



**Alison
Moncrieff-Kelly**

cello

Stephen Coombs

piano

St Thomas' Church
Winchelsea

Saturday 3rd September 2022



Winchelsea Arts



MYKOLA LYSENKO 1842-1912

Elegie (In Memory of Shevchenko) opus 41 No.3

Little known outside his home country, Lysenko is highly regarded in Ukraine as a nationalist composer, the father of Ukrainian music. He was also a pianist and conductor, prominent in Kyiv's musical life, where he founded a school of music and drama. His compositions include operas, chamber music, piano works and over twenty volumes of folk song arrangements.

The *Elegie* is dedicated to Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), the leading Ukrainian poet of the 19th century, a man of many talents and an important nationalist figure. Shevchenko was sentenced to internal exile in Czarist Russia.

His poem *Zapovit (My Testament)* is popular in Ukraine.

*When I am dead, then bury me
In my beloved Ukraine,
My tomb upon a grave mound high
Amid the spreading plain,
So that the fields, the boundless steppes,
The Dnieper's plunging shore
My eyes could see, my ears could hear
The mighty river roar.*



Lysenko

Shevchenko



LEONID DESYATNIKOV b. 1955

Songs of Bukovina (24 Preludes for Piano – a selection)

Born in Ukraine, Desyatnikov studied at the Leningrad Conservatory. He is a successful and prolific contemporary composer whose works include four operas and some 13 film scores, as well as chamber music. He has collaborated with Gidon Kremer since 1996. The region of Bukovina lies mainly in the Carpathian Mountains and after a complex and at times tumultuous history is divided between Ukraine and Romania.

A ballet version of *Songs of Bukovina* was performed by the American Ballet Theatre in 2017. The *Songs* exploit the wide dynamic range of the piano.

The selection of preludes performed today will be as follows:

Steppe Wind A-Blowing

Oh, Petrivocha, A Night So Short

Oh, The Clock Chimed Midnight

If Only Mother Had Known...

Red Arrowwood Has Blossomed White

Red Arrowwood, Green Leaves

They Say I Have Lost My Looks

A Lady Had A Husband, She Loved Some Peter Though A

Pipe Made Of Maplewood



ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV 1865 -1936

Melodie and Serenade Espagnole opus 20 no.1

A child prodigy, Glazunov was a prominent Russian romantic composer and teacher, with a substantial opus. A conservative figure, he is perhaps somewhat overlooked today, although his ballets *The Seasons* and *Raymonda* remain popular. He orchestrated Chopin to create *Les Sylphides*.

Late in life he wrote a *Concerto for Saxophone* (1934). In 1905 he became director of the St Petersburg Conservatory (later the Leningrad Conservatory) where his students included Shostakovich whose talents Glazunov recognised.

Glazunov remained in post after the Soviet revolution but emigrated in 1928 (“on health grounds”) and died in Paris. Glazunov wrote a number of works for cello and knew Pablo Casals. *Melodie* is a charming piece and has often been recorded. *Serenade Espagnole* is similarly lyrical and immediately attractive.



INTERVAL

SERGEI BORTKIEWICZ 1877-1952
Lamentation and Consolations opus 17

Born to a Polish family in what is now Ukraine, Bortkiewicz led a turbulent and difficult life. Some of his work has been lost. After music studies in St Petersburg, he moved to Berlin but when the First World War broke out he and his wife were deported to Russia. After various vicissitudes and travels which included a period in Constantinople, they eventually settled in Vienna and became Austrian citizens. There they survived the Second World War, after much hardship. Bortkiewicz's lifelong friend was the Dutch pianist Hugo van Dalen, who helped him financially.

Bortkiewicz's output includes many works for piano, as well as two symphonies and several concertos. For some years there was a Bortkiewicz society in Vienna, but he is now rather a forgotten figure. His style is romantic, lyrical and nostalgic. Stephen Coombs has written: "His colourful and delicate imagination, his idiomatic piano-writing and sensitivity to his musical ideas, combined with his undisputed gift for melody, result in a style that is instantly recognizable, attractive and appealing to many listeners." For more information see sergeibortkiewicz.com.



DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH 1906-1975

Cello Sonata in D Minor opus 40

Allegro Non Troppo

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Born in St Petersburg where he studied at the Conservatory, Shostakovich is a towering musical figure, as well as an intriguing and complex personality of whom much has been written, e.g., *The Noise of Time* (Julian Barnes). Shostakovich's opus covers most genres from opera and symphonies to musical comedy and film scores, as well as chamber music. Shostakovich was also a concert pianist and after graduating supported himself by accompanying silent films.

Shostakovich's *Cello Sonata* was written in 1934 for the principal cellist of the Bolshoi Theatre. Later Shostakovich became close friends with Mstislav Rostropovich, with whom he recorded the sonata in 1959. The sonata was first performed prior to the infamous and debilitating Soviet censure of Shostakovich in 1936 which followed the production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and its ban: "Muddle instead of Music", according to Pravda.



At the time of writing the *Cello Sonata*, Shostakovich was infatuated with one of his music students, divorcing his wife whom he subsequently remarried when she announced her pregnancy. Some critics suggest that his conflicting emotions at that time are reflected in the sonata. Others point to the composer's relatively conservative approach to the sonata form (exposition, development, recapitulation) through which hints of his interest in popular music emerge.

ALISON MONCRIEFF-KELLY

Alison Moncrieff-Kelly won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in 1979, where she studied with Florence Hooton. She was also a chamber music student of Sidney Griller and a piano student of Alexander Kelly. She made her South Bank debut in the Park Lane Group Young Artists series during this time as a member of the Latarche clarinet trio.

She has performed and broadcast all over the world as soloist and chamber musician, specialising in piano trio repertoire. She has made a number of successful recordings, including the complete piano trios of Hummel, the piano trios of Clara Schumann and Saint-Saens, the complete cello and piano works of Stanford and three discs of solo cello repertoire.

In 2005, Alison was awarded the Heinrich Boll fellowship, a residency in Ireland – the first musician to be given the award. From 2007 until 2012, she was Director of Music at The Conservatoire in Blackheath, where she ran a programme of music tuition and concerts, and was responsible for managing a team of 70 tutors.

As well as being an adjudicator, Alison is also an examiner for ABRSM in classical, jazz and diploma exams. She and Tim Wells also created and edited a book of cello pieces for ABRSM, *Principal Cello*. Alison was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2013, an award conferred for distinguished services to the music profession. She is a sought-after teacher and coach and has run many successful workshops for children and adults. She has particularly strong experience in the teaching of gifted children, and in coaching chamber music.

STEPHEN COOMBS

Stephen Coombs is recognised as one of the leading British pianists of his generation, active not only as a soloist in concertos and recitals but also collaboratively as a chamber musician, song accompanist and duo pianist. His repertoire encompasses works from the Baroque period to the present and he has achieved international acclaim not only for his many performances and broadcasts but also for his extensive discography, mainly on the Hyperion label.

His first recording for Hyperion Records in 1989, a disc of Debussy works for two pianos with Christopher Scott, received a *10 de Répertoire* award. Further duo and chamber recordings for Hyperion followed, including the Arensky Suites for Two Pianos with Ian Munro, Piano Duo works by Milhaud with Artur Pizarro and Piano Trios, Quartets and Quintets by Hahn, Vierne and Catoire with the Chilingirian Quartet and Room-Music Ensemble.

Coombs solo recordings for Hyperion include the complete solo piano music of Glazunov in four CDs as well as other discs of Russian solo piano repertoire by Scriabin, Arensky, Liadov, and Bortkiewicz (2 CDs). His contributions to Hyperion's award winning Romantic Piano Concerto series, include concertos and other works for piano and orchestra by Arensky, Bortkiewicz, Mendelssohn, Glazunov, Goedicke, Gabriel Pierné, Massenet and Hahn. Stephen Coombs has appeared extensively on the BBC, performing as soloist and collaboratively in over 100 broadcasts on Radio 3 alone. He has performed in many prestigious international music festivals including: the BBC Proms, Bath, Cheltenham, Spoleto, Sintra, Three Choirs, Snape Maltings, Lichfield, Salisbury, Newbury.

He has consistently committed himself to promoting the works of contemporary composers and has given many significant premieres of works by British composers, including Michael Finnissy, Judith Bingham, David Matthews, Kenneth Leighton, Malcolm Lipkin, Paul Barker, David Osbon, and Francis Pott. He is also a founder member of Room-Music Ensemble, a flexible chamber group which has recorded programmes of French and Russian music for Hyperion and has appeared as ensemble-in-residence at St. John's, Smith Square, London.

Coombs has a lifelong commitment to teaching. For some years, he was Director of Music at Blackheath Conservatoire, an open-access community college in South London, and has previously taught at the Royal Northern College of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he is also an External Examiner for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Since 2018, he has taught at the Purcell School and is currently a Professor of Piano at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Next from Winchelsea Arts...

On Saturday 8th October at 7.30pm *The Pagano Quartet* will perform a selection of music by Italian composers, past and present. They will take us on a journey from the romantic masterpieces of the nineteenth century to twentieth century film music, and up to the present day.



Information and tickets at
winchelsea-arts.org.uk