

# CONCERT REVIEWS *continued*

Sea) and Nocturne (nightfall across the sands) that the composer's descriptive but nevertheless impressionistic intentions can be gauged, and are immediately evident in the very effective scoring for the recorder with quartet – an entirely engaging work.

Then followed the first performance of a new arrangement for recorder and string quartet by David Dubery of *Pinchbelly Park*; the first movement of his *Two Stopfordian Impressions*. Originally scored for recorder and piano, this evocation of Stockport's Vernon Park (nicknamed Pinchbelly Park by the poor workers who built it in the 1850s) concluding with a reference to Elgar's *Salut d'amour*, no doubt heard from its bandstand, benefits from the increased sustaining power of the quartet in this version.

If a concert requires a more familiar work then this was provided in Dvorak's Op. 96 String Quartet 'The American', as characteristically atmospheric as his 'New World' Symphony.

The concluding first performance was of David Beck's *Petite Suite* for recorder and string quartet. The opening *Introduction* is suitably preludial, but the second movement *Spooks* and third movement *Hopscotch* reveal the composer's wit and craftsmanship, and obvious familiarity with the recorder and, indeed, the string quartet (he was a professional orchestral violinist).

The official programme at an end, John Turner announced that to mark a 'significant' birthday on the following day of Ian Henshall, a driving force behind Music at St James, another piece by David Beck would be played as an encore. This lively *March* (also receiving its premiere) felt as if it could be a fourth movement for the *Petite Suite* – perhaps it will become so?

This was an absorbing concert, compellingly played, and very entertainingly introduced, particularly by Andy Long in his 'throw away' style.

Andrew Mayes

## Peregrine Recorder Orchestra's Charity Concert

Simply Oak near Biggleswade, Bedfordshire  
Saturday 26th November, 2011



This was advertised as "A Most Unlikely Concert" to raise funds for Operation Christmas Child, featuring Steve Marshall as soloist playing his amazing Tubax (giant sax!) and as guest conductor. However, the concert finished up even more unlikely, as there was a last-minute scramble to put together some additional recorder pieces, following the news that Steve had been taken ill and would be unlikely to be fit again in time to appear. Musical Director Ian Farquhar pulled all the right rabbits out of his ever-productive hat and, despite the odds, some concert-goers deemed this one of the best concerts performed by Peregrine. The venue, which is a restaurant and furniture and antiques emporium, had never been used for a concert before, but proved a superb environment.

I am not going to list all the music played, but it is worth mentioning some of the highlights, beginning with Ian's own overture for Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*, made up of, of course, of a selection of the operetta's lovely tunes. This was followed by the Canzon *La Foccarà* by Bramieri. A very competent playing of this lively piece. Some lovely Grieg and Gluck were then played and the popular Elizabethan *Serenade* by Binge. A quartet of players from the orchestra then stood to play a three-piece suite (remember, this was a furniture store!) composed by Steve Marshall himself. *Music that Counts* is a humorous offering, complete with finger snapping, stamping of feet and vocalising. It was well received and the players were duly congratulated on their playing as they had only first seen the music some hours before.

A hearty rendition of Sylvia Rosin's arrangement of a Native North American song *The River* gave added interest when the orchestra's players sang before playing their recorders. This took us up to the interval where the host's famed tea and cakes were enjoyed. With such a large audience, this took rather longer than expected.

Not satisfied with the off-the-wall quartet and the strange sounds of the American plains, the piece that followed the interval was another outing for Farquhar's *Primal Search*, with its novel percussion accompaniment to Jo Leatham's superb solo playing on the descant. Back to earth then, with three pieces from Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* and Fantasia No.1 by William Byrd. A couple of Brazilian children's songs had been intended to be conducted by Steve Marshall, but Ian continued in his place. Then followed two arrangements of well-known modern songs to finish the programme. The encore chosen was a humorous waltz by Shostakovich.

And Operation Christmas Child will be receiving some £500 for the international shoe-box appeal, which is an even better finale.

Ron Whitlock