

DOVER COLLEGE LUNCH-TIME CONCERT

Reviewed by JACK WOOLFORD (001)

The Festival Brochure got it wrong. "Jeux d'Eau" is Ravel, not Debussy, and I lost a bet. The concert was not from 1.30 pm. – 2.00 pm. but 1.30 pm. – 2.30 pm., but this was pure gain. It was also, quite remarkably, free of charge(!), which was a pity because a deserving collecting box would have been generously filled.

It was a gem of a programme, skilfully and sensitively shaped with its sequence from contrasting instrumental solos to choral finale, and the more so because every soloist was also a chorister. The array of talent, from Far East as well as Near West, naturally varied in virtuosity but was uniformly professional in attitude: if they were nervous in public performance then none of them showed it and it was a delight to observe the quietly friendly rapport between the performers and Leo Forsdyke, both unobtrusive accompanist and flamboyant choirmaster.

Instrumental solos were framed between piano pieces, Mozart flute Andante (Alex Bradley), Brouwer Spanish guitar Estudios (Graham Conlon), Elgar's Serious Doll flute solo from the Nursery Suite (Charlotte Harvey), and Peeter's trumpet Aria (James Heath) were all competent performances at Grade 8 (I think) level, as was also Liszt's piano Consolation No. 2, also played by Graham Conlon.

The pianists were on an ascending scale of virtuosity, starting with Albéniz's seductive and rumbustious Sequidillas (Annie Lee) followed by Poulenc's Trois Mouvements Perpetuels (Timothy Wellard) which is sinuous and subtle, demanding quiet rather than boisterous dexterity. Ravel's Jeux d'Eau demands dazzling brilliance at both extremes of piano and forte and Dai Fujikura is even more than the "budding concert pianist" of the brochure. He is a mature artist, whose prodigious technique enables him to express, with his body as well as his fingers, the multi-coloured radiance of Ravel's fountains.

What followed was unbelievable. Timothy Wellard reappeared, unmistakably tricked out as Noel Coward, with 12-inch cigarette holder, bow tie, and ornate blazer, and with Noel Coward's own voice both sang and acted "Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage, Mrs Worthington!" To do that with aplomb in the former Wesleyan Chapel, now the Menzies Hall, requires effrontery and histrionics bordering on genius.

Back to Elgar, this time choral settings of "As Torrents in Summer" and one of the Bavarian Dances, already familiar as an orchestral piece. Why the piano accompaniment should have been so technically demanding only Elgar could tell us, but Brigitte Schröder Harris handled it with joyful panache. The choir was matched in quality

with its individual performers, balanced and precise and technically polished but, above all and like its director, blithesome.

The notice in the Festival brochure did not, indeed could not, adequately advertise this miniature masterpiece of a concert. It is comforting to meet such happy competence in young people from West as well as East and gratifying that Dover College should be able so substantially to contribute to Dover's musical life. Oliver Twist-like, I crave for more.

Paint or Draw your Pet

(or any other animal you can observe)

Castle Books, 25 Castle St., Dover

For this competition children were invited (mostly through their primary schools) to submit small pictures of animals which they could observe. The Mayor, Councillor Kevin Mills, presented the prizes on Saturday, 21 May.

There were a good number of lively, well-observed paintings and drawings. (Sadly, a few only produced versions of cartoons). Those mentioned below, apart from the three prize-winners, were 'Highly Commended.'

5 - 7 year age group.

Jessica Roud, age 7, Capel-le-Ferne C. P., painted a splendid striped orange and yellow cat with a white bib and won 1st Prize. Joe Solomon, age 6, Charlton C.P., drew a stuffed crow from a classroom specimen and obviously looked at it very carefully. Emma Agar, age 7, Capel-le-Ferne C.P., produced a characterful painting of her tortoiseshell cat, 'Scampie', in a stipple technique, Jamie Turner, age 7, Melbourne C.P., drew a budgerigar in a cage and Pippa Butterworth, age 7, Capel-le-ferne C.P., a perky picture of 'Alice', her Giant Schnauzer.

8 - 9 year age group

Another striped cat, with a surprised expression gained 1st Prize for Hayley McKnight, Melbourne C.P. and Yvonne Carr, of the same school, drew 'Aggy' a splendidly ratty rat. A bright goldfish in its tank was boldly drawn in coloured markers by Amy McKnight, Melbourne C.P., Martin Steele, St. Mary R.C.P., Deal, conveyed the strong image of a screeching gull in pencil, while Christopher Phillips, Sibertswold C.P. showed a placid black rabbit, drawn with marker pens.

10 - 12 year age group

Nathan Elliott, St Mary's C.E.P., Dover, won 1st Prize with a sprightly representation of 'Creepie', his uncle's pet tarantula; we assume that the spider survives happily minus one leg. Hazel Basran, St. Mary's C.E.P., Dover, made a sensitive drawing of a cat and Steven Laycock, D.G.S.B., produced a convincing rabbit in coloured pencils.

Other children were 'Commended' for their work.

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