



The Avison Ensemble is proud to sponsor this year's Music Celebration Festival presented by Gateshead Schools' Music Service. The Festival brought together hundreds of children and a wide range of partners in a series of vibrant concerts showcasing the wealth of musical talent in the region. We're delighted to once again have collaborated with the Gateshead Schools' Music Service - our education and outreach partner. Highlights included **The Blaydon Bash** concert at Newcastle City Hall celebrating the 150th anniversary of The Blaydon Races, **A Jubilee**

Concert at The Sage Gateshead featuring ensembles and choirs from the North East, and this year's **Whopping Big Barbeque** which included a massive ensemble in the outdoor area outside Gibside Chapel! And the grande finale to the Music Celebration Festival on 18th July is a **A Royal Celebration** at Saltwell Park to welcome a Royal Personage.



ON TOUR

Whilst not on home turf until the funding climate allows, the Avison Ensemble have however just fulfilled an engagement opening the Gregynog Festival in Wales, and their next concert, for Music in Country Churches (Patron HRH Prince Charles), will take place on Saturday 25th August in the wonderful surroundings of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Lavenham, Suffolk. The Ensemble will perform Concerti Grossi by Avison and Handel, Vivaldi's Four Seasons, and cellist Richard Tunnicliffe will perform one of Garth's Cello Concertos. If you're on holiday in the area do drop in and say hello!

Tickets: £7 to £25. General booking opens on Monday 25th June. Tickets can be booked by post, telephone or in person from: Prelude Records, 25b St Giles Street, Norwich, NR2 1JN Box Office: 01603 628 319 Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.30pm Payment can be made by cheque, postal order or credit card



YOUNG MUSICIANS

Our Young People's Celebration Concert was a huge success with amazing performances from some of the best young musical talent in the North East! Congratulations to our 2012 Young Musicians' Awards Winners, who during the concert were presented with their Awards by the Sheriff of Newcastle Councillor Jackie Slesenger. And well done to all the Awards winners and entrants who performed at the concert. There were wonderful performances too by the Gateshead Youth Orchestra and Wind Band and by the Choir Boys of St Nicholas's Cathedral. Congratulations to all the performers and a big 'thank you' to the teachers, parents and supporters who made the concert possible - it's great to see such support for the North East's young musical talent! Our special thanks to the The Sir James Knott Trust and Joel Cohen and Andrea Toon (American Friends of The Avison Ensemble) for their support which made this year's Young Musicians' Awards and Celebration Concert possible.

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 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 3,600 images of our concerts and events, behind-the-scenes at rehearsals and recordings, and education and outreach projects. Our pics have been viewed over 97,000 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 15,000 times!

Come and join the Avison Ensemble on the Web!



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION please visit our website at www.avisonensemble.com

Concerts for the autumn 2012 and spring 2013 will be announced shortly. Visit our website for more information www.avisonensemble.com

ensemble

THE AVISON ENSEMBLE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012



LIVING LIFE ON ONE BUTTOCK!

The great composers were tuned into something beyond our everyday existence, an energy or creative force which was the source of their inspiration and which has brought so much joy into the world. These days we are all probably in need of having our batteries recharged, given the negativity we are bombarded with on a daily basis, so it is fantastic news that one of the most energetic and radiant musicians on the planet is coming to Newcastle to inspire our young musicians and audiences.

Benjamin Zander, the eminent conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, is a musician of world renown and happens to be internationally recognised as one of the world's greatest motivational speakers. Having adapted his work as a conductor to a presentation on leadership, he has given talks to the World Economic Forum and to many global organisations such as Shell, IBM, Arthur Andersen, Sprint and NASA.

A former student of Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst, Ben brings amazing insights into the workings of the composer's mind, and shares this in a way that is totally captivating. Using music, words, stories, gestures, and an abundance of energy, he is like a walking symphony of human passion. In short, he is an experience like no other!

We are hosting a series of Ben's workshops for both musicians and audiences which will take the form of an enquiry into what elements go into making a great performance, how we can all increase our understanding and enjoyment of music, and how this can be applied to our daily lives. It will be a truly transformational experience, and especially so for anyone new to Benjamin Zander's work.

Ben's concept of "One buttock playing" and belief that "Everyone loves classical music, it's just that many people haven't found out about it yet" make him something of a musical zealot, so one can identify with the following reviewer of one of his concerts: "The whole performance left you feeling as though you had been struck by lightning – dazzled, with all your molecules rearranged."

On Sunday 12th August, we will host a tea party at King's Hall, Newcastle University, as a special welcome for Ben, and he will give an introduction to what his workshops will be about. Please join us – it will be a social event, and an opportunity to meet this charismatic musician, as well as chance to sample one of our delicious teas!

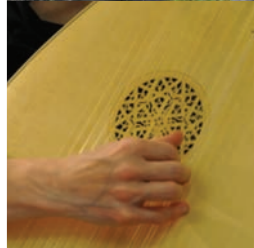
The workshops will take place throughout the week and will conclude with a presentation talk on leadership "Benjamin Zander The Art of Possibility – Living Life on One Buttock" at Jesmond Dene House Hotel on Thursday 16th August at 6pm. This is to be a fund-raising event for the Avison Ensemble and there is an opportunity for dinner after the event.

Benjamin Zander
The Art of Possibility
King's Hall, Newcastle University
Sunday 12th August 3pm – introduction & tea party – admission free
Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th 10am to 5pm each day – admission free
Thursday 16th August 10am to 1pm – admission free

Jesmond Dene House Hotel
Thursday 16th August 6pm Presentation
"The Art of Possibility"
Admission by invitation – contact us for details zander@avisonensemble.com
0191 226 0799

"These fortunate young people will experience an intense musical and emotional engagement, which will remain with them for a lifetime."

Sir Simon Rattle



CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Gordon

I trust all is well with you and the Ensemble. I follow with interest the website and emails I receive and wish you even further success.

You may find of interest some thing that has come to light (literally and metaphorically) recently in St Andrew's Churchyard on Newgate Street. I have been researching for a couple of years, the relationships between the early Methodists based at the Orphan house on Northumberland Street and St Andrew's, which of course was their parish church.

I had known for some time that Edward Avison, the eldest surviving son of Charles, was buried in the churchyard, together with his wife Margaret. It is only recently that I have discovered their grave and last Wednesday I was able to remove a lot of grass that had overgrown and obscured it.



Charles Avison's Grave with Edward and Margaret Avison's to the right.

The grave of Edward and Margaret is near to and due west of Charles Avison's, close to the path and immediately facing the south porch of the church. Furthermore, most of the carved epitaph can still be read. It is as follows:

"In memory of Edward Avison and Margaret his wife who were eminent for piety and primitive simplicity of manners, having each borne a lingering disease with the most exemplary patience and resignation, they rejoiced at the approach of death and expired with hope full of immortality. He died on October 1776 aged 29. She in November 1777 aged 33".

Edward Avison was a trustee of the Orphan House and met his future wife, Margaret (Peggy) Dale, there and they were married in St Andrew's Church on 4th March 1773. John Wesley was fond of Peggy and wrote, "Miss Peggy is one of the holiest young women I have any knowledge of". He appears to have an equally high opinion of Edward in writing, "I do not know where Peggy could have made a better choice".

Charles Avison and his connection with the Wesley's will be mentioned in an essay I have written to be published later this year and in a lecture I shall be giving on St Andrew's Churchyard at the Lit & Phil next March.

With kind regards to you and all associated with the Avison Ensemble.

Yours sincerely
Reverend Terry Hurst



The new Charles Avison interpretation board outside Newcastle Cathedral.

RESEARCHING AVISON'S LIFE THE EARLY YEARS

One of the most frustrating (though intriguing) periods of Charles Avison's life, as far as a researcher is concerned, is that quarter century between his birth in 1709 and his first recorded public appearance, in London, in March 1734. We can take a few guesses at his early training (given to him by his father, surely and possibly his older brothers too) and we know where the family lived, but beyond that nothing.

Until now ...

The Bowes family at Gibside in County Durham were great supporters of the arts in general and of music in particular. George Bowes and his second wife, Mary, attended almost all the concerts in the North-East, subscribed to Avison's music, hired him to teach their daughter, and invited him to Gibside every summer to play music along with their favourite Italian violinist, Giuseppe Cattanei. He carried out errands for them in Newcastle (including buying cloth for Bowes's ruffles and nightcaps), and in turn they did a favour or two for him when they visited London (Bowes was an MP).

The couple are notable not only for their love of the arts but also for their impeccable and detailed financial management; their expenditure is recorded in a variety of ledgers and cash books, large and small, and Mrs Bowes kept her bills and receipts, including one of Avison's, which was written on the back of a piece of paper on which he had obviously been scribbling notes for one of his prefaces. Two small entries in these records throw light on Avison's early career.

The first concerns the date of Avison's return from his stay in London. After his concert there in March 1734, nothing is definitely known of him until October 1735 when he took up the post of organist at St John's Church in Newcastle. Bowes's ledgers, however, show that Avison came back relatively quickly after the concert, probably at the end of the London season in April or May. On 15 December 1734, Bowes records a payment of four guineas to Avison for a trip he made to Gibside during the late summer; Bowes had put together a special party for his mother-in-law, Mrs Verney, and Avison had evidently been invited to Gibside to help entertain her. Mrs Verney's visit was in September; on the 6th, she was treated to a trip downriver from Newcastle to Shields and back again, in a barge, accompanied by the waits to play a little music. There is no reference to Avison being on the barge but it is certainly possible.

If Bowes's accounts fill a little gap in Avison's twenties, the other entry is even more significant. Arthur Milner, writing in 1954, suggested that Avison had been an apprentice of Ralph Jennison at Warkworth. He had no evidence for the idea, however, and it has always seemed unlikely that Avison – the son of a musical family and apparently destined for a musical career – should have taken up the post of apprentice to a merchant.

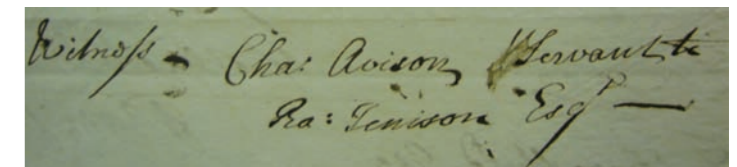
The Bowes's accounts make things clearer. George Bowes had financial dealings with Ralph Jennison and from time to time paid him large sums of money; these were always drawn on Bills presented to Child and Blackwell's bank in London – an early version of cheques, in effect. The procedure was for Bowes to write out a request for the bank to pay a named person a sum of money; the bill was then presented at the bank, countersigned by the payee, and the money was paid. (The cancelled bill was then sent back to Bowes, which explains their survival.)

In June 1728, Bowes wrote out three separate bills for Ralph Jennison, which Jennison duly presented at the bank. Either he was unknown there, or the person he was dealing with was unusually pedantic, because he was required to have a second person to witness his signature. And there is the witness's signature: *Cha: Avison, Servant to Mr Jennison*. [See photo] He was nineteen years old and in London at least six years before previously suspected. So Milner was right to suggest a link between Avison and Jennison – he merely got the nature of that link wrong. Avison was not an apprentice but a servant in Jennison's house.

The word *servant* is one that was often used loosely, referring to any employee, so it is not easy to know exactly what duties Avison would have been expected to fulfil. Did Jennison hire Avison for domestic duties, or for his musical ability – or indeed a mixture of both? The hiring of musical servants in rich households goes back to Tudor times and lingered until about the mid-18th century; George Bowes himself had a musical footman (playing the cello), valet (violin) and at least three other footmen (all French horn), meaning that with himself and his wife and the odd guest, they could get up a small band to play a considerable variety of music. Almost all Bowes's musical servants spent their working lives in his domestic service, but the cellist footman left to become a professional musician in London. Is this what happened to Avison? Certainly by the time he returned to Newcastle in mid-1734, he had left Jennison's service and set himself up as a professional musician.

We could take a guess that Avison might have been a footman in Jennison's household; footmen frequently accompanied their master and mistress on errands about town, being particularly useful for carrying parcels. Conscious that he was going to be withdrawing a large sum of money, Jennison may have decided to take a footman with him for extra protection. Avison was about the right age for a footman too; the information also suggests that he may have been tall, as that was usually considered a requirement for the post.

But this is speculation, of course; unless we can find more documents to throw light on the matter. So, many questions still remain. When did Avison enter Jennison's service? How much was he paid and what exactly were his duties? When did he leave? Hang on, I'm just off to do some more research ...



Dr Roz Southey,
International Centre for Music Studies,
Newcastle University.

MUSIC TO MEASURE

"Cut your coat according to your cloth" is the proverb that applies to our activities at this time. Arts Council cuts and the loss of grants from Northern Rock Foundation have meant some serious tailoring of our operations. The familiar phrase 'We apologise for this temporary interruption...' applies, but as soon as we have some cash in hand we will be able to resume normal service!

We have all been here before, and in such times we rely heavily upon the philanthropic nature and generosity of our friends. Donations do make a significant contribution to our ability to attract grants, and at this time we need your support more than ever. We have gained some support from The Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation towards our educational activity over the next two years, and your donations have helped us to attract this, so please do consider supporting us with increased donations this year if you can!

We are creating an opportunity to support us with donations through Benjamin Zander's presentation, so please consider taking this opportunity to show us your support.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting news of our recent application to the Arts Council to fund a few concerts before the end of the year, however we will not have confirmation of funding before going to press with this newsletter. Should we be awarded funds, we will write to you again soon to confirm the forthcoming events.

CD NEWS



This summer Linn Records are expecting to begin the release of the Avison Ensemble's recording of the complete published works of Corelli. This has been a project that we have been engaged in for the last two years and its worldwide release has been much anticipated. The connection between Corelli and Avison exists through Geminiani, (Corelli's pupil and Avison's teacher) therefore this recording is a fitting tribute to our namesake.

Anyone who listens to Corelli's music will instantly understand why Avison was so enthusiastic about all things Italian, and why he devoted all his composing life to imitating his style. Avison clearly felt that music simply couldn't get any better!

It is hoped that all 4 volumes (some 7 Cds) will be released at regular intervals over the next year as part of the 300th anniversary marking Corelli's death.

Cellist Richard Tunnicliffe gave a memorable recital of Bach's 6 cello suites at Chillingham Castle and King's Hall last year, and he has recently released his recording of these to glowing reviews. J.S. Bach Cello Suites Linn Records CKD 396

SARAH GARDNER NEXT BRIT THING AWARD

We're delighted that Sarah Gardner who was one of our Young Musicians' Awards winners in 2011 recently won the 2012 Next Brit Thing classical music award at London Indigo2. We were very happy to welcome her back to perform during our 'In Celebration' kids concert in March and in April she gave her own piano recital at the Literary and Philosophical Society. As part of her Next Brit Thing prize she'll be performing at the Royal Albert Hall as part of Classic FM's birthday celebrations in August, so do listen in to support one of our talented Young Musicians!

