

Report of SRP meeting 20th July at the Nag's Head

Our conductor was Joyce Rudall, who promised to break us in gently (in case we hadn't been doing our daily practice in the hot weather.) so we began with *Two Easy Consorts* by Jeremiah Clarke, arr Helen Hooker. Both were in C major. The first, a march, was straightforward with tenor part giving a strong beat and bass often playing only on beats 2 and 3. The Ayre, in contrast, was gentle and began with a 2 beat bar. Coming in halfway through the first beat proved tricky for some of the descants until our leader threatened to get cross. The rest of us looked virtuous (well you can if you are only playing 2 rests or a minim!) Suddenly it clicked. Flowing quavers floated over the more solid lower parts and behold, it was easy after all.

The second piece was *Fughetta* by Glen Shannon (b.1966) In 3/8 time, marked Allegro, this posed more of a challenge. Starting on the 3rd beat of the bar, the parts came in at 6 beat intervals playing a pattern of scalar semiquavers and staccato quavers. The trebles and tenors had tricky dovetailing rhythms with lots of accents. The basses played a sturdy accompaniment of staccato and tenuto quavers interspersed with slurred semiquavers. At about the 4th attempt we managed to finish together on a delicious chord of D major with an added second. The verdict was "not bad" but worth working on.

A *Canon* by Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) followed. It was in duple time but counted in four. The dynamics, when observed, contributed greatly to the canonic effect, as we discovered when we had got the hang of all the tied notes!

We were now ready for tea, by Elsa (21st Cent) with delicious cake, as usual.

Spring Dance, by Andrew Challinger, was written for the Golden Jubilee of the SRP in 1987. It is a lively waltz with a 1-in-a-bar feel. The lower parts play a catchy staccato rhythm below a legato descant melody. At the key change the lower instruments take over the melody, and in the final section in the original key we hear the catchy rhythm again, with phrases from the melody passed between the parts. Very effective and fun to play.

We ended with *North Sea Sketches* by Allan Bullard, commissioned by the Suffolk branch of the SRP for the 2010 National Festival. The first movement, *In Harbour*, consists of three country dances, all in 6/8 time, each one faster than the previous one and culminating in the *Steamboat Quickstep*. In contrast, the second movement, a *Lament*, is legato with gentle dynamics. Although minor in tonality, it ends on a lovely chord of A major. The third movement, *Ocean Waves*, changes the mood with a few bars of a hornpipe, then two folk songs; *Bold Nelson's Praise* and *The Bay of Biscay*. In the latter all parts get a turn at playing the melody (even the basses) then the descants (or sopraninos) play a high descant over the top. After all this excitement there's a huge *molto rit* and we go straight into *Spanish Ladies*, an expressive waltz. **Absolutely essential to watch the conductor here as we move**

from 3/4 to 2/2, change key and almost double the speed ! Joyce is very good at explaining how she is going to do this. After a final hornpipe intro (with two wicked $\frac{3}{4}$ bars in the middle...oops!) we ended with *What Shall we do with the Drunken Sailor?*.....Well,you try to play at the same speed as everyone else in the (almost)unison quaver passages, try to remember your trill fingerings and beware the flying baton at **Z** (accel. al fine)... Oh, and play in the General Pause at your peril !!

....piece of cake really....

Joyce, thank you for being so patient. Great fun! Gwyn Flitters