

LISZT SOCIETY

Newsletter

www.lisztsoc.org.uk

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LISZT SOCIETY ANNUAL DAY

The Liszt Society Annual Day 2008 will be held at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DT (nearest underground stations - Barbican and Moorgate), on

Friday 28th November 2008

PROGRAMME

(Please note the change of time for the Annual General Meeting)

12:00 Annual General Meeting

13:00 Recital presented by the Liszt Society and the Keyboard Charitable Trust

Vitaly Pisarenko - piano (Winner of the 8th International Franz Liszt Piano Competition, Utrecht 2008)

Liszt - Polonaise No.2 S223/2

Liszt - Valse Impromptu S213

Saint-Saëns/Liszt - Danse macabre S555

Liszt - Vallée d'Obermann (Première Année de pèlerinage) S160

Liszt - Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 S244/2

14:00 Masterclass: **Leslie Howard** with musicians of GSMD

17:00 Talk by **Ross Alley** on Liszt's Songs

19:00 Concert by musicians of Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Light refreshments will be available at the canteen until 19:00

LESLIE HOWARD MASTERCLASSES - JANUARY 2009

Leslie Howard will be holding a series of masterclasses on piano compositions of Liszt with sacred themes and subjects. These will be held at his home in London (nearest overground station Norbury) from Monday 12th to Saturday 17th January, 2009. Members of the Liszt Society and guests can attend in an auditory capacity from Thursday 15th January - between 2pm and 5pm. On Sunday 18th the best performances will be presented in a concert at 3pm. Listeners will be asked for a small contribution for refreshments.

The classes will be open to all members of the Liszt Society (of an appropriate standard) and to piano students from Trinity College of Music. Repertoire must be submitted to enquiries@LisztSoc.org.uk for approval. Other pieces of Liszt will be considered but no transcriptions, fantasies, or pieces on national themes will be accepted and the Sonata is excluded on this occasion.

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscription rates (1st January – 31st December):

UK £20 (students £10), EU £25, elsewhere £25.

Additional donations are most welcome.

Please note that renewals of membership are due on **1st January 2009**. Payment must be made in **pounds sterling (£ / GBP)** and cheques made out to **'The Liszt Society'** not to individual officers of the Society. If you pay by Standing Order please remember that the rates were increased last year.

As we are fast approaching Christmas, please ask the Membership Secretary about making a gift of a subscription to the Liszt Society!

Paypal

Members are invited to pay subscription or contribute donations by means of the **Paypal** system. Anyone with an e-mail address can open a Paypal account - just go to www.paypal.co.uk to sign up. It is free. To send monies to the Liszt Society simply set the payment destination as treasurer@lisztsoc.org.uk and pay the usual Sterling amount. The Paypal system will identify the sender by their e-mail address and any reference they may give. Members electing to pay this way are requested to also send a brief e-mail to the Treasurer at the same address to advise that they have transmitted payment.

Overseas members can also pay this way and can specify the destination currency to be Sterling - the Paypal system will compute the local currency amount required. The Society incurs a small charge for receiving payments this way but it is much less than the cost of transacting individual cheque payments on overseas banks in foreign currency. The monies arrive much more quickly as well.

Once a Paypal account is set up it can be used for many other types of payment.

Members are urged to investigate this simple means of payment.

REVIEWS: RECENT RECORDINGS

I've recently bought volumes 26 and 27 of the ongoing Naxos complete Liszt piano music series. These two discs consist of what I believe to be the first recording of the two piano arrangement of the Dante Symphony with the choral finale (the *Magnificat*) sung by a children's choir with treble soloist. I'm not overly familiar with this work in its original guise but, comparing my orchestral recording with this two piano version, it does not suffer in comparison! The power of the opening Allegro is well re-created by the two pianos belonging to The Franz Liszt piano duo, Francesco Nicolosi and Vittorio Bresciani (the latter was involved in one of the two extant recordings of the two piano version of the Faust symphony that I know of, recorded on Nuovo Era, 7284 – another excellent CD which I also wholeheartedly recommend). I found the work utterly compelling and the *Magnificat* ending is suitably ethereal and very nicely sung by the Hungarian Radio Children's Choir with Gabriella Thész as the chorus master and the treble soloist Barbara Szmodies. Some of the passages are lovely and are beautifully sung and are well supported by the pianists. I can't see any reason why this remarkable work is not better known and, certainly in this arrangement, it deserves a wider audience.

In all, I warmly recommend this disc not only because it appears to be the first recording of this work but also because it is an excellent recording in all respects. Also, I assume that if Naxos sells enough copies, it may persuade them to record the remainder of Liszt's two piano music as well as part of this

series. My one minor quibble is with the filler – an arrangement of the Dante Sonata by Vittorio Bresciani which, although very well played and adding some interesting counterpoint to the themes within the piece, strikes me as not really necessary as the piece works well enough in its original (solo piano) version. The seventeen odd minutes that this takes up on the disc could easily have been filled with one (or more) of Liszt's other works for two pianos as there is still much of his work for this instrumentation left to be recorded.

All of which brings me onto the next and most recent of the series – a CD of Donizetti operatic paraphrases and transcriptions, played by William Wolfram. The disc begins with the "Valse a Capriccio on themes from Lucia et Parisina" (S413 no.3 – second version). This is superbly played all the way through with a very lovely and delicate little waltz that is varied throughout the piece and interspersed with the more powerful sections from "Parisina". This is another all too rarely heard piece which deserves to be programmed more frequently in concert halls. I was also very impressed with this recording of the two Lucrezia Borgia fantasies (S400, nos.1 and 2). These pieces really are immensely difficult but here every technical hurdle (including runs in thirds, three handed effects and so on) is dispatched with considerable aplomb. My only slight reservation is the central section that is marked *Andante* is taken slightly more *con moto* than that! Nonetheless, this is a superb recording of both pieces. Next on this disc are the two "Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor" (S397 and S398) the first of which is a fairly straightforward transcription of the 'Sextet' and the second the 'Funeral March and Cavatina'. Unusually, in comparison with the other recordings I have heard, it starts quietly (the score I have does not specify any sort of dynamic marking until a 'Rinforzando' in bar 3) rather than 'Forte' or 'Fortissimo' as many pianists seem to choose. This means that the piece gradually gains in volume as it progresses and concludes suitably rousing! As with the other pieces on this disc, it is very well played. As many people may know, the original conception of the fantasy was as a single piece but Liszt's publisher was unhappy with this, due to the length and so the piece was split into two. This is why at the end of the second Réminiscence there is a passage modelled on the sextet introduction from the previous piece (albeit in a different key). I think perhaps the two pieces would have worked rather better the other way around (so the Sextet ending of the 'Funeral March and Cavatina' transcription is followed by the Sextet) but it doesn't spoil the fact that this is a thoroughly enjoyable performance of the 'Funeral March and Cavatina' as well! The next piece is another "straight" transcription, this time of the tenor aria 'Spirito Gentil' from "La Favorite" (designated S400a). Again, this is well played although it is rather faster than expected – there is a lot of detail in the right hand which would possibly sound more clearly if slowed down but it is a very good recording, once again. Lastly on this disc we have a transcription of the 'Funeral March' from "Dom Sebastien" (S402). Again, I cannot fault this recording either – the funereal section at the beginning is suitably dirge like and the piece gradually builds in volume and speed before becoming much jollier and ending affirmatively in a major key.

These two discs, for me, represent a recent high point in the Naxos series and I would hope that due to the low price of the recordings, all of the pieces here may find a larger audience especially amongst those who think all that Liszt wrote was hugely difficult and bombastic.

Jonathan Welsh

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following members who have joined or re-joined in recent months:

Alexander Ainley	Hertfordshire, UK
Norman Carr	London, UK
Tiago Gomes da Costa	Swansea, Wales
Frank Lioni	Netherlands
Jason Newton	Norfolk, UK
Milus Scruggs	USA

MEMBER NEWS

Violinist **Rachel Barton Pine** will be performing the Brahms Concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and José Serebrier at the Cadogan Hall in London on Tuesday 11th November at 19.30.

If any other members would like their news to be published in the next *Newsletter* please get in touch with the Membership Secretary.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Thursday, 13 November, 2008 - 19.30
Barbican Hall, London
Programme includes Liszt Piano Concerto No. 2
Jean-Yves Thibaudet - piano
Marin Alsop - conductor
London Symphony Orchestra

Thursday, 18 December, 2008 - 19.30
Wigmore Hall, London
Liszt - *Années de pèlerinage* (Books I and II)
Daniel Grimwood - piano

Saturday, 3 January, 2009 - 19.30
Wigmore Hall, London
Music by Ravel, Thalberg, Clementi and Liszt
Natalia Strelchenko - piano

Friday, 16 January, 2009 - 19.30
Wigmore Hall, London
Music by Chopin, Beethoven, and Liszt
Fuzjko Hemming - piano

Thursday, 12 February, 2009 - 13.00
LSO St. Luke's, London
Music by Chopin and Liszt
Cedric Tiberghien - piano

Thursday, 5 March, 2009 - 19.30
Town Hall, Birmingham
Music by Brahms, Bach/Busoni and Liszt
Peter Donohoe - piano

Sunday, 15 March, 2009 - 15.00
Royal Festival Hall, London
Music by Schumann, Schubert/Liszt and Liszt
Boris Berezovsky - piano

CONTACT INFORMATION

THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, ANDREW KING,
MAY BE CONTACTED AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

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Other enquiries may be addressed to:
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