

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



### *Music and Spirit*

Dear Friends,

I was particularly sorry to miss a Soundbites concert last month featuring two of J.S. Bach's cello suites. It's great music, and Doug returned to tell me that it had been brilliant. Pal Banda had played suites 1 and 5 (the opening part of suite 1 is very well known and often heard) and I would have loved to hear it live in our church. Ah well, a Rural Dean must do her duty....

Intriguingly Pal mentioned a theory that the Bach Suites may have a religious significance, with suite 1 being associated with the Birth of Christ, and suite 5 the Crucifixion. We wondered what the other four suites connected with, but presumably suite 6 would have to be the Resurrection.

The recordings I have heard speak to me of a "plumbing of the depths" as the solo cello resonates within the human spirit. Everything from sorrow to elation is reflected in the music, and the idea that it may be linked to all that Jesus did connects with his complete sharing of the entirety of our human experience.

I feel that the best music connects in some way with our experience, whether in poignancy or positivity. This is a reason why the church often uses music to support our faith, from the gentleness of Gregorian chant and of Tallis and Palestrina to the power of Messaien and infectious joy of Chilcott's Jazz Mass which we appreciated recently.

Also, the singing of hymns old and new can involve us all directly, and whether simply soaking up the experience or actively sharing in it we can feel connected to

something more profound and moving than we could achieve alone – or, indeed, through watching events on television.

June sees extra music at All Saints, along with our regular worship and Soundbites, with a Hertford Choral Society concert celebrating their 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with classical, samba and reggae pieces, and the Hertfordshire Festival of Music offering nine days of music at various venues, but particularly at All Saints. The Principal Artist for the Festival is Stephen Isserlis, a leading cellist. Yes, he has recorded the Bach Suites, but I first noticed him for his performance of John Tavener's "The Protecting Veil". It will be wonderful to welcome him, and the other artists, to All Saints.

One way or another there is much for us to appreciate, and I commend to all the wonderful events available to you. The details are all on our website. Whether you come for worship and/or musical appreciation I hope you will have a deeply moving experience!

Love  
Jo

