



DUNSTER FESTIVAL

CLOSING CONCERT

7.30pm, Sunday 29 May 2022

Aoife Mairead Ní Bhriain | Violin
Clare O'Connell | Cello

Liam Byrne | Viola da Gamba
James McVinnie | Organ

Prelude
(Clare) Marin Marais (1656 – 1728)

Silent Noon
(Jamie, Clare, Liam, Aoife) Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872 – 1958)

Broken
(Clare and Liam) David Lang (1957 –)

A Fantasia of Four Parts
(Jamie) Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)

Three Solos
(Clare) Edmund Finnis (1984 -)

Anach Cuan (slow air) / The Maids of Mitchelstown (Irish Reel)
(Aoife) Trad.

INTERVAL

Prelude for Solo Cello
(Clare) Natalie Klouda

Sarabande from the Partita in D minor / My love is in America
(Aoife) JS Bach / Trad.

Je n'av deuil
(Jamie, Clare, Liam, Aoife) Alexander Agricola (1458 – 1506)

Dies sind die heiligen Zehen Gebot BWV 678
(Jamie) JS Bach (1685 – 1750)

The Lark Ascending
(Jamie, Clare, Liam, Aoife) Ralph Vaughan-Williams

This is a programme devoted to the melding of diverse musical traditions and sound worlds, taking as its starting point Vaughan Williams' Lark ascending in a new arrangement for violin, cello, gamba and organ, and which draws together music ancient and modern from both classical and folk traditions, as we explore the unique sonorities created by this unusual combination of instruments.

Vaughan Williams is famous for collecting and incorporating traditional English folk tunes into his work - the Lark Ascending is full of them and so it feels right - essential(!) - to set alongside this very pastoral music some real traditional Irish folk from a classical violinist who comes from a long line of Irish fiddlers and whose family is steeped in that tradition.

Natalie Klouda's piece, originally written for baroque cello, pays homage to the first movement of JS Bach's Prelude in G major from his first suite, and we continue the exploration of more ancient sounds with pieces by Agricola and Byrd, while the most modern piece in the programme by David Lang juxtaposes the sonorities of the ancient viol alongside the modern cello to great effect.

We open the programme with Vaughan Williams' exquisite song Silent Noon, played on gamba, part of Ralph Vaughan Williams' famous cycle, The House of Life, which sets six sonnets by poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and which captures the essence of two lovers alone with nature and so deeply in love that words are no longer necessary.

AOIFE MAIREAD NÍ BHRIAIN

Born in Dublin, to a family of musicians, Aoife Ní Bhriain has established herself as one of the most versatile musicians of her generation. Thanks to her musical heritage combined with her classical studies she has collaborated and performed with musicians such as pianist Eliso Virsaladze, fiddle player Martin Hayes, jazz guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel and Oscar winning actor Tim Robbins.

She is a member of the avant garde string quintet Wooden Elephant as well as the Goodman Trio with whom she has explored the manuscripts of the music collected around Ireland in the 1800's by Canon James Goodman.

Aoife has a particular interest in solo violin works and curated a performance on the solo violin works of J.S. Bach and the improvisations of acclaimed Dublin fiddle player and soloist Tommie Potts.

She graduated with first class honours from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig in 2018 and plays on a violin by J.B. Vuillaume on generous loan.

CLARE O'CONNELL

Performer, arranger and curator, cellist Clare O'Connell plays as a soloist and chamber musician.

Since founding her own concert series Clare's practise has developed into a mixture of performing, writing, arranging and curating projects in which she collaborates with musicians and artists who inspire her. She is most interested in the intent behind a piece of music and finding the perfect context in which to present it.

She is a member of visionary ensemble Lontano and the Storytellers Ensemble and is a regular collaborator with many other chamber music & chamber opera projects. For Behind The Mirror, her concert series based in Berkhamsted, she commissions many new works from living composers, makes

her own arrangements of a vast array of music for unusual groups of instruments, and interweaves music poetry and storytelling to add another dimension to the listening experience.

Over lockdown she arranged, recorded and produced her debut solo album *The Isolated Cellist*, a deeply personal collection of ancient & modern music for solo and layered cello which was released by Stone Records in April 2021.

Highlights of 2022 include a performance of Cheryl Frances Hoad's work *Katharsis* with the new music ensemble at Oxford University, and premiering *Figures of Eight*, Ed Finnis' duo for cello and double bass which she co-commissioned with bassist Elena Hull.. She will be one of four solo cellists performing in Laura Jane Bowler's new opera *The Blue Woman* at the Royal Opera House and at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh; and throughout the year performs as a soloist with Michael Morpurgo as he tours his *Carnival of the Animals* poems.

She is a graduate of Wadham College, Oxford where she studied Ancient & Modern History followed by postgraduate study at the Royal College of Music & the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen, Germany with internationally acclaimed cellist and teacher Alexander Baillie. She plays on a cello by Stefan Krattenmacher.

LIAM BYRNE

Liam Byrne spends most of his time playing either very old or very new music on the viola da gamba. An obsession with the instrument's most obscure 16th and 17th century repertoire is a recurring theme in his work, whether in devising baroque performance installations for the Victoria & Albert museum, or in collaboration with the Appalachian fiddler Cleek Schrey, or creating new electronic works with Icelandic composer Valgeir Sigurðsson.

Liam's solo performances frequently combine old viol music with new works written for him by composers such as David Lang, Nico Muhly, and Edmund Finnis, among many others. His membership in Icelandic record label and artist collective Bedroom Community has led to the release of two massive studio-based works: Donnacha Dennehy's 40-minute long *Tessellatum* for multi-tracked viol and viola (with Nadia Sirota), and Valgeir Sigurðsson's *Dissonance*, a 23-minute deconstruction and explosion of a Mozart string quartet using many layers of Liam's improvisation.

In June 2017, Liam was commissioned by the Victoria & Albert museum to create a site-specific sound installation for their new Courtyard Gallery, which resulted in the 8-hour long piece *Partials*, an exploration of the space's resonance derived entirely from upper partial harmonics played on the viol. In 2015 Liam also collaborated with Nico Muhly on a sound installation for the National Gallery's *Soundscapes* exhibition, and in 2016 was commissioned by the Dulwich Picture Gallery to make an immersive work in their Mausoleum, in response to two 17th century paintings by Gerrit Dou.

Over the years, Liam has worked closely with a wide variety of musicians, from Damon Albarn to Emma Kirkby, and is a frequent guest of new music ensembles Stargaze, the London Contemporary Orchestra, and Crash Ensemble. With a background in Historical Performance and degrees from Indiana and Oxford Universities, Liam has played and recorded with many of Europe's leading Early Music ensembles, including the Huelgas Ensemble, Dunedin Consort, The Sixteen, i Fagiolini, and the viol consorts Phantasm, Concordia, and most notably Fretwork, with whom he toured and recorded extensively for several years.

JAMES MCVINNIE

James McVinnie's work as a performer encompasses music from the 16th century to the present day. He has collaborated with many leading figures in new music including Philip Glass, Tom Jenkinson/Squarepusher, Angélique Kidjo, Nico Muhly, Martin Creed, Richard Reed Parry, Bryce Dessner, Darkstar, Hildur Guðnadóttir, David Lang, Sarah Davachi many of whom have written large scale works for him.

James McVinnie is a member of Icelandic record label Bedroom Community. 'Cycles', his debut recording of music written for him by Nico Muhly, was released on this label in 2013 to widespread critical acclaim. An album of music by Philip Glass, 'The Grid', was released on Orange Mountain Music in 2018. 'All Night Chroma', an album of works by Tom Jenkinson/Squarepusher was released on Warp Records in September 2019.

This season's highlights include the first performances of Philip Glass's Symphony 12 'Lodger' with Angélique Kidjo and the Los Angeles Philharmonic under John Adams and in London with the London Contemporary Orchestra at Southbank Centre, Messiaen recitals in Lieu Unique Festival, performances of Nico Muhly's organ concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra, an evening-length collaboration with electronic duo 'Darkstar' for the SPCO's 'Liquid Music' series. He also appears in recital at Paris Philharmonie and London's Southbank and Barbican Centres.

James McVinnie was Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey between 2008 and 2011. Prior to this appointment, he held similar positions at St Paul's Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral, and Clare College, Cambridge where he studied music. His teachers were Sarah Baldock, Thomas Trotter and Hans Fagius. He made his debut at London's Royal Festival Hall in March 2014, giving one of the six reopening recitals on the refurbished iconic 1954 Harrison & Harrison organ. He made his solo debut in the Salzburg Festival at age 26 performing with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra under Ivor Bolton.