

**Stenson off the wall**



# Stenson off the wall

## 1. Guinea Pigs

Hi there,

Just uploaded a cello quartett (sort of) and cheerful little piano piece (done this morning!) on the web site - idle hands obviously.

Sarah's already been inflicted with the quartett (by duett if you see what I mean) so now you can hear what it SHOULD sound like.

Cheers

David

### **Sarah Replies:**

David,

you make me feel tired. never have the urge/energy to 'upload a cello quartet' myself. What's with the double tttttts on the q'tets and duettts all of a sudden; are you slowly turning into a german without noticing? If so, please let me know if there is anything we should be doing to help.

had the roof off on my car the other day. a bird has plopped on the headrest, avoiding my head by millimetres. is this a good thing? Can I expect good fortune? Is it good for hair, in which case was it a missed opportunity?

Perhaps Mystic George can make a prediction.

Have decided, in the notable ABSENCE of some of us right up until Benslow that I will forward this correspondence to the remainder of the cello chums. Not because ut's interesting, plainly, but it could have the potential to let us focus on some heady topics as part of our mental preparation.

Regards to all,

Sarah.

### **John replies:**

Oh Dear David, I fear you may have developed an email stutter due to all those loads, with all the stress they entail, or perhaps it's due to too many peanutts/too little salttt. If you can transfer the effect to your bowing arm, it could come in very handy for Friday evenings, especially if Andrew can

## Stenson off the wall

bring off a spoof 'cello entry - it would greatly enhance the amusement factor for the rest of the orchestra. Viola players do seem to like a good joke (even a bad one if it's about viola players), and how those violins would laugh. The horns would be reduced to fits of coughing, causing cacophony in the rest of the brass - hang on a minute - how do they explain the rest of the time then? Anyway, once again I am just hugely impressed at how a few hours of idleness can result in such musical pleasure - Beethoven would have been gutted. All that effort and fury for just a few quartetts and symphonies and stuff, and he couldn't even hear them played through a midi sound card.

I vaguely remember from last Friday, after mention of the new pieces for Subutteo (a pair of streakers and a posse of (uniformed) chasers for the benefit of those ABSENT), that I claimed to have come across an item about a nude 'cellist with green veins - well here it is, and very puzzling it is too in places:

[http://www.photo.net/bboard/q-and-a-fetch-msg?msg\\_id=000ZKD](http://www.photo.net/bboard/q-and-a-fetch-msg?msg_id=000ZKD)

It was months ago now, and I can't remember exactly what I was searching for via Google, but it was definitely 'cello-related and not nude-related! Anyway, I was highly amused - when it comes to the question of poses, just how many ways are there of playing a cello without clothes?! I wondered whether a black filter would help to de-emphasise any boils or warts on a 'cello, and especially to hide any of those extra bits one might have glued on to it. Perhaps a cork under the fingerboard isn't quite as bizarre as we thought.

See you all on planetttt Wibble-Wobble tonight, then.  
John.

### **George replies:**

Ah, I somehow knew that John would be much better at interpreting this!!

George

## **Stenson off the wall**

### **Sarah's repost:**

Hello All,

Having just suffered from idle hands myself, I couldn't resist putting a helpful entry on John's 'nude' website myself; I dare say you may see through the 'nom de plume'.....

Sarah

### ***Sarah's nude website Entry:***

[donna mobile](#) , jun 04, 2004; 07:39 p.m.

Hello. We are a group of enthusiastic cellists who have been known to pose as a section. As a cellist with extremely prominent green veins myself, I thoroughly detest green filters. The red filters are effective, but can show up unnecessary details such as salt (most of us eat peanuts,) and find that a lot of make up is required to cover our warts and bumps.

Should you wish to get a group to pose, I think you will find it extremely rewarding. A lot of blue lipstick is a small price to pay for the delightful images one can contemplate. One of our group, John, is particularly, er, bendy, and can finish a picture off beautifully. David G, (not the leader; he's german) can also use purple sprouting to good effect. Miranda and Judith offer bloneness and should it Not be a nude shoot, can offer a number of lovely hoodies between them. George brings good music, and has access to the finest pies should they be needed. Liz also has a beautiful pipe organ, which always comes in handy. Hope this helps.

# Stenson off the wall

## 2. Match report

Hi George, Liz

Match report dutifully filed as promised:

Got a bit of a shock at start as Jackie and friends decided to sit on front row right under our noses! - just what is needed to build confidence. Anyway, 1st half started with rousing rendition of the Wagner just to make sure all the audience was awake and warm us up and happily there were no embarrassing silences and even the woodwind held their end up. This was followed by the Shuby Unfinished (Sarah actually turned the page after last movement hoping for a bit more!) which I think we did a pretty good job on (even avoided the cello pizzicato waterfall technique that we had been rehearsing for weeks) and during half-time some members of the audience were even heard to have been enjoying themselves. We tried to put them off for the 2nd half and persuade them to leave for a good curry or pint but to all no avail so we manfully (and womanfully) re-assembled for the Dvorak. All went pretty well until that bit on the 3rd page where the time changes and Andrew beats at the wrong speed - anyway, we all ignored him and luckily he caught up after a few bars. I nearly made Sarah laugh in the sombre bit at the end by doing an imitation of a crocodile with my bowing hand (magic lantern trick) but she resisted wonderfully and we plonked the goblin under water glug, glug glug all together. Finally the RK which went swimmingly apart from one "gathering moment" where we all took a bars rest while the rest (the others) caught up and then pandemonium broke out on the last page (principally because I can't count to 2 - but then I think the brass had their own ideas too). Anyway no-one seems to have noticed and everyone enjoyed it - even the audience. We even got to practice our cello wave (all rise in sequence and pivot cellos to audience) on special request from Diana.

Jackie stayed awake all the way through (which is amazing but probably something to do with sitting on the front - serves her right) and said she really enjoyed it all but thought one of the french horns had indigestion!

## **Stenson off the wall**

I'm sure the others will give you their own particular angle.

Have a good Easter and hope to see you on 23rd April!

Cheers

David

### **David G Replies:**

Hi David

Well, someone's got to say it. Congratulations on a brilliantly entertaining match report, which had me in stitches. The only problem is that it seems to have resulted in complete and uncharacteristic silence from all our other usual e-mail scribes. Come on John, get that zany brain working and give us all a treat - and what about you girls too ? My only excuse is that all my energies, mental and physical, have been devoted to designing and constructing not just one but two amazingly elaborate cages to keep the birds off my purple sprouting broccoli!

Happy Easter to you all.

David G

### **Sarah Replies:**

The image of a physically and mentally drained David G, lying submerged and dazed, gently bobbing in a caged vat of purple sprouting is slightly disturbing, particularly if pecking birds are added to the equation....ouch.

My apologies too for the abject failure in responding to the 'match report', a spectacular summary of all that is right about our Stratford orchestra, and England in general... I will try and make up for lack of communication with recent match report from deepest Southam.

Have been having a strange week; 1) thought I might have to dig a man up, (yes that does say what I meant it to say, and yes, he is dead which is just

## Stenson off the wall

as well) but fortunately events took a turn for the better and we decided we didn't have to after all; hoorah....I'm sure he's pleased too.

2) silly other man decided he wanted to kill his wife, lots of planning but lacked detail and didn't succeed (second hoorah) and is now very sorry and seems a jolly nice chap really. But lots of paperwork.

3) someone else didn't mean to kill someone at all, but very nearly has.

4) Gave Pebbles (my car) a big bash, when another man in a big audi wanted to give me a close up by overtaking towards me on a double white line. Despite my poor sense of physics, geography and all other relevant disciplines, I could see we weren't all going to fit and did a quick eeny meeny on hitting him head first (didn't like to waste the air bag) or taking a different course all together (ie west) playing bumps a daisy with a lorry and then having a slow motion gaze up the nostrils of oncoming frightened looking people in traffic. Vague police training reminded me not to brake and sailed eventually to a gentle halt. Pebbles is looking a little crushed on the nearside wing but is looking to make a full recovery.

Injuries; a tiny bump that I can find if I circle my finger on my scalp long enough to find it and then produce proudly for Geoff to view, yet again, but by far the greater is that I am having to drive a dark grey Nissan Micra; the *ignominy of it all*: wings truly clipped....

So, weird week ; all to do with the full moon I reckon. And I'm padding around the place like an incarcerated giraffe because I bought one of those pedometer thingies after I saw a recommendation in The Times (so it **must** be true)of 10,000 steps a day. Was manically chugging round the quiet streets of Southam last night, to make up for the fact that I had been mostly inanimate throughout the day.

Bye for now, happy Easter, I wish you all protected broccoli. John, I've sent to you twice because I can't remember which is more likely to find you.

### George Replies:

Ouch! Nissan Micra eh? Very sorry to hear about that, Sarah! So now I know where I've been going wrong - using the brakes! Thanks to all for the updates! Hope the purple sprouting turns out well, David!

## **Stenson off the wall**

I think the full moon sent me a bit doolally too, but perhaps it's just the 27 hours a day staring at computers...

Feeling very pleased with myself, after performing a 2nd cellistic gig with Sam Holmes - I learnt two more of her songs at the soundcheck and scribbled furious notes out so I could at least play a sort of bassline, rather than sitting onstage looking like a lemon - there was no easy escape during the songs I wasn't involved in, as the only way onto the stage was an enormous set of steps up from the floor in the centre! And anyway I was trying to hide behind the backing vocalist! This evening's gig was at a former working men's club in trendy West London, it's been turned into a fairly poncey 'members only' exclusive establishment, so no real beer, only champagne cocktails....!

Unemployment beckons after next week, so should see you all on the 23rd!

Cheers!

George

### **David G replies:**

Ouch, too, Sarah and poor Pebbles, but relieved to see that your sense of humour hasn't been affected. You really can't argue with that thing about a police(wo)man's lot not being a happy one, can you?

If you want to try gently bobbing with my caged purple sprouting you're more than welcome, but it might be a bit crowded even without me in there as well. I'm going to resist the temptation at least until we get some nice warm, sunny, dry weather again.

Good to hear from you too George and looking forward to seeing you on the 23rd. I've got your summer music so give me a ring if you want to pick it up before then, but that might be misconstrued as indicating an intention to do some practice, so do go easy.

David

## Stenson off the wall

### John Replies:

Well, how surreal can things get? All this talk of digging up purple people and putting them in cages - are members of the cello section going to try each others jobs? Honestly David and Sarah, I really think you should just stay with carrots and sticks. (Mind you I would think trying to get a confession out of a carrot would be tricky, and I know I wouldn't be any good at being a JP - Alice in Wonderland springs to mind (or was it Through The Looking Glass? You know - "Off with his head")). As for marine engineering - I can't work out how anyone does that in the total absence of any sea to see, you see; so I'll just have to try running leisure centers. Not sure about running though, leisure sounds better. No, too good to be true - it will have to be sound engineering, best practice and all that - oh no I'm an engineer again, how did I get back there? Reading between the double white lines, I suspect Sarah might just be a teensy-weensy bit annoyed by a certain Audi driver (and feeling very sorry for all Micra drivers?) so here's another animated GIF file that may be of some help.

Now what was that about a concert? Oh yes, hope you've got over the shock of my contrary page turning, Miranda! (Unlike Sarah, I finished the Unfinished one movement before everyone else, so I got a bit of a surprise when I came back from my out-of-body experience to find that we actually had more to play on the other side (of the page that is - otherwise it would get very spooky)). Bet you were even more unnerved by having to play from memory whilst I unskipped a line and turned the page back again for the last bar or two of a page in the RK (I blame all those confusing combinations of 1, 2 or 3 staves and divisi etc). It could have been worse - I could have done a Lily and knocked the stand over - oh no I'm going to have nightmares before each concert now.

Sorry for my very rude email absence - I've been working out of the office since before Easter, and in Cromer for a long Easter weekend. I'm in the office for just a short time this afternoon preparing for a week at a test house in Ringwood next week. I have my cello with me today so will be there this evening - but I'm not sure about next week yet.

## **Stenson off the wall**

Looking forward to seeing you all today - but warning: shock, horror - I've only practiced twice since the concert!

John.

### **George replies:**

John, I've just read your email three times, and I think I've got the gist of it now! See you later and down the pub afterwards of course, for a full and frank explanation I hope!!?

George

### **Miranda Replies:**

Hello all. Apologies for the somewhat belated contribution to the banter. The concert seems an age ago, and any match report I could create would certainly be no 'match' for the rest of you so I'll leave that to those blessed with wittier commentary!

I hope to join you for a 'bit of a play' this Friday, but alas no beers for me as that long long drive back to Suffolk will be beckoning - a swift pint might make that tiresome A14 seem slightly less painful, but with a member of the law in our midst, best to play safe! But dear old Fergus will be glad for an airing, as he hasn't seen the light of day since the night of said match report. He has sort of been lost for a while amongst piles of boxes, amidst packing at one end and unpacking at the other, he has survived the move to the country. He now has no competition but for a few birds, a peacock (they keep strange pets around here), a few bangs from the bird scarers (but i might be able to negotiate with the farmers to keep them in strict time), and the odd hoot from a rather tuneful owl. If you hadn't guessed already, it's not a description of the next door neighbour's aviary in Ipswich, but the description of the much more peaceful scene in rural (if somewhat isolated) mid-Suffolk, which, if I may be more specific, means that we have moved. Hence my excuse for a somewhat tardy email, and if I could also blame a week in the south of France too, and a lack of Internet connection, I feel it is a fairly justifiable reason.

## **Stenson off the wall**

John, I would hate to think of you experiencing page-turning nightmares before the next concert - it might just spur me on to practice a bit more, attend more rehearsals, and endeavour to learn the piece by heart - if Anup can do it with the Dvorak, I should really have no excuse!

Can I just ask - has anyone paid in full yet for the Benslow course? I think it's due at the end of this month, but I haven't got round to sending my cheque off yet.

Anyhoop, best be off - have been on the phone line for hours this afternoon sending a rather large email for work - Dave will just think I'm gossiping on the phone if he's tried to call!

hopefully see you all on Friday  
Miranda

PS shock, horror - I've not practised at all since the concert... my fingernails are too long!

### **3. E-Dice**

Hi there fellow composers,

One thing we omitted to do last night whilst concentrating on coffee, tea and wine corks was to sort out the rules for the next challenge (ready for the 11th). George may be able to rustle something up in an afternoon but I certainly need all the time I can get (particularly if I cheat and do more than 16 bars).

So

I think Sarah has already decided we should base on a bar of Brahms which is great but we have 2 2 choose from (429 bars of tragic and 471 bars of variations - also pretty tragic) and lacking an e-dice this is what I suggest so that we can all contribute to our fate:

You both reply to this.

## Stenson off the wall

If George replies 1st its Tragic otherwise Variations (challenge for you Sarah).

The bar number we choose will be 3 digits:-

For the first digit, I will take the time in minutes of George's reply (he's bound to be first) and choose that word number from Sarah's reply and count the number of letters in that word - OK so far, clear as mud I should think.

For the 2nd digit, the same but using time of Sarah's reply to find word in George's e-mail.

For the 3rd digit (so I can be involved) I will take the 5th word in Sarah's reply (5 letters in David), use that to pick a word in George's reply and use that to pick a word in this - confused - I should hope so.

The answer will probably end up as tragic bar 430 which would be a shame and we'd have to do it all over again so I reserve the right to change the rules or any other illuminating suggestions you will indubitably have.

So, be careful what U write as it will affect what you have to write!  
Trust you have sobered up after two bottles of plonk each.

Can hardly wait,  
David

### Sarah replies:

Hmmm, maybe it's because **I've** been exercising my brain all day playing Beethoven with Diana et al (FANTASTICO) but I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about D !; but I'm afraid I got to the 11th October bit and got my white flag out in any case... sister coming to stay, weekend **4** a wedding, French classes, prepare for tutor day from Roger Coull (oooh, get her) and boring old work between now and then actually , for once, provide a GENUINE excuse. Incidentally, I went home and tried, unsuccessfully with those 2 b\*\*\*\*\*y corks; well 2 shells I found in the bathroom actually, while sitting in bed; judging by his expression I think Geoff thinks I'm losing my marbles. Still, if he reads D's e mail or some earlier ones from John, he'll be reassured...anyway, got nowhere, put them

## Stenson off the wall

down, went to sleep, got up and did it perfectly 5 times; now can't do it again... I think I must have a bit of goldfish in my ancestry..... ta ta for now,  
Sarah

### George replies:

Crikey **David**, I think you must either have too much time on your hands, or an over-active brain! Ooga-booga wibble wobble (will that affect the outcome?) Should I continue writing or is that enough? I'm not sure I understand the rules, but I'm dying to know the outcome! How closely do we have to base our composition on the chosen bit? Are we to take it as the starting melody, like we did with DAB? I can't think of any more daft questions, so I look forward to hearing from you!

Yours etc.!

George

### David replies:

OK, all replies in so here is how it works.

1st reply from George (no surprises there) so it's the Tragic.

George sent reply at 1:55 and 55th word in Sarah's reply was '4' which has 1 letter so 1st digit is 1.

Sarah sent replay at 22:02 and 2nd word in George's reply was 'David' which has 5 letters so 2nd digit is 5.

My name is David (5 letters) and 5th word of Sarah's reply is 'I've' which has 3 letters if you ignore the apostrophe so 3rd digit is 3.

The bar we want is Bar 153 of the Tragic. - I've just looked - 3 and a half beats rest followed by a Bb - Oh b\*\*\*\*r.

Ok, plan B. I'll interpret Sarah's '4' as a 4 which would give us bar 453 - oh b-----k--s there are only 429 bars.

## Stenson off the wall

Who dreamt up this silly idea anyway?

OK, plan C, I wont forget the apostrophe like ( I normally do) and back to interpreting '4' as 1 which would give us 154. - **Result - A minim, A crotchet, quaver rest, D quaver.**

One last try to find something more interesting - I'll use the time I received the e-mails rather than the time when sent.

This would give:

George's e-mail arrived at 1:54 (1 minute before he sent it!) and the 54th word in Sarah's reply is 'weekend'. This has 7 letters but if we count modulo 4 (go back to 1 when you get to 4) we end up with 3.

Sarah's e-mail arrived at 22:02 (the same time she sent it thus avoiding an inconvenient time warp and the need to look any further).

So we end up with Bar 353 which is: crotchet A, quaver rest, Quaver A, crotchet A, quaver rest, quaver A ( I think I want to cry).

Short of imagining that Sarah really wanted to send her message first thus opening the way to the variations (but far too many flats) I suggest we go back to plan C above with the usual 16 bars in 1 flat (major/minor your choice).

As for your protestations Sarah, call that busy! You still owe two movements (in the pipeline) so get plonking on Bertie and stop complaining (Please).

Is it a deal?

See you Friday

David