



BBC SCOTTISH SYMPHONY CLUB

Honorary President Sir Donald Runnicles OBE

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Several of my editorials have used titles from popular songs to reflect their theme. My last one was *'Ruby, Ruby, Ruby'* - not because I am a fan of either the Kaiser Chiefs or the late Kenny Rogers but because season 2020-21 on which we were then about to embark was to be the Club's ruby anniversary season. It had been 40 years since, in 1980, the Club arose to fight for the sustainable future of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Although the Club's recent history has been somewhat insecure (the Club was effectively relaunched in 2019-20 following a lean period), when that editorial was written, we had high hopes for a full and exciting programme to mark the Club's ruby celebrations. Season 2019-20 was underway and going well. On 2 March 2020 Andrew Berridge and friends (Laura Samuel, Charlotte Ashton and Sharron Griffiths) entertained Club members with the season's third concert, a lovely recital that displayed the variety and unexpected repertoire that are hallmarks of so many Club concerts, encompassing music familiar and not so familiar by familiar and not so familiar composers, in this instance Beethoven, Halvorsen, Finnis, Maxwell Davis and Debussy.

It was the last recital we have had. By the end of March 2020, the country was in lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and that is how we remain. The Club concert and Annual General Meeting planned for 1 June were cancelled (with the 2020 AGM eventually held on 30 November using the now very familiar video-conferencing app, Zoom). So, instead of celebration, season 2020-21 has seen no concerts, no receptions, no autumn edition of the Newsletter. Likewise, subscriptions have again been suspended and with no concerts that means no income for the Club.

How should the Club respond to this crisis? I believe we have no alternative but to await what happens with the BBC SSO. All

decisions by Glasgow Life (the BBC SSO's landlord in City Halls) and the BBC SSO itself on any relaxation of the current restrictions must be taken within a framework to be set by the Scottish Government. The resumption of concert-giving to the public in City Halls is probably still a long way off. No doubt Glasgow Life will have to decide on, *inter alia*, the financial viability of opening the City Halls with a reduced audience capacity (assuming social distancing still pertains). The situation respecting the Club and its continued access to the Recital Room in City Halls is, if anything, even more uncertain. There are many imponderables. For example, would the Club still have free use; how would social distancing be achieved if it was still required; where would responsibility for health and safety matters lie if the pandemic continued? And, of course, one must bear in mind the membership's elderly age profile, deemed amongst the most vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic.

And so back to the title of this editorial: 'The End of the Line' is a song written and performed by the British-American supergroup the Traveling Wilburys. They no longer exist and it is, unfortunately, looking as though the Club is also nearing the end of its line.

While Covid-19 has played a part in the existential crisis now faced by the Club, it is not in fact the main factor. The Club's Management Committee decided during the early stages of lockdown to continue to the end of season 2020-21 in the hope that something might be salvaged of the season. As we now know, restrictions have not yet been relaxed. Ironically then, Covid-19 in fact delayed the inevitable which might have happened last June when there ought to have been an AGM. For, after many attempts since summer 2018 at trying to find a successor and build a new team capable of continuing the Club, all unsuccessful, I am resolved to stand down as Club President at the close of this season, come what may. This year is my tenth of Club Committee involvement, the last 7

as President. I believe that several Committee members (the most experienced and the most active) will be doing likewise.

At the Zoom-facilitated AGM on 30 November two variations on the theme of closure were floated, one that someone within the orchestra might take over from us immediately, the other that the Club be put into suspension and revived at some future undetermined date. At the time of writing these avenues are still being explored. But, essentially, the Club in its present form is very likely to cease at the end of this season.

If that happens, it is worth echoing the words of one Club member who wrote to me during the crisis of 2018: *"best to close with thanks for the past and to say it was good to be part of it"*. More recently, Matthew Caminer, first Club Chairman, wrote in similar vein: *"let us hope for a positive outcome, but if it is not to be, let us celebrate what has been, with joy rather than sadness"*.

Essentially, most of the articles in this Newsletter have been planned over the last twelve months. What could not be foreseen was the death in mid-January of past Chairman, Malcolm Flemington. I did not work with him but it is evident that without him the Club would not have survived as long as it has. Reminiscences of Malcolm from those who did work with him appear in these pages with more on the Club's website (see the address on page 3).

Lastly, I would like to thank the BBC SSO's own Chris Dale who, once again, has given of his valuable time to proof read No.62 most thoroughly! Any remaining infelicities or simple errors are, however, fully my responsibility.

Jim McGrath

Front cover: Malcolm Flemington at St Bride's Church, Hyndland, Glasgow 23 April 2009. (John Wood)

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From Dominic Parker, Director BBC SSO



The BBC SSO went into Covid-19 lockdown on 16 March 2020, alongside the other BBC orchestras and the arts industry – and indeed most industries – in the UK. The immediate impact for us was the cancellation of some much-anticipated performances later in March: of Brahms's *German Requiem* to be conducted by Ilan Volkov, and Bartók's *The Wooden Prince* with Thomas Dausgaard.

Now, nearly a year on in February 2021, we are still unsure when concerts for our loyal live audiences will resume. It has been an extraordinary time for all of us, and certainly it has tested the resilience of our musicians, management and audiences alike.

Nevertheless, alongside all the challenges of the last year, there have been some truly memorable moments.

The first day when a small group of our musicians returned to City Halls in July 2020 to play together, now social distanced, was tremendously moving.

Prior to that, of course, many of our musicians had developed new skills for working digitally at home. Some delivered free online music workshops into schools for the children of key-workers as part of the BBC's 'Connecting the Dots' programme; others made individually brilliant performances and were part of ever-more ambitious ensemble recordings, assembled into finished articles by our brilliant sound engineers. Hopefully you saw our musicians playing the Wimbledon theme tune, many sporting tennis gear and featuring on BBC Two to cap a programme which looked back at Wimbledon's greatest moments? Or maybe you saw the musicians from all BBC orchestras join with members of the public in the great Lockdown Orchestra?

We gradually built up the number of players working together at City Halls throughout July and August, testing the safety regimes, with our eye on our being prepared for our performance on 5 September at the BBC Proms – not knowing at that point if we'd be able to travel to London or make other arrangements.

Heading to London ultimately proved impossible, though that in itself provided an opportunity – to broadcast and stream the first-ever BBC Prom from City Halls in Glasgow, live on BBC Radio 3 and BBC iPlayer. Alpesh Chauhan conducted (announced by then as our new Associate Conductor) with Steven Hough dazzling as soloist in Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto. Strauss's *Metamorphosen* was stunning and felt deeply appropriate, and Jay Capperauld's new work *Circadian Refrains (172 Days Until Dawn)*, commissioned and composed in five weeks, captured the frustration of lockdown and the optimism for an eventual release from its restrictions.

A swiftly reworked season of radio and streamed concerts followed, and for an industry that tends to plan two or more years in advance, fixing performances and artists at perhaps a month or two months' notice brought a very different dynamic for all concerned. Travel restrictions meant many artists couldn't make it to Glasgow, and we enjoyed working with only UK-based conductors. To name a few: Sir Mark Elder made a welcome return, performing Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No.1*, Stravinsky's *Dances Concertantes*, and Schreker's *Chamber Symphony*; Steven Isserlis joined

conductor Chloé van Soeterstède to perform the Schumann Cello Concerto; Jessica Cottis conducted works by John Adams, Joan Tower and Schumann; Mark Wigglesworth conducted a searing afternoon performance of Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony; and Isata Kanneh-Mason joined conductor Andrew Gourlay to perform Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

The BBC SSO and our fellow BBC orchestras were categorised as 'Broadcast Critical' during the current crisis, and our mission during this last year has been to keep broadcasting and maintain our musical output for

our audiences at home as much as we can. Whilst there has been no-one present listening in the hall, we've been acutely aware of those at home who have found radio, and now streaming, to be a lifeline during lockdown. We'll continue to do that until our world returns to some kind of normality.

Dominic Parker

Music in a time of Pandemic

Two BBC SSO players reflect on their experiences of lockdown

Mark Braithwaite (sub principal viola)

It feels impossible to write anything about living in the time of Covid without pausing to think of how much it has affected others: from victims to health professionals; business owners; those who never stopped working full time; all those feeling anxious about the present and future. The BBC SSO didn't meet together for over four months initially. Despite the negative cause, for me as a musician there were some positives to the down time. Orchestral string players have lots of different preferences around personal practice: some feel happier or more able to learn the notes during rehearsals. I have always preferred to prepare beforehand and also felt the need to practice alone in order to look after my skills. This can mean playing seven days a week for quite long stretches. A common occurrence for me would be starting the weekend tired from the week's work and trying to find a balance between resting and enjoying free time on the one hand, and preparing for the following week on the other. I have often found myself in an anxious state between the two. I realised during the first lockdown that I had kept this anxious state with me and that every time I picked up my instrument, I had a stressful feeling of not having done enough, and playing as if there was something I needed to do in a hurry. It took me a couple of months to realise that I needed to recover a sense of play in the purest sense: enjoying it and having fun. At that point I finally started to enjoy a luxurious element of lockdown - that there was no pressure to play. Then why play at all? The only reason could be because I wanted to, so I began to appreciate that if I picked up my instrument, it must be for pleasure. And I could play exactly what - and how - I wanted to. That's another luxury that can be hard to come by in a disciplined and hierarchical orchestral setting where there can be very little space for personal preference. A couple of pieces came off the shelf where they had sat untouched for years: Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata*; the last two Bach Cello Suites; and a couple of the duets for two violas by Jean-Marie Leclair. It has sometimes been hard to be motivated - why do anything on any particular day when weeks and months stretched out ahead of me? In fact my motivation has been genuine when it has been



there and I have started enjoying small achievements. There has also been time to unwind long-held tensions and bad habits, and to take as long as I need to figure out a complicated phrase or a tricky passage. An aspect of playing an instrument that doesn't necessarily spring to mind is that it is physically and mentally tiring. There is none of the obvious attrition of playing sport, but we must process enormous amounts of information in everything that we do, and we are with our instruments for many hours a day, over many years. I think that when we stopped working I was a bit like a car that hadn't been serviced for a long time: I was still going but one or two parts were creaking! Pressure is a necessary part of doing things, and to getting music learned and onto a stage. And there is nothing like performing to an audience - particularly a loyal and friendly one! But for me a rare positive from 2020 was remembering that it's important to do things without stress sometimes; to slow down and play for myself; to wonder and keep having a go, and to hopefully get there in my own way, in my own time.

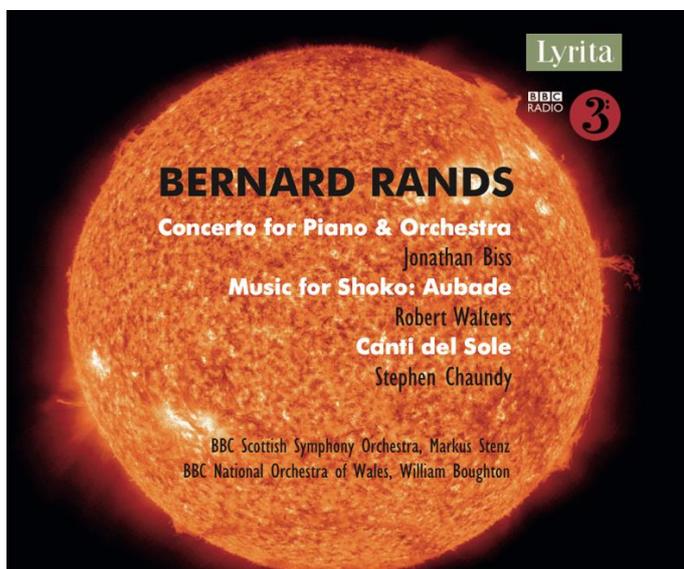
Rudi De Groot (section principal cello)

The thing about lockdown, when it was first triggered, was that suddenly we were all faced with a very real cacophony of conflicting emotions. Suddenly, most of us were faced with an horizon of potentially infinite time at home, and we had to swiftly adapt our practical lives, and our minds, to these new and extreme conditions. For me, and most, I gather, the practical adjustments were no problem at all – home-schooling our daughter has been a challenging but rewarding experience (I finally understand Pythagoras!!) and all the other activities around our house and garden have kept me busy throughout the year. I am now a keen gutter installer and specialist and I'm pretty adept at repairing trampolines that have literally left our property in the various storms that have passed over us.

I've also been writing a huge amount of music from large orchestral scores to big band Christmas collections and then for smaller ensembles too. From a mental perspective, I have certainly found it helpful to maintain a variety of creative projects on the go. It's a very slow process, and I'm not the most patient person in the world, but I do love creating any kind of artistic project and I find it very rewarding indeed. I have realised through lockdown that with disciplines and activities, my mind is at less risk of becoming depressed or frustrated. Some days it is much harder to motivate myself, but most days I get there in the end. This otherworldly experience of lockdown during a most terrifying pandemic is certainly something that will stay in our lives and our minds for a very long time. Our lives will never be the same, but I'm confident that, as with every catastrophe our species has endured, we will come out stronger. Hopefully, we will all be able to return to some form of normality soon. And the moment we eventually walk on stage to a live audience will be a moment to remember.



BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra Recordings – New and Recent Releases



Bernard Rands

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Biss (piano), Markus Stenz (conductor)

Music for Shoko: Aubade

Robert Walters (English horn), Stephen Rose and Jeffrey Zehngut (violins), Joanna Patterson Zakany (viola), Charles Bernard (cello)

Canti del Sole

BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Stephen Chaundy (tenor), William Boughton (conductor)

Lyritya LY0379

Bernard Rands belongs to a group of British composers who came to prominence in the early 1960s when serialism held sway though, as he later pointed out, he was 'never a card-carrying member of the serial school'. The international reputation of Bernard Rands as one of the leading composers of his generation rests on over a

hundred well-crafted scores of notable formal cohesion, dramatic intensity and lyrical beauty.

The Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (2013) was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in celebration of Rands's eightieth birthday. As implied by its title, the piece is for piano and orchestra rather than a piano concerto. Reserved rather than outwardly virtuosic, Rands's concerto uses large forces sparingly, always at the service of the long-term musical argument. Rands has referred to the score as "very reserved...without wanting to invite comparisons, it's almost Mozartian".

Music for Shoko: Aubade is an atmospheric mini-tone poem for English horn and string quartet (2017). The piece is a transcription of the central 'Aubade' movement from the Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra.

Canti del Sole, for tenor and orchestra (1983) describes a day's progression from dawn to dusk through a continuous setting of fourteen poems about the sun.

(Released 2019)



Reawakened: Clarinet Concertos by Hamilton, Gipps, Walthew and Ireland
Robert Plane (Clarinet), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Martyn Brabbins (Conductor)
Champs Hill CHRCD160

This album of world premiere recordings showcases rediscoveries of works for clarinet that have become unjustly neglected. Each work adds a distinctive and fascinating new voice to the genre of the British clarinet concerto. Iain Hamilton's concerto has been un-played for over 50 years after just a handful of performances, possibly because the orchestral parts were mislaid; Ruth Gipps struggled to be heard in a male-dominated musical world; Richard H. Walthew left his clarinet concerto in manuscript, un-orchestrated, and it is here orchestrated by Alfie Pugh. 'Reawakened' also features John Ireland's much-loved Fantasy Sonata.

In an enthusiastic review for the January 2021 issue of Gramophone magazine, Richard Whitehouse stated: "All four pieces could not have more sympathetic advocacy than by Plane, whose virtuosity is keenly abetted by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins. With vivid and realistic sound, and informative notes from Daniel Jaffé, this is an enjoyable and worthwhile release". (Released December 2020)



Bartók
The Miraculous Mandarin; Suite No. 2; Hungarian Peasant Songs
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard (Conductor) ONYX4213

This album is the second in a series intended to cover all of Bartók's works for orchestra. His Suite No. 2, smaller in scale than No.1, is imbued with the folk music he had been studying. He spent the war years collecting folk songs, some of which provided material for the Hungarian Peasant Songs which he returned to in 1933 and orchestrated. Bartók composed *The Miraculous Mandarin* during the period of violent unrest in Hungary after the collapse, in 1919 of the Soviet Hungarian Republic, which was replaced by an ultra-nationalist regime that left over 1,500 dead and thousands imprisoned without trial. It is against this bloody political and social backdrop that the composer, recovering from the so-called Spanish Flu, set about a musical depiction of Lengyel's 'pantomime grotesque'. Thomas Dausgaard writes: "In spite of its often dream-like character, it is music sometimes so offensively realistic that it was censored and cut for its Budapest premiere. Our recording uses the recently discovered original score without censored cuts – enjoy this opportunity to finally hear it in the shape it was conceived!"

(This volume was released on 26 February 2021 and has already been highlighted by Gramophone magazine).



Elgar: Cello Concerto
Vaughan Williams: Dark Pastoral
Dai Miyata (cello), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard (Conductor)
MDG6502181

Dai Miyata is the first Japanese to win the first prize at the Rostropovich Competition, in 2009. The Elgar probably needs no introduction. The other piece is unusual. Ralph Vaughan Williams left only sketches for a planned cello concerto for Pablo Casals. Only the slow movement, which breaks off abruptly, is available in a fair copy. In collaboration with the RVW Foundation, David Matthews has turned it into a playable piece. The BBC SSO, under its Chief Conductor Thomas Dausgaard, perfectly strikes the tone of both works. The Sunday Times commented: “*First comes a beautiful account of Elgar’s Cello Concerto, then, in contrast with that overfamiliar work, a version of part of an abortive cello concerto Vaughan Williams planned for Casals...It’s fetching and elegiac, with an evanescent ending.*” (Released: 31 July 2020)

A brief history of the BBC Scottish Symphony Club – Part Two

The Club’s records were deposited with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s Archives in 2012 for safekeeping. This article is based on around half a dozen visits to the RCS Archives conducted between late February and mid-March 2020 before the Covid-19 crisis eventually closed all access. I would again like to thank my co-researcher and fellow Committee member Meg Speirs for her invaluable help, and the RCS’s archivist Stuart Harris-Logan for allowing us access until the very last possible moment! What follows cannot claim to be exhaustive. It adopts a broad-brush approach to describing how the Club developed over four decades. Part One (in the spring 2020 Newsletter) covered the years 1980 to 2000, and ended with a photograph of Margaret Beaton, Matthew Caminer and Robert Simans cutting a cake in celebration of the Club’s 20th anniversary in 2000...

2001-2010

In March 2001, the Salon Trio, led by Bob Simans (one of the principal architects of the Club), provided the entertainment at the Club’s then annual music weekend, now being held at the Lyall Cliff Hotel in Dunoon.

At that year’s AGM Eileen Robertson reported that the Club stall was not as lucrative as in earlier years as more venues and promoters were charging for allowing the stall to set up. For example, the Edinburgh Festival Theatre was charging £50 per night, and others were taxing between 10 and 15% of the Club’s sales. However, if the BBC were the promoters, charges generally did not apply, and the stall continued to appear at most BBC SSO concerts.

The chairperson Margaret Beaton, at that same 2001 AGM, announced that she, Gordon Smith (the treasurer) and Mary Cree (secretary) all wished to stand down at the following AGM as they had all been office holders in excess of 10 years. In words that echo down the years, she hoped that “*Club members would come forward to take over those posts as well as the other untitled posts on the committee*”; otherwise “*without new volunteers the*

future of the Club could be in doubt”. In the event, at the following AGM, Beaton was able to demit office because Malcolm Flemington, who had already been Chairman between 1984 and 1987, stepped forward and saved the day. He began his second period as Chair in September 2002.

In 2002, the BBC SSO inaugurated its ‘Friends of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra’. The Club’s management was concerned, its anxiety reflected in the autumn 2003 Newsletter: “*Many of you will have read in your concert programmes when attending concerts by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra an item about FRIENDS OF THE SSO and may have been confused as to whether this supersedes the BBC Scottish Symphony Club, or that there had been a takeover when we weren’t looking!!*” The article went on to feature an explanation from the orchestra’s Director, Hugh Macdonald, who had written to assure the Club that the new organisation was “*purely a charitable trust to raise money for the orchestra’s educational commitment*” including supporting the appointment of a Learning Manager and other related activities. The following year the Club

sought to become an associate or corporate member of the Friends but was advised that no such class of membership was available. An uneasy co-existence followed, for several years.

In 2003 two names well-known to the current group of Club supporters first appear in the Club's records: Nancy Dickinson, who joined the Committee in September 2003 and immediately became membership secretary, and Gill Copp (later De Groote) who succeeded Jan Warrack as the liaison between Club and the orchestra.

Although the overheads, to which the Club's stall was subject to in venues beyond Queen Margaret Drive, were increasing during this decade, sales were clearly flourishing, with 699 CDs sold between 2003 and 2005.

Far less encouraging were the Club's membership numbers. From around 250 at the start of the decade, the AGM in April 2004 was told that there were 155 members. Three years later it was reported that *"our numbers have dropped to an all-time low"*. The figure does not appear in the AGM's papers but can be interpolated from later details as having been about 85 (even lower than our current figure of 97 as at March 2021).

The cause of this slump may well have been competition from the 'Friends of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra'. Certainly, after that organisation was wound up (around 2007) the Club's figures recover. The AGM minutes of June 2009, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, suggest another factor when recording the recovery, namely the efforts of the membership secretary Nancy Dickinson *"who has a never-ending string of musical friends...attending our Evening Concerts"*. The autumn 2010 Newsletter records that the number of members had grown to 145.

On Saturday 5 November 2005, the Club hosted a party for BBC SSO players to mark the orchestra's 70th anniversary with cake, catering and a ceilidh band. The event was held in Hutcheson's Grammar School Hall (formerly Laurel Bank school) in Great George Street, as Broadcasting House in Queen Margaret Drive was now closed. BBC Scotland's long-cherished dream of new, more centrally located premises in Glasgow was about to be realised. The move of BBC Scotland and the BBC SSO from Broadcasting House in Queen Margaret Drive to, respectively, Pacific Quay and the City Halls complex in 2006 meant that the Club was on the move. It had to look beyond the BBC for a venue for its events. Inclusion in the City Halls was not a given. The immediate need was met by St Bride's, an episcopal church in Hyndland in Glasgow's west end, and it was in that church's crypt that the Club held its May 2006 AGM. Club recitals would follow soon at St Bride's (and also, on one occasion, at the nearby Hyndland Parish Church).

There can be little doubt that the Club had enjoyed a very comfortable existence at Queen Margaret Drive. It had been an ideal venue for its social evenings, as the recitals were termed, replete with cheese, wine, and (as the following AGM minute extract from 2007 suggests)

homemade sustenance which, by this time, was in contravention of the Food Hygiene Regulations: *"Malcolm explained that, although a blind eye had been cast...at Broadcasting House...we could not continue with home baking"*. So, no more home-made food at St Bride's though the Club still offered wine and crisps.



Well-attended music making at St Bride's, Hyndland (John Wood)

More seriously, losing the close physical ties that had been enjoyed with the BBC SSO, its management and its audiences at Queen Margaret Drive was quickly seen to be to the Club's disadvantage. In May 2006 one finds the statement that *"we are hopeful that we will be able to sell our CDs again and have a presence in the City Halls; talks are at a very early stage"*.

The minutes of subsequent AGMs into the next decade record continuing efforts by the Club's management to secure a presence of some sort for the Club in the City Halls similar to that which it had enjoyed at Queen Margaret Drive. There was, on some matters, quick and significant progress. In June 2009 it was reported that season 2009-10 would see the Club's programme of six 'Evening Concerts' (as they were now styled) split evenly between St Bride's and the Recital Room of the City Halls. Discussions with the orchestra's then director, Gavin Reid, were also exploring such matters as *"the possibility of a limited number of members being permitted to attend open rehearsals by the orchestra"* and of the Club *"sponsoring the orchestra's annual Christmas gathering, which would provide another opportunity for members to meet players"*.

The Club sought to help the BBC SSO settle into its new home. In 2007 a wish list was supplied by the orchestra. This included decorations for the stage and a fridge for the 'board room'. Both were deemed items that the City Halls should supply. On the other hand, a request for book shelves for the players' Green Room was approved and paid for by the Club. It was also to mark the move to City Halls that the Club decided in 2007 to commission from composer (and Club member) Eddie McGuire music that could be played by the BBC SSO especially on overseas tours (up until then the encore on such occasions had often been a set of *Eightsome Reels* arranged by Brian Fahey). The *'Three Encores'* were delivered in 2010 and received their first public hearing

during a broadcast of Sean Rafferty's popular Radio 3 programme, *In Tune*, on 24 September of that year.

Club subscriptions were increased substantially at the 2009 AGM, the first increase since the 1990s! The rates were now those with which we are familiar: adult £14, joint adult and family £22, senior citizen £12, joint senior citizen £20, junior (under 18) and students £6. Membership would still bring the purchaser "*discounted tickets for most BBC SSO concerts*", discounted entry to the Club's own evening concerts (£2.50 as against £5 for non-members), discounted recordings, and regular newsletters.

January 2010 saw a conducting masterclass at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). The course was delivered by Donald Runnicles, the orchestra's new Chief Conductor. Club members were invited to attend both this and a similar event one month later with a joint RSAMD/BBC SSO concerto masterclass.

The Club's first Annual Reception for the orchestra, and called as such, was held on Sunday 13 June 2010 in the Players' Green Room in the City Halls, after an afternoon concert. It was deemed a great success. Others would follow, almost (but not quite) every year.



Malcolm Flemington addressing a Club audience at St Bride's church in Hyndland, Glasgow. (John Wood)

At the AGM held later that same month, Malcolm Flemington stood down as Chair. He had completed a remarkable and unequalled two terms of office as Chair that amounted to 12 years of service to the Club, plus his time as a Committee member.

Eileen Robertson, a member of the Club Committee since November 1989 and Malcolm's Vice-Chair, succeeded him.

In November 2010, Eileen and Marion Caldwell (the Club's Treasurer) met with Gavin Reid, director of the BBC SSO, and Douglas Martin, the orchestra's marketing manager, to discuss the Club's place in the City Halls. The Club had already been allowed to use the Recital Room in the City Halls for half of its annual programme of concerts (with the other half at St Bride's church) and this was now extended to up to 6 concerts per annum, without charge to the Club. The BBC SSO's management and the City Halls had also allowed Club recruitment leaflets to be displayed in the Halls. On the other hand, it was confirmed that the Club would not be allowed to sell its stock of BBC SSO CDs at the orchestra's events in the City Halls. The Club was told that this would run contrary to recently published BBC procedures. Exceptions might be made (and subsequently were) at the Director's discretion, if the CD involved an artist performing at a concert. (One such example would be Steven Osborne's recording of the Britten Piano Concerto with the orchestra, with 50 of those CDs sold at performances of the piece with the soloist). It was around this time that the Club gifted to the BBC SSO 63 of the orchestra's recordings to replace ones missing from its archive.

Among the Club records are a few notes written by some of the Club's early luminaries to Malcolm Flemington in 2009 in preparation for the Club's 30th birthday celebrations. Among them is an illuminating note by founder Bob Simans, and it is worth quoting at length.

"My original aim was for a supporters' club not unlike the BBC Symphony Club in London. But, unlike the London model, it seemed to me that we needed a permanent band of followers who could be transformed into an "army" to fight for the orchestra should another Aubrey Singer emerge. Instant rebuttal of arguments, quickly-planned strategies, not to mention pre-emptive strikes in the form of letters to the press from highly-placed supporters who would surely join the Club in the wake of so damaging a strike - these were my aims. I do not think the Club turned out to have such raw and rough edges as I had envisaged. Nevertheless the Club has proved a most valuable tool in forging links between orchestra and audience (another aim) and has been a very strong focus of support throughout the years."

The decade finished on quite a high note. Membership was increasing and the Club's Evening Concerts across the two locations were very popular, with audiences sometimes exceeding 100. The Club had a new marketing approach and corporate look (with a new Club Logo) which was to be seen in its promotional and recruitment leaflet, and in a new banner. Significantly, there was the launch of a Club website, designed by David Dunnachie. There was even a new-look *Newsletter*, the first to be produced in colour. The present style appeared in spring 2010 under the editorship of Martin Armstrong. And, after a hiatus of many years, the Club had a new Honorary President in the shape of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, CBE and Master of the Queen's Music.

2011 to the present



Eileen Robertson with the Club banner, City Halls (Tom Rodger)

In late 2010, while the orchestra celebrated its 75th anniversary, the Club was also due to celebrate its 30th. For the Club's event, Nancy Dickinson was charged to source "a 120 portion iced sponge cake with decorated inscription from a specialist baker in Cambuslang for the Christmas concert on Monday 6 December, 2010". In the event, the Club's celebration in December 2010 was cancelled owing to stormy weather. The orchestra's players became the immediate beneficiaries of a very large birthday cake and the Club's own celebration had to wait until a St Valentine's Day concert on 14 Feb 2011 - with another large cake present!

The spring 2011 Newsletter recorded that the final Club concert of the 2010-11 season would be the last to be held in St Bride's Church. From season 2011-12 all Club concerts would be held in the Recital Room at City Halls. Thanks was given to St Bride's which had served as "our main base for our evening concerts since we moved in 2006 from Studio One".

The same year saw the Club enter the sphere of social media. Emily MacPherson, the orchestra representative, had set up a Facebook page for the Club, and over the years it has attracted quite a lot of attention – at the time of writing it has just over 300 'likes'.

Throughout the previous three decades, it was almost a matter of chance that the Club's records survived, kept in officers' homes and passed on from chairman to chairman and from secretary to secretary in *ad hoc* fashion. The danger of loss was high and so in August 2012 the Club's archives were deposited for safe keeping with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where they remain to this day. Subsequently catalogued, several gaps in the record were identified, but all papers (and recordings of recitals) are now transferred to the repository on a regular basis.

Eileen Robertson continued to guide the Club with great verve and enthusiasm. However, the peripatetic stall she took to so many BBC SSO concerts was now becoming ever less profitable, a new factor being the fact that fewer

people were buying CDs, preferring instead to download their music. The ban on sales at the orchestra's Glasgow concerts ensured there was no way to compensate for this and in 2013 it was decided to sell off all remaining CD recordings at Club recitals at cost price.

One of the triumphs of Eileen Robertson's chairmanship occurred on the afternoon of 18 April 2012 when the Club achieved one of its ambitions – access to a BBC SSO rehearsal. A limited number of members was allowed to attend an exclusive open rehearsal of the orchestra working on a performance of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* and Fifth Symphony with soloist Jennifer Pike and conductor Andrew Manze. The Club had been lobbying for several years for access to at least one rehearsal per annum. From the Club's perspective it was a great success, and it was hoped there would be more. Exclusive attendance at rehearsals was now, prematurely, advertised as one of the benefits of Club membership.



Open Rehearsal with Andrew Manze and Jennifer Pike, April 2012 (Jim McGrath)

While membership subscription levels remained at the 2009 levels throughout this decade, admission prices to Club concerts did not. From 1 January 2014 these were modified by widening the differential between member and non-member charges so as to ensure that when ticket prices were combined with membership fees there was an actual financial incentive to join the Club if a non-member chanced to go to every concert! The membership rate of £3.50 per concert was unchanged but that for non-members of £5.00 was increased to £7.00. These fees rose slightly to £4 and £8 soon after, but at the 2019 AGM a radical change came about when it was agreed that henceforth members' subscriptions should cover entry to Club concerts. Club concerts thus became free for members but for non-members the charge rose to £10, a figure still competitive with concerts elsewhere.

Over the years the Club had built up substantial reserves, and on occasions at AGMs the uses to which these would be put was queried. On one such occasion (2012), Eileen Robertson responded thus: "With the strict guidelines now in force with the BBC there was very

limited opportunity for the Club to contribute financially in ways to help the orchestra. As a result, the money in the National Savings Account had increased in the last few years...the sum...should be regarded as contingency funds”.

Having a “fighting fund” (a term explicitly used on other occasions, to be used were the orchestra to find itself threatened again as it has been in 1980 and 1992) was felt to be very important. However, the reality was that any fresh campaign would likely be conducted very differently in the digital age from the leafleting and press campaigns that had been so successful earlier. The fighting fund might not be fit for purpose.

The AGM of 2014 was the last Eileen Robertson would chair and just before the next season, in September 2014, she resigned on account of ill health. She was succeeded by Jim McGrath (who favoured the gender-neutral title of President, a position he still holds). At the Annual Reception in January 2015 Eileen was honoured for her long service to the Club and presented with a portrait painted by Meg Speirs, a recently recruited Committee member.



City Halls Recital Room – Donald Runnicles and friends, April 2011 (Tom Rodger)

In March 2016, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, the Club’s Honorary President died. Donald Runnicles, who had previously served as a distinguished Chief Conductor of the BBC SSO was invited to succeed him and agreed.

Unfortunately, the Club’s original web page crashed in 2016. Attempts at rescue were eventually aborted and a completely new website, designed by the Club’s President on a different platform, came on-stream in late 2017. It is still active and regularly updated: see <https://www.bbcscottishsymphonyclub2.com/>

Unfortunately, a theme of recent years has been the erosion of the benefits the Club can offer its members. In early 2016, the Club management was faced with the news that it could no longer self-cater at its evening concerts. Faced with the choice of accepting very expensive charges levied by the in-house caterers (and these were especially high for wine) the AGM in 2016

near unanimously voted that the Club should henceforth do without. Teas, coffees and mince pies continued but only at the Club’s Xmas concert. All this was regrettable, but the Club simply could not have absorbed the charges of the in-house caterers. It was also their charges that prompted the change of venue for the Annual Receptions from the City Halls to the nearby Metropolitan Bar in Candleriggs (at which the wine and other drinks continue to flow), and where these events have continued to be held, and very successfully too.

Next, it became clear there would be no more exclusive open rehearsals: the 2012 event with Andrew Manze and Jennifer Pike was to prove the only such occasion. Thereafter, the privilege would be reserved to BBC SSO season subscribers, and the benefit had to be removed from Club recruitment literature.

Another change occurred just prior to the start of season 2016-17 when the BBC SSO’s management decided, without alerting the Club, to withdraw the discounts that members who were not senior citizens had previously enjoyed on both season and individual concert tickets. Following urgent discussions between the Club President and Gavin Reid, these discounts were reinstated but for one year only. The change came fully into effect with season 2017-18. Harsh economics were to blame, but it was indicative of a changed relationship between the Club and the BBC SSO. Ostensibly a small matter, it marked the removal of a key Club benefit which affected recruitment of new and much needed younger members.

Assisting the orchestra directly was by now very difficult because of BBC rules whereby all expenditure was supposed to be met from the licence fee and from no other sources. One of the reasons for the Club’s existence was thereby undermined. But despite rising costs eating into the Club’s reserves, novel ideas were still sought by the Club to find means to use the funds in accordance with the Club’s constitution.

Thus, the idea of a composition prize was born. In 2015 the Club inaugurated a prize of £500 to be awarded to a student of Composition at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland who was required to write to a commission from one or more members of the BBC SSO. The first commission came from Laura Samuel (leader of the BBC SSO) and Yann Ghiro (clarinet section principal of the BBC SSO). The prize was awarded to Henry McPherson in 2017 for his piece (*A Thought of Falling*). He received the monetary element of the prize. The other element was to be a first performance at a Club concert and though that has yet to happen, it is still hoped that it can be programmed at some point, if not by the Club then by players of the BBC SSO. The original intention had been that a composition prize might be commissioned from the RCS’s students and awarded every 2 years, but in view of the several difficulties that now began to beset the Club no further works have been commissioned to date.

One concern was the erosion of the benefits of Club membership, enumerated already, but even allowing for the age profile of the Club’s supporters, membership

numbers were falling. The decade had started well, with the Club's membership (excluding honorary members) rising to 174 in 2011 though, as it transpired, this would be a peak that would not be reached again. A slow decline followed, despite pamphleteering on several occasions outside the City Halls after BBC SSO concerts and placing leaflets in city libraries and in the Royal Conservatoire. By season 2017-18 numbers had dropped to 116.

Difficulties also beset the Club's recitals, the core remaining benefit offered by the Club that kept members engaged and which could attract new members to join. For many years (certainly from the 1990s onwards) the norm was six Club concerts per annum, usually advertised well in advance, and that continued until the middle of this most recent decade. The events were flourishing, helped by the tireless efforts of liaisons like Emily MacPherson, Amanda Shearman and Gent Kocho. The quality of the concerts remained undiminished as players offered up their talent and time free of charge to entertain the membership.

Mention may be made of two spectacular concerts, in terms of the sheer number involved. The first, held on 15 December 2014, featured no fewer than 12 cellos, while the second just pipped it when, five years later, 13 students from the Royal Conservatoire's trombone department entertained members with a recital. The cello concert of December 2014 was notable also as it was the first that was recorded for the Club's archives – many recordings would follow, engineered by the late Norman McGadie.

Not content with 6 concerts per annum, Gent Kocho managed to organise 8 recitals in 2015-16 and 7 in season 2016-17. However, season 2017-18 proved more problematic with uncertainties throughout the year as to the number of concerts and when they would happen, though eventually Sarah Oliver, that year's liaison, managed to secure 5 recitals for the Club, the last being at the AGM on 21 May 2018.

The orchestra's players were under increasing demands on their time. Although the Club provided the benefit of providing a platform that allowed players to play the chamber and other music they might want to play, rather than that dictated by the BBC concert programmes, their time was increasingly limited. Then, shortly before that same 2018 AGM, the Club's management was made aware of a decision that with immediate effect the Club would be charged by Glasgow Life (the BBC SSO's landlord) for its use of the Recital Room, close to £500 per concert, charges that if implemented would quickly swallow up all of the Club's reserves.

The Club was feeling pressure on all sides. Fortunately, the new Director of the BBC SSO, Dominic Parker, intervened over the summer of 2018 on the Club's behalf. The immediate threat of a rental charge was lifted and the Club was assured that it could use the Recital Room free of charge up to 4 times per annum, two-thirds of the previous allocation but much better than what had

been threatened. The Director also wrote warmly of the importance of the Club to the BBC SSO community.

By the late summer of 2018 no concerts were in place for season 2018-19. The Club's management decided not to collect subscriptions for the coming year. This proved prudent, as, in the event, by the May 2019 AGM, only 2 recitals had materialised. There were doubts whether the Club still had the support of the hard-pressed players and closure began to be considered. Fortunately, the Club's difficulties came to the attention of the Players' Committee of the BBC SSO and a very fruitful meeting between that group and the members of the Club's management followed in February 2019. There (and at subsequent meetings) assurances of the players' commitment to the Club were received and agreement was reached that for season 2019-20 there would be a minimum of 4 scheduled concerts.

So, after a sabbatical of one season the Club was effectively relaunched in September 2019 and subscriptions were collected. Gill De Groote returned as the liaison between orchestra and Club. Two changes were also introduced – admission to Club concerts would now be free to Club members and also to BBC SSO players (who at some point prior to 2011 had, oddly, begun to be charged £2 admission).

Mindful that in the late 1990s the Club funded dresses for the ladies of the BBC SSO, the Club was pleased to respond positively to a special request from the male members of the orchestra in late 2019 for tartan ties. These made their first public appearance on the orchestra's tour of Japan in November 2019.

Season 2019-20 was progressing well. The third of the promised four concerts was given on 3 March 2020 by Andrew Berridge and friends, but even by then there were inklings that a far greater problem than anything thus far encountered was about to strike. By the end of the month the Covid-19 pandemic had prompted lockdown across the country. The season's fourth concert was cancelled.

The above was largely written 12 months ago. At the time of writing (March 2021), the country is still in lockdown and the world remains in the grips of the pandemic. For the small universe of the Club, the effects have not been good, though we still have 97 members on our books. Season 2020-21 ought to have been one of celebration to mark our 40th anniversary. Instead, all Club activity (other than producing this edition of the Newsletter) has been cancelled and, as the editorial explains, the Club faces a very uncertain future indeed, for the same reasons that threatened it in 2001 when Margaret Beaton declared that "*without new volunteers, the future of the Club could be in doubt*".

Jim McGrath

Chairpersons & Presidents of the Club

1980 - 1984	Matthew Caminer
1984 - 1987	Malcolm Flemington
1987 - 1988	David Price
1988 - 1991	Margaret McIver
1991 - 1995	Gavin Settle
1995 - 2002	Margaret Beaton
2002 - 2010	Malcolm Flemington
2010 - 2014	Eileen Robertson
2014 - 2021	Jim McGrath

Recitals

2011-12	6
2012-13	6
2013-14	6
2014-15	6
2015-16	8
2016-17	7
2017-18	5
2018-19	2
2019-20	3**
2020-21	0

Membership

166
149
164
159
133
137
116
116*
99
97*

* No subscriptions were sought, and no attempts were made to recruit in these seasons.

** In 2019-20 four concerts were scheduled but the fourth was cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Club's First Chairman writes...

Matthew Caminer was the Club's first Chairman, 1980-1984 but had lost contact with the Club, having moved away from Scotland in 2002. Early in 2020, Matthew responded to a post on our Club's Facebook page. Jim McGrath was then writing up the Club's history, and immediately recognised the name. He contacted him and a brief exchange followed. It was too late to have his direct input to the first part of the Club history, but following publication of the spring 2020 Newsletter, Matthew got in touch at the end of May. The following extracts are edited from several emails that followed. They start with how Matthew became involved with the Club and continue with fascinating details of those early years, when nothing was certain as to the orchestra's future.

E mail 29 May 2020, Caminer to McGrath

"I had recently moved to Glasgow. My employers, Stewart and Son of Dundee, were sponsors of recordings of Scottish music by the SNO Chorus and one of the recordings was a collaboration with the BBC SSO rather than the SNO, which was unable at the time. Because of my own musical background (I had recently left the LPO Choir...) I was asked to manage the sponsorship arrangement between the company and the SSO and thereby came into frequent contact with Martin Dalby, Head of Music, Trevor Green, Orchestra Manager and Timothy Redman, Librarian, as well as with members of the orchestra. I was by then singing in an amateur choir called the Good Shepherd Chorus, for which I was also marketing and publicity manager. The choir gave regular charity concerts with professional soloists and players. Two of the latter were Anthony Sayer (sub-principal 'cello) and Robert Simans (freelance violin) and in a rehearsal break for one concert, they took me to one side and told me about their vision for a club, and the way in which that might provide a strong, independent body to support the players but also, very important, to be mobilised in the event of the BBC again seeking to dissolve the BBC SSO. There was nothing cosy about this vision. It had a very distinct purpose, though most of the time it was a gloved fist, operating in a benign, supportive role, but ever ready to jump to the barricades! I became the Club's first chairman, keeping things running, liaising with BBC management (who were largely supportive, though of course not directly involved) and I also liaised with the orchestra's chairman (Alistair Beattie) and with their committee.

I edited and painstakingly typed and cobbled together [the first issue of the BBC SSO Club Newsletter] with paste and scissors - technology was VERY different in those days! I am rather proud of it to be honest, because it said a lot about where we already were by the end of 1980...

During the strike in 1980, the Club was central in organising a concert at the City Hall in aid of the fighting fund. It was conducted by Bryden Thomson and featured the great [soprano] Elizabeth Harwood in [Carl Orff's]



Matthew Caminer with the tankard he was given on standing down as Club Chairman in 1984

Carmina Burana. We had to be very careful not to call it the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra because there were all sorts of legal and contractual issues about them playing under that name during the strike but it was indeed them! The programme for that concert had a note [of support] from Sir Adrian Boult...

Other early Honorary Members included Sir Charles Groves, Christopher Seaman I think, possibly Norman Del Mar, and other conductors who had a relationship with the orchestra during that time. You should realise that in the post-strike days, there was no leader, no co-leader, no principal conductor, no associate conductor... they were very bleak times with successions of guest leaders and guest conductors. The relationships with people like Sir Charles were like gold-dust, and I recall that on his return visits he never wore other than his BBC SSO tie! I think that Simon Rattle was the President...

From the beginning, the Club had a stand at every public performance and studio recording, projecting a sense of calm and organisation and future, as much to the very insecure orchestra members as well as to the public. There was a feeling in the small Club committee that we should seek to inject a feeling of permanence and stability at a time when things felt quite the opposite. Thus, we ordered and sold ties, scarves, pencils, coffee mugs and sweatshirts in several colours, as well as stickers to go on rear windows of cars.

I am not conscious of a decision to bar players from being honorary members of the SSO Club, though it is true that there was a need to maintain some independence from the BBC, partly because there was always a sense that the balloon might go up again - after all, it was really only the (London) Proms that saved the BBC SSO and other orchestras during 1980, because the Musicians Union boycotted the BBC, threatening the Proms, and causing a U-turn.

A good idea of the nature of the Club's independence, and how important that was, is the fund-raising concert mentioned above. The 'fixing' of the players was undertaken by the chairman of the orchestra's own committee, but all hall hiring, publicity, engagement of soloists and a choir were undertaken by members of the Club committee and their friends. I was actually hauled into the office of the Head of Radio, Scotland and warned off, but he had no authority over me personally. These were indeed very nervous and tricky times."

E mail 11 June 2020, Caminer to McGrath

"One thing that did catch my eye [in part 1 of the history] and it goes back to what the Club is (or was) for was a slight suggestion that the Club existed to put on concerts given by members of the orchestra. Of course, that is far more skewed than the reality. I think that what we were trying to do was create a platform that could be mobilised (albeit with zimmer frames?!) if the balloon ever went up again. So even a year without fees and without concerts but maintaining existence as a shell would always provide the continuity that would underlie action.

Other things...the annual weekends at Onich (and thereafter elsewhere I think) were quite excellent, though again appealing to an audience of a certain age, with some wonderful performances...the Ravel Piano Concerto for Left Hand for instance, played by one of the SSO fiddle players...and of course the inimitable Heather Corbett (percussion principal) playing marimba, dulcimer and all sorts of other instruments. Wonderful. And the reference to Bob's Salon Trio [in the history]. I actually sang with them a couple of times when they added a vocal line. Great fun."

E mail 17 June 2020, Caminer to McGrath

This is about the John McNulty prize, references to which appeared in the Club's earliest Newsletters and then ceased. It was strongly supported by Club members but not actually managed by the Club. "[It] was brokered with heavy involvement and fund raising in the early days of the SSO Club following the sudden death of long-term principal cello John McNulty. The prize was to recognise the key role of orchestral playing as an end in itself, and was awarded in association with the [Conservatoire]...I thought the thing had rapidly disappeared into oblivion, but I found a reference to [it still being awarded] a couple of decades later. [It's] very much a part of the heritage of the early days of the SSO Club... a worthy prize and it deserves to be widely acknowledged and it certainly adds kudos to the Club."

E mail 21 July, Caminer to McGrath

"I am not sure that we thought terribly much about why we put on concerts and had the country house weekend etc. I think largely, at the beginning anyway, it was to show that the Club had substance, and a way of getting the members to meet and talk with each other - there was always a social side too. I'm not sure that we were overtly looking to give the players performing opportunities, and in any case the players, or most of them, were only too glad to get involved."

E mail 26 July, Caminer to McGrath

"I am just wondering, Covid-19 and all, whether the BBC orchestras will be seen as easy cash-saving targets, so this might be a time when the Club's original role might come to life again!"

E mail 26 November, Caminer to McGrath

"I think the nub of our previous exchange is encapsulated in something that caught my eye in one of the attachments [for the November AGM] that "some members were clearly in the Club because of their admiration of the BBC SSO as much as for their love of chamber music recitals". It suggests that, in the same way that everything evolves over time, the focus of the Club shifted imperceptibly - perhaps especially at times when there have, thankfully, been no perceived existential threat to the BBC SSO. In a sense, yes, the Club social events, including concerts, did happen more or less from the start, but as a way of gelling or

cementing the members and attracting new ones, while providing a strong boost to player morale at a critical time. But they were always a means to an end, not an end in itself...

I can see post-Covid being a time of a huge amount of change and restructuring, and things like orchestras may

again be seen as a luxury, and an elitist one in these egalitarian times at the BBC? And therefore the original purpose of the Club, to be available to mobilise in support and lobby is likely to become more necessary than it has been for decades."

Matthew Caminer

Malcolm Geddes Flemington (1933-2021)

Malcolm Flemington died on Friday 15 January 2021. He was a figure well known to many, a tireless supporter of the Club, a highly active Committee member and twice Club Chairman, 1984-1987 and 2002-2010. He attended virtually every Studio One Invitation Concert in Glasgow, but also attended concerts in Ayr, Aberdeen, Inverness and even the Royal Albert Hall, often helping to run the Club's merchandise stall (along with Eileen Robertson). Educated at Forres Primary School and then Gordonstoun, Malcolm's National Service in the early 1950s saw him rise to the rank of Captain in the Territorial Army unit of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. His working career encompassed many roles in several areas, including a period with Babcock & Wilcox and as a SVQ assessor with British Road Services, the nationalised road transport company. Below are two tributes. Unedited versions of these and other tributes are on the Club's website at <https://www.bbcscottishsymphonyclub2.com/>

Malcolm Flemington – by Martin Armstrong

I first met Malcolm Flemington about twenty years ago at a BBC Scottish Symphony Club concert in Studio One in BBC Scotland's then headquarters in Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow. At that time I was not a Club member, however, I was an occasional visitor with my mother Rita, who was a Club member. I do remember being at a Christmas concert in Studio One and sampling an excellent Christmas cake during the interval, which Malcolm had baked. When my mother died in May 2005, I wrote to the Club to advise them. By return I received a letter of condolence from Malcolm, together with an invitation that I should consider taking-up my mother's membership, which I duly did. This was typical of Malcolm, who never wasted an opportunity to swell the ranks of the Club!

A short time after, Malcolm asked if I would like to join the Committee. It was hard to refuse Malcolm's invitation, as he had such a charming manner. In due course, I became the Secretary. Malcolm always exhibited boundless enthusiasm for the Club in support of the Orchestra. Committee meetings were always conducted by Malcolm in a friendly, business-like manner. By this time Club concerts were being held at St Bride's Church on Hyndland Road, as the BBC had moved to their new headquarters at Pacific Quay. The Club Newsletter was restarted after a long absence in Spring 2010, with the new issue including some colour for the first time. A small folded leaflet to promote the Club was produced and a portable Club banner was designed and displayed at SSO concerts in City Halls. Malcolm also had a hand in setting-up the Club website with the orchestra representative David Chadwick (who was in the second violins) and David Dunnachie (website designer). The BBC's financial rules now prevented the Club giving any further direct support to the orchestra. As the Club still wanted to show their appreciation to the BBC SSO musicians and staff, it was decided that we would hold a reception for them. The first reception was held in the 'Green Room' behind the stage at City Halls on Sunday 13 June 2010 following an afternoon concert in the

Grand Hall. Malcolm made a short speech to thank everyone in the BBC SSO for allowing us to use the Green Room for the reception and also for their superb playing over the season just ended. The following evening, Monday 14 June, Malcolm stepped down from his second period as Chairman during the Club's Annual General Meeting. He had indeed served the Club well.

Away from the Club, Malcolm was an ardent supporter of Alastair Savage (first violins, BBC SSO) in his promotion of traditional Scottish fiddle music. Malcolm often assisted The Alastair Savage Trio at their gigs by manning the door and selling the trio's CDs. Malcolm considered himself to be Alastair's 'roadie'!

In later life Malcolm widened his musical interests by joining the Glasgow Philharmonic Male Voice Choir. Having joined the choir, he also became their Secretary from 2011 to 2015. He didn't stop there, because Malcolm arranged to have singing lessons once a week with James Boyd, which meant travelling from his home in Clydebank to Kilmaurs. Club member Nancy Dickinson accompanied Malcolm on the piano during those lessons in advance of the Glasgow Music Festival, when Malcolm entered solo singing competitions. Malcolm certainly did not sit back in retirement; he was every bit as busy and active as he had been during his working life.

Over the last few years, Malcolm's health had gradually deteriorated and he was no longer mobile enough to attend BBC SSO concerts in City Halls, which was a bitter blow to him. Sometime in late 2019 a fall at home resulted in Malcolm receiving a hip replacement. Following this, he was persuaded to go into a care home, where he had plenty of company. Unfortunately, he contracted the Covid-19 virus in early January 2021 and passed away two weeks later.

More than once Malcolm was of assistance to me in personal matters. He was always willing to assist anyone at any time if he could help - a true friend and always good company.

Malcolm Flemington – by Gill De Groot

Malcolm and his late wife Gwen were avid supporters of the orchestra, regularly attending the concerts in the old Studio One. When I first took on the role of orchestra liaison for the supporters' club back in the noughties, Malcolm was the Chair of the Club Committee. The Committee would hold their meetings in someone's house, usually the fabulous Marion Caldwell's, and I will always remember the very warm welcome I received from Malcolm. A tall, friendly, fun and obviously very capable man whose face I knew from the audience at our Studio One concerts in Queen Margaret Drive. I don't exaggerate when I say that Malcolm probably attended every concert we played!

As Chair, he worked like a Trojan, travelling the length and breadth of the country supporting the orchestra and setting up the stall front of house at the concerts to sell orchestra CDs and memorabilia raising funds on our behalf.

Not happy to just support the orchestra, Malcolm took a huge interest in the individual players, attending gigs and helping in any way he could. No job was too big or too difficult and he was a true ambassador for the orchestra. Malcolm will be greatly missed and for those of us who knew him, his loss makes our world a little sadder.

Malcolm was a kind, warm and lovely person.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Chris Dale of the BBC SSO has been using lockdown to delve into the archives and has shared the following notes.

As late as August 1939, despite war being clearly on the horizon, the BBC was still taking live broadcasts of dance band and orchestral music from Berlin and Salzburg ('courtesy of The Reich'...as printed in *Radio Times*), so it seems likely the BBC was offering similar broadcasts to The Reich's broadcasting network!

For a significant period of time during 1940, for national security reasons (the Battle of Britain took place from 10 July to 31 October), all the BBC Orchestras 'lost' their names in the weekly editions of *Radio Times*, as did virtually all towns and cities in the UK. So listings, more often than not, appeared like this: "Orchestral Concert broadcast from a town in the north/west" or "Sunday Evening Service", but no name of the church/cathedral. The only way of identifying which orchestra was being broadcast was by the conductor's name; in the BBC Scottish Orchestra's case: Guy Warrack, Ian Whyte or, very occasionally, Kemlo Stephen.

ORCHESTRA NEWS

Despite lockdown there's quite a lot of comings, goings and awards to report!

First, we are very pleased to welcome **Jamie Campbell** as principal of the BBC SSO's second violins.

Jamie was born in London into a family of musicians. He now lives in Scotstoun, Glasgow, with his wife, Ruth and dog, Ralph.

After reading Music at Clare College, Cambridge he continued his studies in Vienna, London and Madrid.

In addition to his new role with the BBC SSO, he plays principal second violin with Aurora Orchestra. In 2004 he founded the Solstice Quartet, in which he was first violin, and they played together until 2013. The quartet won the Royal Overseas League Ensemble Prize in 2009 and gave their debut at Wigmore Hall in the same year. Jamie continues to play chamber music regularly at festivals around Europe.

Jamie has appeared as leader with groups including the London Sinfonietta, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra and Arcangelo. He is Associate Artistic Director of the Southwell Music Festival which takes place in August each year.





Alpesh Chauhan (Martin Shields, © BBC 2020)

We are also delighted to welcome **Alpesh Chauhan**. He is the BBC SSO's new Associate Conductor and assumed the post in August. His face has become well known through the BBC SSO's lockdown video broadcasts from City Halls. Chauhan and the BBC SSO have had a close relationship since he stepped in at the last minute for the orchestra's then Chief Conductor, Donald Runnicles, in May 2015. He has returned to conduct many times, including at the re-opening of Aberdeen's Music Hall in 2018 and the launch of the BBC SSO's 2019-20 season.

Born in Birmingham, Alpesh Chauhan is also Music Director of Birmingham Opera Company and his collaboration with the BOC on its production of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk* received glowing reviews and a prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award. He is Principal Conductor of the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini in Parma. Other career highlights have included performances with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre, with the BBC Philharmonic at the BBC Proms, a production of Puccini's *Turandot* in Valencia at the Palu de les Arts Reina Sofia as well as regular appearances with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra where, until 2016, he was Assistant Conductor.

Asked to comment on his appointment, Alpesh Chauhan was enthusiastic. *"I'm so excited to be taking up this position with the BBC SSO. I've had a wonderful relationship with the orchestra over the last few years, right from the very beginning of my career when I stepped in for a last-minute cancellation. The orchestra was so welcoming, and from our first rehearsals together, I immediately felt a powerful musical connection. I'm looking forward to developing exciting programmes, working on our musical ideas and giving memorable concerts together."*

In December, the orchestra's players (and others) said farewell to one of their most valued colleagues, **Eddie Gallagher**. Gill De Groote writes: *"After more than 20 years Eddie, our stage manager, left in December and I think it's fair to say that over these years the smooth running of stage changes and seat swapping, stand and light fixing, and of course not to mention what he had to deal with in some of our Tectonics performances - cabbages, seaweed and paddling pools, to name just a few of the more unusual props - was all down to him! Professionalism and reliability were always high on Eddie's list, and we shall miss him greatly and wish him all the very best!! But, as we say farewell to Eddie, we get to say hello to our new Stage Manager - **Steve Lamb**. Steve is a familiar face to us all and we look forward to many years of working with him."*

It has been a good year for one of our most notable previous conductors, the BBC SSO's Conductor Emeritus who, coincidentally, is the Club's Honorary Patron. **Donald Runnicles** was awarded a knighthood in the belated 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours. Sir Donald is music director of Deutsche Oper Berlin. He is also director of the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming where his contract has recently been extended for a further five years to 2026, bringing his tenure there to 20 years.

And so back to new arrivals, and five rather special lockdown newcomers!



Innes Lawrence, born 2 May 2020 to Andrew Berridge (violas) and Yvette.



Emma Lola Blair Ferrer, born 3 April 2020 to Mireia Ferrer (violins) and Alan.



Ernest Evantelmi, born 12 August 2020 to Rik Evans (violas) and Maria.



Lorenzo Comini-Braithwaite, born 19 September 2020 to Mark Braithwaite (violas) and Laura.



Selma Olive, born 6 May 2020 to Alice Rickards (violin) and Martin Wiggins (viola).

Bon mots et bonnes notes (occasional musical space fillers!)

There are many famous put-downs in the world of classical music, and one of the most notorious is that by Rosa Newmarch (1857-1940). In Grove's Dictionary of Music (1945), edited by Eric Blom, regarding the music of Rachmaninov, she opined that *"it was well constructed and effective but monotonous in texture, which consists in essence mainly of artificial and gushing tunes accompanied by a variety of figures derived from arpeggios"*. Whether one agrees or disagrees with her, Rosa Newmarch's credentials could not be denied. She did a great deal of research on Russian music, making many visits to that country and becoming one of the first English critics to champion Russian music. She wrote extensively on the subject, hence her contributions to Blom's magnum opus. And her interests extended to Slovak music – she championed Leoš Janáček and organised a visit by him to the UK.

Some Past Recital Snapshots



In the absence of concerts, some reminders of St Bride's and the Recital Room at City Halls (by John Wood, Ian Duthie, Jim McGrath and Tom Rodger).

Leviathan – Music from the Deep!

Club concertgoers! Cast your minds back to March 2015 when Peter Wesley, principal contrabassoonist of the BBC SSO and fellow contrabassoonist Heather Kent, accompanied by Liivi Arder on piano and assisted by two toy fish, delighted us with 'Music for Contrabassoons, Piano and Goldfish'. Once experienced, never forgotten!

The fish may be absent from 'Leviathan' but on this entertaining and imaginative CD (running time over 70 minutes) Peter is reunited with Liivi and joined also by Martin Willis on percussion. They play (superbly) a mix of pieces composed for the contrabassoon or specially arranged for it, ranging from Elgar and Saint-Saëns via Martinů and Schulhoff to contemporary composers Michael Burns and Terje Lerstadt. Available from <https://www.birnamcdshop.com/> for £10.99 plus postage. Also available on iTunes, with 5 tracks on Spotify. Or contact Peter at leviathancontrabassoon.com to obtain a copy for £10 including postage.



The BBC SSO in Glasgow City Halls on 5 September 2020, conducted by Alpesh Chauhan, in the socially distanced configuration dictated by the Covid-19 pandemic. (Martin Shields, © BBC 2020)
