

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS
SEASON 2006-2007

Paul Arden-Taylor (oboe)

Michael Bochmann (violin)

Helen Roberts (viola)

Peter Adams (cello)

Wednesday, December 6th 2006

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS
COMING NEXT

Wednesday, January 10th 2007 7.30pm

Royal College of Music String Orchestra

directed by

Mark Messenger

Sarah Field (saxophone)

Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings
Glazounov Saxophone Concerto

plus other works to be advised

Tickets £9 advance from stewards or 01993 822412; £3 students; 50p under-18s

Abbey Chamber Recitals

St. Nicolas' Church, Market Place,
Abingdon

Sunday 10th December at 3pm

"The Lute's Delight"

Linda Sayce &

Edward Fitzgibbon

*A celebration of Renaissance
Music from England, Italy and
France*

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by reservation (tel. 1235 718420), or at the door
Ticket includes a cup of tea at a local hostelry
(01993 822539)

WITNEY WINTER CONCERTS

Friday, December 8th 7.30pm

Wood Green School

John Barker

(saxophone)

with pianist

*The winner of the 2006 Making Music (The Philip
and Dorothy Green) Award for young concert
artists.*

*In addition to his solo work John performs regularly
with the Tempest Saxophone Quartet on the late
Yehudi menuhin's Live Music Now! scheme. With the
quartet he has performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall
and at the Purcell Room as part of the Park Lane
Group series.*

Tickets £9/£7.50 (Children/WOC students £1)
from Music Stand, High Street;
C Greenway (Antiques), Corn Street; or at the door
Lenthall Members receive a further concession of £1.00.

Programme

(notes by Derek Smith)

Oboe Quartet in B flat
(after the String Quartet K172)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)
arr Derek Smith

*Allegro spiritoso
Adagio
Menuetto & Trio
Allegro assai*

There is a dearth of classical quartets for the combination oboe, violin, viola and cello. Fred Meyer, who has made a study of them, lists on his website only a handful of such works written between 1750 & 1825, plus a few which employ other combinations of strings, keyboard or other winds. Aside from Mozart (K370) the best-known composers featured are J C Bach, Danzi, Krommer, Stamitz and Vanhal, though Quartets by unknowns Luigi Gatti and Jan Mica are commended. Derek Smith's arrangement of K172 was made in 2002 after hearing Paul Arden-Taylor play Mozart's Concerto in C (K314) with Michael Bochmann's ESO ensemble.

The early string quartet KV172 dates from 1773 while Mozart was absent from Salzburg (in Milan and in Vienna). It shows the influence of Haydn's recent Op 17 and Op 20 string quartets (1770/1), though the structural mastery of the latter is not matched. Mozart was loth to abandon the display format of earlier string quartet music in which, instead of equality of the four voices, the virtuosity of the principal violin was contrasted with a more homogeneous harmonic accompaniment by the lower strings. Perhaps for this reason these quartets are now seldom performed, being overshadowed by his more popular "Quartets dedicated to Haydn" of 1782-5 and their successors. This neglect buries many lovely tunes and unusual musical turns of phrase which encourages reincarnation in the present form for Oboe & Strings to supplement the single masterwork from Mozart's own pen, the celebrated KV370 of 1781. A weakness in the original becomes a strength in this version for oboe which contrasts its plangent tones with the *ripieno* string texture.

String Trio movement in B flat, D471

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Written in 1816 when Schubert was nineteen, this perfectly-formed and utterly beguiling *allegro* sonata movement is the work of a mature musician with four symphonies, nine operas, eleven string quartets and countless songs already to his credit.

Pagan Piper / Pan Overheard

Christopher Ball
(b 1936)

Christopher Ball is a composer, arranger, conductor, clarinetist, recorder player and teacher, who celebrated his 70th birthday in July 2006. His tonal, melodic style of composition is instantly appealing, and these two short unaccompanied pieces are very evocative. *Pagan Piper*, composed in 1985, was inspired by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem *A Musical Instrument*. Following requests from friends and pupils for more, *Pan Overheard* was written as a companion piece a few years later.

Oboe Quartet in F, K370

Allegro
Adagio
Rondeau (Allegro)

Most probably written in 1781, the year of *Idomeneo*, for Mozart's Mannheim oboist Friedrich Ramm, this Quartet represents the apotheosis of oboe chamber music, as witness the number of performances available on CD. Surprising then at first thought that such a wonderful work was not published during the composer's lifetime. Less surprising when one considers the extraordinary difficulty of performance on the two-key baroque oboe, which would have required a lot of tweaking to play many of the notes. Perhaps the only other music sale would have been to the equally renowned 18th-century virtuoso Fiala who would no doubt also have sported a top F, a minor third above the usual baroque range. As well as having super tunes, the Quartet is remarkable formally for the compression of the wealth of material, not only in the sonata-form first movement but particularly in the heart-rending Adagio - only 37 bars long but encompassing a whole world of expression. The boisterous finale bounds along delightfully much as expected until at bar 95 the oboe heads off into quadruple time leaving the strings playing in triple. This culminates in five hectic bars wherein the solo instrument plays eight notes against three in the accompaniment, a novel passage even by today's standards. After more fireworks, including one *piano* top F, the work ends *pianissimo* with yet another F - perhaps to convince us that the earlier ones weren't flukes!

String Trio, Op. 10 ("Serenade")

Marcia (Allegro); Romanza (Adagio ma non troppo, quasi andante);
Scherzo (Vivace)
Tema con variazioni (Andante con moto - Poco piu animato - Piu adagio)
Rondo (Allegro vivace)

After a dazzling career as solo pianist, Ernő Dohnányi (1877 - 1960) became director of the Budapest Conservatory in 1919. In 1948 repression forced him to resettle in the USA. Older friend and mentor of Bartók, he composed in a cosmopolitan idiom embracing shifting tonality and chromaticism but was little influenced by Hungarian folk heritage. Besides the ever popular *Variations on a Nursery Song* for piano and orchestra, he wrote three symphonies, three operas, two other piano concertos and chamber music which includes two piano quintets and a very jolly sextet for piano, strings, clarinet and horn. The Serenade is probably his best known and loved chamber work. Although written, as so often, with tongue in cheek, Dohnányi tempers parody with genuine emotion. This is particularly evident in the fourth movement where each contrasting texture of the five variations conjures up a new sound stage. Throughout the work, skilled use of double-stopping combined with extensive arpeggio writing in the lower parts and judicious pizzicato, contrives to persuade the ear that a much larger ensemble is involved.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Ernő Dohnányi
(1877-1960)

Oboe Quartet, Op. 61

Allegro non troppo
Allegretto
Vivace con brio

During the twentieth century, a number of composers revived the oboe quartet form, usually when inspired by a virtuoso oboist. British composers, among them Boughton, Moeran, Lennox Berkeley, Jacob, Maconchy, Britten, Matthews and McCabe have all contributed to the oboe quartet literature. Dating from 1957, Malcolm Arnold's Quartet was written for the British virtuoso Leon Goossens to celebrate his sixtieth birthday. It is written in the composer's familiar idiom wherein a superficial frivolity is underscored by tonal conflict. In the cantabile opening subject of the first movement, B flat/F opposes A/E. Contrasting material is introduced by the strings in rhythmic unison, the real second subject appearing very properly on the viola. The ideas are worked together, culminating in a high-wire spat between oboe and violin which the oboe abandons on reaching his top F, leaving the fiddle to soar up to G. After the predominantly lyrical second movement with its pre-echoes of Sondheim, the rumbustious finale renews the tonal battle in a rondo-like format with intervening trill-like episodes, a pizzicato canon and some affirmative unisons. After threatening a lunge into D minor the quartet ends as it began in (almost) undisputed B flat major.



Malcolm Arnold

Arranging for Oboe

Although there is plenty of good modern music for oboe quartet, there are rather few classical or romantic works, which many audiences prefer. In recreating early classical string quartets as oboe music, one has to consider not just the smaller compass of the oboe as compared with the violin, its inability to play chords and its greater need for rests, but also the character and tessitura of each phrase in the original, whether it must remain within a string texture or whether the phrase lends itself to transcription for wind. In this, classical scoring is a guide, not least in contemporary symphonies and divertimenti. However the modern oboe and its virtuosi can play with greater agility than was usual two centuries ago and I have exploited this greater facility when and where the music requires it while remaining within the classical compass up to F in alt.

So as to increase the feeling of conversational dialogue which is fundamental to our modern concept of chamber music., melodic passages formerly attributed to the first violin have been shared out to oboe, violin, viola and very occasionally to cello (on temporary release from its fundamental support role). Some four-part passages of essentially string texture make use of chordal writing for the three strings designed to remain in character with string-trio writing of the early nineteenth century.

Derek Smith

Paul Arden-Taylor

Paul Arden-Taylor was born in Hertfordshire and studied oboe at the Royal Academy of Music with the late Janet Craxton, simultaneously becoming active in the early music world as a member of the Praetorius Consort. Upon leaving the RAM with four diplomas and the Leila Bull Oboe Award, of which he was the first ever winner, he was appointed principal oboe at the age of 20 with the Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet Orchestra. He later moved to the Midlands to join the BBC Midland Radio Orchestra, and has since built a wide-ranging freelance career, including regular work with the Royal Shakespeare Company band and as principal oboe with the English Symphony Orchestra, of which he is a founder member. He has played with many British orchestras and ensembles, and his talents as a multi-instrumentalist have kept him in demand for a plethora of recording sessions, ranging from playing penny whistle in an episode of *The Archers* to a commercial CD recording of the Recorder and Oboe Concertos by Christopher Ball. A keen interest in the technical aspect of recording has led him, over the last few years, to combine his performing career with work as an independent recording engineer and record producer. In 1997 Paul was awarded an honorary Associateship of the Royal Academy of Music.



Michael Bochmann

Brought up in Turkey and England, Michael Bochmann comes from a family of professional musicians. At 16, he entered the Royal Academy of Music on a scholarship to study the violin with Frederick Grinke. While still a student, he was the winner of the British Prize in the 1972 Carl Flesch International Violin Competition and a year later, prizewinner in the Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris. He received lessons at this time also from Sandor Vegh and Henryk Szeryng. Shortly after he made his first solo broadcasts for the BBC. He was appointed concertmaster of the English String and Symphony Orchestras in 1988. Two years later he partnered Yehudi Menuhin in Bach's Double Violin Concerto in a tour of eighteen concerts in the USA and Britain. He frequently visits Germany to perform and teach and in other spare moments promotes 10 chamber music series through his new enterprise "Opus 2000". He holds courses for young professional ensembles and soloists at his home in Gloucestershire.

Helen Roberts

Helen Roberts was born in Newport, Gwent and studied the viola with Walter Gerhardt. At the age of seventeen she joined the BBC Training Orchestra and two years later the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She was then appointed principal viola with the BBC Midland Radio Orchestra and in 1980 became principal of the English String Orchestra, with whom she has made many recordings and solo appearances. In 1990 she became violist with the Bochmann String Quartet and has performed and recorded a wide repertoire to critical acclaim. Helen is also a regular guest principal with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera Orchestra and frequently appears with the CBSO.

Peter Adams

Peter Adams was born in London in 1963 and began his musical studies whilst still at school, learning piano and later 'cello with Dennis Nesbitt and Maurice Zimble. At the age of sixteen he joined the orchestra of London Festival Ballet and in 1984 he was made principal 'cellist with the London String Orchestra and London City Ballet. At an early stage Peter became interested in the viola da gamba and this led to the forming of the early music group Musicos da Camera and his appointment in 1984 as the youngest ever professor at the Royal Academy of Music, teaching viol and baroque 'cello. In 1991 Peter became director of the Elizabethan Consort of Viols, and for five years he was senior lecturer at the London Guildhall University. He joined the Bochmann Quartet in 1996, and a year later he was appointed to the Principal Chair of the English String and Symphony Orchestras. He plays a 'cello by G.B.Roger dated 1697.

Derek Smith

Derek Smith studied conducting with Norman Del Mar and composition with Malcolm Arnold who was a master of instrumentation. He also learned a lot about musical phrasing while playing for Colin Davis. After playing brass in the National Youth Orchestra and horn in a wind quintet, for a decade he ran his own wind ensemble as conductor and arranger. He publishes much of his own music under the title GEMMA MUSIC (www.gemmusic.co.uk) but also has a publisher ARIEL MUSIC (www.arielmusic.co.uk) who handles his larger ensemble pieces for brass and for wind dectet.

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS

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