

# ensemble

THE AVISON ENSEMBLE NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2011

Dear Friends,

We live in uncertain times! With the recent financial crisis, cuts, and the loss of Northern Rock Foundation as the major supporter of North East Culture, you may well understand that all in the performing arts will be tightening their belts and proceeding with cautious optimism!

In the depths of the Second World War, Dame Myra Hess realised that in dark times the human spirit needed music more than ever. She established the National Gallery concerts and audiences, amazingly risking the blitz, bravely flocked to support them. Dame Myra's efforts eventually contributed to the formation of the Arts Council, and so through the darkest of times the future of Britain's cultural life was assured.

As we proceed into the unknown depths of this reckless financial crisis, we utterly count on your support to contribute to our own "war effort". More than ever before we need you to be active by attending our events and bringing friends, buying tickets and CDs, and of course through your generous much needed donations! It is only through your support that we can keep our concerts going and are able to give the special advantages that we offer to children and young performers in our outreach programmes.

Audiences were delighted by the high standard of the talented entrants to our Young Musicians' Awards this year, and there were more finalists than ever before – 13 managed to reach the final stages of the assessments and the standard of the performances managed to deadlock the judges for quite some time! You can read more about the Awards in the newsletter and about the wonderful children's concert that followed.

If you've already heard our award-winning Handel Opus 6 CDs (which have been exceptionally well reviewed), you'll be delighted to know that we will be recording Corelli's complete published works in the near future. The Italian composer Corelli taught the violin and composition to Geminiani, who in turn taught our own Charles Avison, so you could say that Corelli was the musical grandfather of our hero! It is therefore apt that we are setting out to record the complete published works of Corelli in time for the tercentenary of his death in 2013. This summer you can experience some of the delights of his Trios and Concerti Grossi in concert.

Finally, with my cello in hand I will be teaming up with the brilliant young Canadian pianist Kathy Chi for concerts in May, doing our bit to raise funds for the Avison Ensemble's education programmes. We will roll up our sleeves and learn millions of notes in our programme of Chopin and Shostakovich, so wouldn't it be great if we could achieve £1 per note to expand our fantastic education work in the North East...? Please do come along and contribute – the programme "*Desperate Romantics!*" will be very exciting!

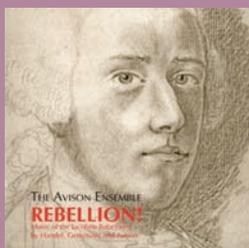
Your involvement and support means so much to us. We very much hope that you will be able to find ways to support us in the coming months – for which we will be truly grateful. And we extend our gratitude and thanks to all of you who have already expressed your support this year. We look forward to seeing all of you at a concert soon – so please do come along!

Best wishes,

Gordon

Gordon Dixon  
Executive Director  
Avison Ensemble

## RECORDINGS 2010



### HANDEL: Concerti Grossi Opus 6

3 CDs on Linn Records

Awarded an Opus d'Or Award 2010

Awarded Best Record 2010 by High Fidelity Magazine

Nominated for the 2011 International Classical Music Awards

Released on Linn Records –

Gramophone Magazine Label of the Year 2010

The Avison Ensemble offers us no less than a small musical miracle... Here is a landmark SACD, sumptuously recorded, that one should not hesitate to acquire.

Jean-Jacques Millo, *Opus d'Or*, 19 August 2010

### REBELLION!

Cavalier Classics

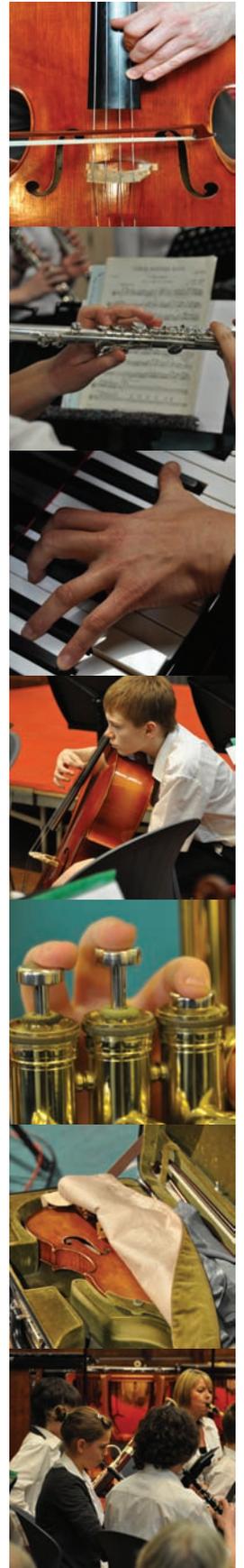
Music of the Jacobite Rebellions By Handel, Geminiani and Avison

## NEW WEBSITE

Over the past year we have been working on our new website. We are proud to announce that it has now gone live! [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)

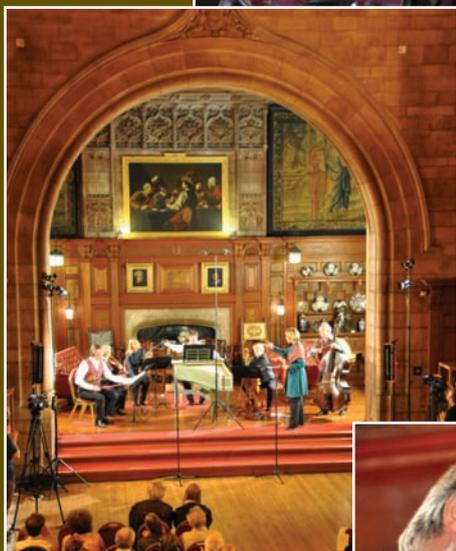
This is the first in a series of phased changes we are making to improve our presence on the Internet. We think the design is much better, but we welcome your comments and ideas, so take a look and get back to us!

Links will take you to our other social networking places, so you can follow us on Twitter, become a fan on Facebook and enjoy our pictures on Flickr!



## TAKING BAMBURGH BY STORM!

The magnificent Bamburgh Castle was the scene of a creative invasion last September when the Avison Ensemble and the children from First Act Theatre Newcastle took over the entire building for a day of filming and performances.



The Avison Ensemble performed a wonderful concert launching their new *Rebellion!* CD and First Act Theatre directed and filmed their own production of the *Escape from the Tower...* an exciting 18th century tale of 'derring-do', intrigue and romance! The film will be shown on our new website later this year – so watch out for it at [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)

## DESPERATE ROMANTICS!

The cello and piano sonatas of Chopin and Shostakovich are monumental works of the repertoire, but the dramatic context of their creation is little known.

Chopin's last work was born out of his turbulent love affair with the writer George Sand, who finally refused to visit the composer as he lay dying. It was the last piece of music he heard and his last memory of his lover, having requested it to be performed to him on his deathbed.

In 1936 Shostakovich premiered his cello sonata on the eve of his denouncement in *Pravda* by Stalin, heralding dangerous times for the composer, who earlier that year had divorced his wife in order to be with his lover, only to then be rejected by her and amazingly end up re-marrying his former wife before the end of the year!

International concert pianist Kathy Chi joins forces with Gordon Dixon to interpret these landmark works – catch them at:

St James's Piccadilly on May 12th & 13th; Paxton House on May 14th and at the King's Hall, Newcastle on May 15th. See listings for further details or visit our website [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)



## FUNDRAISER! KING'S HALL CONCERT MAY 15TH AT 3PM

We are opening this concert to everyone as a fundraiser for our education programmes and request that if you book your seat now, by returning the early bird booking form, or emailing [tickets@avisonensemble.com](mailto:tickets@avisonensemble.com) we will reserve your seat and you can make a discretionary donation on the door. Gift aid forms will be available as well, so let us make your gift go further, at no additional cost to you.

## ROMAN JEWELS: A CORELLI SUMMER FESTIVAL



The composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli was born in Italy in 1653, a full generation before Bach or Handel, and established an academy of literati that later became the Arcadian Academy. Thanks to his musical achievements and growing international reputation he found no trouble in obtaining the support of a succession of influential patrons. History has remembered him with such titles as “Founder of Modern Violin Technique,” the “World’s First Great Violinist,” and the “Father of the Concerto Grosso.”

Corelli’s popularity as a violinist was equaled by his acclaim as a composer, yet his compositional output was rather small. All of his creations are included in six opus numbers, most of them being devoted to serious and popular sonatas and trio sonatas.

Chronologically, Corelli was Avison’s ‘musical grandfather’ and our summer concerts will cover the trio sonatas and the Concerti Grossi Opus 6 in which work Corelli reached his creative peak and climaxed all his musical contributions.

The concerts will be presented in 2 series during July. The trios from July 1st – 3rd and the Concerti Grossi from July 21st to 23rd. Visit our website for details of the programmes, which differ for each concert on tour. [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)  
If you cannot access the Internet, please call 0771 031 567 and leave your name and number and we will call you back.

## PAXTON FESTIVAL AT PAXTON HOUSE



This year the Avison Ensemble has been asked to help launch the Paxton Music Festival with two concerts taking place on the same day – July 17th at 1pm and another at 7.30pm – the first is a lunchtime solo performance on baroque violin from the Ensemble’s Leader and Director Pavlo Beznosiuk.

Pavlo is one of Europe’s most respected Baroque violinists, and is presenting a programme focussing on the Austro-German

school of unaccompanied violin music. He will perform music by two lesser-known composer/violinists renowned in their day for their virtuosity, Biber for his brilliant passage-work and Westhoff for his development of the violin’s polyphonic capabilities. The programme ends with Bach’s monumental sonata in C major, a towering piece of writing for solo violin and one of the most challenging works of the entire baroque repertoire.

At the evening concert The Avison Ensemble presents a programme of chamber music composed for the opulent surroundings of Arcangelo Corelli’s patron, Cardinal Ottoboni. This programme combines the sumptuous and much-imitated sonorities of Corelli’s deft writing for the violin with music from two lesser-known Romans, the lutenist Zamboni and the harpsichordist and long-term Corelli collaborator, Bernardo Pasquini. Also making a rare appearance is Domenico Gabrielli, credited with writing the first ever sonatas for violoncello.

Tickets from the Festival box office: 0131 473 2000 or at [www.hubtickets.co.uk](http://www.hubtickets.co.uk)

## YOUNG MUSICIANS’ AWARDS 2011



The Avison Ensemble’s Young Musicians’ Awards go from strength to strength each year, and recently we welcomed more young talented musicians through to the finals than ever before.

Held in the presence of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Newcastle, the finals were held at Shipley Art Gallery on February 27th and were supported by the Roland Cookson Fund at the Community Foundation.

The winners of this year’s Awards were talented grade 1 pianist, Aleksandar Jovanovic (10), from Heaton, an outstanding grade 5 flautist, Julia Lochmuller (13), from Newcastle, and a second extraordinary pianist (Dip. ABRSM) Sarah Gardner (15), from Stockton-on-Tees.

The competition was open to over 250 schools across the North East and the 13 finalists were selected over two sets of heats. The finalists were judged by Mark Monument, recently retired from the Arts Council North East where he held the position of specialist officer in music. Mark was also an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

The Awards themselves are 3 beautiful, unique engraved glass trophies, inscribed with music from the Avison workbooks and were created by Dominic Fondé, a local glass artist. The winners also received a cheque for £25 each and the awards will be displayed in their schools: Jesmond Primary School, Central Newcastle High School and Yarm School, Stockton-on-Tees.

Next year’s awards will begin in earnest in September, so if you know any young and talented musicians who might like to take part, please tell them to go to our website and register their interest now and we will send details when it begins again in the autumn. [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)

## Desperate Romantics! Piano & Cello

May 12	15.00	Open Rehearsal & Filming	St James's Piccadilly	No charge
May 13	13.10	Lunchtime Concert	St James's Piccadilly	No charge
May 14	20.00	Concert	Paxton House	£10
May 15	15.00	Concert	King's Hall, Newcastle	By donation

## Roman Jewels I: Corelli Trios

July 1	19.30	Concert	St James's Piccadilly	£15
July 2	19.30	Concert	Alnwick Playhouse	£14 (£13 concs)
July 3	15.00	Concert	King's Hall, Newcastle	£10

## Paxton House Music Festival

July 17	13.00	Violin Solo Concert	Paxton House	£10 (£5 concs)
July 17	19.30	Roman Jewels Concert	Paxton House	£20 (£10 concs)

## Roman Jewels II: Corelli – The String Concertos from Op 6

July 21	19.30	Concert	St James's Piccadilly	£15
July 23	19.30	Concert	King's Hall, Newcastle	£10

Concerts for the autumn 2011 and spring 2012 will be announced shortly.  
Visit our website for more information [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)

## FIRST CHILDREN'S CONCERT PROVES A WONDERFUL SUCCESS



## TICKET BOOKINGS

Use the Earlybirds booking form enclosed for your tickets, or email [tickets@avisonensemble.com](mailto:tickets@avisonensemble.com) to reserve your seats.  
For July 2: Telephone Alnwick Playhouse 01665 510785 or visit [www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk)  
For Paxton Festival July 17: Telephone 0131 473 2000 or visit [www.hubtickets.co.uk](http://www.hubtickets.co.uk)

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Help us 'go green' and join our email list, you will receive our news and newsletters more quickly. Email us today at [list@avisonensemble.com](mailto:list@avisonensemble.com) and we will email you in future.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Join us on the Web as we've got news, photos and films we want to share with you!

Be an Ensemble Fan on Facebook and you'll be the first to know about our news, latest on-line activity, new releases, and future concerts and events. Or follow us on Twitter and receive our regular tweets! We're on Flickr too, the world's biggest photo sharing website, where we've got over 2,500 images of our concerts and events, behind-the-scenes at rehearsals and recordings, and education and outreach projects. Our pics have been viewed over 46,000 times already! And you can watch us on YouTube where you'll be able to see highlights from our concerts, discover our education projects and get sneak previews of our future releases. Our films have already been viewed over 10,000 times!

Come and join the Avison Ensemble on the Web!

Sunday March 6th saw the first concert performed by the children of the Young Musicians Awards and two of our education partner organisations, the Choir of St Nicholas' Cathedral and the Gateshead Youth Orchestra. Held in the presence of Her Grace The Dowager Duchess of Northumberland, the evening was a resounding success with all the young people taking part performing their solos, or orchestral works with a professional quality that left the audience elated and spellbound!

No one performance could be singled out for special praise, but the 3 winners of this year's YMA competition did prove that public concerts heighten performance technique. The young performers received their prizes from the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cllr Brenda Hindmarsh. We hope to hold a similar event next year.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION please visit our website at [www.avisonensemble.com](http://www.avisonensemble.com)

