

St. Mary's, Hemel Hempstead

Lunchtime Concert, Tuesday 14th October 2008

Marion Garrett, Mary Harris and Peter Stephenson have each achieved enviable reputations as skilled solo performers, Marion on violin, Mary on cello, and Peter on piano. Beyond that they have led busy lives as teachers, accompanists, répétiteurs, ensemble players and in other ways. In short they have always been busy professionals, their lives devoted to music. So how do they relax? Simple – with music! This was the origin of their coming together as the Trio Artemis, so that they could enjoy each other's company musically and, one assumes, socially. But such was their success in bonding musically and in the excellence of their music making that they were soon in wide demand for performance both in this area and beyond. And it was as the Trio Artemis that St. Mary's enjoyed a lovely recital by these fine artists at the lunchtime concert on October 14th. In a programme of intriguing contrasts the first item was the Piano Trio in G by the English composer William Hurlstone (1876-1906). Dying when only twenty-eight he was a sore loss to English music. He had already some superb compositions to his name, so what he might have achieved if he had lived longer we can only conjecture. The Trio in G displays endless melodic invention but also impressive structure and mastery of form. Much of the phrasing is reminiscent of Brahms, whose chamber music must surely have been an influence on Hurlstone. The Piano Trio no. 1 in C minor by Shostakovich followed. Composed when still in his teens, this is a work of astonishing maturity, presaging the manner of his later output – the tension and the deep emotionalism interspersed with sudden dramatic, almost theatrical passages. Shostakovich may have laboured all his working life under the iron heel of Communism, but most surely it did not inhibit his creative life force.

Trio Artemis handled these contrasting pieces with great sureness and artistry and they deserved a much larger audience than they got. If you read this please come along to the next lunchtime concert on 11th November which will feature the gifted pianist Takami Weaver.