

Workers' Music Association

BULLETIN: WINTER 2006

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Editorial Team

Please note the new editorial team shown above. Copy or letters for any edition of Bulletin may be sent to any member of the team, preferably by email but, if you do not have access to email, you may post hard copy to: Steve Randall, 16 The Farthings, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1XD; or Anne Schuman, 240 Perry Rise, Forest Hill, London SE23 2QT; or Jennie Vaughan, 299 Westerton Road, Tingley, Wakefield, West Yorks WF3 1AE.

Disclaimer: NB. *The views contained in Bulletin, or sent out with it, are not necessarily those of EC or of the WMA. No alterations are made to any article without the express permission of the author.*

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NOTICES

CONCERT IN AID OF MANA:

The Flute and Guitar Duo, "Dance Music through the Ages",

3.00 p.m. Saturday 11th March, 2006

Ripley Arts Centre,
24 Sundridge Avenue,
Bromley, BR1 2PX

Programme includes music by Handel, Chopin, Brahms, Joplin, Granados, Bartok, and others, arranged for flute and guitar.

Ann Dixon - Guitar,
Sheila Searchfield - Flute.

This concert is given in aid of MANA (Musicians Against Nuclear Arms).

Tickets £6.00 (£4.00 concessions).

Tel: 020 8852 7886 or at the door.

Sheila Searchfield (Summer School Tutor)

Chris Rubinstein – addendum:

I have now found the order of service at Chris Rubinstein's funeral which was unfortunately not to hand for the last bulletin. Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony opened the service followed by a tribute by Chris's son Dan. Then one of Chris's poems was read out. "Genghis Khan". After a tribute by Hudson Pace, two more of Chris's poems, "Guernica" and "The Triumph of Good over Evil" were read out. These were followed by another piece of music, the 3rd Movement of Beethoven's 1st Symphony. After another tribute from Laurie Green, Tim Heath of the Blake Society, read an extract from "JERUSALEM", and Ken Davies of the Blake Society, read an extract from "MILTON" both of course by Blake. The service finishes with Beethoven's Sonata No 14, "The Moonlight".

Steve Randall

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Len Davis:

We understand Len has had a fall and broken his shoulder, thereby rendering himself temporarily unable to play. We wish him a speedy recovery and, in the meantime, invite old friends to write or call and keep him entertained!

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North West Area Rep

EC have accepted the kind offer of Barrie Booth to be regional rep for the North West, following Ros Wood's resignation. You can contact Barrie at 31 Ivy Lane, Macclesfield SK11 8NR. Tel: 01625 611745

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Vernon Frost has supplied the following information

Harry Gold has died. He had been a member of the WM for many years in his prime which, as he was born in 1907, was years ago. Although born in Dublin, we always think of him as a Londoner where he had moved, taking his parents with him, at the age of four. He played with Roy Fox, Geraldo, Mantovani, Eric Winstone and Andre Kostalanetz before many of our younger members were born, but we probably remember him best for his *Pieces of Eight*, a group which continued successfully through the 1980s and 1990. That was an astonishing feat for an elderly gentleman; and he

retired from any sort of professional woodwind playing in 1999. Wow!

Robert Cruden is now in hospital after a long wait, and the cataloguing of Brian Trueman's organ music at Christ the King is, of course, being held up. We wish Robert a swift and full recovery.

Reginald Christie is also in hospital having had no wait whatever. When it was suggested that he should be compared with Rameau who beat his foot with a conducting pole, Reg dismissed the comparison as 'mere speculation' and said the true comparison was with composer Alkan who died having pulled his bookcase down upon himself! Happily, the comparison is not complete, for Reg is recovering nicely.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED!! Alexander Dimant left a library of cassette tapes of instrumental and orchestral recordings to the WMA. These are of a standard repertoire, but have an emphasis on American music. His catalogue is written in pencil; however, if this were to be typed up, the list could be copied, and tapes lent out to members. Anyone willing to take this task on board, please contact any of the editorial team or Vernon Frost.

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Mariachi

It would seem that Yvonne Hithersay and Rosweta Lamb are shortly off to Mexico where they will be seeing some genuine Mariachi bands. Lets hope they take their moustaches and sombreros with them in case they get asked to sit in!

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**NEW.MEMBERS...NEW.MEMBERS...NEW.MEMBERS...
MEMBERS...NEW.MEMBERS...NEW.MEMBERS...**

Like any other progressive organisation we need new members and new ideas to stay alive. At the last meeting of the Executive we decided to take a couple of initiatives to stimulate interest in the WMA and hopefully get new people to join us.

One of the ideas was to ask YOU, through this Bulletin, to take the leaflet (enclosed with this edition) to the Music Department of your local or central Library. Most Music Sections have a notice board for musicians/orchestras to give information on concerts or vacant positions. (Last year I took the Summer School brochure to the Birmingham Central Library for display on their Music Notice Board). You could always take a few photocopies first, and distribute them amongst your musical friends!

So do yourself and us all a favour. Take the leaflet to your Library for them to display on their board. You never know, you might find a new WMA member AND a new member for your choir or ensemble. Rob Harper

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Reviewers Needed

A query was made as to why the Morning Star no longer reviewed newly released CDs, and the response came that it was because they could not find anyone who was willing to write such reviews.

Anyone who feels suitably experienced, and who has the time and enthusiasm to take this on, should contact the Morning Star directly.

Whilst discussing the above notice, the Editorial Team thought it would also be a welcome addition to Bulletin if readers would like to submit their own review – not necessarily just of newly released albums, but of any favourite recordings.

Don't just give us a technical report, but let us also have your feelings about the piece concerned, and any story connected with your relationship with it. Why stop at music recordings – film reviews that would be of interest to members would be gratefully received too!

Come on – let us all share in your personal favourites!

ARTICLES

The WMA Singers' Yuletide Party, 2005

The Yuletide Party hosted by the WMA Singers at Conway Hall on December 15th brought a year's hard practising under our expert conductor, Aubrey Bowman, to a satisfactory conclusion.

We were very pleased that of all the London choirs invited, Strawberry Thieves and Raised Voices were there in force, Velvet Fist was there in spirit, and there were other friends drawn in, some well known to us, some new. They braved the cold night air and contributed to what became a thoroughly warm, social event. No doubt the initial consumption of the generous donations of seasonal food and drinks helped to raise the temperature! And by this time we were more than ready to listen to the musical contributions of the three choirs, together with several solo performances.

Raised Voices under their conductor, sang **“The Wall”** and **“Life on Earth”**, which were very musical and stirring. Next, *Strawberry Thieves* performed **“Got to bring the wall down”**, with all voices making a good sound, and a special presentation of a song sung by its composer, John Hamilton, their conductor, as a sample just to taste, **“The Time Has Come”**. It will sound better when there are more singers. Well done John; it was interesting!

To ensure that the audience was awake, *WMA Singers*‘ contribution consisted of an opening number, **“Workers Unite for the Battle”**, to a socialist Russian tune, and to end the party, presented a rendition of **“Hymn to Friendship”** ascribed to the composer W. A. Mozart, as an adjunct to his ‘Little Masonic Cantata, K623’.

John Jordan was the first of our soloists. He was warmly applauded for his valiant attempt to perform the last movement from Beethoven’s ***Pathetique Piano Sonata*** from memory. Next was a solo sung by Anne Schuman (her first) accompanied by Nita McCrossan, of a most musical rendering of the song entitled, **“Dona, Dona”**, with the first verse sung in Yiddish.

This was followed by Nita playing Mozart’s rather slow but tuneful ***Minuet in D Major, K355*** which was probably written in 1790, a year before his premature death.

Ron Phillips offered **“Salute to Life”**, music by Shostakovitch, and the gathering joined in the chorus. , English translation was by Nancy Head, who became Nancy Bush,

Mavis sang a new song, a premier performance, concerning water pricing.

Finally, and fortunately, the collection taken at the conclusion of our festive occasion helped to defray the cost of hiring the hall.

Nita McCrossan
WMA Singers

Singing Carols Outside Parliament

As members may be aware, a new law has been introduced making it illegal to demonstrate or gather outside Parliament, which means in effect in Parliament Square. Owing to an error in drafting the new law, Brian, a character who has virtually taken up residence on the green in Parliament Square, is immune to prosecution because his continuing demonstration was there before the law was passed.

Since this law was put into effect, two women have been arrested, one of whom was convicted. The first one had the temerity to read out publicly the names of people who have died in Iraq and was duly arrested and convicted. The second one carried a banner which carried the message, “I am not a criminal.” The powers that be decided that she was a criminal and she was arrested, but I do not know whether or not she was convicted.

It was decided that a challenge should be mounted against this law by singing carols on the green in Parliament Square in defiance of this law. I participated together with several members of my choir, *Raised Voices*. Other members of various other choirs also participated and we had quite a decent ad hoc choir. John Hamilton, the conductor of both *Strawberry Thieves* and *Red and Green*, conducted the ad hoc choir and we sang carols from a sheet distributed to the singers. I recognised one person from *Red and Green* and a couple of choristers from *Strawberry Thieves*. I also saw Ron Phillips from *WMA Singers*. I recollected that Aubrey Bowman did not approve of singing carols even to raise money for charity, so I hadn’t expected to see anyone from *WMA Singers*. There were quite a number of non-choir people there. There were also photographers, individuals with recording equipment and at one point there were television cameras.

Brian, who is quite a character, seemed to want to take charge of the proceedings and had quite a lot to say. The one section of our community conspicuous by their absence were the police who possibly were too busy dealing with real criminals. I took my toothbrush and toothpaste just in case we were arrested, but, as the famous carol goes, all was calm, all was bright, with not a single cop in sight. We sang for an hour, lingered to chat, gave money for injured children in Iraq and then went home. I suspect that there will be further demonstrations on the same spot in the new year!

Mavis Cook

Music in Russia over the last 15 Years

Enormous changes have occurred in the musical world in Russia since the Soviet Union broke up. It is not easy to give an account of it. You will meet with the same difficulties as reading *War and Peace*. You never know who is who and you have to keep going back and looking up the names which mostly end in “ski”!

But what has happened is very absorbing. From 1990 onwards it seemed like a new dawn. In many senses it was. In the past the Soviet exerted what might be called a dead hand on music institutions. There was security, plenty of state money and, just as the Russians had turned out world beating athletes, they produced through the conservatoires

world class executants; precocious violinists, pianists, cellists and conductors abounded. Many winners of performing competitions rose to the rank of world-class stars. In ballet they were leaders. Music criticism in the Soviet press was distinguished and of a much higher standard than our journalists are allowed to produce by our newspaper editors.

Moscow was one of the great music centres of the world, but it was also rather a dead system. It suppressed unorthodoxy. Those in the Arts who did not conform got something worse than a kick in the pants. While world famous artists and those known internationally were safe, lesser known names could meet a fate worse than intellectuals in the days of Mao's Chinese leap forward. Many musicians feared what might happen to them. The Russians, with their own wry sense of humour, asked the riddle, "What is a Trio? It is a Quartet that has been touring in the West"!

Well – all that changed. New things happened. And they happened on a tremendous scale. A new orchestra was established by Michael Pletnev called the Russian National Orchestra. A new opera was opened by Evgeny Kolobov. A new 'International House of Music' with 1800 seats and two minor halls and the largest organ in Russia was built in 18 months. It was the first new building of its sort for over a hundred years. Gergiev conducted the first complete performance of Wagner's *Ring* since the Tsar's family were murdered. Yet another orchestra was founded, this time by Spivakov: the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia.

The political structures also changed, sometimes dramatically. For example, Boris Yeltsin removed the Bolshoi from the control of and dependence on the Ministry of Culture. Most other musical institutions were freed from the grip of the state. The changes began to have both social and economic effects. Prices went up with the reduction in state aid. The old style communists joined the music loving workers in being unable or unwilling to pay the new prices. Audiences were often thin in number but not, interestingly enough, among the opera audiences. Opera became quite fashionable among the newly rich who moved to the opera from the night clubs.

Alas, their behaviour did not meet with the approval of the old guard. They clapped in the wrong places (even between movements!), talked at the wrong time and made jests in an unseemly way..... The presentation of music changed. Anna Chekova, the quietly spoken and rather scholarly announcer at Great Hall, Moscow Conservatoire, died in 1997 and was replaced by spokesmen for which our nearest equivalent would be disc jockeys who shout thin messages at the top of their voices.

The status of the performers, many of whom were no longer salaried, declined. Musicians became underdogs and were often quite poor and no longer the heroes of the past to be looked up to and copied by the young. The standard of musical criticism declined and moved into the hands of youngsters who, in the view of the old guard, knew very little and engaged in descriptive regurgitation and reportage rather than analysis. The Culture TV channel, which was set up to introduce audiences to music from the west and to educate and reinforce the Russian tradition, introduced a downbeat talk show compered by Artyom Vargaftik called 'The Orchestra Pit'. One remark which caused outrage described the establishment as fascist – I think "Communist Fascism" was the way it was put. 10 million complaints were received (10 million! You must be joking? No – anything about fascism reminds the audience of the suffering in the Great Patriot War).

Well – President Putin decided that things were getting out of hand. A KGB man himself, his old colleagues began to take over some of the administrative posts. Many of the subordinates have welcomed a return to the old ways. And it was not all bad. Although the Bolshoi and many other institutions were returned to the control of the Ministry of Culture in 2003, Putin personally awarded grants to seven major institutions, including both conservatoires, so there were some pluses for music. Rostropovitch withdrew from *War and Peace* at the Bolshoi, while Gennardy Rozhdestvensky, having been appointed conductor at the Bolshoi in 2001, resigned the following year. The parallels with the rows at ENO and La Scala and the dumbing down of our own television do not need pointing up.

I have not heard much of recently written music. Vladimir Martynov, who won the state prize in 2003, supplied an extract from *The Four Seasons* written in the same year, repeats a tuneful theme in a quartet with repetition in blocks. In an extract from Vladimir Tarnopolsky's *Cheengur* of 2001 there was a good deal of groaning, expanded string pedals, the sound of popping corks from bottles and some Russian singspiel from a large Russian lady (Imagine Rita Hunter singing Harrison Birtwhistle).

Fortunately the Russian sense of humour cannot be put under. The guests were arriving for a grand function. Picasso was refused admission by the doorman because he could not prove his identity. 'I am Picasso' said the indignant artist and drew a large picture on the pavement. 'Come in, Senor Picasso' said the doorman, 'I am proud to have met you'. A few minute later, a bejeweled lady was helped from her motor by the chauffeur and was asked for her identity. 'I am the Minister of Culture and the Arts' she replied. 'Even Picasso had to be identified' said the doorman. 'Who is Picasso?' asked the Minister.

With jokes like that the sun will surely rise again and Moscow will again be one of the world's great music centres.

Vernon Frost

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65th Anniversary Celebration of Birmingham Clarion Singers

On 19 November 2005, Birmingham Clarion Singers held a concert at All Saints Church, Kings Heath, Birmingham to celebrate their 65th anniversary.

One of the things that added to the excitement of the concert was the rediscovery of the score of '*Prometheus Bound*' which had never been published. George Thomson's translation from Aeschylus was set to music by Wilfred Mellers when both were professors at Birmingham University and was performed by Clarion in 1948. It was found in a folder of vocal parts at the bottom of the Clarion music cupboard! They decided to perform it on their 65th anniversary.

The concert was extremely varied with vocal, instrumental and folk items. It opened with the choir singing *Ode to Joy*, using Paul Robeson's fine words, *Viva la Quince Brigada*, Alan Bush's arrangement of *Joe Hill* and his *Shining Vision*. They then sang *Sharpen the Sickle*, a composition by Aubrey Bowman to words by Chartist Ernest Jones.

This was followed by a fine performance of *Divertimento no. 2 in Bb of five Basses* by Mozart, arranged by F Oubradous, and the theme and six variations by Beethoven on *La ci darem la mano* from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

The choir then performed a piece composed by John Jordan to words written by Debbie O'Connell called *Suzi's Home*, which was a powerful piece on homelessness, set for voice, guitar and double bass (the double bass part was played on the trombone).

A terrific folk group, called 'Cuckoo's Nest', performed with distinction a selection of instrumental folk music including the jigs, *Oyster Girl*, *Off She Goes*, *New Rigged Ship*, a Playford dance tune from Newcastle, the hornpipes *Rights of Man* and *Off to California*, and a Shetland air and reel: *Slockit Light*, *Spoostiskerry*.

A section on fishing folk songs followed: *The Shoals of Herring*, *The North Sea Holes*, *Fisherman's Wife*, *Tatties and Herrin'*, *Net Hauling Song*, *Fish Gutters' Song* and *We're awa' to fish for the Herrin' oh*. Soloists included Steve Walker (solo and concertina), Mo Powell and Rob Harper (solo and guitar). Two duets were performed by Mo Powell and Jane Scott.

The second part of the concert included *March of the Spirit* with choir, piano, mandolin and concertina. There followed extracts from *Dido and Aeneas*, with solos sung by Doreen Baggett, Joy Street, Mo Powell, Lynne Habermach and Adam Nigel. They then performed pieces from the rediscovered score *Prometheus Bound*. The latter included readings by Percy Lea and Oliver Scott and a choral piece *I Weep for you, Prometheus*. The last section of the concert included songs on and from Africa – *Nkosi Sikeleli Africa*, *Freedom is Coming*, *We are the Children of Africa*, finishing with Alan Bush's fine choral work, *Africa is my Name*.

It was a well balanced concert and on the whole very well performed. I enjoyed it very much. It was held in a very fine church which, to my surprise, was rather well heated. Excellent food and wine was served in the interval and at the close of the concert. Well done, Birmingham Clarion Singers!

Mavis Cook

Comments from Bill Oldham:

Bulletin has received some comments from trombonist extraordinaire Bill Oldham on the previous discussion on the origins of tonic sol fa. " I was always under the impression that Sarah Ann Glover (1785 - 1867) was responsible (for tonic sol fa). Obviously some businessman Curwen stepped in, which is stated by "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music"". Secondly , commenting on the statement of music being universal. Bill says "It is not! I have played trombone and chromatic harmonica in Spain, Tunisia and Egypt. Only the dot is universal. Words and chords are in their own (country's) language. " If you ask for a tune and say it is B flat, you have to work up the scale - B is Te and flat is Bemol, so you have to ask for Tebemol. If it is G minor, you ask for So-Minnor and so on". Bill also says how he is looking forward to seeing lots of old friends at the music weekend.

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Holocaust Memorial Day

On the eve of Friday 27th January, the WMA Singers marked Holocaust Memorial Day with a short statement, read by Anne, in which she reminded us of the period during the 1930s and up to 1945.

The theme of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2006 is One Person Can Make A Difference, and the names of Anne Frank, Primo Levi, Schindler and Nicholas Winton, were brought to mind. One of the quotations came from the memoirs of a man who, as a child of eight, watched his father being kicked by a man in a brown shirt, who had until a few days earlier been his friend, but who was making him scrub the pavement clean of the socialist slogans painted on the ground.

As a nine year old Hans Stoessl travelled on the Kindertransport with his two year old sister, not knowing whether he would see his parents again, and at 15 he joined the British army (pretending to be 18) and was among the first to arrive at Flossenburg concentration camp, and the blood ran cold to hear his words describing the desecration found there.

There was another quotation from a speech given at the "German Church" dedicated to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, by Hedy, born in Sudeten, the German speaking section of Czechoslovakia, who recounted how her father had met the Pastor, hours before the Nazis hanged him, almost a fortnight before the Germans surrendered and the war ended.

From Primo Levy, a call to remain alive, not to allow the power of consent to be removed by those who would enslave, torture and starve, a moving call to resist.

The gathering concluded this solemn event with songs, "When I needed a neighbour, were you there? Were you there?", which takes your conscience through the events of history, from "When they shouted Hosannah", through "When they took me to prison" and "When the crosses were crooked, - burning," the words are by Sydney Carter, and the music was arranged by John Jordan. The basses tell the location and the sopranos join with the question. It is a very moving effect.

Paul Robeson's adaptation of Beethoven's Choral points out that "Nature made All People Equal Members of One Human race", and concludes with "None shall push aside another, None shall let another Fall, Stand beside me, Oh my brothers, All for One and One for All".

A song produced by political prisoners in a German concentration camp, who rebelled at singing Nazi songs, "The Peat Bog Soldiers" carried the choir through "to the moor", and the music resounded through the room. The melody notation is attributed to Hanns Eisler.

The ceremony concluded with the three-part song "The Message", words by Pastor Neimoeller, and the beautiful music by John Jordan, an emotional rendition.

First they came for the Communists,
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Jews,
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for the trade unionists,

And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a trade unionist.

Next they came for the Catholics,
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Catholic.

Then they came for me,
And there was no one left to speak for me.

Anne Schuman

(For a copy of the full text of Anne's moving address, please contact her directly at the address given on page 1)

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Two Matters Of Great Concern

Danger ONE

In the Winter 2005 Bulletin there was a report of Jill Snowden (prior to July 2004) asking for legal advice which ought to ring alarm bells for anyone concerned with the survival of the WMA. It was only after the March 2005 AGM where it was argued that the money spent was WMA money, and that therefore the advice belonged to every member of the WMA that Jill agreed to tell us what happened in this interchange with the solicitor.

First she claimed that she asked for legal advice on the charity question because she was asked by the EC. But when one sees the nature of the questions she asked, it is clear this was not what the WMA members were asking, and that she was not concerned with the well-being of the WMA, but had her own agenda. The EC minutes show no indication that it asked for this type of advice.

Spelling it out she wanted to seek approval to do the following:-

- a) to set up a separate company without the objectives of the WMA.
- b) To transfer all the assets (including goodwill) of the Summer School to that company, plus an undisclosed sum of money from the main WMA account,
- c) Then she would go off into the sunset with these assets in company with her buddies, leaving the WMA practically broke and without a Summer School.

She spent about a £100 of our money getting this advice whilst she was treasurer; a post which one usually associates with caring for our resources and not indicating a wish to asset-strip us. Can she ever be trusted again? I say NO! Should anyone ever vote for her to hold WMA office again? Not on your life.

Danger TWO

We are in a serious financial position. When I eventually handed over the finances in May 2003 our balances totalled about £16,500. Jill became treasurer in defiance of the AGM vote that I should continue as treasurer. This was a breach of rule 5m. The state of our balances on the 26th November 2005 (reported at the EC meeting) totalled £10,943.56. A reduction of £5.500 (five and a half thousand pounds.) The WMA will cease to exist in a few years at this rate. Most members do not get to the AGM, and never see the balance sheets. A couple of thousand was spent on a reprint of the 'Peace' songbook, but the rest of this horrendous loss is entirely due to the functioning of the EC, because it is not London-based.

They have attempted to save money by replacing proper quorate meetings with telephone conferences. Which means that no legal decisions can be made. Many of the expenditures made could allow the EC members to be taken to court. Even so, telephone conferences with up to a dozen or so people are still a costly affair. With a membership of less than 200 we cannot afford to have an EC drawn from all over the country. The main reason for the increase in subscriptions this year has been to pay for these EC expenses. If we returned to a London-based EC it would enormously help our finances, and stop these heavy losses.

In my first year as treasurer (2000) the cost of a meeting on average came to less than £30 a time, including the rent. This was because many of the EC members were retired and had free transport in the London area, a 'perk' not given to the same extent by any other city or town. The WMA could be indirectly subsidised by the London authority if we were wise.

A London- based EC does not mean that members outside London could not be involved. When Tom Tomkins did most of the work in organising weekend music schools he was not on the EC, and these very were successful.

A London-based EC is 'a must' Roy Bride

LETTERS

12-8-05

TWO-TIER MEMBERSHIP

In the Summer Bulletin, Roy Bride suggested a two-tier membership in the WMA, whereby some members would be only associate members, active in the WMA's musical and political life, but not in its administration or the furtherance of its objectives.

I am unhappy with this because the idea implies two levels of citizenship in which everybody is equal, but some are more equal than others. When first I attended a summer school, and joined the WMA, Aubrey Bowman said to me, "We're all equally members of the WMA, and we don't give ourselves airs." (Perhaps I had been giving myself airs. If so, I hope that I do it no longer.)

Roy is probably right in thinking that many of us are not fully committed to the WMA's objectives. This would be because most of us don't know what they are. How many of us have copies of the Rules? *They ought to be given to all members. But the first time that I saw the Rules was when I joined the Rules sub-committee of the executive committee. I found that we have some odd objectives, such as "dealing in musical instruments, including instruments for the reproduction of music." At present, the Rules sub-committee is working on a revision of the Rules, and we will probably remove some of the financial and commercial objectives which seem irrelevant to the present-day WMA.

I think that Roy supposes that some of us have delicate consciences, and worry that we are not fully committed to the WMA objectives. I can only say that I don't know any members in that position. I suspect that most members, like myself, agree with the idea of "education and performance for the labour and peace movements", as stated in the current objectives, and look no further than that. If we did introduce two-tier membership, who would decide on a person's membership? If we leave it to individuals, I don't see a rush of members seeking associate membership. Or would we require full members to sign a declaration of their political maturity? Or would we introduce an Inquisitor-General? I don't like the sound of THAT!

David Martin

(*Editor's note – copies of the Rules can be downloaded from the website or requested from the Secretary. New members are informed of this.)

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Gordon Balcon writes to correct one or two points made in the article published in the last issue about his history –

Shortly after the war an orchestra was formed due to the hard work of an ex-service musician, Henry Newton (known as Buck). He went to work at Boosey & Hawkes where they supplied him with much of the music library. The orchestra was quite large and consisted mainly of members of the newly-formed E. London branch of the M.U. Paul Hart and his sister were teen-aged violinists (I am talking about more than 50 years ago).

The venue was moved several times, ending at Wanstead, London E.11 where support gradually fell until 2 years ago there were only 4 regular members and the orchestra ceased to exist.

All the music is stored in Wanstead House (adult education centre, near Wanstead underground station) and not at Chadwell Heath.

I see Roy quite frequently, he lives at Ilford, Essex, his health is very good for his age and we always have lunch in the Red Lion!

Gordon Balcon

NOW AVAILABLE !!!!!

WMA PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE !!

THE PEACE SONGBOOK

Is now available in a new, spiral-bound edition.

It is full of powerful songs, old and new, and suitable for use by soloists or groups.

If you are looking for something new to sing or play, why not try something from this terrific book, collected together by John Jordan.

For prices and sales, please contact John Jordan directly on 01883 346690.

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Also available:

THE EASTER RISING IN SONG AND BALLAD by C Desmond Greaves

The cover notes for this fascinating book read as follows:

The Easter Rising in Song and Ballad has not only an historical interest but a terrible relevance because of the continuing conflict in

Ireland. Together with a searching commentary from Desmond Greaves the songs themselves reveal the long history of the English attempts

to control Ireland and the centuries-long struggle put up by the Irish - who were sometimes joined by radicals from England and other nations - against this, culminating in the heroic stand of 1916. The men and women of the Easter Rising may have been defeated and their leaders executed, but they rekindled a flame which led to the establishment of the independent Republic of Ireland.

The book contains 32 songs with words, melodies and guitar notation, together with an explanation of the notation used.

Desmond Greaves was editor of the Irish Democrat and former secretary of the Connolly Association. He wrote numerous articles on Irish affairs and Anglo-Irish relations, and his books include The Life and Times of James Connolly, Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution, Sean O'Casey, Politics and Art; edited and wrote a final chapter for T A Jackson's Ireland Her Own, etc.

For information regarding price and availability of THE EASTER RISING, please contact Anne Schuman (see contact details in Editorial Team)

NEXT ISSUE:

We hope to publish the next issue in early May, to allow publication of a report on the AGM.

Items for publication in that issue should be received no later than 15 April 2006.

