

Humour in Harmony

Saturday 21st July 2012
at Buxton Methodist Church

This document being a complimentary
CONCERT PROGRAMME
in which is elicited

*an Incomparable Collection of
Nonsense in Notes, Whimsy in Words,
and Madness in Music,*

assiduously assembled by

John Kilpatrick Esq.,

occasional Composer of the same,

*to be performed with aplomb and delivered with diligence by
the versatile voices and interlocutory instruments of*

Sheffield Lydian Ensemble

and in which is featured the salutary story of the bereavement of a
briefcase, as well as a repository of the resourceful rhymes and
informative insights of Gelett Burgess Esq.; those enveloping a
miscellany of magical moments legated by both the living and the
lamented, on themes tormented and transcendental, the whole
culminating in a mythical mammalian masterpiece known as

The Purple Cow

Programme

in the execution of which it is planned to proceed without an interval

At the start there will be a short safety announcement.

Ensemble: My Briefcase

John Kilpatrick

Narrator: Peter Taylor (baritone)

Fooscap solo: Jane Ginsborg

For programme notes, and complete words, please see page 3.

Choir: Three Nonsense Songs

Matyas Seiber

1. There was an old lady of France
2. There was an old person of Cromer
3. There was an old man in a tree

The words and accompanying drawings are on page 4.

Solo: Peripheral Visions

George Nicholson

Jane Ginsborg (soprano), George Nicholson (piano)

1. Abroad and At Home – Jonathan Swift
2. I Passed by his Garden – Lewis Carroll
3. J'ai Peur – anon.
4. Call (Incident at Weekend Party) – D.B. Wyndham Lewis

The words are on page 5.

Clarinets: Surprise Item

A never-before-heard arrangement which will be partially announced

Solo: Flanders & Swann Songs

Peter Taylor (baritone), George Nicholson (piano)

1. The Gnu
2. The Armadillo
3. The Hippopotamus

Choir: Insalata Italiana (Italian Salad)

Richard Genée

Soli: Peter Taylor, Jane Ginsborg, Robin Hughes

It is hoped that the words will be audible and the piece self-explanatory.

Ensemble: Cuttings from a Nonsense Book

John Kilpatrick

Speaker: Peter Taylor

no.8: Barbara Hawley; no.9: Carol Bowns

No.11b: Robin Hughes, Peter Taylor, Alison Down

Please see page 6 and also the separate **User Guide**.

Please join us for complimentary light refreshments after the concert.

Words & Notes

My Briefcase – Notes & Words

The label near the catches on my 1970s briefcase suggested the knocking up of a spoof madrigal, perhaps in the style of Gesualdo. After the 1991 incident, when the briefcase was stolen, a confluence of ideas led to the stream of narrative and side-shows that underlie this composition. The ideas simmered until after the [Sheffield] Lydian Singers had been formed, suggesting the use of the Lydian Mode (F-G-A-B \flat -C-etc.) that pervades the piece. Throw in a few other chestnuts, such as placing pitches or intervals in relation to numbers in the text (Fibonacci series; four languages); or an arbitrary decision to write a fugue with unusual entries instead of the usual tonic & dominant, or even a tongue-in-cheek attempt to write the “most beautiful piece of music ever written” (no.7: “Music”), and the piece took shape.



The work has evolved from an unaccompanied original to this, the latest version. I know of two performances outside our own circle, one in Ealing, the other in Ghent: but imposing on one's friends is easier than getting the outside world interested! I am most grateful to the singers and players for their forbearance – but why do the choir seem to find the Dog chorus so difficult? Our dog didn't!

As this is based on a true event, in the interests of truth I must state the following:

- the expressed sentiments on Europe and metrication are not those I actually hold;
- Lisa claimed that the dog should be described as a Doberman, not a Doberman Pinscher;
- the said dog didn't, at the time in question, bark;
- none of the briefcases here today is the actual one stolen, which was never recovered.

John Kilpatrick

1. Opening

Si apre solo in questo senso.

2. Recit.

I had a briefcase, a favourite briefcase. It was a present from my wife (*his first wife*).

It was Brown. It was Strong. Its make was Samsonite.

Its surface was sort-of-like simulated leather, but not like any real animal or dinosaur; more like the floor of a dried-up reservoir, or crazy paving, where the children play games with the cracks.

3. Fugue

Where the bears and crocodiles lurk in the cracks waiting for children, to eat them up.
Where the bears and crocodiles lurk in the cracks waiting for dogs and children.

be careful – don't get caught – mind where your feet go – you must be careful – they're dangerous – they're bad – they're very nasty (etc.) – mind your step – don't tread on them.

4. Recit. & Objections

My briefcase was capacious, holding all manner of articles.

With comfortable clearance from the hinges it could take A3 paper.

What's that? A3? What's that? Metric? We don't like metric. Down, down with Europe. What's wrong with Quarto? What's wrong with Foolscap?

Do you like numbers? I'll tell you about Foolscap.

5. Foolscap

One and one is two,
One and two is three,
Two and three is five,
Three and five is eight,
Five and eight is thirteen.

$$F_n = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \cdot \left(\frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n - \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \cdot \left(\frac{1 - \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n$$

Formula for Fibonacci numbers

Foolscap’s edges are eight and thirteen so come in the Fibonacci series.
Because the edges are Fibonacci numbers, Foolscap approximates to the Golden Rectangle.

6. Recit.

Never mind Quarto, never mind Foolscap.
Don’t forget there’s another size, not metric, not an A size: Octavo – much used for music
the whole world over – That’s what my briefcase was used for.

7. Music

Music.

8. Recit.

And now for the sad part. My briefcase was stolen from my wife’s car (*his second wife*).
I rang the baby-sitter (*her name was Lisa*).
‘I’ll be late. Lock the door. They’ve got the keys.’
She was frightened; rang her father.
When I got home there were two men (*big men*) and a Doberman Pinscher.

9. Dog

Woof. Arf.

10. Recit.

And now for my special memory of my briefcase.
It had on it an inscription in four languages: I remember but two.

11. Close

Si apre solo in questo senso. Which is to say: Opens this way only.

Three Nonsense Songs – Words (Edward Lear)

There was an old lady of France,
Who taught little ducklings to dance;
When she said, ‘Tick-a-tack!’ – They only said ‘Quack!’
Which grieved that old lady of France.



There was an Old Person of Cromer,
Who stood on one leg to read Homer;
When he found he grew stiff, he jumped over the cliff,
Which concluded that Person of Cromer.

There was an Old Man in a tree,
Who was horribly bored by a Bee;
When they said, ‘Does it buzz?’ he replied, ‘Yes, it does!’
‘It’s a regular brute of a Bee!’



Peripheral Visions – Words

1. Abroad and At Home (Jonathan Swift)

As Thomas was cudgel'd one day by his wife,
He took to the street, and fled for his life:
Tom's three dearest friends came by in the squabble,
And sav'd him at once from the shrew and the rabble;
Then ventur'd to give him some sober advice;
But Tom is a person of honor so nice,
Too wise to take counsel, too proud to take warning,
That he sent to all three a challenge next morning.
Three duels he fought, thrice ventur'd his life;
Went home, and was cudgel'd again by his wife.

2. I passed by his Garden (Lewis Carroll)

I passed by his garden, and marked with one eye,
How the Owl and the Panther were sharing a pie.
The Panther took pie-crust, and gravy, and meat,
While the Owl had the dish as its share of the treat.
When the pie was all finished, the Owl, as a boon,
Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon;
While the Panther received knife and fork with a growl,
And concluded the banquet by eating the Owl.

3. J'ai peur (anon.)

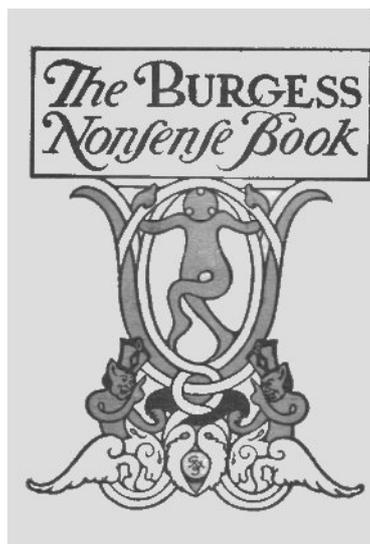
J'ai peur
Du Flu!
Toute á l'heure
J'ai bu
Un peu trop
D'whisky chaud,
Et j'ai vu
Trois faces
Dans la glace:
Trois 'moi'
Á la fois;
Et – ma foi,
Tous les trois
Étaient moi!
J'ai peur
Du Flu!

*I'm scared of the flu! Just
now I drank a bit too much
hot whisky and I saw three
faces in the mirror: three
'Me' at the same time; And,
my goodness, all three were
Me! I'm scared of the flu!*

4. Call (Incident at week-end party) (D B Wyndham Lewis)

He cried: 'Let England to herself be true!
What sacrifice too great if England live?
What boots it that our treasure, poured anew,
Make of us paupers, if we gladly give?'
His face was honest, and sincere, and red;
He did a bit in armaments, he said.

Cuttings from a Nonsense Book – Notes



While I was learning to read in bomb-free Oxford during the war, my father was training pilots in Rhodesia, from where he got for me a copy of “The Burgess Nonsense Book”. The contents thereof, especially the quatrains, etched themselves lastingly into my brain, and it seems only fair that I should now impose them on others. For me they have provided a most convenient vehicle, as they are many and short, and I find “long” to be beyond my abilities.

The Purple Cow, now a suite-within-a-suite, first appeared on its own. It’s a phrase not much known in this country, being more familiar to North Americans. In Oakhurst, California, for example, Trish & I chanced upon The Purple Cow Mall; and, attending Bernstein’s “Wonderful Town” recently, we were amused to hear a passing reference to a hostelry of that name. A Google search on “purple cow” achieves 2,400,000 hits.

As with My Briefcase there have been a few changes, such as 7b being written for the Ghent choir because, unsurprisingly, they couldn’t effect a translation of 7a into Flemish. For this performance a new number (no.5) has been written (which is why it’s the only one with split vocal parts).

The whole work is peppered with slivers of attempted musicologicality: in, for example, the representations of fingers, toes, and other features; in “stretching” lamp posts; in no.8 by “without touching the ground” descending not quite to the base note (the dominant); by reversing the music where Burgess uses mirror-writing; by setting a blues-note on the word “purple”. Well, how else to write music? It’s a lot easier than seeking inspiration!

John Kilpatrick

Words of the above

Please see the separate **User Guide** for the words and their accompanying drawings, and for a biography and bibliography of their author Gelett Burgess. The following lists the movements.

1. Introduction
 - Frontispiece
 - Epigram
2. Digital Extremities
3. Cranial Ambulation (The Lecture)
4. City Flora (The Lamp Post)
5. My Fancies
6. Fugue in 24 keys
- 7.(b) The Museum of Kisses
8. The Floorless Room
9. The Window Pain
10. The Towel and the Door (& The Door and the Towel)
11. The Purple Cow
 - 11a. The Purple Cow
 - 11b. The Purpil Cowe
 - 11c. Confession
12. Finis

Biographies

The Choir is an established group, Sheffield Lydian Singers, with the happy addition of **Peter** as guest. The singers are an informal lot, meeting in houses to enjoy mainly unaccompanied repertoire, though **George** is not averse to helping us out on the piano when the notes prove hard to come by. Most of us are, or have been, members of choral societies, such as Sheffield Bach Choir, Sheffield Oratorio Chorus, or Sterndale Singers, and many have musical activities extending further: for example **Carol Bowns** directs the Tideswell Singers, a well-known local group, and **Robin Hughes** has written some pieces that the choir have performed with pleasure, with more to come (it makes a change from you-know-who). As well as the aforementioned, others have solos in this concert: those with more than a bar or two are on the menu.

As for directing, **Peter Taylor** runs the Hallam Choral Society, and is Artistic Director of the Sheffield University Singers Society. He makes a living as a singing teacher and baritone soloist. We are lucky that he enjoys taking part, and between curries and occasional drinks that one doesn't mention in this church, is often inclined to help others out if asked nicely – for which we are most grateful. More may be found on his website www.petertaylor.biz



George Nicholson and **Jane Ginsborg**, surnames notwithstanding, are husband and wife. Jane has an over-long job title and is Professor of Music Psychology at the Royal Northern College of Music, while George is Reader in Composition at Sheffield University. George's musical output seems, at times, to be on a higher plane, but George himself is firmly on this planet; as is Jane, although she devoted the earlier part of her career to singing difficult modern music and now studies musicians' memory. More can readily be found about either on the internet, by searching on nothing more than the name.

The Wind Players have a common link in Sheffield Concert Band, from **Judith** who is its director to **Brian** who has deputized on trombone, with the others being, or having been, members (as is John). The clarinettists, with John, form the local "No Strings Attached" clarinet quartet, while **Jim** collects and repairs vintage brass instruments, and often makes the like to his own designs (which seem to work, somehow). **Anne** leads our group with her evident calm ability. Many can play instruments other than what you see, but only **Chris** gets a chance today, on the soprano saxophone (unless a vuvuzela appears on the scene, that is).

The real blame for this concert must lie with **John Kilpatrick**, who has the temerity to put it on in spite of a complete lack of recognizable musical qualifications. His early 6-year experience as a chorister of Christ Church, Oxford, may have something to do with it: he has scarcely been able to avoid singing since, and following retirement has had an annoying tendency to play any wind instrument he can get his hands on. How he ever thought he could compose is a mystery yet to be solved. But even if this event could be described as a "vanity concert", John feels very well supported by the **whole ensemble**, all of whom have their own lives to live, but have nevertheless found the time to put their backs into this project.



It would be a trifle difficult to write a biography of the **audience**, to whom, as the most important people at the concert, not only is recognition due, but sincere thanks also.

Sheffield Lydian Ensemble

Sopranos:	Carol Bowns Jane Ginsborg Yuko Morimoto Trish Kilpatrick Eve Saunders
Altos:	Alison Down Kitty Ross Barbara Hawley Philippa Hughes
Tenors:	Robin Hughes Frank Arthurs Tim Down
Basses:	Robin Saunders Alan Yarranton Peter Taylor Chris Walker
Clarinets:	Anne Huggins Judith Wallace Chris Watson
Trombone:	Brian Witten
Euphonium:	Jim Langley
Piano:	George Nicholson
Conductor:	John Kilpatrick