

Seaford Music Society

Sunday 22nd October 2017 at 3.00 pm

London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble

Founded in 1949 by Harry Blech, **the London Mozart Players is the UK's longest established chamber orchestra**. Known for its unmistakable British roots, the orchestra has developed an outstanding reputation for adventurous, ambitious programming. From Baroque through to genre-crossing contemporary music, the London Mozart Players is constantly exploring new venues and audiences through collaborations with artists and personalities from all over the creative scene. The ensemble has enjoyed a long history of association with many of the world's finest musical personalities including Igor Stravinsky, Sir James Galway, Dame Felicity Lott, Jane Glover, Julian Lloyd Webber, Stephen Hough, Nicola Benedetti, John Suchet and Simon Callow.

Away from their commitment to live performances across the UK, the London Mozart Players also undertake an international touring schedule which has seen them give performances in the Far East, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium and Spain. A long relationship with classical label Chandos has led to a series of over 20 recordings, including works by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Clementi, Salieri and Stamitz.

In 2016, the London Mozart Players relocated their home to St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, undertaking a rich programme of initiatives within the local community. The London Mozart Players is the only professional orchestra in the UK to be managed both operationally and artistically by the players, and has enjoyed the patronage of HRH The Earl of Wessex since 1988.

London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble

Ruth Rogers	<i>violin</i>
Nicoline Kraamwinkel	<i>violin</i>
Judith Busbridge	<i>viola</i>
Sophie Renshaw	<i>viola</i>
Sebastian Comberti	<i>cello</i>
Julia Desbruslais	<i>cello</i>



Seaford Music Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Newberry Tully Estate Agents.

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Divertimento in D major, K136

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante*
- III *Presto*

Among the many divertimenti that Mozart composed in Salzburg there are three, K136-138, that are not divertimenti at all. The mistake is due to the heading on the autograph score that says: '3 Divertimenti de Wolfgang Amadeo Mozart'. The composer himself would never have added this title to his score because he knew that a proper divertimento has many movements (usually seven) including two obligatory minuets, while K136-138 have only three movements each and no minuets.

So, if these works are not divertimenti, what are they? The score is laid out for a string quartet, and some of the music, especially in K138, is effective in that medium. But the overall style and texture obviously demand the larger dimensions of a string orchestra. The most realistic solution to the problem is therefore to regard all three 'Divertimenti' as symphonies in the Italian style – that is to say, symphonies in three movements and without any minuets. Mozart may well have composed them in the hope of having them played during his tour of Italy in 1772. Whether he did or not is not known, and the erroneous title has never been corrected, only the numbers have been changed (to K125a) in the new Kochel Catalogue. However, the old title and numbers have by now become so familiar with orchestras and audiences alike that a serious attempt at changing them would only increase the confusion.

K136-138 date from the early months of 1772 when Mozart was the leader of the Archbishop's orchestra in Salzburg. K136 is the earliest of the three works and also the most entertaining. Both the *Allegro* and *Presto* convey something of the positive spirit of the composer who, in 1772, had every reason to regard his future as promising, while the *Andante* foreshadows that warmth and tenderness that distinguishes so many of Mozart's later symphonic middle movements. The most remarkable part of this work is the humorous *Presto*. It has unusually short quaver chords between rests and sudden bursts of very fast semiquaver runs, some of which – and by no means the easy ones – are given unexpectedly to the second violins.

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ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874-1951)

Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4

In the autumn of 1899, Arnold Schoenberg was 25 and largely unknown, scraping a precarious living from conducting workers' choirs and making arrangements of other people's music. He was encouraged by his friend and mentor, the composer Alexander von Zemlinsky (whose sister he later married). Schoenberg's exploration of atonality and serialism was to bring him notoriety as the world's leading 'modernist' composer; but this still lay some 20 years in the future. At the close of the nineteenth century, Schoenberg was seeking to extend the boundaries of the late romantic idiom of Brahms, Mahler and Richard Strauss, under the spell of the chromatic harmonies of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

In 1897, Schoenberg's String Quartet in D had inspired the critic Eduard Hanslick to proclaim that 'a new Mozart is growing up in Vienna'; heartened by this reception, Schoenberg composed *Verklärte Nacht* for string sextet in September 1899. Zemlinsky was impressed, and submitted the score to an influential Viennese music society, the Wiener Tonkünstlerverein; but the work proved too modern for the judges, who commented 'It sounds as if someone had smeared the score of *Tristan* while it was still wet!'

Verklärte Nacht ('Transfigured Night') is based on a poem by Richard Dehmel. Two lovers are walking in the moonlight; she confesses that she is pregnant by another man, but so great is his love for her that he agrees to bring the child up as his own. Schoenberg's work closely follows the five sections of Dehmel's poem. An introduction, depicting the couple's hesitant steps through the moonlit wood, is followed by the woman's confession; a brief interlude introduces the man's reply. His declaration of selfless devotion is followed by a serene postlude, as they walk on through the 'high, bright night'.

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*Two lovers walk through a bleak, cold glade;
the moon keeps pace with them, they gaze at it.
The moon sails over tall oaks;
no wisp of cloud obscures the light of heaven
into which the black treetops reach.*

The voice of a woman speaks:

*I am carrying a child, and not by you,
I walk in sin beside you.
I have offended grievously against myself.
I no longer believed in happiness,
yet I had a grave longing
for what life holds, for a mother's joys
and responsibilities; and so I dared,
and so, shuddering, I yielded my sex
to the embrace of a stranger,
and have become pregnant from it.
Now life has taken its revenge:
now I have met you... you!*

*She walks with awkward steps.
She looks up; the moon keeps pace with her.*

*Her dark gaze drowns in light.
The voice of a man speaks:*

*Do not let the child you have conceived
be a burden to your soul.
See how brightly the universe is shining!
There is a radiance all around;
you journey with me on a cold sea,
but an inner warmth flickers
from you to me, from me to you.
It will transfigure the stranger's child,
you will bear it to me, from me;
you have filled me with this radiance,
you have turned me into the child myself.*

*He embraces her strong hips.
Their breaths entwine in the air.
Two people walk through the high, bright night.*

Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), from *Weib und Welt* (1896)
English translation by Jonathan Burton

INTERVAL 25 MINUTES

Tea and coffee at £1 per cup can be purchased from the Church Lane Tea Room, 18 Church Street (just past the Plough Inn) and may be brought back into the church.

There is one toilet in the church vestry, and public toilets opposite the church. The Church Lane Tea Room also has one toilet (for patrons only).

If you are not already a member of the Seaford Music Society but would like to join, Paul Moore, the Society's Treasurer and Membership Secretary, will be available during the interval. If you become a member today, the cost of your single ticket for this concert will be refunded in full and put towards your membership subscription.

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Souvenir de Florence for string sextet, Op. 70

- I *Allegro con spirito*
- II *Adagio cantabile e con moto*
- III *Allegretto moderato*
- IV *Allegro vivace*

In common with many late Romantic composers, Tchaikovsky's musical thoughts tended to be on a grand scale, hence requiring large orchestral forces. Chamber music thus forms a relatively limited part of his output, numbering just five mature works: three string quartets, a piano trio and this string sextet.

The string sextet itself emerged as a form during the 19th century, developed in particular by Brahms in his Op. 18 and Op. 36 works, and by Dvorak, and for this work Tchaikovsky chose to write for six instruments rather than the four of the string quartet because of the increased range of textures and colours made available. *Souvenir de Florence* was written for the St Petersburg Chamber Music Society, which in 1886 had elected Tchaikovsky as an honorary member, and was completed in 1890, but then revised before publication in 1892 and its first performance in St Petersburg in December 1892, less than a year before Tchaikovsky's death.

Unlike Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien*, in which he consciously sets out to capture in music the flavour and excitement of Italy, the *Souvenir de Florence* is not a tonal picture of the city or country. Rather, its name derives from one melody, the main theme of the slow movement which Tchaikovsky had heard and noted down during a visit to Florence in 1887. In all other respects the musical idiom is Russian rather than Italian, in particular in the *scherzo* third movement with its Russian dance theme, and the opening music of the lively *finale*.

The outer movements show Tchaikovsky's thorough mastery of Western classical forms, including sonata structures and a full-blown fugue in the *finale*, and the work as a whole his delight in writing for string instruments, and his expertise in using the whole gamut of their technical possibilities. *Souvenir de Florence* is sometimes performed by a full string orchestra, giving it a similar character to Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, but the quality and ingenuity of the part-writing is more obvious and effective when it is played, as in this afternoon's concert, in its original version.

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Forthcoming concerts:

Sunday 5th November, 4.00 pm, at St Andrew's Church, Bishopstone (please note the starting time)

Family concert: Cloudland! Explorations in sound stories for all the family, by students from the Royal Academy of Music. The concert will last about an hour.

Sunday 3rd December, 3.00 pm, at St Leonard's Church, Seaford

Capriccio Ensemble, performing duos and songs by Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven, Donizetti and Fauré.

If you are not already a member of Seaford Music Society, you can join this afternoon and receive a full refund of the price of your ticket, which will be put towards the cost of your annual membership subscription. To join, see our Treasurer, Paul Moore, after the concert.