

# The Score

NEWSLETTER 25

NOVEMBER 2006

## Dear Members,

I hope you all had a splendid Summer. The weather certainly did all it could to help! The rehearsals for our two works, Carmina Burana and The Rio Grand have been very demanding, but also very exciting. Aiden has been working us - and himself – very hard, so I hope the concert will be a tremendous success!

### CARMINA BURANA AND CARL ORFF:

A couple of years ago I discovered that Carmina Burana was the first of a group of works entitled Trionfi, Trittico teatrale (Triumphs, Theatrical Triptych). The second work is entitled Catulli Carmina, Ludi Scaenici ( Songs of Catullus, Scenic Games), and the third work is entitled Trionfo di Afrodite, Concerto scenico (Triumph of Afrodite, Scenic Concert). The whole work runs for over 132 minutes, whereas Carmina is less than an hour long. It might be interesting to do the whole work one day or hear it done by someone else. All three pieces are full of the same simple but exciting rhythms we know in Carmina. The only complete Trionfi on CD that I know of is a Deutsche Grammophon double CD conducted by Eugen Jochum.

Aiden remarked recently that it was difficult to find out what other works Carl Orff has written, which is very true, but I was lucky enough in 2005 on a visit to Cornwall to find a CD entitled The Best of Carl Orff at a stall on one of the promenades. It has some extracts from Carmina – inevitably, but it also has some excerpts from a work called Schulwerk which includes Rundadinella made famous by the BBC “Amazing what you can learn trail”, Gassenhauer made famous by the Volkswagen Golf TV advert, and Guten Morgen, Spielmann made famous by the movie “Badlands”, so the notes tell me! They all seem to be songs written for children. Then there is an aria from Die Kluge – an opera, I presume, and excerpts from Der Mond, another Opera, I think. These extracts are taken from “The Authorized Carl Orff Edition”.

The booklet note on Carmina Burana says this: Carmina Burana was the inspired title dreamt up by Johann Andreas Schmeller for the edition he published in 1847 of re-discovered 13<sup>th</sup> century “Songs from the Benediktbeuern Monastery” in Southern Bavaria. Written in a mixture of dog-Latin and low-life vernacular German, the

songs take nature worship, sentimental piety and drunken ribaldry as their principal subjects. Orff saw the possibility of using a number of them as the basis for a choral cantata accompanied by mimed action and “magic tableaux”. The result was a work of more or less unbridled hedonism, with coursing rhythms, folksy melodies and deliberately uncomplicated harmonic and contrapuntal writing.

#### CONSTANT LAMBERT: 1905-1951

Constant Lambert was born in London on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1905. His father was the Australian painter, G.W. Lambert, and his brother, Maurice, was a well-known sculptor. Constant, at an early age, became the darling of British 20<sup>th</sup> Century music. At the incredibly early age of twenty-one he was commissioned by Diaghilev to write a ballet on the theme of Romeo and Juliet. When he fell out with Diaghilev over his choice of the Surrealist painters (Ernst and Miró), he wrote a second ballet (Pomona) for Bronislava Nijinska.

By the age of twenty-five, he had achieved a commanding position in British music, equal to that of Walton, but for a time he had to earn his living by playing music for ballet classes which made him take a deep dislike to the marches and waltzes of Schubert which were used for dancing practice!

In 1934, when he was still under 30, he wrote the famous (or infamous) book on contemporary music entitled “Music Ho!”

Lambert was interested in music of various kinds, especially Jazz. Jazz rhythms predominate in his piano Sonata of 1929, and, of course, in *The Rio Grande*. Some say that the work catches perfectly the sun-laden and sensual atmosphere of the poem, but I find the poem dull and not very well written, and Lambert’s music transforms it into something lively and certainly sun-laden and sensual!

#### Places Where They Sing.

by

Maureen Turner.

We booked a holiday in Italy without looking closely enough at the brochure until it was too late. Our vision of the rolling hills and cypresses of Tuscany was shattered by the reality that the hills were anything but rolling. We had booked a holiday in the Dolomites, in an area with a distinctly Austrian air about it - a little out-of-season ski village, Fai della Paganella, in the Trentino region.

We flew into Bergamo about six o’clock in the evening, rather tired and crumpled, to join our coach and our guide for the week. We all asked, not unnaturally, when we would get to the hotel. He replied deviously that we had to drive to the hills, only revealing when we were half-way there that it would take at least three hours. It says something for British calmness in adversity that we did not rise up and lynch him.

This set the tone for the week, with a relentless programme of early starts, long coach journeys and very late evening meals of the old-fashioned boarding house kind. We didn't whinge, though I did hear one elderly lady complain that she hadn't wanted to come at all, but her friend had insisted. 'And I am over eighty you know!'

The places we travelled to were amazing. The first day we sailed down Lake Garda to Limone over sparkling blue water with mountains on each side, and visited a lemon farm. The lake has a bad reputation for storms and even in the sunshine it could seem 'sullen and menacing'!

We drove up endless hairpin bends high among the jagged peaks and saw a glacier; and also gentians and the starry mountain aster. We went to Venice (the second time for us) and were sad to see it sinking (literally) further into decay, though still eerily beautiful.

The day we didn't join the coach was in some ways the best. Having caught the local bus to the nearest small town, we came back to Fai to explore and have coffee at the local bar. It was so quiet in the village that the sound of footsteps was startling. The small fields and gardens in the narrow valley were green and peaceful, and that day little wisps of cloud drifted down the cliffs and sat on the rooftops.

On the way back to the airport we discovered that the region is famous for choirs; a local saying goes: 'In Trentino one person is silent; two will gossip and three will sing!'

The journey home was horrendous; we finally arrived at three the next morning. Was it all worth it? There was no way we could have visited so many places under our own steam in such a short time and the 'pictures in our heads', to say nothing of the photographs, will stay with us. Travel has always been a tedious, uncomfortable business, which modern transportation systems can't completely alleviate - but the only alternative is staying at home!

Maureen Turner.

Many thanks for that interesting, and unusual article, Maureen. I love travelling abroad, and have done so since my mid-20s. I even loved it when, while I was on my motor-cycle, a wasp flew into my open shirt one hot day just after crossing the border into Spain, and since I instinctively looked down to flick it out, I hit the kerb and came off the bike. That moment was not very enjoyable, but two other young motorcyclists on one motorcycle came along and picked me up. Since I was hurting in several places, one of them rode my motorcycle while the other took me as a passenger groaning at every bump on the back of his bike. They found me an hotel at the next town, parked my motorcycle for me in the road, and went on their way. I've never forgotten them, as you can see. All the staff at the hotel and most of the English guests – the young ones, anyway – were very kind to me, and later the staff arranged a flight for me to get home and ordered a taxi for me to get to the airport. I suppose one remembers the disasters more easily than the trouble-free holidays, but I must say I did enjoy the company and help of those young people.

One of them went on a visit to a bodega with the others and came back roaring drunk. One of the girls said to me that on the way out he had been a very nice bloke, but after he had lain down under the tap of one of the barrels of wine and turned the tap on, he had become absolutely unbearable!

That's all there is for this Newsletter. Please do try to make a contribution to the next one. The more contributions the better the Newsletter!

Hope the Concert goes well for all of us!

Best wishes,  
Jim Nicol