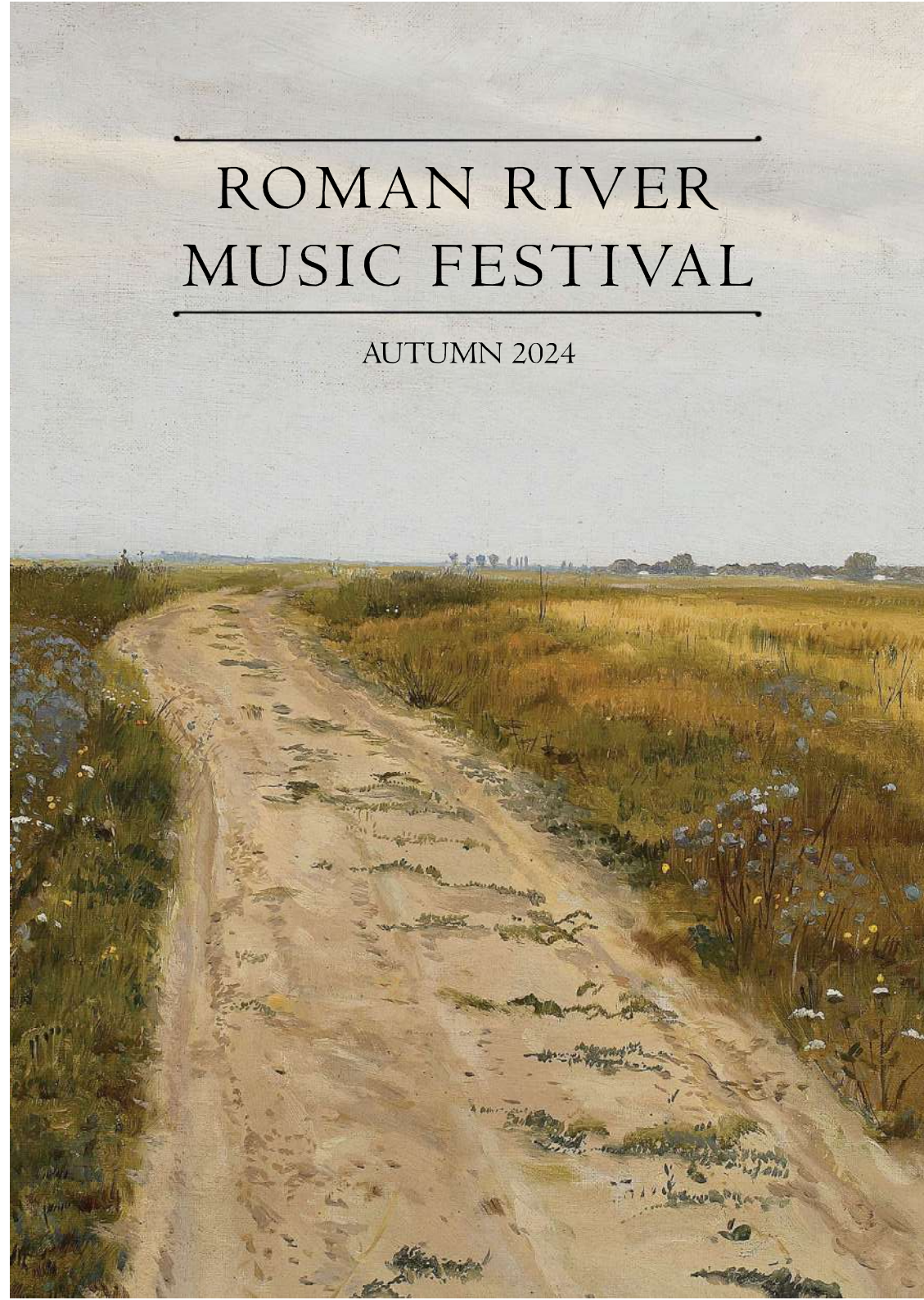

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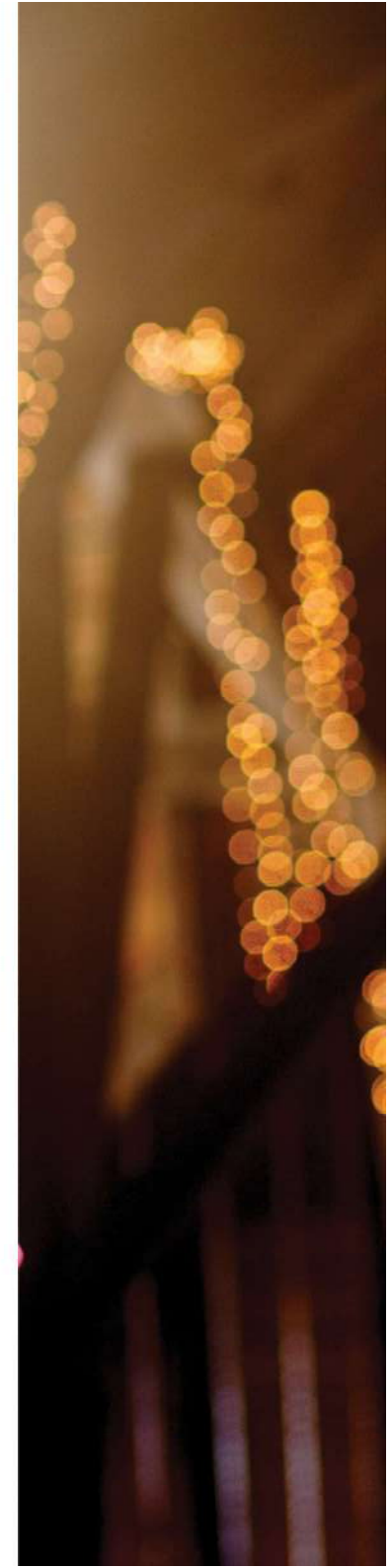
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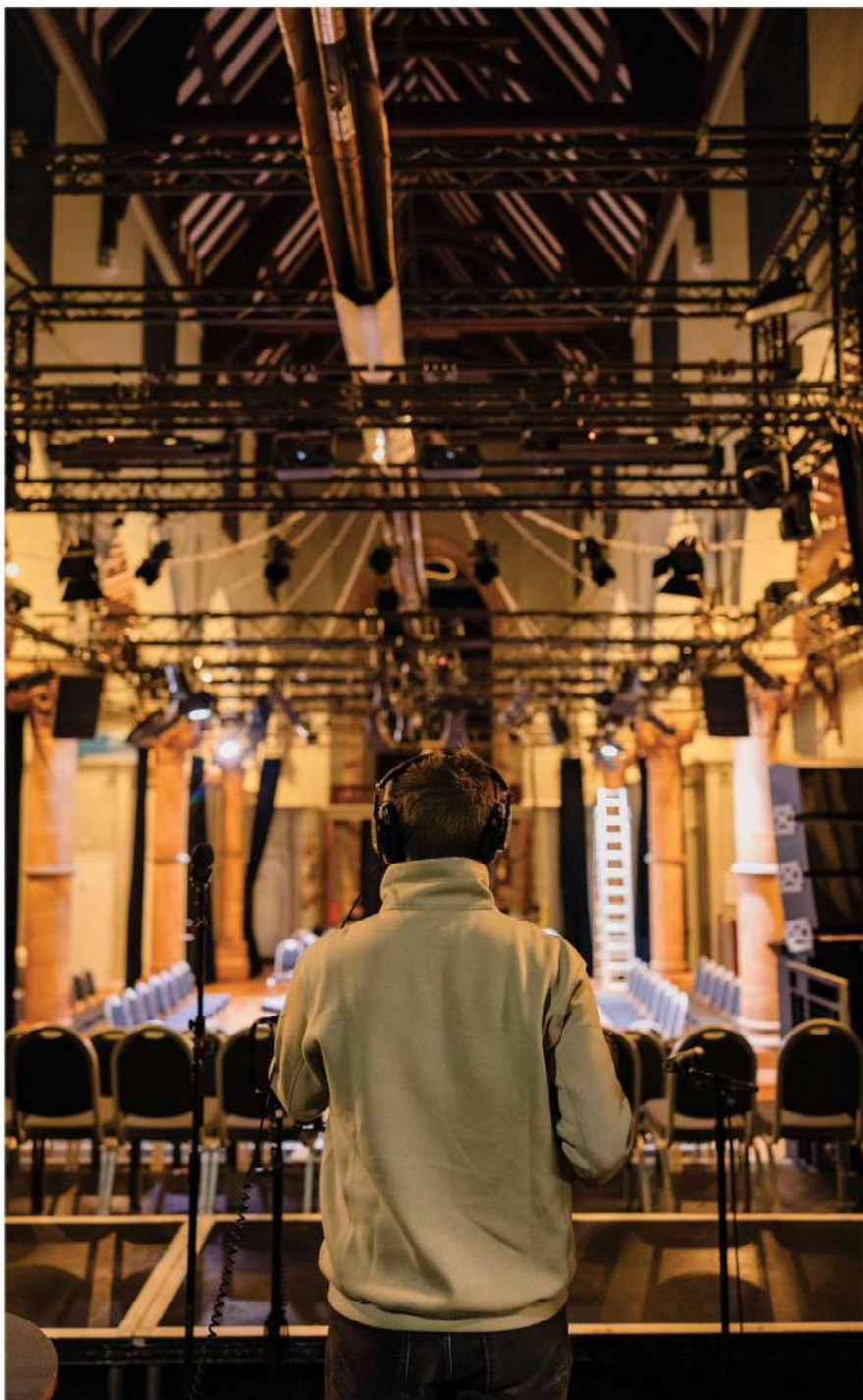
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Programme text and design by Max Parfitt, September 2024

Cover Image: Józef Chelmoński, *Field Track* (1889)
Wild Arts / uncredited photos by Lucy J Toms

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WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to the twenty-fourth Roman River Festival.

With the festival approaching its quarter-centenary, it is a thrill to be bringing yet another wide-reaching programme to Colchester and its surroundings: Wivenhoe, Fordham, Fingringhoe, and Coggeshall.

This year we are looking both to the past – the first recital in Fingringhoe Church and years of concerts in renovated bus shelters, night clubs, and ships – and to the future. We are returning to a stunning array of churches, including Fingringhoe, as well as making our first appearance in Colchester's iconic Grade II* listed Jumbo Water Tower (only fitting 30 audience members at a time), and visiting the golden-clad Firstsite.

Musically, we have an outstanding selection of artists, from rising stars Ignas Maknickas and Hana Chang, to the more established Solem Quartet, Huw Watkins, Sijie Chen, and Orlando Jopling, and to three groups reviving and reimagining music for the future: The Monteverdi String band, acapella group Catching Voices, and the consistently innovative Hermes Experiment. Collectively these performances cover 500 years of music making through fifty composers.

The festival would not be complete without a focus on upcoming talent and young people around Essex. With the Roman River team having expanded UK-wide in 2022 under the new charity name of Wild Arts, the festival is now a part of a wider annual programme, reaching 10,000 people in 2024 and nominated for an International Opera Award. With the larger resources and team this has allowed, we have been able to bring more music to local schools and underserved communities.

500 children from in and around Colchester experienced a series of curated lessons and workshops led by our outreach team and our four Young Artists, with 200 attending a specially-constructed schools' performance of The Magic Flute at Layer Marney Tower – supported by the Essex Community Foundation and The Arts Society Colchester.

Within the festival week, we are featuring a series of young artist spotlights, with a return from the Wivenhoe Youth Choir and first-time appearances from 9-year-old pianist and composer Bethany Reynolds, and Rotary Festival winners Ned Bell and Sofiia Usmanova.

A huge thank you to all the generous people and organisations that, together, have made this possible, including our team, our artists, and all of our supporters – from our Friends to our sponsors, patrons, and volunteers, who form the bedrock of everything we do. We rely on the generosity of wonderful people like you to help keep the Festival growing from strength to strength.

The Festival is for you; your support as audience members gives it all meaning. Please enjoy everything you come to, and as always, please come and chat about the performances or about your ideas for the future.

Orlando Jopling
Artistic Director, Wild Arts

Jessica Chapman
Producer, Roman River Festival

FESTIVAL DIARY

Sun 22 Sep	11am	Bach to Baby Family Concert: Fiesta! <i>Layer Marney Tower, near Colchester</i>	
Tue 24 Sep	7pm	The Madrigal Reimagined <i>St Mary's Church, Wivenhoe</i>	7
Wed 25 Sep	8pm	Ignas Maknickas <i>All Saints Church, Fordham</i>	13
Thu 26 Sep	8pm	The Solem Quartet <i>St Andrew's Church, Fingringhoe</i>	18
Fri 27 Sep	8pm	Huw Watkins, Sijie Chen and Orlando Jopling <i>St. James the Great, East Hill, Colchester</i>	22
Sat 28 Sep	1.30pm	Space and Nature: The Hermes Experiment <i>Firstsite, Colchester</i>	26
	6pm	Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and Rachmaninov 2nd Symphony <i>St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall</i>	33
Sun 29 Sep	10.45am & 12.15pm & 1.45pm	Notes in the Sky: Ant Roberts and Orlando Jopling <i>Inside Jumbo Water Tower, Balmerne Gate, Colchester</i>	38
	11am	Open Masterclass with Sijie Chen <i>The Old Library, Colchester</i>	
	4pm	Catching Voices: Faith, Nature and Love <i>St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall</i>	40



Tuesday 24 September, 7pm

The Madrigal Reimagined

St Mary's Church, Wivenhoe

Oliver Webber Violin & Director

Theresa Caudle Violin

Wendy Kelly Viola

David Brooker Viola

Mark Caudle Bass Violin

GUEST ARTISTS

Hannah Ely Soprano

Toby Carr Lute and Theorbo

WITH

The Wivenhoe Youth Choir

Ben Vonberg-Clark Director

Claudio Merulo *Canzona 18*
Johann Nauwach *Cruda Amarilli*
Claudio Monteverdi *Cruda Amarilli*

Reading: Giovanni Artusi
The Imperfections of Modern Music

Laurencini da Roma *Preludium in G*
Oliver Webber Diminutions on:
I. *Vestiva i colli* (Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina)
II. *Anchor che col partire* (Cipriano de Rore)

Reading: Emanuele Tesauro
Pleasant and Unpleasant Sounds

Claudio Monteverdi *Entrata and Ballo*
(from *Il Ballo dell'Ingrate*)
Ah, dolente partita
Ahi, troppo è duro (from *Il Ballo dell'Ingrate*)

Reading: Fabrizio Caroso *The dancer*

Cristofano Malvezzi *Sinfonia à 6*
Giulio Caccini *Io che dal ciel*
Emilio de' Cavaliere *O che nuovo miracolo*

Interval

Claudio Monteverdi Extracts from
L'Orfeo

THE MADRIGAL REIMAGINED

Notes by Oliver Webber. Texts on page 11.

Introduction: From pastoral whimsy to a catalyst for creativity

According to the sixteenth-century poet Giovanni Battista Strozzi, the madrigal was a short poem of no fixed rhyme and structure, ideally suited to the depiction of gentle scenes of love. Although lacking profundity, it had an elusive charm, which Strozzi encapsulated with the phrase *un non so che del frizzante*, "a little something sparkling" – or perhaps, according to some dictionaries of the period, "stinging." The range of contemporary definitions of *frizzante* is intriguing: for John Florio, in 1610, it can be "smacking in taste as good wine," while the related verb *frizzare* means "to bite, to burne or be tarte upon the tongue," or "to quaver and run nimbly upon any instrument"; the Accademia della Crusca, the newly formed authority on the developing Italian vernacular, offers an even wider range of connotations: a stinging sensation in the skin, the feeling in the mouth of certain kinds of wine, or, curiously, "false [yet] graceful writing which moves." It is perhaps this enticing cross-section of qualities and associations which gave enduring life to a form which, on the surface, may not seem to have offered much in the way of profundity.

Musicians quickly came to love the madrigal, and honed their compositional craft in book after book of settings, most commonly (at first) for four or five voices; the paradoxical, multifaceted quality of *frizzante* seemed to spark a creative spirit in the best composers, whose endeavours enabled this relatively minor poetic form to lead an extraordinary, independent life, and to play a decisive role in the transformation of musical style.

Over the course of the next two generations, the musical embodiment of the madrigal evolved in a number of different directions: it lies at the heart of the transgressive *seconda prattica*, in which harmonic conventions were deliberately subverted for emotional impact; instrumental performances transformed madrigals into virtuosic showpieces through spectacular ornamentation; and madrigal-writing techniques were used to profound effect in some of the most moving scenes ever composed for the stage.

Tonight's performance explores these reinventions and transformations in a variety of textures from solo voice or violin with lute, through strings alone, to the full ensemble, interspersed with instrumental canzonas, preludes and sinfonie.

The 'second practice': intelligent rule-breaking

In the end, since their buildings are without foundation, they are quickly consumed by time and cast to the ground, while their builders are mocked and scorned.

– Giovanni Artusi (1540-1613)

This was the composer and theorist Giovanni Artusi's dismissive verdict on Monteverdi's latest madrigals. Artusi was lauded by his supporters for promoting orthodoxy in music, much as the Inquisition promoted it in religion – an ominous comparison given the extent of counter-reformation zeal. Fortunately for us, it is Artusi's compositions which have been consumed by time, while the so-called 'second practice' proved to be one of the most fruitful developments in the history of music.

The 'rules' of counterpoint which Monteverdi had 'broken' might be better described as conventions: the summing up of common practice. But much like the rules of grammar, they were always open to a more flexible interpretation in the hands of fine writers. Monteverdi's approach is inventive, coherent, and convincing – in fact, the expressive power he gives to the music itself makes a purely instrumental performance of his *seconda prattica* madrigals all the more rewarding.

Ornamentation, the missing essence of the Baroque

Sweet also is a fine voice, either singing alone, or ornamenting with accented and articulated diminutions, or harmoniously carolling in a full choir, or joined with a symphony of wind or string instruments.

– Emanuele Tesauro (1592-1675)

When we look at a well-restored seventeenth-century painting or visit a baroque church, what we see today is not so different from

the original appearance, complete with extravagant – some might even say gaudy – decoration. Most musical scores from this period, by contrast, reveal little to nothing about how the brilliant embellishments that musicians studied for years might have been realised. These came in many forms: flourishes and runs of mainly stepwise movement known as diminutions, trill-like figures or tone repetitions adorning a single note, and elusive *accenti* – subtle, rhythmically fluid patterns which emerge from the end of one note to link it elegantly with the next. Awareness of this kind of artistry was not limited to professionals in the field. Tesauro was no musician: his expertise was literary and philosophical, and this description comes from his remarkable seventeenth-century 'dictionary,' in reality a bold attempt at a universal categorisation of concepts which happens to include a treasure trove of delicious words and phrases.

The voice is heard "ornamenting with accented and articulated diminutions," accompanied by theorbo, in the setting of *Cruda Amarilli* by Nauwach, a German student of Heinrich Schütz, while Tesauro's 'symphony' of string instruments joins in *Vestiva i colli* to create a particularly lush texture. The violin takes its turn as solo embellisher in improvised diminutions on Cipriano de Rore's *Anchor che col partire*, a beautiful setting of a poem about the sweet sorrow of parting and returning – which some scholars argue can also be interpreted as a rather more openly erotic metaphor!

Dance, "a virtue most praiseworthy and necessary"

Should the soul find itself troubled in some way, [dance] relieves and restores it, and keeps it far from any tiresome or unpleasant thoughts.

– Fabritio Caroso (c.1530-c.1610)

An integral feature not only of most musical performances, but indeed of all civilised life, dancing was the focus of much serious philosophising in earlier centuries. Caroso notes here its capacity for the good of the soul in general, but it was also understood that specific dances could elicit particular emotional responses. The dances featured in this programme run the gamut of emotions from sombre and apprehensive to celebratory and raucous. **The Entrata and Ballo** from *Il Ballo dell'Ingrate* sees the "ungrateful" women – briefly allowed to return to the sunlit lands only to send a dire

warning to those still living – fearful of their impending, inescapable return to hell; we have chosen to incorporate the heart-rending *Ah, dolente partita* – another tale of painful parting, here rendered with a poignant solo soprano accompanied by strings – before the conclusion of the Ballo.

Cavaliere's "**O che nuovo miracolo**," on the other hand, is pure exultation. It is taken from one of the most lavish entertainments in history: the 1589 Florentine *Intermedii*, part of the wedding celebrations of Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine. No expense was spared for this politically vital union, and talent of every kind was sought from all over Tuscany: one likely participant was the young Galileo Galilei, whose recent lectures on the dimensions of hell in Dante's *Inferno* may have inspired the set design for the fourth *Intermedio*, set in the world of demons. Cavaliere's exuberant dance – the finale of the final *Intermedio* – has left demons far behind in an outpouring of joy and celebration.

Joy characterises the dances in *L'Orfeo*, too, although the celebration in "Lasciate i monti" proves tragically premature, and the final Moresca, while providing the required *lieto fine* appropriate to another courtly celebration, cannot quite erase the memory of Orfeo's catastrophic failure and the emotional torture that follows.

Most accounts of the 1589 *Intermedii* focus on the astonishment felt by spectators at the inconceivable ingenuity of the special effects; however Caccini's song for the sorceress, "**Io che dal ciel cader farei la luna**," sung by his wife Lucia, was said to have taken the spectators' minds off the spectacle of the flying chariot long enough to wonder at her brilliant ornamentation.

Playing nicely: ornamentation in company

I don't consider him a good singer who, for example, having an excellent vocal facility, insists on making all the diminutions himself, without giving time for others to do so: or if others do, theirs are lost amongst his excessive ornaments. Those who sing and play well should give time to one another, and rather than using over-clever artifices of counterpoint, they should use playful and beautiful imitation.

– Pietro della Valle (1586-1682)

The ability to interweave stylish, eloquent ornamental figures in one's performance

has already been noted; musicians were clearly also expected, when appropriate, to respond to one another without hogging the limelight. A concept which emerges as important in the earliest treatises on ornamentation is that of *prontezza*: the special kind of alertness that a good musician has to their colleagues' spur-of-the-moment choices. This comes to the fore in **Vestiva i colli**, with voice and bass violin in playful dialogue, and it is a principle we try to stay true to in any improvised embellishments.

A return to the ancient world and a new beginning

*I come not hither to discover Hell,
Nor bind that scowling cur, who barking
shakes
About his triple brows Medusa's snakes.
My wife this journey urged, who, by the
tooth
Of trod-on viper, perished in her youth.

By these obscure abodes, so full of dread,
By this huge Chaos, and deep silence,
spread
Through your vast empire, by these
prayers of mine,
Eurydice's too hasty fate untwine.*

*She, when her time by nature shall expire,
Again is yours; I but the use desire.
If fate deny me this, my second choice
Is here't'abide; in both our deaths rejoice.*

– Publius Ovidius Naso (43BCE-17CE;
translation by George Sandys, 1578-1644)

The latter part of the sixteenth century in Italy was characterised by a fervour of intellectual exploration. Much of this was inspired by the tide of Renaissance Humanism, which, since the time of Petrarch, had gradually instilled a new vigour in the study of classical texts. One such exploration was an investigation into how music and literature could benefit from the imitation of ancient Greek theatrical performances. The focus on clarity of text and imitation of speech in music inspired by classical descriptions of singing was a crucial element in the emergence of what we came to call 'opera.'

Monteverdi's setting of Orpheus' brave but ill-fated journey to bring his wife back from the underworld was not the first such attempt, but where he was especially ingenious was in using not just the new story-telling technique of monody – a voice singing in speech-like patterns with a simple chordal

accompaniment – but also his impressive command of the 'second practice' to bring a more profound emotional dimension to the work. An elegant, symmetrical structure, judicious use of instrumental colour and a piercing insight into human joy and sorrow made this *Favola in musica* a deeply moving experience which has withstood the test of time more successfully than the earlier efforts of Caccini, Peri, and Cavaliere.

The Prologue, in which the personification of Music introduces the work to the noble audience, is a masterpiece of word-setting: Monteverdi is not merely 'word-painting' here – he crafts a rhetorical *tour de force* drawing on every aspect of the text and music. Melodic contour, rhythm, harmony, consonant clusters, diphthongs and elisions are all mined for possible emotional content; especially impressive is Monteverdi's use of pacing: some lines of verse pass in moments while others are drawn out across long silences, and the effect is spellbinding, provided one doesn't dilute it by losing track of the rhythmic pulse, on which this kind of writing relies.

The Wivenhoe Youth Choir joins us to help tell the rest of the story: they sing of the wedding ceremony and Orpheus' new-found joy, the bitter twist of fate that cuts that joy short, and the (premature!) triumph of his pleading in the underworld; their contributions are complemented by readings, so that the story unfolds through music, speech and song.

The highlights presented here can of course only capture a fleeting taste of everything this iconic story has to offer, but it seems fitting to bring the programme to a close with one of the finest 'reimaginings' of the humble madrigal to be found.

– Notes © Oliver Webber, 2024

Johann Nauwach Cruda Amarilli

*Cruda Amarilli, che co'l nome ancora,
D'amar, ah! lasso! amaramente insegna;
Amarilli, del candido ligustro
Più candid'e più bella,
Ma de l'aspido sordo
E più sord'e più fera e più fugace;
Poi che co'l dir t'offendo,
I mi morirò tacendo.*

– Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538-1612),
from *Il Pastor Fido* (1589)

Cruel Amaryllis, whose very name
Teaches bitterly, alas, of love,
Amaryllis, whiter and more beautiful
Than the white privet,
But than the deaf adder
Deaf, fiercer, and more fleeting
Since in speaking I offend you
I will die in silence.

(All translations by Oliver Webber unless
otherwise stated.)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina Vestiva i colli

*Vestiva i colli e
le campagne intorno
La primavera di novelli onori
E spirava soavi arabi odori,
Cinta d'erbe,
di fronde il crin adorno,
Quando Licori, a l'apparir del giorno,
Cogliendo di sua man purpurei fiori,
Mi disse in guidardon di tanti ardori:
A te li colgo et ecco,
io te n'adorno.*

– Ippolito Capilupi (1511-1580)

Spring clothed the hills and
the countryside around
With fresh honours
Wafting sweet Arabian fragrances,
Encircled by grasses,
her hair adorned with blossoms,
When Licori, at break of day,
Gathering purple flowers in his hand,
Said to me, in recompense for such longing,
I gather these for you, and see,
I adorn you with them.

Cipriano de Rore Anchor che col partire

*Anchor che col partire
Io mi sento morire
Partir vorrei ogn'hor, ogni momento
Tant'è il piacer ch'io sento
De la vita ch'acquisto nel ritorno
Et così mill'e mille volte'l giorno
Partir da voi vorrei
Tanto son dolci gli ritorni miei*

– Alfonso d'Avalos (1502-1546)

Even though on parting
I feel myself dying
I would depart every hour, every moment,
Such is the pleasure I feel
In the life I gain on my return
And so, a thousand, thousand times a day
Would I part from you,
So sweet are my returns.

Claudio Monteverdi Ah, dolente partita

*Ah! dolente partita!
ah, fin de la mia vita!
da te parto e non moro?
E pur i' provo
la pena de la morte
e sento nel partire
un vivace morire,
che dà vita al dolore
per far che moia immortamente il core.*

– Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538-1612),
from *Il Pastor Fido* (1589)

Ah, sorrowful parting!
Ah, end of my life!
I am parted from you but do not die?
And yet I feel
The pain of death
And sense, in departing,
A dying full of life,
That gives life to my grief
So that my heart might, undying, die.

Claudio Monteverdi "Ahi, troppo è duro" from *Il Ballo dell'Ingrate*

*Ahi troppo, ah! troppo è duro
Crudel sentenza e viè più
cruda pena
Tornar a lagrimar ne l'antro oscuro*

Ah, too, too hard
Is the cruel sentence and even
harsher punishment
To return to weep in the dark cave

*Aer sereno e puro
Addio per sempre, addio ò Cielo ò sole
Addio lucide stelle
Apprendete pietà Donn'e Donzelle*

*Al fumo d' gridi a' pianti
A sempiterno affanno
Ahi dove son le pompe
ove gli amanti
Dove, dove sen vanno
Donne che sì pregiate al
mondo furo?*

*Aer sereno e puro
Addio per sempre, addio o Cielo o sole
Addio lucide stelle
Apprendete pietà Donn'e Donzelle.*

– Ottavio Rinuccini (1562-1621)

Giulio Caccini *Io che dal ciel*

*Io che dal ciel cader farei
la luna*

*A voi ch'in alto sete
e tutt'il ciel vedete, voi comando
Ditene quando il somm'eterno Giove
Dal ciel in terra
ogni sua gratia piove.*

– Giambattista Strozzi (1551-1634)

Clear, pure air
Farewell for ever, farewell O Heaven, O sun
Farewell shining stars
Learn pity, ladies and maidens

To the fumes, to the cries, to the weeping
To everlasting torment
Ah, where is the ceremony,
where are the lovers
Where, where are they going,
Ladies who once enjoyed such
worldly esteem?

Clear, pure air
Farewell for ever, farewell O Heaven, O sun
Farewell shining stars
Learn pity, ladies and maidens.

I, who could make the moon fall from
the heavens,

Command you, who are on high
And see the whole of heaven
To tell us when the great eternal Jove
From heaven to earth
will pour his every grace



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Wednesday 25 September, 8pm

Ignas Maknickas

All Saints Church, Fordham

YOUNG ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Bethany Reynolds Piano

Claude Debussy "Doctor Gradus ad
Parnassum" from *Children's Corner*, L. 113
(performed by Bethany Reynolds)

Robert Schumann *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15
Carl Vine *Five Bagatelles*

- I. Darkly
- II. Leggiero e legato

Interval

Sergei Bortkiewicz Selection from *Ten
Preludes*, Op. 33

Alvydas Remesa *Stigmatas*

Chopin *Nocturnes*, Op. 27
Polonaise-Fantasie, Op. 61

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Photo: Ignas Maknickas © Kaupo Kikkas

IGNAS MAKNICKAS

Claude Debussy “Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum” from *Children’s Corner*, L. 113 (1908) [2’]

By the time the 44-year-old Debussy began work on his *Children’s Corner* suite in 1906 he had already achieved international fame. His opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* had premiered to great acclaim in 1902, and the following year had seen the composer appointed a Chevalier of the Légion d’honneur, the highest French order of merit – he was the first musician to receive the honour.

While his musical achievements would continue with *La mer* in 1905, his social life became the subject of scandal. Having married Marie-Rosalie “Lilly” Texier in 1899 (he had threatened suicide should she refuse him), in 1904 he was introduced to Fauré’s former mistress and muse, Emma Bardac, the wife of a Parisian baker. In August that year, Debussy wrote to Lilly telling her that their marriage was over, before returning to Paris and taking an apartment with Emma. Lilly attempted suicide, shooting herself in the chest with a revolver. Emma’s family disowned her, and, following Emma’s pregnancy and divorce in 1905, she and Debussy were forced to move to London to escape the hostility of Paris.

Their daughter, Claude-Emma (known as “Chouchou”), was born in October 1905, and it is to her that *Children’s Corner* was dedicated – a six-part suite intended to evoke memories of childhood.

The title, “Gradus ad Parnassum” (“Steps to Parnassus”), alludes to a series of piano exercises which had been popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Debussy’s piece offers a satire of these studies, preserving their traditional role of challenging finger independence and versatility, and updating their musical language and sensibility to that of the twentieth century. In the middle section, the pianist slows down and explores the material in a series of other keys, before moving to a frantic, dramatic finale.

The work was premiered in 1908. The dedication reads:

To my dear little Chouchou, with tender apologies from her father for what follows.



Schumann in 1839. Lithograph by Josef Kriehuber

Robert Schumann *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 (1838) [18’]

- I. Von fremden Ländern und Menschen (*From foreign lands and peoples*)
- II. Kuriose Geschichte (*A curious story*)
- III. Hasche-Mann (*Blind man’s buff*)
- IV. Bittendes Kind (*Pleading child*)
- V. Glückes genug (*Happy enough*)
- VI. Wichtige Begebenheit (*An important event*)
- VII. Traumerei (*Dreaming*)
- VIII. Am Kamin (*At the fireside*)
- IX. Ritter vom Steckenpferd (*Knight of the hobbyhorse*)
- X. Fast zu Ernst (*Almost too serious*)
- XI. Fürchtenmachen (*Frightening*)
- XII. Kind im Einschlummern (*Child falling asleep*)
- XIII. Der Dichter spricht (*The poet speaks*)

Robert Schumann was born in 1810 in Saxony. He studied piano with Friedrich Wieck from 1828, and swiftly fell in love with his daughter Clara – just eight years old when they met. As early as 1833 he had written a set of ten Impromptus on one of her compositions (a romance), and by 1837 the pair had become secretly engaged. There would follow a long legal battle with Friedrich, who sought to prevent the marriage, accusing Schumann of alcoholism, mental instability, a lack of business sense, egoism, and stupidity.

In 1838, Friedrich would take Clara, now a skilled pianist herself, on a seven-month concert tour across Europe to keep the

lovers apart, and Schumann produced an incredible stream of piano works in her absence – not least *Kinderszenen*, a touching recollection of childhood. He wrote to Clara:

Perhaps it was an echo of what you once said to me, that “Sometimes I seemed like a child”; anyway, I was suddenly visited by inspiration, and then I knocked off about thirty quaint little things, from which I have selected about twelve ... You will enjoy them.

When *Kinderszenen* was published the final tally of pieces was thirteen, most less than a page in length. Schumann described them as “more cheerful, gentle, and melodic” than his repertoire up to that point.

Harriet Smith has summarised the collection:

Despite being modest in dimensions, each piece is as deftly and exquisitely crafted as anything in [Schumann’s] more outwardly sophisticated mode. Among the most touching portraits here are the “Pleading child” (Bittendes Kind), quietly insistent but ending, like the “Child falling asleep” (Kind im Einschlummern), without resolution, tenderly catching the emotional inconsistency of youth. And Schumann conceives it beautifully as a cycle, from the haunting beauty of the opening “From foreign lands and people” (Von fremden Ländern und Menschen), via the spare eloquence of the central “Dreaming” (Traumerei), to the quiet rhetoric of “The poet speaks” (Der Dichter spricht). The subject holds his audience rapt, his soliloquy ending in a whisper at the lower end of the keyboard.

Schumann would finally marry Clara in 1840, resulting in the composer’s so-called “year of song.” The unused movements of *Kinderszenen* were later published in *Bunte Blätter*, Op. 99, and *Albumblätter*, Op. 124.

Carl Vine *Five Bagatelles* (1994) [5’]

- I. Darkly
- II. Leggiero e legato

Born in Perth in 1954, Carl Vine is one of Australia’s leading composers, with an extensive orchestral catalogue featuring eight symphonies and thirteen concertos, as well as solo and chamber compositions, and various works for film, television, dance, and theatre.

He was Artistic Director of both Musica Viva Australia (2000-19), and the Huntington

Estate Music Festival (2006-2019). In 2005 he was awarded the Don Banks Award for outstanding contribution to Australian Music – the highest accolade the Australian Council can offer a musician.

He now lives in Sydney where since 2014 he has been Senior Lecturer in Composition at the Conservatorium of Music.

Having composed the short form “Threnody” to perform at a fundraiser for the Australian National AIDS Trust in 1994, Vine’s *Five Bagatelles* were written to provide a context to the work (which would become Bagatelle No. 5). Aiming to explore “smaller” keyboard ideas, the short works distil the composer’s voice into a microcosm: motoric jazz influences, sonorous harmonies, and brief, heart-stopping moments of lyricism.

The first movement, marked with the instruction “darkly,” seems to create an almost tempo-less tonal cloud, clusters of notes drifting ominously above a low, repeated D pedal in the left hand. The second movement, initiated by quick semi-quaver patterns split between the left and right hand, has a stronger pace and rhythm, creating a rich, kinetic texture, followed by an almost comedic ending – with a rising scale drifting to the highest note on the piano before a reverie-breaking *pianississimo* octave tap in the bass.

Sergei Bortkiewicz Selection from *Ten Preludes*, Op. 33 (1926) [15’]

- I. C-sharp minor
- II. F-sharp major
- III. D-major
- VI. C-sharp minor
- VII. F-sharp major

Sergei Eduardovich Bortkiewicz was born in Kharkov in Ukraine in 1877, his mother an accomplished pianist and co-founder of the Kharkov Music School, where the young Bortkiewicz would study piano and composition. Early influences included Anton Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky, both of whom visited the school and took part in concerts there. After studies at the St Petersburg and Leipzig Conservatories and a brief dalliance with law (to please his father) and military service (from which he was promptly excused due to illness), the composer graduated in 1902 and became engaged to his childhood friend, Elisabeth Geraklitova – they married in 1904.

The couple spent the next two decades travelling between cities and countries,



Ignas Maknickas © Kaupo Kikkas

moving to Berlin only to be deported back to Kharkov with the start of the First World War, then fleeing the Russian Revolution in 1919 – hiding, penniless, aboard a merchant steamer bound for Constantinople. Having established a career as a piano teacher, he was able to move to Vienna in 1922.

The *Ten Preludes*, Op. 33, were written in 1926, the year Bortkiewicz became an Austrian citizen and when he must have enjoyed the greatest security in his life. Preludes 1, 2, and 3 are modelled on the music of Chopin while preludes 6 and 7 are in Bortkiewicz's own distinct musical language – with hints of early Scriabin and Rachmaninov.

Bortkiewicz would describe himself as a romantic and a melodist, with an emphatic aversion to atonality and cacophony, and his colourful and delicate imagination, his idiomatic piano-writing, and his gift for melody, are all on display throughout. In a 1948 interview, he emphasised the importance of beauty and passion over "intellectual commitment to an academic programme" – his music was "the expression of my most profound mind and soul."

Interval

Alvydas Remesa *Stigmatas* (1987) [10']

Born in Lithuania in 1951, Alvydas Remesa has composed over 100 works in genres ranging from songs and symphonies to stage works, with a particular focus on sacred music. He studied composition at

the Lithuanian Academy of Music, and, having played the organ for the Franciscan monastery in Kretinga from 1990 to 2002, has since dedicated himself to a study of ecclesiastical music, liturgy, and Gregorian chant – more recently becoming a music psychotherapist and Franciscan monk.

Described as "subtle and eloquent," Remesa's music is often built from mono-thematic principles, with recurring motivic ideas and patterns and an emphasis on cyclical structures. *Stigmatas*, composed in 1987, follows these same structures, with atonal and folk influences. The title refers to the five wounds of Christ – the nail holes in each hand and foot, and the wound to his torso from the piercing of the spear – and the work is made up of five corresponding miniatures flowing in sequence.

Frédéric Chopin *Nocturnes*, Op. 27 (1835) [15']

- I. C-sharp minor
- II. D-flat major

Born near Warsaw in 1810 (the same year as Robert Schumann), Frédéric Chopin was a child prodigy, taking professional lessons from the age of six and giving public performances from the age of seven, as well as composing his first two polonaises. After attending the Warsaw Conservatory from sixteen to nineteen, touring and performing publicly throughout, his final report read: "Chopin F., third-year student, exceptional talent, musical genius."

Moving to Paris in October 1831, the young musician gave his first performance in the city the next February. Critic François-Joseph Fétis wrote in the *Revue et gazette musicale*:

Here is a young man who ... taking no model, has found, if not a complete renewal of piano music, ... an abundance of original ideas of a kind to be found nowhere else.

Chopin's nocturnes are a perfect illustration of these original ideas. While the term had been fairly commonplace prior to Chopin's works, the composer would capitalise on the ever-growing popularity of the salon, reshaping the form towards his own pianistic style shaped by vocal imitation, with an ornamental melody supported by widespread arpeggiations.

His Op. 27, composed in 1835, conforms to these stylistic tropes, while also marking a departure. Though happy to perform the pieces separately, from this point onwards,

Chopin published his nocturnes in deliberately contrasted pairs rather than in groups of three, drawing a more explicit narrative (melodic, harmonic, textural) between the two pieces.

John Henken described the first nocturne, in C-sharp minor, as possessing a "chromatic yearning." The opening arpeggio lacks a major or minor third and rests in a "harmonic no-man's land," before the melody enters on the minor E-natural and immediately moves up a semi-tone to the major, the harmony immediately uncertain and restless. The contrasting middle section then introduces a dancing character, midway between a waltz and a mazurka, before a climax, a fleeting left-hand cadenza, a recollection of the opening, and a coda, now in C-sharp major.

The second nocturne assumes this new key, translated to the enharmonic D-flat major – "the gloomiest and grandest of Chopin's moody canvasses" (as James Huneker termed the first nocturne) is transformed enharmonically into the consolatory, dreaming D-flat major of the second.

The D-flat nocturne does not have a middle section, instead formed from three through-composed strophes, each beginning with the same single-note melody, which gradually grows more agitated, more mazurka-like, and fuller in texture. The coda offers a final few bars of duet writing for the right hand, which then floats off in sixths to the end of the keyboard.

When the pieces were published in 1836, Schumann wrote that they marked a "new wave" of piano music.

Frédéric Chopin *Polonaise-Fantasia*, Op. 61 (1846) [13']

Chopin had been sickly since childhood – significantly underweight; intolerant to fatty foods; prone to colds, headaches, throat complaints, and diarrhoea; and coughing up blood near daily from shortly prior to his first arrival in Paris, aged just 21. From 1842, these symptoms would be particularly pronounced. After a solo recital that year he wrote, "I have to lie in bed all day long, my mouth and tonsils are aching so much," and again, in 1844, conductor Charles Hallé would describe him being "hardly able to move, bent like a half-opened penknife and evidently in great pain."

The composer's decline was only amplified by his failing relations with George Sand,

with whom he had begun a relationship in 1838. The pair fell out not only over his health, but also over her radical political republicanism and his support for her daughter in a series of engagements Sand deemed unsuitable. They would separate in 1847.

Chopin's diminishing health came hand in hand with a diminishing output. He wrote only six pieces in 1842 and 1843, and just one in 1844 (his *Piano Sonata No. 3*). The *Polonaise-Fantasia* in A-flat major would be Chopin's last extended work, written in 1846 alongside his *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. He would die from tuberculosis in 1949, aged 39.

The fantasia as a form had begun as a vehicle for fugal and contrapuntal complexity, and yet by Chopin's time, and in particular his *Fantasia-Improvisu*, composed a decade earlier, it implied rhapsodic improvisation and free, emotive invention. The *Polonaise-Fantasia* combines these elements – a fluid, complex, and somewhat sprawling formal and tonal structure – with the triple metre and much of the melodic and rhythmic character of a polonaise – tripping syncopations and propellant semi-quaver pairs.

In 1848, Chopin would undertake one final tour, travelling to London and performing for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and later sharing the stage with Pauline Viardot. His last public performance would be at the Guildhall – a benefit for Polish refugees. Now weighing under seven stone and aware of his approaching death, he was but a shadow of Schumann's description, given a few years before:

It was an unforgettable picture to see Chopin sitting at the piano like a clair-voyant, lost in his dreams; to see how his vision communicated itself through his playing, and how, at the end of each piece, he had the sad habit of running one finger over the length of the plaintive keyboard, as though to tear himself forcibly away from his dream.

– Notes © Max Parfitt, 2024



Thursday 26 September, 8pm

The Solem Quartet

St Andrew's Church,
Fingringhoe

Ellie Fagg Violin
William Newell Violin
Stephen Upshaw Viola
Stephanie Tress Cello

Lili Boulanger (arr. William Newell)
Deux morceaux pour Violin et Piano
Edmund Finnis *String Quartet No. 3,*
"Devotions"

Interval

Nadia Boulanger (arr. Amy Tress)
Trois Pièces pour violoncelle et piano
Claude Debussy *Quartet in G minor,*
Op. 10

Photo: The Solem Quartet © Rachel Adams

Thursday 26 September, 8pm
St Andrew's Church, Fingringhoe

THE SOLEM QUARTET

Lili Boulanger *Deux morceaux pour violon et piano* (1911/1914-15) [6']

I. Nocturne
II. Cortège

Born six years apart, Nadia in 1887 and Lili in 1893, the Boulanger sisters belonged to a prodigious musical family – the daughters of singer and Russian princess Raissa Myshetskaya, and her Paris Conservatoire teacher, Prix de Rome-winning composer and conductor Ernest Boulanger.

Both showed talent at an early age. When Nadia was accepted to the conservatoire aged nine, Lili (still just three) would accompany her sister, quietly absorbing her lessons, and Fauré (a close family friend) would later insist that the younger sister had had perfect pitch by the age of two. Lili tragically contracted bronchial pneumonia as a toddler, which weakened her immune system and led to health issues that would persist throughout her short life. She died from intestinal tuberculosis age 24.

Arranged for the Solem Quartet by their second violin, William Newell, Lili's *Deux morceaux pour violon et piano* was compiled by her publisher, Ricordi, after her death.

Though one of her best-known works, the composer was just eighteen when she wrote her *Nocturne* in 1911. The piece conveys a permeating sense of grief and loss that biographers have attributed both to her illness and childhood isolation, and to the death of her beloved father when she was just seven years old.

It begins sparsely, with bare octave figures wound about a repetitive rising and falling theme. As the texture becomes thicker, the violin becomes more virtuosic and begins to climb, incorporating a delicately whispered reference to Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* – Debussy was a particular inspiration to Lili throughout her life. There is no harmonic resolution until the final *ppp* note in the top register of the first violin, which is answered by a final low *pizzicato* tonic from the cello.

Soon after composing *Nocturne*, and following in the footsteps of her father, Lili would receive the Prix de Rome for her Goethe-inspired cantata *Faust et Hélène*,



Schumann in 1839. Lithograph by Josef Kriehuber

becoming the first woman to win the prestigious compositional award. The award came with recognition and an international scholarship, and the composer, having spent her childhood hidden away for her health, began to take pleasure in travelling Europe.

Composed in 1914 while returning from a trip to Rome, *Cortège* was initially written as a solo piano work for her *Trois morceaux pour piano*, and was rewritten the following year for violinist Yvonne Astruc, who would later record the work with Nadia at the piano. Perhaps capturing something of Lili's newfound freedom in its evocation of a joyous springtime procession, the piece stands out for its carefree character, with shifting rhythmic accents and boldly contrasting dynamics. It is a refreshing outlier in an output otherwise defined by illness and melancholy.

The same year, following the outbreak of the First World War, Lili and Nadia would create a charity (the Comité Franco-Américain du Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation) to supply food, clothing, money, and letters from home to soldiers who had been musicians before the war.

Edmund Finnis *String Quartet No. 3,*
"Devotions" (2023) [22']

Born in Oxford in 1984, and singing as a choirboy at New College, Edmund Finnis would go on to complete a doctorate at the

Guildhall School of Music and Drama on the subject of distortion in acoustic instrumental music. He has written music for some of today's leading instrumentalists (Vikingsur Ólafsson, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Jess Gillam, Oliver Coates) and ensembles (Britten Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta).

Commissioned by the Solem Quartet for their album *Painted Light* in 2023, *Devotions* comprises a sequence of eight short movements and was originally intended for performance alongside Beethoven's *Quartet No. 15 in A minor*, although tonight it is performed independently.

Finnis' Quartet begins with an ascent and a gradual unfurling. We hear a network of voices flowing, pulsating, revolving, crying out. The music moves between tranquil, meditative states and those of a more animated, agitated nature. Yearning lines and figures recur, overlapping and intensifying with each iteration. Around them harmonies swell, envelop and recede. Elements of the music resemble wordless song, chorale, and the spirit of plainchant.

Prior to the premiere, Finnis wrote:

I am motivated by the idea that imagining, sounding out and perceiving this music can be an act of devotion, an expression of solace intertwined with sorrow, a way of reaching outwards, upwards, towards the inexpressible.

Interval

Nadia Boulanger *Trois pièces pour violoncelle et piano* (1914) [7']

- I. Modéré
- II. Sans vitesse et à l'aise
- III. Vite et nerveusement rythmé

Following her sister's death in 1918, Nadia Boulanger would move away from composition, working instead as a teacher and conductor – the first woman to conduct the BBC Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. (When asked by the press what it felt like to be the first woman conductor of the Boston Symphony, she responded: "I've been a woman for a little more than 50 years. I've gotten over my original astonishment.")

Even prior to her sister's death, Nadia's focus had always been more multidisciplinary. Caroline Potter has argued that Lili was

"allowed" to have a public career as a composer as her chronic ill health ensured "she would not be a professional threat to her male peers." Nadia, on the other hand, was publicly ambitious. She was also financially responsible for the family and a firm believer in the existence of musical genius: describing her sister as the "first important woman composer in history," and devoting herself to promoting Lili's works.

Nadia's *Trois pièces pour violoncelle et piano* were originally written for organ in 1911, but transcribed for cello in 1914, and arranged for the Solem Quartet by regular first violin Amy Tress. The first piece presents a muted song-like melody in the cello with what Alex Burns has termed a "trickling" accompaniment, marked *doux et vague*. After a brief climactic central section, the opening music returns, drawing things to a close with a serene and delicate touch.

The second piece is somewhat more optimistic in tone, leading a simple tune – almost akin to a folksong or a lullaby – into a soft canon between the instruments. This fades away before the final, more frantic and energetic finale, with a leaping melody and largely chordal accompaniment. The middle section here, traditionally a showcase for the range and timbre of the cello, contrasts in both rhythm and texture to what Nigel Simeone describes as the "playful but muscular" mood of the rest.

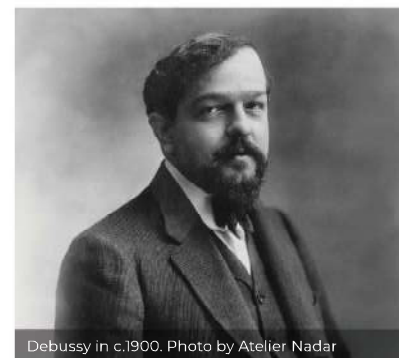
By her death, aged 92, in 1979, Nadia's students had included Grażyna Bacewicz, Daniel Barenboim, Lennox Berkeley, Aaron Copland, John Eliot Gardiner, George Walker, and Philip Glass. In his memoir, Glass wrote of his time with her, "I became a child again, relearning everything from the beginning." He remembered her first leafing through his scores, pointing out a single bar of music and saying: "this was written by a real composer." – "That was the first and last time she said anything nice to me for the next two years..."

Claude Debussy *Quartet in G minor*, Op. 10 (1893) [28']

- I. Animé et très décidé
- II. Scherzo: Assez vif et bien rythmé
- III. Andantino, doucement expressif
- IV. Très modéré – En animant peu à peu – Très mouvementé et avec passion

The Boulangers never met Debussy, his controversial love life having forced him to move to England by the time they entered

the Parisian scene. His music, however, is known to have inspired them, and he admired Lili especially in return, describing her music as "undulating with grace." Both composers shared a love for Paris, both were brought into the mainstream after winning the Prix de Rome, and ultimately the pair would die just ten days apart in March 1918.



Debussy's *Quartet* was composed in 1893, at the beginning of perhaps the most productive decade of the composer's life. From this period date the *Suite Bergamasque* (with its ever-popular *Clair de Lune*), the seductive orchestral *Nocturnes*, his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (or at least most of his work for it), and, in 1894, his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* – referenced in Lili Boulanger's *Nocturne* which opened tonight's concert. Pierre Boulez wrote about Debussy's work of the time: "modern music was awakened."

This "modern music" consisted in large part of breaking down the harmonically-defined structures that shaped the Western classical style – structures which Debussy increasingly perceived as confining music rather than enabling it. Already interested in modes and pre-tonal European practices, in 1889, at the Paris Exposition, Debussy would encounter Javanese gamelan music – the scales, melodies, rhythms, and ensemble textures surfacing to differing degrees in virtually all his subsequent work.

The new sound-world afforded a freedom from harmonic expectations and encouraged increasingly atypical orchestration and non-Teutonic tone colours. At the same time, the use of cyclical forms by César Franck in particular, with certain themes recurring through a work, began to offer an alternative to the traditional contrast and development

techniques which had dominated European music since Haydn's time. The composer wrote excitedly to a friend:

Any sounds in any combination and in any succession are henceforth free to be used in a musical continuity.

The Quartet opens with the establishing of the vigorous cyclic motto theme from which the whole work extends, cast in a Phrygian mode. The form then spins out in a series of light-handed variations, with the principal theme (and a secondary theme closely related to it) carried through subtle and continuous transformations.

The gamelan sonorities Debussy had heard four years earlier are recalled in the *pizzicatos* and cross-rhythms of the second movement *Scherzo*, a viola solo intoning the motto theme, recast now in rhythm, mode, and tempo. In the subsequent *Andantino*, the motto theme appears at its most drastically altered – featuring muted soliloquies by the viola and cello, and now in the exotically distant key signature of D-flat major – before a more traditional series of variations in the fourth movement *Finale*: inversion, imitation, and the slightest hint of a fugue. A gently shimmering climax swells and softens before a *staccato*-infused final series of triplets and scales brings the work to a close.

Often labelled as an "Impressionist," Debussy's own categorisation was somewhat simpler: "I am trying to do something different." Steven Rings captured the composer's approach in his analysis of the later *Des pas sur la neige* (1910):

Debussy's music is a music of mystery. It does not hide its truths behind hermetic codes or arcane formalisms, but instead lays bare essential mysteries of existence, making them palpably present to experience.

In 1917, Paul Hindemith, stationed close to the front line, was performing in an all-soldier string quartet at the behest of a particularly cultured commanding officer, Count von Kiemannsegg. The group happened to be playing the Debussy Quartet when news of the composer's death came over the radio. Hindemith wrote:

In that moment, we realised what music was – more than style, technique, or the expression of personal feelings. Music stood above political boundaries, national hatreds, even the horrors of war.

– Notes © Max Parfitt, 2024

Friday 27 September, 8pm

Huw Watkins, Sijie Chen, and Orlando Jopling

St. James the Great, East Hill,
Colchester

Sijie Chen Violin
Orlando Jopling Cello
Huw Watkins Piano

YOUNG ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Sofiia Usmanova Piano

Photo: Huw Watkins © Benjamin Ealovega

Mel Bonis *Soir et Matin* for Piano Trio,
Op. 76: I. Soir

Franz Schubert *Notturmo in E-flat
major*, Op. 148

Mel Bonis *Soir et Matin*: II. Matin
Huw Watkins Piano Trio No. 2

Interval

Maurice Ravel *Trio pour Piano, Violon,
et Violoncelle*, M. 67

Friday 27 September, 8pm
St. James the Great, East Hill, Colchester

HUW WATKINS, SIJIE CHEN, AND ORLANDO JOPLING



Mel Bonis aged 19. Painting by Charles Corbineau.

Mel Bonis *Soir et Matin* for Piano Trio,
Op. 76 (1907)

I. Soir: Andante cantabile [4']

Born in 1858 in Paris, Mélanie Hélène Bonis taught herself to play the piano until, aged twelve, her talent was spotted by a family friend and tutor at the Paris Conservatoire, Henri Maury. He would supervise her formal tuition and, when she was sixteen, introduce her to César Franck, who brought her to the Paris Conservatoire the following year. She shared her harmony and composition classes with Claude Debussy. Dismayed by the limitations imposed on her by her sex, on signing the manuscript of her Opus 1 in 1876, Mélanie would give herself the deliberately androgynous pseudonym, Mel.

Bonis would go on to win multiple prizes at the Conservatoire, however, after she fell in love with fellow student, singer and poet Amédée Landély Hettich, her parents withdrew her from her studies and from the "dangerous artistic world." In 1883 they arranged her marriage to Albert Domange, a twice widowed businessman twenty-five years her senior with no interest in music, and the couple would have three children (to add to the five from Domange's previous marriages).

By the time she composed *Soir et Matin* in 1907, two personalities had developed: Madame Mélanie Domange, the socially fastidious matriarch and pious, faithful wife;

and Mel Bonis, the prolific and inspired romantic, writing boldly sensual music. In 1890 Bonis had reencountered Hettich, and in 1898 they began an affair, having an illegitimate daughter, Madelaine. It was their affair that would renew her passion for composition.

The first movement, "Soir," opens with arpeggio ripples in the piano, evoking the accompaniment style of the romantic nocturne. The melody then enters, weaving in a rising and falling dialogue between the two string parts, often playing in imitation. A middle section development allows more extended melodic lines to each instrument before a ritardando, and the return of the primary material, the violin now one octave higher. The movement ends with a coda and two *pianissimo* tonic chords.

Franz Schubert *Notturmo in E-flat major*,
Op. 148 (1827) [9']

Born in Vienna in 1797, Franz Schubert was given music lessons by his father from the age of five, and by ten years old was receiving private tutoring from Antonio Salieri, then the city's leading musical authority. He had come to the maestro's attention following his compositions and performances for his family string quartet, featuring his brothers on first and second violin, himself on viola, and his father on the cello.

The *Notturmo in E-flat major*, also called "Adagio," was composed in 1827, at the height of the now thirty-year-old composer's popularity. Still based in Vienna, he was five feet tall, nicknamed "Schwammerl" ("tubby little mushroom"), and living with a close-knit circle of artists and students who would hold what they termed "Schubertiades" – informal performances and celebrations of his music.

The *Notturmo* was one of many works written in a burst of inspiration following the death of Beethoven, others from the time including the song cycle *Winterreise*, the *Fantasy in C major*, the piano *Impromptus*, and two further compositions for piano trio (the *Notturmo* was originally intended to be a part of the latter, his *Piano Trio in E-flat*).

Following an extended ternary form (ABABA), the opening presents a mesmerically

sustained melody, initially performed in close harmony by the violin and cello with a harp-like accompaniment in the piano, before the instruments swap, the violin and cello taking the accompaniment in a whispered *pizzicato*. The vividly contrasting secondary material moves to the unusual key of the supertonic, a semitone above the tonic, with an emphatic chordal pattern over a constantly wandering arpeggiated piano accompaniment. The final coda, based on the opening melody, entertains a momentary *crescendo* before coming to a gentle close, the final tonic chord spelled out across the upper register of the piano.

While Schubert and Beethoven were not close until the last four months of the latter's life, Schubert visited Beethoven on his deathbed multiple times, and Anton Schindler, Beethoven's secretary, would give the old master manuscripts of Schubert's songs to provide him with some distraction. Astonished by the quantity and quality of what he saw, Beethoven is said to have exclaimed: "Truly, the spark of divine genius resides in this man!"

On one of Schubert's visits, with Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Beethoven would repeat the assertion: "You, Anselm, have my mind, but Franz has my soul."

Mel Bonis *Soir et Matin* (cont.)

II. Matin: Andantino [4']

Bonis' second movement, "Matin," is faster, with a 6/8 feel and a more complex harmonic narrative – as though the world is awakening. The opening *pianissimo* piano clusters flit between the D-flat major tonic and B-flat minor, subverting the implied tonal goal and creating an unsettled feel amplified by the closely winding quaver pattern in the violin and cello. A middle section development is bookmarked by rapid semiquaver runs in the cello and violin, before a new, lilting theme surfaces, high in the register of the violin, then falls away. The final gesture is similar to that of the first movement, with two tonic D-flat gestures in the piano.

Saint Saëns, hearing the work premiered, remarked to its dedicatee Jean Gounod, "I never thought a woman could write something such as this."

Huw Watkins *Piano Trio No. 2* (2022) [17']

Huw Watkins MBE was born in Wales in 1976 and studied at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. In 2001 he was



Franz Schubert. Lithograph by Josef Kriehuber, 1846

awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he later taught composition. He currently teaches composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

The *Piano Trio No. 2* was premiered by the Leonore Trio in 2022, the same year his *Symphony No. 2* was premiered by Hallé.

Watkins wrote of his work:

Although my second piano trio runs continuously without a break for around a quarter of an hour, it divides into four main sections which correspond roughly with a more traditional four movement scheme. Two slow movements are followed by two fast movements.

Interval

Maurice Ravel *Trio pour Piano, Violon, et Violoncelle*, M. 67 (1914) [30']

- I. Modéré
- II. Pantoum. Assez vif
- III. Passacaille. Très large
- IV. Finale. Animé

Born in the Basque region of France in 1875, Maurice Ravel later wrote:

Throughout my childhood I was sensitive to music. My father, better educated in this art than most amateurs are, knew how to develop my taste and to stimulate my enthusiasm at an early age.

He started professional lessons aged seven, and entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1891 (fifteen years after Debussy and Bonis), only to be expelled in 1895 for lack of progress,

readmitted in 1897, and expelled again in 1900 – his first orchestral composition, *Shéhérazade*, having been greeted by a raucous mixture of boos and applause. One critic described the composer as a "mediocrely gifted debutante ... who will perhaps become something if not someone in about ten years, if he works hard."

Supported by Gabriel Fauré, his composition tutor at the Conservatoire, who insisted he possessed "an engaging wealth of imagination," Ravel persisted. Despite a series of pieces that made little initial impact, his reputation and popularity would soon grow. When the thirty-year-old Ravel made his fifth attempt to win the prestigious Prix de Rome and was eliminated in the first round, it caused a scandal even among those unsympathetic to his music – especially when it emerged that the senior professor at the Conservatoire, Charles Lenepveu, was on the jury, and only his students were selected for the final round.



Maurice Ravel "en soldat" c.1916.

By the time Ravel turned to his *Trio pour Piano, Violon et Violoncelle* in 1914, he had composed three operas and three ballets, as well as his *Introduction et Allegro, Pavane pour une infante défunte*, and *Ma mère l'Oye*. First putting pen to paper in March, he would head to Saint-Jean-de-Luz (near his family home in the Basque region) with the outbreak of war, and speed through his writing process so as to enlist. He wrote to Stravinsky in September:

[My brother] has joined up as a dispatch-rider. I haven't been so lucky; they don't want me, but I am pinning my hopes on a new medical examination... In the

meantime, the idea that I should be leaving at once made me get through five months' work in five weeks! My Trio is finished!

The sombre first movement "Modéré" is inspired by the *zortziko*, a Basque dance form with a 3-2-3 quaver rhythmic pattern, and incorporates remnants of the composer's abandoned piano concerto on Basque themes (*Zazpiak Bat*).

The subsequent "Pantoum" is based on a traditional scherzo and trio form, maintaining a brisk, exuberant pace throughout, with the trio in a different metre to the scherzo – the two metres at times layered one over the other. The title is taken from an Eastern poetic form found in the writings of Verlaine and Baudelaire.

The slow third movement, "Passacaille," stretches out over a repeated eight-bar theme first heard in the lowest register of the piano and derived from the first scherzo theme of "Pantoum." The processional quality is reinforced by the relentlessly increasing dynamic level, which eventually subsides, leading directly into the vigorous finale.

Ravel was very concerned with balancing the instruments of the trio, considering the cello especially easily lost in the ensemble. While the other composers tonight overcome this by drawing the violin and cello closer together in range, the cello playing largely in its upper register, here the violin and cello lines are often spaced two octaves apart, with the right hand of the piano playing between them. Ravel also utilises a percussive piano sonority to deliberately contrast against the more sustained strings sounds. These decisions combine with a wider instinct to showcase the highest and lowest registers of all three instruments, and a liberal use of devices such as trills, tremolos, harmonics, and glissandos, to create the illusion of a sonority larger than that of a trio.

All this analysis, however, would not have been to Ravel's taste. His words from a 1928 pamphlet precede all such speculation:

Real art is not to be recognised by definitions, or revealed by analysis: we sense its manifestations and we feel its presence: it is apprehended in no other way.

– Notes © Max Parfitt, 2024



Saturday 28 September, 1.30pm

Space and Nature: The Hermes Experiment

Firstsite, Colchester

Héloïse Werner Soprano
Oliver Pashley Clarinet
Marianne Schofield Double Bass
Anne Denholm Harp

Cécile Chaminade (arr. Schofield)
La lune paresseuse

Tom Coult *I Find Planets*

Caroline Shaw (arr. Denholm)
Plan & Elevation: I. The Ellipse

Laura Moody *Rilke Songs*
I. An die Musik
III. Rose

Soosan Lolavar *Mâh Didam*

Errollyn Wallen (arr. Werner) *Tree*

Hannah Peel (arr. Pashley) *The Almond Tree*

Misha Mullov-Abbado *The Linden Tree*

Photo: The Hermes Experiment © Raphaël Neal

Saturday 28 September, 1.30pm
Firstsite, Colchester

SPACE AND NATURE: THE HERMES EXPERIMENT

Biographical notes on each composer below. All texts on page 31.



Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Cécile Chaminade was born on the outskirts of Paris in 1857. Her mother gave her her first piano lessons, but, against the recommendation of a teacher from the Paris Conservatoire, her father prevented the talented ten-year-old from undertaking study at the prestigious institution. He did, however, allow her private instruction with prominent musicians associated with the Conservatoire – pianist Félix Le Couppey, violinist Martin Pierre Marsick, and composer Benjamin Godard. George Bizet, for whom Chaminade performed some of her own music, was much impressed by the prodigious young artist. She would go on to combine performance and composition throughout her career, often playing concerts consisting solely of her original works.

Chaminade's inventive pieces – ranging from solo piano works, to duets, songs, chamber music, orchestral pieces, ballet, and a comic opera – enjoyed immense popularity. Queen Victoria numbered among Chaminade's admirers, honouring the composer with the Jubilee Medal in 1897. In a statement indicative of the status of women composers at the time, composer Ambroise Thomas remarked: "This is not a woman who composes, but a composer who is a woman."

Patrick O'Connor wrote of *La lune paresseuse*, composed in 1905:

With a beautiful rippling melody in the accompaniment, shows Chaminade in an ecstatic vein, the singer offering a prayer to the moon, in the words of one Charles de Bussy.

Tom Coult (b.1988)

Tom Coult was born in London in 1988. His playful and seductive music has been championed by many of the UK's major orchestras and ensembles, resulting in a series of acclaimed large-scale pieces including *Beautiful Caged Thing* for soprano Claire Booth and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, *Sonnet Machine* for the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, and *St John's Dance*, premiered by Edward Gardner and the BBC Symphony Orchestra to open the First Night of the 2017 BBC Proms.

He has enjoyed ongoing associations with ensembles such as Britten Sinfonia and London Sinfonietta (who premiered *Spirit of the Staircase*, nominated for a South Bank Sky Arts Award), and is currently Composer-in-Association for the BBC Philharmonic. His 2022 opera *Violet* was described as "the best new British opera in years" by The Telegraph and has already earned further new productions in Germany and France.

The text of *I Find Planets* is adapted by the composer from the automated Twitterbot 'Newfound Planets' (@I_Find_Planets), which, every hour of every day, announces the discovery of an imaginary planet. The inventive but matter-of-fact descriptions make these planets sound strange, poetic, and alluring. Coult writes:

It is worth listening to all these descriptions – if our own planet is not well, we may soon need to live on one of these ones.

Caroline Shaw (b.1982)

Caroline Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy awards, an

honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She has written over 100 works in the last decade, working with artists including Anne Sofie von Otter, Renée Fleming, Rosalía, and Yo-Yo Ma.

Her albums include *Partita for 8 Voices* with vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, *Orange* with the Attacca Quartet, and two collaborations with So Percussion, *Let the Soil Play its Simple Part*, and 2024's *Rectangles and Circumstance* (described by The Guardian as "gleefully eclectic" and "mesmerisingly beautiful"). She has contributed music to films and TV series including *Fleishman is in Trouble*, *Bombshell*, and Beyoncé's *Homecoming*. Her favourite colour is yellow, and her favourite smell is rosemary.

In her original notes for *Plan & Elevation*, Shaw described the work and the processes behind it:

I have always loved drawing the architecture around me when travelling, and some of my favourite lessons in musical composition have occurred by chance in my drawing practice over the years. While writing a string quartet to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Dumbarton Oaks, I returned to these essential ideas of space and proportion – to the challenges of trying to represent them on paper.

The title, Plan & Elevation, refers to two standard ways of representing architecture – essentially an orthographic, or "bird's eye," perspective ("plan"), and a side view which features more ornamental detail ("elevation"). This binary is also a gentle metaphor for one's path in any endeavor – often the actual journey and results are quite different (and perhaps more elevated) than the original plan.

I was fortunate to have been the inaugural music fellow at Dumbarton Oaks in 2014-15. Plan & Elevation examines different parts of the estate's beautiful grounds and my personal experience in those particular spaces. Each movement is based on a simple ground bass line which supports a different musical concept or character. "The Ellipse" considers the notion of infinite repetition (I won't deny a tiny Kierkegaard influence here). One can walk around and around the stone path, beneath the trimmed hornbeams, as I often did as a way to clear my mind while writing.



Caroline Shaw. Photo by Piotr Redlinski.

Laura Moody (b.1978)

Laura Moody is a composer, cellist, vocalist, songwriter, and theatre performer. Her work focuses on storytelling, ritual, the expressive potential of musicians' physicality, and the transformation of spaces through sound, music, and movement. Most recently Laura composed, and performed in, five consecutive shows for The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse at Shakespeare's Globe, each of which explored a different way of reinterpreting the same very idiosyncratic, candlelit space, and the function of music and musicians within it. Other recent works include *Hildegard Portraits* for the vocal trio Voice, *Parallelist* for the Aldeburgh Festival, and award-nominated scores for *dreamplay* at The Vaults Theatre and radio drama *Mary Rose* for BBC Radio 3.

For fifteen years Laura's major focus as a collaborative musician was as a member of the innovative string quartet Elysian Quartet, known for its pioneering performances and recordings of contemporary classical, experimental and improvised music. She is a frequent collaborator with Radiohead's Philip Selway, performing and arranging for his film scores, albums and solo shows. Other artists she has worked with include Meredith Monk, Björk, Simon Fisher Turner, JARV IS, Anna Calvi, Antony and the Johnsons, Peter Gabriel, and Kae Tempest. In November 2014 she released her debut solo album *Acrobats* to major critical acclaim.

The first movement of *Rilke Songs*, "An die Musik," takes Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke's ode to the ephemeral wonders of music to a place of wildness and abandonment, referencing modal music to be sung outdoors amid the hum of nature. The third movement is a setting of Rilke's shortest poem and the enigmatic epitaph the poet chose for his own final resting place. A kind of lullaby, the setting is inspired by wildlife photographer Neil Bromhall's time-lapse films of roses opening and fading, as well as the contemplative ostinato compositions of Meredith Monk.

Moody writes:

I'm so delighted with how The Hermes Experiment have embraced all the different aspects of these pieces, moving effortlessly between wild expressiveness, wonky glitchiness and meditative stillness in a the blink of an eye. They really are a magnificent, magical, shape-shifting beast, utterly transforming for every piece they perform.

Soosan Lolavar (b.1987)

Soosan Lolavar is a British-Iranian composer and educator who works in both electronic and acoustic sound, and across the genres of concert music, contemporary dance, installation, film, animation, and theatre. Her work has been performed at venues such as the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the Victoria & Albert Museum, and has been broadcast several times on BBC Radio 3. She has worked with ensembles such as the Philharmonia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra Foyle Future

Firsts, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Sinfonietta.

In 2013, having been featured in BBC Radio 3's Adopt-a-Composer scheme, she was selected as one of two Embedded composers in residence at the Southbank Centre and received funding from Arts Council England, Jerwood Charitable Foundation, and Iran Heritage Foundation to pursue *Stay Close*, a ten-month project exploring contemporary classical music as a means of cultural exchange between the UK and Iran. She was later awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study Iranian music at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

She writes of *Mâh Didam*:

This piece endeavours to explore the links between Iranian music and Renaissance Counterpoint. While such musical systems seem wildly divergent, they do in fact share a great deal of common ground. Both are musics concerned with the horizontal rather than the vertical, with melodic lines rather than harmonic progressions, and with the aesthetic and moral primacy of the voice. One key difference between these musics, however, is their tuning systems. While Renaissance counterpoint – at least in contemporary performance – uses Equal Temperament, Iranian music makes use of a tuning system built on natural perfect fifths and which contains 17 notes in an octave. Mâh Didam makes use of both tuning systems side by side, encouraging the listener to directly confront the differences between these musical worlds.



Soosan Lolavar.



Hannah Peel. Photo by Phil Sharpe.

The words are from a poem by Rahi Mo'ayeri (1909-1968): "I saw the moon, it reminded me of your beautiful face."

Errollyn Wallen (b.1958)

Errollyn Wallen is a multi-award-winning Belize-born British composer and performer. Her prolific output includes twenty-two operas and a large catalogue of orchestral, chamber and vocal works which are performed and broadcast throughout the world. She was the first black woman to have a work featured in the Proms and the first woman to receive an Ivor Novello award for Classical Music for her body of work.

Errollyn composed for the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games 2012, for the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilees, a specially commissioned song for the climate change conference, COP26, 2021, and a re-imagining of Jerusalem for BBC's Last Night of the Proms 2020. She is one of the top 20 most performed living composers of classical music in the world.

She was featured on BBC Radio 3's Composer of the Week in 2022, and the same year her carol, *Peace on Earth*, was part of the Nine Lessons and Carols broadcast from King's College, Cambridge.

Errollyn was awarded an MBE in 2007 in the Queen's Birthday Honours and a CBE in 2020 in the New Year Honours, for services to music. Her albums have travelled 7.84 million kilometres in space, completing 186 orbits around the Earth on NASA's STS115 mission.

She lives and composes in a Scottish lighthouse.

Hannah Peel (b.1985)

A Mercury Prize, Ivor Novello, and Emmy-nominated, RTS and Music Producers Guild-winning composer, with several solo albums and collaborative releases, Hannah joins the dots between science, nature, and the arts, through her explorative approach to electronic, classical, and traditional music. From her own solo albums to composing soundtracks (*Game of Thrones: The Last Watch*), and to orchestrating and conducting for artists like Paul Weller, her work is ambitious, always adapting and reinventing new genres and hybrid musical forms.

Peel releases her solo records on her own label, My Own Pleasure Records: including her 2021 Mercury Music Prize-nominated *Fir Wave*, *Awake But Always Dreaming*, and *Mary Casio: Journey to Cassiopeia*.

Aside from her solo work, Peel has worked with collaborators on projects including orchestrations and conducting for Paul Weller, an album written for the British Paraorchestra, an album with the poet Will Burns, and as a member of the psycho-geography indie rock group The Magnetic North and the electronic music group John Foxx and the Maths.

She has been a regular weekly broadcaster on BBC Radio 3's *Night Tracks* since 2019.

Misha Mullov-Abbado (b.1990)

Award-winning, London-based jazz bass player, composer and arranger Misha Mullov-Abbado a BBC New Generation Artist. His collective, The Misha Mullov-Abbado Group, has performed all over the UK and around the world – including at top London venues such as Ronnie Scott's, the Vortex, King's Place and Royal Albert Hall – and he has collaborated with musicians such as Alice Zawadzki, Dave O'Higgins, Tim Garland, Viktoria Mullova, Enzo Zircilli, Sam Lee, Rob Luft, Paul Clarvis, Stan Sulzmann and Nessi Gomes.

As a composer, Misha embraces his jazz, classical, pop, and folk influences and writes for a variety of jazz groups, as well as various classical soloists and ensembles. His cello concerto was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and premiered at London's Southbank Centre by Matthew Barley and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He has released three albums on Edition Records, the most recent titled *Dream Circus*.

Cécile Chaminade *La lune paresseuse* (The Idle Moon)

*Dans un rayon de crépuscule
S'endort la libellule;
Le rossignol s'est endormi
Sur la branche d'un chêne ami,*

*L'herbage est plein de lucioles,
Le ciel d'étoiles folles,
Et pourtant la lune qui luit
Laisse ses ombres à la nuit.*

*Mollement, Lune, tu reposes
Sous des nuages roses...
Oh! la paresseuse, pourquoi
Te jouer de mon tendre émoi ?*

*Toujours voilée à l'heure douce
Où, glissant sur la mousse,
Les cigales chantent moins fort,
Tu ne te montres pas encor!*

*Lève-toi! brillante et sereine,
Viens éclairer la plaine!
Lune d'argent, Lune au front blanc,
Illumine mon bras tremblant!*

*Frôle de ta lumière pure
L'or de ma chevelure:
Car c'est bientôt que va passer
Sur la route mon fiancé!*

– Charles de Bussy

In a ray of twilight
The dragonfly falls asleep;
The nightingale has fallen asleep
On the branch of a friendly oak,

The grass teems with glow-worms,
The sky with whirling stars,
And yet the shining moon
Permits the night its patches of darkness.

Quietly, O moon, you repose
Beneath pink clouds...
Oh! idle one, why
Do you toy with my tender feelings?

You are always hidden at the sweet hour
When the crickets, moving over the moss,
Sing less loudly,
And still you do not show yourself!

Arise, brilliant and serene,
Light up the plain!
Silver moon, white-faced moon,
Illumine my trembling arm!

Brush with your pure light
The gold of my tresses:
For it will not be long
Before my betrothed passes by!

(Translation by Richard Stokes)

Tom Coult *I Find Planets*

I have discovered a planet.
It has 23 rings.
It is where the comets roam, obscured by
a dust cloud.
We could journey there when the
catastrophe comes.

I have discovered a planet.
It is not on any maps, not in the guidebooks.
It is so far.
Five moons dance under its dying star
– what a tantalising place.

I have discovered a planet.
It could be a safe planet.

They know so much about us on that world.
Some of its mountains look like topaz.

I have discovered a planet.
I set sail on Thursday.
The planet makes me think of my parents,
makes me feel needed.
Something there conjures memories of an
old song.

I have found you a planet.
It is right here – it is our little secret.
Will you go with me?

– 'Newfound Planets' (@LFind_Planets)

Laura Moody *Rilke Songs*

I. An die Musik

*Musik: Atem der Statuen. Vielleicht:
Stille der Bilder. Du Sprache wo
Sprachen
enden. Du Zeit
die senkrecht steht auf der Richtung
vergehender Herzen.*

*Gefühle zu wem? O du der Gefühle
Wandlung in was? – in hörbare
Landschaft.*

(I. To Music)

Music: Breathing of Statues. Perhaps:
Silence of Paintings. You Language where
all Language
ends. You Time
standing vertically on the Motion
of mortal hearts.

Feelings for whom? O you the Transformation
of Feelings into what? – into audible
Landscape.

*Du Fremde: Musik. Du uns entwachsener
Herzraum. Innigstes unser,
das, uns übersteigend, hinausdrängt, –
heiliger Abschied:
da uns das Innre umsteht
als geübteste Ferne, als andre
Seite der Luft:
rein, riesig, nicht mehr bewohnbar.*

III. Rose

*Rose, o reiner Widerspruch, Lust,
Niemandes Schlaf zu sein unter soviel
Lidern.*

– Rainer Maria Rilke

You Stranger: Music. You heart-space
Grown out of us. The deepest space in us,
which, rising above us, forces its way out, –
holy Departure:
when the Innermost point stands without
as the most practiced distance, as the other
Side of the Air:
pure, boundless, no longer habitable.

Rose, oh pure Contradiction, Joy,
of being No-one's Sleep under so many
Lids.

(Translation by Stephen Mitchell)

Soosan Lolavar *Mâh Didam*

*Mâh didam, (دیدم)
ruyé zibâye to-am (روی زیبای توام)
âmad beyâd (آمد بیاد)*

– Rahi Mo'ayeri

I saw the moon,
it reminded me
of your beautiful face.

(Translation by Soosan Lolavar)

Errollyn Wallen *Tree*

Does the tree own me?
Does the tree own the moon, the
impassive moon?
Do the leaves seem to sing in the dark?
Does the tree own my heart?

Do I lie, Do I lie,
In the arms of his art, confounding art?
I'm perplexed by the rune,
I'm perplexed by rooted trees.

Hannah Peel *The Almond Tree*

Temperance the dear old deer
Did not dare to bother anyone's ear
With her uptight jaw and hair tightly pinned
Who'd have thought the sin to be within?

Bury me under the almond tree
If anything should happen to me
Late last june I heard a cry
I ran to see my younger sister die

The poisoned meat had cut deep inside

I cast my revenge on temperance tonight
Bury me under the almond tree
If anything should happen to me

I walked for months through rain and pour
No sign of temperance and her deathly paw
I start to think did I dream it all up
What revenge is this, my life has been caught

Bury me under the almond tree
If anything should happen to me

Misha Mullov-Abbado *The Linden Tree*

Upon a distant hillside
There stands a linden tree;
As children we would play there,
My friends and you and me.

We thought that it would never end
For children never see:
We thought that we would always play
Around the linden tree.

One day your eyes were misty
As eyes can sometimes be;
You told me that you loved me
Beside the linden tree.

I thought you'd always be around
For lovers never see:

I thought our children soon would play
Around the linden tree.

But then the trumpet sounded
And love was not to be;
The call to death or glory
Took you away from me.

You thought that you would never die
For soldiers never see:
But we will never meet again
Beneath the linden tree.

And now I lay my flowers
Beside the linden tree.

– Tom Parker & Amy Vanmeenen

Saturday 28 September, 6pm

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and Rachmaninov Symphony No. 2

*St Peter ad Vincula Church,
Coggeshall*

The Wild Arts Ensemble
Orlando Jopling Conductor
Simon Blendis Leader

SOLOIST

Hana Chang Violin

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto*
in D major, Op. 35

Interval

Sergei Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2,*
Op. 27

TCHAIKOVSKY VIOLIN CONCERTO AND RACHMANINOV SYMPHONY NO. 2

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35* (1878) [40']

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Canzonetta: Andante
- III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

From 1872, six years prior to the composition of the *Violin Concerto* in 1878, Tchaikovsky was suffering from what his brother, Modest, would describe as a "moral ailment" – a depression marked out by social loneliness and professional discontent. In his articles the composer became liable to outbursts, condemning Russia's musical culture, declaring Brahms overrated and Schumann inept, and mounting a sustained attack on César Cui, one of the best-known composers of the day. In private, his health worsened and his letters (usually a constant record of his life) became scarce. In 1875, he wrote to his younger brother Anatoly:

Cursed buggermania ["bugromaniya" was a popular term among Russian homosexuals at the time] forms an impassable gulf between me and most people. It imparts to my character an estrangement, fear of people, shyness, immoderate bashfulness, mistrust, in a word, a thousand traits from which I am getting ever more unsociable.

Despite the composer's achievements across this period – including *Swan Lake*, *Eugene Onegin*, and his Third and Fourth Symphonies – in a letter to Modest the following year he would emphasise the impact of his sexuality on his work: "buggery and pedagogy cannot co-exist."

His desire to overcome this perceived barrier led, in 1877, to his ill-judged engagement to Antonina Milyukova, a former student who had sent him a series of love letters, some threatening suicide if he did not consent to make her his wife. Their marriage, in July, was described by one guest as "gloomy as a funeral," Tchaikovsky's family dressing in black and leaving early. Though never divorcing, the composer would leave to "take the waters" just two weeks after their wedding, returning briefly in September and attempting to drown himself in the Moskva River before fleeing to Europe to forget his "long nightmare."



Tchaikovsky in 1874.

Written the following March in Clarens on the banks of Lake Geneva – the same spot where Stravinsky would later compose *The Rite of Spring*, and just a stone's throw from the hotel in which Richard Strauss would spend his last months – it was the *Violin Concerto* that saw the composer's inspiration restored. Energised by his lover and muse, Josef Kotek, who advised him on matters of bowing, fingering, and dynamics, he would draft the concerto in only eleven days, the second movement Canzonetta written in just one.

From the day that propitious mood struck it has not left me. In such a phase of spiritual life composition completely loses the character of labour: it is a veritable pleasure. When you write you don't know how time passes, and if no one interrupts you could work the whole day without getting up.

The Concerto is in three movements.

The Allegro Moderato opens with a brief introduction in D major. The solo violin then responds with two themes: the first virtuosic and charming, the second (*con molto espressione*) initially calmer, before building to a passionate climax and a series of trills.



Rachmaninov in 1921.

An orchestral *tutti* (rare in Tchaikovsky's concerto) fades into a wandering development and returns to strength, now in the tonally-distant F major. The solo violin reasserts itself with a technically-demanding cadenza, full of fast springing bow strokes (*sautillé*), and reaching towards the upper extreme of the instrument's range. The orchestra re-enter in D major for the recapitulation before, as Calvin Dotsey describes, orchestra and soloist "race to the end" in a thrilling coda.

The subsequent movements are notably Russian in character – emblematic, in Nicolas Slonimsky's words, of the "Slavic Soul." The second movement Canzonetta ("little song") is simple and melodic, the violin playing with mute, and both the violin theme and the chorale-like introductory material return and transform across the movement, becoming more alike with each iteration.

The rondo Finale follows without a pause, leaping out with a sudden Allegro vivacissimo (*attacca subito*). Mark Pullinger writes: In the recitative at the start you can almost hear the fiddler tuning up; there then follow two main themes, the first a lively dance, the second a more earthy utterance with a rustic double-pedal drone, emulating peasant bagpipes.

The overall effect is generally cheery, and yet, in two more sombre moments, Tchaikovsky echoes the music of Lensky's farewell from *Eugene Onegin*, passing the motif first between the woodwind instruments over sparse chords from the strings, before it

enters the violin melody. Traditionally used by the composer to represent the "death of the poet" or the "death of art," its intention here is unknown – perhaps a quiet acknowledgement of his prior struggles.

Critic Eduard Hanslick wrote what was intended as a damning review following the concerto's premiere in Vienna in 1881, and yet it captures something of the work's impact: "The violin is no longer played; it is beaten, pulled, torn, shredded."

Tchaikovsky would learn to recite Hanslick's article by heart.

Sergei Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2, Op. 27* (1908) [65']

- I. Largo – Allegro moderato
- II. Allegro molto
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro vivace

Having graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1892 with a gold medal for his Pushkin opera, *Aleko*, in 1897 Rachmaninov would premiere his *Symphony No. 1* with high expectations. The performance was an unexpected disaster. Doomed by a drunken Glazunov wielding the conductor's baton, one attendee recalled:

The Symphony was insufficiently rehearsed, the orchestra was ragged, basic stability in tempos was lacking, many errors in the orchestral parts were uncorrected; ... there were no flashes of animation, enthusiasm or brilliance of orchestral sound.

Tchaikovsky's critical sparring partner, César Cui, likened listening to the work to the seven plagues of Egypt, suggesting it stemmed from the music conservatory in Hell.

Rachmaninov attempted to intervene between movements and, having failed, left before the end, destroying the score shortly after.

Facing musical and personal failure and forced to pawn any expensive possessions, the composer fell into a depression which he compared to "the man who had suffered a stroke and for a long time had lost the use of his head and hands." While his difficulties lessened following psychotherapy and the completion of the *Piano Concerto No. 2* in 1901 (reaping both popular and financial rewards), the social and political unrest surrounding the 1905 Revolution and continued bouts of depression and writer's block encouraged a move to Dresden in 1906.

Returning to the symphonic medium which had caused his descent nine years before, his inspiration restored by his new surroundings, Rachmaninov would draft his *Symphony No. 2* (alongside his symphonic poem *Isle of the Dead*) in less than three months. It was premiered in 1908, earning the composer popular and critical acclaim as well as a much-needed 1,000-ruble prize.

The symphony consists of four movements.

The first opens with a slow introduction – the opening pensive, seven-note cello and bass theme lifted virtually intact from an abandoned student work – before some ominous woodwind phrases and a descending violin figure wind down to a mournful English horn solo. The opening cello and bass theme forms the basis of both the movement and the wider symphony, expanding first into a faster main theme, and then being developed, redeveloped, and reimagined throughout.

The second movement scherzo is initiated by a persistent motif in the upper strings, the horns referencing the traditionally portentous *Dies Irae* chant. A more lyrical section and strings melody is brought about by the solo clarinet before a loud crash and an aggressive *fugato* episode, a repeat, and a final darkened brass chorale, reiterating the *Dies Irae* theme.

The music fades away to prepare us for the unflinchingly romantic and rhapsodic Adagio, first establishing two separate melodies –

one for the violins, the other for solo clarinet – and then interweaving them contrapuntally. While the clarinet solo is long, it never once repeats itself, and both melodies are based around a single “home note” that provides a constant draw.

The exuberant Finale opens with a fanfare, swiftly dying away into a darker march-like section, a slow melody (with the violins and violas in unison octaves), and a recapitulation of material from the preceding Adagio. The fanfare material returns to usher in a series of scales and stabbing gestures from across the orchestra, driving to a triumphant and raucous conclusion.

Following the premiere, composer-critic Yuli Engel wrote:

At 34 years, [Rachmaninov] is one of the most significant figures in the contemporary music world – a worthy successor to Tchaikovsky. After listening with unflagging attention to its four movements, one notes with surprise that the hands of the watch have moved forward 65 minutes. ... How fresh, how beautiful it is!

While between the wars Rachmaninov would bend to calls for several large cuts (amounting to some 300 bars), he would later condemn them: “It was like cutting a piece out of my heart.”

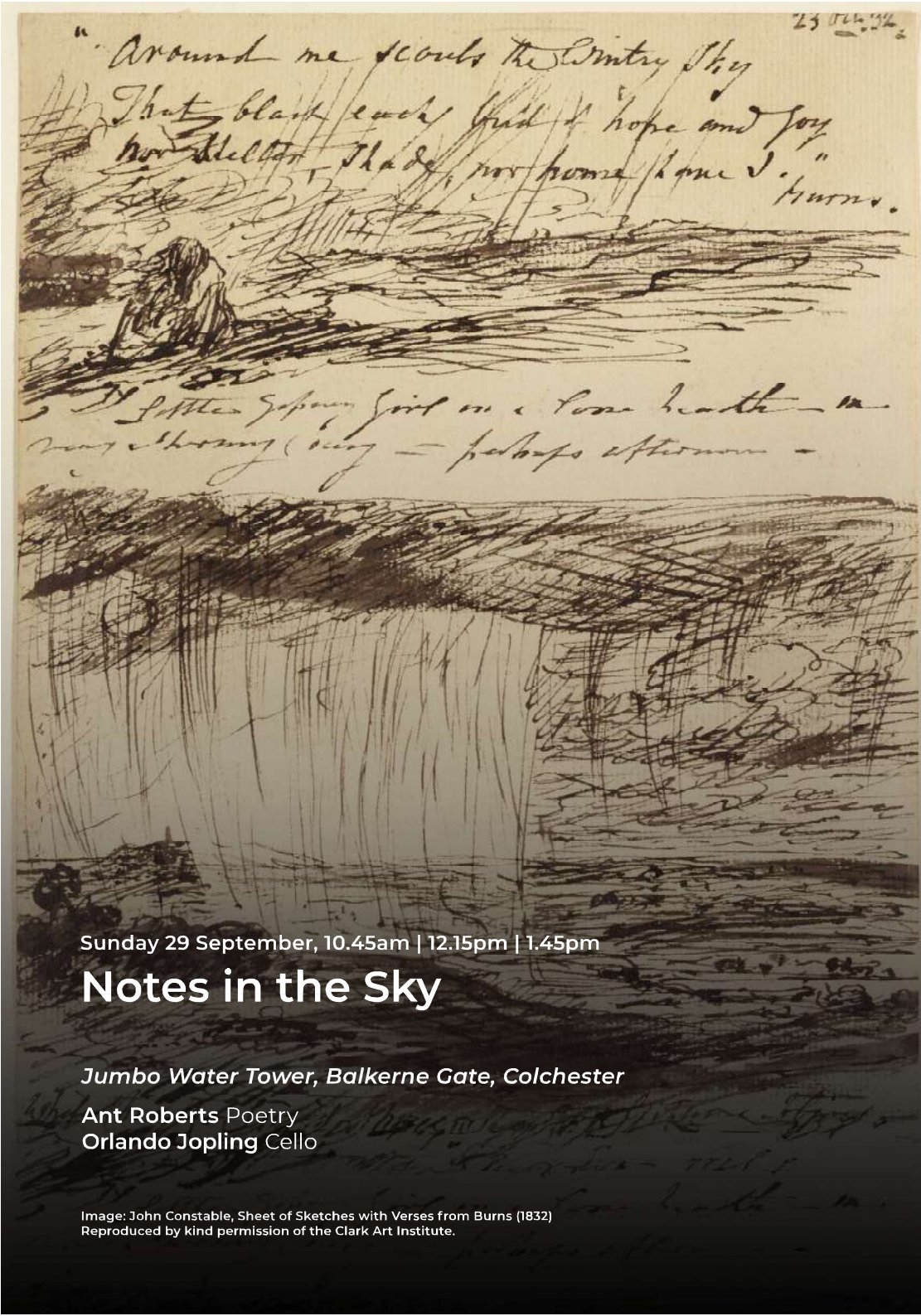
– Notes © Max Parfitt, 2024



Hana Chang. Photo by Kaupo Kikkas



Mozart's *Gran Partita* in St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall. From the Roman River Festival 2023.



Sunday 29 September, 10.45am | 12.15pm | 1.45pm

Notes in the Sky

Jumbo Water Tower, Balmerne Gate, Colchester

Ant Roberts Poetry
Orlando Jopling Cello

Image: John Constable, Sheet of Sketches with Verses from Burns (1832)
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Sunday 29 September, 10.45am | 12.15pm | 1.45pm
Jumbo Water Tower, Balmerne Gate, Colchester

NOTES IN THE SKY



Orlando Jopling. Photo by Lucy J Toms.

Introduction from Ant Roberts

During lockdown I rediscovered my love of poetry. When the arts centre closed overnight, along with all the theatres and venues in March 2020, I spontaneously announced I wouldn't shave and I'd broadcast a poem everyday until the arts centre re-opened, thinking this would be about three weeks. 532 poems later, and with a beard that virtually came down to my knees, the venue re-opened!

Ant's Guide to Poetry:

I. Writing

Here's how to write a poem.

1. Think one of your favourite things. (It can be a person, a place, a pet or something you enjoy doing.)
2. Make a list of words you associate with your chosen subject.
3. Read them out.

You have a poem!

Make it longer or better by:

1. Finding any rhymes or thinking of rhymes and putting them next to each other.
2. Making up little sentences to join them together.

Once you've done this send it to me:
anthony@colchesterartscentre.com

II. Reading

I'd start with *Smiling*, by Spike Milligan:

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

Sunday 29 September, 4pm

Catching Voices: Faith, Love, and Nature

St Peter ad Vincula Church,
Coggeshall

Hilary Cronin Soprano
Gabriella Noble Mezzo-Soprano
Lauren Macleod Mezzo-Soprano
Jacob Ewens Tenor
Peter Edge Baritone

YOUNG ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Ned Bell Treble

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and
Profane*, Op. 91
I. St Godric's Hymn

Field Recording

Trad. *Oh love, sweet, love*

Gerald Finzi *Seven poems of Robert
Bridges*, Op. 17
VI. Haste on, my joys!

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and
Profane*, Op. 91
II. I Mon Axe Wod

Gerald Finzi *Seven poems of Robert
Bridges*, Op. 17
IV. Clear and gentle stream
V. Nightingales

Field Recording

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and
Profane*, Op. 91
III. The Long Night
IV. Lenten is Come

Interval

Healey Willan *Rise up, my Love*

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and
Profane*, Op. 91
V. Yif Ic of Luve Can
VI. Carol
VII. Ye that Pasen by

Gabriel Jackson *I am the rose of
Sharon*

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and
Profane*, Op. 91
VIII. A Death

Judith Weir *Vertue*

Ralph Vaughan Williams *Rest*

Judith Weir *My Guardian Angel*

Sunday 29 September, 4pm
St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall

CATCHING VOICES: FAITH, LOVE, AND NATURE

Introduction from Catching Voices

Like a day in the English countryside, tonight's programme will begin with the distant sounds of a hymn – the first movement of Britten's *Sacred and Profane*. A field recording will follow, where the songs of birds echo with church bells, out of which will emerge individual voices incanting a folk melody as we enter the stage. This folk melody, with its interweaving rhapsodic melodies coming together and apart in flight, is echoed later in the programme in the decorated individual lines of Gabriel Jackson's *I am the rose of Sharon*. The scattering of Britten's *Sacred and Profane* throughout connects this bird-like lyricism with themes of faith, nature, and love, in music that sounds at the same time avant garde and distinctly ancient.

The stunning depictions of nature by Robert Bridges and the transcendental religious poetry of George Herbert each find worthy settings in the music of Finzi and Judith Weir, their subjects interweaving. Weir's music portrays the simplicity of the divine in the cycles of nature, and – in "Antiphon" – faith expressed in a structure associated with music.

Finally, after the day close of Vaughan Williams' *Rest*, we will invite the audience to congregate, like our dwindling bird populations, and sing with us in Weir's moving and hypnotic *My Guardian Angel*.

Thank you for coming, and we hope you enjoy the show.

Notes are provided below for each work, arranged chronologically by their first appearance in tonight's programme. Texts can be found in performance order on page 45.

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and Profane*,
Op. 91 (1975)

I. St Godric's Hymn
II. I mon waxe wod ("Foweles in the frith")
III. Lenten is come
IV. The long night
V. Yif ic of luve can
VI. Carol
VII. Ye that pasen by
VIII. A Death

Composed in 1975, just one year before Britten's death, *Sacred and Profane* comprises eight lyrics based on medieval English poems, each set in their original archaic language, and arranged in a deliberate juxtaposition of secular and sacred pieces (more akin to the musical traditions of the time). As the deliberately binary title suggests, the work is a celebration of these rich texts and their unfaltering strangeness – creating, in Meurig Bowen's terms, "a tapestry of spiritual and earthly life."

The work begins with St Godric's simple Hymn to the Virgin Mary, characterised by its use of descending glissandi, rising chords, and modal inflection.

"I mon waxe wod" then bewails man's unique capacity for insanity, the upper voices clucking away repetitively ('Birds in the wood, / The fish in the river'), while the



Britten in 1968. Photo by Hans Wild.

lower voices offer a long, sombre pedal melody beneath ('Much sorrow I live with').

"Lenten is come" uses syncopation and imitation to celebrate the arrival of spring – the limping phrases and slow harmonies hinting at the music of *A Ceremony of Carols*, composed more than three decades earlier – before "The long night" signifies the drawing in of winter.

"Yif ic of luve can" presents the intense feelings of love and sorrow inspired by a

contemplation of Christ on the Cross, with a soaring soprano line and simple hymnic accompaniment – Paul Kildea has compared it to the music of the Venetian churches of which Britten was so fond.

The mood then switches abruptly to one of irreverent and folkish parody in the ensuing “Carol,” where a pastoral scene of a maiden lying on a moor is related in deliberately banal harmonic and rhythmic patterns with halting, incomplete lines.

In “Ye that pasen by,” Christ makes an entreaty to passers-by to behold him on the Cross in a crunching, more traditional madrigal style.

Recalling *A Boy was Born*, “A death” begins with full-throated Pérotin wailings, cataloguing the breakdown of bodily functions at the moment of death. Rita Thomson recalled the composer chuckling away as, his own health failing, he sketched out the piece and finally dispatched the protagonist to his grave in humorous defiance: ‘Of al this world ne give I it a pese!’ i.e. ‘For the whole world I don’t care one jot!’

Despite his frustration at his reduced working hours and at how long everything was taking him to write out, Britten did not take death lying down. While working on *Sacred and Profane* in 1975, he would insist to an over-sympathetic friend that “there is life in this poor old dog still.” He would continue to attend public functions, dressed smartly in his favourite velvet smoking jacket, until November the following year – unhooking himself from his oxygen tank and wandering downstairs to host a final birthday champagne party.

He died shortly afterwards, at the age of sixty-three, of complications brought on by bacterial endocarditis – the same condition that, coincidentally, had killed Mahler sixty years earlier. Michael Tippett wrote:

I want to say, here and now, that Britten has been for me the most purely musical person that I have ever met and I have ever known.

Gerald Finzi *Seven poems of Robert Bridges*, Op. 17 (1934/1937)

- VI. Haste on, my joys!
- IV. Clear and gentle stream
- V. Nightingales

In 1933, Gerald Finzi was in his third year of teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London. The position had been obtained for



Gerald Finzi. Photo by Angus McBean.

him by his friend and mentor Ralph Vaughan Williams, but Finzi never felt at home in either the city or the institution. Having married artist and musician Joyce Black in 1933, he moved to the Wiltshire countryside, where he devoted himself to composing, apple-growing, and immersing himself in his collections of poetry and music.

At this time, Finzi and his wife would also devote much time to cataloguing and editing the works of their friend, composer-poet Ivor Gurney, who had been committed to a mental hospital. It was through Gurney, and his passion for the poems of Robert Bridges that Finzi discovered the texts for his *Seven poems* – both composers particularly drawn to his depictions of beauty and the English landscape of which they were so fond.

“Haste on, my joys” captures rapid movement through canonic rhythm, the upper voices seeming to perpetually nudge the lower ones forwards as “beauty flies” – the composer capturing joy’s “swift, unceasing flight.”

“Clear and gentle stream” is more restrained in its imitation, creating (in verses 1, 2, and 4) a sense of a stream rising and falling and tumbling over itself in motion as the narrator recalls hearing its song in his “boyish” days. Verse 3 is calmer, with its memories of the hum of bells and the coming of evening.

“Nightingales” is more homophonic, the voices brought together as they sing of mountains and streams. Finzi’s careful word-painting brings to life the blooming of flowers in the nightingales’ forest home, the loneliness of the night, and, in the third and final verse, the triumphant arrival of the dawn chorus.

Interval

Healey Willan *Rise up, my Love, my Fair One* (1929)

Healey Willan would describe himself as “English by birth; Canadian by adoption; Irish by extraction; and Scotch by absorption.” Born in England in 1880 and growing up between Eastbourne and London, he emigrated to Canada in 1913 (aged 33) and became organist and choirmaster of Toronto’s largest church, St Paul’s, Bloor Street. Having resigned his post in favour of the smaller, but high-church Church of St Mary Magdalene in 1921, he focussed on composing liturgical works for use in the church’s services – including this setting of a famous passage from the Song of Solomon in 1929.

The piece is modelled on the Anglican choral tradition – both the works of Stanford and Parry, and the plainsong and Renaissance music which preceded it. Vaughan Williams summarised the musical lineage in his 1950 *Musical Autobiography*:

The tradition which Tallis passed on to Byrd, Byrd to Gibbons, Gibbons to Purcell, Purcell to Battishill and Greene, and they in their turn through the Wesleys, to Parry. Parry has passed on the torch to us [his pupils and admirers] and it is our duty to keep it alight.

Head of theory at the Toronto Conservatory and later Professor of Music at the University of Toronto, Willan would compose more than 800 works during his lifetime, the vast majority sacred, and yet the composer made little impact outside of Canada – *Rise up, my love* often overlooked in favour of Patrick Hadley’s *My Beloved Spake* written a decade later in 1938.

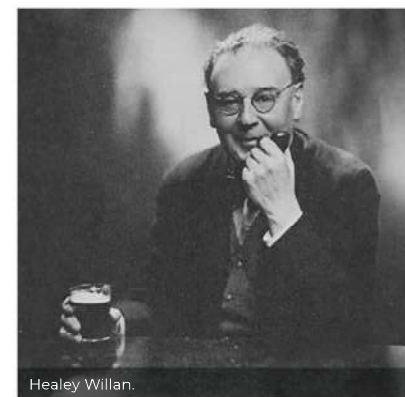
In 1953, he received a commission to write an anthem, *O Lord Our Governour*, for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Since he was unable to pay the fare to London, his friends and congregation would club together and raise the money to fund his ticket.

Gabriel Jackson *I am the rose of Sharon* (2001)

Born in Bermuda in 1962, Gabriel Jackson was a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral before studying composition at the Royal College of Music. While at the college he won the Theodore Holland Award in 1981 and was awarded the R. O. Morris Prize for Composition in 1981 and 1983 – placing him alongside the likes of Finzi, Edmund Rubbra, and Michael Tippett.

Jackson’s music can be heard on over 100 recordings (including seven discs devoted exclusively to his work), and he is a frequent collaborator with leading choral groups, including The Sixteen, the Tallis Scholars, Ars Nova Copenhagen, and the Swedish and Bavarian Radio Choirs. From 2010 to 2013 he was Associate Composer to the BBC Singers, producing a series of substantial pieces for the group including a virtuoso four-movement Choral Symphony.

I am the rose of Sharon was commissioned by the Opus Anglicanum Trust and was first performed in Wells Cathedral in 2001. Inspired by plainchant and (as with Willan’s anthem) the Song of Solomon, a highly melismatic melody is layered over a predominantly harmonically slow-moving accompaniment in the lower voices. Alexandra Coghlan has described the work as “looking back to chant, but through gauzy, gilded cloths.”



Healey Willan.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *Rest* (1902)

Ralph Vaughan Williams composed *Rest* in 1902, the year after he received his doctorate in music at Cambridge, and the year of his first published work, the song “Linden Lea.” Over the next five years he would write articles for music journals and for the second edition of *Grove’s Dictionary*; edit a new hymn book, *The English Hymnal*, and the first volume of Purcell’s *Welcome Songs* for the Purcell society; start collecting, cataloguing, and publishing folksongs; found the Leith Hill Music Festival; and establish himself as one of the most promising of England’s young composers. By the winter of 1907 he was in Paris, having been taken under the wing of the famously selective Ravel. Ravel would go on to describe

him (glowingly) as: "the only one of my pupils who does not write my music."

Rest precedes this swift rise through compositional circles. Dedicated to "Members of The Magpie Madrigal Society," and capitalising on a trend for part-song and madrigals at the time, it uses nuanced word painting to create interest – the melody dropping downwards, for example, on the word "Sigh." The voices are delicately woven together, and there is a noticeable shift as, in the middle section, they separate into upper and lower parts. The dynamic reaches upwards near the end of the song, before a soft held note forms a gentle close (holding the word "long" until it fades to nothing).

Jeremy Summerly has summarised the impact of the piece, which sets text from a poem of the same name by Christina Rossetti:

It encapsulates the Christian idea of resurrection, but its starting point is with the world of nature embracing the body – a beautiful poetic concept, later taken up in Howells' Hymnus Paradisi and the great motet Take him, earth, for cherishing.

Judith Weir *Vertue* (2005)

- I. Vertue
- II. Antiphon
- III. Prayer

Born in 1954 to a Scottish family, Judith Weir grew up in and around London – a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Having studied composition with John Tavener, she went to Cambridge University before moving back to Scotland, teaching at Glasgow University and the Conservatoire of Scotland.

Initially focussed on opera and orchestral music – particularly as resident composer with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the 1990s – in recent years she has reached worldwide acclaim for her choral works. In 2014 she was appointed to the 395-year old royal post of Master of the Queen's Music, successor to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. In this role she has written music for national and royal occasions, including Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday celebrations, her Platinum Jubilee, and her state funeral, as well as the coronation of Charles and Camilla.

Vertue was commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival, of which Weir was Artistic Director,



Judith Weir in 2024. Photo by Hannah Burton.

in 2005. In her programme note for the premiere, Weir wrote:

These three short chorus settings of famous poems by George Herbert (1593-1633) were written in memory of Peter Lerwill, a dear friend and generous supporter of the Spitalfields Festival. When I set Herbert's verse about "a sweet and vertuous soul, like season'd timber," it was Peter who came instantly to mind.

The formal care with which the poet laid out his words on the page was an important clue in the organisation of the music. The unaccompanied vocal ensemble begins simply, but progressively divides into as many as eight parts. In "Prayer," the final and most complex piece, pairs of solo voices are heard amidst the massed chords, acting as a kind of punctuation. The settings of "Vertue" and "Antiphon" are respectively like a madrigal and then a hymn, aiming for the clearest possible presentation of the wonderful words.

Judith Weir *My Guardian Angel* (1997)

Also commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival, in 1997, alongside Judith Weir's appointment as Artistic Director, *My Guardian Angel* sets a short text by William Blake and celebrates the increased incidence of public appearances by angels at Christmas time. The music of the carol is based around a short "alleluia," designed (hopefully) to be performed by the audience, while the choir weaves four-part counterpart around it.

– Notes © Max Parfitt, 2024

Benjamin Britten *Sacred and Profane*, Op. 91: I. St Godric's Hymn

(Old English:)

*Sainte Marye Virgine,
Moder Jesu Christes Nazarene,
Onfo, schild, help thin Godric,
Onfang, bring heylich
with thee in Godes Riche.
Sainte Marye, Christes bur,
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie min sinne, rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne with the self God.*

(Modern Translation:)

St Mary the Virgin,
Mother of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
Receive, defend and help thy Godric
(And,) having received him,
Bring him with thee in God's Kingdom.
St Mary, Christ's bower,
Virgin among maidens, flower of motherhood,
Blot out my sin, reign in my heart (and)
Bring me to bliss with that selfsame God.

Trad. *Oh love, sweet, love*

O love, sweet love, how consoling and refreshing is the balm of love?

(O love, sweet love, how consoling and refreshing is the balm of love?)

I will support through ev'ry trial bringing peace and joy.

Be ye filled, for 'tis holy, and my cup is running o'er.

(I will support through ev'ry trial bringing peace and joy.

Be ye filled, for 'tis holy, and my cup is running o'er.)

Gerald Finzi *Seven poems of Robert Bridges*, Op. 17: VI. Haste on, my joys!

Haste on, my joys! your treasure lies
In swift, unceasing flight.
O haste: for while your beauty flies
I seize your full delight.

Lo! I have seen the scented flower,
Whose tender stems I cull,
For her brief date and meted hour
Appear more beautiful.

O youth, O strength, O most divine
For that so short ye prove;
Were but your rare gifts longer mine,
Ye scarce would win my love.

Nay, life itself the heart would spurn,
Did once the days restore
The days, that once enjoyed return,
Return, ah! nevermore.

Benjamin Britten (cont.): II. I Mon Axe Wod

*Foweles in the frith,
The fisses in the flod,
And I mon waxe wod:
Mulch sorw I walke with
For beste of bon and blod.*

Birds in the wood,
The fish in the river,
And I must go mad;
Much sorrow I live with
For the best creatures alive.

Gerald Finzi (cont.): IV. Clear and gentle stream

Clear and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day;
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play

Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray,
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseeem
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,

Gerald Finzi (cont.): V. Nightingales

Beautiful must be the mountains whence
ye come
And bright in the fruitful valleys the
streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I
wander there
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly
air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent
the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts
our dreams

Benjamin Britten (cont.): III. The Long Night

*Mirrie it is, while summer ilast,
With fugheles song.
Oc nu necheth windes blast,
And weder strong.
Ey! ey! what this night is long!
And ich, with well michel wrong,
Soregh and murne and fast.*

Benjamin Britten (cont.): IV. Lenten is Come

*Lenten is come with love to toune,
With blosmen and with briddes rounne,
That all this blisse bringeth.
Dayeseyes in this dales,
Notes swete of nightegales,
Uch fowl song singeth.
The threstelcok him threteth oo.
Away is huere winter wo
When woderofe springeth.
This fowles singeth ferly fele,
And wliteth on huere wyne wele,
That all the wode ringeth.*

*The rose railleth hire rode,
The leves on the lighte wode
Waxen all with wille.
The mone mandeth hire ble,
The lilye is lossom to se,
The fennel and the fille.
Wowes this wilde drakes,
Miles murgeth huere makes,
Ase strem that striketh stille.
Mody meneth, so doth mo;
Icht ich am on of tho
For love that likes ille.*

That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

A throe of the heart
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes
profound
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound
For all our art

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and
bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn

Pleasant it is while summer lasts,
With the birds' song.
But now the blast of the wind draws nigh,
And severe weather.
Alas ! how long this night is,
And I, with very great wrong,
Sorrow and mourn and fast.

Spring has come with love among us,
With flowers and with the song of birds,
That brings all this happiness.
Daisies in these valleys,
The sweet notes of nightingales,
Each bird sings a song.
The thrush wrangles all the time.
Gone is their winter woe
When the woodruff springs.
These birds sing, wonderfully merry,
And warble in their abounding joy,
So that all the wood rings.

The rose puts on her rosy face,
The leaves in the bright wood
All grow with pleasure.
The moon sends out her radiance,
The lily is lovely to see,
The fennel and the wild thyme.
These wild drakes make love.
Animals cheer their mates,
Like a stream that flows softly.
The passionate man complains, as do more:
I know that I am one of those
That is unhappy for love.

*The mone mandeth hire light,
So doth the semly sonne bright,
When briddes singeth breme.
Deawes donketh the dounes,
Deores with huere derne rounes
Domes for to deme.
Wormes woweth under cloude,
Wimmen waxeth wounder proude,
So well it wol hem seme.
Yef me shall wonte wille of on,
This wunne wele I wole forgon,
And wiht in wode be fleme.*

Healey Willan *Rise up, my Love, my Fair One*

Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.
For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear upon the earth.
The time of singing of birds is come.
Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.

– *Song of Solomon 2:10-12*

Benjamin Britten (cont.): V. Yif Ic of Luve Can

*Whanne ic se on Rode
Jesu, my lemman,
And besiden him stonden
Marye and Johan,
And his rig iswongen,
And his side istungen,
For the luve of man;
Well ou ic to wepen,
And sinnes for to leten,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can.*

The moon sends out her light,
So does the fair, bright sun,
When birds sing gloriously.
Dews wet the downs,
Animals with their secret cries
For telling their tales.
Worms make love under ground,
Women grow exceedingly proud,
So well it will suit them.
If I don't have what I want of one,
All this happiness I will abandon,
And quickly in the woods be a fugitive.

When I see on the cross
Jesu, my lover,
And beside him stand
Mary and John,
And his back scourged,
And his side pierced,
For the love of man,
Well ought I to weep
And sins to abandon,
If I know of love,
If I know of love,
If I know of love.

Benjamin Britten (cont.): VI. Carol

*Maiden lay in the mor lay,
In the mor lay;
Sevenight fulle,
Sevenight fulle,
Maiden in the mor lay;
In the mor lay,
Sevenightes fulle and a day.*

*Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the –
The primerole and the –
Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the violet*

*Welle was hire dring
What was hire dring?
The chelde water of the –
The chelde water of the –
Welle was hire dring.
What was hire dring?
The chelde water of the welle-spring.*

A maiden lay on the moor,
Lay on the moor;
A full week,
A full week,
A maiden lay on the moor;
Lay on the moor
A full week and a day.

Good was her food.
What was her food?
The primrose and the –
The primrose and the –
Good was her food.
What was her food ?
The primrose and the violet.

Good was her drink.
What was her drink?
The cold water of the –
The cold water of the –
Good was her drink.
What was her drink?
The cold water of the well-spring.

Welle was hire bower.
 What was hire bower?
 The rede rose and the –
 The rede rose and the –
 Welle was hire bower.
 What was hire bower?
 The rede rose and the lilye flour.

Benjamin Britten (cont.): VII. Ye that Pasen by

Ye that pasen by the weie,
 Abidet a little stounde.
 Beholdet, all my felawes,
 Yef any me lik is founde.
 To the Tre with nailes thre
 Wol fast I hange bounde;
 With a spere all thoru my side
 To mine herte is mad a wounde

Gabriel Jackson I am the rose of Sharon

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.
 I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.
 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse:

Benjamin Britten (cont.): VIII. A Death

Wanne mine eyhnen misten,
 And mine heren sissen,
 And my nose coldet,
 And my tunge foldet,
 And my rude slaket,
 And mine lippes blaken,
 And my muth grennet,
 And my spotel rennet,
 And mine her riset,
 And mine herte griset,
 And mine honden bivien,
 And mine fet stivien –
 Al to late! al to late!
 Wanne the bere is ate gate.

Thanne I schel flutte
 From bedde to flore,
 From flore to here,
 From here to bere,
 From bere to putte,
 And te putt fordut.

Thanne lyd mine hus uppe mine nose.
 Of al this world ne give I it a pese!

Good was her bower.
 What was her bower?
 The red rose and the –
 The red rose and the –
 Good was her bower.
 What was her bower?
 The red rose and the lily flower.

You that pass by the way,
 Stay a little while.
 Behold, all my fellows,
 If any like me is found.
 To the Tree with three nails
 Most fast I hang bound;
 With a spear all through my side
 To my heart is made a wound.

I have gathered my myrrh with spice;
 I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
 I have drunk my wine with my milk:
 eat, O friends;
 drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
 he feedeth among the lilies.
 He brought me to the banqueting house,
 and his banner over me was love.

– *Song of Solomon* 2:1-3, 6:3, 5:1, 6:3, 2:4

When my eyes get misty,
 And my ears are full of hissing,
 And my nose gets cold,
 And my tongue folds,
 And my face goes slack,
 And my lips blacken,
 And my mouth grins,
 And my spittle runs,
 And my hair rises,
 And my heart trembles,
 And my hands shake,
 And my feet stiffen –
 All too late! all too late!
 When the bier is at the gate.

Then I shall pass,
 From bed to floor,
 From floor to shroud,
 From shroud to bier,
 From bier to grave,
 And the grave will be closed up.

Then rests my house upon my nose.
 For the whole world I care not one jot.

Judith Weir Vertue

I. Vertue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
 The bridal of the earth and sky;
 The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
 For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
 Thy root is ever in its grave,
 And thou must die.

II. Antiphon

Chorus Praised be the God of love,
Men Here below,
Angels And here above
Chorus Who hath dealt his mercies so,
Angels To his friend
Men And to his foe;

Chorus That both grace and glory tend
Angels Us of old,
Men And us in th'end.
Chorus The great shepherd of the fold
Angels Us did make,
Men For us was sold

III. Prayer

Prayer the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
 God's breath in man returning to his birth,
 The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
 The Christian plummet sounding heav'n
 and earth;

Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tower,
 Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing
 spear,
 The six-days' world transposing in an hour,
 A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
 A box where sweets compacted lie;
 My music shows ye have your closes,
 And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
 Like season'd timber, never gives;
 But though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.

Chorus He our foes in pieces brake;
Angels Him we touch;
Men And him we take.
Chorus Wherefore since that he is such,
Angels We adore
Men And we do crouch.

Chorus Lord thy praises should be more.
Men We have none,
Angels And we no store.
Chorus Praised be the God alone,
 Who hath made of two folds one.

Softness, and peace, and joy, and love,
 and bliss,
 Exalted Manna, gladness of the best,
 Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
 The milky way, the bird of Paradise,

Church bells beyond the stars heard,
 the soul's blood,
 The land of spices; something
 understood

Ralph Vaughan Williams Rest

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
 Seal her sweet eyes weary of
 watching, Earth;
 Lie close around her; leave no room for
 mirth
 With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of
 sighs.
 She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
 Hushed in and curtailed with a blessed
 dearth
 Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;

With stillness that is almost Paradise.
 Darkness more clear than noon-day
 holdeth her,
 Silence more musical than any song;
 Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
 Until the morning of Eternity
 Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
 And when she wakes she will not think
 it long.

– *Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)*

Judith Weir My Guardian Angel

The Angel that presided o'er my birth
 Said, "Little creature, form'd of Joy & Mirth,
 Go love without the help of anything and earth."

– *William Blake (1757-1827)*

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Toby Carr, Lute and Theorbo

Lutenist and guitarist Toby Carr is known as a versatile and engaging artist, working with some of the finest musicians in the business. While studying the classical guitar at Trinity Laban he was introduced to historical plucked instruments, an interest he pursued during a postgraduate degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, graduating in 2016 and welcomed back as a professor in 2021. Now in demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and continuo player, his playing has been described as "sensuous and vivid" (*The Guardian*), "eloquent" (*BBC Music Magazine*) and "mesmerising" (*Opera Today*).

Toby has performed with most of the principal period instrument ensembles in the UK and beyond, as well as with many symphony orchestras, opera companies and ballet companies.

Notable recordings include *Drop not, mine eyes* with Alexander Chance for Linn, and *Battle Cry* with Helen Charlston for Delphian, which won both BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone awards in 2023. He is a member of Ceruleo, Lux Musicae London, and Ensemble Augelletti, works frequently with vocal groups Fieri Consort and Ensemble Pro Victoria, and has appeared on recordings with all of these groups.

Catching Voices

Launched in 2020 (a project from Lockdown 1.0!), Catching Voices is a five-voice acapella ensemble made up of freelance singers – each based in London with Northern roots. The singers have performed individually with groups such as The Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, Tenetbrae, London Voices, Chamber Choir of London, the Taverner Consort, BBC Singers, Britten Sinfonia and the London Symphony Orchestra, and in prestigious venues around the world: the Berlin Philharmonie, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, St John's Smith Square, Abbey Road Studios, Westminster Abbey, and St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. The group has worked with Voces8 and I Fagiolini, and pride themselves on their range of genres and styles.

For individual biographies, see Hilary Cronin, Gabriella Noble, Lauren Macleod, Jacob Ewens, and Peter Edge.



Hana Chang. Photo by Kaupo Kikkas.

Hana Chang, Violin

Hana Chang was a winner of the 2023 Young Classical Artists Trust and Concert Artists Guild International Auditions held at Wigmore Hall. She was nominated as one of Classic FM's Rising Stars of 2024, and has recently been announced as a Borletti-Buitoni Fellowship recipient and a member of BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artist scheme 2024–26. Most recently, she was named a laureate of the 2024 Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition.

Over the course of the 2024/25 season Hana will make her debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Sinfonia Viva among others, and undertake a UK recital tour with venues including St George's Bristol, Holywell Room Oxford Leeds International Concert Season, and the Wigmore Hall. In February 2025 she will join an ensemble of artists who have been supported by the Young Classical Artists Trust for a European Tour celebrating the charity's fortieth anniversary.

Hana plays on a 1647 Nicolo Amati violin, kindly on loan from the Rin Collection in Singapore.

Sijie ("Susie") Chen, Violin and Leader of the Wild Arts Ensemble

Chinese-born British violinist Sijie ("Susie") Chen moved to the UK when she was five years old. While studying in the UK, US and Germany, she was a string finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. She now enjoys a varied career performing on modern and period violins.

As a chamber musician, Sijie has collaborated with artists including Nicola Benedetti, Roderick Williams, Alina Ibragimova, and many other wonderful musicians and friends; at the Edinburgh International Festival,

Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music, Roman River Festival and other festivals worldwide. She leads the Bloomsbury Players and Wild Arts Ensemble, and is the Artistic Director of Vermeer Chamber Concerts.

Sijie is the co-leader of the London Mozart Players. She tours with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and is a member of the Academy of Ancient Music. She also guests with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, United Strings of Europe, and on period instruments with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the English Concert, La Nuova Musica.

Hilary Cronin, Soprano

Selected by BBC Music Magazine as a Rising Star of 2022, Hilary Cronin won both First Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2021 London Handel International Singing Competition. Hilary trained at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and at Royal Holloway University, since establishing a reputation as an outstanding performer of Baroque music, and performing with ensembles including Academy of Ancient Music, Arcangelo, English Baroque Soloists, The English Concert, Florilegium, Irish Baroque Orchestra, London Handel Players, La Nuova Musica, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Polyphony, The Sixteen, and many more.

Hilary's operatic engagements have included Poppea in *Agrippina* (English Touring Opera), Mother in *Hansel and Gretel* (Silent Opera at Opera Holland Park), Céphise in *Pygmalion* (Dunedin Consort), and Têlaire in *Castor et Pollux* (The Rameau Project). Her recordings include *Second Lady Dido and Aeneas* (La Nuova Musica), now available on Pentatone SACD.

Anne Denholm, Harp

Studying at the Purcell School, Cambridge University, and the Royal Academy of Music, Anne has been on a crusade to promote the versatility and power of the harp since she worked on her first solo harp commission back in 2009. Now tutor of Contemporary Harp at the Royal Academy of Music, in 2020 she was elected an Associate there. She is Principal Harp with the BBC Concert Orchestra and also served as Official Harpist to HRH The Prince of Wales from 2015–2019. She has appeared as a soloist at festivals and series across the UK and the world, and has performed concertos with the London Mozart Players and the London Chamber Orchestra.

Peter Edge, Baritone

Shropshire-born baritone Peter Edge studied at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music. He has been a principal artist with English Touring Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, Hampstead Garden Opera, and Opera North. Elsewhere he has performed with Garsington Opera, The Grange Festival, and the Monteverdi Choir. Roles include Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Curio in *Guilio Cesare*, Le Dancaire in *Carmen*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème*, and Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes*. He makes his debut with The Royal Opera in the 2024/25 Season in *Trouble in Tahiti / A Quiet Place*.

Hannah Ely, Soprano

Hannah Ely is based in Belgium and specialises in the Renaissance and Baroque, performing as a soloist around Europe and the UK with early music ensembles including Il Gardellino, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ensemble Schirokko Hamburg, Yorkshire Bach Soloists, Alia Mens Ensemble, and Camerata Øresund. Hannah also enjoys singing with a range of small ensembles including Collegium Vocale Gent, Huelgas Ensemble, InVocare, Siglo de Oro, Musica Secreta, and Vox Luminis.

She is also one half of Duo Accenti with gamba player Harry Buckoke which explores the performance practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for solo voice and viol. She is the artistic director of Fieri Consort specialising in Italian and English secular music, with whom she recorded an album of solos and duets by Barbara Strozzi as well as five other albums of consort music and two new commissions.

Hannah completed her Masters in Advanced Vocal Ensemble Studies at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland in 2018, following her studies at Manchester University and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Selected for the Handel House Talent young artist scheme in 2018, she remains a part of the family and performs regular recitals in that historic London venue.

Jacob Ewens, Tenor

Hailing from Peckham, South London, Jacob's musical training began as a chorister at Westminster Abbey. Before his MA studies at the University of York, he was an organ

scholar at Keble College, Oxford, where he was a Music undergraduate. Jacob now works regularly as a singer with the UK's top vocal ensembles including the BBC Singers, Tenebrae, and The Monteverdi Choir. He also works as a producer recording groups such as The Marian Consort, SANSARA, The Gesualdo Six, and Gramophone Award-winning group, Ensemble Plus Ultra.

Ellie Fagg, Violin

Ellie Fagg divides her time between her family, the London Symphony Orchestra (where she has played for 20 years), and various chamber music projects. She co-founded the Puertas Quartet in 2010 (touring the UK and releasing two CDs to critical acclaim), and enSEMBLE26 in 2018, with whom she performed and recorded all ten Beethoven violin Sonatas for a worldwide online audience during lockdown. She has performed with players including Roman Simovic, Milena Simovic, Sacha Rattle, and Katherine Jenkinson; with groups such as United Strings of Europe and the Razumovsky Quartet; and has lead and directed the London Chamber Orchestra and St James's Sinfonia.

Ellie plays on a 1715 Daniel Parker violin, known as the 'Parker Stradivari.'

The Hermes Experiment

Winners of the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award 2021 and the Royal Overseas League Mixed Ensemble Competition 2019, The Hermes Experiment is one of the UK's leading young contemporary music ensembles. Capitalising on their deliberately idiosyncratic combination of instruments (harp, clarinet, voice, and double bass), The Hermes Experiment regularly commissions new works, as well as creating their own innovative arrangements and venturing into live free improvisation. They have commissioned over sixty composers (at various stages of their careers) and released two albums on Delphian Records – *HERE WE ARE* and *SONG* – both to critical acclaim.

Recent highlights include performances at Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Tallinn Music Week, Rotterdam's De Doelen, Spitalfields Festival and the RPS Awards. The Hermes Experiment were also one of the showcase artists the Classical NEXT Conference 2019.

Orlando Jopling, Cello and Conductor

Orlando Jopling is a conductor and cellist. His conducting work has ranged from guest music staff and conducting positions at the Royal Opera House, Royal Ballet, and English National Ballet, to performing and recording a huge range of orchestral repertoire with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the London Mozart Players, and the Irish Chamber Orchestra among many others.

His music making as a cellist has included over 150 solo recitals, recording the six Bach Cello suites to critical acclaim, a lifelong obsession with chamber music, and playing on numerous film scores and on tour as a guest tutti cellist with all of the great international orchestras based in London, most regularly with the Philharmonia and London Symphony Orchestra. Chamber collaborations include work with Anthony Marwood, Elena Urioste, Ben Goldscheider, Mark Padmore, Tim Ridout, Felicity Lott, Sijie Chen, Tom Poster, Simon Blendis, the London Sinfonietta, Rebecca Gilliver, Ben Gilmore, Endymion Ensemble, Lawrence Power, Piers Lane, Nika Goric, Tim Hugh, Boris Giltburg, James Gilchrist, and Benjamin Grosvenor.

He has collaborated with theatre companies, dancers and choreographers, poets, school pupils, students, folk musicians, global superstars like Sinead O'Connor, and visual artists. He has appeared in several feature films and TV series as a conductor, most recently as Pierre Monteux conducting an early performance of *The Rite of Spring*.

Lauren Macleod, Mezzo-Soprano

Lauren was born on the Isle of Lewis and brought up on folk music. A fluent Gaelic speaker, she won various awards at the National Mòd in Scotland, before studying first at the University of St Andrews (pursuing Physics), and then at the University of York (taking an MA in vocal studies), and the Royal Academy of Music. Her roles have included Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw*, Athamas in *Semele*, and Chocholka in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, among others, and she has performed under the batons of Andrew Parrott, John Eliot Gardiner, and Semyon Bychkov, among others.

Ignas Maknickas, Piano

Supported by the Young Classical Artists Trust, American-Lithuanian pianist Ignas

Maknickas was winner of the 2024 Award for Keyboard at the Royal Overseas League Annual Music Competition. He has appeared in concerto with orchestras including the Aarhus Symphony, Bloomington Symphony, Lithuanian National Symphony, and London Mozart Players, and led recitals at prestigious venues including the Wigmore Hall, Auditorium du Louvre, Charlottenborg Festival Hall in Copenhagen and Lithuanian National Philharmonic.

This season, Ignas' performances include concerts at Wigmore Hall, St George's Bristol and his debut at the Konzerthaus Berlin among others. Further afield he makes his Australian debut at the Bendigo Chamber Music Festival.

Ignas completed his Bachelor, Master of Arts programmes and Advanced Diploma Programme at the Royal Academy of Music.

The Monteverdi String Band

The Monteverdi String Band takes its inspiration from the sound, style and repertoire of the early violin consort, using seventeenth-century equipment to create a unique sound, "quite unlike any that of any other ensemble I know that plays this music" (*Planet Hugill*).

Much of the band's programming draws on the elaborate cultural milieu of early seventeenth-century Italy: the literary origins of the madrigal, the life of Galileo, and the private entertainments of the Venetian nobility have all inspired performances. They have collaborated with several opera productions at the Brighton Early Music Festival, and 2023 saw further collaborations with the Taverner Consort (Monteverdi's *Vespers*, Herrenchiemsee) and The City Musick.

The "Monteverdi String Band in focus" series, instigated during lockdowns when the full ensemble couldn't meet, offers smaller projects featuring individual ensemble members: in *Con Arte e Maestria*, Oliver Webber and Steven Devine explore virtuosic traditions of ornamentation. Released on Resonus Classics in 2021, it was described by Gramophone as "an intensely perfumed performance: beguiling then joyful, simple then suave." They followed this with *A Thousand Flexible Ways*, for voice (Hannah Ely), violin, and lute.

The Madrigal Reimagined is their latest venture, exploring the extraordinary musical afterlife of a relatively simple poetic form.



Ignas Maknickas. Photo by Kaupo Kikkas.

William Newell, Violin

William Newell is Principal Second Violin with Manchester Camerata, where he regularly collaborates with the orchestra's Music Director, Gábor Takács-Nagy, and some of the world's leading soloists. Elsewhere, he has performed with many of the UK's leading chamber orchestras including Manchester Collective, London Mozart Players, Royal Northern Sinfonia and 12 Ensemble, and his arrangements have been performed by the London Mozart Players, St Martin-in-the-Fields Players, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Originally from Romford, North East London, William attended the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Alongside his classical work, he is a member of the Mead Men (a sea shanty group); has played for Nonclassical and the Vortex Jazz Club; and has performed live with artists including Eminem, Laura Marling, Deacon Blue, Bring Me The Horizon, and Goldsmoke.

Gabriella Noble, Mezzo-Soprano

Gabriella is a Mezzo-Soprano and Conductor from London, about to begin on Guildhall

School of Music and Drama's Opera Course. Gabriella's interest are eclectic, but early music and contemporary music, for which she was awarded the Tracey Chadwell Memorial prize at Guildhall, remain key passions. Gabriella was recently the recipient of a Young Artist's Scholarship from Fundació Salvat, which saw her performing Bach Cantatas in venues and festivals across Europe, including under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki. She was awarded the Rodney Gibson prize for Early Music by the Association of English Singers and Speakers in 2023. Before embarking on a varied freelance career in singing and conducting she graduated with a First Class degree in Music from Oxford University, where she performed lead roles with New Chamber Opera and the experimental collective Leoe&hyde.

Gabriella is a 2024 Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera. She is passionate about interdisciplinary arts, and her singing is influenced by her love of poetry, visual art, and theatre.

Oliver Pashley, Clarinet

Oliver Pashley is a clarinetist based between London and St Leonards-on-Sea. Having studied at Cambridge University and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, he is a founding member of The Hermes Experiment and holds the position of Sub-Principal Clarinet with Britten Sinfonia.

Oliver plays regularly with orchestras and ensembles at home and abroad, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Collective, Riot Ensemble, and the Haffner Wind Octet, and as guest principal with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, and English National Ballet. In 2020, he recorded Mark Simpson's *Geysir* alongside Mozart's *Gran Partita* on one of Presto Classical's Recordings of the Year, receiving a Gramophone Editor's Choice award. He was also featured on Harry Escott's BAFTA-winning Soundtrack to the popular BBC Series *Roadkill* in 2020.

Bethany Reynolds, Piano (Young Artist Spotlight)

Bethany Reynolds is a nine-year-old composer, pianist, and cellist. She is a member of Saffron Centre for Young Musicians as well as Pro Corda, Europe's

leading International Chamber Music Academy.

She is laureate of several piano and composition competitions and most recently won First Prize at the Fanny Mendelssohn International Competition. Performance highlights include accompanying saxophonist Jess Gillam as part of her performance in Saffron Hall and, in May this year, making her concerto debut, playing the second movement of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 5* ("Emperor"). She recently enjoyed her first Masterclass with British pianist Tom Poster.

Marianne Schofield, Double Bass

Marianne Schofield studied academic music at Cambridge University and completed a postgraduate degree in double bass performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London, graduating with distinction and the Eugene Cruft Prize for double bass. She performs regularly with UK orchestras including Aurora Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, English National Opera, London Mozart Players, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Sinfonia of London, and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

A dedicated chamber musician, Marianne has performed with the Haffner Wind Ensemble, GBSR duo, the Solem Quartet, Navarra Quartet, United Strings of Europe, Chroma, and Manchester Collective. She is committed to presenting new music in an engaging way and, alongside her projects with The Hermes Experiment, she is an artistic board member of Riot Ensemble, London's award-winning new music collective. She has performed the premieres of many new solo works for double bass, including solo performances at Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Arctic Arts Festival Norway and MaerzMusik Berlin.

The Solem Quartet

Praised for their "immaculate precision and spirit" (*The Strad*) and "cultured tone" (*Arts Desk*), the Solem Quartet has established itself as one of the most innovative and adventurous quartets of its generation. Since winning the Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Competition 2014, the Solem Quartet has built a strong following. They enjoy a busy concert schedule, ranging

from international tours to performances at venues such as London's Wigmore and Queen Elizabeth Halls, Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw, Perth Concert Hall (subsequently broadcast by Radio 3), and the Tung Auditorium in Liverpool. They are Quartet in Residence at the University of Liverpool and regularly appear as guest teachers across the UK.

Stephanie Tress, Cello

Cellist and founder member of the Solem Quartet Stephanie Tress is a leading chamber musician and champion of contemporary music. Aside from the quartet, she regularly joins other chamber ensembles as a guest, including the Manchester Collective, the Jess Gillam Ensemble, United Strings of Europe, SE26 Ensemble, 12 Ensemble, London Chamber Orchestra and UPROAR. Steph is also a member of the experimental group House of Bedlam, with whom she regularly goes to Aldeburgh Festival and appears on BBC Radio 3.

Originally from Kingston-upon-Thames, Steph graduated from the Joint Course at Manchester University and the Royal Northern College of Music in 2014 with distinction. She performs regularly with the Manchester Camerata and the London Contemporary Orchestra, often as Guest Principal.

Stephen Upshaw, Viola

American violist Stephen Upshaw regularly appears in festivals around the world including the BBC Proms, Cheltenham,

Lucerne, Brighton, Huddersfield, Aix-en-Provence, Wien Modern, Donaueschingen and the Salzburg Chamber Music Festival. Recent recital and chamber music engagements have taken him to Boston's Jordan Hall, London's Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and Vienna's Konzerthaus, and seen him sharing the stage with artists such as Tai Murray, Jennifer Stumm, and Sheku Kanneh-Mason. As a member of London's Riot Ensemble, he has taken part in over 300 world premieres including the chamber music of Georg Haas and Sally Beamish (alongside the composer) and solo works of Mark Simpson, Michael Finnissy, and Errollyn Wallen. He serves on the faculty at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Junior Department, and Switzerland's Lucerne Festival Academy.

Sofiia Usmanova, Piano (Young Artist Spotlight)

Sofiia Usmanova, originally from Ukraine, is a Year 11 pupil at the Royal Hospital School. She studies piano under Christine Stevenson and organ with James Davy. Sofiia recently achieved outstanding success at the prestigious Ealing Festival of Music, where she won first prize in the solo category and earned a bronze medal in the exhibition class. In March this year, she was honoured as the winner of Colchester Rotary Club's Young Musician of the Year. Sofiia has also won multiple competitions and holds several performance diplomas from Ukraine.



The Solem Quartet (L-R: William Newell, Amy Tress, Stephen Upshaw, Stephanie Tress). Photo by Bertie Watson.

Huw Watkins, Piano

One of the UK's finest pianists, Huw Watkins has premiered works by Oliver Knussen, Tansy Davies, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Michael Zev Gordon and has performed concertos with numerous leading orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra and London Sinfonietta. His recordings include chamber music discs on Chandos, Signum and Nimbus; Alexander Goehr's piano cycle *Symmetry Disorders Reach* on Wergo; and music by Knussen on NMC. Watkins was awarded the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Elise L. Stoeger Prize in 2016.

Oliver Webber, Violin and Director of the Monteverdi String Band

Oliver Webber has been immersed in the world of historical violins and their relatives since the early 1990s. A passionate advocate for bringing research and performance together, his work in the field of string-making has been transformative, inspiring individuals and ensembles worldwide, and his study of historical bow-holds has played a role in several important recordings, including Gabrieli's award-winning readings of Purcell in 2019. For the Taverner Consort's recording of *L'Orfeo* in 2012, Oliver was invited to lead the string band, collaborating closely with Andrew Parrott on modelling every aspect of Monteverdi's own string band, including the elusive violini piccoli alla francese.

Oliver is a professor of baroque violin and viola at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. He was appointed a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in 2020, and used the absence of performing work to develop new teaching methods drawing on his passion for ornamentation.

Héloïse Werner, Soprano

French-born soprano and composer Héloïse Werner is currently an Associate Artist at Wigmore Hall and is "quickly becoming a latter-day Cathy Berberian or Meredith Monk" (Richard Morrison, *The Times*). Her debut album *Phrases* was released in 2022 on Delphian Records, and garnered widespread critical acclaim, including *Sunday Times*' 10 Best Classical Records of 2022, *Gramophone Magazine*'s Editor's Choice, *Presto Classical*'s Editor's Choice, *BBC Music Magazine*'s Choral/Song Choice, and *The Times*' Classical album of the week.



Héloïse Werner. Photo by Nick Rutter.

Héloïse's anticipated follow-up *close-ups* was released in June and launched at the Southbank Centre: "this is a record full of poise, curiosity and playfulness. Werner and her colleagues make music that is as singular as it is striking" (*The Observer*).

As a soprano, Héloïse has performed with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Grange Festival, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), and Nash Ensemble, and created the role of Madame DuVal in Sarah Angliss' opera *Giant* opening the Aldeburgh Festival 2023. As a composer, Werner has written for the CBSO, Aurora Orchestra, Maîtrise de Radio France, London Handel Festival, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Lawrence Power, Mishka Rushdie-Momen, Helen Charlston, and more, and has commissions in the pipeline for Manchester Collective, St Paul's Cathedral, BBC Singers, and Royal Northern Sinfonia among others.

Wivenhoe Youth Choir and Ben Vonberg-Clark

The Wivenhoe Youth Choir was founded in 2022 to provide a high standard of musical tuition and experiences for children between the ages of 7 and 13. The choir is directed and conducted by Ben Vonberg-Clark, a leading tenor and conductor. Taught by operatic tenor Nicky Spence, Ben trained at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, King's College London, the University of Vienna, and Durham University. He has sung with the BBC Singers, The Sixteen, La Nuova Musica, Tenebrae, the Eric Whitacre Singers and Stile Antico, and conducts the London Youth Boys' Choir and the University of Essex Choir.

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Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) <i>Trois pièces pour violoncelle et piano</i>	20	Hannah Peel (b.1985) <i>The Almond Tree</i>	30
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Giulio Caccini (1551-1618) "Io che dal ciel"	9	Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) <i>Trio pour Piano, Violon, et Violoncelle</i> , M. 67	24
Emilio de' Cavaliere (c.1550-1602) "O che nuovo miracolo"	9	Alvydas Remesa (b.1951) <i>Stigmatas</i>	16
Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) <i>La lune paresseuse</i>	27	Laurencini da Roma (fl.1550-1608) <i>Preludium in G</i>	[8]
Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) <i>Nocturnes</i> , Op. 27	16	Cipriano de Rore (c.1515-1565) See <i>Oliver Webber</i>	
Tom Coult (b.1988) <i>I Find Planets</i>	17	Franz Schubert (1797-1828) <i>Notturmo in E-flat major</i> , Op. 148	23
Claude Debussy (1862-1918) <i>Quartet in G minor</i> , Op. 10	20	Robert Schumann (1810-1856) <i>Kinderszenen</i> , Op. 15	14
<i>Children's Corner</i> , L. 113	14	Caroline Shaw (b.1982) <i>Plan & Elevation: I. The Ellipse</i>	27
I. Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum		Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) <i>Violin Concerto in D major</i> , Op. 35	34
Edmund Finnis (b.1984) <i>String Quartet No. 3, "Devotions"</i>	19	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) <i>Rest</i>	43
Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) <i>Seven poems of Robert Bridges</i> , Op. 17	42	Carl Vine (b.1954) <i>Five Bagatelles: I & II</i>	15
IV. Clear and gentle stream		Errollyn Wallen (b.1958) <i>Tree</i>	30
V. Nightingales		Huw Watkins (b.1976) <i>Piano Trio No. 2</i>	24
VI. Haste on, my joys!		Oliver Webber (b.1969) Diminutions on:	
Gabriel Jackson (b.1962) <i>I am the rose of Sharon</i>	43	I. <i>Vestiva i colli</i> (Palestrina)	10
Soosan Lolavar (b.1987) <i>Máh Didam</i>	29	II. <i>Anchor che col partire</i> (de Rore)	9
Cristofano Malvezzi (1547-1599) <i>Sinfonia à 6</i>	[8]	Judith Weir (b.1954) <i>Vertue</i>	44
Claudio Merulo (1533-1604) <i>Canzona 18</i>	[8]	<i>My Guardian Angel</i>	44
Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) <i>Cruda Amarilli</i>	9	Healey Willan (1880-1968) <i>Rise up, my Love, my Fair One</i>	43
<i>Ah, dolente partita</i>	9		
<i>Il Ballo dell'Ingrate</i>	9		
<i>L'Orfeo</i>	9, 10		
Laura Moody (b.1978) <i>Rilke Songs: Movements I & III</i>	28		

THE ROMAN RIVER FESTIVAL

Founded in the spring of 2000 after a weekend the previous autumn of a workshop for children and two concerts in Fingringhoe Church, Roman River Music was established to provide an annual festival that would combine classical music concerts in beautiful and atmospheric venues with opportunities and activities for local children. The name comes from the river that flows through the village into the nearby Colne. Initially just a weekend of activities based in and around Fingringhoe, it quickly expanded into Colchester and nearby villages, growing in size and reputation.

Now running for a week or more each year as part of Wild Arts' annual programme, the festival highlights a range of genres, styles, and spaces – giving musicians an opportunity to perform programmes that they are passionate about, while shining a light on stunning venues and locations around coastal Essex.

Next year Roman River will have flourished for twenty-five years. We are planning a bumper festival that celebrates the quarter century so far and looks ahead to the next twenty-five years.

WILD ARTS

Building on the Roman River Festival and its twenty-four year history, Wild Arts offers a year-round programme that takes world-class performances to beautiful places across the UK and Europe in an environmentally sustainable way, and is a 2024 International Opera Award nominee.

In just two years, the company has gained a series of five-star reviews and accolades from the UK press, and has enjoyed universal audience acclaim and return invitations from every venue it has performed in.

Since its founding in 2022, Wild Arts has enjoyed startling growth and now performs regularly in over forty UK and European festivals, theatres, and venues – reimagining works for modern ears and dramatising some of the great music of the last 400 years, including Handel's Messiah and Bach's St John Passion.

Wild Arts produces the Roman River Festival and the Essex Summer Opera Festival at Layer Marney Tower, and tours a new opera production each year:

2025 Eugene Onegin
2026 The Marriage of Figaro
2027 La bohème

Wild Arts organises schools projects both as part of the Roman River Festival and the Essex Summer Opera Festival at Layer Marney Tower. The projects introduce music to over 500 primary school pupils each year, delivering a wide programme of lessons, workshops, and performances.

Our Young Artists Programme gives several exceptionally talented musicians each year the opportunity to hone their craft in a professional production setting, gaining confidence through vocal, language and acting coaching, and through rehearsals and performances with an experienced ensemble of established artists.

For more information about Wild Arts and the Roman River Festival, please visit wildarts.org.uk, or contact us via info@wildarts.org.uk. If you would like to keep in touch, you can find us on Facebook or Instagram (Wild Arts / wildartspresents), or head to our website and subscribe to our mailing list.

BECOME A FRIEND



Performance for Schools at Layer Marney Tower (Photo by Lucy J Toms)



Our tiers of support start from a £35 Festival Friendship, offering priority booking to all our events in Essex, as well as regular newsletters and invitations to special events organised by Roman River and our local partners.
wildarts.org.uk/support-us



JOIN US

Everything we achieve would not be possible without the ongoing support of our patrons, donors, members and supporters, and those who remember us in their will. Donations from our generous Friends and Supporters have kept the Festival running for the last twenty-five years, and (as mainstream funding becomes ever more elusive) will do so for the next twenty-five. Our Friends enjoy being a part of our festival tradition of great performances and our life-changing programme for young people.

Over the next year we will be creating a Roman River Festival Endowment of minimum £100,000 that will underpin the Roman River Festival specifically and sustain its education work for the next 25 years. If you can contribute to that, or leave the charity something in your will, we and everyone who benefits from the festival will be enormously grateful. Please get in touch to discuss this, or just email us saying that your donation is particularly for the Roman River Endowment Fund.

Roman River Festival Friends £35 (or £3 per month)

Our Roman River Friends enjoy priority booking to events in Essex (the Roman River Festival and Spring Concert Series), as well as regular newsletters and invitations to special events organised by Roman River and our local partners.

Wild Arts Friends £75 (or £6.50 per month)

Our Wild Arts Friends receive all of the above plus priority booking for our whole UK-wide programme and all our productions – opera, chamber music, and more. Our Messiah at Layer Marney this December sold out in early August, and all four performances of the Magic Flute were packed to the rafters. Becoming a Wild Arts Friend really makes a difference to being able to get the tickets you want, and lots of people making regular contributions makes all the difference to our being able to plan confidently without spending enormous amounts of time raising funding.

Remember us in your will

Legacies are vital to ensuring the continuation of our incredible music education history, and leaving something to Wild Arts means that you will be giving joy and inspiration to young people and audiences for decades. You can stipulate exactly where you want your support to go. Education has been at the centre of the work done by Roman River Music, and it remains core to everything Wild Arts do. For information on leaving a legacy, please visit wildarts.org.uk/legacies

Dragonfly Friends and Patrons £250+

Our Patrons make a real difference to the quality of the festival and of our wider work. You can support a particular concert within the Roman River Festival, the Festival generally, or our wider work which includes the opera festival at Layer Marney Tower, the Messiah tours and our international performances. You will receive invitations to rehearsals, initial concept presentations by our creative teams, and our Young Artist Masterclasses (led by one of our patrons, Roderick Williams or Jeremy Sams), as well as a credit in all our programmes.

If you would be interested in joining us as a friend or partner, in gifting a friendship, or in making a one-off contribution, please visit wildarts.org.uk/support-us, or come and speak to one of us after the show.

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THANK YOU

Our huge thanks to everyone who has made this Festival possible in its twenty-fourth year – from our supporters, Friends, and hosts, to those who have donated their space, their time, or their expertise. Whether supporting all of our work, our music, our outreach, or our sustainability programme, you have ensured the survival of this festival as we head into our twenty-fifth year, and are the reason it will continue for another twenty-five, and another.

All the supporters of Wild Arts contribute to the Festival, including:

Individual Supporters Simon Hall & Nicki Bolton, Suki Cohen, Jonathan & Miff Minter, Caroline Steane, Celia Edey, Brooks & Lucy Newmark, Francis Norton, Timothy & Marisa Orchard, Rupert & Vanessa Watson, Bill & Kay Abbott, Christopher & Caroline Compston, Georgie & Andrew Garthwaite, Peter & Sarah Glossop, Jane Hindley, Jasper & Jennie Hunt, Patrick & Jayne Jennings, Zélie Jopling, Rupert & Leonie Marks, Mark & Jill Pellew, and our anonymous patrons.

Foundations & Sponsors Arts Council England, The Arts Society Colchester, Essex Community Foundation, Browns Solicitors, FSJ Charities, Colchester City Council Cultural and Creative Events Fund, Castleacre Insurance.



A special thank you to Dave Rado, Adrian Biggs, Suki Cohen, Mike Connell, Claire & Nicholas Cottrell, Clare Crick, Suzanne Cullen, John & Isobel Doubleday, Celia Edey, Clemency Evans, Tom Fenton, Charles Gooch, Linda Gossett, Grania Gregson, Jean Gray, Zélie Jopling, Gerald Ketley, Jo & D'Arcy Lambton, Jonny & Miff Minter, Annie Morris, Douglas Pike, and Raymond & Barbara Wright, as well as to those who have hosted our performers, including Marcus & Grania Gregson, and Tom Fenton & Sara Impey.

Last but not least, thank you to all our venues and those which have supported the festival – Colchester Arts Centre; St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall; St James the Great Church, Colchester; St Andrew's Church, Fingringhoe; Firstsite; All Saints Church, Fordham; Jumbo Water Tower; Layer Marney Tower; St Mary's Church, Wivenhoe; and Wivenhoe Estate, University of Essex – and everyone who has contributed along the way.



TEAM AND VOLUNTEERS

Artistic Director
Orlando Jopling

Producer, Roman River
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Jessica Chapman

Education Manager
Rebecca Milford

Associate Producer
Max Parfitt

Producer, Messiah
Kirsty Hopkins

Fixer
William McGahon

Ensemble Leader*
Sijie Chen

Production Assistant
Robin Huber

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Andrea Williams

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The Essex Summer Opera Festival 17 – 22 June 2025

Tchaikovsky **Eugene Onegin** Summer 2025

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The 25th Roman River Festival 19 – 28 September 2025

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