

## *April 15th 2023 50th Anniversary Playing Day .....with Steve and Ann Marshall*

It was Somerset's turn to host their first playing day of 2023, and we very happy to welcome Ann and Steve Marshall as joint guest conductors. Steve in particular has long associations with Somerset SRP, having at one time been a regular visitor but this was Ann's first chance to conduct at the branch.

Ann started the ball rolling with one of the Marshall's arrangements of **Canzon 19 by Maschera**. It was a fairly straightforward piece, very pleasant, and gave Ann a chance to assess the group playing. After working on it for a while we gave a good run through. In the same vein, Ann then continued with an old favourite (again arranged by Ann and Steve) **Music Divine by Thomas Tomkins**, a lovely piece leading us into our short break.

Steve then took the baton and introduced us to a brand new piece, written especially for this occasion. **Somerset Pictures**, a series of 3 pieces based on the unique environment of the county. Firstly came - **The Coast** and, if you listened carefully, you could hear the waves crashing. So I assume it was based on the West Somerset Coast where there are impressive cliffs as opposed to the sandy beaches of further North. Cleverly, Steve and Ann managed to capture a motif and use it in the other movements. The second movement portrayed the infamous **Glastonbury Tor** which rises from the Somerset levels and here we were encouraged to imagine monks chanting - from Glastonbury Abbey - to the Tor? This chanting reappeared towards the end of the piece. The final movement depicted the former steam train line, now a cycle and walking route, from Wells to Yatton - **The Strawberry Line**. Images of people of old leaning out of the carriages to pick blackberries whilst the bumper crops of strawberries and cream were trained to Yatton and hence onto the London train and to the tables of the rich.

Steve later put this on Facebook:

### ***Somerset Pictures***

*A few months ago Ann and I were pleased to be commissioned to write a piece by Somerset SRP. The piece was to be played on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the branch, and that day was yesterday! Our 'Somerset Pictures', is in three movements, and the idea – naturally enough - was for each movement to reflect somewhere in Somerset.*

*Some of the music is straightforward, and some less so, but the players rose to the occasion. Not only did they work hard, but they were a friendly and good-humoured bunch, and our 'concert performance' went very well – the composers (and hopefully the players too) were delighted!*

Steve and Ann somehow managed to write this brilliant piece together and the branch and visitors thoroughly enjoyed playing it and it will certainly be played again in the future.

We had a welcome break for lunch and enjoyed some sunshine and fresh air

Ann then retook control with 2 Victorian pieces by Edward MacDowell arr Marshall.

**Nice and Relaxing**, less familiar and the second – **To a Wild Rose**, which was very well known.

Steve took over for the final – fun – pieces - **Tea for Two by Youmans** arr Marshall, appropriate as it was approaching tea time, followed by another appropriate piece - **Happy Birthday by Paul Clark** (arr Marshall).



We then stopped for the tea break and raffle, which had many prizes and raised some money towards branch funds. We also had a celebration cake, made and designed by a local baker, Rowan Tree Bakery.

After the tea break with Steve conducting we began again with a very appropriate piece, again arranged by Ann and Steve - **Teddy Bear's Picnic by John Bratton**.

This was followed by a restful piece, one of 4 pieces from **Upsala anon** arr Marshall, before finally a rendition of **A Great Day Out** by **Julian Nott** arr by **Robert Ramskill** – which apparently Steve and Ann had had, again arranged by Ann and Steve.

And judging by the comments and smiling faces as we left – it was a Great Day out – many thanks to the 2 brilliant conductors and for all their hard work composing and arranging music, but also – many thanks to everyone who helped to make it a Grand Day Out – from Judy, Sue, Gill and everyone else who helped in the kitchen, to all those how put chairs out and away and helped generally to make the day run smoothly.

The branch is very worthy of its fifty years and here's to another 50!