

BRISTOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Conductor: Tim Harrison
Leader: Bob Pinniger
Soloist (Oboe): Lucy Keeley

CONCERT PROGRAMME

Saturday 29th June 2019 7:30pm
Frenchay Parish Church,
Bristol

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Incidental music to *Abdelazer*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Overture – Rondeau - Aire – Aire – Minuett – Aire – Jigg – Hornpipe - Aire

Organist at Westminster Abbey from age 20, Purcell was England's greatest composer before Britten, who admired his work greatly. Purcell wrote both religious and secular music and is perhaps best known for Dido's great Lament at the end of his only opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, a magnificent piece heard in instrumental form on Remembrance Sunday and other solemn occasions. But he could also be light-hearted, as in the incidental music he provided for numerous plays or masques.

Abdelazer or The Moor's Revenge was a Restoration tragedy by the once famous female dramatist Aphra Behn. Purcell's elegant music, a series of dances, bears no relation to the play's lurid violence but served as light relief between scenes. The second of these is the theme chosen by Britten for the Variations in his *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Purcell's untimely death at 36 was a tragic loss to the musical world.

Oboe Concerto in D minor

Alessandro Marcello (c.1684-c.1750)

Andante - Adagio - Presto

Alessandro Marcello and his younger brother Benedetto were born into a noble and affluent family in Venice. Both were extravagantly talented and combined a life as musicians with one in unrelated professions as well as a high degree of literary activity. Alessandro belonged to an exclusive cultural society in Rome which met in gardens to read poetry or make music. Members wore masks and adopted pseudonyms for the sake of equality: his was Eterico Stinfalico, and his compositions were published under that preposterous name. He was a proficient violinist and, it may be assumed, singer. He composed cantatas as well as concertos for a variety of solo instruments.

It was Bach who unearthed this oboe concerto while researching the Italian style. He transcribed it for keyboard, and that is how, in the 20th century, it was rediscovered. The Adagio, during which the strings remain silent, is the best-known of all Marcello's works and is sometimes used at weddings.

Divertimento in F K138

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Andante – Allegro di molto – Allegro assai

Mozart wrote his three Divertimenti in 1772 at the age of 16 on returning to Salzburg from Italy. He was in the midst of composing a fairly weighty "opera seria", *Lucio Silla*, and may have turned to the then popular and smaller-scale divertimento form for light relief. Mozart's divertimenti (the word means "diversion" or "recreation") were probably intended for a small group of solo instruments and can be seen as his first contributions to the string quartet genre.

Although an early work, K138 is perfectly characteristic of Mozart, with complete mastery of form, clear, sparkling harmonies, and an irresistible elegance and charm. It is in the classic fast-slow-fast layout. The first movement relies on brilliant, rapid scale passages for effect, the second is serene and deeply felt, and the finale, in rondo form and including a few bars in a minor key, is irrepressibly humorous and zestful.

Interval

Two Slavonic Dances,

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Furiant and Polka, from op. 46

Dvořák's melodic inspiration and love of the musical traditions of his native Bohemia came out very strongly in his dances as well as in his beautifully crafted symphonies, chamber music, operas and songs. He was for a time employed as director of the New York conservatoire, at a salary 50 times what he had been earning in Prague, but was so homesick that he resigned and returned to his beloved homeland.

His more surprising passions, apart from alcohol, were pigeons, railway engines and steamships "He's rather an odd chap," said his great friend Brahms, "but his heart is in the right place."

Chanson de Matin and Chanson de Nuit

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Elgar became a practising musician early on but was largely self-taught as a composer. His breakthrough came with the performance of the *Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)* in 1899. Shortly afterwards his great choral work, *The Dream of Gerontius*, although not well received in Britain, was hailed as a masterpiece in Germany by Richard Strauss, and Elgar's fame was then assured both on the Continent and in Britain. However, what made him a household name was his Pomp and Circumstance Marches, especially No. 1, whose trio section was later set to the words "Land of Hope and Glory". His cello concerto is also held in very high esteem.

He was equally gifted at writing melodious and well-crafted miniatures. The *Chanson de Matin* and *Chanson de Nuit* are amongst his most charming pieces in this genre. They were composed in 1897, originally for violin and piano but later orchestrated.

Elgar spent much of his life in his native Worcester, from where the extensive and fascinating "Elgar route" makes a delightful excursion.

Lady Radnor's Suite

C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918)

Prelude – Allemande – Sarabande – Slow Minuet – Gigue

The reputation of Parry, Director of the Royal College of Music (1894-1918) and Professor of Music at Oxford (1900-1908) suffered unfairly at the hands (or pen) of the waspish critic Bernard Shaw and has only recently begun to be reinstated. Yet he wrote a large quantity of good-quality music both sacred and secular, some of it becoming very famous, including the *Songs of Farewell*, the anthem *Blest Pair of Sirens*, the coronation ode *I Was Glad* (1902, for Edward VII), and above all the hugely popular hymn *Jerusalem* (1916) in which the superb music triumphs over the very odd, though rousing, poem by William Blake.

Lady Helen Radnor of Longford Castle, near Salisbury, conducted her own chamber orchestra and in 1894 commissioned Parry, a personal friend, to compose the Suite we play tonight. Tuneful and uncomplicated, it follows the form and manner of the early classical suites of dance movements

Tim Harrison, originally from Neath, South Wales, came to Bristol University to study music, specialising in composition and orchestration. He achieved a master's degree in performance on the viola at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, and while there formed his own orchestra, Cardiff Camerata, which prided itself on performing neglected music alongside more popular works. He later gained a PGDip with Distinction for his performances with Sinfonia Newydd and the RWCMD Symphony Orchestra. Now living in Bristol and teaching music in a secondary school, he is in demand as a conductor throughout the wider Bristol area.

Bob Pinniger began piano and violin lessons at an early age at the Garjulo School of Music in Bristol. He played in the National Youth Orchestra and became an Associate of the Royal College of Music in 1967. He enjoys playing in small ensembles and performs in concerts at Bristol Music Club. He has given concerts in the Chapel at Tyntesfield the local National Trust property and plays for their various Christmas events. In his other roles, he performs with Bristol Concert Orchestra and is kept busy as Secretary of Bristol Music Club. He has a long history with Bristol Chamber Orchestra, joining when he was 15 years old, and conducting the orchestra between 1992 and 2003.

Lucy Keeley attends Redmaids High School, where she has been taking her GCSE examinations. Oboe is her main instrument, on which she was awarded distinction in the ARSM performance diploma last year. She has also achieved Grade 8 distinctions in both piano and recorder. She has played in the National Children's Orchestra, the Bristol Youth Orchestra and the Bristol Preconservatoire, and is looking forward to a residency with the National Youth Orchestra this summer.

The **Bristol Chamber Orchestra**, founded in 1963, has several professionally qualified players amongst its members, and gives five or six public concerts a year, occasionally combining with other instrumentalists to perform concertos and chamber symphonies.

Violins: Bob Pinniger, Sarah Beetham, Susan Burdock, Wendy Gillman, Jenny Heathcote, Trevor Jennings, Lisa Orton, Vanessa Pinniger, Morven Ringrose, Celia Skrine, Julia Smyth, Erica Wright

Violas: David Jewell, Edna Cause, Catharine Deam, Dee James, Joan Sidgreaves

Cellos: Anne Tyler, Alison Bell, Carolyn Little, Peter Soothill, Catherine Tayler, David Trott

Double bass: Martin Sanders

Harpichord Continuo: Clare Griffel

Next concerts of the Bristol Chamber Orchestra:

Saturday 23rd November 2019 Trinity Henleaze United Reformed Church
Friday 3rd April 2020 St. Mary Magdalene Church, Stoke Bishop