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KATYA APEKISHEVA
and
CHARLES OWEN
piano duo



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PROGRAMME

Ravel

Ma mère l'Oye (Mother Goose)

Stravinsky

Petrushka

INTERVAL

Fauré

Dolly suite, op 56

Holst

The Planets, op 32 (four movements)

PROGRAMME NOTES

MAURICE RAVEL
(1875-1937)

Ma mère l'Oye (Mother Goose)

Ravel composed *Ma mère l'Oye* [Mother Goose] between 1908 and 1910 for Mimi and Jean Godebski, aged respectively 6 and 7, who were the children of Ida and Cyprian (“Cipa”) Godebski, two of Ravel’s closest friends. In 1911, Ravel orchestrated the piano duet for a ballet and later an orchestral suite, changing the order and adding movements. It is in this latter form that the work is most often heard today. For the most part, the movements describe fairy tale scenes made famous by the 18th-century fairy tale collector and writer, Charles Perrault (1628-1703).

- I. ***Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty)***. Ravel evokes the long dormant princess by using the ancient Aeolian mode and distant, chiming effects.
- II. ***Petit Poucet (Tom Thumb)***. Ravel quotes from Perrault’s story at the head of the movement: ‘Tom believed he would have no difficulty finding his way by means of the bread crumbs he had strewn everywhere he had passed; but he was greatly surprised when he could not find a single crumb; the birds had come and eaten them all.’
- III. ***Laideronette, Impératrice des Pagodes (The Ugly Little Girl, Empress of the Pagodas)***. This tale is by Perrault’s rival, Countess d’Aulnoy. A girl is rendered ugly by a witch. Whilst walking in wood, she encounters a green serpent who used to be a handsome prince. Together they set off for adventure but are soon shipwrecked on an island inhabited by tiny people made of jewels and porcelain (the Pagodas). Unsurprisingly, the couple eventually regain their true forms, fall in love and marry.
- IV. ***Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête (Conversations of Beauty and the Beast)***. As Beauty and Beast waltz, she tells him that his goodness renders him beautiful. She asks him to be his wife. At first, she refuses but when she accepts, the Beast is transformed into a prince ‘as beautiful as the god of love.’
- V. ***Le jardin féerique (The Fairy Garden)*** brings the work to a glorious, glowing close.

Mimi and Jean never performed Mother Goose. Mimi later wrote: ‘Ravel used to tell me marvellous stories. I would sit on his knee and he would

begin, ‘once upon a time...’ However, neither my brother nor I were of an age to appreciate the dedication [of Mother Goose] and we regarded it rather as something that involved hard work!’.

Last performance at ICC 16/09/1959

Duration: approx. 16 minutes

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Petrushka

Published by Stravinsky in 1913 (8 years before the more familiar orchestral ballet score), this version of *Petrushka* was the one which the much-travelled composer carried with him and with which fellow musicians he encountered would have been familiar (Debussy was an occasional co-performer). Initial inspiration came to Stravinsky in a vivid mix of the visual and musical: ‘Before tackling *The Rite of Spring* ... I wanted to refresh myself by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part ... I had in my mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating to the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts. The outcome is a terrific noise which reaches its climax and ends in the sorrowful and querulous collapse of the poor puppet’. The puppet became *Petrushka*, a traditional Russian counterpart of Punch or Harlequin who, with fellow marionettes the *Ballerina* and the *Moor*, jerks into action at a Shrovetide Fair. His pathetic antics, hopeless longing and grisly fate are paraded before a vulgar audience before a posthumous shriek of triumph brings proceedings to a chilling close.

- I. **The Shrovetide Fair:** St Petersburg, 1830. All the bustle of a fair. *Petrushka*, the *Ballerina* and the *Moor* are summoned by a magician.
- II. ***Petrushka*’s Room:** *Petrushka* is hurled into his dismal cell where he rages at his fate. The *Ballerina* appears briefly but she leaves, indifferent to *Petrushka*’s agony.
- III. **The *Moor*’s Room:** The *Ballerina* swoons before the brutish *Moor*. They make love as their distinct musical themes intertwine. *Petrushka* enters but the *Moor* chases him away.
- IV. **The Shrovetide Fair:** Back to the tumult of the fair. Hawkers parade their wares. A peasant enters with a dancing bear. A sudden cry and the *Moor* enters chasing *Petrushka* as the *Ballerina* screams. The *Moor* cuts *Petrushka* down with a single blow of his scimitar. The police arrive. The magician calms the terrified crowd – all that

they have seen is but a show. Nothing is real. As the relieved crowd leaves, the wraith of Petrushka appears above the puppet booth. He leers and thumbs his nose at the terrified magician who scuttles off into the darkness.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

INTERVAL

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

GABRIEL FAURÉ
(1845-1924)

Dolly suite, op 56

Newly minted or rehashed from earlier pieces, the *Dolly Suite* was assembled between 1893 and 1896 for Régina-Hélène Bardac (1892–1985), known to her family as Dolly, young daughter of the singer Emma Bardac, with whom Fauré had a long-running affair. Fauré delivered each movement to mark one of Dolly's birthdays or other notable family events. Audience members of a particular vintage (who are, one hopes, sitting comfortably) will recognise the *Berceuse* as the theme from the BBC radio favourite, *Listen with Mother* (1950-1982).

- I. ***Berceuse***: *Allegretto moderato*. Appropriately, this cradle song marked Dolly's first birthday.
- II. ***Mi-a-ou***: *Allegro vivo*. Composed by Dolly's second birthday, the title refers not to a family cat, as is often supposed, but to Dolly's attempts to pronounce Raoul, the name of her elder brother, who would later become Fauré's favourite pupil.
- III. ***Le jardin de Dolly***: *Andantino*. Composed for New Year's Day 1895, this is perhaps the jewel of the suite.
- IV. ***Kitty-valse***: *Tempo di Valse*. No more feline than *Mi-a-ou*, the Bardacs' dog Ketty gets to whirl and scamper.
- V. ***Tendresse***: *Andante*. Composed in 1896 and originally dedicated to the wife of the composer's music publisher, *Tendresse* has a more modern feel and employs chromaticism.
- VI. ***Le pas espagnole***: *Allegro*. A Spanish dance brings the suite to a close. The style resembles that of the composer's friend, Chabrier, composer of *España*.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 12 minutes

One of the wonders of English music, Holst composed the Planets between 1913 and 1917. Each movement of the suite is named after a planet and its supposed astrological characteristics. These may have been suggested by Alan Leo's *What is a Horoscope?* which Holst was reading at the time. Certainly, the titles of two movements – Mercury, the Winged Messenger and Neptune, the Mystic – were taken from Leo's book. First performed in its orchestral version in September 1918 and conducted by Adrian Boult, the audience struggled with the modernity of the work and the dissonances of *Mars* in particular. Tonight, we hear four of the seven movements in the version for piano four hands which Nora Day and Vally Lasker, two friends and amanuenses, helped the composer assemble; Holst suffered from agonising neuritis in his right arm (which the composer said was 'like a jelly overcharged with electricity') which made the act of writing very difficult. This version had been lost until the autographed manuscript was discovered in a cupboard in Holst's old room at St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith by one of his successors as head of music, John York. York and his wife Fiona, also a teacher at St Paul's, made the premiere recording in 2000.

- I. **Mars, the Bringer of War:** Often thought to portray the horrors of mechanised warfare, Mars was in fact completed before the First World War started. Battle music had been written before but it had never expressed such violence and sheer terror.
- II. **Venus, the Bringer of Peace:** One of the most sublime evocations of peace in music, Venus 'tries to bring the right answer to Mars' as Imogen, the composer's daughter remarked. *What is a Horoscope?* noted that Venus was 'the most fortunate star under which to be born'.
- III. **Mercury, the Winged Messenger:** In 6/8 time and marked *vivace* throughout, Mercury is the shortest movement (and the last to have been composed) and marks Holst's first experiment with bitonality. Scampering melodic fragments in B flat major and E major are juxtaposed in a fast-moving scherzo.
- IV. **Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity:** Holst portrays Jupiter's 'abundance of life and vitality'. The noble, slower middle section was later made popular (and, in the view of Imogen Holst, compromised) as the tune for the patriotic hymn *I Vow to Thee, My Country*. By any standards, it is a glorious melody, as fine as any by Elgar.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 22 minutes

KATYA APEKISHEVA

and

CHARLES OWEN

For our final concert this season, we welcome two renowned pianists, Katya Apekisheva and Charles Owen, to our stage here in Ilkley. Katya is no stranger to Ilkley, having performed here twice before in both season 71 and most recently in season 75 but performing tonight alongside her colleague Charles Owen who makes his debut in the King's Hall. Together they form a highly successful and personally rewarding piano duo partnership, performing regularly at festivals worldwide and are also co-Artistic Directors of the London Piano Festival which began in 2016.

Katya was born in Moscow into a family of musicians where she attended the Gnessin Music School for exceptionally gifted children and made her stage debut at the age of 12. She continued her studies in Jerusalem at the Rubin Music Academy and later at the Royal College of Music in London where she studied with Irina Zaritskaya and became a recipient of the President's Rose Bowl, presented to her by the then HRH the Prince of Wales, now King Charles III, for whom she has been asked to perform on a number of occasions. Katya went on to become a prizewinner at the Leeds International Piano Competition and has continued to enjoy a career performing with many of the world's leading orchestras including the London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, the Halle, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, the English Chamber and the Royal Philharmonic, working with renowned conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, David Shallon, Jan Latham-Koenig and Alexander Lazarev. Katya has collaborated with the award winning Belcea Quartet at Wigmore Hall, and with the Aviv Quartet performing piano concerti in chamber reductions.

As a recording artist Katya has received widespread critical acclaim for her interpretations from the Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice Award and International Piano Magazine's Critics' Choice to Classic FM's CD of the week as well as a Classical Brit award to name but a few. Katya's discography includes solo and chamber works by Mussorgsky, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Dvorak and Rachmaninov.

Recent and future highlights include performances in Russia, Norway, Japan, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Australia and at home in the UK at the Bath Mozart Festival, St. George's Bristol and the prestigious Wigmore Hall, where she is a regular presence. Her intense

artistry and delicacy makes Katya a most sought after collaborative pianist, working with artists such as Janine Jansen, Natalie Clein, Guy Johnston, Maxim Rysanov, Jack Liebeck, Boris Brovtsyn, Alexei Ogrintchouk and Nicholas Daniel and she appears regularly at major chamber music festivals around the world.

Charles Owen was born in Cambridge and grew up in Hampshire and Worcestershire, the eldest of four children, his brother, John being the Chief Designer of the Mercedes Formula 1 team! After lessons from his first teacher he won a scholarship to the Yehudi Menuhin School where he studied with Seta Tanyel and collaborated with many fellow students including Katharine Gowers and Paul Watkins. Owen went on to study with the distinguished Russian pianist Irina Zaritskaya at the Royal College of Music where he won the Chappell Gold Medal, which was followed by further studies with leading British pianist Imogen Cooper. He won the silver medal at the Scottish International Piano Competition in 1995, the Parkhouse Award in 1997 and was a finalist in the Piano Section of BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1998.

Charles Owen enjoys an extensive international career performing a wide-ranging repertoire to outstanding critical acclaim. He appears at many major UK venues such as Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, The Sage and Kings Place. Internationally he has performed at Lincoln Centre and Carnegie Hall in New York, the Brahms Saal in Vienna's Musikverein, Paris Musée d'Orsay, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and the Moscow Conservatoire. His chamber music partners include Julian Rachlin, Alina Ibragimova, Steven Isserlis and Augustin Hadelich as well as the Takacs, Carducci and Vertavo Quartets alongside receiving widespread recognition for his duo partnership with Katya Apekisheva.

A regular guest at UK Festivals such as Aldeburgh, Bath, Buxton, Cheltenham, Oxford Lieder and Ryedale he has also performed at the Verbier Festival and in Australia at the Perth and Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Townsville. Charles' concerto appearances have included the Philharmonia, Halle, Aurora and London Philharmonic orchestras. He has enjoyed collaborations with many leading conductors including Sir Mark Elder, Ryan Wigglesworth, Nicholas Collon and Martyn Brabbins.

Charles' solo recordings comprise discs of piano music by JS Bach, Brahms, Fauré, Liszt, Janacek, and Poulenc. Chamber music recordings include the cello sonatas of Rachmaninov and Chopin with Natalie Clein, the Stravinsky Piano Ballets and Rachmaninov Suites with Katya Apekisheva and the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's Piano Quintet with the Sacconi Quartet.

CLUB NOTES

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<https://www.justgiving.com/page/ilkley-concert-club-may-2024-appeal>

2024 Autumn Afternoon Concerts

We will present the 4th series of Afternoon Concerts with leading students from the RNCM later this year. It is evidence of the promise of these young musicians that we are welcoming back the Treske Quartet as part of our main 2024-25 78th Season. They performed here as students in 2022, and are now fully established as a professional string quartet.

Mark these dates in your diary for the 2024 Afternoon Concerts:

Tuesday 5 November

Thursday 14 November

Thursday 5 December

These concerts are open to all and we particularly welcome people who cannot easily come to our evening events. If you would like to help building our audience please contact Josephine Wesley at:

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- 11 Dec 2024** **TRESKE QUARTET** string quartet
Beethoven, Stravinsky, Purcell and Britten
- 8 Jan 2025** **BEN GOLDSCHIEDER HORN TRIO**
Mozart, Clara Schumann, Huw Watkins and Brahms
- 19 Feb 2025** **DUDOK QUARTET** string quartet
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