

Cathedral Concert Society

The Music Serenade

Andrew Long *violin*

Robert Ashworth *horn*

Ian Buckle *piano*



Monday 12 November 2018 | Ripon Cathedral

www.riponconcerts.co.uk

Welcome

A very warm welcome to audience and our Leeds-based musicians alike.

Once more we are exploring new territory: Procter-Gregg will be a name unfamiliar to most music lovers. Andy Long and Ian Buckle have just recorded a CD of three of his unrecorded violin sonatas. It is hoped that this will provide the opportunity to engage with younger musicians at the UK's music conservatoires but, in particular, given P-G's historical connections, the Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester University. The realisation of this will undoubtedly bring Procter-Gregg's compositions the richly deserved and long overdue attention of a wider public.

As yesterday saw the 100th year anniversary of the end of WW1, I thought it would be appropriate to share a fragmentary poem by Wilfred Owen (who convalesced in Ripon before returning to the front in 1918) on the theme of music:

I KNOW THE MUSIC

All sounds have been as music to my listening:
Pacific lamentations of slow bells,
The crunch of boots on blue snow rosy-glistening,
Shuffle of autumn leaves; and all farewells:

Bugles that sadden all the evening air,
And country bells clamouring their last appeals
Before the music of the evening prayer;
Bridges, sonorous under carriage wheels.

Gurgle of sluicing surge through hollow rocks,
The gluttonous lapping of the waves on weeds,
Whisper of grass; the myriad-tinkling flocks,
The warbling drawl of flutes and shepherds' reeds.

The orchestral noises of October nights,
Blowing [] symphonic storms
Of startled clarions []
Drums, rumbling and rolling thunderous and [].

Thrilling of throstles in the keen blue dawn,
Bees fumbling and fuming over sainfoin-fields.

Roger Higson, Chairman

Cathedral Concert Society

Patron: Julius Drake

Monday 12 November 2018 The Music Serenade

Programme:

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Adagio and Allegro for horn and piano, Op. 70

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9

– interval –

During the interval refreshments will be available in the South Transept.

Humphrey Procter-Gregg
(1895–1980)

Sonata No. 1 in A minor for violin and piano

Johannes Brahms

Trio for violin, horn and piano in E flat major, Op. 40

Andante

Scherzo (Allegro)

Adagio mesto

Finale (Allegro con brio)

Piano by courtesy of Making Music and the North West Piano Centre

we get on with



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Schumann: Adagio and Allegro for horn and piano, Op. 70

During Schumann's residence in Dresden as the city's director of music, from 1844 to 1850, he was in frequent contact with the local musicians. Richard Wagner, filled with revolutionary political and musical ideas, was then conductor at the Royal Opera House, which boasted one of the finest orchestras on the Continent. A chief member of that ensemble was a player named Lewy, a virtuoso who headed the orchestra's horn section and who was also one of the earliest exponents of the recently developed valved instrument, the so-called "*ventilhorn*", which allowed the production of the complete chromatic scale. Schumann was so impressed with the possibilities of the improved horn, and with the expressive avenues for it that Wagner had opened in his operas (*Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser* had all been staged by 1845), that he undertook both a grand, concerted piece for not just a single horn but for an entire quartet of the instruments, as well as a two-movement chamber piece for horn and piano. The *Konzertstück* for Four Horns and the *Adagio and Allegro* that he devised were both showpieces for the valved horn and were hard enough to be proclaimed by some as virtually unplayable - Schumann's biographer Robert Schauflier decided that in the *Konzertstück*, "the difficulties are so horrendous that it needs almost the trump of an archangel to cope with them."

The *Adagio and Allegro* dates from 1849 (composed just a couple of days after the

Fantasiestücke), when Schumann was in good health and spirits, and producing music with greater ease and speed than at almost any other time in his life - some thirty works date from what he referred to as "my most fruitful year". It is a work of optimism and good cheer whose two contrasting movements (Schumann originally considered titling the piece "*Romance and Allegro*") achieve a particularly satisfying formal balance - the tenderness of the *Adagio*, followed by the ecstatic happiness of the *Allegro*, shows Schumann at his most romantic. When the score was published in 1849, Schumann allowed that the solo part could also be performed on violin, viola or cello.

Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9

In 1852, two years before his final mental collapse, Robert Schumann collected several of his miniatures for solo piano, composed between 1836 and 1851, and published them under the title *Bunte Blätter* (Coloured Leaves), Op. 99. It consisted of two groups: *Drei Stücklein* (Three Small Pieces) and five *Albumblätter* (Album-leaves). The first of the *Albumblätter* was a favourite of his wife, Clara. The poignant theme included a sequence of notes spelling out Clara's name which Schumann had used so often before that it has been called 'Clara's Theme'. In May and June of 1853 Clara wrote a set of variations on the theme (her Op. 20), dedicating it to Robert and presenting the autograph to him as a gift on his forty-third birthday, the last birthday he would spend with

his family. Her inscription read, "To my beloved husband on June 8, 1853; this renewed feeble attempt from his old Clara." She composed very little after this.

Schumann's growing mental disturbances climaxed on 27 February 1854 when he attempted suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine. Fearing that he would harm his family, he insisted that he be sent away. On March 4 he was committed to an asylum in Eendenich, near Bonn, not far from the family home in Düsseldorf. He died in the asylum two years later on 29 July 1856.

Although Brahms, aged twenty, had met the Schumanns only a few months earlier, on 30 September 1853, Robert, Clara and Johannes had quickly become devoted to each other. Upon receiving the news of Schumann's illness, Brahms returned to the Schumann household in Düsseldorf to comfort the distraught Clara, who was pregnant with her seventh child, to help with the children, to take charge of the family finances, and generally to fill the shoes of Robert. He remained in Düsseldorf for two years, supporting himself by giving a few piano lessons but mostly by borrowing money from friends. After Robert's death, Clara wrote the following about Brahms to her children:

Like a true friend, he came to share all my grief; he strengthened the heart that threatened to break, he uplifted my spirit; brightened my soul in any way he could. He was, in short, my friend in the fullest sense of the word.

In May 1854 Clara played her variations on Robert's theme for Brahms, who

immediately set about writing his own set of variations on the theme, showing each variation to Clara as soon as it was completed. On 15 June he sent her a completed manuscript headed 'Short Variations on a Theme by Him, Dedicated to Her'.

Programme note taken from a blog by D. Schreider

Procter-Gregg: Sonata No. 1 in A minor for violin and piano

The Violin Sonata in A minor, dedicated to Albert Sammons and originally published in 1936 by Boosey & Hawkes, is the first of four written for the instrument over a period of thirty years from the mid 1930s: the second in C major was frequently performed by Clifford Knowles, most memorably at P-G's eightieth birthday concert in 1975 at the University Faculty Hall in Denmark Road, Manchester; No. 3 in F was written for Thomas Matthews, former leader of the Hallé Orchestra, Head Professor of Violin at the Royal Manchester College of Music and a well-known international figure. He was closely associated as interpreter with the Delius and Elgar concertos and gave the first performance of Britten's Concerto in 1940 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra; the fourth Violin Sonata is in D major. Sonatas Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are published by edition db.

In the first movement a yearning tune, *con anima*, on the violin propels the music forward to a *ff* bridge passage that leads to a lyrical second subject in B minor. This is a more serene affair, but it is not without reference to the first theme which seems to infiltrate

and even coalesce with the second subject as it proceeds: so much so that the exposition seems to lean to monothematicism. All is revealed in the following development where the two main themes appear in counterpoint as if in a duet, with the second subject on the violin. But the fervent first subject eventually gains the upper hand and monopolises the scene until the return of the bridge passage. The 'recapitulation' then opens without the first subject but with the second tune in A major on the piano as if to compensate for its neglect in the exposition. A substantial coda in A minor redresses the balance with the opening tune gaining dominance and sweeping the movement to an impassioned plagal cadence.

The slow movement has two main tonal centres (E and A flat) but not two distinctive tunes – this is more of an extended romantic melody with a brief diversion along the way to C major. Violin flourishes, swoopings and a *ff* climax on a high B subside to a calm close.

The element of contrast needed to offset all the previous romanticism and nostalgia, however beautiful, comes in the *Allegro brioso* finale. The piano opens with an extended bravura solo passage in which an important rhythmic motif is established. But a sudden change of mood, key and time signature leads to the violin taking up the reins with a most endearing principal melody which surges on with increasing urgency until a change to D major leads to a return of the main violin tune with piano accompaniment derived from its bravura opening. Both instruments

work up this ingenious conflicting dialogue, neither willing to secede to the other, until a triple *fff* climax marks the introduction of a new tune and a *calmandosi* passage that leads to a compressed recapitulation starting with the violin tune in A major, but without the opening piano bravura which was extensively and sufficiently worked in the development.

There is an echo of the first movement – a lovely felicitous touch – before the brilliant and triumphant A major Coda which concludes the sonata.

Programme note by Michael Almond, 2009

Brahms: Trio for violin, horn and piano in E flat major, Op. 40

Horn players are greatly indebted to Brahms, not only for some glorious solos in his symphonic works, but also for this Trio Op.40 for violin, horn and piano, a deeply personal work. Whilst it may seem surprising that he did not write more for this combination, perhaps (as we shall see) it became such a personal statement, that he felt he had said all that he had to say.

Brahms had been familiar with the horn from an early age as it was one of his father's instruments. It is interesting to note that Brahms wrote for the 'Waldhorn' which implies a handhorn without valves. As a horn player himself in his youth, it is known that Brahms preferred the mellow and subtle sound of the natural instrument over the then 'modern' valve horn, and many of the superb horn solos in his orchestral works are testimonial to his love and

understanding of this noble instrument. However, a letter to Brahms a few days before the first public performance reveals that even at the time of its composition the work was more often played on an instrument with valves (even though Brahms' own preference was always the Waldhorn). Brahms was the first major composer to write for this combination of instruments and has served as an inspiration to several other composers, most notably perhaps, Lennox Berkeley and György Ligeti who dedicated their own Horn Trios to Brahms.

The Trio Op.40 was composed in 1865 at a time when Brahms was finding solace in the natural beauties and congenial social life of the Black Forest. Once commonly thought to be as a result of the death of his mother, more recent research suggests a broken love affair. The Horn Trio was written at his home in Baden-Baden and was performed on 7 December 1865 by Brahms along with Ferdinand Segisser (horn) and Ludwig Strauss (violin), both members of the local Karlsruhe Opera. The first performance was actually a few days earlier in Zürich.

Like his other trios, this is in four movements, although it is his only piece of chamber music of which the first movement is neither *Allegro* nor *Vivace*, nor in sonata form. Instead it begins with a noble yet reflective theme marked *Andante* which forms the 'A' section of an ABABA pattern. This theme was inspired by a sunrise he saw one morning on a walk in the forests outside Baden-Baden, which he described to his friend

the composer Albert Dietrich, who later became a biographer of Brahms.

The almost furious Scherzo follows with its underlying staccato rhythm overridden by longer, more sustained and impassioned tunes, conveying images of the hunt, horses and drinking songs, although it's a transformation of material from another source entirely as we shall see later. The music for the beautiful trio, is found (according to Christopher Hogwood's comprehensive 2014 Urtext edition for Bärenreiter) in a recently discovered piano piece written some twelve years earlier when Brahms was twenty. This is in a collection entitled *Album Amicorum* which contains pieces by Robert and Clara Schumann, Mendelssohn, Franz Liszt and many other contemporary composers and musicians.

The elegiac slow movement was begun only a few days after the death of Brahms' mother, and is deeply contemplative and very emotional (*mesto* meaning sad). One of the most movingly optimistic moments in all horn literature occurs towards the end of this movement when the music slips into the major key and the melody of a song emerges, one that his mother Christiane may well have sung to him as a child. This 'motif' (later transformed to become the main theme of the seemingly joyful finale) is heard as a peaceful echo which gradually builds towards the anguishing peak of despair which quickly subsides to close the movement with a heavy heart.

The finale sees the horn in familiar hunting 6/8 territory but with surely

more energy than ever before. The theme is a transcription of a folk-song melody 'Es soll sich ja keiner mit der Liebe abgeben' which translates as 'No one should have anything to do with love!'

*No one should have anything to do with love.
It has brought many a fine lad to kill himself.
Today my buxom wench withdrew her love.
I accused her! I accused her!*

The light-hearted text surely cannot relate to Christiane's death, but surely to his more recent break-up with Agathe von Siebold, whose name was entwined in the string sextet that Brahms was writing at the same time.

Brahms didn't write any more chamber music for eight years.

The Music Serenade

The Music Serenade was formed in 1978 at the inception of Opera North and has performed in a huge variety of venues and had recorded music for wind octet on CD. It has performed in all manner of chamber music combinations including strings, woodwind, brass and voices. Today it's the turn of the Horn Trio.

Robert Ashworth *horn*

Andrew Long *violin*

Ian Buckle *piano*

Robert Ashworth studied the horn at the RNCM with Sydney Coulston, gaining a 1st class diploma and the award of Laureate. After free-lancing with most of the regional orchestras he was appointed Principal Horn with the Orchestra of Opera North in 1978. He has made several appearances as

soloist (Mozart and Strauss Concerti) and is a regular member of the chamber group *The Music Serenade*, whose acclaimed recording of wind octets by Mozart, Beethoven and Hummel is available on CD. He is an active member of both the British Horn Society and the International Horn Society, performing at many of the former's local seminars and writing for *The Horn Call* - the journal of the IHS. In 1997, with his Opera North colleagues, he founded the Opera North Horn Club - providing a forum for professional, amateur and student horn players. Having taught for several years at the RNCM he concentrates more on private teaching and working on books of exercises to promote good playing habits ('Horn Warm Ups' and 'Beyond the Warm Up' published by June Emerson).

In addition to his Opera North commitments Robert has played with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. On the period instrument front (hand horn and baroque horn), he has played for the Academy of Ancient Music, the Hanover Band, The Sixteen, The English Concert and the Cambridge Baroque Camerata. He runs a small publishing business 'edition db' specialising in music for horn ensemble and the works of Humphrey Procter-Gregg - www.editiondb.com

After leaving his position as Assistant Leader with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, **Andrew Long** is now the Associate Leader of Opera North and the Leader of the New World String Quartet, New World String Trio and New World Ensemble. As a soloist he has given concerto and recital performances throughout Britain, Norway, Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, and Poland where he gave a live televised performance of Elgar's violin sonata. He is also a regular recitalist at the Duke of Westminster's country home.

Andy is in demand as a freelance leader having led the Hallé Orchestra, Manchester Concert Orchestra, Johann Strauss Orchestra, Mozart Orchestra and English Baroque Ensemble amongst many others. He was also the leader of the Performing Arts Symphony Orchestra for many years where he regularly performed concertos and solos to audiences of over 16,000 people.

Despite his busy playing career, he has developed an enviable reputation as a teacher. He was a tutor at Chetham's School of Music for 15 years as well as at Manchester University. He also taught privately for Sir Yehudi Menuhin and was invited to accept a post at his specialist music school.

Andy is a keen exponent of contemporary music and with his quartet and ensemble has commissioned many new works and recorded CDs on the ASC and Champion labels. In 2016, Naxos recommended his New World Ensemble's recording of Kevin Malone's 'Eighteen Minutes'

as one of their Top 20 tracks from their catalogue of 1.9 million to choose from.

On a lighter and more unusual note, Andy conducts, arranges for and presents the Andy Long Orchestra where he indulges his passion for the light music and easy listening genre. His arrangements of popular classics have made him a regular feature at corporate events and at the Bridlington Spa Grand Ballroom.

His landmark recording with Ian Buckle of music for violin and piano by Sir Edward German is available worldwide on the Naxos label and includes previously unrecorded material.

Email: newworldensemble@aol.com
www.newworldensemble.com

Ian Buckle maintains a varied performing career working as soloist, accompanist, chamber musician and orchestral pianist. He enjoys longstanding relationships with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the John Wilson Orchestra and has appeared with both as soloist on numerous occasions. He has also played concertos with the Royal Philharmonic, the Orchestra of Opera North, Sinfonia Viva and the Manchester Concert Orchestra. Committed to contemporary music, he has been the pianist in Ensemble 10/10 since the group's inception, premiering many new works in venues nationwide including Wigmore Hall and on BBC Radio 3. He frequently collaborates with former Poet Laureate Andrew Motion in giving recitals of piano music and poetry, recent programmes including

Shropshire and Other Lads, a celebration of A. E. Housman; *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, a commemoration of World War One; and *Philip Larkin's England*. Ian is the director and pianist of *Pixels Ensemble*, a collective of chamber music players with a shared passion for performing the finest repertoire, from the classical period to the present day [pixelsensemble.org]. He teaches at the Universities of Leeds and Liverpool and is an examiner with ABRSM. Current CD releases include transcriptions for cello and piano with Jonathan Aasgaard, a recital of new works for clarinet and piano with former BBC Young Musician winner Mark Simpson and a disc of English music with clarinettist Nicholas Cox. A recording of Gershwin's *New York Rhapsody* with the John Wilson Orchestra live from the Royal Albert Hall is available on iTunes, and *Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals* featuring Ian alongside his duo partner Richard Casey with Vasily Petrenko and the RLPO was recently released on the Warner label.

Humphrey Procter-Gregg, universally known to students and colleagues as 'P-G', was born in 1895 at Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmorland. He was an Organ Scholar at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, before going to the Royal College of Music, studying composition under Charles Villiers Stanford.



He gained a studentship at the opera house of La Scala, Milan. He became Opera Manager to the Royal College of Music and was, at various

times, stage manager and producer to the Covent Garden Opera Company, the British National Opera Company, and the Carl Rosa Opera Company, also working in a similar capacity at the Royal Manchester College of Music and the BBC Opera Section. P-G was specially concerned with the fate of opera in this country in the years following the First World War. It was in this context that his lifelong friendship with Sir Thomas Beecham first blossomed. Following Beecham's death in 1961, P-G compiled and edited *'Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor and impresario, as remembered by his friends and colleagues'*.

In 1936 he became Reader in Music at the University of Manchester, founding the Music Department, and in 1954 became the university's first Professor of Music. He set up the Ad Solem Ensemble, and initiated the development of the University's concert hall, in Denmark Road, acoustically one of the best halls for chamber music in the north of England.

In 1962, on leaving the University, he became the first Director of the new London Opera Centre, relinquishing the post in 1964, when he retired to Windermere and devoted himself to composition and opera translation. He was appointed C.B.E. in 1972 and died on 13 April 1980.

Like Beecham, P-G always had a deep love and understanding of the music of Delius. In many of P-G's works this aesthetic affinity with Delius is undoubtedly declared, even though he always speaks with a distinctive and

personal voice, quite unmistakable once known. There is also a profound feeling for the beauty – and essential sadness – of the natural world, perhaps particularly the ageless beauty of the hills, the lakes and the dales of his native Westmorland.

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Onyx Brass Quintet

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