

Seaford Music Society

Sunday 8th March 2020 at 3.00 pm

Melvyn Tan and Maggie Cole

Born in Singapore in 1956, **Melvyn Tan** showed prodigious musical talent during his childhood, and at the age of twelve came to England to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School. His piano teachers, Nadia Boulanger, Vlado Perlemuter and Marcel Ciampi, sparked his lifelong passion for French music, in particular the works of Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen. After enrolling at the Royal College of Music in 1978, he developed an interest in the sounds of early pianos and the playing styles that conditioned them.

Tan decided in 1980 to specialise in fortepiano and was rewarded by rapid professional progress over the following decade. He forged an artistic partnership with Roger Norrington and the London Classical Players, intensified in 1987 during a landmark tour of Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and Japan. Capacity audiences attended their Beethoven Experience weekend at London's South Bank and subsequent international tour, during which Tan performed on Beethoven's Broadwood fortepiano of 1817.

Later on, Tan began exploring works on the modern concert grand piano. This new phase of his career was launched in 1996 with a performance in Cologne of Mozart's Piano Concerto No.9 "Jeune homme", with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie. His interpretations of everything from Bach and Rameau to Chopin and Debussy are directly informed by his knowledge of historical playing styles, and his intuitive feeling for the modern piano's timbres and textures.

Tan has performed as concerto soloist with numerous prestigious ensembles around the world. More recently he has made regular appearances with the London Chamber Orchestra, recording Mozart's Piano Concerto No.12 and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.2 on their LCO Live label.

After a long absence, Melvyn Tan returned to Singapore in January 2011, where he played to a full Esplanade Hall. He has since returned regularly for orchestral and recital performances and to teach young musicians. Since September 2012 he has been Artist in Residence at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory.

American born **Maggie Cole** enjoys an international musical life, playing and recording on harpsichord, fortepiano and modern piano. Now resident in England, she is Professor of Fortepiano at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and teaches early keyboards at Dartington International Summer School.

Maggie is well known through numerous solo recitals on BBC Radio 3 and appearances at leading British festivals. Abroad, she has performed in venues from Seattle to Moscow, and from Finland to India. She performs regularly with Trio Goya, the Nash Ensemble, Britten Sinfonia and her USA-based group the Sarasa Chamber Ensemble. With Sarasa she has been able to extend her love of teaching to the development of a program which brings music, improvisation and poetry into facilities for youth offenders.

Maggie's many recordings include Bach's Goldberg Variations, Poulenc's Concert Champêtre and Boccherini Sonatas with Steven Isserlis. More recent recordings include Haydn trios with Trio Goya, "Mozartiana" with Sebastian Comberti, and flute and piano music by Philippe Gaubert with flautist Idit Shemer.



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

Seaford Music Society, registered charity no. 295569

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

Sonata in C major, K.521

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante*
- III *Rondo: Allegretto*

In the days before recorded music was available, duet arrangements were a common way of becoming familiar with symphonies and quartets. Playing together was in itself a way of learning musicianship, and several composers provided original compositions alongside arrangements and transcriptions of popular works. Schubert and Brahms come to mind as composers of fine works for piano duet.

Long before their time, however, the nine-year old Mozart was writing sonatas for himself and his sister Nanerl to play. As he grew up, these duet sonatas became fewer but more serious. The two parts might imitate orchestral effects, or be more *concertante*, but with Mozart they remained a form of personal, domestic music-making. In all, five complete sonatas for piano duet have come down to us, a sixth having been left unfinished and completed by the publisher André. The *Sonata K.521* is the last of them, having been composed in May 1787 and published the same year. The two parts are rivals, but in the brilliance of especially the first and last movements, each has a chance to shine.

The Sonata begins with a supremely confident *Allegro*, full of festive spirit, humour and charm. There follows a beautiful *Andante* in F major, with a more agitated middle section in D minor. The work ends with a tender *Rondo*, the theme of which comes back at least four times in the most simple and touching manner imaginable.

Programme note courtesy of Making Music

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Sonata in D major, Op.6

- I *Allegro molto*
- II *Rondo: Moderato*

Music for two or more players at one keyboard came to prominence in the generation after J S Bach, as the piano began to displace the harpsichord as the “default” keyboard instrument in a musical household. Bach's son Johann Christian contributed several sonatas to the repertoire. In the next generation, whilst Mozart wrote a substantial quantity of exquisitely crafted and irresistibly appealing music for two pianists, his contemporary Haydn was much less prolific in this medium. Haydn's pupil Beethoven followed his teacher's example, contributing only a handful of early works to the four-hands literature.

Of these, the most substantial is the two-movement Sonata in D major, Op.6, composed and published in 1797. By this time, Beethoven had spent five years in Vienna, but he was still building his reputation as a virtuoso pianist and composer, and needed to supplement his income by teaching. It is generally assumed that the D major Sonata was composed as a teaching piece. Nonetheless, it foreshadows the composer's maturity in several respects: for example, the main themes of both movements are ornamented when they reappear towards the end of the movement, rather than being played straight, as Mozart and Haydn might have done.

Of the two movements, the opening *Allegro* is the more energetic. Its vigorous opening motif – three short repeated notes, followed by a single longer note at a lower pitch - contrasts with a more sinuous, melodic secondary theme. In the central development section, the two themes are superimposed on each other with interesting results. The concluding movement, a genial *Rondo* with the tempo marking *Moderato*, is

cast in a five-part ABACA form; the first “B” episode is in the minor mode, whilst the second remains in the major and contrasts more gently with the main theme.

But the most striking portent of the mature Beethoven lies in that opening motif, innocuous as it may seem in this context. If you take that “three-shorts-and-a-long” figure, change it from major to minor mode, and speed it up, you have the opening theme of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony – arguably the single most famous piece of classical music in the world.

Programme note used with permission from TiVo Corp.

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Selected Pieces

These pieces will be introduced from the platform.

INTERVAL 25 MINUTES

Tea and coffee at £1 per cup can be purchased from the Church Lane Tea Room, two doors down the road at 18 Church Street, just past the Old Plough Inn.

Specialist teas and coffees are also available at standard prices.

Please bring your drinks back to the church, to make space in the Tea Room for others.

Public toilets (including disabled facilities) are in Place Lane, on the north side of the churchyard. There are also public toilets (no disabled facilities) in South Street (at the bottom of Church Street).

Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Petite Suite

- I *En bateau*
- II *Cortège*
- III *Menuet*
- IV *Ballet*

Debussy composed his *Petite Suite* as a piano duet between 1886 and 1889, and gave its first performance on 1 March 1889, with his fellow student Jacques Durand. The work has a feeling of period simplicity, and illustrates the composer's ability to charm as it looks back to earlier times and styles.

The first movement, *In a boat*, is set in the traditional 6/8 time of a *barcarolle*, a Venetian gondola song. Swelling arpeggios evoke the sound of gentle waves under a floating melody, and there is a more animated central section before the gentle lilt resumes. The second movement, *Procession*, uses bright rhythms and syncopation. The *primo* part often evokes two, sometimes even three, flutes. The wistful *Menuet* is an elegant dance with classic grace. The starting point here was an earlier song, *Fête galante*, a setting of words by Verlaine. The final movement is a ballet, in which the ebullient main theme is interrupted by a waltz motif, which indeed takes over at the end.

Programme note courtesy of Making Music

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Grand Rondeau in A, D.951

The final year of Schubert's all too brief life was very productive and saw the creation of several of his finest works. Among these were the F minor Fantasy for piano duet, a number of songs including the noteworthy "Serenade", the last three piano sonatas, and the final version of the Great C major symphony. A prodigious amount of work by any standard, this was all the more remarkable considering that he was in the tertiary stage of syphilis and ultimately dying of typhoid as a complication of this.

In the midst of it all, Schubert accepted a commission from Domenico Artari, his publisher, for a "Grand Rondeau" for four hands at the piano. In June of that year he began to set down a simple theme in 2/4 time. Each subsequent digression from this theme presses gently in another direction, giving the impression that all are siblings, very comfortable with each other. The work does not betray what must have been the composer's depressed and even despairing frame of mind, emerging as a melodic, fully scored, finely crafted and ultimately satisfying piece of piano music.

Programme note used with permission from TiVo Corp.

Our forthcoming concerts and other events

Sunday 5th April 2020, 3.00 pm, at St Leonard's Church, Seaford

Our **Family Concerts** have been a great success, enjoyed equally by children and their families and by unaccompanied adults. This year's concert, "**Haydn Seek**", will last about an hour, and the whole family will be very welcome. Free entry for members, children and young adults (under 26); other adults £10. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

Sunday 10th May 2020, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

We are delighted and privileged to welcome the **Endellion Quartet** to Seaford in this, their farewell season. They will be playing works by Haydn, Janacek and, of course, Beethoven, in his 250th anniversary year.

Important: This concert will be held at Seaford Baptist Church, not St Leonard's Church

Seaford Music Society AGM, Sunday 28th June 2020, 3.00 pm, at St Leonard's Church Hall, Seaford

Our Annual General Meeting, preceded by the traditional cream tea, will this year be held at St Leonard's Church Hall, not in Bishopstone as in the past couple of years. We hope this will make it easier for members to attend. The programme for 2020-21 will be announced at the AGM.

The formal notice will be sent to members later on, but we urge you to put the date in your diary now. Attendance at the AGM is open to members only, so PLEASE KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD SAFE AFTER THE FINAL CONCERT OF THIS SEASON, as proof of your entitlement to attend.

Additional benefits for members of Seaford Music Society

As a member of Seaford Music Society, you can receive a discount on the standard entrance charges to the concerts of the **Nicholas Yonge Society** (Lewes), **Lewes Festival of Song** and **Uckfield Music Club**. All you need to do is to present your current SMS membership card, and you will receive the following discounts:

Nicholas Yonge Society (www.nyslewes.org.uk)	£3 discount (£13 instead of £16)
Uckfield Music Club (www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk)	£3 discount (£12 instead of £15)
Lewes Festival of Song (www.lewesfestivalofsong.co.uk)	£2 discount for lunchtime concerts £3 discount for evening concerts

If you are not already a member of Seaford Music Society, you can join by seeing our Treasurer, Paul Moore, at the table at the back of the church.