

Wethersfield Chamber Concerts

3 November 2013 – 3.30pm

Morgan Szymanski *Classical Guitar*

Harriet Mackenzie *Violin*

PROGRAMME NOTES *by John Woollard*

Programme

Vivaldi: Violin Concerto No. 9 in D major, RV230

Ponce: Estrellita

Bartok: Romanian Folk Dances (1915)

Mangoré: Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios

Falla: Five Spanish Folk Songs, Spanish Dance

Paganini: Cantabile in D major

Bach: solo Violin Sonata II in A, andante

Piazzolla: Bordell 1900, Cafe 1930, Nightclub 1960

The History of the Guitar

The ancestries of the modern guitar track back through many instruments and thousands of years to ancient central Asia. Guitar like instruments appear in ancient carvings and statues recovered from the old Persian capital of Susa. This means that the contemporary Iranian instruments such as the tanbur and setar are distantly related to the European guitar, as they all derive ultimately from the same ancient origins, but by very different historical routes and influences.

During the Middle Ages, instruments called "guitars" with three and four strings were in use but their construction and tuning was different from the modern guitars. The Guitarra Latina in Spain, had curved sides and a single hole. The Guitarra Morisca, which was brought to Spain by the Moors or at least was heavily influenced by Moorish instruments, had an oval soundbox and many sound holes on its soundboard. By the 15th century, a four course double-string instrument called the vihuela de mano, that had tuning like the later modern guitar except

on one string and similar construction, appeared in Spain and spread to Italy; by the 16th century, a fifth double-string had been added. During this time, composers wrote mostly in tablature notation. In the middle of the 16th century, influences from the vihuela and the renaissance guitar were combined and the baroque five string guitar appeared in Spain. The baroque guitar quickly superseded the vihuela in popularity in Spain, France and Italy and Italian players and composers became prominent. In the late 18th century the six string guitar quickly became popular at the expense of the five string guitars. During the 19th century the Spanish luthier and player Antonio de Torres gave the modern classical guitar its definitive form, with a broadened body, increased waist curve, thinned belly, improved internal bracing. The modern classical guitar replaced the older form for the accompaniment of song and dance called flamenco, and a modified version, known as the flamenco guitar, was created.

The History of the Violin

The violin first emerged in northern Italy in the early 16th century especially from the Brescia area. Many archive documents testify that from 1585-95 Brescia was the cradle of a magnificent school of string players and makers, all called with the title of "maestro" of all the different sort of strings instruments of the Renaissance: viola da gamba (viols), violone, lyra, lyrone, violetta and viola da braccio. From 1530 the word violin appears in Brescian documents and spread all around north of Italy. While no instruments from the first decades of the century survive, there are several representations in paintings; some of the early instruments have only three strings and were of the violetta type. Most likely the first makers of violins borrowed from three different types of current instruments: the rebec, in use since the 10th century, the Viola da Braccio (or Renaissance Fiddle), and the lira da braccio. By the 1550s the violin had already begun to spread throughout Europe.

The oldest confirmed surviving violin, dated inside, is the "Charles IX" by Andrea Amati, made in Cremona in 1564. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an Amati violin that may be even older, possibly dating to 1558 but the date is very doubtful. One of the most famous and certainly the most pristine is the Messiah Stradivarius (also known as the 'Salabue') made by Antonio Stradivari in 1716 and very little played, perhaps almost never and in an as new state. It is now located in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford.

The violin has gone through a number of changes since then, but instruments of approximately 300 years of age, especially those made by Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù, are the most sought after instruments (for both collectors and performers). In addition to the skill and reputation of the maker, an instrument's age can also influence both price and quality.

This afternoon's composers

Vivaldi (1678-1741)

The creator of hundreds of spirited, extroverted instrumental works, Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi is widely recognized as the master of the Baroque

instrumental concerto, which he perfected and popularized more than any of his contemporaries. Vivaldi's rhythms, fluid melodies, bright instrumental effects, and extensions of instrumental technique make his some of the most enjoyable of Baroque music. He was

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highly influential among his contemporaries and successors. Even as esteemed a figure as Johann Sebastian Bach adapted some of Vivaldi's music.

Ponce (1882- 1948)

Manuel Ponce was a Mexican pianist and composer whose style underwent a profound change in midlife. After studying with Dukas, Ponce developed a style that combined French Impressionism and neo-Classical contrapuntal techniques. Most of his guitar music and the majority of his more serious and larger works were written in this style. Ponce composed a piano concerto, several large symphonic works for orchestra, and a large quantity of guitar music.

Bartók (1881-1945)

Through his far-reaching endeavours as composer, performer, educator, and ethnomusicologist, Béla Bartók emerged as one of the most forceful and influential musical personalities of the twentieth century. With fellow countryman and composer Zoltán Kodály, he travelled throughout Hungary and neighbouring countries, collecting thousands of authentic folk songs. Bartók's immersion in this music lasted for decades, and the intricacies he discovered therein, from plangent modality to fiercely aggressive rhythms, exerted a potent influence on his own musical language.

As the spectre of fascism in Europe in the 1930s grew ever more sinister, he refused to play in Germany and banned radio broadcasts of his music there and in Italy. A concert in Budapest on October 8, 1940, was the composer's farewell to the country which had provided him so much inspiration and yet caused him so much grief. Days later, Bartók and his wife set sail for America.

Agustín Barrios Mangoré (1885-1944)

A prominent Paraguayan composer, songwriter and classical guitarist. Famed for his exceptional performances, often while dressed in traditional Paraguayan garb, Barrios Mangoré played and composed virtuosic pieces with a late Romantic flavour which were often infused with native folk elements, and made some of the first classical guitar recordings. He also composed over 300 songs, of which the words were written first as poems.

Falla (1876-1946)

After early musical studies with his mother, he went on to study in Madrid. During his years in Paris, he received

encouragement from Dukas, Debussy, and Ravel. Upon return to Spain in 1914, many of his most famous works were written. Falla was one of a group of nationalistic Spanish composers who championed their native musical idioms. He did this while also infusing his music with impressionistic traits. He remained active on the musical scene of his homeland until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. With the rise of fascism, de Falla left Spain for South America. He spent his final years in Argentina.

----- Interval -----

Paganini (1782-1840)

Niccolo Paganini is perhaps the most famous violinist who ever lived. He was born on October 27, 1782, in Genoa, Italy. His early studies were on the mandolin, instructed by his father, who played mandolin on the side to supplement his income, but he changed instruments in his teenage years, and his stupendous and unmatched virtuosity on the violin made him a legend (and a fortune) in his own time. He is also famous as a composer of prodigiously difficult violin music.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

The musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky states that Bach is "a master comparable in greatness of stature with Aristotle in philosophy and Leonardo da Vinci in art". Bach is the unsurpassed foundational composer of western classical music, creating a gravity that influences music to this day. There was, of course, important music in earlier eras, but many of the fundamental musical techniques used by composers in the classical, romantic, and even the modern eras can be traced back to Bach.

Piazzolla (1921-1992).

Ástor Piazzolla was instrumental in the renaissance of the tango after World War II. Born in 1921 in Mar del Plata, Argentina, he moved to New York's lower East Side at a young age. Oddly, it was in New York, where he lived from age three to fifteen that he developed nostalgia for a country he scarcely remembered. He taught himself to play the bandoneon and was swept up in the newest craze in America: the tango of Argentina. Resolved to update the tango, Piazzolla succeeded in shocking tango traditionalists by infusing his tangos with the harmonic language he had learned in Paris, -- Bartok, Schoenberg, and Messiaen --, with the rhythms influenced by Stravinsky and by jazz, in addition to melodic innovations that many saw as severing tango from its roots.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Born in Mexico City in 1979, **Morgan Szymanski** started playing the guitar at the age of six. Early studies at the National Music School (Mexico) and the Edinburgh Music School led to a scholarship to study under Carlos Bonell and Gary Ryan at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London, graduating in 2004 with first class honours. During his studies he won all guitar prizes from the RCM as well as scholarships from the Tillett Trust, Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Leverhulme Trust and a scholarship to study at the Conservatorium of Amsterdam. He immediately went on to become the first solo guitarist to be selected by YCAT and was the first guitarist to be awarded a Junior Fellowship at the RCM, where he completed his Masters with distinction

Violinist **Harriet Mackenzie** graduated from the Royal Academy of Music where she was supported by numerous awards : the Musicians Benevolent Fund, Tillett Trust, Hatton Foundation and the Manoug Parikian Award. She is passionate about contemporary music and has collaborated with many musicians and composers who have written works dedicated to her. As a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician Harriet has toured throughout the world and performed in many prestigious venues such as the Wigmore Hall, South Bank London, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam & Expo Dome in Japan.

To read more, please refer to our website

Next Concert – Sunday 17 November @ 3:30pm – The Jubilee Quartet

For more information on the artists and on future concerts, please visit www.wethersfieldchamberconcerts.org.uk