

What's On



**Classical music
with Philip R Buttall**

Great cellist gets ready to delight South West



IF YOU were at London's Royal Festival Hall on April 11, you would have been one of the hundreds of guests at a very special event.

This was a concert featuring the Philharmonia Orchestra, to mark the 60th birthday of one of Britain's most sought-after cellists, Julian Lloyd Webber, and celebrate his lifetime of music-making.

Julian has already played in Plymouth on a number of occasions, but his next visit to the area is definitely a first for him, when he appears at Ivybridge's Watermark Centre on Friday at 8pm, in a recital with pianist Pam Chowhan.

Julian said: "I am very much looking forward to returning to the South West, although I don't know very much about the Ivybridge venue - but, either way, there's just no substitute for live music, however good CDs are today".

Julian does, though, have a soft spot for our own Guildhall, where he has enjoyed playing his most favourite concerto, the Elgar, and which also confirms his obvious love of English music.

When asked about his Ivybridge programme, which includes works by Frank Bridge, Britten, and Delius, Julian was quick to point out that all of it is eminently tuneful, especially a work by his father, William.

He agreed that the apparent need for a lot of music written today to appear harmonically challenging and shapeless might now be going full circle again. His recent birthday bash, for example, included a beautiful yet newly-written piece for cello and strings by American composer Eric Whitacre but couched in the very best English pastoral style.

Julian's Watermark programme ends with one of his favourite works, Rachmaninov's glorious Cello Sonata,

a formidable tour de force for cellist and pianist alike.

Julian said: "It's amazing how the cello seems to draw the very best out of a great number of composers and I am also really looking forward to playing the Delius concerto next January in the Royal Festival Hall, to mark the composer's 150th birthday" - a concert virtually sold-out already, a recurring trend as far as Julian's concerts go.

Asked whether audience size nationally has been hit by the recession, Julian's personal experience is that it hadn't.

However, in his recent acceptance speech as President of Plymouth Music Accord, he said: "A city of the size and importance of Plymouth deserves to

experience music-making at the very highest level, so I am delighted to support Plymouth Music Accord, which aims to provide just that.

"All power to the PMA team, including the indomitable Jeanie Moore for their magnificent efforts to continue to ensure the best for the city".

Jeanie, in fact, has already booked Julian to appear on Thursday, October 11, in the Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery at 7.30pm, with pianist John Lenehan and locally-born clarinettist Peter Cigleris in a programme to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of composer John Ireland's death.

A number of top performers, as they reach a certain stage in their musical

career, seem to take up the baton - is this something to which Julian will ultimately aspire? While he has occasionally conducted some smaller ensemble works, he was frank enough to reply: "I think conductors do need some specific training and it is something that I can't see myself wanting to get involved with at present".

If you can get along to the Watermark next Friday or, failing that, the museum in October, you'll surely see why it is a good thing. His superb cello-playing and immense musicality have delighted audiences across the world and across all music genres - he has absolutely no need to consider any change of direction for the foreseeable future.



JUNE DATE: The Watermark Centre, Ivybridge, will host Julian Lloyd-Webber tomorrow

Chamber choir promise the sounds of summer nights

THE 20-strong South West Chamber Choir sings at Landrake Parish Church on Saturday, June 11, at 7.30pm, to raise money for church funds.

Entitled Songs for a Summer Night, the programme of unaccompanied choral music includes works by John Dowland, Orlando di Lasso, Vaughan Williams, Arthur Sullivan and Stanford, as well as song-arrangements by the choir's musical director, Stephen Trahair.

Tickets (£5) are available at the door.



PARISH VISIT: The South West Chamber Choir

Cross-Channel music the theme for evening

ON FRIDAY, June 10, East Cornwall Bach Choir returns to St Germans Parish Church at 7.30pm for an Anglo-French evening, with Fauré's Requiem and some English cathedral music.

Paul Ellis conducts, with Simon Dunbavand (organ), and soloists from Truro Cathedral choristers.

Tickets (£12 / £6 students) are available at the door, or online (www.ecbc.co.uk).

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