

Sadwrn 21 Gorffennaf
Saturday 21 July

~~~~~

*Neuadd Fawr / Great Hall*  
*Canolfan y Celfyddydau*  
**Aberystwyth Arts Centre**

8.00 *Cyngerdd yr Hwyr*  
**8.00 Evening Concert**

*Pedwarawd Sacconi Quartet*

*Ben Hancox* *ffidil / violin*  
*Hanna Dawson* *ffidil / violin*  
*Robin Ashwell* *fiola / viola*  
*Cara Berridge* *soddgrwth / cello*

*gyda / with*

*Tom Poster* *piano*  
*David Campbell* *clarinét / clarinet*

*Rhaglen / Programme*

**Llwybrau Cân (Paths of Song) for String Quartet**

**John Metcalf**

My interest in the idea of travelling (the concept not the actuality) has been long-lasting and much of my music reflects this, including the early opera 'The Journey' and the music-theatre work 'The Crossing' (which is set on an ocean liner). More specifically even, at the beginning of the 1990's I became fascinated by the idea of walking. This is also reflected in my work, in pieces like 'Rest in Reason, Move in Passion' (1993) and 'Transports' (2000) and the interest was further developed when I read Bruce Chatwin's 'Songlines' and became familiar with the music of Kevin Volans and Peter Sculthorpe. In their work the journey is a spiritual as well as a physical exercise, a concept familiar from pilgrimages to 'walkabout'.

I have always been keen, however, that this exploration should happen in my own context. I knew directly from Canadian experience of the dangers of cultural expropriation from native traditions - cultures which many would say have retained richer and broader points of reference than contemporary western society. I was helped in this by the travels in Wales of the artist Catrin Webster who I worked with on 'Transports' and whose collection of paintings of the same name inspired my own 'Mapping Wales'. It was also helpful that my music, though primarily melodic is often driven by pulse. I had written one previous work built on a single tempo throughout - Line Dance for String Orchestra - and decided that I would take a similar approach with the present work.

The piece is built, appropriately, on a walking pulse. It is a brisk walk (crotchet = 116) and the pulse is clearly signalled at the outset by a long series of repeated chords. As the work progresses polyrhythms and varied textures mask it, but it is ever present. Indeed, I had intended that it would be very much to the foreground throughout as in, for example, Andriessen's 'De Snelheid'. But the work evolved in a different and, for me, surprising direction.

There are five sections all, of course, in the same basic tempo but each having a clearly differentiated musical character :

*Andante \* Estatico \* Calmo \* Scherzevole \* Cantabile*

The opening Andante section is characterised by repeated chords. It soon broadens out and leads via a dramatic modulation to the Estatico section. Here there are proliferating 'songlines' for all the players and the texture is very full. After a dramatic climax high on all four instruments the music slows for the Calmo section. This is clearly identified by a soaring melody on first violin. To this point in the piece all the music is very sustained and there are few rests. By contrast, there follows a Scherzevole section with broken texture, playful writing and rapid alternation between left hand pizzicato, conventional pizzicato and arco playing. This section effectively has two expositions of the same material, though the 'join' is masked. The final Cantabile refers back to the ideas of all the previous sections but, as it progresses an even broader melody - which seems to me to affirm once again the healing power of music - asserts itself, before the work comes to a light and airy conclusion.

What is surprising about this is that, having set out at the beginning of the work on a path of discovery to nowhere in particular, I find, at the end, that I have in effect written a single movement 'symphonic' work with identifiable opening and closing faster sections and in between a slow movement and a scherzo (albeit all in the same tempo). Maybe the old adage that all stories end in either a marriage or a death is also, after all, true.

**John Metcalf**

'Paths of Song' was commissioned by the Bangor New Music Festival, Llandudno Festival and Lower Machen Festival with funds provided by the Arts Council of Wales and the PRSF.

## Clarinet Quintet

**Arthur Bliss**  
(1891-1975)

*Moderato \* Allegro molto \* Adagietto espressivo \* Allegro energico*

Bliss achieved well-deserved recognition during his life-time and became a fully-committed Master of the Queen's Music in 1953. His reputation has suffered more recently by comparison to his contemporary, William Walton which is not a fair reflection on his contribution to British Music. An 'enfant terrible' in his early years, he looked to Stravinsky and Satie as models. Later he found a more traditional, but personal idiom which is sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'post-Elgarian'.

The clarinet quintet was first performed in 1932. The composer's brother, Kennard had been a clarinetist but was sadly killed during the First World War. There is no programme as such for the quintet but the temptation is strong to hear the composer's emotions echoed in the music. The first movement opens with a cantalena motif on the clarinet, joined by the viola and eventually the rest of the strings. It is a reflective movement and might well suggest happy recollections of the two brothers in childhood.

The bustling scherzo gives a picture of frantic activity interspersed with moments of lyrical tranquillity, facets of a quicksilver personality perhaps. The music's flow is suddenly halted by dramatic chords and the movement ends abruptly as if a candle had been snuffed out.

The beautiful Adagietto is elegiac in mood with a gently lilting central section. The movement ends with a long pianissimo note on the solo clarinet.

The final Allegro is cheerfully exuberant, contrapuntal in style and offers the wind player considerable opportunities for display. Brief moments of lyricism are brushed aside in the excitement until, toward the end, Bliss recalls the reflective mood of the first movement in a quieter episode. Exuberance, however, has the last word.

## Egwyl / Interval

### Piano Quintet in A minor, Op. 84

**Edward Elgar**

*Moderato \* Adagio \* Andante-Allegro*

In 1918 the Elgars moved to West Sussex where the composer found a convivial atmosphere in which to start writing again after the fallow years of the Great War. In the next eighteen months he produced his violin sonata, string quartet, piano quintet and the cello concerto.

Not far from their cottage there stood a small group of dead trees and most likely it was his writer friend, Algernon Blackwell who invented the 'legend' that they were inhabited by the spirits of impious Spanish monks. The scientist in Elgar, he was a dedicated amateur chemist, would have scoffed at the idea but the striking image of those ghostly figures certainly inhabit large sections of the quintet.

A chant-like motif on the piano, accompanied by hushed comments from the strings sets the haunted scene. This is interrupted by a loud, brisk outburst as if to say 'What a lot of rubbish!' But the ghosts return and gently begin to dance (perhaps that was their sin). Elgar clearly had not intended to write a tone poem and the movement develops along more or less traditional lines with a brilliantly constructed climax. The music subsides, the mood darkens and we are left amid the haunted trees.

Any programme for the slow movement, Elgar kept to himself. It is pure, seamless melody without reference to anything that has gone before. The mood is serene apart from several impassioned climaxes and does not share the despairing introspection of the slow movement of the cello concerto.

A brief reference to the opening chant acts as a link to the main subject of the finale, a striding six note theme. This is Elgar in confident, optimistic mood and demonstrates how a great composer can expand such simple material. During quieter moments he could not resist a backward glance at the opening scene, although the trees seem to have lost their sinister aspect. The main theme then returns to propel the movement to a robust conclusion.

**Peter Kingswood**

~~~~~

Pedwarawd Sacconi Quartet

Formed in 2001 at the Royal College of Music, the Sacconi Quartet is rapidly gaining an enviable reputation as one of the outstanding quartets of their generation. Over the last year the Quartet has won 2nd Prize at the 2006 London International String Quartet Competition, along with the Esterhazy Prize & Sydney Griller Award, and 1st Prize in the Trondheim International String Quartet Competition. They also won the Kurtag Prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, 1st Prize in the Royal Over-Seas League chamber music competition and were shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society award. In May 2006 the Quartet was selected for representation by Young Concert Artists Trust (YCAT), and in August was awarded an Angel Award by The Herald newspaper for outstanding performances in the Edinburgh Festival.

Last season the Quartet gave recitals at Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, the Aldeburgh and Lincoln International Chamber Music Festivals and appeared at numerous festivals and venues throughout the UK. They also made their debut at the Holland Festival to great acclaim. They have collaborated with the Chilingirian Quartet, Wihan Quartet, David Campbell, Morgan Szymanski, Tim Boulton, Lawrence Power and Raphael Wallfisch in quintet, sextet and octet concerts.

At the opening of the 2006/07 season the Quartet toured the UK as part of the IMS Prussia Cove ensemble, working with Chloe Hanslip, Ian Brown and Christoph Richter. They went on to perform three complete cycles of the Mozart string quartets and quintets with Simon Rowland-Jones. Engagements during the season include return visits to Wigmore Hall, concerts at Cadogan Hall (28 January), St. George's Bristol, the Canterbury, Bangor New Music, Bury St. Edmunds, Winchester, Gregynog and Lincoln Mozart Festivals. Abroad the Quartet has appeared at the St. Olav Festival in Trondheim, Norway and given recitals in Geneva, France and Italy.

Future plans include a series of concerts in Switzerland and recitals in the Musikverein in Vienna, Barcelona and the prestigious Liceo da Camara series in Madrid. Their recording of Finzi's song cycle *By Footpath and Stile* with baritone Roderick Williams was released on Naxos in June 2006.

The Sacconi Quartet hold the Leverhulme Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music. They pursue a keen interest in educational work, collaborating with the Cavatina Chamber Music Trust, Live Music Now! and Wigmore Hall schemes, making regular visits to schools, hospitals and community venues.

The name *Sacconi Quartet* comes from the outstanding twentieth-century Italian violin maker and restorer Simone Sacconi, whose book *The Secrets of Stradivari* is considered an indispensable reference for violin makers.

Tom Poster piano

Born in 1981, Tom Poster is rapidly emerging as one of the most talented and versatile pianists of his generation. As concerto soloist, solo recitalist and chamber musician, he has appeared in major venues throughout Britain, Ireland, continental Europe, China and the Middle East, and he is a regular guest at national and international festivals. Since his London concerto debut at the age of 13, Tom has appeared extensively in a wide-ranging concerto repertoire of over 20 major works, with orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic (under Yan Pascal Tortelier), European Union Chamber Orchestra, China National Symphony Orchestra, Macau Orchestra, Orchestra of St John's (as Featured Artist in the Dorchester Festival), Southbank Sinfonia and the Orchestras of Nancy and Montbéliard, France. He has given solo recitals at the Barbican Hall and St John's Smith Square in London; in Bonn, Hamburg, Lugano, Paris and the Channel Islands; and at festivals in Brighton, Chester, Devon (Two Moors), Edinburgh, King's Lynn, Winchester, Windsor and Spoleto, Italy (the last by personal invitation of Maestro Gian Carlo Menotti).

In 2000, Tom won the keyboard sections of both the Royal Over-Seas League and BBC Young Musicians Competitions, and in 2003, he was a major prizewinner at the Dudley and Epinal International Piano Competitions. He has made many appearances on BBC Radio 3, BBC 2 and Classic FM, and has recorded works by Thomas Ades for EMI. As a chamber musician, Tom has given duo recitals with cellist Guy Johnston at the Wigmore and Bridgewater Halls and the Louvre Auditorium Paris. He is also the pianist of the Aronowitz Ensemble, which recently made its Wigmore Hall debut and is now a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme. Tom has collaborated with the Endellion, Medici, Bochmann and Bronte Quartets, and with the Brodsky Quartet in the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's Piano Quintet at the Aldeburgh Festival. Future plans include appearances at the Cheltenham, Aldeburgh, Spitalfields and City of London festivals with the Aronowitz Ensemble, several recording projects for the BBC, and concerto performances with the St Petersburg Academic Symphony Orchestra and Southbank Sinfonia under Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Tom currently holds a Postgraduate Fellowship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studies with Joan Havill, his teacher for the past 16 years. Prior to this, he gained a Double First in music from King's College, Cambridge, where he won all the major prizes for performance. More recently, Tom has had teaching responsibilities at both the Guildhall School and the Cambridge University Music Faculty and has been an adjudicator for the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. Also a successful composer, Tom was Artistic Director of Sophie's Silver Lining Fund Music Festival in Chacombe, Oxfordshire for three years, and in 2005 was a guest at the reception at Buckingham Palace given by the Queen in celebration of the British music industry.

David Campbell - clarinét / clarinet

David Campbell is internationally recognised as one of Britain's finest musicians and was described by the doyen of British clarinetists, the late Jack Brymer, as 'the finest player of his generation'.

A large part of Campbell's early career was spent as a clarinetist in the field of contemporary music as a member of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' chamber ensemble, 'The Fires of London' also playing regularly with the London Sinfonietta, Endymion Ensemble, and Lontano, but over the past twenty years David Campbell has developed the solo and chamber music strands of his career, performing in over forty countries with leading orchestras and ensembles.

His repertoire is wide-ranging but he still champions new works, many of which have been written for him. The most recent were a new concerto 'River of Crystal Light' by Peter Lieuwen, which he played and recorded in the Texas Festival in June 2005 and a clarinet quintet, 'The Sun and the Moon' by Michael Stimpson which received its premiere in Aberystwyth with the RTE Vanbrugh Quartet in July 2005. In February 2006 David played concertos by Mozart and Charles Fitts (World Premiere) in the USA with the Houston Chamber Orchestra.

As well as numerous broadcasts over the past thirty years, David has made many CDs including two versions of the Mozart Concerto with the City of London Sinfonia and Royal Philharmonic, two versions of the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas as well as the Mozart and Brahms Quintets, Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time, two albums of music by Charles Camilleri, the Bliss Clarinet Quintet, Phillip Cannon's Quintet, Logos and works by Martinu, Maxwell Davies and Carey Blyton. His recording of Peter Lieuwen's 'River of Crystal Light' was released in May 2007 and future projects include recording a third CD of works by Charles Camilleri and an album of English clarinet quintets, and concertos by Carl Davis, Gerald Finzi and Graham Fitkin in Estonia with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra.

David Campbell particularly enjoys the genre of the Clarinet Quintet and has appeared as a guest artist with many fine string quartets including the: Bingham; Bridge; Brodsky; Copenhagen (Denmark); Coull; Danubius (Hungary); Delme; Emperor; Endellion; Fine Arts (USA); Maggini; Medici; Solstice and Tippett. During 2007 David has toured the UK extensively with the Sacconi Quartet (Second Prize Winners in the London International String Quartet Competition in April 2006).

David Campbell is also passionate about music education. He holds positions as a Visiting Professor at Canterbury Christ Church University and Head of Woodwind at Westminster School. David has been Artistic Director of Musicfest-Aberystwyth since 2002 and is Course Director of the International Clarinet Course at Harrogate.

David Campbell is the UK Chair of the International Clarinet Association, and has represented the UK at the international clarinet conferences in London, Quebec, Lubbock, Paris, Ostend, Salt Lake City, Stockholm and on 5th July 2007 played the Bliss Clarinet Quintet in Vancouver.

~~~~~

### **Nos Iau 26 Gorffnaf 6.15 yh Siop Lyfrau Canolfan y Celfyddydau Aberystwyth**

*Fydd Margaret Williams, awdures lleol, yn siarad am ei lyfr diweddar,  
"The Food of Love - A Centennial History of the Penzance Orchestral Society".*

**Croeso i bawb.**

**Thursday 26th July 6.15pm  
Aberystwyth Arts Centre Bookshop**

Local author Margaret Williams will be talking about her recently published book, "The Food of Love - A Centennial History of the Penzance Orchestral Society".

**All are welcome to attend.**

~~~~~