

FOUR VIOLINS Saturday 24 July 2021, 12.30pm | St Martin-in-the-Fields

Amanda Smith Catherine Morgan Helena Smart Robert Salter

Grazyna Bacewicz Quartet for 4 Violins

Julian Andersen Ring Dance

Bartok Selections from 44 Duos

Sally Beamish Prelude and Canon

Telemann Sonata in D Major from Six Sonatas without Bass TWV 40:101-106

Charles Dancla Variations on 'Ah! vous dirai-je, Maman!' Op.161

Grazyna Bacewicz (1909-1969) Quartet for 4 Violins

- I. Allegretto Allegro giocoso
- II. Andante tranquillo
- III. Molto allegro

A student of Nadia Boulanger, Grazyna Bacewicz was an outstanding violinist who performed across Europe before a serious injury sustained in a car accident forced her to give up playing. Turning to composing and teaching composition, her folksy Quartet for four violins, written in 1949 as a teaching piece, consists of three contrasting movements that show a strong influence of neo-classicism. It remains one of her most popular and frequently performed compositions.

Julian Anderson (b. 1967) Ring Dance

Robert Salter and Helena Smart

'I've always been fascinated by dance, especially collective dancing which usually takes the form of dancing in a circle. Ring Dance is the earliest example of this obsession, but quite deliberately it does not dance. Instead it offers a dance in slow motion – extremely slow motion, allowing the listener to hear all the details of sounds such as overtones, sum and difference tones, instability of bowing pressure. The work is extremely loud and slow throughout – an attempt to create a music which is in a perpetual state of climax. The only interpretation marking in the work is at the start of the score: "with unimaginable joy!" Note by Julian Anderson

Béla Bartók (1881-1945) Selections from 44 Duos for Two Violins

Catherine Morgan and Robert Salter

Bartók did not intend this work to be played in performance, but rather to be useful as a work for young students. The work was commissioned by Erich Doflein, a German violinist and teacher. This intention for educative works was exploited by the fact that he was a teacher himself, then he chose to write works for his pupils to play. Nevertheless, all songs and dances included in this series are based on east European folk songs, but harmonic and rhythmic freedom is evident throughout the whole piece. Catherine and Robert perform 7 duos from the collection:

- 35. Ruthenian Kolomeika
- 38. Romanian Whirling Dance
- 28. Sorrow
- 39. Serbian Dance

- 42. Arabian Dance
- 43. Pizzicato
- 44. Transylvanian Dance

Sally Beamish (b.1956) Prelude and Canon for two violins

Amanda Smith and Catherine Morgan

This short duet is 'canonic' throughout; the opening Prelude leading to a true canon, beginning with the second violin. In the central, slower section, the violins reverse, and the first violin is the lead voice to the end of the piece, which ends with a brief coda referring to the Prelude. As well as hinting at the musical language that Stradivarius would have known, 'Prelude and Canon' is inspired by traditional Scottish fiddle music, and Pibroch; the classical music of the Highland bagpipes. Note by Sally Beamish

G. F. Telemann (1681-1767)

Sonata in D Major from Six Sonatas without Bass TWV 40:101-106

Helena Smart and Amanda Smith

- 1. Dolce
- 2. Allegro
- 3. Largo
- Vivace

Telemann cultivated to a considerable degree the genre of chamber music without continuo. His 'Six Sonatas without Bass' exhibit a strict cyclic organisation, in terms of both tonality and form. All six sonatas are in four movements and based on the same formal pattern. In the slow movements, expansive baroque thematic material is intertwined with more charming galant features. The fast movements are usually cast in an imitative, fugal style, or, with their capricious rhythms and delicate figuration, they approach suitelike models. The cycle displays fascinating characteristics in its musical substance and development its treatment of sonority, and in its compositional craftsmanship. Helena and Amanda perform the Sonata in D Major.

Charles Dancla (1817-1907)

Variations on 'Ah! vous dirai-je, Maman!' Op.161

A childhood prodigy, Dancla attended the Paris Conservatoire studying violin with Piere Baillot and composition with Fromental Halevy. Strongly influenced by Paganini and Vieuxtemps, from 1835 he was soloist and concertmaster with Paris Opera. In the late 1850s he became a professor at the Paris Conservatoire and taught for more than 30 years.

Introduction Variation 6 i. viii. Variation 7 ii. Theme ix. iii. Variation 1 Variation 8 Х. Variation 2 xi. Allegretto risoluto iv

Variation 3 V. Variation 4 vi. vii. Variation 5

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