

Dydd Mawrth 29 Gorffennaf

Tuesday 29 July

*6.30 pm Neuadd Fawr
Datganiad yr Hwyr Cynnar*

**6.30 pm Great Hall
Datganiad yr Hwyr Cynnar**

*Myfyrwyr dosbarth feiolin, cyfarwyddwr Sigyn Fossness gyda'r
pianydd Hilary Suckling.*

Students from the violin class, director, Sigyn Fossness, with pianist
Hilary Suckling.

*7.15 pm Cyntaf Isaf
Cyngerdd Ymylol Musicfest*

**7.15 pm Lower Foyer
Musicfest Fringe**

Côr y Gors

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*8 pm Neuadd Fawr  
8 pm Great Hall*

**Cyngerdd yr Hwyr  
Evening Concert**

*Cerddorfa Siambr Orion, arweinydd Toby Purser, Sigyn Fossness  
(feiolin), Simon Lane (piano)*

Orion Chamber Orchestra, conductor Toby Purser, Sigyn Fossness  
(violin), Simon Lane (piano)

**Martinů**

*Noned / Nonet*

EGWYL / INTERVAL

**Ravel**

*Sonata ar gyfer feiolin / Violin sonata*

**Lutosławski**

*Rhagchwaraeon Dawns / Dance Preludes*

#### **Orion Chamber Orchestra**

(Patron: HRH Princess Michael of Kent; President: Lady Solti)

The members of tonight's ensemble are selected from the London-based Orion Orchestra. The Orion Orchestra exists to promote the best young musicians in the country, giving its members the experience of working under professional conditions at all of London's leading concert venues, as well as a platform for especially talented young soloists.

As orchestra in residence over the last three years at Aberystwyth International MusicFest, the orchestra also provides unique experience to student conductors and composers. It awards annually both a Conductors Prize and a Young Conductors Bursary, supported by the Richard Carne Trust. Additionally, in 2012 it awarded its first Composers Prize, supported by the Royal Overseas League.

Since its formation in 2005 by artistic director Toby Purser, notable soloists have included Joanna MacGregor, Julian Lloyd Webber, Tasmin Little, and Dennis O'Neill, while exceptional younger instrumental soloists have included violinists Nicola Benedetti, Valeriy Sokolov, Jack Liebeck and Charlie Siem, pianists Tom Poster, Teo Georghiu and Panos Karan, percussionist Martin Grubinger, and cellist Guy Johnston.

Each year, Orion's repertoire embraces the wide range of genre, style and skills its musicians will need in professional orchestras, encompassing symphonic, opera, contemporary and even Middle-Eastern and Latin-American fusion. They have championed many neglected works, including the premier of a long-lost Stravinsky orchestration of *The Song of the Volga Boatmen*. Future highlights include a tour to Singapore, and a Royal Festival Hall performance conducted by Edward Gardner.

They have 3 CDs to their name, most recently recording 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' with rock legend Rick Wakeman.

Many of the orchestra's concerts are in partnership with charities and have contributed to raising over £950,000 for The Passage, helping London's homeless, among many other charitable organisations.

#### **Toby Purser**

Toby Purser is widely regarded as an intelligent and passionate conductor. He began his musical studies as a chorister and a music scholar at Winchester College and studied piano in Vienna before returning to read music at Oxford, where he founded the Oxford Philomusica and conducted the Oxford Sinfonietta. Having begun his conducting studies with George Hurst, he spent two years at the St. Petersburg State Conservatoire studying with Ilya Musin, and then a further three years at the Royal Academy of Music with Colin Metters.

Toby Purser first came to prominence when he won second prize at the Leeds Conducting Competition in 2002, and was appointed Assistant Conductor of L'Ensemble Orchestral de Paris for 2007 following his participation in the Vendome Academy with Janos Furst and John Nelson.

He is Artistic Director of the Orion Orchestra, and principal guest conductor of Orpheus Sinfonia and Kammerphilharmonie Graz. From 2002 until 2011 he was principal conductor of the London International Orchestra, and remains its principal guest conductor. Other orchestras he has conducted include the English Chamber Orchestra, L'Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Orchestra of Opera North, Basel Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, Sinfonia Viva, the St. Petersburg Camerata and the St Petersburg Festival Orchestra. Non-professional orchestras include Oxford University Orchestra, Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra, Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra and the Helix Ensemble.

In 2005 Toby Purser founded the Orion Orchestra, a stepping-stone orchestra for the most talented musicians leaving music college, and has developed it into one of London's great orchestral successes, receiving glowing reviews and recognised as a leading organisation for young musicians. Now performing over a dozen concerts per year in all of London's most prestigious venues, it recently toured to Paris, and future plans include a European tour with Rick Wakeman, and concerts in Lebanon and Singapore. Together, they have worked with soloists including Nicola Benedetti, Susan Gritton, Tasmin Little, Joanna MacGregor, Alwyn Mellor, Dame Ann Murray, Teo Gheorghiu, Martin Grubinger, Guy Johnston, Jack Liebeck, Julian Lloyd-Webber, Dennis O'Neill and Valeriy Sokolov. Toby Purser initiated a Composers' Prize, a Young Conductors' Award and a Great Young Soloists series. His debut CD with the orchestra was released in 2010, with critical acclaim praising his "passionate but finely nuanced" conducting. A second recording of British works was released last year by Cameo Classics.

He is a regular guest at Grange Park Opera where he has conducted *Madama Butterfly*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Rigoletto* and *Fortunio*, which was also performed at the Buxton Festival. Highlights for 2014 include performances of *The Thebans* at English National Opera, *La Fille du Régiment* for Opera della Luna, and the release of a CD of Bel Canto arias with tenor Jesús León and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

Other operatic performances have included Bailey's *The Black Monk* for The Sirius Ensemble, *Hansel und Gretel* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for British Youth Opera and Sciarrino's *Infinito Nero* for Almeida Opera. Working for Pimlico Opera each winter since 2008, he has conducted productions in various prisons, with a cast of inmates performing alongside professionals in repertoire including *West Side Story*, *Les Misérables*, *Sugar*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Sister Act*.

In 2010 the Aberystwyth International MusicFest invited him to direct its first conductors' class, following which the class is now established as an annual event. He was assistant to the late George Hurst at the Canford Summer School of Music, where he remains a tutor on the George Hurst faculty of conducting, and was co-director of the Graz Conductors' Summer School 2008-9.

## Sigyn Fossness

Violinist Sigyn Fossnes is associate professor at Barratt Due Institute of Music, Norway. She teaches both young talents and students, and her students have received a great numbers of awards and prizes. She is also involved in Barratt Due's teaching program, and is now setting up the same program for violin professors in Hanoi, Vietnam. She is also co-leader for "Valdres sommersymfoni", the Norwegian music summer school.

Sigyn Fossnes is educated as a violinist from the Norwegian State Academy and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, studying with Prof. Detlef Hahn. She was former a violinist in Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, but in recent years she has performed with her Ensemble Ernst and colleague pianists. Her first solo-CD, and Quartet-CD was both nominated to the Norwegian award "Spelemannprisen", and in 2005 she received from the Norwegian Composer Society the award: "Performer of the year". She has performed a great number of works for the first time, and she has performed Norwegian recent works in concerts and festivals all over Norway and in Paris, Rome and London. She also now works with improvisation and "Open Form" and released with her pianist, Else Olsen S., her new CD at Bergen International Festival 2010.

## Simon Lane

Simon Lane performs with both instrumentalists and singers across the UK, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Croatia, Slovenia and North America.

He studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, with Mark Ray and Dina Parakhina, and subsequently graduated with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, where his teachers were Michael Dussek and Julius Drake. In his early life he was a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral.

Simon has performed at venues such as Wigmore Hall, St. George's Bristol, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the Bridgewater Hall, and has collaborated with artists including Allan Clayton, Iestyn Davies, Guy Johnston, Jack Liebeck, and the Navarra and Badke String Quartets. Festival appearances include the Bachfest Leipzig, Menton, Dubrovnik, Leeds Lieder, Newbury and Brighton Festivals.

Future engagements include recitals with Guy Johnston, Lana Trotovsek and Tamsin Waley-Cohen at venues including Wigmore Hall and the Ljubljana Summer Festival.

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Nonet, H374

Bohuslav Martinů (1890 - 1959)

1. *Poco allegro* 2. *Andante* 3. *Allegretto*

Martinů was the son of a shoemaker, who was also the bell ringer and watchman in the small Bohemian town of Poličky. Although not a child prodigy, he soon showed promise as a violinist and composer. He seems to have had an excellent music teacher, to judge from the comments he made in later life, and he was firmly supported by his mother. He gave his first public concert in Poličky at the age of 15 and entered the Prague Conservatoire at the age of 16. His stay at the Conservatoire was brief and he was expelled for idleness. He returned home to teach music and he continued to study by himself. After the First World War he joined the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra as a second violinist and in 1923 he went to Paris, where he studied composition with Albert Roussel. He married a Frenchwoman and remained in Paris until the outbreak of the Second World War. A target for the Nazis, they had to leave Paris in a great hurry and struggled for six months before reaching Lisbon and getting a passage on a boat to the United States, where Martinů, like so many European musicians, spent the war years. He stayed in America for some years after the war, teaching composition in several universities, but later went to live in Switzerland, where he died.

Martinů was one of the most prolific of 20th century composers; he composed sixteen operas, fifteen ballets, six symphonies, five piano concertos and much chamber music, as well as works in a wide range of other genres. In the 1920s and 30s, he was influenced by a number of the fashions of modernism in music but it was not until he was in his mid-40s that his work began to gain recognition. By the time he crossed the Atlantic, he had begun to develop a neo-classical style. During his stay in America, his style grew more mellow and increasingly lyrical, and his works became popular and widely performed. His melodic and rhythmic invention was influenced by Czech folk music but his forms were increasingly classical. These qualities are very evident in this nonet, a lyrical work, written in 1959 and dedicated to the Czech Nonet, who gave the first performance at the Salzburg Festival on 27th July 1959. It is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, cello and bass; it takes the form of a classical Haydn three movement trio and shares the Czech accent, warmth, good humour and lyrical beauty of Dvořák's chamber music.

Violin Sonata in G major

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

1. *Allegretto* 2. *Blues: moderato* 3. *Perpetuum mobile: allegro*

By the start of the First World War, the French musical establishment that had so hampered Ravel's early career had been overthrown and his friend and former teacher, Gabriel Fauré, was head of the Paris Conservatoire. Ravel himself, though never a prolific composer, had accumulated an impressive collection of compositions and was widely viewed as the most important of France's younger composers.

Ravel was keen to serve his country. The last work that he wrote before his enlistment was his Piano Trio and we know from his letters that he worked very hard to make sure that the manuscript was as tidy as possible, in case someone else had to correct the proofs after his death. He had hoped to become a pilot but he was small and underweight and

the doctors said he had an enlarged heart. He was worried that he would given a desk job but in the end he was able to enlist as an ambulance driver, in which capacity he was later wounded and discharged. The war itself had a profound effect on Ravel. He lost many friends in the war. His mother, to whom he was very attached, died in 1917 and this only added to his depression and exhaustion. Nevertheless, he found the energy to compose *Le tombeau de Couperin*, each movement of which is dedicated to a friend (or, in one case, two friends who were brothers) killed in the hostilities. He composed little in the nine years between the end of the war and 1927, when he finished the Violin Sonata. Following the deaths of Debussy in 1918 and Fauré in 1924, Ravel was by this time undoubtedly the pre-eminent living French composer.

The violin sonata is dedicated to the distinguished French violinist Hélène Joudain-Morhange, a good friend of Ravel, who shared his enjoyment of jazz. The première of the work was given by the Rumanian violinist and composer Georges Enesco, with Ravel at the piano, on 30 May, 1927, in the Salle Erard in Paris. (Technically, this was Ravel's second violin sonata, since he completed a single movement of a violin sonata in 1897 but abandoned it at that point.)

Ravel was never tempted to imitate the techniques of either Schoenberg or Stravinsky but he nevertheless seems to have been influenced in the 1920s by a general tendency towards a more austere style. Gone is the luxurious orchestral sound of *Daphnis and Chloe* and gone is the melodic richness of the *Introduction and Allegro for harp, flute, clarinet and string quartet*. Nevertheless, what remains is immensely satisfying. The first movement of the sonata is particularly bare and austere in its textures but it still has moments of beautifully expressive lyricism. As the marking 'Blues' suggests, the second movement is permeated with the rhythms and harmonies of the blues. The *perpetuum mobile* begins with a few hesitant introductory bars, before the violin embarks on an uninterrupted whirl of semiquavers over a staccato accompaniment, eventually bringing the work to an exciting conclusion.

Dance Preludes (1981)

Witold Lutosławski (1913 - 1994)

1. *Allegro molto* 2. *Andantino* 3. *Allegro giocoso* 4. *Andante* 5. *Allegro molt*

Lutosławski was born into a family of intellectual Polish landed gentry, which was to be shaken and battered by the political and military convulsions that overtook Eastern Europe during the twentieth century. The family fled from Warsaw (then formally part of Russia) to Moscow when the Prussian forces started to march towards Warsaw. Following the Bolshevik revolution, his father and uncle were executed in Moscow. Surviving members of the family returned to the newly independent Poland after the end of the War but the family estates were ruined and they were barely able to scrape a living from them. Young Witold was, however, able to attend the Warsaw Conservatoire, where he studied piano and composition. Military service followed and his unit was mobilised at the start of the Second World War. He was captured by the German forces but escaped and made his way back to Warsaw - his brother was captured by Russian forces and died in a labour camp. Following the German occupation of Poland, Witold spent most of the war years playing popular music in Warsaw cafés with his friend, the composer Andrzej Panufnik. After the war, he fell foul of the communist authorities because of his refusal to accept the Stalinist doctrine of socialist realism. Following the death of Stalin in 1953, the cultural climate became more relaxed and his Concerto for Orchestra written in 1954 earned him two state prizes. Over the next 30 years, he produced a stream of works that established his reputation as one of the leading composers of the second half of the twentieth century. His international reputation made his very public support for the Solidarity movement in the 1980s particularly effective.

Lutosławski composed his *Dance Preludes* in 1954; they were originally written for clarinet and piano but the composer subsequently made two orchestral versions. The work is built around the rhythms of Polish folk dances rather than specific dance tunes. These rhythms change from bar to bar in a sometimes bewildering fashion. The second and fourth movements are quiet and reflective, contrasting with the increasing energy of the odd-numbered movements. Nowhere is the rhythmic complexity more evident than in the last movement, which combines 2/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/4 and 6/4 time signatures; its high spirits, the hints of bagpipes and the wild climax suggest a village wedding or similar celebration.

Frank Bott