

Janette Fishell and
Colin Andrews, organ

Jesus Church, Oundle - 7.30pm

The Programme

A Fancy for Two to Play Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)
Thomas Tomkins was born in Pembrokeshire, but little is known of his life until his appointment as Instructor Choristarum at Worcester Cathedral in 1596. At some stage he seems to have studied in London, probably with William Byrd, but was certainly in Worcester around 1614, when he was responsible for installing a two-manual organ in the Cathedral. In 1621, elected organist of the Chapel Royal, he provided the music for the coronation of Charles I, but was living in Worcester - without apparently relinquishing his London post - when in 1646 the city surrendered to the Parliamentary forces and the Cathedral organ was destroyed. Tomkins cuts a rather lonely figure, for although in his youth he could count Byrd, Morley and Gibbons among his colleagues, they all died long before him, and in later life his works seemed old fashioned. Tonight's piece was one of the first duets ever written for a keyboard instrument.

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582 J S Bach (1685-1750)
Although the Passacaglia and Fugue is one of Bach's best known organ works, many questions about its origins remain unanswered. Generally thought to date from his time in Weimar (1708-1717), Forkel suggested in 1802 that it was written not for organ but for a two-manual pedal harpsichord. However, no such instrument has survived and it is difficult to imagine that it could have been an appropriate choice for a work of this weight and majesty. What is sure is the certainty of purpose with which Bach journeys from simplicity to complexity, starting with the solo pedal statement of the passacaglia theme, before moving through 20 variations to the glorious concluding fugue. In the face of such magnificent music, mundane worries about its genesis become almost irrelevant.

Fantasy Op 78 William Mathias (1934-1992)
Like Thomas Tomkins, William Mathias was born in Wales, and then studied in London, winning a scholarship to study with Lennox Berkeley in 1956. Three years later he returned to Wales to take up a lectureship at University College, Bangor, and apart from a year in Edinburgh, spent the rest of his career there, earning a reputation as one of the UK's leading composers. Mathias composed an opera, chamber music and sound tracks for films and television, as well as a great deal of choral and orchestral music, but he also wrote prolifically for the organ. Fantasy, which was commissioned by the Welsh Arts Council, was given its first performance by John Scott in 1978.

Arabian Dance, from The Nutcracker Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
arr. Janette Fishell
Tchaikovsky began work on his ballet, 'The Nutcracker', in 1891 but at first had little confidence in the score's ability to rival the success of 'The Sleeping Beauty'. By the following February, however, he had decided that a number of excerpts could be combined to form a separate suite, and conducted the first performance of the resulting score in St Petersburg on 19th March 1892. Despite its title, the 'Arabian Dance' has its origins in Georgian folk music, for the opening theme is a cradle song passed to Tchaikovsky by Ippolitov-Ivanov.

Sonata in B flat, Op 65 no 4 Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Allegro con brio; Andante religioso; Allegretto; Allegro maestoso e vivace
Mendelssohn never worked regularly as an organist, but was in great demand as a recitalist, and had learned much of his love of Bach from his teachers, Carl Friedrich Zelter and Christian Heinrich Rinck. His views were very much those of the 19th century, however, and when English publishers approached him for three voluntaries for organ in 1844, he responded that his ideas could not be contained within this form and suggested that sonatas might be more appropriate. Inspired by the project, he then worked intensively on six sonatas, all of which were complete by the end of January 1845. By now, however, Mendelssohn was unhappy with the last movement of Sonata no 4, and replaced it with an new fugue, included when the entire set was published. His obvious debt

to Bach was welcomed enthusiastically by his English admirers, and Henry Gauntlett, composer of 'Once in Royal David's City', described the opening movement as "a Bach Prelude, but not Bach".

Faust: Beggar with the barrel organ; Gretchen; Student songs Petr Eben (b. 1929)
In writing his nine-movement incidental music for 'Faust', Petr Eben follows the narrative of Goethe's original quite closely. The first of the movements which we are to hear today depicts a beggar by the city gate playing his rather cranky barrel organ after the first Mass of Easter. Townsfolk walk purposefully past, however; he loses heart and suddenly the music stops. As well as being a study in solitude, 'Gretchen' conjures up the gentle whirring of the girl's spinning wheel by calling upon the organist to play series of repeated notes on different manuals. Finally, in 'Student songs', we visit the tavern where Faust and Mephistopheles begin their adventures. At first waltzes are played by a mediocre oompah band, but as the tavern fills, the assembled company becomes increasingly uninhibited, singing more and more raucously, so that by the end most are in a state which they will clearly regret in the morning!

The Russian Sailors' Dance from The Red Poppy Reinhold Glière (1895-1956) arr. Janette Fishell
When Glière was born in Kiev his family had been building musical instruments across Europe for a century. The young Reinhold soon showed potential as a violinist and in 1894 he entered the Moscow Conservatoire to study composition with Arensky, Tanayev and Ippolitov-Ivanov. Although he graduated with flying colours, his first symphony was not a success. He therefore moved to Berlin to study further, and on his return won the Glinka Prize. Glière then went on to win favour with the post-Revolutionary government by using old fashioned harmonies and opulent orchestrations to create an accessible style, and by basing his scores on unashamedly political subjects. At first, the Soviet authorities were predictably delighted with 'The Red Poppy'. Audiences who watched the first performance at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on 14th June 1927 saw a work in which a Chinese dancer is exploited by a vicious capitalist, and eventually dies to save a revolutionary leader, urging her people to fight for liberty and to use a red poppy as a symbol of freedom. Before long, however, the connection between poppies and the unacceptable opium trade began to worry the Stalinist government, and in subsequent performances the ballet was called 'The Red Flower'. The rousing 'Russian Sailor's Dance' is perhaps the best known excerpt from this underrated score.

The Performers

Janette Fishell holds degrees in organ performance from Indiana University and Northwestern University in the United States, and is a recitalist and teacher of international standing. The author of numerous articles and a recent book, she is widely recognised as a leading authority on the organ music of Petr Eben. She currently heads the church music and organ performance degree programmes at East Carolina University, and is organist/choirmaster at St Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville.

Colin Andrews was born in Bristol and was a student at the Royal Academy of Music, later studying with Lionel Rogg and Gillian Weir. He has toured worldwide, both as a soloist and in concert with his wife, Janette Fishell. He has played at many of the world's leading venues, and regularly recorded for the BBC. As well as his busy teaching and recital career, Colin Andrews is organist/choirmaster at St Stephen's Episcopal Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

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Twilight Recital
Ensemble d'Arcs-en-Ciel

St Peter's Church, Oundle - 9.30pm
(the Parish Church)

Matthew Billing, clarinet
Ben Harte, violin
Vicky Matthews, cello
Min Jung Kim, piano

The Programme

Quartet for the End of Time Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
Liturgie de cristal; Vocalise, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du Temps; Abîme des Oiseaux; Intèrmede; Louange a l'Eternité de Jesus; Danse de la Fureur, pour les sept trompettes; Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du Temps; Louange a l'Immortalité de Jesus.
At the outbreak of war Messiaen joined the French army, but his active service came to an end in June 1940 when the Germans in Nancy caught him as he tried to escape on an old bicycle with no tyres. The few things he had with him included scores of Bach's Brandenburg concertos and works by Beethoven, Berg, Ravel and Stravinsky; these went with him to Stalag VIIIA at Gorlitz on the German/Polish border. "Only music made me survive the cruelty of the horrors of the camp", he wrote after his release two years later, and it was while he was interned that he wrote one of his most eloquent chamber works, the Quartet for the End of Time.

The Quartet draws extensively on the deep Catholic faith which sustained Messiaen throughout his life. It is based on the story of the Apocalypse from the Book of Revelation, and the text appears on the first page of the composition: "I saw a mighty angel descending from heaven, clothed in mist and with a rainbow on his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and standing thus on the sea and the earth, he lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, "There shall be time no longer but on the day when the seventh angel's trumpet sounds, the mystery of God shall be fulfilled." "

Messiaen completed the Quartet in January 1941 and gave its first performance at Stalag VIIIA the same month with three fellow inmates - the violinist Jean le Boulaire, the clarinetist Henri Akoka, and the cellist Etienne Pasquier. The temperature had fallen to minus 30 degrees centigrade and the piano keys kept sticking, but the audience of 5,000 prisoners was spellbound, perhaps finding in the Quartet a reflection of the apparent timelessness of their own imprisonment. "Never was I listened to with such rapt attention and comprehension", wrote the composer.

The Performers

Matthew Billing began clarinet at the age of nine and was later principal clarinetist with the Nottingham Youth Orchestra, with which he has appeared as soloist on tours to Denmark, Canada and the United States. He is now in his third year at the Royal Academy of Music, and has won the Hine Gift and Edwin James Prize. He has recently toured abroad with the Royal Academy Sinfonia, with performances in China, Japan and Spoleto in Italy.

Benjamin Harte entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1993, and in 1997 won the Emily English Award for violin from the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Since 1997 he has been working as a freelance player with The Philharmonia Orchestra. Forthcoming engagements include performances of Bartók's Second Violin Concerto as a result of winning the Edinburgh Concerto Competition in 1997. Benjamin plays a 1690 Ruggieri violin.

Victoria Matthews began cello lessons at the age of four, and attended Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, where she won both the String Prize and the Chamber Music Prize. In 1993 she was awarded the Silver Medal in the Young Musician of Wales competition. Victoria has taken part in masterclasses with Ralph Kirshbaum at the International Cello Festival in Manchester, with the Medici and Brodsky Quartets at Dartington International Summer School, and at the Royal Academy with the Alberni Quartet and Seigmund Nissel. She plays an 18th century Moritz cello.



Min-Yung Kim was a scholar at the Purcell School. She has won numerous scholarships and awards, including the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund and the Yamaha Foundation of Europe Award. She has performed frequently in London on the South Bank and at St Martin-in-the-Fields, and overseas at the Rachmaninoff Hall in Russia and at the Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival. She is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music.

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