

Orff peak

A year ago I bemoaned the misuse of the adverb 'effectively'. The *Daily Telegraph* of 10 May provided an opportunity to examine the current position of this word as an object of abuse. Brendan Carlin, political correspondent, wrote, 'Lord Bach was effectively sacked over the... failure to pay... subsidies on time to... landowners'. This does not mean that he was sacked in an efficient fashion but that his dismissal was, in effect, a consequence of the late payment of subsidies. In the same article I read, 'Downing Street effectively acknowledged the error yesterday... and named a new farms minister in the shape of Lord Rooker...'. This does not imply that Number 10 was adroit in noticing the mistake but that we are to deduce its admission of guilt from Lord Rooker's appointment. Any quibble about split infinitives would be trivial in the context of what has now become commonplace in writing and in speech. Pedants might argue that if the adverb were sited after the verb then, and only then, should it be read as an adverb. Either way, I recognise that English has the power to evolve organically and I have effectively given up the fight.

Back on my feet again

The first recital attended after the enforced rest reported last month was to hear the Callino Quartet with Richard Bayliss (horn) play Arthur Butterworth's 'Romanza for horn and strings', Opus 12. Butterworth was born in 1923, is well known for his brass band compositions, lives in the north of England, and is not to be confused with George Butterworth (1885–1926), who captured the essence of English music with pieces such as the idyll, 'Banks of Green Willow' or the rhapsody, 'A Shropshire Lad'. The later Butterworth is very much alive and writing trenchant articles (including one on the recent Reith lectures by Barenboim), which are available at www.musicweb-international.com/buttera/. The Romanza was described by the horn player as 'nebulous' and it certainly has an ethereal quality but also a distinct flavour of the countryside in the spirit of his namesake. Butterworth in his programme notes acknowledges the influence of Sibelius and I found this little piece rewarding.

If an angler lands a monster catfish you can bet the item will be reported on TV with a few bars of Carl Orff's 'Carmina Burana' which has become a cliché as accompaniment to drama in TV advertisements or film soundtracks. A live performance is the best way to enjoy this work



Arthur Butterworth at 80 (centre) with Christopher Thomas (L) and Len Mullenger at BBC Manchester studio

www.musicweb-international.com



Antony and Cleopatra

www.rsc.org.uk



Much Ado about Nothing

www.rsc.org.uk



Marin Alsop



Carl Orff

www.intermusica.co.uk

www.rpo.co.uk

Alan Frost enjoys being out and about.

and Marin Alsop and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concluded their season playing with Bournemouth Symphony and Youth Chorus and Highcliffe Junior Choir in a splendid rendition. If you heard the broadcast on Radio 3 you missed Thomas Randle's hyperactivity on stage before, during and after his brief moment of glory singing *Cignus ustus cantat* ('The Roast Swan'). You may not have detected the theatricality of baritone Markus Eiche in an hysterical *Ego sum abbas* ('I am the abbot'). The drive, energy and percussiveness of Orff's work are infectious, and Marin Alsop, at the peak of her powers, continues to justify the gongs she collects for her contribution to the musical world. One fears that the virginal children's chorus will be corrupted by the profanity often surrounding them but all present are reminded that pure love and tavern revels are transitory. Fate has the last word as it 'strikes down the strong man.'

The RSC's latest *Antony and Cleopatra* stars Patrick Stewart and Harriet Walter. Mr Stewart was a core member of the RSC from 1966 to 1982 and showed that the bright lights of Hollywood have not diminished his capacity for acting on the small stage. He and Ms Walter were suitably skittish, passionate, majestic, and vulnerable.

A few months ago I mentioned the unsatisfactory ending to *Measure for Measure*, especially the implausible forgiveness of all and sundry. *Much Ado about Nothing* has a similar defect as I always wonder why Hero so readily forgives Claudio and all are so easily reconciled to both Claudio and Don Pedro. We are asked to believe totally that 'the quality of mercy is not strained.' The brilliance of the latest version at Stratford is to set the work in the Cuba of 1953 which means we get an atmospheric set, a live Latin band, the smell of cigars, and sinuous dancing. But it also means that Marianne Elliott's splendid production leaves me confident that Don Pedro and his ilk shall, in a year or so, meet their nemesis as the anti-Batista revolution takes hold.

The Don John of Jonny Weir is a *film noir* baddy with a dark, malevolent, hypnotising voice; Hero (Morven Christie) in her 50s A-line frock is the archetypal, submissive Elizabethan maiden; Joseph Millson is a richly comic Benedick and his Beatrice, Tamsin Greig, a tall, willowy temptress. Their chemistry was catalytic and very funny. Playwright Sir John Mortimer, also born in 1923 and looking rather frail, was in the audience and I hope the great man enjoyed the production as much as I.