



HELLENS MUSIC 2022



11th - 15th May | Much Marcle, Herefordshire



Concerts

Wednesday 11 May

8pm / St Bartholemew's Church,
Much Marcle

CHRISTIAN BLACKSHAW
SOLO PIANO

Thursday 12 May

8pm / Great Barn at Hellens

FROM ENGLAND
TO EASTERN EUROPE

Friday 13 May

7pm / Great Barn at Hellens

MASTERWORKS FROM
AUSTRIA AND GERMANY

9.30pm / The Walwyn Arms,
Much Marcle

GALA PUB CONCERT

Saturday 14 May

8pm / Great Barn at Hellens

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

Sunday 15 May

11.30am and 3.30pm
Great Barn at Hellens

HELLENSMUSIC
MASTERCLASS
PROGRAMME FINALE

Masterclasses

Tuesday 10 May

9.30am - 11.30am / Great Barn PIANO

11.30am - 1pm / Great Barn CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 12.30pm / Music Room VIOLIN, VIOLA, CLARINET

9.30am - 11am / 11.30am - 1pm / Dining Room CHAMBER MUSIC

Wednesday 11 May

9.30am - 11.30am / Great Barn PIANO

11.30am - 1.30pm / Great Barn VIOLIN

9.30am - 11am / Music Room CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 11.30am / Haywain Barn CLARINET, VIOLA

12.30pm - 1.30pm / Music Room CELLO

Thursday 12 May

9.30am - 11.30am / Great Barn CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 1.30pm / Music Room VIOLA, VIOLIN, CELLO

9.30am - 11am — 12pm - 1.30pm / Dining Room CHAMBER MUSIC

Friday 13 May

9.30am - 11am / Great Barn CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 1.30pm / Music Room VIOLA, CLARINET, CELLO, VIOLIN

9.30am - 11am / Dining Room CHAMBER MUSIC

Saturday 14 May

9.30am - 11am / Great Barn CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 1.30pm / Music Room CHAMBER MUSIC

9.30am - 1.30pm / Dining Room CHAMBER MUSIC





WELCOME TO HELLENSMUSIC 2022

Our ninth Hellensmusic brings a post-pandemic Renaissance, I believe, but our essence remains the same: to bring you the dynamics of world music old and new. Our soloists, great international artists, and exciting new talents working, learning, teaching together with an exceptional bunch of students from the Academies and Conservatoires across many borders! Thank you Maya and Máté, Alice, Agnes, Olga, and Christian, Matthew, Julien, for this magic music-making, not forgetting all the team at Hellens who make it possible!

Our first concert is on Wednesday May 11th with Christian Blackshaw, our Founder/Patron, playing an exciting new programme. The first half features two starkly contrasting sets of variations, the Haydn and the Beethoven. These flank six short minimalist pieces by the contemporary composer Howard Skempton. The evening finishes with the intimate character pieces of Tchaikovsky's The Seasons.

On Thursday we have the first of our chamber ensemble concerts - from three composers: a work of the quintessentially English composer Herbert Howells, with its vocal and mystical quality; Shostakovich's final work - dark, serene, atmospheric to the core, and Dvořák highly charged Second Piano Quintet, with its captivating emotional range.

On Friday, featuring french pianist Julien Quentin, we have Fanny Mendelsohn's unjustly neglected only String Quartet - lyrical, soulful, vibrant, followed by Mozart's sublime Clarinet Quintet, and finishing with Brahms' passionate C minor Piano Quartet, completed twenty years after it was begun.

Thereafter all sensible souls will take to the Walwyn Arms from 9.30pm on, for a gala gig to boggle the senses: from Astor Piazzola, king of Tango, music from the twenties, thirties, from classic rock to alternative pop, works by Berlin to Amy Winehouse, and The Verve! With Julien Quentin on piano, Máté Szűcs on viola/fiddle, and Matthew Hunt on clarinet.

On Saturday you're in for a Hungarian Rhapsody - Dohnányi, Bartók, Kodály, - compositions steeped in folk music - sonorous harmonies, heartfelt melodies, delicious rhythms. The Ensemble blending old and new in a colourful, multifaceted programme to rocket the spirit.

And then on Sunday - last but by no means least - you will, I hope, want to join us for two concerts with the musicians of the future! Playing with their Maestros our students will perform both chamber and solo repertoire. This is one of my favourite moments in the year, and one where I feel that even a fellow of my antiquity can be inspired, surprised, and taught!

Adam Munthe
Festival Chairman



DEAR FRIENDS,

This is the moment that we at Hellensmusic, after THREE LONG YEARS, have been waiting for!!! To open our hearts and minds to you again through the joys of exploring and playing music with our extraordinary team of artist professors, and our 'Class of '22', a wonderful group of gifted students from here, there and everywhere! These young people really are our hope for the future.

Some of you will know that we did manage a private and entirely Covid-regulated workshop last year consisting of UK-based senior musicians and pupils. The Herculean effort exerted to make this week possible, within the restrictions at the time, proved to be the most moving and healing experience for us all. No, we weren't allowed to play concerts, BUT we COULD work and play TOGETHER. It was total bliss to witness the students wake up from their enforced slumber and THRIVE. Thank you Adam and Nelly and everyone at Hellens.

Finally, with world challenges currently raging around us, it is impossible not to highlight the essential role that music plays in protecting humankind from ignorance and self-interest. We ask you in this special year at Hellensmusic to join us in our endeavours - it's going to be beautiful, and we'll give you everything we can!

Maya Iwabuchi and Máté Szücs
Co-artistic directors





Wednesday 11 May

8pm / St Bartholemew's Church, Much Marcle

CHRISTIAN BLACKSHAW
SOLO PIANO

J. Haydn Variations in F minor Hob. XVII:6

Howard Skempton Six Pieces:

Saltaire Melody; Sweet Chariot; Chorale; Rumba;
Well, well, Cornelius; Swedish Caprice

L. V. Beethoven 6 variations in F major, Op. 34

P. I. Tchaikovsky The Seasons, Op. 37a





Variations in F minor, Hob. XVII:6

J. Haydn (1732-1809)

One cannot overstate the importance of Haydn in the development of Western classical music. Often referred to as both 'the father of the Symphony' and 'the father of The String Quartet', he also laid the foundation for the emergence of the Piano Trio and arguably the Piano Sonata as we know it today. Haydn also witnessed the early development of the piano as an instrument and he had seen it evolve substantially by the time he composed, in 1793, the Variations in F minor, one of his greatest works for solo piano, and one which presents a microcosm of his late keyboard style, in its originality, emotional expression, tone, articulation and treatment of dynamics. It was composed for Barbara Ployer, a Viennese pianist to whom Mozart had earlier dedicated two of his piano concertos (K449 and K453). The work in fact comprises a set of double variations in that there are two themes, the first march-like and melancholy in F minor, the second bright and florid in F major, each the subject of two variations before an extraordinary coda brings this remarkable composition to a close. The variations alternate throughout between the minor and major key so that the passage of the music is ever changing from darkness to light and back again, a constant shift in mood which thereby creates considerable drama. The work culminates in an epic and grief-stricken coda with cadenza-like sections. It is a true tour de force in the genre.

Six Pieces

Saltaire Melody (1977)

Sweet Chariot (1973)

Chorale (1976)

Rumba (1973)

Well, well, Cornelius (1982)

Swedish Caprice (1993)

Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

The name of Howard Skempton has been associated with the English School of experimental music for over 50 years. He has composed over 300 works (more than 100 being for solo piano) and their main feature is their economy, the material being pared down to its bare essentials. Such a distillation puts the focus on the most subtle melodic and harmonic changes in the music and on its sheer sonority. Many of his pieces are extremely short. Notable in the six being played are the airiness and simplicity of the melodic line in *Saltaire Melody*; the gentle musical arc over shifting harmonies in *Sweet Chariot*; the resonance of the chords in *Chorale*; the rollicking character of *Rumba*; the more expansive nature and lyricism of *Well, well, Cornelius*; and the hypnotic effect of the rhythmic repetition of notes and patterns in *Swedish Caprice*.

6 Variations in F major Op. 34

L. V. Beethoven (1770 -1827)

Beethoven, ever the revolutionary, declared that his set of Op 34 Variations, dating from 1802, were composed 'in a quite new style'. This consummate master of variation form has created what amounts to a set of character pieces as each variation, six in total, is written in a different key, not to mention

the constant changes in tempo and metre. From the beautiful 'cantabile' theme emerge a highly ornamented first variation; a cantering, rhythmically transformed Allegro; a gently unfolding Allegretto starkly contrasting with the previous variation; a graceful Minuet with some gruff undertones; a funeral march with volatile eruptions (a foretaste of the 'Eroica' Symphony soon to appear?); and a genial, tripping final variation. The theme, in elaborated form, reappears in a fantasia-like coda, abounding in trills and flights of fancy, before the work comes to rest as it began.

Interval

The Seasons Op. 37a

January: At the Fireside

February: Carnival

March: Song of the Lark

April: Snowdrop

May: Starlit Nights

June: Barcarolle

July: Song of the Reaper

August: Harvest

September: The Hunt

October: Autumn Song

November: On the Troika

December: Christmas

P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Over the course of his life, Tchaikovsky composed over 100 piano works, of which the best known is The Seasons, commissioned by Nikolai Bernard, publisher of a monthly music magazine, and written during 1875/76. It has been subject to many orchestral and other arrangements and takes the form of twelve atmospheric vignettes pertaining to the months of the year in Russia:

each contains a sub-title and a poetic epigraph, chosen by Bernard. The intimate mood of 'January', depicting a scene by the hearth with a fire and a small light in the house, is captured in rather Schumannesque writing: a wistful central section suggests a certain sadness. 'February' is exuberant as, far from evoking images of snow and ice, it represents a festive occasion, a Mardi Gras. The sparser textures of 'March' create a melancholic soundscape with the song of the lark reaching up into the blue sky above the field of flowers. A waltz tune conveys a cloudless Spring day and the purity of snowdrops in 'April'. 'May' describes a starlit night, with its attendant stillness: a sprightly middle section provides contrast to the gently arpeggiated writing which frames it. There is an ambivalent tonality to 'June': the sub-title reflects the rocking motion of its central section. The repetitive musical language portrays the action of a reaper in the field in 'July'. The liveliness of the outer sections of 'August' clearly indicates the busy activity of harvest-time: they flank a brief period of rest. The hunting calls are not difficult to detect in 'September'. The plaintiveness of 'October' leaves no doubt that Summer has passed to bring in the hues of Autumn. In the bright 'November' one can imagine the experience of riding on a troika on a winter's day and one can hear the sleigh bells on an approaching sled. 'December', featuring the most charming waltz for a Christmas night ball, rounds off a work which delights by its melodic beauty and unaffected innocence.

Thursday 12 May

8pm / Great Barn at Hellens

FROM ENGLAND TO EASTERN EUROPE

Maya Iwabuchi, violin

Agnes Langer, violin

Máté Szücs, viola

Alice Neary, cello

Matthew Hunt, clarinet

Christian Blackshaw, piano

H. Howells Rhapsodic Quintet, Op. 31

D. Shostakovich Viola Sonata, Op. 147

A. Dvořák Piano Quintet No 2 in A major, Op. 81

Programme / From England to Eastern Europe



Rhapsodic Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet Op. 31

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Herbert Howells made a major contribution to 20th Century English choral music. Although he composed a significant amount of orchestral and chamber music and many works for organ, the main thrust of his output involved, in some way, the human voice: Anglican service settings, canticles, anthems, hymn tunes and works for chorus and orchestra. It is therefore unsurprising that the clarinet part of this Quintet, an early composition dating from 1919, is so vocal in character. This one-movement work is the quintessence of Englishness and shows the influence not only of Stanford, one of his main teachers, but also of Vaughan Williams. (Howells was, in fact, present at the première of the latter's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in 1912.) The Quintet has become one of the best loved works in the clarinet chamber music repertoire. It is structurally well organised, the motifs being neatly woven into the fabric, but so naturally does the music evolve that one is not so much aware of that as of the outpouring of song and of the marked contrast in timbre between the clarinet and the string quartet. Its opening is dark and veiled, yet impassioned; on its course, it rises and falls in intensity; and a long melting melody on the clarinet ushers in its ending of rapt beauty.

Sonata for Viola and Piano Op. 147 Moderato; Allegretto; Adagio

D. Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Forged against a background of political intervention, oppression and suspicion in his homeland, the musical voice of Dmitri Shostakovich is chameleon-like, yet always unmistakable. Whatever the genre in which he was composing, there is no doubting the music's emotional power. The Viola Sonata, widely considered to be one of the greatest sonatas of the 20th Century, was written in 1975, the final year of his life, when Shostakovich was very ill, and proved to be his final composition. Distinguished by that ambivalent tonality prevalent in his music, the delightful dissonance that so defines it, this is a work of resignation rather than morbidity. The Moderato, which opens gently with the viola alone playing pizzicato, is for the most part sparsely textured and all the more atmospheric for being so: the mood is interrupted by a central section of considerable fury before a viola cadenza acts as the prelude to the return of the opening figure. The Allegretto borrows material from 'The Gamblers', the composer's long-abandoned opera based on Gogol's black comedy. This rather sardonic movement, with its irresistible forward momentum and repeated chords, is typical of scherzos to be found in other earlier chamber works of his: a more subdued middle section affords contrast. One of the distinctive traits to be found in much of the composer's output is that of musical quotation and the somewhat consolatory Finale, by far the longest of the three movements, is subtitled 'Adagio in the memory of Beethoven': specifically, it makes

constant reference to the famous Adagio of Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'. Perhaps fittingly for this great composer's final work, it ends in utter quietness and stillness.

Interval

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major Op. 81
Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro
A. Dvořák (1841-1904)

Dvorak's second quintet for this medium was written in 1887, during the most intensely nationalistic phase of the composer's life, when his music was imbued with the rhythmic energy so characteristic of his homeland. It encompasses many changes in mood, tempo and dynamics and contains a wealth of memorable melody, right from the opening Allegro. Here, the initial theme is presented on the cello and the second on the viola. 'Dumka' is a Ukrainian term to indicate a piece which alternates between lively and sorrowful moods and, in the second movement, the most melancholic episodes interchange with extrovert passages of tremendous vitality, a contrast made more striking by Dvorak's choice of keys. In the Scherzo, the subtitle 'Furiant' (a fiery Bohemian dance) is misleading since this movement does not employ the alternating duple and triple rhythms that characterise it: rather, it is reminiscent of some of the composer's Slavonic Dances and is marked by an effervescent piano part while in the Trio Dvorak miraculously creates a totally different world of sound using the same material. Dance

rhythms and Slavonic melodies inspired the high-spirited Finale, which builds on two wonderful themes and finishes in a blaze of glory. The eminent Dvorak scholar, the late John Clapham, said of this work: 'It probably epitomises more completely the genuine Dvorak style in most of its facets than any other work of his. Laughter and tears, sorrow and gaiety, are found side-by-side, as well as many moods that lie between these two extremes. All are presented with consummate mastery. They are decked in a wide range of instrumental colouring and through the whole sweeps the life-blood of vital rhythm.'

Friday 13 May

7pm / Great Barn at Hellens

MASTERWORKS FROM AUSTRIA AND GERMANY

Maya Iwabuchi, violin
Agnes Langer, violin
Máté Szücs, viola
Alice Neary, cello
Matthew Hunt, clarinet
Julien Quentin, piano



Fanny Mendelssohn String Quartet in E flat major
W. A. Mozart Clarinet Quintet in A major, K. 581
J. Brahms Piano Quartet No 3 in C minor, Op.60





String Quartet in E flat major
Adagio ma non troppo; Allegretto;
Romanze; Allegro molto vivace

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

As is well documented, the opportunities in the 19th century for highly talented women in the arts to fulfil their potential were very limited. So it was for Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix, in the first half of that century. It is known that certain works attributed to her famous brother were, in fact, composed by Fanny as a means of obtaining performances of her music. Despite the limitations imposed on her by the society in which she lived, however, in her comparatively short life she composed well over 400 works (including around 250 lieder and 125 piano pieces). Her one String Quartet, which only came to light in 1988 but which dates from 1834, is based on a piano sonata she had left unfinished and shows clearly the influence of Beethoven: this is a composition imbued with the early Romantic spirit but with some discernible roots in classicism. There is a restraint and underlying anguish to the nuanced opening movement, its dark mood being largely attributable to the fact that C minor rather than E flat major is its dominant key (as in much of the work). The gossamer texture of the second movement, which has a most impassioned Trio section, is redolent of the elfin scherzos which are a feature of many of her brother's compositions. The tender and deeply expressive Romanze has an elusive, dream-like quality: it contains some wonderful sonorities and builds up with considerable energy and passion in its development before subsiding to its former state. Such a mood is banished by the most vibrant

Finale. Light emerges in its whirlwind opening and the music exhibits a carefree character absent from most of the Quartet, bringing to an end an unjustly neglected masterpiece.

Piano Quartet No 3 in C minor Op. 60
Allegro non troppo; Scherzo: Allegro;
Andante; Finale: Allegro comodo

J. Brahms (1833-1897)

It is one of the sad facts of musical history that Brahms destroyed a substantial number of works, including many in the chamber music field, so great was his sense of perfectionism. Given the outstanding quality of his surviving compositions in this most intimate of genres, which include a piano quintet and three piano quartets, one can surely only wonder what posterity has lost. His Piano Quartet Op 60, the last of the three to be completed, was embarked upon in 1855 as a work in C sharp minor before Nos 1 and 2 were written but Brahms then put it aside and it was not finished until 20 years later. In its final form, the key of the earlier draft has been brought down a semitone to C minor and it is believed that the original first movement has remained but in a considerably revised form; that the original last movement has become the new Scherzo; and that the Andante and Finale were freshly composed. Bearing in mind the germination of this Piano Quartet it is unsurprising that it has elements both of youthfulness and of the deepest maturity. Its very opening, brooding and menacing – a strong piano chord followed by two-note sighing gestures on strings – announces that this is at heart a troubled work. The threatened storm soon arrives and, though the second

theme is one of radiant luminosity, it is treated to a set of variations of ever-increasing intensity which soon re-establish the movement's prevailing mood. This is music of enormous power and suspense and the closing coda in no way dispels its emotional turmoil. Nor does the short Scherzo that follows bring much relief. Propelled forward by a theme of great rhythmic drive and dynamism with ominous undertones, it unleashes a whirlwind of sound: even a brief excursion into the major key does not derail it on its inexorable course. An oasis of calm is provided by an Andante of tender beauty which opens with a long sensuous melody on cello accompanied by piano alone. The violin enters to create a rapt duet between the two stringed instruments and the movement largely retains its tranquillity to the end, though with a certain poignancy. There is a Mendelssohnian lightness to much of the 'moto perpetuo' Finale but a latent tension resides beneath the flowing lyricism of the music. Muscular piano chords usher in the climax of an epic work of grandeur, fervour and thrilling drama.

Interval

Clarinet Quintet in A major K581
Allegro; Larghetto; Menuetto;
Allegretto con Variazioni

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

There have been countless occasions when composers, having encountered wonderful musicians, have felt compelled to write works for them. There is no better known example of this than Mozart's acquaintance with

the mellifluous playing of Anton Stadler which inspired him to compose, in 1789, his Clarinet Quintet and, two years later, the Clarinet Concerto. Indeed, it was Mozart himself, for whom the clarinet had a unique capacity to imitate the human voice, who labelled the first of these 'the Stadler Quintet'. This is chamber music at its finest: a glorious conversation between the five instruments in which any rivalry between the clarinet and the string quartet is purely fraternal. The clarinet had allured Mozart on his hearing it for the first time in Milan a decade earlier and his discovery of its charm, agility and expressive potential bore wonderful fruit in his creation of this work of beauty. 1789 had not been a happy year for the composer and, though written in the radiant key of A major, the Quintet is tinged with melancholy. Its poignant mood is established from the spacious opening Allegro, a movement of perfect symmetry and warm sonority containing an abundance of melodic material. In the sublime Larghetto, the long-breathed and rapturous singing line of the clarinet is accompanied by muted strings. The most affable and rustic Menuetto has two strikingly different Trios, the first for strings alone. The work is rounded off by a movement made up of an Allegretto, taking the form of a jaunty theme and set of variations of wondrous invention; a serene Adagio passage; and the most amiable Allegro ending, so dispelling the work's underlying sadness.



Friday 13 May

9.30pm / The Walwyn Arms

GALA PUB CONCERT

Julien Quentin, piano

Máté Szücs, viola

Matthew Hunt, clarinet

Our regular pub concert is just one way that we inspire not just our audiences, but our world-class musicians too. Here they have the opportunity to share new collaborations and repertoire - a glorious fusion of sounds, rhythms and cultures, to be enjoyed with a drink in your hand!

Dmitri Shostakovich from Five Pieces:

No.1 Prelude, No. 4 Waltz & No. 5 Polka

Astor Piazzolla Oblivion

Lou Reed Perfect Day

Elton John Your Song

The Verve Bitter Sweet Symphony

Queen Bohemian Rhapsody

Irving Berlin Cheek To Cheek

James van Heusen Come Fly To Me

Walter Donaldson I wonder where my baby is tonight

Ramin Djawadi "Game Of Thrones" Main Title

John Williams "Superman" Main Theme

Hans Zimmer Pirates Of The Caribbean - He's a Pirate



Saturday 14 May

8pm / Great Barn at Hellens

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

Maya Iwabuchi, violin

Agnes Langer, violin

Máté Szücs, viola

Alice Neary, cello

Matthew Hunt, clarinet

Julien Quentin, piano

E. Dohnányi

Serenade in C Major for String
Trio, Op. 10

Z. Kodály

Adagio for Viola and Piano

B. Bartók

Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet
and Piano, Sz. 111

B. Bartók

Piano Quintet in C major, Sz. 23



Programme / Hungarian rhapsody



Serenade in C major for String Trio

Op. 10 Marcia: *Allegro*; Romanza:
Adagio non troppo; Scherzo: *Vivace*;
Tema con variazioni: *Andante con*
moto; Rondo: *Allegro vivace*

E. Dohnányi (1877-1960)

Dohnányi is considered by some to be the most versatile classical musician to have emerged from Hungary since Franz Liszt. He established himself in the first half of the 20th Century not only as a significant late Romantic composer but also as a conductor of distinction and as a quite remarkable pianist, particularly renowned for his interpretations of Beethoven. Chamber music was to feature strongly in his compositional output, which is more mainstream and less folk-inspired than that of his compatriots Bartók and Kodály. This well-constructed Serenade, made up of five concise movements and abounding in melody, was composed between 1902 and 1904. The movements are, in turn, a Marcia, in which the brisk opening march-like figure gives way to music of a gentler nature before making a brief reappearance to end the movement; an atmospheric Romanza, introduced by a melancholic theme on the viola, which contains a central section of some commotion; an impish and fugal Scherzo of irregular rhythm which generates a great deal of nervous energy; a set of beautifully crafted variations on an elegiac, chorale-like theme: the tranquillity of its close is most affecting; and a scurrying, frenetic Rondo framing contrasting episodes: the opening march figure returns in the coda. Brahms, who had greatly encouraged the young Dohnányi and whose influence on his music is evident in this Serenade, would surely, had he lived to hear the work, have given it the highest praise.

Adagio for Viola and Piano

Z. Kodály (1882-1967)

For most of his creative life, the name of Kodály was closely identified with the folk music of his native country. However, his Adagio is an early composition, written in 1905, originally for violin and piano, just before he embarked on his mission to uncover the rural folk culture of its remote villages. Kodály arranged the work for viola and piano (and cello and piano) five years later and so loved did it become that there are subsequent versions for many other combinations, including orchestral arrangements. The Adagio is tripartite in structure. In the opening section, sonorous harmonies on the piano wonderfully complement the viola's heartfelt melody; the lucid central section includes the rippling effect of wonderful spread piano chords; and, in the final section, the opening material returns in modified form, dying away to its peaceful conclusion, so bringing to an end a most beautiful but inexpressibly sad work.

**Serenade in C major
for String Trio Op. 10**

Verbunkos: Moderato ben ritmato;
Pihenő: Lento; Sebes: Allegro vivace

B. Bartók (1881-1945)

This intriguing work, dating from 1938, has as its origin a request by violinist Joseph Szigeti for Bartók to write a short two-movement composition for violin, clarinet and piano with the intention that it should be performed by Szigeti, Benny Goodman on clarinet and Bartók himself as pianist. Bartók responded by writing this longer three-movement

work and the contrasts implicit in its title are of the different timbres of the three instruments. Verbunkos is a popular 18th Century Hungarian dance and represents a type of music associated with military recruitings. Employing characteristic dotted rhythm and incorporating dance melodies of the composer's homeland, this multi-coloured opening movement, which contains a cadenza for clarinet, exhibits a certain pride. Pihenő indicates 'rest' or 'relaxation' and in this introspective central movement Bartók makes use of snatches of sound and indeed silence to achieve this end: the movement also contains elements of the composer's so-called 'night music' in which he seeks to convey the sounds of nature at night with their attendant capacity to evoke eeriness. At the outset of the last movement, Sebes (a fast dance), Bartók uses 'scordatura' (an unusual tuning of a stringed instrument) to make allusion to a village fiddler tuning his violin: this whirlwind, often frenzied, Finale includes a violin cadenza before all three instruments combine in the work's riveting conclusion.

Interval

Piano Quintet in C major Sz23
Andante; Vivace scherzando;
Adagio; Poco a poco più vivace
B. Bartók (1881-1945)

When Bartók wrote his Piano Quintet in 1904 - it also received its première that year with the composer at the piano - he was, musically speaking, at a crossroads. He had imbibed the music of the late 19th Century Romantics and fallen sufficiently in love with that of

Richard Strauss to compose, in 1903, Kossuth, a symphonic poem deeply influenced by the older German master. However, Bartók had around the same time also begun a collaboration with his compatriot Kodály which would lead to both of them having a lifelong fascination with the folk music of Eastern Europe, even to the extent of their spending many years visiting villages and recording authentic folk melodies. Bartók would also soon embrace modernist trends in music that would further define his compositions as being distinctly different from those of the Romantics that had preceded him. Perhaps it was this tension that caused him to eventually withdraw the Piano Quintet and oppose its publication. Thankfully, it was rescued from obscurity. This expansive work is in four movements or, strictly speaking, in four sections and, in common with much of the output of his fellow countryman Liszt, there is a cyclic element as the principal theme at its outset returns in the Finale. Its organised structure, soulful melodies and lush harmonies also bear the mark of the late 19th Century but Bartók's treatment of the material together with more recent influences are indicative of a new path on which he would travel: there is a Hungarian flavour through the inclusion of a Magyar song and csardas-inspired rhythms in the Finale; a unique use of tonality that departs from his predecessors; and asymmetric rhythm. Notwithstanding the inner conflicts Bartók may have had when writing the Quintet, it delights by its soundworld.

All programme notes by John Brain





Sunday 15 May

11.30am and 3.30pm / Great Barn at Hellens

HELLENSMUSIC MASTERCLASS PROGRAMME FINALE

Hellensmusic Masterclass Programme has a unique, non-hierarchical approach to learning and mentoring which in the course of seven years has inspired dozens of aspiring professional musicians to fulfil their utmost potential.

Hellensmusic masterclass students are the stars of tomorrow, and these performances give you an opportunity to hear them today. This is the culmination of a week of study with our resident artists and these transformative masterclasses are all open to the public.

Maya Iwabuchi, violin

Agnes Langer, violin

Máté Szücs, viola

Alice Neary, cello

Matthew Hunt, clarinet

Julien Quentin, piano

Students from Hellensmusic

Masterclass Programme,

piano, violin, viola, cello, clarinet



Christian Blackshaw, piano

A deeply passionate and sensitive pianist, Christian Blackshaw is celebrated for the incomparable musicianship of his performances. His playing combines tremendous emotional depth with great understanding.

Following studies with Gordon Green at the Royal College Manchester and Royal Academy London, winning the gold medals at each, he was the first British pianist to study at the Leningrad Conservatoire with Moisei Halpin. He later worked closely with Sir Clifford Curzon in London.

He has performed worldwide and in festivals as recitalist and soloist with many renowned conductors and was Founder Director of the Hellensmusic Festival which was established in 2013.

His hugely acclaimed Wigmore Hall complete Mozart Piano Sonatas series was recorded for Wigmore Hall Live and released in four volumes. Critics have been unanimous in their praise, describing these “landmark” recordings as “captivating”, “magical” and “masterful”. Volume 4 was named as one of the Best Classical Recordings of 2015 in the New York Times in addition to Gramophone Magazine’s Top 50 Greatest Mozart Recordings.

Recent notable performances include the Mozart cycle in Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing and debuts at the Schwetzingen and Edinburgh International Festivals. He has been an Artist in Residence at the Wigmore Hall. During 2019/20 he takes the Mozart cycle to Montreal and makes debuts with Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi Milano and Claus Peter Flor and the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nezet-Seguin.

He was awarded an MBE for services to Music in the New Year 2019 Honours List, as one of the Best Classical Recordings of 2015 in the New York Times.

Matthew Hunt, clarinet

‘The clarinetist played so beautifully it was as though he wished to make the very air melt’ Tokyo Times

One of Europe’s leading clarinetists, Matthew Hunt is a distinctive musician, renowned for the vocal quality of his playing and his ability to communicate with audiences. Matthew enjoys an international career as both soloist and chamber musician, and currently holds the position of Solo Clarinetist of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Bremen, and is Professor of Chamber Music at Folkwang University in Essen. Matthew is a member of the British wind ensemble ‘Orsino’.

Highlights of the 2021/22 season include working extensively with the Chiarascuro quartet, playing with historical instruments, and working with the composers Thomas Adès, Huw Watkins and Thomas Larcher.

His recording for the ASV label of Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet was acclaimed by the BBC as: “the benchmark recording of this much recorded work”.



Maya Iwabuchi, violin

Maya Iwabuchi began violin lessons at the age of two. Her main teachers were Ms. Alice Schoenfeld at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and Rodney Friend MBE at the Royal College of Music in London.

Maya Iwabuchi has enjoyed an international career as a solo violinist, chamber musician and orchestral leader since her first concert at age five. Her playing has been hailed by critics as 'simply brilliant' (Strad), 'gorgeous' (Times) and 'absolutely stunning' (HeraldScotland), and she continues to receive the highest praise from the press. Her performances have taken her to concert halls, such as London's Royal Festival and Wigmore Halls, Vienna's Musikverein, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw, New York City's Lincoln Centre and Carnegie Hall, and Tokyo's Suntory Hall.

Solo highlights for Maya include appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia and Royal Scottish National orchestras, and she has appeared in numerous renowned music festivals, including the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh, Bath, Chichester and Edinburgh festivals, and the International Musicians Seminar in Prussia Cove.

A sought-after chamber musician, Maya was a member of the award-winning Mobius Ensemble, and she has collaborated with artists such as the Vellinger Quartet, Boris Giltburg, Brett Dean and Karen Cargill. Much of her work is regularly broadcast by the BBC and Classic FM.

Maya served as Leader of the Philharmonia Orchestra from 1994 to 2012, leading for conductors such as Sir Andrew Davis, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Charles Mackerras, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti, Andris Nelsons, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kurt Sanderling and Sir Andras Schiff. She has been regularly invited as concertmaster by many of the major UK orchestras, such as the BBC Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony and the John Wilson Orchestra.

Maya has resided in Scotland since 2010, where she devotes much of her time as Leader of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and as a member of the faculty at Glasgow's Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. When not playing her Fabrizio Senta violin circa 1685, she relishes spending as much time as she can with her musical doctor husband and in the company of family and friends - usually a table groaning with good food and wine is close by.

Agnes Langer, violin

Agnes Langer is a Hungarian violinist born in Budapest. She moved to Germany at quite a young age to study with Anne Shih at the Hochschule für Musik, Mainz, where she finished her Master's degree in 2020. Being a participant at masterclasses like IMS Prussia Cove and Casalmaggiore International Festival, she has been inspired by teachers like Gerhard Schulz, Boris Belkin, Taras Gabora and Nai-Yuan Hu.

Agnes is a prizewinner of several international competitions, such as the Bartok World Competition, the Spivakov International Competition and the Yankelevich International Competition. She has performed all over the world with orchestras like the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia, the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Liszt Chamber Orchestra and the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn. Her Moscow debut with the first Shostakovich Concerto at the Svetlanov Hall was in 2017 with the NPR under Mihhail Gerts. She has performed in Taiwan, in Canada, at the „Spivakov Invites” Festival in Russia, where she performed the Brahms violin concerto with the NPR under Vladimir Spivakov and was a guest artist at festivals like the Colmar Festival in France, the Kaposfest and the Festival Academy in Budapest. Her chamber music partners include Istvan Vardai, Kristof Barati, Jose Gallardo, Maxim Rysanov, Barnabas Kelemen and Maximilian Hornung.

Agnes plays on a fine instrument loaned to her by the Peter Eckes Kulturstiftung, made by Nicola Gagliano in 1782.



Alice Neary, cello

Alice enjoys a varied performing career as a chamber musician and principal cellist of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Familiar to listeners of BBC Radio 3, she has performed at major festivals including BBC Proms chamber series, Malboro (USA), Bath International, Santa Fe (USA) and Lofoten and played concertos with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, Liverpool Philharmonic and Israel Symphony. 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 to 2018 – career highlights include 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 and over 25 CD releases.

Alice collaborates with pianists Viv McLean, Benjamin Frith, Robin Green and Daniel Tong and has appeared as guest cellist with the Nash Ensemble, Ensemble 360 and the Endellion quartet. Regular visits to International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove provide ongoing inspiration.

Alice studied with Ralph Kirshbaum at the Royal Northern College of Music and, as a Fulbright scholar, with Timothy Eddy at Stonybrook, USA. As winner of the 1998 Pierre Fournier Award, Alice made her début at the Wigmore Hall in 1999.

Alice has been a tutor in cello at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal College of Music and is now based in her home town of Cardiff at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama 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.

Julien Quentin, piano

French pianist Julien Quentin has established himself as a versatile and sensitive musician, exhibiting great maturity and poise. His remarkable depth of musicianship and distinct clarity of sound coupled with flawless technique, make him an artist in demand as both soloist and chamber musician.

Touring internationally in America, Australia, Japan, the Middle East and throughout Europe, he has appeared at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Wigmore Hall in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, in Avery Fisher, Alice Tully and Carnegie Halls in New York. He has recorded for EMI, Channel Classics, Sony RCA, Hungaroton, Decca & Deutsche Grammophon.

Julien Quentin is a keen chamber musician and has collaborated with artists such as Nicolas Altstaedt, Emanuel Ax, Lisa Batiashvili, Gautier Capuçon, Corey Cerovsek, Martin Fröst, Sol Gabetta, David Garrett, Nelson Goerner, Ilya Gringolts, Gary Hoffman, Lawrence Power, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Sayaka Shoji, Kirill Troussov, and István Várdai.

Born in Paris, Julien Quentin started his studies at the Geneva Conservatory with Alexis Golovine. He completed his Artist Diploma under the tutelage of Emile Naoumoff at Indiana University, where he held a one-year teaching position as Assistant Instructor. He then received his Graduate Diploma from the Juilliard School, where he studied with György Sándor. He has also worked with Paul Badura-Skoda, Nikita Magaloff, György Sebök and Earl Wild.

Julien Quentin now lives in Berlin. With 'Musica Litoralis' at Piano Salon Christophori, he has managed to create an increasingly successful concert series reminiscent of the salons of the Roaring Twenties. With visual artists, he explores new artistic visions bringing various art forms together. He also pursues his interest in other genres of music through his collaboration with pianists Kelvin Sholar, Kaan Bulak and Francesco Tristano, or producers Adrien de Maublanc and Cesar Merveille in projects ranging from improvisation to producing electronic music, most notably within their new projects Midiminuit & Les Coeurs Brisés.



Olga Sitkovetsky, piano

Olga Sitkovetsky has been part of the Hellensmusic Masterclass Programme's team as an accompanist since 2014, backing students in their individual classes as well as in their Sunday concert.

A distinguished accompanist, she has performed alongside many of today's leading interpreters. Originally from Russia, she moved to the UK in 1991 at the request of Lord Menuhin, who invited her to work at the Yehudi Menuhin School of Music in Surrey. She has toured extensively with many of her former students, performing in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, the Salzburg 'Mozarteum' and the Vienna Konzerthaus.

Máté Szücs, viola

Hungarian born Máté Szücs is an award winning viola soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. He was first principal viola at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra between 2011 and 2018, where he has appeared as a soloist playing the Bartók Viola Concerto in September 2017.

He has also played as soloist with orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Flanders, the 'Bamberger Symphoniker', the "Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden", Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, and "Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen"

Máté has worked with prominent musicians such as Janine Jansen, Frank-Peter Zimmermann, Christian Tetzlaff, Vadim Repin, Ilja Gringolts, Vladimir Mendelssohn, László Fenyő, Kristof Baráti and István Várdai, Camille Thomas, Kirill Troussov, and Julien Quentin.

Since the summer of 2006, he has been a regular professor at the "Thy Masterclass" chamber music summer festival in Denmark. From 2012 to 2014 he taught at the Britten-Pears Festival in Aldeburgh, for two years at the University of Music in Saarbrücken, from 2014 to 2018 at the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, between 2015 and 2018 at the "Hanns Eisler" University of Music in Berlin, and at the Music Academy of Budapest.

Máté gives masterclasses all over the world including New York, Los Angeles, Michigan, London, Berlin, Brussels, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul and Tokyo.

Since 2018 he is viola professor at the Geneva University of Music in Switzerland, since September 2020, viola professor at Pécs University of Music in Hungary, and since 2021 visiting professor in the chamber music department of the Franz Liszt Academy of music, Budapest.

In 2020 Máté was awarded a Doctorate of Arts.



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Our aim is to create a rich and inspiring musical week that can fast-track meaningful learning, creating a welcoming environment that encourages risk-taking and candid interactions.

Beyond the masterclasses, students have the chance to engage with their tutors at meals and breaks and can see them in action at rehearsals and performances. This provides a unique opportunity for informal learning, which sets Hellensmusic apart from other short courses.





HELLENSMUSIC THROUGH THE YEAR

Our audiences tell us that our Hellensmusic festival is beautiful just as it is, but it's bursting at the seams and we can only fit so much into 6 days of wonderful music making with top international musicians, talented students and enthusiastic children, who all love an opportunity to perform. So 'Hellensmusic Through the Year' was launched in January 2019 to give us more opportunities to support young musicians at every level, inspire new audiences, and bring the best of music to Herefordshire.

Since January 2019, despite Covid (!), we have promoted 21 concerts and workshops under this banner. Our performers have included musicians from all over the world, Hellensmusic alumni (students and teachers) and local students. We have promoted music of the highest quality from countries including Denmark (Elisabeth Zeuthen Schneider), Sweden (Doggerland), Italy (Daniele Rinaldo), Spain (Juan Martín), Argentina (Massa Trio); we have introduced our audience to new music with 7 world premieres; we have enjoyed performances from ensembles ranging from The Peatbog Faeries to the Britten Oboe Quartet; we have given a platform to the next generation of talented artists. We look forward to welcoming you to all our concerts.

For more information visit hellensmanor.com



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For more information visit
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