

Barn Theatre



Eightieth Entertaining Year 1924-2004

News

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"Tippett and Friends" - A Centenary Tribute



Sir Michael Tippett was born in London in 1905 and lived in Oxted for over 20 years. Teaching French in Hazelwood School and conducting concerts for The Oxted and Limsfield Choral Society, he earned just enough to enable him to spend long periods at composition. He chose to live here and built a cottage in Limsfield because of the easy access to London.

In April 1930 he made his public debut as a composer at The Barn Theatre. For his regular concerts at the Theatre the orchestra were located under the stage wearing wellingtons and Sir Michael sat on the edge of the auditorium floor conducting the orchestra below and the singers on the stage level. In order for the singers to hear the orchestra better he had 'hear holes' drilled in the surface of the stage floor.

"Little did I know that I would later be living and making music in that very same village when I met him in Colorado in 1968" says Johan Michael Katz, Music Director of the Barn Sinfonietta. My conducting teacher, the great late Walter Susskind, was

preparing a performance of "A Child of Our Time" when during breaks in the rehearsals I was able to chat with Tippett. America was all a whirlwind for him I think, and he seemed at times a bit reserved. The beauty of the setting of the Summer School and Festival in Aspen and the very fine musicians working there were all, nonetheless, very impressive to him.'

How can we celebrate this great man's centenary? Much of his music is set for very large forces which simply would not fit on the stage of The Barn Theatre. Rather we have chosen to show a portrait of Sir Michael and in the short space of a concert to illustrate some of the musical associations that made him the creative genius that he was.

His interest in early music, especially English music, led straight to Henry Purcell. Another early composer, Arcangelo Corelli, was the source of Tippett's Fantasia on a Theme of Corelli. Although not always in agreement with the way others treated folk song material, he did admire many of his teachers and colleagues including Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. And, of course, Benjamin Britten often visited him here in Oxted. This then forms the impetus for the program "Tippett and Friends - A Centenary Tribute".

Tippett's work often has a deep Jungian thread running through it especially in works such as A Child of Our Time (1939-41), an impassioned protest against persecution and tyranny and now his most widely performed composition. He was uncompromising in his craftsmanship and self-criticism which has sometimes made it difficult to come to grips with the depth and genuine creative spirit inherent in the music. More frequent hearings unfold this wealth and show he is justifiably an internationally acclaimed genius.

Concert Date: 29 January 2005 at 7:45pm. Programme:

Purcell - Suite from The Fairy Queen
Tippett - Little Music for Strings (written in Oxted)
Corelli - Concerto Grosso Op 6 No.2
Vaughan Williams - Fantasia on Greensleeves
Britten - Simple Symphony
Holst - St Paul's Suite

Johan Michael Katz

An invitation from the Barn

2004 has been another exciting year in the development of the Barn Theatre
To reflect on our achievements to date, and to celebrate the Festive Season, we would
like to invite you to a

CHRISTMAS NOGGIN AND NATTER!

Kindly hosted by the FOBS

SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER from 12 - 2.30pm

THE BARN THEATRE, OXTED

Christmas starts at the Barn!

We look forward to welcoming you!

That's your Lottery

As you are probably aware from the August issue of Barn Theatre News we have completed our fund raising for Barn 2000. A staggering £258,000 cash has been raised, the building completed & we are debt free – a fantastic achievement.

As a result I have decided that it's time to bring an end to the Barn 2000 Lottery – it has run for seven years with over 200 entries each year. In total, just over £9,200 has been awarded in prizes and in excess of £10,500 raised for Barn 2000.

Thanks to everyone who entered for their support.

Phil Littleford