

Meeting Notice Sunday, June 27th 2:00PM-5:00PM

The June meeting will feature SP Technology speakers (www.4sptech.com) from La Porte, Indiana. Co-founder and head of engineering, Bob Smith, will be presenting along with other principals from the company. In addition, their local dealer Joe Jurzec from JAM'n Audio of Lake Villa, IL will be supplying associated equipment including: Jolida tube preamp, Jolida 801 tube monoblocks, Proceed CDP transport, and a current Birdland Odeon DAC. A Crown Macro Reference (800w/ch) will also be on hand. The company was founded by ex-Crown engineers and the website goes into numerous technical details of the loudspeakers.

The Classic Corner-Len Cronin

Len is taking a very well deserved month off this month due to a move to a new house. Of course, audio is involved-a new dedicated listening space!

May Meeting Recap

Len Cronin and Jared Johnson presented a very enjoyable and highly informative presentation on classical music of the first half of the 20th century (1900-1950)- (makes me feel old just to refer to it that way!). We were treated to music from the late Romantic era of the late 19th century that provided a transition to this period as well as a few somewhat more recent ones. The variety of styles of this period were highlighted with the great recordings that Len and Jared selected. Our thanks to both of our resident classical experts for taking this on with short notice. Due to Len's recent move, most of the selections were packed away, and a complete playlist will appear in next month's newsletter.

Important Announcements

A vote will be taken at the June meeting to fill the President vacancy.

Meetings will not be at the Arlington Heights Historical Society location for July and August. They will be held at Brian Richardson's for July and at Frank Putnam's for August. See below for additional details.

Baroque Bits from Brian Richardson

Hello, friends. I'd just thought I would write an article here and there about worthy recordings I have found from the Baroque era.

I know many of you folks have tried in vain to find the Vivaldi "Four Seasons" by the Freiburger Barockorchester on Harmonia Mundi. I lauded this recording as exquisitely intense and poetically evocative of the sonnets that Vivaldi wrote to describe his musical programme. A good replacement for the Freiburger disc is the NEW one by Anne-Sophie Mutter with the Trondheim Soloists on Deutsche Grammaphone 289-463-259-2 (it is also available on DVD-A). Anne-Sophie Mutter is world-class, and some may say, in a class by herself for the range of expressive capabilities she displays on her Stradivarius. The Trondheim Soloists are young, talented, and very exuberant on this recording. The "Summer" section (which I played at the meeting last year) is not quite as languorous on this Mutter disc, but the "Winter" section is even "chillier." A thoroughly enjoyable CD and you can't go wrong.

I have also listen to recent recordings by Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante, and Guilio Carmignola, and while they have elegance, sophistication, and original phrasing, they don't "capture" the spirit as well as Anne-Sophie Mutter. (By the way, do not get the earlier Mutter recording with von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic - boring)

Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante have a nice new recroding of Vivaldi's Mandolin Concertos on Virgin Veritas 7243 45527 2 4. The sound is marvelous, and the interplay between the mandolins is handled extremely well.

I found a new recording of the Bach Brandenburg concertos that I really like for the beauty of the sound and the insight and seeming spontaneity of interpretation, and that is by Helmut Rilling with the Oregon Bach Festival Chamber Orchestra on Hanssler Classic D216465. It is performed with period style but with modern instrumentation. While I normally prefer original instruments, the interpretation here is so "right" and the sound is so sauve and beautiful that all ideological

criticisms seem superfluous.

I found a new Handel opera that I love, called "Aci, Galatea e Polifemo" If you recall, I played two arias from the Handel opera "Acis e Galatea" at the Go for Baroques lecture. Well, the "Acis e Galatea" opera was composed about 10 years before this new version - and a completely new version it is. There is no shared music. The recording is by Le Concert d'Astree conducted by Emmanuelle Haim on Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45557 2 5. On this recording, there is the most astounding bass aria I have ever heard, "Fra l'ombra e gl'orrori" sung by Laurent Nouri. As a bass-baritone, I can tell you that this is an almost impossible aria to sing, since the low notes are so low as to be subterranean, and it jumps up a couple octaves to ridiculously high notes. And this french bass handles these difficulties with total control, aplomb, style, and emotional weight. The sound is "Five Stars" all the way - extremely transparent in performance and recording techniques.

This same group, Le Concert d'Astree, has just released a new recording of Monteverdi's L'Orfeo with an absolutely stellar cast, including Natalie Dessay (the coloratura assoluta of our age), Ian Bostridge, Lorenzo Regazzo, Veronique Gens, and others. L'Orfeo is one of the first operas ever written, and the first by Monteverdi. L'Orfeo uses a new recitative style where the dialogue and accompaniment match the ebb and flow of the dramatic action. Recognizable music from Monteverdi's Vespers of 1612 is prominent in the overture.

Another new early opera is a new recording of Gluck's "Alceste" with John Eliot Gardiner, with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists on Phillips 289 470 293-2. As Gluck said of his masterwork, "This opera excites me to frenzy whenever I hear it. My nerves are at full stretch, and I am enthralled from the first word to the last. It is like a cask of late-season wine; the flavor is superb, but concentrated, and too robust to be drunk freely . . . The audience will discover that it is no mere entertainment, but a very serious undertaking." Gluck eschewed virtuosic ornamentation of the sung lines in favor of a direct, declamatory style of

singing that was ahead of his time. The plot is contrived (what opera is not?), but the authenticity of the emotions wrought from the plot devices are quite moving.

And finally, saving the best for last, there is a relatively new recording of *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart with Rene Jacobs conducting the Concerto Koln on Harmonia Mundi HMC 901818.20. First off, Concerto Koln is fast becoming one of my favorite original instruments groups. Their recordings all have astonishing virtuosity of playing, transparency of texture, spaciousness and x-ray-like clarity of sound. When I listen to this recording, I find myself smiling and laughing - the sound is so fresh, and the interpretation is so playful, sophisticated, emotionally-direct, *sauve*, and to my ears absolutely authentic to what Mozart would have intended. I have spent alot of money trying to find a recording of *The Marriage of Figaro* that sounds right to my ears, but all have fallen short. I have heard more beautiful singing on other recordings, especially on the female voices doing *Porgi Amor* and the letter duet, but everything takes a back seat to dramatic authenticity on this recording. The pianoforte accompaniment of the recitatives by Nicolau de Figueiredo are worth the price of admission in and of themselves. The pianoforte "comments" on the actions of the character, conveying what Mozart really thought rather than what the censors allowed his characters to say in this most subversive opera. And \$37 at Borders seems like a damned good price for a 3-CD set. This recording was recommended quite highly by Gramophone magazine recently, and like me, found it to be one of the best recordings of the *Marriage of Figaro* to be found (and this magazine finds it very hard to acknowledge that any recording that doesn't have Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, Hermann Prey, (or other singers of that era) could hold a candle to the golden oldies).

Well, that's all for now. Brian Richardson

Future Meetings

July-Get together at Brian Richardson's, 3014 N. Kennicott, Arlington Heights, (847) 577-0944. Brian will be barbequing. Pop, diet pop, and water will be provided. If any members want to bring a dessert, side dish, or different beverages please do so. The meeting date is **Sunday, July 25th, 2:00PM-5:00PM**. We'll have

the chance to hear Brian's modified Magnepan 1.6's driven by the Audiomat Arpege tube integrated, fed by Stan Warren modified Philips SACD-1000.

August-Get together at Frank Putnam's. Date to be determined.

September-Note meeting date is **4th Sunday, September 26th**. We will be featuring **Brent Riehl and Audiopoints**. They did the last Dance Building meeting 2 years ago holding our attention far more than to be expected with their equipment rack. This time they will be supplying an entire system of their own design, except for the source. Mark your calendar!

October-Sedrick Harris, representing Nola (formerly Alon speakers), Berendson electronics from Germany, and the Cruz digital amp. This will mark Sedrick's 4th meeting with us over the years, and for those of you who haven't attended one in the past it will be a treat. Mark your calendar!