



# More Musical Magic

by Jack Woolford

The fourth free concert given by the Dover Music Society in the Connaught Hall on Saturday 1st October more than matched its predecessors in scope and execution. It was also even better attended. Robert Poole's policy of coupling young players with mature and established performers was again splendidly vindicated. Pianist Catherine Wright and cellist Katie Cattell are, unbelievably, still school girls. Boris Petrushanky, on the other hand, is one of the world's leading concert pianists, notably teaching master classes alongside Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Catherine Wright began, very unusually, with a late (and therefore demanding) Beethoven sonata movement and astonishingly followed it with an even more technically demanding Chopin Scherzo. Both were played with power and precision. Debussy's *Reflections in the Water*, however, could not have been more delicately and quietly contrasted, whilst Liszt's (prodigiously virtuosic) *Etude on the Paganini theme* made so well known by Rachmaninov's *Variations*, was breathtakingly dispatched. Not only is Catherine note-perfect. She is maturing into a sensitive interpreter.

Elgar's Cello Concerto inevitably recalls the acrobatic head-tossing performance of Jacqueline du Pre; Katie Cattell could not have been more different. Her performance (of the first movement) was physically undemonstrative, head still and eyes looking steadfastly forward, surprisingly almost never on the fingerboard, as little demonstrative as is possible to imagine. Yet the sound she produced, from the mighty opening chords across the strings, through the saddest lyrical pathos, to the flashing semi quavers of the climax were worthy of

Jacqueline. The Mendelssohn *Song Without Words* with which she began and the Hindemith *Meditation* (both requiring extremes of technical virtuosity) with which she concluded made a fitting framework for the Elgar.

I shall not be surprised, though delighted, to see both girls competing in the BBC's *Young Musician of the Year*.

The Boris Petrushansky pictured in the (excellent) programme is young and beardless. The Boris Petrushansky who appeared on the platform is a bearded giant of a man and a giant of a performer, a very Russian giant virtuoso. He began with Chopin's Polonaise *Fantasia*, as challenging a test as it is mighty in Polish national fervour, and followed it with three works by Scriabin who was taught by the same teacher as Rachmaninov as it well showed. These, however, were mere preludes to the three movements from Stravinsky's gigantic ballet *Petrushka*, which stretches the capabilities of full symphony orchestras. Some genius (Stravinsky himself? ... Petrushansky?) has incredibly arranged it for solo piano, with all its tempestuous changes of volume, key, tempo, rhythm - and colour - and it was assaulted and conquered by a superhuman virtuoso. Even this was not the whole of it. Insistent and persistent applause twice brought him back to play two equally prodigiously difficult encores, the first (I think) referring to Paganini and the second (I know) a fantastically unbelievable sequence of variations - on Rossini's *Largo Al Factotum* from the Barber of Seville. I never saw such prodigious finger work or heard anything to match it in seventy years of piano recitals. I pity Robert Poole. What can he find to match this in next year's three (FREE) recitals?

## ***Philomena Kennedy Art Prize***



Sheila R Cope



On 28th June at the Girls Grammar School Jeremy and I attended the A2 and AS art exhibition. This was a display of examination work entered by Lower VIth and Upper VIth (A-level) students. We were very impressed by the immense variety and vitality of the exhibits. Explanations about techniques and thought processes accompanying the exhibits demonstrated how much hard work this one subject had demanded.

Since the prize, awarded by the Society in memory of our founder Philomena Kennedy, is intended as a means of encouragement for the Lower VIth, fellow students and volunteers to the exhibition were asked to record an assessment of each individual presentation. Thus the element of evaluation by the peer group, which has always been the criterion for choice, was maintained.

Gina Berisford and Jade Everett were equal winners and both received a Society cheque for £25 to be spent on art materials. Last year the prize was not taken up and therefore the committee was content with the two awarded this time. Our Chairman, Derek Leach, attended the final art lesson of the term to present the prizes and the Society has received letters of thanks from both winners.

## **DOVER SOCIETY WEBSITE UPDATE**

Mike McFarnell

### **LONDON 2012**

I have included the London 2012 website because the Olympics will provide Dover with many opportunities but only if we have the vision and enthusiasm to exploit the potential benefits. The new fast link will from Ashford to Stratford will make it possible to travel from Dover to the Olympic Stadium in an hour. Dover Castle could provide the venue for a major pre Olympic Archery Tournament. Mayor Ken Tranter has agreed to host a power point presentation to make the case to English Heritage, the Olympic Archery Committee and all the bodies involved, that Dover Castle must be a venue to benefit from the Olympics. The Friends of Dover Castle have agreed to provide a purse of 500 guineas for "Archer of the Realm" in the Olympic year. There is the potential to increase the size of the purse to attract the very best in Archery from all over the world. Dover College has expressed an interest in hosting a "Long Bow" Tournament on the same weekend. Archery is a "Cinderella sport" but with the right personality (Olga Corbet) could emerge like gymnastics.

### **DOVER FILM FESTIVAL**

From 1st December, 10,000 programmes will be given away free to promote the 2006 Dover Film Festival which takes place at Dover Town Hall on Monday 6th February 2006 and Tuesday 7th February 2006 at 3.00pm and 7.30pm. 350 tickets were sold for the 2005 Dover Film Festival so please give your support to increase the numbers attending for 2006. The event includes the installation of the Lord Warden, visit by the Queen, Dover Pageant, Dover Carnival, Hospital fete and Dover Regatta to name but a few. The 1965 Ray Warner Film will be shown to give a glimpse of Dover 40 years ago.

# HERITAGE OPEN DAYS IN DOVER

Thursday 8th to Sunday 11th September 2005

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**HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**, organised by English Heritage and the Civic Trust every year, celebrates England's fantastic architecture by encouraging free access to buildings that are usually closed to the public or would normally charge an admission fee.

Dover has a great wealth of historic buildings, but only some are normally open to the public such as Dover Castle and the Roman Painted House. I suggested to The Dover Society that it was about time Dover made an effort to have more buildings open, if only for a few days. The Executive Committee agreed and I approached the owners of ten sites. As a result five buildings were opened this year to the public free of charge. The Dover Society coordinated the local arrangements and publicity, whilst the Heritage Open Days publicised via their regional booklet and the on line service.

The buildings that were open this year were:

## Maison Dieu House



This fine Jacobean house in Biggin Street is the oldest domestic building in Dover. It was built in 1665 as the Agent Victualler's residence close to the Maison Dieu, which Henry VIII had requisitioned as a store for the Navy Victualling Office following the Dissolution. In 1834 it became the residence of the commander of the Royal Engineers in Dover before becoming a

private residence. The Kingsford brewing and milling family and the Mummery family who owned the Stembrook tannery lived here during the 19th century. Bought by the Corporation in 1899, the house became council offices until after the Second World War when it became the public

library. Following the move of the library to the Discovery Centre, the premises were purchased and beautifully restored by Dover Town Council for its use. Some of the town's regalia, including the magnificent 1676 mace, was on display and Brian Walker, the Town Sergeant, was on hand with a knowledgeable guided tour.

## Archcliffe Fort



The site was first used for defensive purposes in 1370 when a watch tower was built surrounded by a chalk bank and ditch. In 1540 Henry VIII built the fort, which was strengthened and altered over the centuries to meet changing needs. From 1834 it was the Dover HQ of the Royal Engineers. The railway from Folkestone tunnelled underneath it, but in

1928 with more track required part of the fort was demolished. It ceased to be a military installation in 1956 and was transferred to the Department of the Environment in 1979 and scheduled as an ancient monument. In 1991 the new A20 dual carriageway removed part of the entrance gateway and dry moat.

The surviving bastions

and parapets date from the 17th century. The fort is now owned by English Heritage, but is occupied by the St. Martin's Emmaus Community, which celebrated ten years in Dover during the Open Days weekend and attracted many visitors, including Terry Waite, the president of UK Emmaus. Terry Sutton provided guided tours of the fort's remains.

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## St. Edmund's Chapel

This tiny chapel in Priory Road was consecrated by St Richard of Chichester in 1253 in memory of his friend, St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury 1234-45, and was probably used as a cemetery chapel for the Maison Dieu close by. Hidden for many years by development around it and used as a workshop, it was revealed again following war damage to the surrounding buildings. The chapel was restored and reconsecrated in 1968.



## Unitarian Church

This brick-built octagonal church sitting above York Street was constructed in 1820 and its worship area reflects the shape of the building. The origins of the church go back to 1643 to a local community of Baptists who established a meeting house in 1655, but were persecuted following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In 1692 Samuel Taverner made part of his house available for worship and part of the garden as a burial ground. Freedom of belief and form of worship as a Unitarian Church was agreed by members in 1916.



Following Second World War damage, the chapel reopened in 1952.

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## Grand Shaft Staircase

This unique triple staircase was started in 1804 and finished in 1807. It connected the barracks and fortifications on the Western Heights through the 250 foot high cliff to sea level, Snargate Street and the Pier District, enabling troops to move quickly up or down its 140 steps within the cliff plus another 59 into the barrack yard. In 1812 a Mr Leith of Walmer rode a horse up the staircase for a bet. The Western Heights Preservation Society also took the opportunity to open the Drop Redoubt at the same time for a small fee.



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At the time of writing I am waiting for feedback from the property owners etc. but from my own visits to all the sites, I am hopeful that everybody will be willing to repeat the exercise in September 2006. I am very grateful to the property owners for their cooperation and for their

volunteers who manned the sites. This is a new initiative for The Dover Society and, if successful, we hope to increase the number of properties participating next year, including possibly the Gun Turret on Admiralty Pier.