

contact

Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

Citation

Menter, Ian. 1976. 'Review of *Bristol Musicians' Co-Operative*'. *Contact*, 14. pp. 41-42. ISSN 0308-5066.

BRISTOL MUSICIANS' CO-OPERATIVE

Information from Ian Menter, 36 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol 6; tel. Bristol (0272) 559226, or Steve Mulligan, 18 Church Lane, Clifton Wood, Bristol 8

IAN MENTER

Although the Bristol Musicians' Co-operative has existed for about 18 months (see *Contact* 12, p.30), it is about a year since it started promoting a regular music scene in Bristol. What follows is no more than a condensed list of the Co-op's achievements and experiences during that time and an outline of our current aims and concerns. On nearly every Wednesday evening since August 1975 the Co-op has put on a performance at a Bristol pub. Many different kinds of music have been played by many different groups. We have been thrown out of one pub because the beer takings were not high enough, but we are currently installed at the Bristol Flyer (Gloucester Road).

Two activities which have folded up since last autumn are the weekly improvisation workshops run by Co-op members — one at a community centre and open to anyone, the other for children at a comprehensive school. Lack of regular support was the basic cause of the termination of these sessions. However, since July of this year the Co-op's financial situation has improved considerably due to the award of a £500 grant by the regional arts association, South West Arts.

Immediate use of this money is being made to support the scene at the Flyer, and, regardless of attendance each week, a flat rate for every musician performing is guaranteed. Although this sum is only £2, an important principle has been established: the equality of 'value' of musical performances regardless of commercial standards. Some of the grant may also be spent on putting on concerts with visiting musicians playing opposite our own groups. We are keen to get groups from other organisations such as ours to play, either at such concerts or at the regular Wednesday sessions, preferably on a reciprocal basis, i.e. they arrange a performance for one of our groups in their home town.

Very briefly, other achievements in the past year have included a commission for one of our members by the local art gallery, the Arnolfini. This work was performed by a specially formed Co-op group, Wind and Fingers. Various musicians have played on local TV and radio programmes, and we have established contacts with the local press and with magazines such as *Contact* and *Musics*. We have a representative on the national committee of the Musicians' Collective, the recent formation of which we regard as very encouraging.¹ With the support of a local record shop which has already been helping in our publicity, we are hoping to produce some records during the next year.

Perhaps our overwhelming priority at the moment is the search for a permanent base which can be used for rehearsal and performance. Once we find this we will immediately recommence regular music workshops, which we feel are essential in keeping the doors of the Co-op open to new people. In general terms the educative function of the Co-op is fundamental. We must always be providing opportunities for people to hear and understand new

kinds of music, as well as providing opportunities and contexts for musicians to experiment and to expand their techniques and relationships.

Over the past year we have certainly changed and probably enhanced our own perceptions of the place of the committed new musician in a provincial community. The strength of collective action has been politically, intellectually and artistically rewarding and, we have no doubt, will continue to be so.

We publish a monthly calendar which gives details of all sessions organised by the Co-op as well as other performances in which members are involved. Monthly discussion meetings are held which are open to members and non-members alike. These usually cover routine planning and programming as well as consideration of basic policy matters. If we can help you, or if you can help us, or if you would like our calendar posted to you, then contact either Steve Mulligan or me at the addresses above.

NOTE:

'It is hoped to include information on the development of this in a future issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)

The Piano: A History

CYRIL EHRLICH

A definitive, much needed history of the piano which is concerned with both its social and economic importance as well as its musical history.

Illustrated with 8 pages of photographs, £6.95

New in the 'Master Musicians' Series

Schoenberg

MALCOLM MACDONALD

'Malcolm MacDonald's admirable book has the basic merit of stressing the human reality of Schoenberg's music, its relevance to the world which he lived in and we have inherited: and of relegating his technical discoveries to the status of means rather than ends... it conveys enthusiasm for and delight in the music.'

Encounter. £4.25

Richard Strauss

MICHAEL KENNEDY

'An exceedingly well-balanced study' *Sunday Times*.
'Compact and astonishingly comprehensive for its size' *Financial Times*. 'Succeeds in steering what must be a nightmare of a path through the critical levels on which Strauss is for ever being deposited.' *Guardian*.

Both illustrated with music examples and 8 pages of photographs. £3.95

Music Since the First World War

ARNOLD WHITTALL

In this survey Dr Whittall traces the history of music in Europe and the United States and discusses the influence of a large number of individual composers. Special features of the book are the importance attached to tonality and extended examples of musical analysis.

Dr Whittall is Reader in the department of music at Kings College, University of London.

Illustrated throughout with music examples, October, about £6.95

Coming in Spring 1977

Music in Transition 1890-1920

JAMES SAMSON

An account of the crucial decades in the development of music from the 1890s to 1920, devoting chapters to such key figures as Scriabin, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern and includes a discussion of the twelve-note method of composition. The book will be of special interest and use to students of one of the most important periods in the history of music.

Dr Samson lectures in the department of music in the University of Exeter.

Illustrated throughout with music examples, about £6.50

DENT