

Walter Willson Cobbett Medal

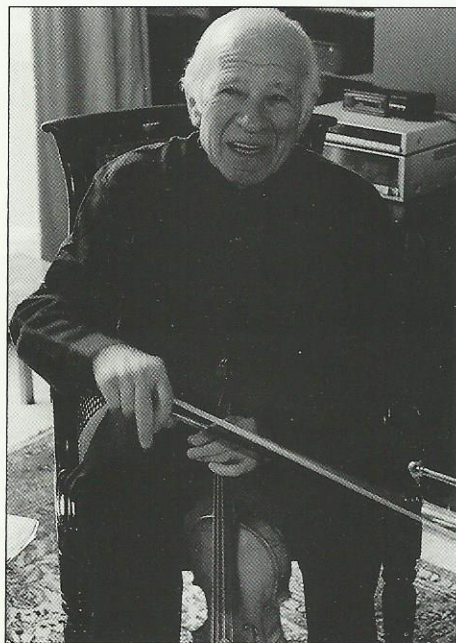
To many of us, the name of Yfrah Neaman is so closely linked with that of Carl Flesch, the Hungarian violinist – of whom he was a pupil and after whom the famous international competition was founded – we tend to overlook his broader contribution to the field of classical music.

Educated largely in France, Neaman held a succession of posts at the Guildhall School of Music while teaching and giving masterclasses throughout Europe, the USA, the Orient and other countries in Asia and Africa.

As a performing artist, he is accredited with numerous appearances as a soloist with orchestras worldwide. In addition to a wide range of recitals, he has appeared frequently on radio and television.

Otherwise, between adjudicating at virtually every international violin competition of note, he has somehow found the time to edit several musical works and make records.

Becoming a Liveryman in 1980, it can come as no surprise that a mere 5 years ago, at three score years and ten, he advised the then Master, that "because of my professional life, with great regret, I simply have no time to serve on any additional (Musicians' Company)



Liveryman Professor Yfrah Neaman.

committees."

How delightful that he was able to accept the 1997 Walter Willson Cobbett Medal in person at the October Court Dinner.

Listen to the band?

Perhaps commercial radio with its quick-fit easy instant appeal has made the more serious approach of BBC Radio seem somewhat pedestrian. Classic FM, Jazz FM and many others are weaning away large numbers of traditional BBC audience by specialisation. To many, the new stations have presented their disciplines in an exciting and informal way. They have caught the mood of the moment.

The difficulty arises when the serious listener and the enthusiastic new converts wish to hear a "whole" piece rather than just a sound bite. Perhaps the BBC, particularly Radio 3, should look at its Charter again, consider its responsibilities and think about the damage which will be done to that music it no longer wishes to support. When such an important institution makes a negative decision, who else might feel encouraged to follow?

For example, what serious composer will write music for Brass Bands when they have been relegated to a rare spot on Radio 2? How many local authorities might make this an excuse for reducing support for certain musical activities to save money? We are told that a survey showed that 80% of those who listened were not regular Brass Band fans and so expected pieces to last no longer than the popular single. Even the test piece from this year's British Open Championship was drastically cut from some 15 down to about 5 minutes for the broadcast. (Then they mixed up the tapes and played the Williams Fairey tape as being that of the winning band which was the Yorkshire Building Society! Not very encouraging for the serious listener.)

Our Brass Bands are leading Europe, they swept the board yet again at the 1997 Championships. Even the French instrument maker, Courtois, is now sponsoring Fodens'. What a pity that these successes should be tempered by the unseen executives of the BBC, an institution which once supported the whole spectrum of music. In an effort to compete with the bright new broadcasting brigade, they are trying to move into the territory of their opposition.

Why cannot the BBC present Brass Band Music in a well structured weekly format?

Addendum

It has been reported that GMTV are to accept the challenge from Julian Lloyd Webber (reported in the Daily Telegraph) made in his speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos recently to present more Classical Music.

LIVERY EVENTS

ITEMS IN BLUE ITALICS DENOTE LIVERY CLUB EVENTS.

16 Mar	19:30	Maisie Lewis Company Concert at the Wigmore Hall
27 Mar	11:00	United Guilds Service in St. Paul's followed by lunch in the Company's Office
7 Apr	18:30	Masterprize Finals in the Barbican Concert Hall
21 May	12:30	Phyllis Barrett Invitation Lunch in the Company's Office
28 May	13:10	Beethoven Winners Recital at St James' Church, Piccadilly
31 May	20:00	Jazz Winners Evening at Pizza-on-the-Park
24 June	11:00	Election of the Sherrifs in Guildhall
24 June	18:30	Midsummer Banquet in Drapers' Hall
29 June	13:00	<i>Organ Recital in St. Michael's, Cornhill</i>
8 Aug	19:30	<i>Piano Museum Visit – at Brentford</i>
1 Sept	12:30	Phyllis Barrett Invitation Lunch in the Company's Office
15 Sept	12:00	<i>Bach Contata in St Mary at Hill followed by lunch at Watermans' Hall</i>
29 Sept	12:00	Election of the Lord Mayor in Guildhall.
5 Oct	19:30	Maisie Lewis Company Concert at the Wigmore Hall
7 Oct	17:00	Company Evensong in St Paul's and refreshments in the crypt
15 Oct	12:00	Phyllis Barrett Invitation Lunch in the Company's Office