



75TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
CELEBRITY CONCERTS

7.30 p.m. WEDNESDAY
8th December 2021

ST MARY'S CREATIVE SPACE
St. Mary's Hill, Chester CH1 2DW

THE PLEYEL ENSEMBLE

Harvey Davies - Piano *Melinda Maxwell - Oboe*
Janet Hilton - Clarinet *Laurence Perkins - Bassoon*
Laurence Davies - Horn

Chester Music Society is a Company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England No. 4793760 Registered Charity No. 1099094
Registered Office: UHY Hacker Young, St. John's Chambers,
Love Street, Chester CH1 1QN
www.chestermusicsociety.org.uk

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Welcome back to St Marys for our 21/22 season; it seems a long time since we were last in St Mary's.

Our Virtual Concert series on YouTube was very successful with a large number of views per concert. They are still available to watch. Thank you to everyone who was able to donate to support the society and the performers.

We have a great series of concerts for you; some have been rebooked from the cancelled 20/21 season and some are new bookings.

We have taken a deliberately cautious approach to restarting our concert series primarily because we wanted to ensure that everyone was safe and more importantly felt confident about returning to live concerts.

We intend to review every concert and the arrangements in place, and, as the season progresses, we hope to be able to reintroduce some of our normal services, like refreshments in the interval and a printed programme. We will tell you in advance about the changes we propose to make and would welcome feedback from you on our arrangements.

A very warm welcome this evening to the Pleyel Ensemble for our first live concert for some time

David Woods
Chairman

PROGRAMME:

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

Quintet in Eb for piano and winds, K452

Largo - Allegro moderato

Larghetto

Rondo: Allegretto

Lennox BERKELEY (1903-1989)

Quintet for piano and winds, Op. 90

Andante – Allegro

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Intermezzo: Andante

Allegretto

INTERVAL

Ludvic van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Quintet for piano and winds, Op. 16

Grave - Allegro ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Francis POULENC (1899-1963)

Trio for Oboe, bassoon, and piano

Lento - Presto

Andante con moto

Rondo: très vif

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS:

The Pleyel Ensemble

The group was formed in Manchester in January 2011 by Harvey Davies with his wife, the 'cellist Heather Bills. It comprises a group of friends and colleagues who draw on a wealth of experience gained through many years of music-making. The Pleyel Ensemble was delighted to be chosen again as *Making Music Recommended Artists* for the 2019/'20 season and has appeared at Music Societies and Festivals all over the UK.

It takes its name from the Classical composer Ignaz Pleyel (1757-1831), a brilliant musician and businessman, who, in addition to writing a large body of accessible chamber music, helped increase the popularity of this wonderful kind of music-making amongst amateurs and professionals as both music publisher and piano manufacturer in the early nineteenth century.

As an ensemble comprising wind, strings, and piano it offers a diverse repertoire with many instrumental combinations available.

Harvey Davies - Piano



Harvey Davies studied the piano with Helen Davies and David Parkhouse then with Ryszard Bakst at the Royal Northern College of Music. His career as a chamber musician has taken him to four continents and throughout the UK.

Harvey is a Fellow in Historical Performance and a staff pianist at the RNCM and teaches at Chetham's School of Music. He has collaborated with many eminent musicians

including the Alberni, Benyounes, Callino and Carducci Quartets, Atar Arad, Alison Balsom, James Bowman, Rebecca Evans, James Gilchrist, Tony Halstead, Janet Hilton, Guy Johnston, Jennifer Pike and Elena Urioste and as a freelance player, Harvey has worked with the Hallé Orchestra, RLPO, Manchester Camerata, Northern Chamber Orchestra, Manchester Collective and the contemporary music group Ensemble 10/10.

The *Davies Duo*, Harvey and his mother Helen, have worked together since 1990. They have performed and recorded extensively and commissioned many new works for piano duet as well as rediscovering some of the huge wealth of Classical and early Romantic 4-hand music. Their disc entitled '*Diversity*', features works written for them by Welsh composers and was received to critical acclaim.

Melinda Maxwell – Oboe



Melinda was born in London and read music at York University and studied in Germany with Ingo Goritzki and Helmut Winschermann.

She has performed as soloist at many festivals including Edinburgh, Aldeburgh and Cheltenham and abroad at the Holland, Aarhus, and Oslo Festivals. She has given many recitals and is frequently heard on BBC Radio 3. She has also made many recordings.

Melinda is also an accomplished composer, among her pieces are Pibroch and Song for Sidney for solo oboe, a work for double-reed

ensemble, Crane Dance, written for the RNCM Woodwind Day in October 2008, and various ensemble pieces with strings.

In addition to her work as a chamber musician and recitalist, she is principal oboe of the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, the Endymion Ensemble and the improvisation group Notes Inegales and also performs regularly as principal with the London Sinfonietta, and for film sessions with the London Metropolitan Orchestra.

She has taught at the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College in London and has been giving masterclasses at the Dartington International Summer School since 1992. She also coaches at the Britten-Pears and National Youth Orchestra summer courses. She is Consultant in Woodwind Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

Janet Hilton – Clarinet



During a distinguished international career as a soloist, after studies in Manchester and Vienna, Janet Hilton has appeared with most major British orchestras, at festivals including Edinburgh, Cheltenham and the BBC Promenade Concerts, and in many European countries, the United States and Canada.

Janet has created a substantial discography, having recorded much of the clarinet repertoire for Chandos, with other CDs on the EMI, BBC, ASV and Clarinet Classics labels.

She had a long association on record and in the concert hall with the Lindsay String Quartet and has also recorded with Peter Frankl, Nobuko Imai and Keith Swallow, and many leading British orchestras.

Also, as a leading teacher, Janet was Head of Woodwind at the Birmingham Conservatoire and then for 12 years at the Royal College of Music until she stepped down in 2010, although remaining a professor. She has given masterclasses at several American universities, the Paris Conservatoire and served on the juries of leading competitions in England, Ireland, Italy and Canada.

Laurence Perkins – Bassoon



Laurence Perkins has become one of Britain's best-known solo bassoonists through his concert performances and numerous solo and orchestral recordings on CD. His solo recitals in the UK have included the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London, Dartington International Summer School, and live broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM, as well as recitals and concertos in several European countries. He was Principal Bassoonist with Manchester

Camerata from 1974 to 2017, with whom he recorded concertos by Mozart and Weber conducted by Douglas Boyd.

Laurence is a bassoon tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and his educational work has included major national and international projects promoting the bassoon to young musicians. He is also heavily involved in working with amateur musicians, working as a bassoon and chamber music tutor at many summer schools and courses in the UK and overseas, including a series of *Wind Serenades* courses at Higham Hall in the English Lake District, and at *Cubertou* in the south of France. His other activities include musical relaxation sessions with cancer patients and landscape photography.

Laurence Davies - Horn



Laurence Davies has recently left the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra having joined as their Principal Horn in June 2008. He previously held the same position with the Philharmonia Orchestra for 10 years. During this time Laurence has also been invited to perform as concerto soloist most notably in Mozart's 4th horn concerto which he played in the Dennis Brain 50th anniversary memorial concert conducted by Barry Tuckwell with the Philharmonia and for a live Mozart DVD with the RPO. He

is also one of the soloists on the celebrated Deutsche Grammophon recording of Schumann's Konzertstück for four horns and orchestra with Christian Thielemann and the Philharmonia. Laurence has also enjoyed performing Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings with several of the UK's most renowned tenors including Philip Langridge, Ian Partridge, Ian Bostridge, Mark Padmore and Charles Daniel.

In addition to orchestral playing Laurence is an experienced chamber musician performing both with the RPO and Philharmonia's own ensembles and with established groups such as the Nash Ensemble, London Winds, the Razumovsky Ensemble and the Britten Sinfonia. In 2006 Laurence was invited by Charles Dutoit and Chantal Juillet to become part of an international faculty of leading players from Canada, the USA and Europe establishing new summer music academies in China and South Korea.

Laurence also has a BA in archaeology and classical studies and runs a tour company called Oldbury Tours from his home in Wiltshire.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

Quintet in Eb for piano and winds, K452

Largo - Allegro moderato

Larghetto

Rondo: Allegretto



“My academy concert went very well. - I have written 2 grand concertos [K.450, 451] plus a quintet which has been exceptionally well received: I myself consider it the best thing I have ever written in my life.” Mozart to his Father, April 10th.

Completed on 24 March 1784 and followed by another piano concerto (K.453) by the end of the month, it is not surprising if this work

sometimes feels like a piano concerto, with brilliant passage work for the piano, while the interplay between wind instruments and piano, so often also a central part of the concerti, establishes all the instruments as equals in skill and in their involvement in the musical material. The *Quintet* too, is not simply a showpiece for the piano, for each of the wind instruments plays its full part in the ensemble, and if the limitations of wind instruments in Mozart's time meant that each instrument could only play relatively short phrases, this presented Mozart with wonderful opportunities to use the different timbres of each instrument to colour the melodic line as it passes from one instrument another.

The opening movement is prefaced by a dignified but lyrical *Largo*, the *tutti* chords acting as pillars between the melodic phrases, before each instrument is introduced in turn with a simple descending scale,

a motif which the piano makes much grander with its octave doubling. Brief duets between different combinations of the wind instruments follow before *tutti* chords accompanied by trills on the piano, signal the opening of the *allegro*. The piano introduces both first and second subjects, but it never dominates the musical argument, and the fecundity of melodic and rhythmic invention, as well as different styles of accompaniment is shared between all instruments. The development section, which takes up the closing phrase of the exposition, is brief but manages several modulations of the first subject, as well as fragmenting its signature falling couplet between the instruments, before the recapitulation. Here the horn gets its turn at the second subject now in the home key. The whole movement is rounded off with a brilliant flourish from the horn by way of a coda.

The *Larghetto* has a stately but graceful air with the instruments in turn accompanying the melodic line, whose phrases seem to develop endlessly as each instrument takes it over in turn. There is drama too at the beginning of the middle section before the horn introduces a new melody while subtle chromatic harmonies prolong the tension of resolution before the return of the opening subject.

The last movement is an expansive, cheerful rondo in sonata form - the first subject acting as the rondo theme, while the second subject and the development become the rondo's 'episodes'. A cadenza in tempo begun by the wind instruments but joined by the piano leads to a further episode and the final re-statement of the rondo theme, followed by a coda, in which all the characters of the ensemble, as in an *opera buffa*, line up to tell us how well things have turned out in the end.

Programme notes by Janet Upward, January 2012, supplied through Making Music.

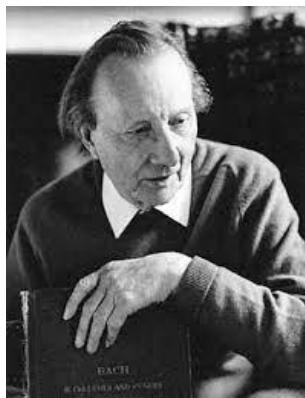
Sir Lennox BERKELEY (1903-1989)
Quintet for piano and winds, Op. 90

Andante – Allegro

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Intermezzo: Andante

Allegretto



Sir Lennox Berkeley was born near Oxford on 12 May 1903. After graduating in French and Philology at Merton College, Oxford in 1926, he moved to Paris where, on the advice of Ravel, he studied with Nadia Boulanger. During the Second World War, he worked as a programme planner for the BBC in London

From 1946–68 Lennox Berkeley was professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music, his pupils including Richard Rodney Bennett, William Mathias and Nicholas Maw. He was made CBE in 1957 and knighted in 1974.

Commissioned by and first performed by Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New York, the *Quintet* for wind and piano (1975) is among the more extended chamber works from Berkeley's later years, as well as witness to his interest in the subtle deployment of serial elements to enrich his musical vocabulary.

The first movement begins with a thoughtful introduction in which each wind instrument appears in turn, evincing a harmonic astringency that carries over into the main movement. Here, the angular first theme is complemented by its more yielding successor, elements of both being combined in a sequence of leisurely exchanges where timbral contrast between the instruments is less

significant than that of their overall combination. At length the slow introduction returns for a placid conclusion.

The *scherzo* strikes a livelier note with its rhythmically unpredictable interplay between wind instruments over a similarly flexible piano accompaniment. There is a calmer interlude for horn and piano, but the initial mood duly returns to affect a brusque ending.

The *intermezzo* continues the varied combining of wind instruments, given a secure rhythmic underpinning by the piano. A brief solo for the latter leads directly to the finale, initially as pensive but summoning up greater energy as the wind instruments emerge. At length, each of the four winds states an expressive version of the main theme: this mood prevailing through more restive music from horn and piano, yet without precluding a spirited dash to the close.

Taken from notes on Berkeley's chamber works by Richard Whitehouse

Ludvic van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Quintet for piano and winds, Op. 16

Grave - Allegro ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo



In February 1796 Beethoven undertook a tour of Prague, Dresden and Berlin, with Prince Lichnowsky, and it is very likely that this *Op.16 Quintet* was written during his stay in Berlin, having been

inspired, it is said, by hearing a group of Czech wind players performing Mozart's similar work in the same key. Both employ oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, with the piano. As far as we know,

Beethoven's work was not publicly performed until April 1797, after his return to Vienna, when the composer publicly criticized Karl Czerny for amplifying the original piano part to make use of the instrument's extended keyboard.

Although it is tempting to compare Beethoven's work with that of Mozart, little is to be gained thereby. This quintet is early Beethoven, and shows some Mozartian influence, but adopts very different proportions. It suggests preparation for a full-scale symphony but in a non-symphonic medium. In the first movement Beethoven is extravagant with his material as opposed to Mozart's extreme economy. There is a lengthy, slow introduction featuring a unison fanfare in double-dotted rhythm, followed by an easy-going *Allegro* with a characteristically long development section and coda.

The *Andante*, both in form and harmonically, shows a more adventurous trend than in other wind music of the time.

The final *Rondo* is witty and high spirited and strays from the true rondo form by bringing the first episode back at the end and by developing the main theme to form the second episode.

Dedicated to Prince Joseph Johann zu Schwarzenburg, when first published, Beethoven also made available alternative parts for violin, viola and cello as replacements for the wind instruments.

Programme notes by John Dalton, March 2008 supplied through Making Music

Francis POULENC (1899-1963)

Trio for Oboe, bassoon, and piano

Lento - Presto

Andante con moto

Rondo: très vif



Poulenc was one of the major composers of the post-Impressionist period in France, and one of the most prolific and fluent. His style owes something to Chabrier, Stravinsky and Satie, with a facility for piquant melody and rhythm garnished with spicy dissonances.

Poulenc struck a friendship with a group of young composers. In a 1920 review of a concert featuring all of them, Henri Collet baptized Poulenc, Milhaud, Auric,

Honegger, Tailleferre, and Durey as "*Les Groupe des Six*."

Poulenc's music was driven by a lively sense for melodic invention, set against traditional, even old-fashioned harmonic backgrounds. This duality was one of many in the life of the composer. He suffered fits of manic depression, characterized by deep sadness and doubt followed by maniacal states of optimism. French critic Claude Rostand remarked that: "In Poulenc there is something of the monk and something of the rascal."

His impish wit is put to most effective use in this Trio, written in 1926 and dedicated to Manuel de Falla. The Trio is a well-written, assured work which uses the instruments most skilfully, something in the spirit of an 18th-century divertimento, though one feels that laughter is never very far away.

The first movement opens in mock-heroic style with the piano leading most sedately. In the presto section which soon follows, gives plenty of opportunities for the two wind instruments to alternate cadenzas. Poulenc uses long and contrasting lines, shifting between the harmonies of A major and A minor, to create narrative tension.

The second movement is a lyrical pastorello, described by Poulenc himself as “sweet and melancholic.” The opening theme on the piano is soon passed to the winds, followed by decorative treatment of this theme. After a vigorous middle section calm is restored with beautiful duet playing in the final bars.

The final Rondo is a jolly affair in a leaping 6/8 rhythm; the pastorello-feel of the preceding movement continues with miniature horn-calls and concluding with a joyful fanfare.

Based on programme notes by CRW for Ilkley Concert Club., March 1991 supplied through Making Music and material by Babara Moroncini for LA Phil.

FUTURE CONCERTS

See: <https://www.chestermusicsociety.org.uk/index.php/celebrity-concerts-2>

12 January 2022	Imogen Royce & Imma Setiadi, flute and piano
9 February 2022	Craig Ogden, guitar
9 March 2022	Sam Heywood, piano
13 April 2022	Hefin Duo, harp & flute
11 May 2022	Antonina Suhanova, piano