



Newsletter

No. 20 – MAY 2010

Forthcoming

Servais Concert on June 5, 2010

Didier Poskin is a cello teacher at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles. His career as a musician took him all over Europe, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan and South Korea. Some 20 CD-recordings are to his name. The *Ensemble Rosamunde* consists of soloists of the *Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie* and has already been giving performances for a great many years.

Their CD 'Souvenirs. François Servais', completely devoted to Servais' music, just came out (see former Newsletter). In Halle these musicians will be performing three works by Servais : *Souvenir de la Suisse*, *Fantaisie et Variations sur le Désir* and *La Romanesca*. Also Schubert and Boccherini feature on the programme.



Photo : Luc De Decker

Practical information :

Saturday June 5,

Council Chamber of the Halle New Town Hall, at 8 p.m.

Tickets are available at the cc 't Vondel, Possozplein 40, 1500 Halle, (+32)(0)2 365 94 05 or online : www.vondel.be.

Members of the Servais Society can buy two tickets at the special subscribers' rate via the Servais Society.

Any questions and queries should be addressed to the Servais Society.

Looking back

March 7 2010, Recital

On March 7 Romain Dhainaut and Pierre Brunello gave a highly appreciated concert at the Halle Servaiszaal. Romain won the third prize at the 2009 International Servais Cello Competition. He is now pursuing his studies at the Academy of Music of the Hague and in the next school year at the Royal Academy of Music in London. The first part of the concert

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was devoted to music by Robert Schumann while the second part comprised three virtuoso works by Rossini, Servais and Alfredo Piatti. Both musicians will perform at the 11th Servais Concert on June 3, 2011, with a Liszt-Wagner-Servais programme. An event to look forward to !



ESTA Conference Brugge

The 'European String Teachers Association' (ESTA) organizes its annual conference in one of the 26 member states. This year Brugge was the venue, where some 150 participants from various European countries were welcomed. ESTA Belgium-Flanders succeeded in presenting an interesting programme, in which everyone could find something to their liking. Two items stood out as being directly related to Servais.

On Saturday May 1 at 5 p.m. the orchestra of the Brugge Conservatory performed Servais' *Souvenir de Saint-Petersbourg* (opus 15) with Ketevan Roinishvili as the soloist ; Tony Osaer was the conductor. The City Theatre Hall was

well filled up and the applause clearly indicated that the audience appreciated Ketevan's performance.



And on Monday May 3 Peter François gave a lecture on Servais' career as a travelling cello virtuoso, his part in the development of the cello technique and, last but not least, his contribution to the cello repertoire. A power point presentation and a few sound extracts made this lecture visually and audiotively enjoyable.

Servais was also prominently present in the fine programme published for the conference.

Further information on the Flemish department of ESTA can be found on www.estabelgiumflanders.be; highly recommended!

Vernissage of the exhibition '100 jaar Servaisacademie'

Last April the 'Zuidwestbrabants Museum' in Halle opened its doors for a new season. This year the temporary exhibition is devoted to the centenary of the Servais Academy. It features, among others, some interesting aspects of the Halle School of Music during this period of 100 years, such as Charles De Koster, the founding father, the violin and the cello classes. Clearly, the Servais Society has substantially contributed to the organization of this exhibition.

On the varnishing day on April 30 the oldest former student of the academy was present: Juliette Lekime, born in... 1910. Her diploma for diction, granted in 1932, was a showpiece in the exhibition. That same day a historic recording was presented: Servais' first cello concerto, played in 1957 by Maurice Deneulin, the academy's cello teacher. During the reception afterwards Geert Van den Broeck, the accordion teacher in Halle, treated everybody on a bit of music.

The Museum can be visited from April till the end of October, on Sunday between 2 and 5 p.m. During the months of July and August the Museum is also open on Saturday between 2 and 5 p.m., and Sunday from 10 to 12.



'Servaisacademie' Centenary celebrated with a musical and an accordion concert

One of the highlights of the festivities surrounding the Academy's centenary was undoubtedly the performance of the musical 'De Kleine Zeemeermin' at the cultural centre on March 20 and 21. The drama teacher Ingrid Vreke was responsible for the overall production. The three study streams of the academy, viz. music, diction and dance, were given a chance, each of them. No fewer than 56 musicians, 76 singers, 13 actors and 88 dancers appeared on the stage. By the side of these 233 (sic) performers of the centenary academy there were also a lot of people working "behind the scenes". Indeed, 120 pupils and their teachers of the 'Kunstacademie De Meiboom' had made great efforts for the highly inventive costumes, the setting, the stage properties and the photo reportage. Also the music performed deserves special mention: Johan Evenepoel composed the overture and the ending and took care of the arrangements as well. More than 1100 people had come up to enjoy this spectacle.

Some weeks later, on April 5, there was another special event at the cultural centre to celebrate the centenary: a performance given by father and son Dmitriev, both accordion virtuosi from Russia. The concert opened with some 40 young accordionists, conducted by their teacher Geert Van den Broeck. The friends of the Academy rewarded the Russians and Geert with a 'Servaispakket', consisting of two bottles of 'Servais beer' together with a matching glass, a CD, DVD and a catalogue.

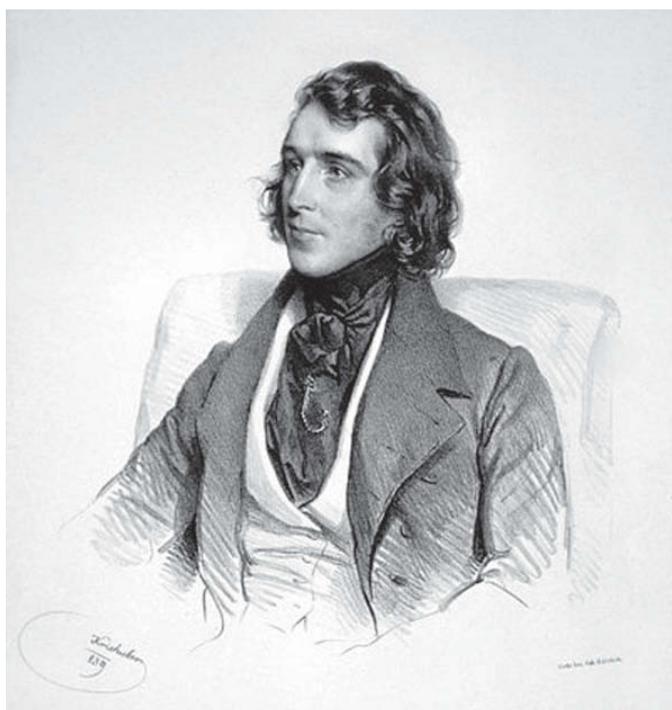
Servais in Teignmouth, Elias Parish Alvars' Native Town
Report of the 2010 Elias Parish Alvars International Harp Festival

At a distance of a 4-hour train journey from London lies Teignmouth, a lovely coastal town in beautiful Devon in the very South West of England. Though small, it has always been a comparatively important seaport since the fourteenth century. The great Romantic poet Keats lived there for a short while - the house where he used to stay in 1818 is still open to visitors - and the four members of the popular rockgroup Muse spent their youth there. However, Teignmouth is above all renowned as the native place of Elias Parish Alvars, the 'Paganini' of the harp.



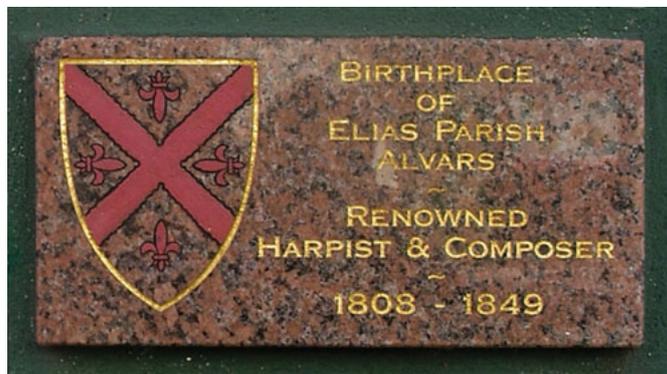
Bird's eye view of Teignmouth

Parish Alvars was born in 1808 in Teignmouth. In 1820 he moved to London, where he took lessons from harpist Nicolas-Charles Bochsa. Eight years later he went to Florence, where he stayed one year. From 1830 on he was travelling all the time, giving performances in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Switzerland and



Elias Parish Alvars, lithograph by Josef Kriehüber, 1839

France... From 1836 till 1842 he lived in Vienna. Afterwards he resumed his travels all over Europe. The 1848 revolution landed him in financial troubles, which indirectly resulted in his having his health deteriorate, so he died prematurely in the Austrian capital on January 25 1849. Also these days Parish Alvars is still a celebrity in the world of virtuoso harp music.



Commemorative plaque on a wall of his birthplace

The first Elias Parish Alvars International Harp Festival took place in Teignmouth in 2008, on the occasion of the musician's bicentenary anniversary. The organizers supporting this project were Florence Sitruk, harp professor in Geneva and Berlin, together with Christoph Bunzendahl, a German cello player currently staying in Belgium. The following year a second edition of the Festival was organized, and in 2010 a third.

The theme of this edition – held between Thursday April 22 and Saturday 24, 2010 – was "Celebration of the Virtuoso Composers" and so focused on virtuosity, which appeared very clearly from the concert programme on Thursday evening. Harp players Florence Sitruk and Agnes Keblyte, violinist Olga Polonsky and cellists Jaap Kruithof and Christoph Bunzendahl performed work by Nicolas-Charles Bochsa, Louis Duport, Frédéric Chopin, Félix Dieudonné Godefroid, Nicolo Paganini and David Popper, each of them highlights from the Romantic virtuoso repertoire.

On Friday morning the musicians and all the other music lovers assembled in Bitton House, a stately house from



Council Hall of Bitton House where Peter François' lecture was given

ca. 1800, where Parish Alvares may well have given performances himself, and which at the moment is used as Town Hall. It was in this historic setting that musicologist and historian Peter François, president of the Belgian Servais Society, gave his lecture on cellist François Servais (1807-1866). The biographies of Parish Alvares and Servais run remarkably parallel: both made great efforts with a view to further developing the playing technique of their instruments, both made a great many compositions for their instruments and visited virtually the same cities. A talk about the trips and achievements of the 'Paganini of the cello' as Servais was often referred to also reveals a lot about the 'Paganini of the harp'.

That same evening the Festival's honorary guest, Jana Boušková from Prague, was in the limelight of our attention. She teaches at the conservatories in Prague and Brussels and gives performances all over the world. "If anyone comes very close to Parish Alvares, it is no less a person than Jana Boušková", so Christoph Bunzendahl remarked in passing.

Mrs. Boušková enchanted the audience with her performance of a 'harp solo' by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and two sonatas by the Czech composers Franz Anton Rössler-Rosetti and Jan Ladislav Dusík. As a matter of course, the very highlight was her interpretation of two pieces by Elias Parish Alvares, *La Mandoline* and *Introduction, Cadenza and Rondo, and Carnival de Venise* of the Belgian Félix Godefroid.

On Thursday as well as Friday Florence Sitruk and Jana Boušková taught masterclasses to three young harpists: Caolan Walpot from Buckfastleigh, Svenja Grummt from Leipzig and Agne Keblyte from Geneva, who convincingly demonstrated that the future of harp playing is guaranteed and in good hands during the Students Recital in the Methodists Church on Saturday morning.

The next edition of the Festival is already in full preparation, while it is also worth stressing that a possible cooperation between the organizers of the Teignmouth Festival and the Halle Servais Society could result in interesting projects.

Peter François

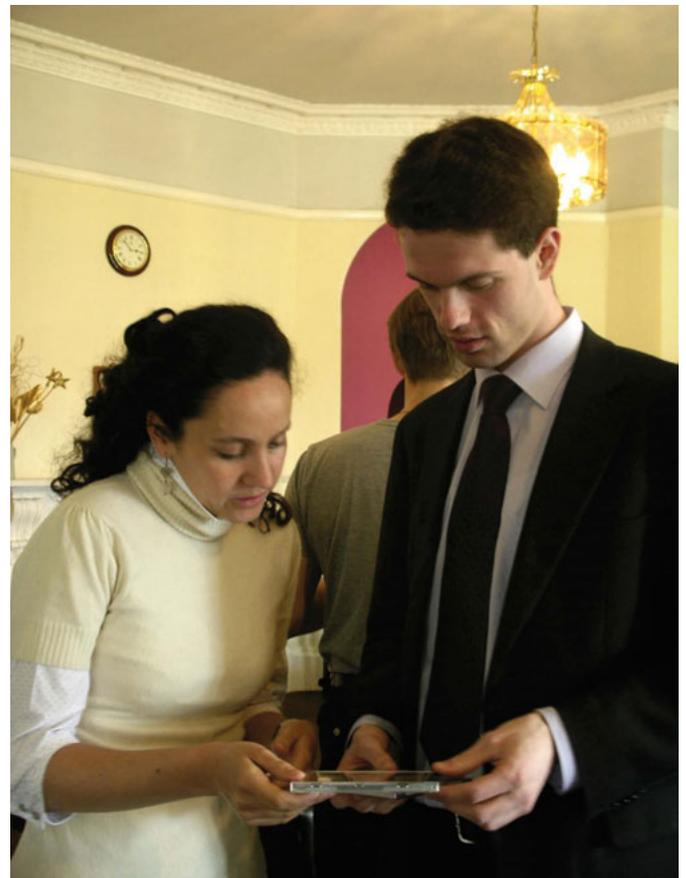
www.eliasparishalvars-festival.com



The three students: Svenja, Agne and Caolan



Jana Boušková



Florence Sitruk and Peter François

Miscellaneous News

» In the February 2010 issue of **Le Violoncelle**, the periodical of the 'Association Française du Violoncelle' you can find a report on Servais and his native town Halle. Servais' statue features on the front page.

www.levioloncelle.com



» Cello player **Didier Poskin** now has a website of his own : www.didierposkin.com. No doubt worth visiting !

» In the April issue of 'Gentlemen', a glossy bimonthly magazine published in Brussels, there appeared an article about **Misia Sert**, in which Eliane Van den Ende identifies Servais' granddaughter, wondering what she would be up to anno 2010.

» There are strong indications that Joseph Servais, the youngest son of François Servais, may well have had some offspring. The tentative findings of an ongoing search can be read in the Dutch version of this Newsletter.

Concert Calendar

Servais Society

June 5, 2010 – Servais Concert

Didier Poskin (cello) & Ensemble Rosamunde (Jean-François Chamberlan, 1st violin ; Pascal Crismer, 2nd violin ; Anne Pinggen, viola ; Bernard Delire, cello ; Alain Denis, double bass)

Works by Servais : Souvenir de la Suisse, opus 10 ;

Fantaisie sur Le Désir, opus 4 ; La Romanesca

Halle, New Town Hall, at 8 p.m.

Organized by : Servais Society and cc 't Vondel

www.servais-vzw.org

November 26, 2010 - Servaisconcert

Seeli Toivio (cello), Linda Hedlund (violin) & Lily-Marlene Puusepp (harp)

Work by Servais : to be determined

Halle, New Town Hall, at 8 p.m.

Organized by : Servais Society and cc 't Vondel

www.servais-vzw.org

Other initiatives

July 1, 2010

Sarah Dupriez (cello) & Vincent Hepp (violin)

Work by Servais & Vieuxtemps : Grand duo sur Les Huguenots

Antwerp, Sint-Laurentiuskerk, 12 a.m.

www.sarahdupriez.com

October 22, 2010

Didier Poskin (cello) & Ensemble Orchestral de Bruxelles,

Jacques Vanherentals, conductor

Work by Servais : Concerto en si mineur, opus 5

Brussels, Koninklijk Conservatorium, 8 p.m.

www.ensembleorchestraldebruxelles.be

December 6-8, 2010

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Lauma Skride (piano)

Work by Servais : Fantaisie sur deux Airs Russes, opus 13

- December 6 : Tübingen, Eberhard Karls Universität

- December 7 : Grünwald, August Everding Saal, 8 p.m.
(Grünwalder Konzerte, www.gemeinde-gruenwald.de)

- December 8 : Ansbach, Theater Ansbach – Kultur am Schloss

www.solgabetta.de

December 9-10, 2010

Sol Gabetta (cello) & Bertrand Chamayou (piano)

Work by Servais : Fantaisie sur deux Airs Russes, opus 13

- December 9, 2010 : Graz, Musikverein

- December 10 : Kempen

www.solgabetta.de

Are you going to perform a composition by Servais in the near future or do you know about a performance ?

Please let us know !

Most recent info : www.servais-vzw.org

Photos : Guido François, Peter François

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