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REVIEW

2015 BAROQUE SUMMER SCHOOL

CHERYL (HARPSICHORD)

It was with a good deal of trepidation that I arrived on the first afternoon. What had I let myself in for and what would be expected of me? Was my sight reading good enough? What would the instruments be like? Did I have enough mental stamina?

Racked with torments like these I was greeted most amicably by the course organizers and by the tutors. Reassurance came swiftly in the form of tea and chat with the other participants and the superb concert given by the tutors was so absorbing that there was no opportunity for an unquiet mind.

As those in charge set about transforming a diverse group of musicians into an harmonious whole I experienced the joy of ensemble playing, along with all the difficulties. The tutors provided historical insight, technical help and musical guidance liberally laced with humour and wit. What a privilege to learn from the Parley of Instruments!

Informal chamber groups sprang up during the afternoons with a view to taking part in the informal concert. This was useful as an opportunity to get to know other musicians and try out sometimes unfamiliar music.

Sidney Sussex was a marvellous setting and the catering was extremely professional and of a very high standard; healthy food in abundance with great attention paid to special dietary requirements. My attendance at the Summer School was one of the high points of my musical life. The company of like-minded musicians, the extensive repertoire conquered and the learning opportunities culminated in the most exciting concert in Great St Mary's. It was glorious to be a part of that after all the endeavours of the preceding week.

If you are fortunate enough to be of a suitable standard to attend then carpe diem! Few paths in life reach this pinnacle of richness.