

July 9th 2022

Marg Hall (Playing Day)

Playing List

Anon	Descende in Hortum meum
Marg Hall	4 little somethings
Orlando di Lasso	O la, o che bon echo
Marg Hall	Fantasia on Burn's Songs
Byrd	Crowned with flowers
Marg Hall	Three Klezmer style quartets
Purcell/arr Hall	Ode to St. Cecelia's Day
Cole Porter/Blackwell/Hall	Let's do it.

Our first playing Day for 3 years was always going to be an anxious affair, but the day dawned beautifully, the wonderful committee all knew what they were doing and we swung into action like a well-oiled machine. Many Somerset SRP members and recorder playing visitors came through the door, to be greeted by Miriam (chair) and directed towards coffee (brilliantly prepared by Mary and Vivienne) and a seat.

At 10.30 we welcomed Marg to the conductor's seat, and she guided us through an anonymous piece, woke us up in a suitable fashion. The 40+ players made a magnificent sound, worthy of a cathedral.

One of the nice things about having Marg to conduct is that she brings much of her own compositions and arrangements, thus our next piece was a new work, 4 little somethings. We enjoyed playing each one, and did a 'performance' of all 4 before the short break. They are well worth looking at in a smaller group, and as with all of Marg's music – fun to play, slightly challenging but possible.

After a short comfort break, we played a 2 choir piece by Lasso. Firstly Marg had us all playing the choir one part, then 4 of us were expelled into the corridor to play the choir 2 part – the same music, but as an echo. I think the effect worked well, and it was certainly fun.

Then something Scottish – Fantasia on Burn's songs; this set us up perfectly for lunch with tunes running around our heads. It was fun picking out tunes played at half speed, or melodies which we knew well. After a lunch mostly eaten in the park or the garden of the hall we appropriately returned to play a piece involving flowers – mostly not natives to Somerset, but, as Byrd often is, quite challenging – although Marg talked us through it confidently and we appeared to master Byrd's intentions.

Marg Hall has a great interest in Klezmer music, so the next piece was one of her compositions in the Klezmer style. Beautiful pieces, and perfect for the recorder, evoking sadness but also hope. It's all to do with the augmented 2nd.

Tea and cakes followed, (thank you again Vivienne and Jill for your expertise) and the raffle that we traditionally hold on a playing day, with nearly a dozen desirable prizes. This was followed by the final two pieces, Ode to St. Cecelia's Day, written originally in 1692. As usual, a combination of Purcell's harmonies and Marg's sensitive arranging made this a beautiful piece to learn.

And finally, a bit of froth – a quick blast through Cole Porter's Let's do it sent everyone home in a happy mood.

Thank you, Marg, for a really lovely day of varied music, very clear conducting and patience when things didn't quite go to plan. We hope to see you soon, but you have certainly got our playing days back on track and given everyone at Somerset SRP a wonderful experience.