



A Musical Tribute for His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on the 100th Anniversary of his birth

Thursday 10 June 2021 at 6.30pm

Prince Philip was our most senior honorary member for many years. He was elected a member of one of our predecessors, the United University Club in 1953. This Memorial Concert was recorded in the Smoking Room and is introduced by Christopher Sayer, our Club Chairman.

Ralph Vaughan Williams
The Lark Ascending

Peter Warlock
Sleep

Charles Dibdin, realised by Britten
Tom Bowling

George Gershwin
Rhapsody in Blue

César Franck
Sonata in A Major

Michael Foyle
Maksim Štšura
Samantha Quillish

Violin
Piano
Soprano



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS 1872-1958

The Lark Ascending 1914 revised 1920

Vaughan Williams, symphonist, composer of opera, song, chamber and film music - was among the towering personalities of English music during the last one hundred and fifty years. He was, as others of his contemporaries, an early collector of Folk Music, and in 1906 edited and contributed two famous tunes to the *English Hymnal*. As a boy he played the violin, and his wide ranging literary and poetic tastes included the Rossettis, Hardy, Housman, Tennyson, and Meredith whose poem, of the same name, inspired *The Lark Ascending*, which evokes the skylark in beautiful -almost celestial song. The composer began working on the piece just as the First World War broke out, but returned to it when he himself returned from the war in 1919, and this may well have heightened his nostalgia for a simpler world that no longer existed. Many regard *Lark Ascending* as one of the supreme achievements of English musical landscape painting, where Vaughan Williams suggests the song of the lark, ever rising, through the flourishes of the violin solo. The piece was originally composed as a short romance for violin and piano, but later orchestrated as a concerto with solo violin, first heard in 1921, the year of Prince Philip's birth.

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain and sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.

Till lost on his aerial wings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

George Meredith 1828-1909

PETER WARLOCK 1894-1930

Sleep 1922

Peter Warlock, the pseudonym of Philip Arnold Heseltine, was composer, critic and author. He was educated at Eton, and was helped in his studies by Delius, about whom he wrote a book and composed a *Serenade* for his 60th birthday. He was a friend E J Moeran and Constant Lambert. Warlock's most performed works are his *Capriol Suite* and song-cycle *Curlew River*. His songs alternate between a Delius-like lyricism and the boisterous, a roistering more redolent of some festive jollities of the first Elizabethan age. They reflect too the disparity in Warlock's personality- the extrovert, and the introspective, of which *Sleep*, a setting of a 1607 poem by the Jacobean playwright John Fletcher, is an example. It is set in the somewhat sombre and reflective key of G Minor, but in the final chord, resolves itself optimistically into the G Major chord- the so-called *tierce de Picardie*, a familiar conceit of music of this nature right down to the 18th century and beyond.

Come, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
 Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dreams beguile
 All my fancies; that from thence
 I may feel an influence
All my powers of care bereaving.
Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
 Let me know some little joy!
 We that suffered long annoy
 Are contented with a thought
 Through an idle fancy wrought:
O let my joys have some abiding!

John Fletcher 1597-1625

CHARLES DIBDIN 1745-1814 realised by BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913-1976

Tom Bowling 1789

Charles Dibdin was a composer, impresario and singer, born in Southampton, the youngest, it is said, of eighteen children, and destined for the ministry of the church. As a boy he sang in Winchester Cathedral choir, but when in 1764 he arrived in London he began to write words and music for pantomime and 'musicals' and is credited with over six hundred songs, many of which he himself sang. In the world of London theatre he became a collaborator and close associate of David Garrick.

Tom Bowling dates from one of his 'table entertainments' - '*The Oddities*'; it draws on the folksong, sea shanty tradition in its unadorned simplicity, and was written shortly after the composer's sailor brother Tom was lost at sea. This lament, poignant as it is beautiful, in a most soulful realisation by Britten which he performed and recorded together with the tenor Peter Pears - both of whom were inspired by the Suffolk coast, and for whom the poem had much resonance. It is equally most movingly recorded by Robert Tear accompanied by André Previn.

Tom Bowling tonight is chosen in homage to Prince Philip's strong maritime connections. It was a song that, reportedly, brought tears to his eyes.

Here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew;
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For death has broached him to.
His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft.
Faithful below, Tom did his duty,
And now he's gone aloft.

Tom never from his word departed,
His virtues were so rare;
His friends were many and true-hearted,
His Poll was kind and fair:
And then he'd sing so blithe and jolly,
Ah! many's the time and oft;
But mirth is turned to melancholy,
For Tom is gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather,
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call life's crew together.
The word to pipe all hands:
Thus death, who kings and tars despatches,
In vain Tom's life hath doffed;
For though his body's under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft.

GEORGE GERSHWIN 1898-1937

Rhapsody in Blue 1924

Gershwin was born in New York and died in Hollywood. He was the composer of many hits, among them *Swanee*, *I Got Rhythm* and *Porgy and Bess*, his opera, finished only within a couple of years of his short life. He was 26 when *Rhapsody in Blue* was first performed in the Aeolian Hall, New York to great critical acclaim. It had been originally composed for two pianos, and it was the 'king of jazz' Paul Whiteman's orchestral arranger, Ferde Grofé, who added most of the orchestration. Gershwin's biographer relates that the piece was inspired by the sound of railway wheels beating time as they passed over the gaps in the rails on Gershwin's journey from New York to Boston. The famous trill followed by the clarinet glissando marking the unmistakable start to *Rhapsody in Blue*, was only introduced rather cheekily as a joke by the clarinetist, Ross Gorman, during the first rehearsal. Gershwin loved it- and there it stays. Tonight we hear an energetic arrangement for solo piano.

CÉSAR FRANCK 1822-1900

Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major 1886

Allegretto ben moderato

Allegro

Ben moderato: rtecitativo-Fantasia

Allegretto poo mosso

César Franck was born in Belgium, where he toured the country as a pianist aged 13, before moving to Paris, studying at the Conservatoire, and becoming choirmaster and organist at Sainte- Clotilde in the 1850s. There he developed an outstanding ability for improvisation which attracted visitors from far and wide, including Liszt, who declared Franck's talents akin to J S Bach. César Franck's compositions at this time- which included one of his three operas, received little public recognition, and his middle years were largely devoted to religious works- including a significant choral piece *Les Béatitudes*, and the ever popular *Panis angelicus*. In his later composition he developed a 'cyclic form' where a theme, varied or modified, returns in each section of the work. His harmonic idiom, as with so many others of his time, owed quite a lot to Wagner, but stamped with an individuality of his own that influenced not only many of his own pupils, but later generations- such as Messiaen and his contemporaries.

The Violin Sonata was a wedding present for the young virtuoso violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, and was first heard after a hurried rehearsal at the nuptials with the bridegroom as soloist. The first movement, with a gentle rocking melody, is the thematic core of the work. Franck originally intended it as a slow movement, but Ysaÿe preferred a slightly quicker tempo, and convinced the composer to mark it *Allegretto*. The second movement is one of turbulence, and considered by some as the real opening movement. The *Recitative-Fantasia* is improvisatory by nature, both in form and expression, and in the last movement the main melody is heard in a famous canonic imitation- a notable and compelling feature, incidentally, of Franck's other signature piece- *Panis angelicus*. Of the sonata canon James Harding wrote- 'a magnificent example of canonic writing, simple, majestic and irresistible in its ample, beautifully wrought proportions'.

Programme notes adapted from the introduction by Christopher Sayer, Chairman

The Foyle-Štšura Duo was formed in 2012; the violinist Michael Foyle and the pianist Maksim Štšura. They won the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe Duo Competition and the Salieri-Zinetti International Chamber Music Competition in 2015.

Since then, the Duo has played recitals in the Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre, Buckingham Palace, Bridgewater Hall, Usher Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, as well as at the New York Chamber Music Festival and the Cervantino Festival in Mexico.

The Duo has released two CDs: *The Great War Centenary* for Challenge Classics and *Lutosławski and Penderecki: Complete Violin and Piano Works* for Delphian Records, to enthusiastic acclaim ('delivered by both artists in sweeping style' – *BBC Music Magazine*, 'richly detailed and impassioned performances' – *The Daily Telegraph*). In 2020 they released the first volume of Beethoven's Violin Sonatas cycle.



Samantha Quillish is a lyric Soprano who recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music's Opera School. While there she appeared in a number of operatic works including the title role in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*, Iris in Handel's *Semele*, and Papagena in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. In concert Samantha has performed as the soprano soloist in Verdi's *Requiem*, Mahler's *2nd Symphony* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. She first sang in the Wigmore Hall as a soloist in a concert of Clara Schumann Songs, then revisited the venue as a finalist in the Royal Academy of Music's Bicentenary Competition and as a soloist in Independent Opera's Showcase of young artists. The concert of Clara Schumann songs also took Samantha to her first performance as part of the Leeds Lieder Festival. As well as being awarded an Independent Opera Voice Scholarship and Fellowship, Samantha Quillish holds a Dip RAM for outstanding performance. She has appeared in public masterclasses with Susan Bullock and Ubaldo Fabbri as well as a masterclass on Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder* with Dame Felicity Lott, which culminated in an evening concert together.



IN MEMORY OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

This concert was planned as a gift for the 100th birthday of His Royal Highness with members invited to make donations in his name to his chosen charity. The Duke's death sadly prevented this, but His Royal Highness was aware of our plans and had granted his permission for the concert to take place. He had asked for donations to be made to the charity Book Aid International.

The recording was adapted to become a Memorial Concert and if you so wish, make a donation here in his memory. The Duke felt that Book Aid International was an excellent fit for the Oxford and Cambridge Club as it is the UK's leading international book donation and library development charity. The Club is pleased to fulfil Prince Philip's wishes in this way.

The Club is using a Just Giving account so that members who are eligible to do so are able to add Gift Aid their donation.

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