



Welcome to the latest edition of AGS News, the forum of The Armstrong Gibbs Society, which covers events, people and music.

### Newham Academy Festival 2011

Early this year the Society was contacted by the Artistic director of the Festival, Geraldine McEwen. A Simple Symphony for piano and Orchestra, by Armstrong Gibbs, had been chosen for their orchestral concert on April 1<sup>st</sup> and they requested a speaker to introduce the preliminary competition. The Chairman and I agreed to say a few words, so on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March we went down to the Academy in Newham.

We were surprised and delighted to hear so much music-making going on in the Academy, which was housed in an old school building needing more than a lick of paint. For a nominal fee, young people living in the area were able to attend instrumental classes regularly and participate in different wind and string bands. The enthusiasm of students and staff alike was infectious and we were very pleased to be able to sit in on several rehearsals and to listen to the workshop on the Gibbs Simple Symphony.

Sadly, since our visit, the Academy appears to have fallen victim to the local authority cut-backs. We have, therefore, no information on whether or not the local Music Festival was a success.

Angela Aries



### **Memory Lane**

Michael Babbidge writes:

### **The Turning Year**

**My interest in The Turning Year goes back to my schooldays. As I am sure**

**you know, it was commissioned to mark the 800th (I think) centenary of the City of Carlisle. I was one of the schoolchildren who sang in the choir at its premier. There is something delightful about the piece and the excitement of the first performance has remained with me all these years.**

**Recently I called into the public library in Carlisle and saw a published copy of the score that they keep in the archives with a handwritten copy which has some instructions written, I assume, by Armstrong Gibbs himself. Of course I could not take it out of the library.**

### **FROM THE RECORDS**

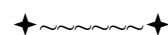
*Honor Gibbs to her daughter Ann:*

"Wed: Oh dear – an afternoon with the Mothers' Union – you know honestly I sometimes feel I can't go on with every year a little older (average age 70s) same old hats and coats – everyone a little deafer. Well I suppose and hope that on the Resurrection morning we'll all (with luck) look a little better & let's trust the heavenly Garments look better than our very worn and ugly earthly ones. I had on an aged Henry Heath (hat) that I bring out every winter and wear with the faint hope that by tilting it at a different angle people will think it is new.

... There! I never told you of the lovely evening we had last Sat. at the Palace Hotel Southend.

The Freda Parry Ladies Choir (Champion British) gave a coronation concert and as Dad is their President we were asked to dinner first at the Palace – very de-luxe and as no-one knew my old black frock it looked quite nice with me diamonds. Every stitch of central heating was on and as it was a warm night we nearly died – 400 in the audience. They sang a group of Daddy's songs and he made a speech in the middle. The mayor and 'ess were there and very nice in their gold plate."

20<sup>th</sup> October 1953



### Recording of the Ballet Music from *The Betrothal*

The Trustees of the Society were delighted to hear late last year that Lewis Foreman was interested in making a recording for Dutton Epoch of another Gibbs orchestral work to be included in a CD of 'Dan Godfrey Encores'.

Lewis Foreman writes:

"Dan Godfrey was the celebrated conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra from 1895 to his retirement in 1934. There he established a tradition of performing all the latest British music (and quite a few foreign ones too). He was knighted for it! The Gibbs works he programmed were: Ballet Music from *The Betrothal* (30/3/1922); Song: *The Fields are Full* (4/1922); Suite: *Crossings* (3/4/1924); *A Vision of Night* (8/3/1923) and *Symphony in E* (25/10/1933).

The idea (suggested by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra) was to do a programme of Dan Godfrey 'Encores' – really revivals – to include mainly unrecorded examples of the shorter works he played including a group of the light music pieces such as *Gee Whizz!* and *Clatter of the Clogs*. I wanted to have Armstrong Gibbs represented, and after looking at *A Vision of Night*, *Crossings* and *The Betrothal* decided to recommend the latter."

Lewis Foreman photocopied the autograph full score which is held at The Royal College of Music. This was passed to Michael Pilkington who used his amazing skills with IT to produce 'electronic' versions of the full score and parts. From these, members of the committee reproduced and prepared performing copies for the orchestra.

The recording was made on 22<sup>nd</sup> July by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at The Lighthouse in Poole and was conducted by Ronald Corp. When the orchestra launched into the waltz section he is reported as saying, "It's where Dusk came from".

*The Betrothal* was written by Maurice Maeterlinck and is described as *A Fairy Play*. It was produced 90 years ago by Granville Barker at The Gaiety Theatre in London for which Gibbs wrote the incidental music. The footnote to the autograph is:

2/6/21. C.A.G. Wildcroft, Danbury.

Christopher Kingsley



### NEWS AND VIEWS

Recordings - *good Christmas*



*presents!*

March 2010

*Gibbs' oboe concerto recorded by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, soloist Jonathan Small*

This recording is available from Christopher Kingsley (01245 223744 or [Christopher.Kingsley@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Kingsley@chelmsford.gov.uk))

September 2010

*Gibbs' complete works for piano and violin, Olga Dudnik, Robert Atchison.*

Available from Amazon, Guild, or iTunes

(Also available: Gibbs' Piano Trios, by The London Piano Trio from CD Baby and iTunes)

July 2011

*The Betrothal, recorded for Dan Godfrey Encores by The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, directed by Ronald Corp.*

Details to follow.

### Armstrong Gibbs Music Festival 2012

For regular updates on this and other events please visit the Armstrong Gibbs website at [www.armstronggibbs.com](http://www.armstronggibbs.com)

See Next Issue for **CAG Soundbites, From the Records, Memory Lane, and News and Views**. Please send contributions to the editor:

Angela Aries, 16, Runsell Close, Danbury, CM3 4PQ, or e-mail ([angela.aries@btinternet.com](mailto:angela.aries@btinternet.com)).