

Sunday 24th January 2021 at 7.30pm

Live from The Coach House

In the 19th century, the spirit of nationalism was a powerful force, enriching sound, form and performance practices of European classical music. Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák and Leoš Janáček emphasised their Czech heritage by using native language, folk melodies, dances and characteristic rhythms. Nationalistic topics provided subject matter for larger works, such as operas, symphonies and tone poems as well as smaller genres including character pieces and sonatas. By recasting the Italian, French and German musical models, they found profound inspiration in their roots. All three composers used musical ideas that referenced their country, but it was Janáček who collected and preserved Moravian folk songs and really incorporated them in his classical compositions through his use of modality, pentatonic scales, and vocal parts modelled on the inflections of the Czech language (particularly the “Moravian” dialect).

String Quartet No. 1 in E minor “From my Life” (1876)

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

1. *Allegro vivo appassionato*
2. *Allegro moderato alla polka*
3. *Largo Sostenuto*
4. *Vivace*

David Adams violin, Lucy Gould violin, Rebecca Jones viola, Alice Neary cello

While Smetana was composing his masterpiece symphonic poem *Ma Vlast* he also began writing his two string quartets. The first quartet is pioneering in its programmatic style. As the title implies, the music tells the story of his life ending in the last movement with his increasing tinnitus depicted by a high E harmonic in the violin. Smetana wrote clearly about what each movement represents:

1. My intention was to paint a tone picture of my life. The first movement depicts my youthful leanings towards art, a Romantic atmosphere, the inexpressible yearning for something I could neither express nor define and also a kind of warning of my future misfortune. The long persistent note in the finale owes its origin to this. It is the fateful ringing of the high-pitched tones in my ears, which, in 1874, announced the beginning of my deafness. I allow myself this small joke
2. The second movement, a quasi-polka, recalls the joyful days of my youth when I composed dance tunes and was widely known as a passionate lover of dancing.
3. The third movement (the one which, in the opinion of the gentlemen who play this quartet, is unperformable) reminds me of the happiness of my first love, the girl who later became my first wife (and whom Smetana sadly lost to tuberculosis, caught in the harsh Gothenburg climate).
4. The fourth movement describes my discovery that I could incorporate national elements in my music, and my joy in following this path until it was terminated by the onset of my deafness, the outlook into a sad future, the tiny rays of hope of recovery; but remembering the promise of my early career

Smetana also wrote that the quartet is “purposely written for four instruments which, as in a small circle of friends, talk among themselves about what has oppressed me so significantly”. The tragedies of his life included losing his first wife to TB and three of his four daughters in infancy. His position when writing the quartet was one of poverty and pain, living in the country on a meagre pension and with advancing syphilis. However he used the quartet to look back on good times as well as bad times with touching melodies, folk music and a wonderful elegant aristocratic dance in the middle section of the polka. The opening viola line in the first movement is very striking and Smetana was lucky enough to have a young Antonin Dvořák to play this in the first performance.

Pohádka (Fairy Tale)

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

1. *Con motp*
2. *Con moto*
3. *Allegro*

Alice Neary cello, Jâms Coleman piano

Although Janáček’s chamber music output is not large, each piece is expressive, original and highly charged. Like several other composers of this period, he based many of his works on a story or programme.

Podhaka, composed in 1910, has a programme based on V A Zhukovsky’s epic poem of 1832, ‘The Tale of Czar Berendej’; The Czar promises his unborn son, Ivan, in ransom to Koschei, the ruler of the underworld. When Ivan grows up, he bravely sets out to meet Koschei. On the way he comes across a lake on which 30 ducklings are swimming. On the shore are 30 beautiful gowns and Ivan steals one; to his surprise, the ducklings swim ashore, put on the gowns and turn into beautiful young maidens. Of course there is one duckling left forlorn, but the kind-hearted Ivan gives her the gown and she turns into the most beautiful maiden of all! They fall in love and plan to marry, but neither their parents nor Koshei approve of the match. But after many adventures, including an elopement on horseback, they do get married and live happily ever after.

The first movement is the most clearly programmatic; we can hear the rippling lake in the piano part, and the fanfare-like pizzicato in the cello seem to describe the approach of Ivan. After a beautiful love duet in which cello and piano sing together, the elopement on horseback can be heard. In the original manuscript, Janáček included a subtitle ‘The Tale of Czar Berendej’, but he later removed it, perhaps not wanting to restrict the imagination of his audience by following one particular story, rather aiming to evoke the mood and magic of all fairy tales.

Piano Quintet in A major Op.81

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

1. *Allegro, ma non tanto*
2. *Dumka Andante con moto*
3. *Scherzo (Furiant): molto vivace*
4. *Finale: Allegro*

Lucy Gould violin, David Adams violin, Rebecca Jones viola, Alice Neary cello, Jâms Coleman piano

Dvořák wrote his first piano quintet in 1872, but was so disappointed with it that he later burnt the manuscript. Luckily his friend, Ludevít Procházka, had had a copy made, so the music was saved. It was never performed however, and it was not until 1887 that Dvořák asked his friend for a copy to look at so he could revise it for publication and performance. After five months of working on this he eventually gave up and decided to write a new one instead. It seems the frustrations of reworking the earlier quintet lit his creative fire once again and this 40 minute masterpiece took him only six weeks to complete.

This is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces of the chamber music repertoire. Dvořák was at the height of his powers and success, and shows his complete mastery of the ensemble with ever more beautiful melodies and

ever more inventive accompanimental figures. The first movement's opening cello melody sets a melancholy tone, but the movement is full of contrasts, fire and drama. The viola is the opening protagonist of the wonderful second movement. The rich tone of his favourite instrument tells its story like an old man to his grandchildren. This returning melody is contrasted first by a more relaxed singing section and eventually by increasingly exciting dance music.

The Furiant 3rd movement is also an energetic dance, with characteristic cross rhythms, but magically contrasted with a dreamlike trio section. The final movement is an uplifting and full blooded rondo with one recent commentator suggesting: "This movement should be given serious consideration by the medical community as a viable replacement for prescription antidepressants."

DAVID ADAMS violin



David is leader of the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera and also the violinist of the London Bridge Trio. Alongside these commitments he teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and is co-Artistic Director of the Penarth Chamber Music Festival with his wife, cellist Alice Neary. In his role at WNO David has performed several concertos with the orchestra and enjoys directing concerts from the violin. He has appeared as guest leader with most of the orchestras in the UK.

As a chamber musician David is equally at home on violin and viola and makes regular guest appearances, recordings and broadcasts with the Nash Ensemble, Endellion String Quartet, Gould Piano Trio and Hebrides Ensemble. He has recorded the complete Brahms Piano Quartets with the Gould Piano Trio and the Beethoven String Quintets with the Endellion String Quartet. He regularly attends the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove.

David belongs to a musical family - his father, John Adams, was Principal Viola of the Halle Orchestra. After being encouraged and guided by his father his principal teachers include Daniel Phillips, Zvi Zeitlin, Malcolm Layfield and Misha Amory (viola).

LUCY GOULD violin



Lucy is best known as the violinist and founder member of the Gould Piano Trio, one of the UK's most respected ensembles. Several international awards, a busy schedule and an impressive discography (core repertoire, lesser known works and commissions) are testament to Lucy's dedication to this genre since embarking on her career.

Lucy studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London and Indiana University, Bloomington with Gyorgy Pauk and Josef Gingold. In addition, masterclasses with Andras Schiff, Menahem Pressler and members of the Amadeus String Quartet at Prussia Cove and the Banff Centre for the Arts were a source of great inspiration in the early days. She enjoys all aspects of the repertoire, having performed sonatas with Leon McCawley, clarinet trios with Robert Plane, horn trios with David Pyatt, Richard Watkins and Alec Frank-Gemmill and chamber music of all shapes and sizes with many of the leading artists in this field at festivals in the UK and abroad. Her experience has led to

invitations to appear on international juries.

Lucy is a regular guest leader of many UK orchestras and holds the position of principal 2nd violin with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. As part of the COE Academy she often gives lessons and advice to up and coming violinists and has directed student performances of Beethoven and Mozart symphonies.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS, SPRING SEASON 2021

Sunday January 24th, 7.30

Sunday February 14th, 7.30 - Beethoven and Brahms

Good Friday April 2nd, 7.30 - Haydn: Seven Last Words, with readings

More information can be found on our website:

www.penarthchambermusicfestival.org.uk

REBECCA JONES *viola*



Rebecca moved to Cardiff to take up the post of Principal Viola of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales after freelancing in London for many years. She was Assistant Principal Viola of the City of London Sinfonia and continues to play guest principal with many UK orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the baroque group Arcangelo with whom she performed the *6th Brandenburg Concerto* at the Wigmore Hall. She is a frequent session musician and has toured with Adele, Bjørk and the Stereophonics. Rebecca is also a long-time member of the Callino String Quartet. They have played at London's Wigmore Hall, have twice been resident at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada where they met and collaborated with Arcade Fire, and spent a week in New York with the famed contemporary specialists the Kronos Quartet, culminating in a recital at Carnegie Hall.

Rebecca's musically formative years were spent in Manchester at Chetham's School of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music, followed by postgraduate studies with Thomas Riebl at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg.

ALICE NEARY *cello*



Alice enjoys a varied performing career as a chamber musician and as principal cellist of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Familiar to listeners of Radio 3, festival performances include BBC Proms chamber series, Malboro (USA), Bath International, Santa Fe (USA) and Lofoten. Her discography includes the Mendelssohn cello sonatas and concertos by Howells, Patterson and Tovey.

Alice was a member of the Gould Piano Trio from 2001-2018 - career highlights included the complete piano trios of Beethoven, Schubert and Dvorak at the Wigmore Hall, the commissioning of new works from Sir James MacMillan and Mark Simpson, regular tours of USA and over 25 CD releases. She collaborates with pianists Viv McLean, Benjamin Frith and Daniel Tong and has appeared as guest cellist with the Nash Ensemble, Ensemble 360 and the Endellion, Elias and Heath quartets. Regular visits to Wye Valley Festival and International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove provide ongoing inspiration.

Alice studied with Ralph Kirshbaum at the RNCM and, as a Fulbright Scholar, with Timothy Eddy at Stonybrook, USA. Alice teaches at RWCMD where she was awarded a Fellowship in 2015. She and her husband, David Adams founded the Penarth Chamber Music Festival in 2014. Alice plays a cello by Alessandro Gagliano of 1710.

JÂMS COLEMAN *piano*



From Anglesey, North Wales, Jâms is a pianist who enjoys a rich and varied musical life performing as a soloist, chamber musician and vocal accompanist. Recent recital highlights include performing with Sir Bryn Terfel in a live Radio 3 broadcast from St David's Hall, Cardiff and performing with bass-baritone Michael Mofidian in a livestreamed recital at the Oxford Lieder Festival. Recent recordings include a disc of Loewe songs with baritone Nicholas Mogg for Champs Hill Records, and future recording plans include a recital disc of Czech and Hungarian music with cellist Laura van der Heijden for Chandos Records.

As a vocal accompanist, he enjoys collaborating with many singers and his engagements include recitals with Ailish Tynan, James Gilchrist, Sir John Tomlinson, Robert Murray, Nicholas Mulroy, Nicky Spence, Robert Murray, Andrew Kennedy, James Newby, Lauren Fagan, Michael Mofidian and Nicholas Mogg.

Chamber-music engagements include performances in the UK and across Europe with instrumentalists Laura van der Heijden, Jamal Aliyev, Steffan Morris, Timothy Ridout, Peter Moore, Luke Hsu, Clío Gould and Maggie Faultless. He has performed live on BBC Radio 3, BBC World Service, BBC 2's Proms Extra, BBC Radio Cymru and S4C. Jâms enjoys performing solo recitals and as a concerto soloist. Concerto performances include Beethoven's Third, Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos and concertos by Chopin, Brahms and Mozart.

Jâms read Music at Girton College, Cambridge, where he was also a choral scholar. In 2016 he graduated with a Masters from the Royal Academy of Music where he then stayed on as a Fellow. In 2018 he was the Artistic Director of a concert series based in St Clement Danes Church in central London which featured twenty-four lunchtime concerts and five evening concerts.
