

SRP Meeting 8 February 2020 Conductor Dick Little

William Byrd Fantasia a 4 in 4 parts

In Byrd's consort music, a number of sub-categories roughly apply:

1. Fantasias 2. Ground-bass compositions 3. Dances (Pavans, Galliards) 4. Cantus firmus compositions (In nomines and various hymn-tune settings)

Byrd uses a collection of motifs throughout his fantasias as was evident in this piece. As the first piece of the session there was initially somewhat of a 'car crash'; it was very tricky. Phrasing did not coincide with the bar lines, which would not have been present when composed.

Dick was very patient and persevered as we all struggled to get to grips with the changing motifs and finally we managed a satisfactory result. It certainly sharpened our concentration ready for a much more modern challenge in the next piece.

Gaston Saux Un Beau Jour d'Été in 7 parts from sopranino to contra bass

Gaston Saux is well known amongst recorder players for two recorder quartets; the first composed in 1959 and the second in 1965. He also wrote a number of other works for recorder most of which are unpublished, including "Un beau jour d'été," composed in 1962. It is dedicated to Edgar Hunt, who had been at the forefront of the revival of the recorder in the UK for over 75 years and who also ran many Anglo-French summer schools in France at Arras. Edgar's sister, who founded the Bristol Branch of the SRP and was its musical director for nearly 50 years, deposited a manuscript of the work in the Bristol SRP Library. The hand written score (not by Saux) was almost illegible – although the parts were clearly written. It has been computer set by Dick Little.

This certainly looked to be a very challenging and long piece (343 bars!). However, slowly we crept up on it and with Dick's encouragement managed a quite satisfying performance. This took us until teatime but most people were really enthusiastic about the piece and the challenge. Well worth the effort on such an unusual, rarely played piece.

This took us through until tea was served by Gwyneth and Barbara. A wonderful choice of cakes as ever, thank you to both.

Ann Marshall 4 Walks in 5 parts

A typical fun set by Ann which, after our first two pieces, looked much more instantly playable. They were not difficult but did present some tricky timing in places to keep us on our toes but a very enjoyable set of short pieces - such a contrast to our earlier efforts.

On to our final piece of the afternoon:

Steve Marshall Horseplay in 6 parts

This piece was written by Steve specially for Dick's band to play at a fundraising event for disabled horse riders and is based on a medley of well known horse related tunes.

A fast, tricky but tremendously fun piece to finish the afternoon with a gallop!

A really good afternoon of very diverse, challenging and stimulating music; thanks very much to Dick who steered us through each piece with great patience

Sue Walker