

EDEN BAROQUE, 17 DECEMBER, 2020

Katharine May and John Sanderson of Eden Baroque moved into our area, attracted by the landscape in which they enjoy fell-walking and cycling, and have become a significant part of the local musical scene very rapidly, establishing their own 'Music Barn' at Salkeld Dykes where John Upson's Music Appreciation group enjoyed their wonderful recital last year. Delighted by this introduction, they seemed to be an ideal choice for our Christmas music this year, expecting that we would be enjoying their performance face to face. However, thanks to the efforts of several people, notably Andrea Willett and Katharine and Michael themselves, we were treated to a concert of beautiful music in our own homes.

Their programme was quite diverse, with Katharine playing the harpsichord and Michael both singing baritone and playing a Baroque violin dating from 1760, and, on occasion, the tambourine. We were led through familiar pieces such as an extract from Bach's Christmas Oratorio and a dance by Handel to a less well-known sonata by the early 17th century Castello. A song entitled 'Nos Galan,' meaning 'New Year' in Welsh, played on the harpsichord, turned out to be our traditional 'Deck the Halls' carol. Interestingly, this music was known and enjoyed by Jane Austen who copied it to play; her notebook can be seen at Chawton House, her Hampshire home. Michael's introductory song, 'If Music be the food of love' set the Christmas theme which was celebrated in other festive pieces such as the Henry Lawes' song, 'The excellency of Wine' and a traditional Basque carol, 'The Angel Gabriel'. A climatic ending was introduced by the upbeat song, 'Gaudete', whose strong rhythm was emphasised by the tambourine, and our concert ended fittingly with a tuneful Gloucestershire Wassail, Michael playing and singing and Katharine providing the harpsichord accompaniment. This rounded off a fine afternoon of joyful music, greatly appreciated by the scattered audience. We look forward to meeting together at some time in the future, maybe even in 2021.

Sue Tomlinson

For further information about Eden Baroque, see their web-site: www.edenvalleymusic.co.uk



