

Saturday 20th May, 2017

We arrived at Ruishton on this May afternoon as the heaven's opened, so mass running into the hall. Julia McKinley very wisely sat the storm out, and appeared a calm and dry – ready to take us through our first piece – a simple traditional **Hungarian piece**, which was set up as a round. We started in unison, but as the level of playing was quite high, we soon progressed to a duet, a trio and eventually a 6-tet. The music worked very well and sounded excellent, and so warmed our fingers up. As this was our May meeting we couldn't let it pass without playing **Thomas Morley's** *Now is the Month of Maying*. Again – we manged the tricky rhythms well, so swiftly moved on to soemth9ign a little trickier - **Evaristo Felice dall'Abaco's** *Sonata 11*, a lovely piece with 4 movements – the first movement gave treble ones a challenge, the second movement gave the whole ensemble a chance to practice semi-quavers, the third movement looked simple, but was a beautiful Largo, and the final movement was also fairly slow and straightforward.

Tea was then served by Sue (W) and Louise (H) – and there was an excellent selection of cakes. Many thanks, Sue and Louise – you are not doing my waistline any good!

We began the second half with a short but evocative piece that **Julia** had written in memory of Noreen Johnson. It was lovely to play, especially in the bass section – the sign of a good composition is how interesting a bass part is, and this certainly ticked that box. Following this we played a version of **Scott Joplins' Weeping Willow** – after splitting into a number of parts – I remember hearing tenor 3 requested, and there were 2 bass parts and great basses. Julia explained that ragtime music is not fast, but a steady march rhythm. After a bit of clapping practice, most people had conquered any rhythmic difficulties, and we progressed to giving a good performance. We finished the afternoon with a bit of light music – **Arthur Sullivan's** *Flowers that bloomed in the Spring* (with no tra las!) – good fun and easy to reach a convincing ensemble.

Thank you, Julia, for a lovely afternoon of music making – and such a variety of music.