

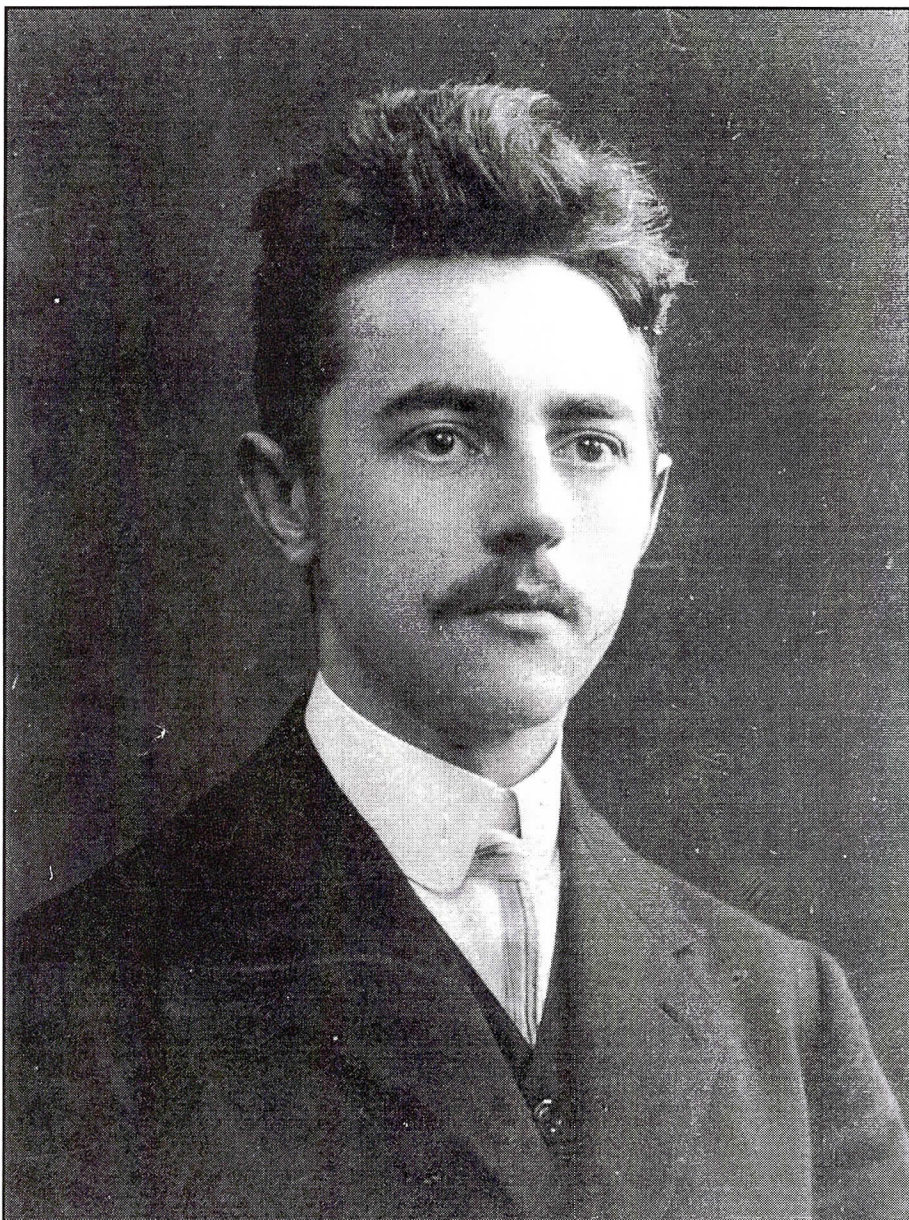
*Ipswich
Chamber
Music
Society*

1925 - 2000



A review by

Joyce and Neil Salmon



IPSWICH CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

1925- 2000

This booklet has been produced to commemorate the 75th anniversary of our Society. The number 75 may not seem highly significant, but there were special concerts organised to celebrate the 25th and 50th anniversaries, so the 75th season has at least a mathematical logic for being regarded as special. In any case, the year 2000 seems a good time to look back with gratitude to our founding fathers and all others who have contributed in major ways to the Society's developing success.

Over the years we have been able to engage the services of many of the very best professional ensembles. And in more recent times, audiences have been consistently large and enthusiastic, made up of a substantial nucleus of loyal and dedicated members. We like to think that the Society is now the sort of thriving body which Martin Slater and Hendrik Spruytenburg envisaged when they cycled around the town in 1925 calling on people who might have been interested in joining what would have seemed then a rather esoteric organisation.

Chamber music was not easily to be found in an English provincial town in the 1920s. There were, of course, a few people who played quartets and trios with their friends at home, as befits the very name of this type of music. But perhaps even fewer people made a point of travelling to London to attend chamber concerts. Radio was beginning to broadcast some chamber music but there was very little available on gramophone records and, of course, no tapes or CDs then! Even orchestral music was harder to encounter in the provinces than one might realise. When Michael Tippett went to the Royal College of Music in 1922, at the age of seventeen, he had heard only one symphony in his life.

Hendrik Spruytenburg (1889- 1978) as a young man in Holland

"No one has done more than he to promote and encourage local musical enterprise."
(written by John McClure, whilst Secretary of the Society)

That was the situation facing our pioneers, Martin Slater and Hendrik (Henk) Spruytenburg. Martin Slater was an ardent devotee of chamber



Martin Slater (1892 -1990)

“What our Society owes to his discerning guidance it is impossible to assess.”
(John McClure, whilst Secretary of the Society)

music. He was an accomplished player of the violin and viola. As a distinguished local architect he was widely known. Amongst the many buildings he designed are to be numbered several of the pre-war schools like Northgate and Copleston, and also Marks and Spencer's in the town. It is also very fitting that the Society should have held its concerts in the Civic College and at present it does so in the Great School at Ipswich School, both buildings designed by Birkin Haward, Martin Slater's partner in the firm of Johns, Slater and Haward.

Henk Spruytenburg, born in Holland, had not long been in the town as a businessman, working for the Danish Bacon Company. Although not a practising musician in public, he was a talented pianist. Much later he became the music critic, writing as “Diapason”, for the *East Anglian Daily Times*.

Martin Slater described the first steps of forming the Society by saying that there was no demand for chamber music in Ipswich because there was no opportunity to hear it. Chamber music societies only existed in major cities, notably London. In his own vivid words, Martin Slater said, “Spruytenburg came to me full of enthusiasm, asking for assistance in approaching those who might be induced to join a society, if formed.” So the two men began the painstaking task of creating an interest and drumming up support. A public meeting was held on 31 July 1925 when the officers and committee were elected for the first season. Thus was created a society described by “Diapason” in later years as “the first of its kind in East Anglia.”

Making a start

The first concert was given by the Wilson String Quartet on 8 October 1925 in the British Legion Hall (now the Manor Ballroom), St Margaret's Green. Looking back on it now, perhaps the most remarkable feature was the fact that the performers were all young women, students from the Royal College of Music. They were Marie Wilson and Gwendoline Higham (violins), Muriel Hart (viola) and Helen Just (cello). Marie Wilson later became more of a household name as leader of the BBC

Symphony Orchestra under Sir Henry Wood. Helen Just preferred chamber music and played for the Society on other occasions in varying ensembles. She also taught on courses for chamber music players at Belstead House up to the 1970s.

The review of that first concert in the *East Anglian Daily Times* is quite instructive - not least in the amount of space given to it (over 1000 words) and all presumably hand set overnight by the compositor, with no mistakes, to be ready for the next morning's paper.

Members of the Society might also like to know that the very first work heard, Haydn's splendid String Quartet in D minor, Op 76 No 2 (sometimes called the "Fifths") has become a sort of milestone in our history. It was also played by the Amadeus at our 50th anniversary and will be played by The Lindsays in our 75th anniversary concert. Music of great quality endures even though new masterpieces appear and audiences change.

MEETINGS, ENTERTAINMENTS.
Ipswich Chamber Music Society.
FIRST CONCERT
THURSDAY, 9th Oct., 1925, 8 p.m.,
At the BRITISH LEGION HALL,
ST. MARGARET'S, GREEN,
By the WILSON QUARTET, LONDON.
PROGRAMME:
Quartet for Strings, D Minor, Op. 76.....Haydn.
Passacaglia for Violin and Viola.....Handel.
Quartet for Strings, Opus Posthumous, Schubert.
Quartet for Strings, G Major, Op. 18, Beethoven.
Admission for Members Only. Subscription, 1 Guinea for the Season, admitting Two Persons to All Concerts.
For Membership apply:— H. SPRUYTENBURG, "Prospero," Lattice Avenue, Ipswich.
Will Members kindly send their Subscription As Soon as Possible.

From the *East Anglian Daily Times*. (Who got the date wrong?)

The eternal problem of money

Dipping into the Minutes Books of the Society reveals what is probably true of all such voluntary societies - fortunes ebb and flow. Each decade seems to have produced a crisis until the 1990s. Membership has sometimes declined and the consequent lack of funds has made attractive programming even harder. Then that vicious circle has been broken by the ingenuity and hard work of the officers and committee, often aided by new opportunities becoming available. It would be revealing to work out how many hundreds of hours have been given by voluntary committee workers simply discussing how to make financial ends meet.

When funds have been dangerously low, there have occasionally been useful donations from loyal members. The autumn of 1947 was one such bad time. The Minutes tell us: "In view of the financial situation of the Society, some doubts were expressed as to the advisability of continuing concerts but some members, amongst whom Mr Porte, were strongly in favour of continuing, and the latter declared himself willing to guarantee either ten new members or the equivalent amount in cash."

(25 September 1947)

At the AGM of 28 June 1950, the Society was informed that "the charges for the use of Christchurch School hall had been increased by 300%. This was received with surprise and disgust by the members." Five years later, at the AGM of 1955, the Treasurer wrote all the accounts on a blackboard - on the grounds of economy. A loss of £42 -16s was shown. Fortunately, however, anonymous donors have helped the survival of the Society, as had happened in season 1954-55, and such donations have made possible the maintaining of the quality of programming in the 1990s.

Public funding has also fluctuated a good deal. The Society has been a member of the National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS) since at least 1940 and through their auspices, as an umbrella organisation, public funding was instituted, first via an organisation with the lovely name of Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA)

in the early 1940s, then through the Joint Council of the NFMS and the Arts Council in the late 1940s. Finally the Eastern Arts Board became the vehicle for the NFMS for awards of "core funding". All this ceased in 1999 after nearly 60 years, leaving the Society with no national funding. That is only available now for special projects, commissions and specifically educational work.

It is pleasing to add, however, that Ipswich Borough Council has frequently supported the Society, whether in the encouragement and help given by Bob Cross when the Town Hall Council Chamber or the Corn Exchange were our venues or whether in the form of useful annual grants made through the Ipswich Arts Association up to the present time. The Ipswich Institute has also provided much appreciated financial support for special concerts and events.

The fact remains, however, that artists of the quality which the Society rightly expects are increasingly expensive. (An interesting comparison can be made of artists' fees and members' subscription rates for 1970 and 1998. Fees for concerts in 1970 were £485 when a double membership was £3.50. In 1998 fees were £7358 when double membership cost £39.) It follows that the present policy of encouraging people to become Patrons, Vice-Presidents and donors is an essential element in stemming the tide of ever-increasing costs. In this respect the Society has been well served over a number of years by the Corporate Patronage of Birketts Solicitors, Willis Corroon (now Willis), Lloyds Bank and latterly the Bank of Scotland, Eastern Audio and Hewlett Packard. Members' bequests on a few occasions have also been greatly appreciated. Perhaps such contributions might become a more regular source of income in the future.

Where the concerts have been held

The various venues used must have had some influence on the relative success of the Society. Following the first performance in the British Legion Hall, concerts were held in the Garratt Memorial Hall, the Art Gallery in High Street, and the former Public Hall in Westgate Street when a larger audience was expected including non-members. Throughout the 1939-45 war and until 1960 the main venue was Christchurch Girls' School, Bolton Lane with special concerts held in the Town Hall Council Chamber. From 1960 till 1970 the main hall of the Civic College (now Suffolk College) was the Society's home. Between 1970 and 1975 concerts were divided variously between the Civic College and the Town Hall, the latter usually when a piano was needed. Then in 1975 the Society moved regularly to the Town Hall.

Finally since season 1985-86, with the encouragement of the then Headmaster, Dr Blatchly, the venue has been Ipswich School, the only exception being 1989-90 when two concerts were held in the Town Hall while the Great School was being re-modelled to what we enjoy today. The refurbishment, particularly the blocking in of the windows, has improved the acoustics and has largely eliminated the extraneous noises which had been a nuisance, especially when Ivry Street was much used at hospital visiting hours. The raised seating has also provided excellent sight lines for the audience. The Society, through several of its individual members, co-operated with Ipswich School in fund-raising for the splendid Grotrian Steinweg piano which is greatly appreciated by visiting pianists. The Society bought the matching piano stool which is on permanent loan to the School.

Looking back at the Society's venues, it can be seen that in the worst years, 1946-47, Christchurch School, the Town Hall Council Chamber and the Art Gallery were all used in the one season - not ideal for creating the friendly familiarity of a society. Contrast that with the Society's current use of Ipswich School where members know what to expect and where newcomers and visitors can be made to feel welcome.

Not even the War stopped the Society

The war years, 1939-45, posed extra problems. Unlike several other organisations, the Ipswich Chamber Music Society continued throughout the war. This achievement is in itself worthy of our admiration. We read that "danger from air raid was considered great" (19 September 1940). But, on the upbeat, "Troops quartered in the town are to be invited" (31 October 1940).

The Honorary Secretary's report on season 1940-41 said, "Owing to various circumstances not unconnected with the intensification of aerial warfare over England, the start of last season's activities was a little later than usual." Despite such commendable sangfroid, the difficulties grew. The Minutes of 8 August 1942 say that because of a further cut in petrol, a decline of members from the country could be expected. However, a month later Myra Hess came to give a recital and presumably helped to raise spirits, as she had been doing in her famous recitals at the National Gallery in London.

The wartime concerts in Ipswich were held in the afternoons so as to avoid problems of the blackout and more hazardous journeys home. Afternoon concerts were still held after the war until the 1949-50 season because of the continuation of petrol rationing. Presumably members could use public transport more easily in the afternoon. The way in which the organisers were determined to continue against the odds should surely inspire us today.

Members' concerts and other participation

In 1948-49, plans to liquidate the financial deficit inspired the first members' concert. Tickets were 2/6d each. This extra concert then became an annual event for fund raising and, when times were particularly hard, two concerts were held in a season. Only members were allowed to perform, so that the programme of pieces varied a good deal but the standards were usually high. In the 1970s and 80s, the members' concerts became increasingly difficult to organise despite the

heroic efforts of John Parry, who eventually found that the only performers willing to contribute were non-members. Attracting enough members to attend also became difficult, with the result that the fund-raising aspect disappeared.

		PROGRAMME	Admission 3/-
		Please bring the Programme with you to the Concert	
SUSAN BAKER	<i>Flute</i>	1. Quartet in D, K285	<i>Mozart</i>
JESSIE RIDLEY	<i>Violin</i>	Allegro	
MARTIN SLATER	<i>Viola</i>	Adagio	
JOHN McCLURE	<i>'Cello</i>	Rondo	
PHILIP YOUNG	<i>Piano</i>	2. Sonata in D, K576	<i>Mozart</i>
		Allegro	
		Adagio	
		Allegretto	
PETER CROPPER	<i>Violin</i>	3. Sonata Op 18	<i>Strauss</i>
FREDERICK TARTELLIN	<i>Piano</i>	Allegro ma non troppo	
		Improvisation, Andante cantabile	
		Andante - Allegro	
DIANA GRACE	<i>Soprano</i>	4. In dulci júbilo	<i>Buxtehude</i>
PAMELA BOWLING	<i>Contralto</i>	Cantata : Aperite mihi	
JOHN AGATE	<i>Bass</i>	Portas Justitiae	
MARTIN SLATER	<i>Violin</i>		
JESSIE RIDLEY	<i>Violin</i>		
ELISABETH AGATE	<i>'Cello</i>		
HESTER AGATE	<i>Harpichord</i>		
		8.15 approximately	Interval for refreshments

Members' concert at the Civic College, 10 April 1965

(Jessie Ridley, of course, is still playing a very active role in the Society, as well as in the musical life of Ipswich.

Note the appearance of young Peter Cropper, now leader of The Lindsays.)

Perhaps part of the explanation is that professional standards of performance are so consistently high nowadays that amateur musicians are more reluctant to submit themselves to such scrutiny. And the same factors would apply to audiences who are so familiar with top-class recordings. It is also true that members who are local professional players find themselves busier than ever with their own outside engagements.

However, in spite of the demise of the members' concerts, the great music which gives members such pleasure is still being made available in Ipswich through the concerts of our main programme. And, moreover, people are travelling from further afield to attend the Society's concerts.

The Society used to place more emphasis on socialising, with for instance an invitation after a concert to coffee at the Tudor Café in St Margaret's Street or at the Picture House in Tavern Street. There was also a good deal of self-help in fund raising. In 1948-49 for example, members were asked to bring plates of sandwiches, scones or cakes for refreshments at 6d per head. Eventually there were rotas (of ladies!) for providing refreshments, followed by rotas for a flower arrangement for the concert platform. There are no rotas any more, though we still have refreshments and flowers!

A largely unseen aspect of participation is the hospitality which has been provided over the years by various members for our musicians. Members have kindly volunteered to provide meals for our visitors between rehearsals and the actual concerts on a regular basis. Sometimes overnight accommodation has been made available in members' homes, especially when the players have come on long journeys. All such help has been greatly appreciated by the Committee.

For most members, however, the crucial kind of participation is to convey to the performers that they are being listened to attentively. It is very pleasing to say that this has always been true of the Society's audiences. The Honorary Secretary, Eric Mayer, could say in his AGM Report for

the 1967-68 season that "visiting artists have repeatedly commented on the receptiveness and the encouragement of our audiences." And certainly for many years now, our performers have often said that they have enjoyed playing for the Society for this very reason.

Attracting more young people

A recurring theme over the years has been the need to encourage young people to come to our concerts. This disappointed note was struck in 1947: "Last season every effort was made to attract the attention of senior pupils in secondary and grammar schools, but very little (or no) encouragement had been received from either the staff or the educational authorities." (25 September 1947) The only significant response was a party of 25 from Leiston who came to a violin and piano recital. They were members of a junior violin class.

But the effort went on. In 1950, the Treasurer stated, "We have been giving a great deal of thought to the recruitment of younger members, and parties from schools have been admitted at very reduced fees while contacts have been made with evening classes and youth organisations. By these means it is hoped that all younger folk interested in music will be attracted to the Society."

To help potential young members, the present committee has kept the cost of student membership at £3.50, with single concert admission at £1.50, for the past eight years. It is still the case, though, that rather few students attend. In some ways this is neither surprising nor alarming. For someone fairly new to such music, the performance of a string quartet or a piano trio has always been less exciting than an orchestral concert. And the growth of a specific "youth culture" from the 1960s onwards has certainly not helped! However, it has been pleasing to see members bringing their interested children, and a few independent-minded students do come along. But the new blood which societies always need has come largely from middle-aged people discovering the wonders of chamber music as "late developers" (a recent new member's own expression).

The role of membership

No society can exist for 75 years without the occasional dispute. Arrangements for refreshments were sometimes contentious! There were also more pertinent disagreements about the nature of the Society and the status of membership. For example, in late 1945 there was much discussion over whether or not to invite Ginette Neveu to give a recital. She was the brilliant young French violinist who later died in a plane crash. Her appearance would have necessitated a more expensive commitment and the concert would have had to be open to the public. She was not booked on the grounds that "it would endanger the principles of the Society which is based on the foundation of a subscription." Similarly, the Honorary Secretary's report for the 1954-55 season states that guest tickets would only be available for members to prevent "the distressing habit of attending only one or two selected concerts during the season."

But in the year 2000, the Society has to get the best of two worlds. A large nucleus of loyal members provides the continuity and the assurance of incoming funds. But non-members are also very welcome visitors.

The Society and the media

Reviews in the local press have also ruffled feathers. Many years ago, a very unfavourable review worried the Committee who feared that it could deter future attendance. In one instance, however, the reviewer was discretion itself. A note in the Honorary Secretary's hand alongside the details of a concert given by the Oromonte String Trio on 16 November 1963 simply states, "Diapason declined to report this concert on grounds that anything he would want to say could not possibly do either artists or Society any good." But on all other occasions his and other writers' reviews were at least comprehensive and detailed. Now in 2000, the situation is entirely reversed. Concert reviewing is usually minimal or non-existent. Publicity is not to be achieved that way!

In the past, the BBC has occasionally helped to put the Society on the

map by recording concerts for the Home Service "Music Club", for instance in 1959 and 1961. These featured the Neaman Piano Trio and the Trio di Bolzano respectively. For the latter, the BBC paid the Society a fee of 5 guineas. The BBC also recorded the 50th anniversary concert by the Amadeus String Quartet in 1975.

THE AMADEUS STRING QUARTET



IPSWICH CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

50th Season

GRAND HALL
CORN EXCHANGE

SATURDAY
8th NOVEMBER 1975

Souvenir Programme

Programming

This has not apparently been as controversial as one might have expected at committee meetings, although it may be that the Minutes convey more sweetness and light than was the case. Committee decisions have, however, reflected changing ideas as to what constitutes a good programme. An interesting note on 30 September 1954 states that "it was hoped that contemporary and 'sharper' works might be selected." In consequence a proposed combination of works by Haydn, Purcell and Mozart was changed at the committee's request so that Bartok's First Quartet was substituted for the Haydn.

During the 1980s especially, grants were often related to modern works performed. There was a "living composer" element. And at a committee meeting of 5 March 1984 it was stated that "As far as modern works are concerned, we already had a policy to include one in every programme." More recently, and partly associated with the withdrawal of "core funding" from national bodies, there is less of a requirement to include modern works, but a balance is usually achieved over a season, despite the fact that the players themselves frequently offer little choice to the concert organisers.

It is interesting to see what a great variety of works have been performed. During the last forty years, when programme information is most readily accessible, no one work has been played more than five times - these most "popular" pieces being Mozart's Quartet K428, Beethoven's Quartets Opus 59 Number 1, Opus 59 Number 2 and Opus 131, Schubert's Death and the Maiden Quartet, Debussy's one and only quartet and, perhaps more surprisingly, Janacek's Second Quartet (*Intimate Letters*) and the Shostakovich Piano Trio. All of the ten Beethoven string quartets from the three Opus 59 (Razumovsky) quartets onwards have been performed several times. But his earlier quartets, the six which comprise his Opus 18, have fallen out of favour, strange to say, with modern performers. Number 2 (which featured in the Society's very first concert) and Number 5 have not been heard at all in the last forty years. The "mature" string quartets of Mozart have been well

represented, as have the quartets of Bartok and Brahms with a fair sprinkling of Haydn. There have been, of course, some surprising omissions of major works, but they shall remain nameless here. Suffice to think of the pleasures to come!

The Minutes of several committee meetings in the past show that there have often been discussions as to what constitutes chamber music. There has never been any doubt that string quartets are and should be at the centre of the Society's activities. The string quartet is not only a deeply satisfying medium but it is also the case that a huge and rich repertoire exists and that some of the greatest composers have put the very best of themselves into this medium. One thinks of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Bartok, Shostakovich and arguably several others. Piano trios plus quartets and quintets with strings and piano and/or wind instruments have also featured regularly in the Society's programmes. To a rather lesser degree, the Society has also embraced violin/piano and cello/piano recitals. Solo piano recitals and vocal recitals have been resisted from time to time.

In order to find out what members thought, the Committee conducted a poll in October 1988 asking which of the less obvious ensembles members would like to hear. Leading the way were woodwind ensembles (65 votes), cello/piano (60), Baroque (59), violin/piano (58), solo piano (49), brass (40) and vocal recitals (32).

The Society's distinguished visiting artists

Many celebrated ensembles have visited the Society. Amongst string quartets of the past, these include several concerts given by the Griller, the Amadeus, the Janacek, the Allegri, and two each by the Aeolian, the Vegh and the Tatrai. Rather uncharacteristically of our subscription Society, special provisions were made for a number of visits by the Lener String Quartet, described in the *East Anglian Daily Times* of 31 January 1931 as "generally regarded as the greatest quartet now before the public - perhaps the greatest the world has ever known."

THE LENER QUARTET'S RETURN VISIT.

Although the world-famous Lener Quartet is spending only a few days in England this season, Mr. Laurence Parker, in conjunction with the Ipswich Chamber Music Society, has been able to arrange for these great artists to play again in Ipswich. This—their third concert here—will take place at the Public Hall on Friday, February 20th, and the plan opens at Mr. Laurence Parker's on Monday. As before, all the seats in the hall will be numbered and reserved at prices ranging from 1s. 6d. to 7s. 6d.

The Lener Quartet was first heard in Ipswich at the Schubert Centenary Concert, and all present will remember the wonderful beauty and perfect finish of the playing. The first impression was strengthened by their second concert, last year. Consequently this concert will be looked forward to with the keenest pleasure by all who appreciate the finest things in music. The Lener Quartet is generally regarded as the greatest quartet now before the public—perhaps the greatest the world has ever known—and the programme on February 20th will include quartets by Mozart and Beethoven, the Andante Cantabile by Tschalkovski, and two other delightful movements. Early booking is strongly recommended.

From the *East Anglian Daily Times*.

Saturday 31 January 1931

IPSWICH CHAMBER * MUSIC SOCIETY *

PRESIDENT - - - DR. F. C. WETHERELL

SEASON 1930-31.

(SIXTH YEAR).

FOURTH CONCERT

(In conjunction with Mr. Lawrence Parker).

Friday, February 20th, 1931, at 8 p.m.

AT THE PUBLIC HALL, IPSWICH.

Recital by THE LENER QUARTET.

JENO LENER	-	-	-	1st Violin
JOSEPH SMILOVITS	-	-	-	2nd Violin
SANDOR ROTH	-	-	-	Viola
JMRE HARTMAN	-	-	-	Violoncello

Given the greater number of excellent ensembles today - including some quite young ones - it has become increasingly invidious to engage one group rather than another, but for the record it is noteworthy that the Society has enjoyed several performances by each of the following quartets: the Lindsays (five hitherto), the Coull (eight), the Vanbrugh (five), the Brindisi (four) and the Endellion (two). In addition, Kenneth Sillito has been a particularly welcome regular visitor in recent years with different combinations of players from the Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble.

Some personal memories

Every long-standing member of the Society must have some personal memories which are unforgettable whether for reasons amusing, quirkish or exhilarating. The present writers crave your patience while recalling some of their memories. Perhaps these will trigger some of your memories?

One of us, while still a Sixth Former, came to the Society's 25th anniversary concert by the Griller Quartet, the first such concert attended - which became a marker for life! Much later, and now as full members, both of us recall the startling absence of music stands on the platform at Bolton Lane when the Janacek String Quartet paid their first visit to the Society in 1959. They played the whole programme from memory. Their dramatic performance of Janacek's Second Quartet (*Intimate Letters*) seemed to us the re-creation of an extraordinary and passionate work by four men possessed.

There was also the occasion when the leader of the Stross Quartet from Germany snapped a string when well into the furious sprint of the fifth movement (Presto) of Beethoven's C sharp minor quartet, opus 131. Such a massive work, which has to be played without a pause between movements, was ruined. A bad memory!

Then there was the unfortunate flautist who had been brought in at short notice and who arrived with her flute broken. Her first question at 3.30

on a Saturday afternoon was, "Where can I get my flute mended in Ipswich?" She had to make the best of it, and so did the audience.

On a much happier note, we recall the beaming expression of Hannah Grimwade on hearing Frances Angell's piano playing with the Angell Trio on their first visit to the Society in 1994. Hannah, a former Assistant Secretary of the Society and a pianist herself, was overjoyed to hear such a brilliant performance. The enthusiastic gratitude of a 90-year old was in itself exhilarating.

How surprised the founders would have been to know what is now possible because of modern transport. The Ysaye Quartet entertained the Society splendidly in November 1999. But most of the audience did not know that they left home in Paris at 8.30 am (our time) to drive to Ipswich via the Channel Tunnel.

Immediately after the concert they set off to drive back through the night to Paris where they performed again the next afternoon. Yet not a suggestion of routine in their Haydn, Webern or Debussy!



Marc Coppey,
cellist of the Ysaye Quartet
drawn by student member,
Lois Bülow-Osborne

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS 1925-2000

President:

Dr F Wetherell 1925-1949
Hendrik Spruytenburg 1949-1978

Secretary:

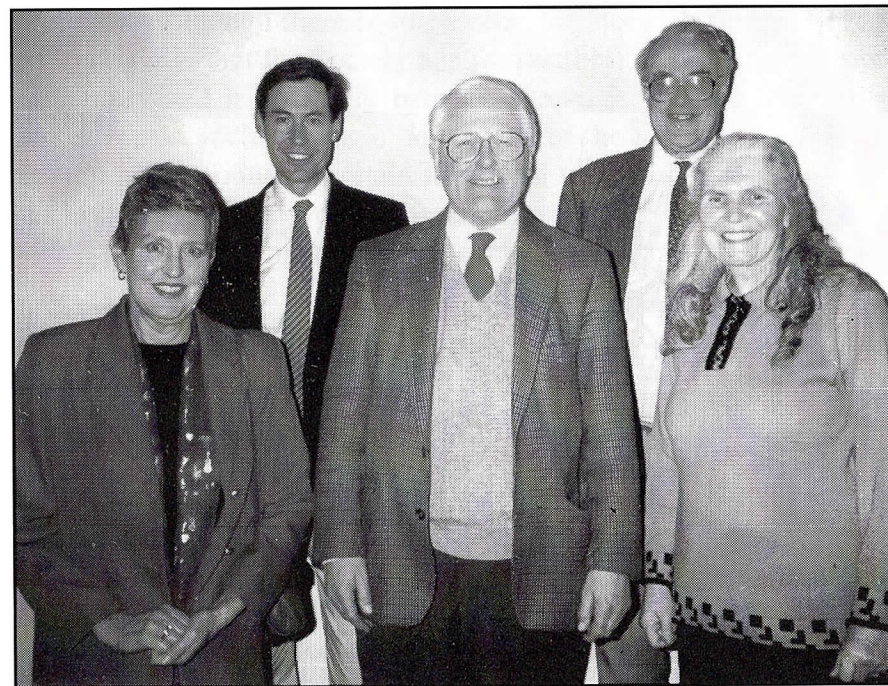
Hendrik Spruytenburg 1925-1948
Helen Matthews 1948-1954
Eric Mayer 1954-1970
John McClure 1970-1986
Lucy Allen 1986-1988
Joyce Salmon 1988-

Chairman:

Martin Slater 1925-1976
David Heckels 1976-

Treasurer:

G M B Langdon 1925-1949
Reginald Lee 1949-1964
Nicholas Ridley 1964-



Committee 1999-2000

Left to right: Margaret Ridsdale, Andrew Leach, David Heckels (Chairman),
Nicholas Ridley (Treasurer), Joyce Salmon (Secretary)

Other long-serving committee members include Irene Cubitt, a founder member (20 years), Joyce Barrell (25 years) and John Parry (23 years). Hannah Grimwade and Janet Barratt were assistant secretaries, a post we no longer have, to Eric Mayer and John McClure for a number of years.

It is a remarkable feature that in 75 years there have been so few officers. This surely underlines the devotion to, and stability achieved by, the Society through the time and effort exerted by each of the officers in both good and bad times.



The Henschel String Quartet playing for the Society, October 1998

Conclusion

At the Annual General Meeting in 1955 the President, Henk Spruytenburg, suggested that “the Society resembled some form of cactus - thin, tough and long-living.” The following year it was reported with sadness that despite greater efforts to recruit more members and to put on a more expensive programme, the gains had been offset by the losses and the membership had remained exactly the same. The Honorary Secretary, Eric Mayer, referred back to Mr Spruytenburg’s cacti and said, “But even these cannot survive if the soil gets too low in the pot, if it is not topped up or replenished and infused occasionally with life-making ingredients.”

Those colourful similes of forty-five years ago are still true. The soil has been frequently topped up and some life-making ingredients have been found - although there is still a need for more. But it can be said with some pride that the Society has survived intact for three-quarters of a century and is currently in good shape. It is to be hoped that chamber music, including as it does some of the greatest creations of humanity, will continue to retain its appeal to future generations. The other hope is that the present Committee will be able to hand on a thriving Society looking towards its centenary and beyond.

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Drawings by Lois Bülow-Osborne

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