

RIPON
CONCERTS

Chamber music with passion

The Pelléas Ensemble

Oliver Wass – harp
Luba Tunnicliffe – viola
Henry Roberts – flute



© Matilda Hill-Jenkins

Monday 13 November 2023, 7.30pm
Holy Trinity Church, Ripon

Programme

www.riponconcerts.co.uk

Patron: Julius Drake

Welcome

A very warm welcome to the award-winning Pelléas Ensemble, who are making a welcome return to Ripon tonight after an absence of exactly six years – they performed for us on Monday 13 November 2017! Their programme on that night included pieces by Bax, J. S. Bach, Debussy, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Benjamin Graves and Ravel. Tonight we will hear something quite different!

The healing power of music

As I write this, the Middle East is on the brink of catastrophe and we all feel helpless as we watch a tragedy of unspeakable magnitude unfold. Could music be the inspiration for a healing solution?

In 1999 pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian scholar Edward Said formed the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, so that young musicians from Israel and across the Middle East could gather, talk and perform together. Today, almost all of these musicians are directly or indirectly affected by the conflict but they still perform together. They are united by the incredible depth and force of music, which has the capacity to cross the deepest of ideological divides. A common

humanity can be identified in music to help understand the supposed other more clearly and find common ground.

The importance of Arab and Israeli musicians sharing a common platform is immeasurable. Barenboim recently wrote: *“We start and end all discussions, no matter how controversial, with the fundamental understanding that we are all equal human beings who deserve peace, freedom and happiness. We must continue to believe in our shared humanity. Music is one way to bring us closer together.”* (*The Guardian*, 15.10.23)

Barenboim went on to found the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin, in memory of his friend. The Academy, located just behind the state opera house, is entirely funded by the German Government – surely the outstretched hand of peace.

Barenboim’s son, Michael, now leads these projects. His father’s dream of political harmony inspired by music is yet to happen, but Michael says: *“we are musicians and not politicians. We cannot change the course of events, but we can shine a light on another way of thinking.”* (*The Times* 28.10.23)

Roger Higson, Chairman

we get on with



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The Pelléas Ensemble

**OLIVER WASS - harp, LUBA TUNNICLIFFE - viola,
 HENRY ROBERTS - flute**

Programme

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune

Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677) A Selection of Madrigals

Claude Debussy Syrinx

Richard Rodney Bennett (1936–2012) Sonata after Syrinx
*i. Molto moderato. ii. Presto. iii. Habanera. iv. Cadenza (viola & harp).
 v. Vivo. vi. Adagio.*

– interval (refreshments in the undercroft) –

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) Selected pieces from
 (arr. L. Tunnicliffe) Les Boréades
*Ouverture - Comme un zéphir - Air vif - Loure - Entrée du Polymnie -
 Air très gai*

Ethel Smyth (1858–1944) Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) Selections from Romeo & Juliet
 arr. Gilad Cohen

*Masks
 The Young Juliet
 Dance of the Knights
 The Fight*

About the music

Debussy: Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

In its original form for small orchestra this prelude dates from 1894. It is probably Debussy's most famous composition. It was inspired by *L'après-midi d'un faune* of the symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, published in 1876 with illustrations by Edouard Manet. Debussy described his music as "a very free illustration" of the poem, not a résumé, but suggesting the atmosphere of a hot afternoon where a faun, "tired of pursuing timorous nymphs and shy nalds, abandons himself to voluptuous sleep". The prominent part for flute in the original score becomes even more evocative in this delicate arrangement for small ensemble, itself inspired by Debussy's own later trio for the same instruments. - *David Hiley*

Strozzi: A selection of madrigals

The illegitimate daughter of the renowned poet Giulio Strozzi, Venetian composer Barbara Strozzi was one of the first women to publish music under her own name, and had more secular music in print than any other composer of the era. *Al battitor di bronzo*, from Strozzi's *First Book of Madrigals*, shows Strozzi's mastery of character and musical affect with its quick changes of harmony and tempo. *Che si può fare* is originally an aria for soprano and continuo on a falling "ground bass". It contains the lines "What can you do?... Since the gods don't give a measure of peace in my suffering, what can I do?... Thus it happens that he who follows the shadow of a blind god, stumbles in the end". *Silentio nocivo* (Harmful silence), also from the *First*

Book of Madrigals, is a beautifully warm and tender work, which talks about the "Sweetest breaths of our loving choirs".

Debussy: Syrinx

Rodney Bennett: Sonata after Syrinx

Debussy's *Syrinx* served as incidental music for Mourey's play *Psyche*. It was played from the wings during dialogue on-stage. 'Syrinx' means 'panpipes': an instrument made of reeds blown across their ends. The instrument was associated in Greek mythology with the demi-god Pan, and in Mourey's play the flute solo accompanied the final scene, in which Syrinx dies. Debussy writes, "my favourite music is those few notes an Egyptian shepherd plays on his flute: he is a part of the landscape around him, and he knows harmonies that aren't in our books."

Sonata after Syrinx explores and expands Debussy's haunting melody. The *Molto moderato* retains an improvised character. The *Presto* is a fast, rhythmic dance in 5/8 time in which a short section of the 'Syrinx' theme is transformed into a tremoring melody that is passed between all three instruments. The following *Habanera* is contrastingly seductive, the *Vivo* is fast and frenetic. The final *Adagio* is sad and ponderous, evoking the tragic death of Syrinx.

— interval —

Rameau (arr. L. Tunnickliffe): Selected pieces from Les Boréades

Known to preceding composers as the father of French music, Jean-Philippe Rameau was an all-around talent. From a young age he held various positions as organist in churches around France, and from then on became a prolific composer and writer; he was fascinated in music theory and over many years perfected his *Traité de l'harmonie* - a book which explored ideas on harmony as a foundation for all music.

Rameau's compositional style was incredibly forward-looking and always has a fresh nature. On top of complex, exploratory chord sequences come rich, florid ornamentation and dramatic switches in character; these qualities are never more present than in his operas. This suite contains a mixture of dance music and arias from his late opera, *Les Boréades*. In the Pelléas Ensemble we have in the past produced arrangements of Rameau's small-scale chamber works and have found that the inventiveness and imagination of his music lends itself very well to our combination of instruments. Reimagining an orchestral work of this scale is undoubtedly more of a challenge! In this arrangement I have maintained each of the important voices (the secondary lines are usually every bit as interesting and intricate as the main melodies), sharing them between the three instruments where it is appropriate, while adding in as much richness as I could for the two polyphonic instruments, to try and recreate the feeling of a full orchestra wherever possible. There

are experimental percussive moments in the rhythmic, faster movements, and lyrical moments which imitate the sound of a high baroque soprano. - *Luba Tunnickliffe*

Smyth: Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin

Dame Ethel Smyth studied at the Leipzig Conservatory and went on to lead a fascinating life, dividing her time between composing and political activism. The early 1900s was a time of significant social change and Smyth used her profile as a composer to aid the 'votes for women' campaign, composing the song 'The March of the Women'. During this time, Smyth served time in jail for throwing a brick through a window of the Houses of Parliament. This happened to land in the office of Lewis Harcourt who was publicly against allowing women the right to vote. Whilst in prison, Smyth used her time to great effect, and after a visit by the conductor Thomas Beecham, he wrote, 'I arrived in the main courtyard of the prison to find the noble company of martyrs marching round it and singing lustily their war-chant while the composer...beat time in almost Bacchic frenzy with a toothbrush.'

Smyth wrote 'Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin' for flute, viola and piano in 1927. The title refers to the English song which dates back to the 16th century and is referred to by Shakespeare in *Hamlet* when Ophelia sings, 'For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy'. Although the words have been lost, it is suspected that the character Ophelia, sings the last line of the tune during her madness. The tune is set in a minor key and

has a mournful and melancholic character. With this as a starting point, she takes the listener on a journey through more sprightly iterations, a beautiful dream-like middle section and then returns to material similar to the opening, the very end offering a softer character and a sense of closure.

Prokofiev (arr. Gilad Cohen): Selections from Romeo & Juliet

Gilad Cohen is an Israeli composer and pianist whose music is influenced by a variety of genres; as well as composing music for the concert hall, he writes for and performs in both a rock and a klezmer band. He has written pieces for many classical chamber groups, as well as receiving prizes at popular song-writing contests. He has created a unique and colourful rendition of Prokofiev's epic orchestral score, and pushes all three instruments to their limits. The neo-classical elements of Prokofiev's music are well represented by the softer sounds of the ensemble, but there's also extensive use of *sul pont* for the viola (the performer plays with the bow on top of the bridge, resulting in a harsh and scratchy sound), percussive sounds created by the harpist drumming against the wood of the instrument and the manic tones of flutter-tonguing in the flute line.

With grateful thanks to the following members for their generous support:

The Armitage Trust
Jim Dalton
G Fieldhouse
Roger Higson
Scilla and Brian Kealy
Janet Mellor
Carla McCowan
Elizabeth Price
Ros and Bill Swaney
Kate Whelan

and others who wish to remain anonymous or who have donated since this programme went to press.



The poster features a dark blue background with a yellow crescent moon at the top. The text 'ST. Cecilia ORCHESTRA' is written in a stylized font, with 'Est Ripon 1995' below it. The main title 'The Magic of Music' is in large white letters, followed by 'with local children's choirs' in smaller white text. An illustration of a wizard in a blue and yellow robe holding a wand with stars is positioned below the text. At the bottom, it says 'IN ASSOCIATION WITH RIPON CATHEDRAL' with a small cathedral icon. The event details are listed in a yellow box at the bottom: 'RIPON CATHEDRAL 20th January - 6.30-8.00 pm www.st-cecilia.org.uk'.

About the performers

The Pelléas Ensemble was formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2011. Playing with “verve and polish” (*The Times*), they won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award in 2018, and the 2017 Elias Fawcett Award for Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the Royal Over-Seas 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 were awarded a place on the prestigious Tillet Trust Young Artists' Programme. In 2015 they won First Prize at the British Harp Chamber Music Competition.

Their Wigmore Hall debut was praised for its “captivating vitality” and “effortlessness and delicacy” (*Seen and Heard International*). They have appeared live on BBC Radio 3's 'In Tune', and have given numerous recitals in London and around the UK. They have been praised for creating an immediate and intimate connection with their audiences, and perform much of their repertoire from memory.

They are dedicated to performing new music, and have had four pieces written for their ensemble. Their debut album was released on Linn Records in June 2021.

Luba Tunnicliffe - viola

Luba Tunnicliffe is a versatile performer and enjoys a varied musical career playing both viola and violin. She has performed solo recitals at London's Royal Festival Hall and St John's Smith Square, and made her debut as concerto soloist with the Philharmonia Orchestra in June 2016. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno.



© Marida Hill-Jenkins

In 2011, while studying, she formed the Pelléas Ensemble, who released their critically-acclaimed debut album 'Nature and the Imagination' on Linn Records in June 2021. As strong advocates for this unusual combination of instruments, they have commissioned four new pieces and produced many of their own arrangements. They have received awards from the Royal Over-Seas League, the Tillet Trust, the Tunnell Trust and are a Britten Pears Chamber Ensemble in Residence for 2023.

Luba has been a member of the Ruisi Quartet since 2016. They have performed extensively across the UK and abroad, participated in the prestigious Banff International String Quartet Competition, IMS Prussia Cove and the Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme. In November 2022 they gave the première of *Novenyek*

by Thomas Adès at the Wigmore Hall, and their debut album “Big House” was released in February 2023 on Pentatone.

In April 2022 Luba started a job as Principal Viola of the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. As a guest Principal, she has done freelance work with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and as an associate Principal with the Britten Sinfonia.

As Principal Viola of the 12 Ensemble, Luba has performed at the BBC Proms, the Barbican, the Wigmore Hall and End of the Road Festival and alongside artists such as Nick Cave, Jonny Greenwood, Kojey Radical and Laura Marling.

Henry Roberts - flute

Henry studied as an undergraduate at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Sarah Newbold, after which he moved on to the postgraduate Orchestral Artistry programme, in association with the London Symphony Orchestra. During this time he was generously sponsored by the Leverhulme Arts Trust as a Guildhall School scholar.

As an award-winning chamber musician, Henry has appeared a number of times on BBC Radio 3’s ‘In Tune’ and has played in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Buckingham Palace. He regularly works with orchestras including the Hallé, Sinfonia Cymru and 12 Ensemble and recently recorded the solo flute parts for Trevor Jones’ (*Notting Hill, Labyrinth*) new film score for *To Tokyo* at Abbey Road Studios. As a soloist, he has performed Mozart’s Flute Concerto in G with the Horsham Symphony Orchestra and Mozart’s Flute Quartets at Concerts in the West.

His solo recording of Debussy’s *Syrinx*,

described as ‘a languorous performance’ (Gramophone), was released on Linn Records in 2021 and has been praised as ‘a superbly liquid performance...seductive yet with an edge to it too’ (Planet Hugill).

Alongside performing, Henry is a passionate educator and has taught the flute at Merton Music Foundation’s Saturday music school for eight years. He has given masterclasses at York and Chichester Universities and is a member of the Kidenza orchestra, with whom he toured South East England with *Peter and the Wolf* in 2019. He has delivered school workshops across the UK with the Pelléas Ensemble, and regularly coaches flute choirs, wind bands and youth orchestras.

Oliver Wass - harp

Oliver holds a First Class Master’s Degree from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he studied with Imogen Barford. He graduated from the University of York with a First Class Honours degree in Chemistry.

He has won the Suoni d’Arpa International Competition in Italy, Jury Prize at the International Harp Competition in Szeged, Hungary, and Second Prize at the Bromsgrove International Competition. In May 2016 he became the first harpist ever to win the Guildhall Gold Medal – the Guildhall’s most prestigious prize. Previous winners of the competition include Jacqueline du Pré, Bryn Terfel and Tasmin Little.

He has performed every major harp concerto, including *Lyra Angelica* with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto with The Mozartists at the Wigmore Hall, and has directed the Handel Harp Concerto in the Barbican Hall. Last season, he gave recitals in Rome,

Paris, Budapest, Utrecht and London.

He has given recitals at the Purcell Room and Wigmore Hall, where he was praised by *Seen and Heard International* for his “remarkable range of timbres and warmth of tone”. He is a Musicians’ Company Yeoman, and is very grateful for support from the Hattori Foundation.

An experienced orchestral player, Oliver has performed with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Ulster Orchestra.

Playing with “verve and polish” (*The Times*), his flute-violaharp trio, The Pelléas Ensemble, won the Royal Philharmonic

Society Henderson Award and the 2017 Elias Fawcett Award for Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the Royal Over-Seas League competition. In 2016 they won both the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the St Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition.

Oliver studied with Charlotte Seale at the Junior Department of the Guildhall, where he became the only harpist to have been a prize-winner in the prestigious Lutine Competition. He was additionally Principal Harp in the National Youth Orchestra. He spent his teenage years making fireworks in his parents’ basement, which is – remarkably – still surviving.



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Richmondshire Concerts

Britten Oboe Quartet: Bach, Mozart, Schubert, trad. Danish, Thea Musgrave

Richmond School
18 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Mowbray Singers

Autumn Concert: Vivaldi & Schubert

St Oswald's Church, Sowerby
25 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Harrogate Symphony Orchestra

Winter Concert: Vaughan Williams, Beethoven, Sibelius

Royal Hall, Harrogate
25 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Jervaulx Singers

Carols by Candlelight

St John's Church, Sharow
2 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

Harrogate Choral Society

Harrogate Christmas Concert

Harrogate Convention Centre
2 Dec 2023, 6pm

Richmondshire Orchestra

Autumn Concert: Weber, Ravel, Wagner, Berlioz

Tennant's Garden Rooms, Leyburn
3 Dec 2023, 3pm

Harrogate Choral Society

Handel: Messiah

Royal Hall, Harrogate
9 Dec 2023, 7pm

Ampleforth College

Handel: Messiah

Abbey Church, Ampleforth
10 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

Ripon Concerts

Tango Calor Trio

Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
11 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

Chapter House Choir, York

Christmas Concert

York Minster
16 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

Vocalis Chamber Choir

Christmas is Coming

St Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate
17 Dec 2023, 3pm

York Symphony Orchestra

Winter Concert: Coleridge-Taylor, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York
17 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

Ripon Concerts

Students from the RNCM

Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
8 Jan 2024, 7.30pm

St Cecilia Orchestra

The Magic of Music

Ripon Cathedral
20 Jan 2024, 6.30pm

Ripon Concerts

Wind Players from Ensemble 360

Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
12 Feb 2024, 7.30pm

Richmondshire Concerts

Marmen Quartet

Richmond School
17 Feb 2024, 7.30pm

Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra

Winter Concert: Handel, Campling

St Mark's Church, Harrogate
24 Feb 2024, 7.30pm

Jervaulx Singers

The Dream

St John's Church, Sharow
2 Mar 2024, 7.30pm

Chapter House Choir, York

Spring Concert

York Minster
9 Mar 2024, 7.30pm

Ripon Concerts

Alice Coote - mezzo-soprano

Julius Drake - piano

The Rebellious Recital

Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
11 Mar 2024, 7.30pm



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Saturday 9 December 2023, 7.30pm

Handel
Solomon

John Dunford - conductor
Jane Burnell & Julianne Coates - sopranos
William Towers - countertenor
Nick Watts - tenor
Adam Green - bass
Orchestra D'Amici

Saturday 16 March 2024, 7.30pm

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Requiem
Rutter
Feel the Spirit

John Dunford - conductor
Jane Burnell - soprano
Rachel Gilmore - mezzo
James Micklethwaite - tenor
Phil Wilcox - bass
Orchestra D'Amici

Saturday 15 June 2024, 7.30pm

Tickets: £25 reserved; £22 unreserved (student concessions £10)

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Music by Scarlatti, Barber, Berio, Danzi, Valerie Coleman & Nielsen



Wind Players from Ensemble 360
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Alice Coote - Mezzo-soprano & Julius Drake - Piano

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The Rebellious Recital - favourite songs and arias through the centuries to the present day, from Bach to Bowie, Mahler to Joni Mitchell, Handel to John Lennon.



Alice Coote
© Jiyang Chen



Julius Drake
© Marco Borggreve

“Chamber music - a conversation between friends”

