

The Lenthall Concerts

Season 2014-15

Michael Bochmann

Esther Cavett

Akash Sottar

Wednesday, December 10th 2014

Burford School

The Lenthall Concerts

Artistic Director: Michael Bochmann

Coming next:

Wednesday, January 14th Burford School

Vasara String Quartet Burford School

Programme to include Quartets by Ravel and Haydn (op77 no.2) and part of Grieg's Holberg Suite.

The Royal College of Music returns to the Lenthall Concerts with one of their prize-winning groups. The Royal College has a long and distinguished association with the Lenthall concerts and this quartet is the winner of the RCM String Prize. They appear with a group of musicians from Burford School..

Tickets: £14 at the door; £12 in advance from:

- The Lenthall Concerts (01993 822279)
- Madhatter Bookshop, 122 Burford High Street (01993 822539)
- Music Stand, 62 High St Witney (01993-774890)

WITNEY WINTER CONCERTS

Friday, December 12th 7.30pm

**Wood Green School, Woodstock Road,
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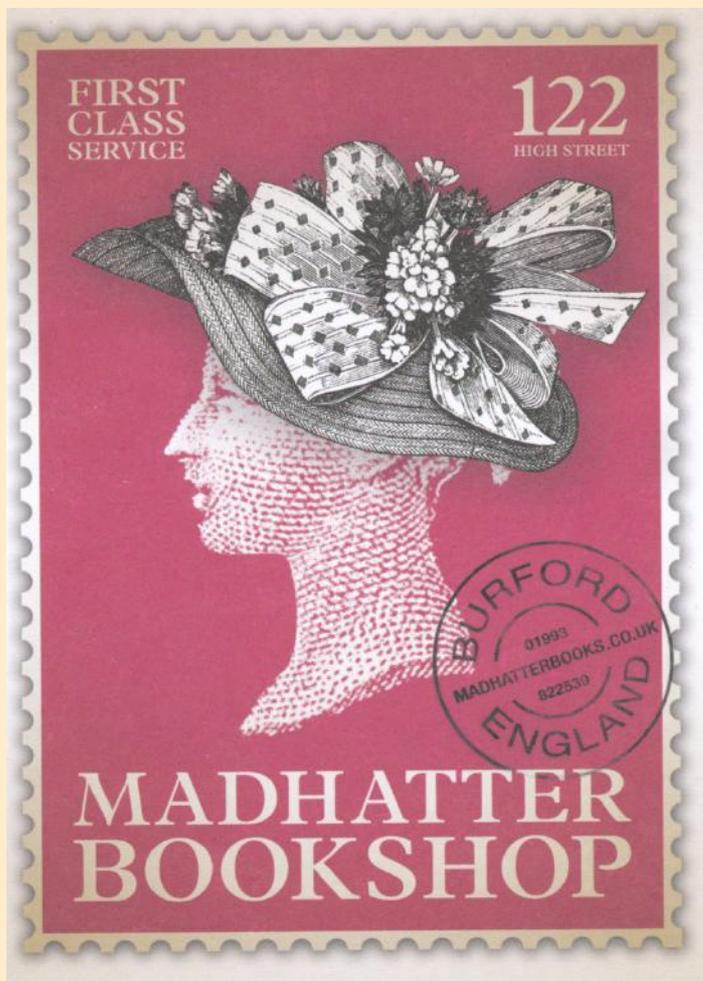
Duo Teresa Carreño

Ana Laura Manero piano

Arturo Serna cello

This duo, which takes its name from a famous 19th century Venezuelan pianist/composer, will perform a programme of cello music by Villa-Lobos, Ginastera, Debussy, ravel, de Falla and others, combining the Latin American and European musical traditions

**Tickets £11/£10 (under 18 £1)
from Music Stand, High Street;
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Programme

Raga 4

Akash Sottar

Violin Sonata no.5 in F op.24 ("Spring")

Ludwig von Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro

Adagio molto espressivo

Scherzo: Allegro ma non troppo

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Beethoven's Spring Sonata, op.24, was one of two sonatas which the composer intended to be published under the same opus number, possibly for performance as a pair; but the engraver made the mistake of producing one in the format that we know as landscape, and the other as portrait, making them impossible to bind as one volume. Such are the vicissitudes of formatting that we know only too well today. So the second sonata of op.23 became op.24. It was written in 1801 and dedicated to Count Moritz von Fries, one of Beethoven's greatest patrons, head of a notable Viennese banking firm and treasurer to the imperial court.



Count Moritz von Fries

The nickname 'Spring' seems to have arisen from the warm and easy nature of the piece and was certainly not of Beethoven's invention. The first movement does, indeed, start with a sunny enough tune, stated first by the violin and immediately repeated, somewhat more floridly, by the piano, but we are soon into a forceful second subject and some serious development. The initial melody returns in a comprehensive recapitulation and there is a good deal of playful treatment in the coda to finish the movement.

The *adagio* is as dreamy as Beethoven gets, the violin floating almost absentmindedly above the piano's undulations. The *scherzo*, the first such movement that Beethoven included in a violin sonata, is charming and surprisingly brief, and the *rondo* finale has a breezy menuet-like tune that gets a good going-over, much as in a set of variations, but with some sterner interpolations in the minor key.

Raga

Akash Sottar

Chanson de Matin
Chanson de Nuit

Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)

Though they share the same opus number, these two short pieces were probably not written as a pair. In 1897 Elgar, established as a composer but still embarrassingly short of income, wrote to A J Jaeger, whom he had recently met and who was to be immortalised as the "Nimrod" of the Enigma Variations. Jaeger worked for the publishers Novello, and Elgar offered him a piece which he had written some years before under the title "Evensong", although he suggested that "Vespers" might have greater appeal for the music-buying public. In the event Novellos decided that "Chanson de Nuit", being in French, might resonate even more with potential customers, and published it under that title. Two years later Elgar sent another piece, claiming to have just rediscovered it, and suggesting that it could form a companion to Chanson de Nuit, called Chanson de Matin.

The immediate appeal of the pair led to Elgar arranging them for string orchestra, and in this form they were given their premiere at the Queens Hall under Sir Henry Wood in 1901. This is the form in which they generally appear now, but like many works with a strong melodic core they have appeared in numerous guises, to say nothing of countless anthologised albums. Although Elgar probably originally thought of them as trifles, for local consumption, (Chanson de Nuit was written for, and dedicated to a local doctor, Frank Ehrke, who led the Worcester Orchestra) their qualities go beyond mere charm and pack much of what the ear recognises as quintessential Elgar in their three or four-minute spans.

Interval

*during which Patrick Powell, student at Burford School
will play two Chopin Nocturnes*

Well well Cornelius

Howard Skempton
b.1947

Promenade

(world premiere)

Howard Skempton

Raga

Akash Sottar

Praeludium and Allegro

Fritz Kreisler
(1875-1962)

Fritz Kreisler belongs to that glorious tradition of child prodigies whose reputation persisted throughout their lives. Born in Vienna, he entered the Conservatory when he was seven, three years under the minimum age, and by the age of twelve he had graduated from the Paris Conservatoire. At thirteen he had been launched on an international career, which at its peak saw him performing over 260 concerts a year

Siegfried Sassoon, in *Memoirs of Fox-Hunting Man*, writes of going to hear Kreisler play in an afternoon concert at the Queen's Hall. "There was something

in the quiet and confident little swing of his shoulders as he walked on to the platform; something about the way he bowed with his heels together; something about his erect and dignified attitude while the accompanist flattened the pages of the music on the piano; this 'something' impressed me very much". Kreisler's playing impressed him no less: "I knew then, as I had never known before, that such music was more satisfying than the huntsman's horn". Although we may not be able, as Sassoon was, to compare Kreisler's playing with the hunting boots he had been fitted for that morning, the many recordings that the violinist left show the perfectionist that he was, booted or unbooted.

He carried on another famous tradition among stellar violinists of composing virtuoso pieces to play himself. Unlike them, though, he wrote them anonymously, or at least passed them off as the work of others, coming clean only when he was 60 years old, having perpetrated his hoax for 30 years. Then the gaggle of mostly eighteenth-century composers whose names he had appropriated were allowed to sink into the background, some into near-obscurity. Gaetano Pugnani (1731-1798), whom Kreisler credited with the Praeludium and Allegro, however, still commands attention in his own right. He was born in Turin and when he was 21 became the first violinist of the Royal Chapel of that city. His virtuosity brought him fame throughout Europe and in the two years 1767-1769 he directed the King's Theatre in London.

It is a little hard to believe that anyone ever thought this was a piece of C18 music, although we do have the benefit of hindsight. Kreisler was first and foremost Viennese, and the flowing lines and 'romantic' harmonies are unmistakably those of a later period. But one can hear echoes of baroque composers in the way the piece is structured and how it progresses. But not in Kreisler's hands: it is one of the few of his pieces that he, a prodigious recording artist, never recorded.



Fritz Kreisler

Carols

Sung by Alice, Amelia, Andrei, Arthur, Ben, Clara, Daisy, Hebe, Isobel, Johnnie, Kaitlyn, Kitty, Lucy, Misha, Olivia and Richard from Combe Primary School, conducted by Deborah Manning.

Raga

Akash Sottar

The Performers

Michael Bochmann, violin, has been prominent in British musical life for several decades. He has performed in the USA, all over Europe and in India. While still a student, Michael was a finalist and winner of the British Prize in the 1972 Carl Flesch International Violin Competition. At only 19, he made his first solo broadcast for the BBC. In February 1990 Michael partnered Sir Yehudi Menuhin in the Bach Double Violin Concerto in a tour of 16 concerts throughout the USA and Canada. He frequently directs the English Symphony Orchestra and has performed as a soloist with them many times. The ESO recording of the Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams is often broadcast on Radio 3 and Classic FM. He is a professor of violin and chamber music at Trinity College of Music in London, and he gives private lessons, master classes and residential courses at his home in Gloucestershire.

Esther Cavett was awarded the Charles and Julia Henry Fellowship for doctoral research in Music Theory and Analysis at Yale University and subsequently became a Faculty lecturer in Music at Oxford University.

During that period she frequently performed as a pianist, having studied the piano with Guy Jonson at The Royal Academy of Music and, for contemporary music, with Susan Bradshaw. More recently she has studied with Thalia Myers, pianist and contemporary music specialist. She was invited to be an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, in recognition of her services to the music profession. Esther published widely on Mozart, music theory and many other topics. She is a Governor of the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and a Trustee of The City of London Festival. She, like

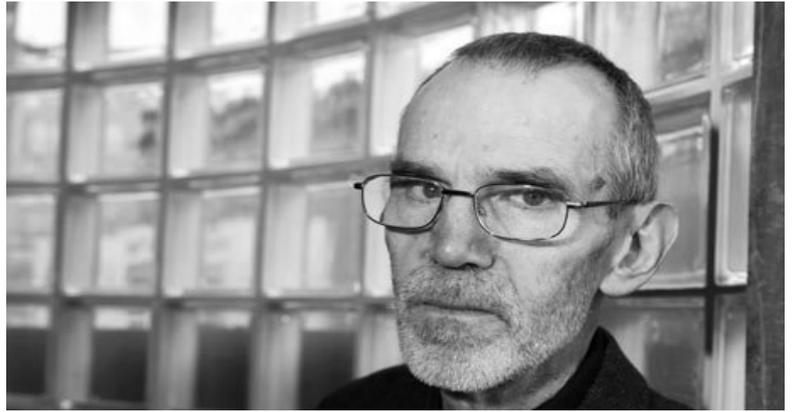
Michael, enjoys helping great music cross boundaries, to places it might not otherwise reach.



Akash Sultan was born in the UK but later raised in northern Bangladesh. At 18 he gained his first diploma in classical music from the Sylhet Music Academy and started his professional career, performing on radio broadcasts on a local and national level. He returned to the UK in 1992 to study and set about trying to immerse himself in music. It didn't take long before he was well established in the London Bengali music scene. He joined Grand Union in 1998, has since played at some of the UK's biggest and most prestigious venues and festivals including Sadlers Wells and the Leeds Mela. Akash completed his second diploma and post diploma in Indian Classical music under the supervision of Chandrima Misra of Patiala Gharana in 2011.

Howard Skempton

Howard Skempton was born in Chester and studied with Cornelius Cardew at Morley College, becoming a founder of the Scratch Orchestra, an ensemble dedicated to the performance of experimental music, with membership open to all. Some members, however, found it difficult to remain on board when it became heavily politicised, and in the early 70s Howard Skempton left to pursue a career in composing, editing and teaching, currently at the Birmingham Conservatoire. His best known work is "Lento" (1990), commissioned by the BBC for the BBC Symphony Orchestra. This was performed at the 2010 BBC Proms. 'Only the Sound Remains' was shortlisted for the 2011 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards. The piece, a large scale composition for viola and chamber ensemble, was written for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, and had its premiere in 2010. His first string quartet, "Tendrils", written for the 2004 Huddersfield Festival, won the Royal Philharmonic Society award for chamber-scale composition, and the Chamber Music category in the BBC Radio 3's British Composer Awards. 'The Moon is Flashing' won the 2008 award in the vocal category.



In an article for The Guardian in 2010 the conductor James Weeks described Howard Skempton's music as "austerely beautiful, sparse, decidedly enigmatic". Tonight's piece was commissioned by Michael Bochmann for the Lenthall Concerts.

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