

Saturday 25th February. Dick Little

Well, the best place to be on this cold, wet February afternoon was tucked up warm in Ruishton Village Hall with the promise of good music and excellent cakes!

Dick did not disappoint with his choice of music – we began the afternoon with some fairly straightforward Polish and German Dances – by **Demantius**, a contemporary of Verdi. They were fun to play and Dick encouraged us to articulate carefully. We left the music on our stands for returning to later in the afternoon.

Next we played **John Hawkes' Celebration Overture**. This was written for the massed playing at the SRP festival when it was held in Newcastle (many years ago!). There were some tricky rhythms, and a lot of syncopation and jazz sections, but we managed to make a good performance of it. Miriam enlightened Dick's conducting to a gentleman confidently leading us through a dance.

Next an even more demanding piece, which we nearly abandoned, but which we managed to improve on with playing. This was **Michael East's Amavi**, one from a set of similarly named pieces which the renaissance English composer wrote. I think this was meant to be about Love, but we possibly had a bit of hate in there too! It is basically a fantasia, in which he develops the initial theme into ever more complex ideas.

Tea was well deserved, and well presented by Diana and Felicity (K). Diana's Date cakes deserve special mention, although the rest looked equally appetising.

After the break we split into 2 choirs, needing a lot of tenors to gain a sonorous sound in the second choir, and also employing both the great and contra basses. We played 2 sonatas by **Gussago** – *La Terza*, which was straightforward and *La Luzzara* which had more challenging moments regarding the time changes. Both were very successful and good to listen to.

The penultimate piece was by **Kuhnau**, the predecessor to JS Bach as organist at Leipzig. This, *Praeludium and Fuge*, was a very lovely but very simple piece, and worked well on recorders. Finally we returned to the Polish and German Dances to round off the afternoon.

Thank you Dick for an enjoyable and at times challenging afternoon of music making, and I hope you will return to Ruishton again very soon.