

for her performance. When she emerged, in a glorious green dress, it began to rain, the previous concert was over-running and so the Master found himself sheltering Elizabeth for some considerable time with his large umbrella. When Elizabeth finally came into the chapel, we were simply entranced by her singing. It was a difficult programme, and the audience was perhaps more attuned to Mozart than Maconchy, yet she won all hearts by her ability to draw us in and communicate the songs to us. Her singing of Poulenc and Debussy was particularly fine.

It was a truly unique experience to meet so many of "our" yeomen and a liveryman, all at the same Festival. The standard of performance they all gave was extremely high and they all had that special something – namely audience communication – clearly proving to us that our Donations and Awards Committee has made some very good decisions. Since that weekend in May, Elizabeth Watts has won the Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize at the Cardiff Singer of the World competition and the Sacconi Quartet has just been awarded the Company's New Generations Prize.

*Since the writing of this article, the organiser of the music festival, Nico Lethbridge, at the very early age of 58, died as the result of an accident at his home in Queille. We wish to extend our sympathy to his family.*

Liveryman Patricia Norland



**The Master, Gwilym Simcock and Tim Garland**



**Julius Drake and Elizabeth Watts**

# PLAYING TOGETHER, STAYING TOGETHER

## Interactive progress in group performance

Almost all high-level performance involving more than one participant must be founded upon a developed and sensitive awareness of the interactive dimension in performance. Regular collaborators in group performance develop over time an essential instinctive rapport but this may be hastened and ultimately enriched by conscious and deliberate exploration of some of the processes involved.

We, at the Coldstream Guards, encourage live solo performances and offer our musicians a practical opportunity to explore and examine group interaction with solo performers in both rehearsal and public performance. Certain unifying concepts are considered such as that of 'function' within the ensemble as a defining factor of interaction. A participant's contribution needs to be modulated according to a well-defined sense of where in the spectrum from the foreground that contribution lies at any one time within a given performance.

Rehearsal sessions will inevitably commence with a review of the technical and quantifiable aspects of interaction in discussions between conductor and soloist before a full rehearsal takes place. During rehearsal balance, ensemble and factors such as textural sparseness, which can affect performance interaction, are discussed. Following a rehearsal, soloists are encouraged to directly assimilate and explore aspects of the communicative process, both verbal and non-verbal, whereby interaction of a more flexible variety and subtle nuance may take place.

It is important to understand the dynamic of performance of the three component parts and their complex relationship. This relationship between soloist, conductor and ensemble should not be underestimated. This dynamic has the variable of live performance built into it, as the emotional factors of all three can and do change between rehearsal and performance. Evaluative rationale should focus on determining the level of integrated interaction accomplished between the soloist, conductor and ensemble both in rehearsal and performance. Soloists are encouraged to maintain a diary to keep accurate notes outlining the exploratory



**Major Graham Jones**

stages and rehearsal strategies initiated in the preparatory stage of performance. Diary notes should also address key issues confronted in the exploration on interaction going beyond the merely empirical and addressing the communicative phenomenon in a manner which is both methodical and supported by theoretical underpinning.

This interactive process in group performance stems directly from the Coldstream Guards MA/PgDip in Music Performance Pathway with the University of Salford where the band is currently 'band in residence'. Using live performance as the underpinning requirement to explore the 'interactive process in group performance' has proved to be inspired. It gives the opportunity for members of the Coldstream Guards Band, who would not normally perform a solo work, the opportunity to research new repertoire, to discuss performance options and prepare for a public performance of their selected work. Whilst preparing for their solo performance, our soloists now consider the interactive processes and keep accurate accounts of their feelings, both positive and negative, as they approach their live solo performance.

For my part, this is proving to be a fascinating journey of musical discovery, not only in repertoire but of musicians and musical emotion; the thrills of live performance, the adrenaline and moment that help create that extra special performance and, above all, the appreciative applause of the audience and the satisfaction of the performers involved.

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