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### Welcome to our newsletter

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Chamber Music Club's Newsletter, a publication which I think is now well established and plays a valuable part in the life of the club.

The subject-matter of this issue ranges widely, taking in the Elizabethan theatrical jig, the 'London Piano School' of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the music of a classic (or not so classic) science-fiction film. Also wide-ranging, of course, is UCL as an institution, and it has recently expanded further as the Institute of Education has merged with UCL. We are very pleased, therefore, to include an article by Jennie Henley from the Institute outlining some of the internationally important research undertaken by the Music Education Group in the Institute's Department of Culture, Communication and Media – research which itself can be called wide-ranging and which goes far beyond the narrow definition of 'music education'. An introduction to the forthcoming Music Education Expo 2015 at the Barbican nicely complements this article. The next in our 'Meet the committee' series is an interview with Dace Ruklisa; 'wide-ranging' is again an appropriate description of Dace's interests and activities, not least of which is her role as an editor of the newsletter! My thanks go to her and fellow-editors Helene Albrecht and Jill House, as well as to all other contributors, for their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm.

So let's keep it wide-ranging, if not indeed 'wider still and wider...' Please let us have your ideas, suggestions and offers of material, whether fully-fledged articles or shorter items. Reviews of concerts and books, information about forthcoming musical events, and comments on the content of the newsletter are all welcome, as are 'discussion' pieces such as David Miller's 'Counterpoints'. Please feel free to contact Dace (dd.rr.tt@btinternet.com), Helene (helene.albrecht@gmx.net), Jill (j.house@ucl.ac.uk) or me (rabeemus@gmail.com) at any time. The next issue is due out in October; meanwhile, we hope you enjoy reading this one.

*Roger Beeson, Chair, UCL CMC*

## *The Fantastic Voyage*: a film score by Leonard Rosenman

In my 15 years at UCL I have had quite a number of opportunities to be introduced to new music. Among the more unexpected and vivid opportunities was one that came along back in January 2013 at one of the splendid film nights run by UCL's Department of Science and Technology Studies ([www.ucl.ac.uk/sts](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts)). In my post-New Year 'down' I'd opted for what I thought would be a fun, slightly campy, if not downright trashy evening of sci-fi schlock in the shape of *The Fantastic Voyage* (1966). After all, this is a film in which a team of scientists – impossibly square-jawed men and a supremely voluptuous Raquel Welch – clamber into a mini submarine that is then miniaturised to the nano scale and injected into the bloodstream of a dying man, all in an effort to save him. With a witty and energetic introduction to the evening given by UCL's ever-impressive Professor Joe Cain what a fine film night this was set to be.

The musical score does not properly begin for some time, until the main characters are injected into the dying man's body. As the film's miniaturised protagonists were finding themselves transported to the alien world of the human interior so I found myself being transported to the abstract orchestral sound world of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and his early twentieth-century contemporaries. This was not what I had expected, and as the film ran I became increasingly absorbed by the rich drama of the music at the expense of the poor drama on-screen.

This intriguing orchestral music is the work of the New York composer Leonard Rosenman (1924-2008), previously unknown to me by name, and it came as no surprise to find he was a pupil not only of Schoenberg, but also of other twentieth-century musical pioneers Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) and Roger Sessions (1896 – 1985).

The score for *The Fantastic Voyage* is notable not only for its large orchestral forces but also the huge range of orchestral colours drawn out by Rosenman through his application of atonality, serialism, and *klangfarben* techniques. Unsurprisingly, for many critics the score is cold and unrelentingly sterile, but such critics would no doubt think this true of so many twentieth-century musical modernists and their disciples.

In his score of *The Fantastic Voyage* Rosenman's highly structured compositional techniques produce a rich and appropriately otherworldly soundscape that feels quite undated, so ubiquitous has the atonal-serial soundscape become in accompanying suspenseful sci-fi material. Indeed, these days a passable pastiche might be thrown together in no time at all by a talented undergraduate composition student with a laptop. But for Rosenman every note and colour combination had to be not only imagined in silence (no digital shortcuts for him) but also set down on paper by hand before the whole could be brought to life by a symphony orchestra of (I would guess) eighty or so musicians; the real effect unknown until

finally performed.

This music really is worth searching out. A music CD lifted from the soundtrack of the 35mm reels is available to buy online, and extracts of the film are numerous on easy-to-access websites such as *YouTube* ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)).

Professor Cain's film nights continue – in partnership with the UCL Grant Museum of Zoology – and details can be found at his UCL website ([www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/staff/cain/film](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/staff/cain/film)).

*Andrew Pink*

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## UCOpera presents *Amadis de Gaule* by J.C. Bach

Established in 1951, UCOpera is one of the world's most successful student-led opera companies, and certainly the most prestigious in the UK. An important directive for the company has always been the staging of rarely performed operas. This has been successfully achieved throughout the years, with the inclusion of seventeen British and four World premières in the company's back catalogue. In addition, UCOpera has provided the arena in which many young professionals have been launched into their successful operatic careers.

This year the company presents an English translation of *Amadis de Gaule*, a visionary opera by Johann Christian Bach. Written and first performed on the eve of the French Revolution in Paris, the opera is a chivalric tale of the violent conflict between love and hate-fuelled revenge. It is set in the ruins of a war-torn society where no civil structures remain. The opera is staged under the direction of Jack Furness, who is both the founder of the ambitious and innovative Shadwell Opera Company, and a Herald Award Winner. The design is by Hannah Wolfe, a graduate of Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

The production features some of today's most exciting young opera singers, including Royal Academy of Music graduates, Alice Privett and Laurence Olsworth-Peter, as well as returning UCOpera soloists, Katherine Blumenthal and Nick Morris. The chorus, orchestra and smaller soloist roles involve over 100 students from UCL, all under the musical directorship of Charles Peebles, who has conducted virtually every major Spanish orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, English Touring Opera, and has served as co-director of the Orkney Conductors' Course. This is an opera of unflinching intensity, human honesty and visionary utopianism. The production will be a must-see theatrical event. Performance dates are the 23rd, 25th, 27th and 28th March, 7.30pm in The Bloomsbury Theatre. Tickets are available from the Bloomsbury Theatre Box Office with prices ranging from £9 to £25; for tickets see also the website of Bloomsbury Theatre: [www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/14029](http://www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/14029).