

## Chairman's Chatter

Ahoy, there! As you've guessed, this Newsletter is mainly about our forthcoming concert – Behold the Sea! We are all (and I'm including our highly dedicated professional team of Steven, Lydia and David) working very hard for this and I know it's going to be a terrific performance. Let's hope there's a high tide of supporters in the audience to appreciate the efforts we've made to prepare for it – and to enjoy some amazing musical interpretations of the sea in its different manifestations.

On a different tack, I was reading St Augustine's Confessions the other day (makes a change from the Beano) and was surprised to find that he was very worried about being carried away by music:

"I am inclined to approve of the custom of singing in church, in order that by indulging the ears weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion. Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous sin, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer."

Well, I hope we all manage a good deal of grievous sin at the RNCM.

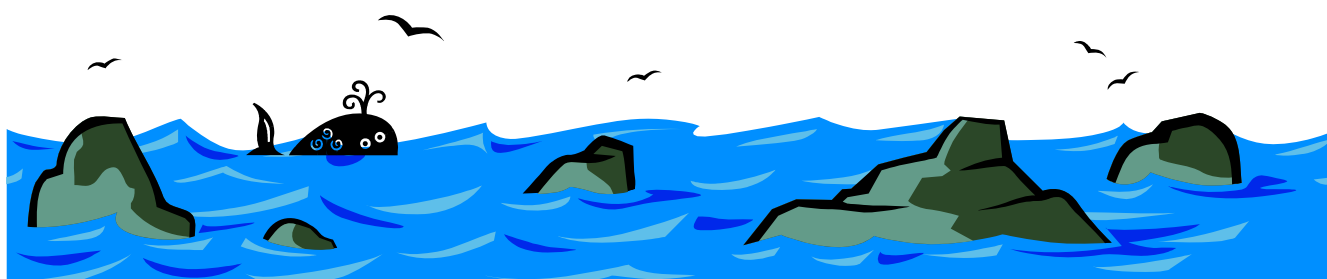
I was also intrigued by the following passage from Anthony Storr's Music and the Mind:

"A culturally agreed-upon pattern of rhythm and melody (i.e. a song), that is sung together, provides a shared form of emotion that carries along the participants so that they experience their bodies responding emotionally in very similar ways. This is the source of the feeling of solidarity and good will that comes from choral singing; people's physiological arousals are in synchrony and in harmony, at least for a brief period."

Now that possibly explains why I enjoy sitting on the front row between Terry and Colin and getting our physiological arousals in synchrony.

Well, time now to get back to RVW for some last minute practice. Difficult stuff – but I'll get the hang it. I'll keep playing the CDs and steer for the deep waters only – but hopefully not completely out of my depth.

Dudley Harrop  
(aka The Old Man of the Sea)



# *Maestro's Musings*

***Behold the Sea!*** – already the title of the concert sounds grand and impressive, and yes, it is a tour de force for all involved.

Preparing for this concert has been hard work and rightly so, bearing in mind the choral involvement of the symphony, yet coupling these works with another 'sea-faring' piece – the Four Sea Interludes from 'Peter Grimes' by Benjamin Britten.

I feel a strange responsibility to do justice to all of these works, possibly more than any other concert I have conducted, and yet I cannot explain why. The forces involved are vast and in particular the contribution of the Baritone soloist.

I know the ladies and gentlemen of the orchestra will rise to the challenge of this large programme, but I also know that they are looking forward to performing the Britten and indeed so am I.

We have built a relationship with this orchestra over the years and every time they seem to produce a performance of tremendous spirit and quality, and I know this concert will be no exception.

I feel very privileged to be conducting these works and believe that the depth of each composer involvement shines through in every bar.

The contrast between the pieces is vibrant and exciting, yet all are unified by the same theme – the sea!

A force which has affected so many and in so many different ways, and for me the following words exemplify everything magical about it.

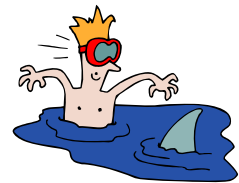
*"Sometimes we are lucky enough to know that our lives have been changed, to discard the old, embrace the new, and run headlong down an immutable course. It happened to me ... on that summer's day, when my eyes were opened to the sea."*

*. . . Jacques Yves Cousteau*

## FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

<p><b>Nov 3</b></p>	<p>'Behold the Sea'          - Stanford: Songs of the Fleet          - Britten: Four Sea Interludes          - RVW: A Sea Symphony          Manchester Philharmonia</p>	<p>RNCM at 7.30 pm          Tickets £12.50 (£1.00 children)          1.15 pm Choir coach £6.00          6.30 pm Audience coach £2.00</p>
<p><b>Nov 5</b>  <b>Nov 26</b>  <b>Dec 10</b>  <b>Dec 15</b></p>	<p>Start carol rehearsals          Open rehearsal          Carol dress rehearsal          Carols with the Choral          - Congregational carols          - Wind quintet          - Organist</p>	<p>Altrincham Methodist Church (AMC)          AMC          URC, Hale          URC, Hale at 7.30 pm          £7.50 including seasonal refreshments</p>
<p><b>Feb 22</b>  <b>March 15</b></p>	<p>ACS dinner with entertainment          'Blest Pair of Sirens'          Music for Special Occasions          Parry, Elgar, Jongen          Organ and brass          Sale Charity Shop</p>	<p>Ringway Golf Club, Halebarns          RNCM</p>
<p><b>July 5</b></p>	<p>Barnardo's Summer Festival          Music from Stage and Screen          - Bollington Brass Band          - School music group</p>	<p>Dates to be finalised          RNCM</p>
<p><b>Nov 15</b></p>	<p>Brahms: German Requiem          Manchester Philharmonia</p>	<p>RNCM</p>
<p><b>Dec 20</b></p>	<p>Carols with the Choral</p>	<p>URC, Hale</p>

### AFTER WALT WHITMAN ( AS THE POETRY POLICE SHOULD HAVE BEEN )



After the interval, after the J<sub>2</sub>O<sub>s</sub>,  
 After the frothy ale, and the coffee all quaffed  
 See the myriad patrons strolling back to their seats  
 With anticipatory buzz, palpable and earnest  
 Hear the players of trumpet and oboe, cello and violin  
 Seeking just intonation in their various ways  
 See now the great captain, preceded by soloists  
 Smile at band and choir, bow to the audience  
 Upright and confident, replete in their aptitude  
 Now with swift downbeat the vessel is launched  
 Immense waves of sound, untamed as thunder  
 How skilfully the captain oversees his crew  
 How deftly realises rise and fall, enforcing the counterpoint  
 Luffing and tacking with the fulsome wind  
 O thou reliant, O thou revelational  
 Bring us safely to harbour home



# SEA FEVER

“ I like themed concerts “ quoth the chairman in much the throwaway manner of a tsar ordering the next pogrom. What the chairman liked was certainly what he was going to get and the music committee was soon in plenary session. An attempt at brainstorming was more like a Quaker meeting, the best suggestions possibly being Hubris ( though none of us was quite sure what it was ) and Divine Redemption ( same comment ).

Then someone said “ It’s all around us “. “ What is ?” chorussed the others. “ Why – the sea itself ”

Thus was born The Theme and all that was required was to put flesh on the bones . It was clear that the sea was a great inspiration to our island race. Well, Turner was fond of painting it, but this wasn’t a lot of help in programme making, except perhaps for the front cover. We vaguely knew that poets had been stimulated by the sea from Sir Henry U-Boat to Walter Mal de Mer. But Music? Debussy had written a piece about “La Mer “ and Charles Trenet had sung one of the same title but your average foreign composer lives in a landlocked country and wouldn’t know an ebb tide from a popular number of the ‘fifties.

This is where Google came to the rescue. Keying in “ Sea – Music and that “ produced a number of titles including the following:

Sea, We Saw The	I Berlin
Sea Pictures	E Elgar
Sea Symphony , A	RV Williams
Sea, Beyond the	Trenet & Lasry
made famous by	R Williams
Sea, Interludes ( 4)	B Britten
Sea – side, I do like to be beside	R Webb
Sea, Songs of the	CV Stanford
Sea songs, Fantasia on British	H Wood
Sea(s) I must go down to the again	J Ireland

It was found that Songs of the Sea by Stanford contained no parts for lady sailors, but, happily, the same composer’s Songs of the Fleet did. It was then plain sailing, so to say, to make the selection which features in our programme.

If this one pleases we plan to do more “themed” concerts. The music committee, as ever, welcomes any suggestions which will amuse before they are rejected.

John Greenan