

The Lenthall Concerts

Season 2014-15

Trinity Laban String Ensemble

Prima Corda

conducted by Nicholas Pendlebury

Wednesday, March 25th 2015

Burford School

Coffee Concerts at Christ Church, Cheltenham

Saturday, 28 March at 10.30.am

Piano recital by
Ashok Gupta
playing Beethoven's
Pastorale Sonata
and Liszt's *Dante Sonata*

Entrance free: donations to
Christ Church Fabric Fund.

JOHN TAYLOR PRESENTS

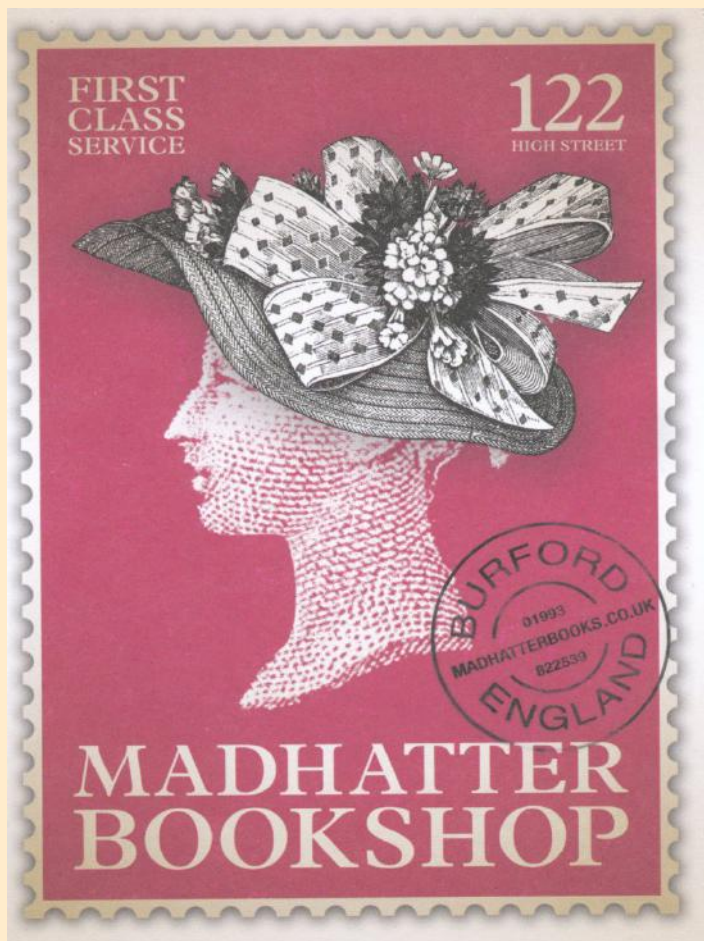
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Programme

Quartet no.1 JWVII/8 (The Kreutzer Sonata)

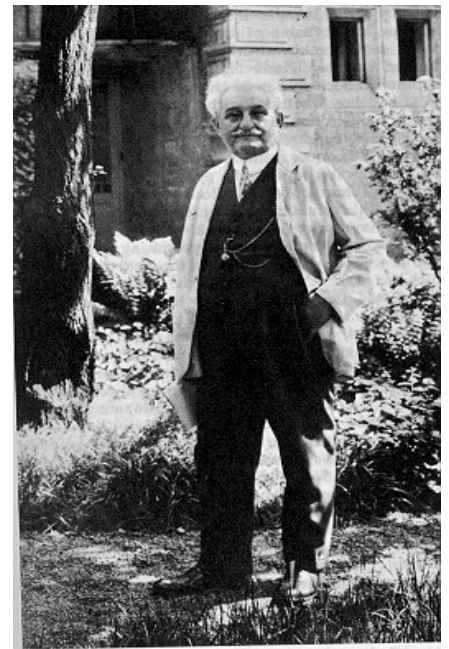
Leos Janacek
1854-1928
arr. R. Tognetti

Adagio con moto
Con moto
Con moto - vivo - andante
Con moto

It is not with Janacek's but Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata that this story begins. Beethoven's op 47 Sonata for violin and piano was dedicated to the violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer - rather oddly, as Beethoven had written the piece for the Afro-English violinist George Bridgetower, and Kreutzer dismissed the work as unplayable. The piece nevertheless inspired Tolstoy (who hated music) to write one of his great novellas, and this work made a great impression on Janacek, who in 1908 wrote a piano trio (now lost) based on that story of a woman's tragic love and betrayal. The first string quartet drew on this trio, and this arrangement for string orchestra, to bring this seemingly endless chain to a conclusion, was written by Richard Tognetti for the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

The central character in Tolstoy's story, Pozdnyshv, hears his wife accompanying the flamboyant violinist, Trukhachevski, in a performance of the Beethoven Sonata and conceives a violent jealousy which explodes when he returns from travels abroad and discovers the pair together. He stabs his wife to death with a curved 'Damascus dagger'.

The idea of a heroine as the victim of passion and social conventions recurs in other works by Janacek, most dramatically in the operas *Jenufa* and *Katya Kabanova*. In a string quartet the narrative has to be suggested rather than depicted. The first movement sets the scene and tells of the woman trapped in a loveless marriage, drawn to the man with whom she plays the sonata. The second movement develops the story, with the first violin portraying the lover, and follows their growing relationship. In the third movement the varying passions of the three are portrayed — love, seduction and jealousy — and a transformed theme from the Beethoven sonata appears.. The fourth movement depicts the murder of the wife by her husband, followed by his remorse as he contemplates her body. The work ends quietly in dignity and penitence.



Janacek

Romance in C op.42

Jean Sibelius

1865-1957

This short piece was written in 1904, the year of Sibelius's violin concerto and two years after his second symphony, of which faint echoes can be heard here. The composer originally gave it the title "Andante" but was persuaded to change this later by a critic's review. It does, indeed have a middle section at a slightly more lively speed ("*un poco chettino con moto*") than its beginning and end. Sibelius conducted its première in Turku, on Finland's south-west coast. The work shows him squarely in late romantic mode, and for all its solemnity it was a piece that the composer recalled in later life as representing a time when he was most truly happy.

Five Bagatelles op.23a

Gerald Finzi

1901-1956

arr. for clarinet and string orchestra by Lawrence Ashmore

Prelude
Romance
Carol
Forlana
Fughetta

Finzi was born in London into a prosperous family. He was one of four children, and his father was a successful shipbroker. However, this happy state of affairs was soon to end. In the space of a few years his father and three brothers died. It was then that Finzi first became aware of the transience of life—one of the major themes of his music.

He studied composition with Stanford, later becoming a professor himself at the Royal Academy of Music. He was a friend and admirer of Vaughan Williams, and was also influenced by English literature, especially Thomas Hardy, Thomas Traherne and William Wordsworth. More than half of his songs are to words by Hardy.

There was a period in the late 1930s and early 1940s when Finzi wrote virtually all his chamber music, including the Five Bagatelles (1938-43). This is a relatively unknown, yet extremely interesting part of his catalogue, and quite different from his earlier orchestral works. While his general musical style is somewhat sad and autumnal, the Five Bagatelles, although mainly wistful, do have their light hearted moments, especially in the last Bagatelle, *Fughetta*. Much of Finzi's music at the time was inspired by the English countryside (his home was on the Berkshire Downs) and these pieces do have a typically English air about them. While he was living on the Downs Finzi conducted the Newbury String Players, amongst whom was his protégé, Lawrence Ashmore, the writer this sympathetic arrangement.

The suite starts with a rather grand *Prelude* somewhat reminiscent in places of Elgar, followed by a slower *Romance*, a piece in the style of a *Carol* and the lilting *Forlana*. The final movement, *Fughetta*, finishes the piece on an upbeat, rather cheeky note.

Serenade for Strings in C op.48

Piotr Tchaikovsky

Pezzo in forma di sonatina: Andante non troppo -Allegro moderato

Walzer: Moderato. tempo di Valse

Elegie: Larghetto elegiaco

Finale (Tema Russo): Andante - Allegro con spirito

"Serenade" is one of those attractive words (even nicer in Italian) that has been used fairly freely over the years. Originally meaning a piece, usually sung, to be performed "on quiet or pleasant nights", it was commandeered in the eighteenth century for instrumental ensembles, initially for wind but in the time of the Mozarts, father and son, for strings. The orchestral serenade developed in the romantic period, although Tchaikovsky, who worshipped Mozart, retained a classical structure for his only composition in this form.

He wrote the Serenade for Strings in 1880, a year before the Piano Trio, alongside the *1812 Overture*, to which it bears absolutely no resemblance, and with which Tchaikovsky compared it extremely favourably. He wrote to his patron, the wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck:

The overture will be very showy and noisy, but will have no merit because I wrote it without warmth and without love. But the Serenade, on the contrary, I wrote from inner compassion. This is a piece from the heart.

Tchaikovsky went on to describe the first movement as "my homage to Mozart":

It is intended to be an imitation of his style, and I should be delighted if I thought I had in any way approached my model. Do not laugh, dear lady, at my zeal for standing up for my latest creation. Perhaps my parental feelings are so warm because it is the youngest child of my fancy.

The first movement starts with the solid descending scale that is to be the backbone of the whole piece. This gives way via an *accelerando* passage to the *allegro*, exploiting the various colours of the strings throughout. These two alternate until the emphatic opening theme returns to close the movement.

In the second movement we are instantly in the world of Tchaikovsky's ballets. In fact Balanchine famously choreographed the movement in 1936, and later the whole work. It dances eventually into the distance, and is followed by another great Tchaikovsky melody in the *Elegie*: sombre, perhaps, but a long way from the brooding sadness of the Sixth Symphony, thirteen years later. With its rising scales it is wistful rather than desperate: more after-the-ball than end-of-the-world. In any case, there is a surprise round the corner. The last movement starts in a similarly reflective mood to the *Elegie*, but we are suddenly swept into a breathless *Allegro con Spirito*, where the irresistible motif of the descending scales becomes a bustling undercurrent to two Russian folk tunes, and one sweeping melody that is Tchaikovsky's own. Then, the master stroke: the scurrying stops, a pause for breath and Tchaikovsky reintroduces the *andante* theme with which the work began, and then transmutes it into the exhilarating *allegro* which brings down the curtain.

Elliott Devivo *clarinet*

Elliott Devivo is a freelance clarinetist and bass clarinetist and is currently studying a masters in performance at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance as an Ann Driver Trust Scholar, where he is studying clarinet with Michael Whight and Joan Enric Lluna. Despite originally starting out his career in Architecture his passion for music soon transitioned into a freelance career performing and teaching around London and the South-East. Over the years he has taken intensive private studies with notable clarinetists such as Richard Hosford, Janet Hilton and Victoria Soames-Samek.

As well as playing orchestrally Elliott thrives on his interest in chamber music. In 2009 he founded the Waldegrave Ensemble, a flexible ensemble of winds, strings and piano which sets out to bring a wide range of works to communities around London and Surrey.

Over the past few years he has had several TV & Film appearances including SkyOne's 'League of their Own' with the Sinfonia Tamesa and as part of the orchestra in the 2011 film 'First Night' featuring Richard E Grant and Sarah Brightman.

Elliott's previous solo performances include the Mozart Clarinet Concerto with the Waldegrave Ensemble Chamber Orchestra, the Mendelssohn 'Konzertstucke No. 2' with the CLIC Sargent Charity Orchestra and the Krommer 'Clarinet Concerto' with Richmond Orchestra. His performances have taken him to many prestigious London venues, along with tours across Europe to Germany, Netherlands and Spain.



Nic Pendlebury *conductor*

Nic is Head of Strings at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London and leads one of the most vibrant string departments in Europe. As well as his administrative and managerial responsibilities he conducts several of the college orchestras including Trinity's String Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra with whom he has toured throughout Europe collaborating with many international soloists including Rivka Golani, Nick Daniel, Dmitri Ashkenazy, Darko Brlek, William Howard, Deniz Gelenbe and jazz musicians saxophonist Julian Argüelles and the groundbreaking American pianist Uri Caine. Most recently he collaborated with actor Edward Fox and script writer John Ginman in a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London in a concert entitled Wolfgang's Travel Notes. He was for many years guest conductor of the English Sinfonia and music director of the Karl Jenkins Ensemble whose infamous Adiemus CDs topped the UK charts for many years.

Nic is also the founder and violist of the internationally acclaimed Smith Quartet renowned for their performance of new music and prize winners of the Prudential Award for the Arts. The quartet have collaborated with many of the world's leading musicians including John Adams, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and Django Bates.

As a violist and a conductor he has worked with many of London's leading orchestras including London Mozart Players, English Chamber Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, English Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra. The more observant viewer may also have seen Nic playing the part of a ghost in Anthony Minghella's film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*.



Trinity Laban String Ensemble

Violin 1

Claire Sledd
Yuka Nagai
Corinna Hentschel
Rebecca Windram
Julia Hart
Josie Calver

Violin 2

Enrique Santiago Cabrera
Beatriz Carbonell Granada
Nandita Bhatia
Andrea Montalbano
Harriet Lawton

Viola

Caleb Sibley
Emily Hoyle
Kristin Chai
Elin Parry

Cello

Ivana Peranic
Olesya Sablina
Alice Perrin
Olivia Clayton

Double Bass

Steve Street
Jack Cherry

Prima Corda

Jennifer Statham *violin (Leader)*
Liam Jurgens *violin*
Tom Frith *violin*
Sophie Dunley *violin/viola*
Anoushka Oxley *viola*
Jacob Barnes *cello*
Esme Spry *cello*
Caitlin Wild *cello*

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