

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES    SPRING · SUMMER 2010

# Concerts at The University

Tuesday 9 March 2010

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

**Programme of works by Mozart, Brahms, Fauré,  
Noda, Ibert, Berg and Debussy.**



### **Sonata in F major, K533, 1<sup>st</sup> movement Allegro**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

This sonata was composed in Mozart's later years in Vienna and published posthumously. It is best known for its rather complicated genesis. K533 was dated 3 January 1788. Two years earlier, in 1786, he wrote a Rondo in F major, K494 as an independent piece, and in 1788, he wrote an Allegro and an Andante in F major K533. It seems that in payment of a debt to the Viennese publisher F.A. Hoffmeister, Mozart might have been prompted to combine the two pieces into a sonata. Meanwhile, Mozart had been appointed "Kammermusicus" to Joseph II in November 1787. He might well be exhibiting an aspect of his compositional craft in order to show himself worthy of his position in the emperor's service by striking the "learned counterpoint" pose. This 1<sup>st</sup> movement of K533, in particular, is notable for the degree of imitative exchange between the hands, along with contrapuntal combinations of various sorts. Contrapuntal writing is blended with an idiom no longer typical of the sonata, one that approaches the *sonata quasi una fantasia*.

### **Capriccio in B minor, Op.76 No.2**

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

A capriccio is a piece of music usually fairly free in form and of a lively character. Typically, it is one that is fast, intense and often virtuosic in nature. In this piece, perhaps more aptly named "Capriccio" than Brahms's other Capriccios, not only the bass steady left-hand quaver notes, but also the thirds of the right hand provide an important feature. Even in such a carefree, dance-like piece, not one element is introduced that does not somehow play a role in the outcome. All of the intervals of the sixteenth-note melody become the subject of variation. Brahms mines the characters of the legato inner voice to create the central melody. It is this inner voice embedded in the texture toward the end of the piece that eventually seizes control and leads the work chromatically downward as it relaxes into its conclusion. Rhythmically, it is straightforward in which the accentuation is mainly direct. However, under the given name "Capriccio", there is plenty of room left for the performer to be imaginative. Most of Brahms's music pieces tend to be heavy, rich or with thick harmony, but this piece, among others, gives a light, crisp and imaginative feeling to the listeners.

### **Nocturne in B major, Op.33 No.2**

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

The Nocturne is not a definite musical form but a psychological mood or state of mind, especially when it comes to Fauré. Fauré wrote thirteen nocturnes spanning

almost forty years, which were published in 1922. The collection is not a collection of thirteen moonlit evenings, but we can at most consider Fauré's Nocturnes as a symbolic homage to the night's serenity which prepares dreamers for meditation. Compared to those of Field and Chopin, Fauré's pieces sometimes contain violent outbursts and are strangers to their titles. His Nocturne No.2 evolves a pleasant, carefree and a bit capricious atmosphere, and permits itself at times the graceful freedom of an impromptu with two stylistic pleasantries – one that consists of establishing continual echo effects between the melody and its accompaniment; and the other that delights in creating a clever friction with the interval of a second which sounds like "wrong" notes and offends our ears. However, they are adroitly prepared and logically executed. Contrastingly, the stirring piece finishes forcefully and really has not much in it which evokes the serenity of the night towards the end.

K.A.

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Emily Henry · alto saxophone

John Kitchen · piano

### **Improvisation 1**

Ryo Noda (b.1948)

The Japanese composer and saxophonist Ryo Noda, is a graduate from Osaka College of Music, North-Western University, where he studied under F. Hemke and subsequently at Bordeaux Conservatory under J. Marie-Londeix. He is hailed across the saxophone world for his well-crafted, avant-garde improvisations, all of which retain the drama and beauty found in Japanese art. His music is notable for the use of innovative playing techniques. Noda's music does, however, depict the dilemma of the modern composer writing for an instrument of a still essentially virgin repertoire history. *Improvisation I*, written in 1972, is the first of Noda's attempts on this new ground. It requires good command and control of the instrument to create the contrasts in playing effects, and the music mimics sounds from the Japanese language and music. By using these characteristics of his culture, Noda begins to find ways to cut the cord that binds classical instrumentalists from their formal 'limitations'.

### **Aria**

Jaques Ibert (1890-1962)

At the other end of the spectrum, Ibert's *Aria* is a perfect example of Adolphe Sax's original musical intentions for the 'singing' instrument. Ibert is one of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers for saxophone, and composed the *Concertino de Camera*, cited as being the best work written for solo saxophone. The beauty of Ibert's music is that he tackles an existing style of composition with his own sense of modernity.

E.H.

Suzanne McGrath · soprano  
Stuart Hope · piano

### L'amerò sarò costante from *Il Re Pastore*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

*Il Re Pastore* is often referred to not as an opera, but as a serenata, a type of dramatic cantata. The appearance of a quartet of lovers (Aminta and Elisa, Agenore and Tamiri) of somewhat dubious fidelity automatically puts a modern audience in mind of *Così fan tutte*. The principal theme of the opera is, however, the demands of love against the demands of kingship, as Aminta, the Shepherd-king, tussles with his conscience. At this stage in the opera Aminta declines the throne rather than give up his love for Elisa, declaring that only in Elisa will he find love and happiness.

I will love her, I will stay constant,  
Faithful husband, faithful lover,  
Only for her will I sigh.  
In so dear and sweet an object,  
My joy, my delight,  
My peace I will find.

### Nacht from *Sieben Frühe Lieder*

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

The *Seven Early Songs* are early compositions of Alban Berg, written while he was under the tutelage of Arnold Schoenberg. They are an interesting synthesis combining Berg's heritage of pre-Schoenberg song writing with the rigour and undeniable influence of Schoenberg. The first of the seven, *Nacht*, is an expansive description of the power and mystical qualities of night.

The clouds embrown the night and valley;  
the mists float above, the water rushing gently.  
Now all at once they unveil themselves:  
O listen! pay heed!

A broad land of wonder has opened up.  
Silver mountains rise up, fantastically huge,  
silent paths lit with silver  
from the hidden lap of the valley;  
and the noble world is so dreamily pure.  
A mute beech stands by the path,  
black with shadows; a breeze from a distant, lonely grove  
wafts gently by.

And from the deep darkness of the valley  
flash lights in the silent night.

Drink, my soul! Drink in this solitude!  
O listen! pay heed!

### Recit and Air de Lia from *L'Enfant Prodigue*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

*L'enfant prodigue* is a scène lyrique or cantata in one act by Claude Debussy with a text by Edouard Guinand. The cantata was premiered in Paris on 27 July 1884 to great success and Debussy won the Prix de Rome for the composition. The prodigal son, Azael, becomes an outcast after leaving his home to pursue the world's extravagant and excessive pleasures. He eventually returns home to his parents, Lia and Simeon, who lovingly welcome him with forgiving hearts. At this moment Lia laments the loss of her son with a heart-rending invocation for his return.

#### RECIT

In vain year follows year!

As each season comes around, its games and pastimes sadden me in spite of myself:

The open my wound again and my chagrin increases...

I am seeking the solitary shore...

Unwilling, undeserved sadness!

Useless striving!

Lia shall weep forever for the child she no longer has!...

#### ARIA

Azael! Azael! Why did you leave me?

In my mother's heart

Your memory has remained.

Azael! Aael! Why did you leave me?

And yet the evenings were lovely, on the plain where the elms are planted,

When, with the burden of the harvest,

The great ruddy oxen were led home.

When work was done,

Children, old people and servants,

Workers from the field or shepherds,

Praised the benevolent hand of God.

Thus did day follow day,

And within the godly family,

The young man and woman

Share their pure love.

Others among them do not feel the weight of old age:

They are happy in their children,

They see the years roll by

Without regret and without sadness...

But how the times are heavy to the inconsolate heart!

Azael! Azael! Why did you leave me?

**Kwan Yee Au** was born and grew up in Hong Kong. She started learning piano at the age of 5 with Annissa Chan. She moved to Scotland after secondary school, and transferred from the University of Glasgow to Edinburgh in 2006. As a fourth-year music student at the University of Edinburgh, Kwan Yee is keen on studying harmony from varied areas and periods with Dr. John Kitchen since 2008. A finalist in the 2010 Tovey Competition in Edinburgh, Kwan Yee has been studying piano with Peter Evans since 2006. She is giving her final recital in May before returning to Hong Kong, and will be pursuing her Masters degree in Art of Music in Hong Kong over the next two years.

**Emily Henry** is currently in her final year of study here at Edinburgh University with performance being her main focus to the degree course. Her classical saxophone studies are currently being directed by Josef Pacewicz from The Royal Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow. Last year, Emily took the opportunity to study abroad at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; there she took classical saxophone lessons and saxophone quartet coaching under Julia Nolan a former student of Eugene Rousseau. Whilst in Vancouver Emily also received the opportunity to perform with many different ensembles, one of which being to perform Gershwin with the West Coast Symphony Orchestra. She also took masterclasses with Eugene Rousseau and attended the 2009 North American Alliance Saxophone Congress in Alberta. In July this year Emily will be joining the Corps of Army Music on saxophone with the desire to train as a bandmaster in a few years.

**Suzanne McGrath** is in her fourth year of a BMus (Hons) degree and studies voice with Patricia MacMahon and Eric von Ibler. She has recently played the Fox (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) with Edinburgh Studio Opera and last year performed the Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*) in ESO Opera Scenes and the role of Serpetta (*La Finta Giardiniera*) in Scheggino, Italy with conductor Matthew Halls. Highlights of solo performances she has given in concert have been Bach's *B Minor Mass* for the Dunedin Consort with John Butt, Mahler's *2nd Symphony*, Faure's *Requiem* and Benjamin Britten's *In The World of The Spirit* with orchestras of The University of Edinburgh. This year Suzanne won the Tovey Memorial Prize and will take part in the Margaret Fletcher Lieder Prize, singing Berg and Strauss. Her vocal studies have been generously supported by the Friends of St. Cecilia's and Clutterbuck Scholarships.

#### FORTHCOMING CONCERT:

Friday 12 March, 1.10pm, Reid Concert Hall

Renate Sperger · organ

Music by BUXTEHUDE, JS BACH and BRUHNS

ADMISSION FREE