

NEARLY 250 years ago, a father brought his nine-year-old Austrian son to Canterbury to give a piano recital.

The child was the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and now Canterbury is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of this musical genius with an innovative series of projects that aim to bring classical music bang up to date under the banner 'Mozart Now'.

Mozart was in some ways the Jimi Hendrix of his day – he was one of the first to master a new innovation in music, the Pianoforte, and make it his own.

He would play backwards, on top of the piano, underneath it – performing like a musical jack-in-the-box, a bundle of joyous energy infusing the instrument with life beyond its physical capabilities.

Mozart was also renowned for his wild sense of humour, was a consummate entertainer and certainly knew how to push the boundaries.

There has never been anyone in 250 years of music to compare with Mozart in terms of the combination of performance and compositional skills that he embodied, which is why his work is still so relevant today.

I believe Mozart himself would have shunned the concert hall, given the chance.

He would have preferred open-air concerts, festivals



■ Bourne Park, Bridge, where Mozart stayed when he visited Canterbury as a child

Picture: Barry Duffield pd 947810

and impromptu street performances and would have headlined at Live8.

The product of an entrepreneurial and pushy father, Mozart was paraded from the age of five, together with his sister (a kind of 18th-century Meet The Osbournes, only with talent) at the various courts of Europe.

He played before Kings, Queens, Dukes and Duchesses, often travelling huge distances to perform.

However, as soon as he was old enough Mozart decided to take his music to the people, appearing at public concerts, in private houses and making money from teaching music.

He was a definite crowd-

pleaser, a performer who actively sought out his audience and engaged with them.

One of the aims of the 2006 Mozart Now programme is to demonstrate to new audiences the importance of Mozart's contribution to music and to break down some of the misconceptions about classical composers.

A central tenet of the programme is taking Mozart's music out of the concert hall and into places where we can make it more accessible.

Three specific projects within the programme are designed to achieve this – Mozart Media Net, 9 x 9 and Pramadeus; see below for details.

DON'T MISS OUT ON MOZART ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

■ Mozart Media Net will be fusing new technology with musical heritage at www.mozartnow.co.uk to provide accessible information, literature and supporting materials on the composer's life and work. The website will also act as a diary to inform Mozart fans – old and new – about forthcoming events.

■ 9 x 9, a schools-based project, is working with nine-year-olds in nine local primary schools to introduce them to the music of Mozart.

It will include other art forms such as dance, visual art and storytelling to bring

the subject to life.

The results will be featured in a 9 x 9 concert at The Gulbenkian Theatre on Wednesday, June 14 and Thursday 15.

■ Pramadeus is aimed at the very young. Peter Cook, of the Big Bash Music Company in Canterbury, is co-ordinating the project in schools and nurseries from January until June.

He said: "Mozart could play the piano at the age of four and began composing at five. By gently introducing children to his music, we hope they will enjoy and find an appreciation of the music as they get older."

■ The climax of the programme will be Requiem Fragments – Completion of the Requiem, a project to complete Mozart's unfinished requiem.

The project culminates in Canterbury on Tuesday, December 5, with a performance of the new completion at 9.30pm in the candlelit Cathedral Quire. Anyone interested in taking part should contact music organisation Sounds New on 01227 738783 or email sounds.new@virgin.net Amateur musicians are welcome but they will need a good level of competency and the ability to read music.

CELEBRATIONS

Ringing the bells

CATHEDRAL bells will peal out tomorrow (Friday) to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. The bells at Canterbury Cathedral will ring along with bells in cities around the world which were visited by Mozart.

Philharmonia

THE Philharmonia Orchestra perform an all-Mozart programme at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, tomorrow (Friday) at 7.30pm.

The programme features the Rondo in D for piano and orchestra, Piano Concerto No 20 and Symphony No 40.

Tickets are £26 and £21.

Student tribute

MUSICIANS at Kent University begin their Mozart celebrations with a concert on Monday at 1.10pm.

It features Kent University Camerata, conducted by Susan Wanless, with Susannah Thackray on flute and Mariah Mazur on harp.

The concert will include Mozart's Divertimento in F and a movement from the Flute and Harp Concerto.

Admission is free, with a collection. The concert is being sponsored by Canterbury law firm Furley Page.

Society concert

ASHFORD Music Society performs one of Mozart's less familiar works – the Divertimento in E flat for String Trio, on Monday.

The performers are members of the leading chamber ensemble London Concertante.

Also on the programme will be a work by Schubert and compositions by a couple of South American composers.

The concert takes place at Norton Knatchbull School, Ashford, at 7.30pm. Tickets £9, children and students £3, from 01233 623700 or from Soundcraft, 40 Ashford High Street or on the door from 7pm.



■ Mozart painted by Barbara Krafft in 1819

“Mozart was a consummate entertainer... he would have headlined at Live8”

Reverend takes on role of chaplain

AFTER five-and-a-half happy years the Rev Paul Filmer is leaving his flock and heading for pastures new.

The vicar of Bridge, Patrixbourne, Bekesbourne, Nackington and Lower Hardres is to become a university chaplain in Medway.

Mr Filmer, pictured, worked in industry as a training officer before being ordained in 1997. He was a curate in the Stone Street group of churches before coming to Bridge in 2000.

One of his greatest satisfactions has been to see the parishes, which welcomed two new churches, Lower Hardres

and Nackington, just before he arrived, knit together as a cohesive group.

They are now going through the formal process of becoming the Bridge benefice, he said.

“The five parishes are now thinking as a benefice. It is a good point to let someone else come in and take that forward,” he said.

Working with the staff and children at Bridge School has been a high point for the father-of-four, who is a governor at the village primary.

He said: “We try to keep the link between school and church as strong as



possible. It's like having 380 grandchildren.”

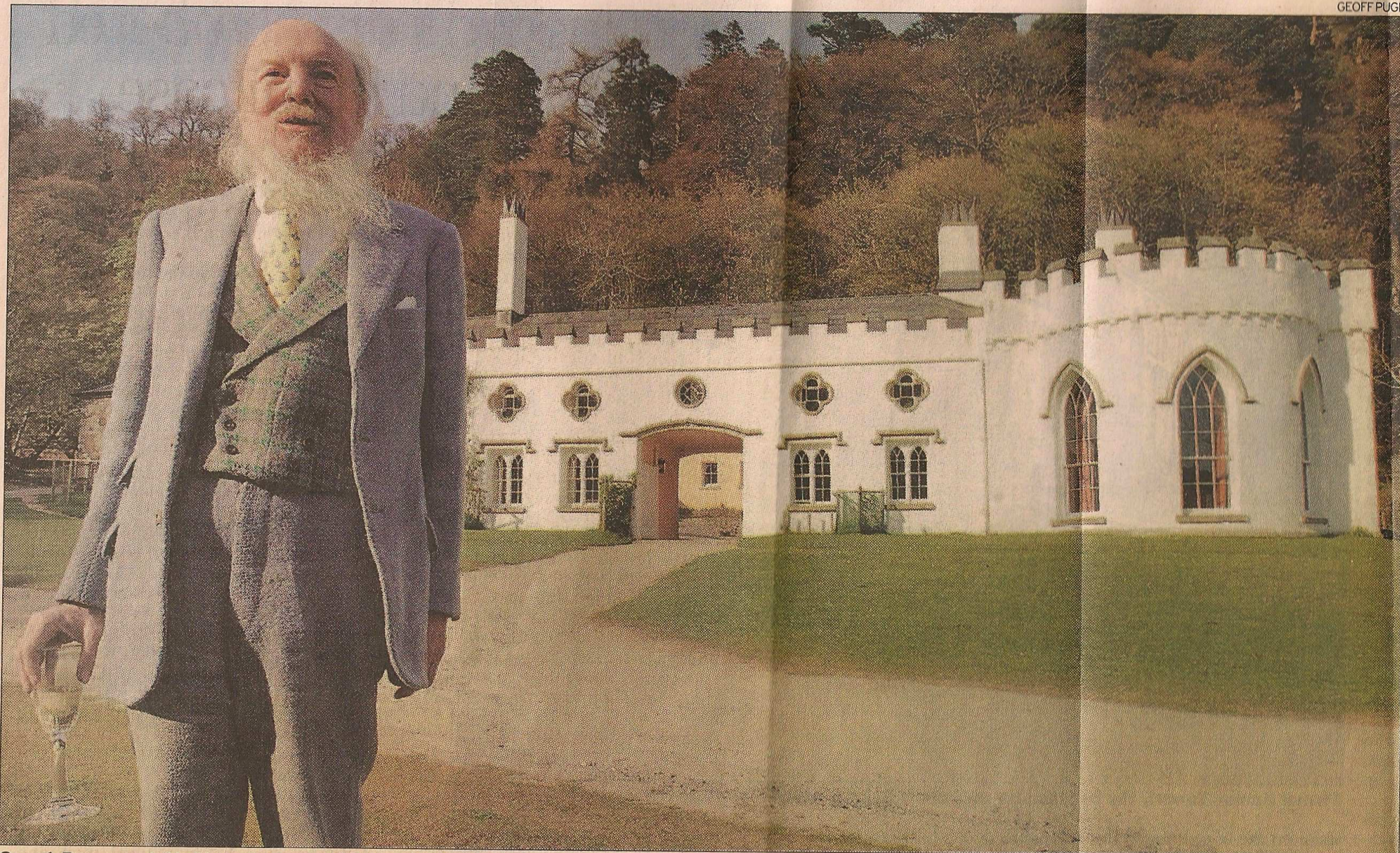
Mr Filmer's last service is in Patrixbourne Church at 10am on Sunday.

Afterwards a shared lunch and family service will be held at Bridge School.

Mr Filmer, his wife Judy and their youngest daughter Kate will then move to Walderslade ready for him to start his new job on March 1.

26/01/06

GEOFF PUGH



Garech Browne outside his home Luggala in the Wicklow Hills. 'I was living among clutter with things under the bed,' he said. Objects for sale at today's auction include

Guinness heir clears out £2m of 'clutter'

By Rory Knight-Bruce

BY any standards, it will be more than a country house car boot sale.

Tomorrow, the Guinness heir, the Hon Garech Browne, will sell the excess contents of his home, Luggala, in Co Wicklow, many of the items having belonged to his late mother, Oonagh, Lady Oranmore and Browne.

"There was just too much stuff here, some of it too large and I was living with the contents of two houses, here and Woodtown," says Mr Browne, 66. Woodtown was sold in 1996, and the contents have been in storage till now.

"I just had too much furniture," says Browne, known in Ireland for managing The Chieftains and, through his record company Claddagh Records, his championship of traditional Irish music. He is also a knowledgeable collector of Irish paintings and furniture.

Like his mother, who was given Luggala and 5,000 acres in the Wicklow mountains as a wedding present by her father in 1936, Browne is known for his hospitality.

and the sale is to secure the future of Luggala," he says.

It is also to help pay for recent refurbishments to the house, estimated at £5 million, including an indoor swimming pool and a Gothic library to house his collection of 8,000 books.

Lanto Synge, the head of furniture specialists Mallet of London, said: "There is a tremendous interest in Irish country house furniture at the moment, not just within the Irish economy where people have money to spend, but also in the United States."

Leading the sale of more than 400 lots, which are expected to realise in excess of £2 million, is a Louis Le Brocquy *Head and Hands* of Francis Bacon. Mr Browne knew both men.

Its estimate of £70,000 - £100,000 is likely to be exceeded, being a painting by and of Ireland's two greatest contemporary painters.

"Provenance adds to the excitement," says George Mealy, whose Kilkenny auction house is handling the sale. "The Guinness name is still highly regarded with affection in Ireland and Mr Browne's name is inseparable from that."

hospitality. Guests at the pre-sale party were served with an Indian dinner in a white Gothic former hunting lodge, accompanied by traditional Irish laments led by a fourth generation Uilleann piper.

Those present included Mr Browne's 40-year-old nephew, Dorian, 40, whose father Tara, was killed in a car crash in London aged 21 in 1966. He was immortalised in the Beatles song *A Day in the Life*.

Mr Browne, who is married to the Indian princess, Purna of Morvi, has no children. "It is lovely having Dorian here

Francis Johnston speaker-clock



from that." Of the furniture, great hopes are placed upon a mahogany longcase clock, the Francis Johnston speaker-clock, which turns out eight different tunes at each quarter hour. Also, there is an 18th century architect's table, on claw and ball feet, (reserve £35,000 – £55,000).

To give an indication of both the importance of provenance and location, together with the resurgent interest in Irish antiques, it is worth considering the estimates on what might otherwise be considered quite mundane objects.

A post horn, wrongly inscribed by the engravers to the "Marquis of Conyngham" (he was the Marquess Conyngham) is estimated at £4,000 – £7,000, two brass-bound fuel containers are offered at £20,000 – £35,000, and bidders are invited to offer £1,000 for a couple of Dutch cow creamers.

"Luggala was always a house of great welcome and happiness," recalls the historian Kenneth Rose.

Oonagh Oranmore was an exceptional hostess. Her guests included the journalists Sam White and Cyril Connolly, and her lovers Claud Cockburn and the historian Robert Kee.

"The sale is just the next stage in the life of Luggala," says Mr Browne. "I was living among clutter with things under the bed."

At the lower end of affordability are several items, including a green lacquered table lamp (£55) and a brass carriage clock at £100.

Surely the bargain for provenance must be Oonagh Oranmore's cocktail shaker (one generous owner) offered at a reserve of £83.

Homely

MAY
2005

THE WHITE HORSE INN

53 High Street, Bridge, Kent

Very old inn, with heavy beamed pub and big, bright, airy dining room. Well liked for its fish and chips and pickled onions, but more sophisticated food is also on offer. Award-winning window boxes.

CUISINE Seasonal and ambitious

HOUSE WINE £12.50

PRICE About £25 per person

PLUS Very good *amuses-bouches*

MINUS Lovely garden, shame about the main road

RESERVATIONS 01227 830249

GOODMANORS

MY KINGDOM FOR THIS HOUSE

Bridge Place, built for a loyal supporter of Charles II, needs a new owner who will defend it to the hilt, writes **Marcus Binney**

BRIDGE PLACE needs to relive its age of glory, which came in 1660 when Charles II knighted its owner, Arnold Braemes, in Canterbury on his triumphant way to London to reclaim his throne. Braemes, descended from a Flemish merchant who had settled in Sandwich, was an ardent Royalist who had funded the King.

In 1661 Braemes was visited by the Dutch artist Willem Schellinks, who sketched his grand house and wrote that "he keeps a princely table" and had "an extraordinary number of visits from knights and high-born gentlemen and their ladies".

At the time of Braemes's death in 1681 another Dutch artist, Jan Siberechts, did a magnificent canvas of the house, showing a grand front in warm red brick with steep roof and dormers. Braemes had bought the estate in 1638 and the house he then built belongs to the remarkable group of early classical houses in Kent all in brick, which begins with Chevening, now the country home of the Foreign Secretary, and Broome Place, later home of Kitchener of Khartoum.

Alas, Braemes overstretched himself and in 1704 his house was bought by a neighbour, John Taylor of Bifrons, who, perhaps jealous of its splendour, demolished more than half of it. The handsome wing that remains cries out for a new chatelain with a passion for formal gardening who will re-create the "very fine and skilfully

Clues suggest that a still earlier house is encased there

made pleasure gardens", orchards and vineyards described by Schellinks, complete with "dovecote like a chapel" and crystalline stream.

The brickwork, though weathered by time, is gloriously detailed with cut and moulded brick for window heads, cornice and a double row of pilasters. Yet there are puzzles too. The pilasters on the present entrance front are longer than

those around the corner, where Georgian sashes have been inserted and the windows "dropped" at the same time.

Yet these are nothing to the puzzles that abound inside. For nearly 40 years Bridge Place has belonged to Peter Malkin, a compulsive rescuer of endangered domains who bought the shell of Boringdon Hall, outside Plymouth, and restored it as an hotel. At Bridge Place he opened a country club and today the interiors are filled with swords and gilt mirrors. Still earlier, probably before or after the First World War, another owner with a craze for woodwork introduced quantities of antique panelling.

I went with Richard Garnier, Kent's foremost house detective, who quickly spotted that two of the fireplace surrounds were made of engraved Bethersden marble comparable to that used about 1605 in the ballroom at Knole, the greatest house in Kent. These and other details such as Tudor chamfers (angled edges) to wooden doorways suggest that there might be a still earlier house encased in Bridge Place.



The finest feature of the interior is a grand elm staircase with balustrades splendid enough to be altar rails for Archbishop Laud, that fervent supporter of Charles I, complete with hanging ball drops at the corners. The flights are not short as in many Jacobean houses, but long like some contemporary aristocratic houses in Paris.

Upstairs the estate agent's brochure offers a tantalising glimpse of what looks like a 1740s Baroque ceiling by itinerant Italian plasterers, complete with floating putti. Yet around it are Adam motifs that came into use only 30 years later. Another work, it seems, of early 20th-century antiquarianism. A further clue lies in the carved stone entrance doorway, again early 20th centu-

ry in date. Gothic in style, this is carved with a portcullis suggesting an MP as owner and is now embellished with the name of Mr Malkin's son, Oliver.

Bridge Place needs an owner who will rise to the thrill of researching its fascinating history, particularly in the gardens, where the 17th-century walls remain around the boundaries. For the adventurous soul with time and patience, the house offers genuine architectural grandeur on a compact scale, with fine views over the valley and two floors of bedrooms for relays of friends coming to help with the great project. *Bridge Place is for sale for £1,975,000 through Strutt & Parker, 01227 451123*



The glory days of Bridge Place, near Canterbury, were in the 1660s, but the house still offers grandeur on a compact scale for £1,975,000

FACTFILE

WHAT YOU GET: Seven bedrooms (four of them en suite), four reception rooms.

WHERE IT IS: Bridge is three miles east of Canterbury, just off the A2.

BEST SCHOOLS: The King's School Canterbury (boys and girls); good primary school in Bridge village.

WHERE TO EAT: Augustine's in Canterbury (01227 453063); Skippers in Bridge (01227 830788).

PERFECT FOR: The future Charles III?

