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MARSYAS TRIO flute, cello and piano



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PROGRAMME

Louise Farrenc

Piano trio in E minor, op 45

Hilary Tann

‘In the Theatre of Air’

INTERVAL

Thea Musgrave

Canta Canta!(1997)

Chen Yi

‘Night Thoughts’

Fanny Hensel

Piano Trio in D minor, op 11

PROGRAMME NOTES

LOUISE FARRENC
(1804-1875)

Piano trio in E minor, op 45

Allegro deciso

Andante

Vivace

Presto

Louise Farrenc's Trio in E minor, Op. 45, was written in 1856 and has a four-movement structure typical of the Classical tradition. With balanced phrasing and clear harmonic outlines, Farrenc unmistakably inherited the rich line of Viennese classicism stemming from Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. She had taken composition lessons privately with Anton Reicha, a friend of Beethoven, since composition classes at the Paris Conservatoire were only open to men. As a contemporary of the Mendelssohn siblings, of Clara and Robert Schumann, Chopin and Liszt, Farrenc was, exceptionally, one of the only women composers of her generation to achieve a successful professional music career. She was a highly educated composer and accomplished touring pianist, and ran a successful publishing company with her husband, leaving a legacy of several important piano publications. She was the only woman of the 19th century to be appointed Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatoire, a role she held for 30 years and in which she had to fight for several years before receiving equal pay with male teachers. Farrenc came from a prominent family of artists whose bohemian way of life allowed her greater freedom than that of female counterparts in the highest social ranks. She showed exceptional talent from an early age, and was taken on as a piano pupil by Moscheles and Hummel, famous teachers whose pupils also included Felix Mendelssohn. Farrenc won the Chartier Prize twice (1861 and 1869), one of the highest accolades for chamber music composition in France.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

HILARY TANN
(1947-)

‘In the Theatre of Air’
Herons; Goldfinches
Thrushes; Wild Geese;
Hawk; White Owl;
Starlings

Welsh-born composer Hilary Tann has enjoyed an international career, with commissions and performances by ensembles including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Lontano, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and KBS Philharmonic in Korea. Tann’s music is influenced by her love of Wales and the natural world and a passion for the Japanese Shakuhachi flute. Tann’s kaleidoscopic work, *In the Theatre of Air* was premiered in 2017 at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival, commissioned by the Marsyas Trio, generously funded jointly by the RVW Trust and the Fidelio Charitable Trust. This beautiful work centres on Mary Oliver’s poetry. Seven images of birds in flight underlie the composition. Tann writes, ‘Think of the images as one asymmetrical wave, with starlings at the crest, where the wave breaks. The piece will rise from the stillness of the herons to the “one stippled star” of the starlings; the last two bring us back to earth.’

In order, these images are: Herons (in the black, polished water), Goldfinches (they swing on the thistles), Thrushes (upward like rain, rising), Wild Geese (high in the clean blue air), Hawk (eyes fastened harder than love), White Owl (a buddha with wings), and Starlings (like one stippled star). The titles and short phrases are taken from poems by Mary Oliver in her collection *Wild Geese* (Bloodaxe World Poets). Each sound-image is closely aligned with the poet’s resonant word-image.

The work is now the title track for the 2018 CD released under the NMC Recordings label.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 16 minutes

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

**THEA MUSGRAVE
(1928-)**

Canta Canta! (1997)
Allegro ma non troppo
Adagio – Scherzo
Trio – Allegretto

Thea Musgrave's *Canta, Canta!* (1997) appears in a new transcription for the Marsyas Trio in celebration of Musgrave's 90th birthday. She has earned great respect for her work both as a composer and conductor at a time when these were still uncommon professions for a woman. Born in Scotland, Musgrave studied with the renowned Nadia Boulanger at the Paris Conservatoire, and later moved to the USA where she still lives. Her music has been performed by the world's leading orchestras. This short piece borrows from Musgrave's own *A Cantata for a Summer's Day*, written in 1954 while a student in Paris. The poems of the *Cantata* describe a summer's day in all its moods, from pleasant sunshine to the memory of winter in the cool evening mist. The original material used in *Canta, Canta!* is a setting of a poem by Maurice Lindsay. It describes the orange tiger lily burning bright in the hot summer sun.

Musgrave has been the recipient of many notable awards including two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Ivors Classical Music Award 2018, and The Queen's Medal for Music. She was awarded a CBE in the Queen's New Year's Honour List in 2002.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 5 minutes

**CHEN LI
(1953-)**

'Night Thoughts'

Night Thoughts was co-commissioned by the Virginia Arts Festival, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Centre, La Jolla SummerFest, and Chamber Music Northwest in Portland (Oregon). It is a lyrical tone poem scored for flute, cello and piano, premiered on April 28, 2004, at the Virginia Arts Festival. The inspiration for this work comes from the ancient Chinese poem by Li Po, of the Tang Dynasty (618-907): *On couch bright moon shone / Thought frost on ground formed / Raised head facing bright moon / Lowered head dreaming of home.*

(Edited version of composer's programme note)

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

FANNY MENDELSSOHN-HENSEL
(1805-1847)

Piano Trio
in D minor, op 11

Allegro molto

Andante espressivo

Lied: Allegretto

Finale: Allegretto moderato

Fanny Mendelssohn, the prodigiously talented sister of Felix, deserves a more prominent place in musical history. She was born into an affluent Jewish family that belonged to Berlin's social elite. As a member of the upper class, she could never hope to pursue music as a profession, despite being equally gifted with her brother Felix who became an international superstar. For a woman in her position to become a professional musician was unthinkable: there had to be some serious financial reason to make it necessary for a woman to go out to the public to give recitals or compose. This was the case for Clara Schumann, for example, who gained fame as a pianist and composer in her time. On Fanny's 23rd birthday, her father instructed her to 'become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the only calling of a young woman – I mean the state of a housewife.'

Nevertheless Fanny remained musically active throughout her short life, composing and playing at the family's weekly private salon concerts which were frequented by famous musicians, artists and writers of the day. While her brother Felix played an important role in encouraging her talent as a composer, it was her mother Lea and her husband Wilhelm Hensel who urged Fanny to publish her works: several pieces were published in the latter years of her life and immediately after her death, including some songs that were published under Felix's name. A letter from Abraham Mendelssohn to his daughter lays bare 19th-century social confines: 'Perhaps for Felix music will become a profession, while for you it will always remain but an ornament; never can and should it become the foundation of your existence.' In recent years, there has been widespread interest in her music and one hopes that more of this wonderful composer's works will be rediscovered.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 27 minutes

(c) *The Marsyas Trio* 2022

MARSYAS TRIO

Tonight's trio takes its name and inspiration from the bold, spirited passion of the Greek mythological figure of Marsyas, the celebrated pipe-playing satyr who dared to challenge and defeat Apollo in a musical contest. The **Marsyas Trio** aims to revive and challenge tradition in chamber music by commissioning initiatives and recording projects while bringing to the public forgotten music from the classical and Romantic eras to the present day. Their no-boundaries ethos focuses on women composers, cross-art collaborations and educational outreach projects, for which they have received generous support from many organisations in the arts sector.

The ensemble has worked with established and emerging British composers, including Michael Finnissy, Judith Weir and Louise Bowler. Recordings include *A Triple Portrait* featuring works by the formerly blacklisted Russian émigré, Elena Firsova, in celebration of her 25 years in the UK. Their album presenting trio works by women composers, *In the Theatre of Air*, was warmly received by Gramophone and BBC Music Magazines and the Sunday Times. At the present time and until 2024 the Marsyas Trio is working regularly at the University of Cambridge through the scheme, Artist-By-Fellowship at Churchill College.

Based in London, the Marsyas Trio was formed in 2009 by graduates of the Royal Academy of Music. Their hugely diverse repertoire has captivated audiences in Europe, China, the USA and Canada. Here in the UK they have presented their programmes in rural Wales as part of an Arts Council Wales Scheme to bring understanding of chamber music to regional audiences. Festival appearances include the Three Choirs Festival, Spitalfields Music in the City and the Cambridge Festival of Ideas. During the pandemic the trio produced a 6 part digital season, *At home with the Marsyas* which received over 5000 combined views.

Helen Vidovich – *flute* – works as a freelance orchestral and chamber musician throughout the UK and internationally. Australian born, she has worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Welsh National Opera as well as giving concerto performances with the Sydney Chamber Orchestra. As a founding member of the Marsyas Trio she has taken a leading role in curating the ensemble's projects.

Olga Stezhko – *piano* – was born in Minsk and educated in Belarus, Italy and the UK, where she completed her Master's degree with distinction at the Royal Academy of Music. An award winning concert pianist and recording artist Olga was acclaimed by Classical Source as a 'supremely delicate master of her instrument' who possesses 'extraordinary presence'. She has performed in the Barbican Hall London, the Salle Cortot in Paris and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Val Welbanks – *cello* – is Canadian and has a busy chamber music career in London as the cellist of both the Marsyas Trio and the Ligeti Quartet. She is regularly invited as guest cellist to play with various chamber groups in UK and Canada. As soloist she has performed the Dvorák and Lutosławski cello concertos several times and Gubaidulina's *Sonnengesang*. Val gained a Masters in Music Performance and completed a PhD in 2016. Her passion for cross-disciplinary arts sees her often performing in plays, operas, dance productions and sound installations.

Compiled by Sarah Warnes

CLUB NOTES

Our first concert this season with the Brodsky Quartet and Laura van der Heijden was truly memorable. They gave a great performance to one of the fullest King's Hall audiences we have enjoyed for many a year. There were over 50 single tickets sold. A big thank you to those season ticket holders who were unable to attend and returned their tickets! This enabled us to satisfy such a high demand for these popular artists, who were celebrating an astonishing 50 years of performing together.

Returned Ticket Refunds

Before the pandemic, ticket refunds had been given as cash or a cheque at the interval of the following concert. Refunds will still be available to members whose returned tickets are resold however we do not plan to give cash refunds. We will contact members, when we are able to resell a ticket, either by email or phone: They will be advised of the process for collecting their refund unless, of course, they wish to donate this to the Club. Donations to the club do attract additional gift aid for us, where applicable.

Start time for our concerts

We announced at the end of last season that the committee intended to change the start time for our concerts to 7.30 pm from October 2023. This followed the general welcome we had heard for the earlier start time that we had to make available in order to run our concerts under the pandemic restrictions.

However we are aware that an earlier start time could make attendance more difficult for some members: therefore we would like to hear from anyone to whom this might apply. Please email me if you feel strongly about this. Strong opposition would show us the need to poll members as we did some years ago.

Chris Skidmore, Chair

NEXT CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022

8:00pm

MICHAEL COLLINS and LONDON WINDS



Mozart

Serenade in C minor,
K388/384a

Beethoven

Wind octet in E flat major,
op 103

Mozart

Serenade for 13 winds in E
flat major, K361

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Members

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