

Saturday 22nd October 2011

Welcome to our annual playing Day – and this year it was to be conducted by *Andrew Challinger*, the composer of a huge amount of recorder music. An excellent number of people attended for what turned out to be a super day of very mixed music. Andrew started proceedings by getting us all to try to memorize a short piece, then play it in rounds. Finally we had to transpose the piece to various new keys – a good way to warm up both brain and fingers. The first written piece we played was a 3 part **Fantasia** by *Byrd* – fairly straightforward, but most enjoyable both to play and to listen to. We then moved onto another *Byrd Fantasia*, this time for 4 parts, the traditional arrangement of SATB.

Moving forward a few centuries we played 2 folk dances, arranged by Andrew and originally arranged by *Paul Clark*. The first was a lively dance for SATB, the second benefitted by the inclusion of the contra bass to support the rhythm. Great fun, both pieces. Moving right up to date we then attempted a piece by *Guus Haverkate* – **Sound Crime**. The subtitles were both amusing and helpful, and the entire piece read like a thriller novel. There were some interesting rhythms and even more interesting chords – particularly one where descant one played a high C and other parts played every other conceivable note in the repertoire – but nowhere hinting at the key of C.

Lunch break – followed by a performance of the *Haverkate*. Fortunately not to an audience! We then had fun splitting into 2 choirs for the next 2 pieces – *Grillo's Canzon Secunda* and *Viadana's Symphonie La Bergamasca*. The first again employed the larger instruments, to good effect, and the second had an interesting twist at the end – was this a joke by *Viadana*?

So to tea – and those who haven't visited Somerset before – be warned – we have the best cake makers in the country, and today was no exception, with an array of mouth-watering cakes. Thanks must go to the ladies, led by Diana, who did such an efficient job of serving teas and clearing up afterwards.

After the tea break and the successful raffle in aid of our own group contra bass, we played some music by *Andrew Challinger* himself – firstly 3 dances – (we only actually played 2 of them) – both very easy on the ear and quite playable, and the finale of the afternoon was **Ballad, Blues and Riffs**, which some of the group have played before. Whilst we didn't work on these very much, we got the general idea and know that they would be fun to explore at a later date.

Thank you Andrew, for guiding us through a super day of playing a variety of music and we hope you enjoyed your visit to Somerset as much as we enjoyed having you here.