**Saturday 21st January 2023 Conductor Robin Powell**

Our first meeting back into the New Year, and Felicity opened the meeting by way of a eulogy to Diana Asbridge, who sadly, and suddenly, died just before Christmas. Diana had been an active member of our branch for many years, and was always cheerful and welcoming to new players. She will be missed.

Diana used to enjoy Robin’s visits to the branch particularly as she loved the music he bought along and his gentle way of guiding us through it. We haven’t seen Robin for nearly 4 years, due to the pandemic, so it was great to welcome him back to Somerset.

We started the afternoon with some fairly straightforward dances – **Hassler**’s *Lustgarten* (not all 12!). these Robin took quite slowly at first, then upped the tempo so that we could enjoy the dancing aspect.

We followed the Hassler with **Ravenscroft**’s *Fantasia* – a well scored piece where everyone has a part of the melody, and all parts are equally proportioned.

Before tea we played a very long version of *Goe from my window,* this version by **Gibbons.** Having found the initial melody, we had fun trying to find where it cropped up again and in what variations. The bass department were not impressed with the semiquavers near the end, but gave them a good go!

We definitely need tea and cake at that point, and this was provided by Vivienne and Judy.

After break, when everyone had a chance to catch up after the break, we played an arrangement of **Faurè**’s *Pavane*, by Brian Davey. It sounded lovely in the acoustic of our hall, and had the main tune weaving throughout the piece. Robin encouraged us to use the dynamics written on the music, to great effect.

Then we moved on to **Mendelssohn** – his *Fuga* from a string quartet written when he was only 14 (we discovered this after much discussion over his dates). Quite a challenging piece to play (again – quite long!) and plenty for all parts to do.

We finished a lovely afternoon of playing with the beautiful *Santo Sepulchro* by **Vivaldi.** This opens with a glorious slow movement, the first 2 bars having clashing alto parts. The second movement is much more lively, and reminiscent of Vivaldi’s Gloria in temperament, so gave a lively finish to the afternoon.

We all agreed that it was great to see Robin return to Somerset again and thank you for a lovely afternoon of playing great music, Robin.