

Cathedral Concert Society

Chamber Concerts in Ripon
2017–18 season

Pelléas Ensemble



Monday 13 November 2017, 7.30pm | Ripon Cathedral

www.riponconcerts.co.uk

Welcome

It is a great pleasure to welcome the Pelléas Ensemble to Ripon for this evening's concert. We hope that the unavoidable rescheduling of the concert from Sharow Church to the Cathedral has not caused too much confusion or inconvenience. We anticipate, however, that the acoustic here will lend itself to this magical combination of instruments. It is 11 years since the Society heard harp music and by coincidence the performance by Chroma also included pieces by Bax and Ravel.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance to the Society of building our membership. This gives a secure income for this and subsequent seasons and for those who join it offers much cheaper tickets and, I hope, the sense of supporting something important in the cultural life of the area.

Subscription for membership for the rest of the current season is still available at a very favourable rate. Charles Monck will be happy to discuss this during the interval or by email at cmonck@charles-monck.com

The following quotes are attributed to some of the composers featured in tonight's concert. See if you can make the connection. (Answers are on the back page).

a. *"In opera, there is always too much singing."*

b. *"The only love affair I have ever had was with music."*

c. *"Art is not an end in itself, but a means of addressing humanity."*

d. *"I sit down to the piano regularly at nine-o'clock in the morning and Mesdames les Muses have learned to be on time for that rendezvous."*

e. *"Without my morning coffee I'm just like a dried up piece of roast goat."*

Roger Higson, Chairman

Cathedral Concert Society

Patron: Julius Drake

Monday 13 November 2017
Pelléas Ensemble

PROGRAMME

Arnold Bax
(1883–1953)

Elegiac Trio

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

**Sonata for Flute and Basso continuo
in C major, BWV 1033**

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp

Interval - during which refreshments will be served

Modest Mussorgsky
(1839–1881), trans. Wass

**Selections from Pictures at an Exhibition,
a Remembrance of Viktor Hartmann (1874)**

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893), arr. L Tunnicliffe

**Chanson Triste Op. 40 No. 2 & Mélodie
from Souvenir d'un lieu cher Op. 42**

Benjamin Graves
(b. 1988)

Scherzo for Flute, Viola & Harp

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937), arr. Jocelyn Morlock

Le Tombeau de Couperin

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Ripon
Choral Society

Saturday 18 November
2017, 7.30pm
Ripon Cathedral



John Rutter:
Requiem

Karl Jenkins:
The Armed Man

*Better is peace
than always war...*

John Dunford - conductor
Samantha Hay - soprano
Karina Lucas - mezzo-soprano
Orchestra D'Amici

Tickets: £22 reserved; £20 unreserved (student concessions available).
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The Cathedral Concert Society is affiliated to Making Music, which represents and supports amateur performing and promoting societies throughout the UK. Registered Charity no. 1163277.

Arnold Bax (1883–1953)

Elegiac Trio

Sir Arnold Bax was a prolific English composer, poet and author. He spent part of his life in Ireland, and was heavily influenced by the Irish landscape and folk music. The *Elegiac Trio* was written in the aftermath of the Easter Uprising, and uses modal harmonies and folk-like melody to create a pastoral effect.

Bax’s music is fairly typical of the English compositional style of the early 20th Century, and clear parallels can be drawn with Vaughan Williams.

Bax was a notoriously romantic man. For a time he lived above a pub in West Sussex, and it was noted by the pub's regulars that Bax would have frequent visitors to his room.

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

Sonata for Flute and Basso continuo in C major, BWV 1033

Andante – Presto

Allegro

Adagio

Menuets 1 & 2

There is some question as to whether the six Flute Sonatas were originally written by J. S. Bach; although his son – Carl Philipp Emanuel – signed the manuscript with his father's name, the C major in particular is thought to be unusually simple in comparison with his other compositions of the time. The key of C major was traditionally used to represent happiness and light; here it provides a fresh, naïve character. Each movement poses a different technical challenge for the flautist; the first includes a long passage of legato arpeggios followed by a spritely collection of leaping notes; the second is a bubbling, relentless, scalic *Allegro*. There is a brief digression to A minor during the sustained following movement, before a pair of elegant Menuets concludes the Sonata.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp

Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp* was one of the last pieces that Debussy wrote; completed just before he died. It is experimental in style, and makes the most of the range and different sound possibilities of each instrument.

The sonata starts with a free, improvisatory movement entitled *Pastorale* in which fragmented melody lines are shared between all the instruments. It is tonally ambiguous, but with moments of extreme purity through the use of open fifths.

The second movement is more flowing and dance-like; the first section is inspired by the 17th-century minuet, and is poised and elegant in character. The middle section moves into four-time, and introduces an innocent, wandering melody with a bubbling accompaniment.

In the third movement, Debussy moves away from the warm, soft textures that are so easily achieved by these three instruments and creates much more dramatic, fiery sounds. The viola and harp provide a driving engine above which the flute introduces a wild theme. It is tonally chromatic and tense, with the use of diminished chords.

– interval –

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881), trans. Wass

Selections from Pictures at an Exhibition, a Remembrance of Viktor Hartmann (1874)

Promenade

Tuilleries (Children quarrel after play)

Bydło (Oxcart)

Promenade

Balet nevylyupivshikhsya ptentsov (Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks)

The most famous of all Mussorgsky's works, *Pictures at an Exhibition* is a musical memorial to the architect, graphic artist and designer Viktor Aleksandrovich Hartmann. Each picture is nominally based on a drawing or watercolour by Hartmann, but the exact attribution of all the pictures is difficult, as many of his works have been lost.

The Promenades symbolise the movement from place to place while walking through the exhibition. They are very Russian in character, and imitate the style of many Russian folk songs, with alternation between precentor (“call”) and choral response. The intervening pictures are varied and colourful, with clear programmatic links to their titles.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), arr. L Tunnifcliffe

Chanson Triste Op. 40 No. 2 & Mélodie from Souvenir d'un lieu cher Op. 42

Tchaikovsky's *Chanson Triste* (1878) was originally composed as a 'song without words' for solo piano. Its simplicity likens it to Russian folk music, and the melancholy character is perhaps due to the emotional turmoil Tchaikovsky experienced during this year while attempting to divorce his wife Antonina.

His *Mélodie* from *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* ('memories of a dear place') is more hopeful and whimsical in character. Even in the intimate setting of a duo, one is made to think of Tchaikovsky's famous ballets.

Benjamin Graves (b. 1988)

Scherzo for Flute, Viola & Harp

Funds for commission generously provided by Alan Sainer & The RVW Trust

In many respects this work is a traditional scherzo: it opens in triple metre, then the time signature rapidly changes - a trait which characterises Mahler’s scherzos; the overall feel of the work is light, as indicated both by the expressive text and by the feel of the ensemble itself, and the piece is in a repeating rounded binary form - each iteration of the material in the opening or “A” section develops slightly but the repeat is obvious and the second or “B” music is half-speed, the feel much more fluid and improvisatory and presents first a flute and viola duet, secondly a viola cadenza and finally the full trio. But this is where the similarity ends. The use of a more traditional structure was an attempt to explore a range of unusual techniques and timbres and their combinations, but giving them context: the harp is “prepared” in places with blu-tac and detunes strings A4-C4 down a quartertone, the viola also tunes its highest string flat and plays unusual harmonic tremolos, and the flute plays harmonics and multiphonics. *Benjamin Graves*

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), arr. Jocelyn Morlock

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Prelude

Menuet

Toccata

The title of this work refers to its structure - Ravel was inspired by the French dance suites of baroque composers like François Couperin (1668–1733). He borrows the rhythm and pace of the dances from these 17th-century composers, but as an impressionist from the romantic era, his harmony is full of chromaticism, whole-tone scales and almost blues-like colours. This piece was originally for solo piano; given how busy each individual part is in this arrangement, it is clear that the piano writing would have been incredibly virtuosic. Arranger Jocelyn Morlock has cleverly shared the melodic lines between the three instruments, creating a richly textured chamber work.

The French suites would always begin with a *Prelude* - a small overture before the dances begin. This prelude includes a playful, busy theme of rising and falling semiquavers which run seamlessly between the three parts. The major key and time signature of 6/8 gives a pastoral character to the movement. The *Menuet* would have originated in the French courts and is an elegant and poised dance in 3/4; this particular one includes a very simple, youthful melody to start, but gives way to a dark and yearning contrast in the middle. The *Toccata* is in a regular, up-beat 2/4; the running semiquavers return but this time in a staccato form, giving the music a chattering quality. There are sections of smooth melody contrasted with driving, menacing themes.



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Pelléas Ensemble

The Pelléas Ensemble was formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2011. Playing with "verve and polish" (*The Times*), they recently won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award, and the 2017 Elias Fawcett Award for Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the Royal Overseas League competition. In 2016 they won both the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the St Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition, and won a place on the prestigious Tillett Trust Young Artists' Programme. In 2015 they won First Prize at the British Harp Chamber Music Competition. They are Park Lane Group Young Artists.

In November 2016, they made their debut at the Wigmore Hall, where they were praised for their "captivating vitality" and "effortlessness and delicacy" (*Seen and Heard International*), and have appeared live on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*. They were selected to represent the Guildhall at the City of London Festival, and have given numerous recitals at other London venues including St John's Smith Square. They have established a reputation for performing their recitals from memory, which they believe creates an immediate and more intimate connection with their audiences.

They are dedicated to performing new music, and have premiered three new works this year, with two further commissions planned for next year. They are delighted to be represented by the Tillett Trust and to be featured Making Music artists.



The Pelléas Ensemble is the winner of the St Martin's Chamber Music Competition 2016. The competition awards an outstanding young ensemble with performance opportunities in the prestigious London venue of St Martin-in-the-Fields and around the UK with voluntary music groups in partnership with Making Music.

With grateful thanks to the following for their generous support:

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And any others who have donated to the Society since this programme went to press.

Cathedral Concert Society

2017–2018 season

All concerts at 7.30pm in the
quire of Ripon Cathedral

Ivana Gavrić *piano*
Haydn, Grieg, Chopin, Schumann
Monday 4 December 2017

Marlborough Piano Quartet
Anna Tilbrook *piano*
Boris Brovtsyn *violin*
Philip Dukes *viola*
Guy Johnston *cello*
with **Peter Buckoke** *double bass*
Schubert, Bridge, Vaughan Williams
Monday 8 January 2018

Roderick Williams *baritone*
Iain Burnside *piano*
Schubert: Winterreise
Monday 12 February 2018

Herschel Trio
Mie Hayashi-O'Sullivan *harpsichord*
Graham O'Sullivan *Baroque flute*
& *recorder*
Susanna Pell *viola da gamba*
J.S. Bach, Handel, Telemann
Monday 12 March 2018

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