

COMMUNITY NEWS - Tuesday 8th September 2020

IPSWICH ARTS ASSOCIATION with Chris Green

This coming Thursday hopefully marks a small step to normality in our ever changing world when Ipswich Arts Association re-launches the Ipswich Town Lectures after a five month break. The organisers have worked closely with Museum Street Methodist Church in Ipswich to undertake a risk assessment and to ensure a COVID compliant environment for the lecture. In normal times, anyone who wishes to attend one of the Ipswich Town Lectures or Concerts simply turns up for the 1pm event, but now you have to pre-register and once the available spaces have been taken, then the list is closed. There may be a few places left, and you should use the contact details that are published on the Ipswich Arts Association website right away.



Chris Green presenting Musical Visitors to Suffolk. Photo: Geoff Rogers

So, if you want to find out where Haydn stayed when he visited Suffolk, or what was the significance of two Ipswich buildings which no longer exist to the world of music, then I do hope you will come along and support the Association and me, since I will be giving

the 50 minute Lecture about Musical Visitors to Suffolk. If the event passes off successfully, then IAA is confident that the scheduled events for October and November can proceed, so this is a “test” case.

One of the visitors about whom I shall be talking was the eminent conductor Sir Adrian Boult who came to Ipswich in the 1950s. He was one of the greatest interpreters of the music of his friend Ralph Vaughan Williams, who also came to the town. Boult gave a talk and also conducted a concert at the Ipswich Gaumont (now the Regent theatre). I think I attended that concert in which he conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra. There is a further connection with the town because I



Sir Adrian Boult. Photo: Wikipedia.org

discovered from my research that one of the last concerts given by the Ipswich Choral Society in the Ipswich Public Hall (burnt down in 1948) was of Handel’s *Messiah*. One of the four soloists was Kathleen Ferrier and the soprano was Isobel Baillie who went on to record Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony* conducted by (yes you have guessed it), Sir Adrian Boult. That Decca recording was one of my prized possessions.

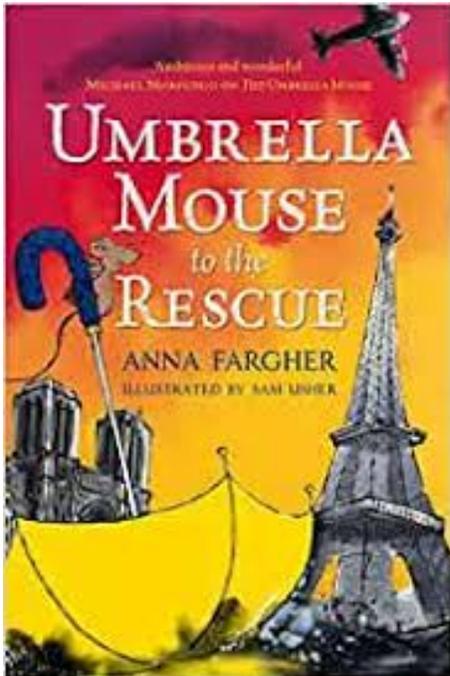
Vaughan Williams gave a homily in St Mary-le-Tower Church to honour his friend, the composer and celebrated editor Martin Shaw who, by that time was living in Suffolk. The speech he gave hit the national headlines. What we do have as a real legacy is his wonderful music and I have spent many hours in the company of some of his splendid choral works. I can recall as a young tenor singing for a short time in one of the Ipswich choirs that was rehearsing Vaughan Williams’s exquisite *Mass in G minor*. That work opens the programme of Vaughan Williams’s choral music performed by the Choir of St John’s College, Cambridge conducted by Andrew Neeshingha (Signum SIGCD 541). There is a cool beauty about this setting whilst VW lets loose on some of the anthems that follow, especially the setting of the *Te Deum in G* and the Antiphon from Five Mystical Songs. Well planned and well executed, the disc also includes a fine contribution from Joseph Wicks (organ).

From time to time, I have been pleased to share news of local authors, especially since many of their publications have been delayed due to the lockdown. Anna Fargher was raised in a creative hub on the Suffolk coast by an artist and a ballet teacher. She read English Literature at Goldsmiths before working in the British art world and opening her own gallery. *The Umbrella Mouse* was her first book, which she wrote on her iPhone notepad during her daily commute on the London Underground.



Anna Fargher. Photo: A.F.

She splits her time between London and Suffolk where she is often found exploring the coastline and marshlands under the huge East Anglian skies.



The Umbrella Mouse won the 2019 Sainsbury's Book Prize for Fiction, was selected as Waterstones Book of the Month, longlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and was listed in the Sunday Telegraph's 50 Best Books of 2019. Now there is a sequel, *Umbrella Mouse to the Rescue* which picks up the story of Pip the mouse, as she continues her mission to reach the Umbrella Museum at Gignese in Italy, her ancestral home. It involves Churchill's Secret Army, the French Resistance and other animals determined to defeat the Nazis.

This roller-coaster of an adventure is published by Macmillan Books and has illustrations by Sam Usher

(Macmillan Children's Books ISBN 978 1529003994).

If you have a story to share with other organisations, please email IAA chairperson, Professor Chris Green at cjc.green@talktalk.net