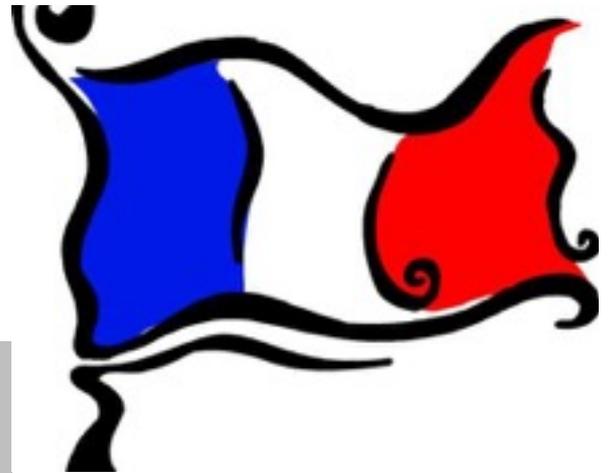


Volume 16
Issue 3
December 2015



Freonotes

The Newsletter of the Fremantle Symphony



In our last concert, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Sibelius, this time round, it will be the same anniversary for Paul Dukas.

If you have never heard of him, he is only known for one piece (although he wrote a lot more) - the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Most people know that work at least due to the antics of a small cartoon mouse.

Dukas' musical training included the piano and he entered the Conservatoire du Paris at the age of 16. Among his fellow students was Claude Debussy. Unlike Debussy, Dukas, who was rather self-critical, destroyed most of his works before his death in 1925.

You probably know the Sorcerer's Apprentice, written in 1894, quite well. It deserves the esteem in which it is held. It is described as a legitimate child of the 19th century's much celebrated wedding of music and literature. The composition's musical story telling is remarkably graphic, although for the many who have seen the Disney animation in the film *Fantasia*, a hearing of the piece may bring to mind Mickey Mouse. No matter. The music alone, sans Mouse suffices to tell the tale propounded in the ballad by the great German author von Goethe. (Howard, 2013, LA Philharmonic)

La Peri is much less well known. Written 15 years after the Sorcerer's Apprentice, it demonstrates a significant maturing in Dukas' composition.

We would like to give you the story of the ballet, but unfortunately cannot find two plots that agree with each other. So here is our take on the matter. Either one of the Magi, or Alexander the Great, is searching for the flower of immortality. He finds it in the hands of a sleeping fairy (Peri) and takes it for himself.

Concert Details: Fremantle Town Hall 3pm, Sunday 13th December

Dukas – *Sorcerer's Apprentice & Fanfare La Peri*
Faure – *Pavane*
Glazunov – *Saxophone concerto*
Franck - *Symphony 1 in D minor*

In one version, the flower is a lotus, decorated with emeralds. The fairy holds this in one hand, which makes it rather difficult to play the lute she holds in the other hand. Alexander/the Magi steals the flower, but it shines and wakes the sleeping fairy. She uses her wiles to get the flower back and Alexander/Magi either dies or goes home.

Fortunately you won't need to know the whole story, as we will simply be playing the brass fanfare that announces the ballet to the full.

This ballet is based on an ancient Persian fairytale, so someone may be able to enlighten us as to the actual story. It was commissioned by the Ballet Russe around the same time as Stravinsky's Rite of Spring.

Glazunov was a Russian composer living in France at the time of writing his Saxophone Concerto (1934). Previously, he had been the Professor of Composition & Instrumentation at the Petrograd Conservatoire, but after leaving Russia to judge the Schubert Competition in 1928, he never returned.

Glazunov first encountered the Saxophone in Paris, which was an instrument considered by the Soviet to be bourgeois and Western decadence. Not surprisingly, he encountered the Sax as a jazz instrument (another Soviet no-no) and although he wrote a concerto for the instrument, he did not want it to be considered as that genre.

Glazunov writes about his concerto in 1934:

I completed the Concerto for Saxophone, both the score and clavier, and most likely I will hear performances within days by the Frenchman Mule and the Danish Saxophonist Rascher. The concerto is written in E-flat major and goes not stop. First goes exposition, allegro moderato 4/4 and ends in G minor. After a short development followed by a singing andante in C flat major (sometimes B major) 3/4 is the transitory into a little cadenza. The conclusion begins after the cadenza with a condensed fugato 12/8 in C minor. All the previous elements appear again which brings to coda in E-flat major. The accompaniment is built on strings with much divisi, which at some point will substitute the missing wind section. I used this technique very often; strings in octave divisi and an upper voice in unison with two cellos. In fact, I use double notes a lot. I am afraid of the double notes effect. I will ask Yuli Konus, who was working with my violin concerto. He is a big expert on such subtleties and he prescribed the articulation to Tchaikovsky.

A month later he wrote again that the concerto was complete.

Faure's Pavane (1887) is also very well known, although few people realise it was a ballet danced by Ballet Russe as well. It has haunting echoes of Spain's golden age reflected through the music. Originally a piano piece, it is taken from a slow and stately Spanish court dance. The pavane was a popular dance at a time when touching each other was rather risqué, so the pairs would hold either end of a handkerchief.

Although you may know the music and have even heard the version with the optional chorus, you may not know the lyrics, which we have included below.

*It is Lindor, it is Tircis, and it is all our victors!
It is Myrtille, it is Lyde! The queens of our hearts.
As they are defying! As they are always proud!
As we dare rule our fates and our days!*

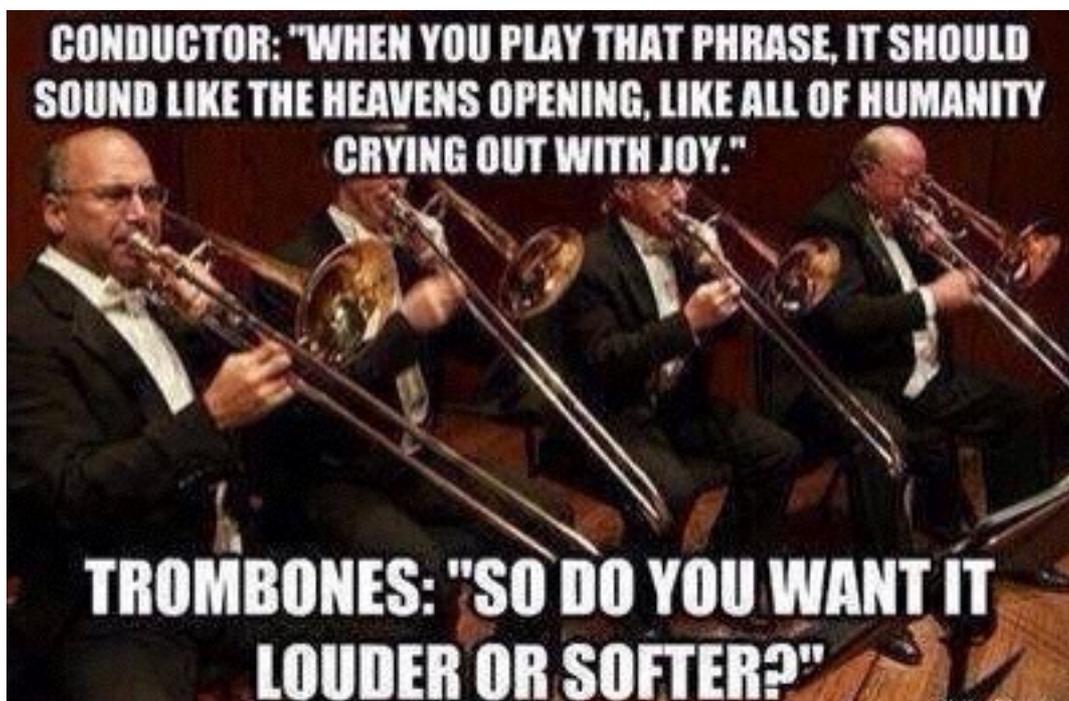
Pay attention! Observe the measurement!

*Oh mortal insult! The cadence is less slow!
And safest falling! We rabattrons gossip out there!*

*We will soon be their running dogs!
They are ugly! Dear little face!
They are madmen! (Quaint airs and tunes!)*

*And it is always the same, and so forever!
We love it! We hate it! We curse her love!
Farewell Myrtille, Egle, Chloe, mocking demons!
Farewell and good day to the tyrants of our hearts!*

And a good day!



What's that Note?



Choir Answers:

Bass: Fa.
Alto: Whole.
Soprano: Lowest.
Tenor: Where?!
Reader: I don't know.
Choirmaster: I know!
Theorist: Where's the key?

What the heck...?

Is that about?

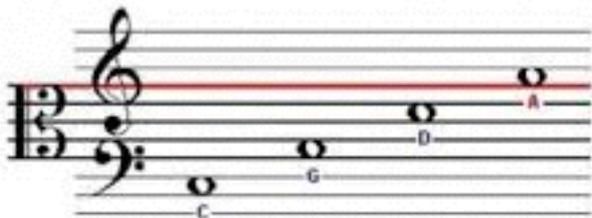
For our readers who are not musicians, here is a brief explanation of written music. Possibly it will help our fellow musicians too.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, music was passed on by committing tunes to memory in a long and arduous process. This is why if you travel through Europe, you will hear the folk songs with regional variations as the music was shared in a process similar to Chinese whispers. One particularly bright chap, Guido of Arezzo, was the person who made the breakthrough discovery of how to represent music on paper. It is essentially what allows us to enjoy the complexities of the music we have today (as long as we do not think about Justin Bieber, and the like).

At the start of each staff (set of five lines), we see a clef - usually either a very old fashioned "G" or "F", although the violas, and occasionally celli & bassoons, use a "C." This tells the musician the pitch and the range.

The colour and stem of the note tells us the length, although one also needs to know the speed of the basic unit of music in order to work that one out precisely. In theory, an orchestra does this by watching the conductor, but in reality, the conductor can be completely ignored. Still, we like to let him (usually "him", though not exclusively) think he is important.

Of course, reading music is somewhat more nuanced than this brief crash-course, with articulation, volume and even variations on the basic pitch being added in. That is another lesson - or course of lessons, so will not be explored here.



She Was Afraid She'd Get Into Treble



Answer to September's quiz.

The photo that did not come from the Grainger museum was the odd wind instrument at the bottom of the page. In case you are wondering why there were whips in the museum, it was not because of a love of horse racing, but rather some of the more "interesting" items used in his bedroom.



Like Dakas, Cesar Franck's reputation is based on a very small number of his works. The fact that Franck finally chose to write a symphony is itself unusual, given the rarity of the form in 19th-century France, which considered the symphony a mainstay of German music. It is likely that the genesis of the Symphony in D minor followed upon the success of his influential Symphonic Variations for piano and orchestra composed in 1885.

Sitting in on a rehearsal under the baton of Jules Garcin, where the players were resistant and uncooperative, Conservatoire director Ambroise Thomas is supposed to have remarked in reaction to the second movement (and quoted by Vincent d'Indy, in his biography of Franck) "name a single symphony by Haydn or Beethoven that uses the English horn!" (This may well be apocryphal and used by d'Indy - who was firmly in the Franck camp - to mock the conservative Thomas, since Haydn had very famously used English horns in his own Symphony No. 22, "The Philosopher".)

The acid political climate helps explain not only the ferocity of French nationalist reaction, but also the speed with which the symphony attained popularity where the internecine divisions of

defining French music were not at issue. Thus, within several years of its composition, the symphony was regularly being programmed across Europe and in the United States. It received its American premiere in Boston on 16 January 1899 under the baton of Wilhelm Gericke.

It seems to us that David Goya being a typical student and leaving his "assignment" (i.e. giving FSO his biography) until the last possible minute. Therefore we have had to rely on a music teacher website to snaffle some information for you.

This tells us he is an accomplished saxophonist with substantial musical experience and knowledge. Graduating high school in 2012 (he must still be young), he was the recipient of the Music Exhibition award for receiving the highest grades of any graduating music student in WA. David is now studying a bachelor of music at the WA Academy of Performing Arts and performs extremely regularly at a variety of venues around Perth.

(Here we have deleted his advertisement).

He is predominantly a classical musician, and has recently found success as the winner of the 2014 Fremantle Eisteddfod concerto competition (which is why he is performing with us). However, David is also a very competent jazz musician/improviser and has performed extensively with groups such as the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra, OZ Big Band, The Newhouse Collective and many other ensembles. Furthermore, he also regularly plays with a variety of blues and contemporary musicians.

We are delighted to have David perform with us at this concert.

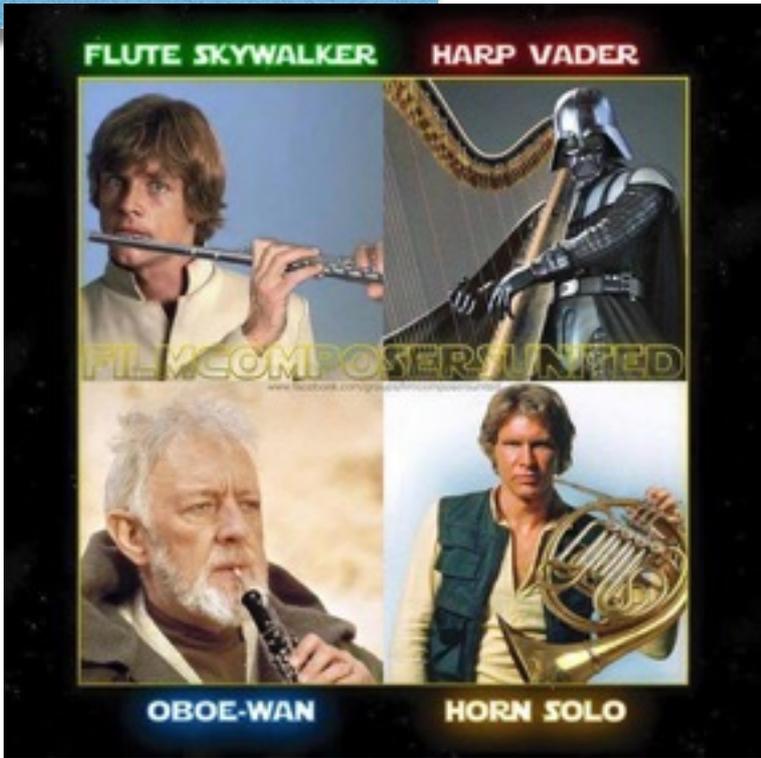
Bruce Herriman has conducted our orchestra several times before now (his wife Mandy is one of our horn players, so it is relatively easy to get hold of him). Bruce usually conducts the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and is the Principal of the School of Instrumental Music.

From the MSO's website, we can tell you In addition, Bruce conducts the Churchlands Senior High School Senior Orchestra and the Perth Modern Senior High School Wind Orchestra.

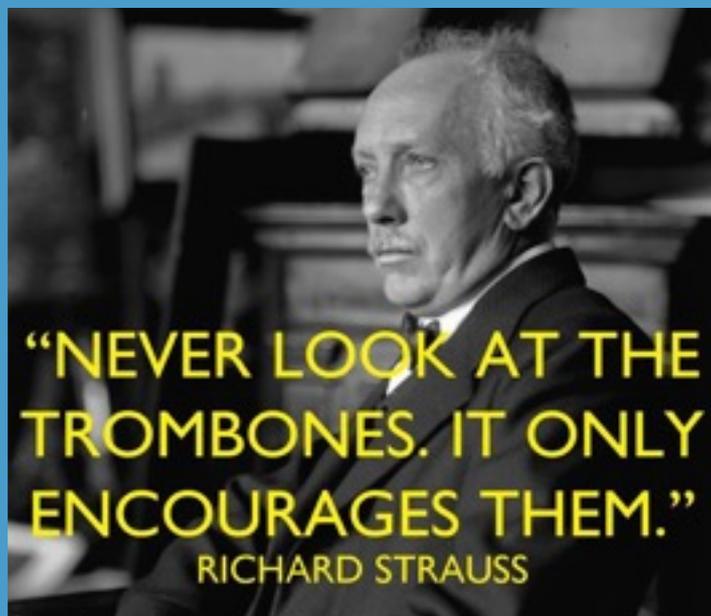
Bruce graduated from the WA College of Advanced Education in 1981 with a Bachelor of Education degree and began teaching at Perth Modern School in 1982. From 1983 to 1993 he was in charge of music at Hollywood Senior High School.

As Associate Director of the former WA Youth Concert Band, Bruce has toured Japan and Korea and performed in all states of Australia. He has directed the Australian Youth Wind Orchestra and National Children's' Wind Orchestra. In 1998 he conducted the Australian Youth Wind Orchestra on a tour of Scandinavia. Bruce also regularly conducts the City of Fremantle Symphony Orchestra. He is currently National President of the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association Inc.

What one remembers about this symphony, once one has got beyond the titillation of its bigness is Franck's wide-eyed frolic through the tonal system.



For the Star Wars fans out there



Conductor: Horns, are you piu f there?

Horn: Yes. We're trying to play as insensitively as possible.

Strings: So are you going to conduct this in 2 or 4?

Conductor: Oh I don't know, I thought I'd just flap my arms around.

Conductor: Violins, you need to be quieter, the brass are having difficulty coming through.

Conductor: Don't let that note go "splat!"

For those who receive the email version of the Notes (which means you get them more regularly - hint, hint - as on occasions your editors need to write the Notes slightly too late to post), here are a few of the funnies that have been doing the rounds of the internet.

Quotable Quotes (& other funnies). Sorry for the lack of quotes - my usual scribe has had to miss a few rehearsals - Cynthia you are missed!

This horse enjoys making modern music. <https://www.facebook.com/musiciansare/videos/10153559847358564/>

The "normal" person's guide to the orchestra: <http://www.classicfm.com/discover/music/orchestra-guide/>

Creativity while playing music: <https://www.facebook.com/bwilliamsmusic/videos/629810217107574/>

Rough translations of musical terms: <http://www.classicfm.com/discover/music/performance-directions/>

For all the new parents out there: <https://www.facebook.com/mamavation/videos/10153051662773202/>

Surgery is no longer available to get that pure male voice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukDAfF0-8q8>

Violinists belong in the circus (if not in a zoo): <https://www.facebook.com/svt/videos/928277623881493/>

Real musicians have never said...: <http://www.classicfm.com/discover/music/musicians-never-say/>

Apologies to those who do not have Facebook - it does make an easy source of musical humour for your editors to mine.

Violas Revealed

We have all heard viola jokes of varying quality. Now five top violists (yes, they exist) reveal their favourites.

Eric Nowlin is assistant principal viola of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and member of the New Orford String Quartet. He said he loves viola jokes and sent us this zinger:

Q: Why is the viola called *Bratsche* in German?

A: That is the noise it makes when you step on it.

Keith Hamm is principal viola of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra. He's also one of CBC Radio 2's *Next!* artists for 2013, so you'll hear more from him next spring. Here's his viola joke entry:

Q: What's the only thing a violinist can do better than a violist?

A: Play the viola.

Tanya Kalmanovitch is a native of Fort McMurray, Alta. She's an active chamber musician and teaches at the New England Conservatory in Boston. Her viola joke is long, but read on.

It's one of our favourites.

The principal violist arrives on opening night for the opera company's run of *Salome*. He comes across the personnel manager in a frenzy. The conductor has suddenly died, and they need another conductor. The violist — let's call him Tom — realises that this is his shining hour.

"It would be my great honour to step in as conductor tonight," says Tom. "You see, conducting has been my secret passion for over 20 years. I've studied this score extensively, and indeed every score this orchestra has ever played. Give me a chance, you won't regret it."

"All right, Tom. You're on," sighs the personnel manager.

Well, the opening night is a great success. Tom conducts with extraordinary finesse, expertise and emotion. He gets a prolonged standing ovation. The orchestra members gather around him to shake his hand and pat him on the back. No one had any idea he could do such a thing!

So well received is he, in fact, that he's kept on for the entire run. It's thrilling for him, but it's hard work. So when the run is over, and the first day of rehearsals for the next production rolls around, he's relieved.

Arriving at the rehearsal room that first day, he takes his seat. He nods at his stand partner, the assistant principal violist

The assistant principal glares at him and says, "And where the hell have you been for the past six weeks?!"

James Ehnes provides our next one. While not solely a violist, I think it's fair to include him in this list because Ehnes has recorded so many times on the viola. He told me that this was a particular favourite of his teacher's at Juilliard, Sally Thomas.

Q: What do you call 1,000 violists buried up to their necks in sand?

A: Not enough sand.

James Legge provides a bit of balance with this last joke. Legge is principal violist with the Saskatoon Symphony.

Q: What's the difference between the violin and the viola?

A: There's no difference. Violins just look smaller because violinists' heads are so much bigger.



Remember - the FreoNotes is better electronically. Drop your friendly editor a line if you would like to receive the e-Notes. With the email version you can:

- Enjoy the links without having to type in the details!
- See colour pictures instead of us being cheap and using black and white to print!
- Enlarge the text if it is a bit too small to read!
- Best of all, you can print out as many copies as you want and give them to your friends/enemies/random people you would like to spam.

You can do all this by emailing your editor at FreoNotes@iinet.net.au

You can purchase your concert tickets in a variety of ways:

1. Corner your FSO family member/friend/enemy - the tickets should be available in the next week or so.
2. Purchase tickets through the EventBrite website (Tickets available soon)
3. Purchase tickets at the door.



FreoNotes
210 Surrey Road
Rivervale, 6103