Page 5, bars 5-6: RH c''s tied in B; bar 9: LH beat 3, no e' or d' in B, and partially deleted in A; bars 13-15, hairpins as in bars 2-4 in A & B; bar 14: natural to g' in B.

No. 2. B has the dedication 'For Dosia'.

Page 6, bar 8, beats 1-3: *dim.* hairpin in B; bars 10-11, no hairpin in B, added in pencil in A; bar 13, RH note 9, A has f' with a'b added in pencil, B has a'b only.

Page 7, bar 1: no dynamics in B; bar 4, beat 1: *f* in A & B; bar 6: *ff* on beat 2 in A & B; LH note 5: A has Bb, B has d.

Page 8, bar 10, LH note 6: bb not f in A & B.

Page 9, bar 1 RH note 9: d'' not b' in A & B; bar 5, RH as page 6 bar 13; bar 7: no dynamics in B; bar 11, LH beat 2: no e', add c, in B; bar 12, *ff* on best 2, A & B; bar 13, RH note 8, b'b not g in B; bar 14 beats 1-4: *cresc.* hairpin in B; bar 15 beat 1: *fff* in B.

No. 7. Page 24, bars 11-12, RH: bs tied in A and B; bar 13 beat 3 – bar 14 end: *cresc.* hairpin, B; bar 15, beat 1: *ff*, A and B; bar 23, RH beats 3-4: c'' b' crotchets as on page 25 bar 19 (the dot and quaver tail in A look like an afterthought in the first instance).

Page 25, bar 7, RH: a'bs tied in B; bar 12, LH: additional f# and e minims in B; bar 14, LH beat 2: no Ab in B; beats 1-4 *cresc.* hairpin in B; bar 15: no *ff* in B.

Sources: A.

No. 3. Page 10, bar 6: LH note 4: g not f, but see page 12 bar 15.

Page 11, bar 1: LH notes 2-4: *cresc.* hairpin; bar 2 RH: *p*, LH *mf*; bar 10, RH last note: b and g', not d' and d''; bar 16 RH last beat: quaver b'' semi-quavers c''' and d'''.

No. 4. Page 14, bar 20 beat 1: *cresc.* hairpin starts here.

No. 5. Page 16, bar 4 RH beat 4: f# crotchet, not quaver, natural to d' editorial; bar 9, RH beat 2: e''b crotchet not quaver.

Page 18, bar 9, RH beat 4: f# crotchet, not quaver, natural to d' editorial; bars 10-11, RH: b'bs should be tied; page 19, bar 2: e''b crotchet not quaver.

No. 6. Page 22, bar 9, RH note 5: g'' not f''#.

Page 23, bar 5, beat 2: *cresc.* hairpin starts here; bar 7: no *mf*.

No. 8. Page 26, bar 19, beat 1: *mp*; bar 20: no *mp*.

Page 28, bar 6: *mf*.

Michael Pilkington



Soundbites

"The little man did enjoy it"

This is taken from Ida Gibbs letter to her mother in 1890, in which she describes her son's reaction to the meet. Barely eighteen months old, Armstrong Gibbs addressed every pink coat as 'Dadda'. Much to David Cecil's disappointment, his son Armstrong was not to follow in his own footsteps and become a keen horseman. However the experience of the hunt may have made enough of an impression on him to evoke the movement *The Huntsmen in Peacock Pie*



NEWS AND VIEWS

Odysseus

Exciting news! Gibbs' choral symphony is finally to be recorded this Autumn by the Oriana Choir

The London Piano Trio CD of the Gibbs piano trios

If you have not yet got a copy, you can order one on the website: www.londonpianotrio.com

Or contact Robert Atchison directly on: 01245 324100

See Next Issue for **CAG Soundbites, From the Records, Memory Lane, and News and Views**. Please send contributions to the editor:

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