

**english sinfonia  
with  
julian lloyd webber,  
cello  
john farrer, conductor  
janice graham, leader  
7.30pm  
oundle school chapel**



Arvo Pärt

**Strong on Oaks, Strong on the Causes of Oaks, Five**  
**Michael Nyman (b.1944)**

English Sinfonia commissioned this suite during late 1997, the fifth movement of which makes an excellent overture. The Sinfonia became the resident orchestra in Stevenage during 1997 and decided that a piece of music would be the most memorable celebration of their new relationship with the town. The title *Strong on Oaks, Strong on the Causes of Oaks* is derived from *Sithenaece*, the Saxon name for a small settlement in the area of Stevenage close to St. Nicholas's Church. The modern translation of the Saxon title is 'Strong Oak'. The word *Sithenaece* developed over the years into the modern day Stevenage.

**Fratres, for strings and percussion** **Arvo Pärt (b.1935)**

Pärt's extraordinary reputation is based on the music which he has composed since the late 1970s, works such as *Tablula Rasa*, *Fratres*, *Summa* and the *St John Passion*. *Fratres* is a series of works for different instrumentations, all featuring a simple, hypnotic theme. The piece to be performed tonight features strings plus percussion and takes the form of a repeating melody interspersed with notes played by the claves and bass drum.

See also page 5.

**Violoncello Concerto in E minor, Op 85**  
**Edward Elgar (1857 - 1934)**

*Adagio - Moderato; Lento - Allegro molto; Adagio;*  
*Allegro - Moderato - Allegro, ma non troppo*

This deservedly famous concerto reveals the very soul of Elgar's Edwardian culture, with its expressions of restrained passion blended with essential dignity. Begun during the closing months of the Great War and premiered in 1919, the work mirrors the composer's natural relief at the cessation of hostilities, coupled with a sombre autumnal resignation that things could never be the same again. Then, beyond such exhaustion, the death of Lady Elgar in 1920 further deprived the composer of his impetus to compose. Thus the Cello Concerto stands as the last achievement of Elgar's great years, and perhaps his most personal utterance.

After its nobilmente opening, the first movement is characterised by two themes: the first, a whimsical lilting

melody, has the air of a softly hummed folksong, whilst the second is perkier, given initially to the clarinets. Following on without a break, the second movement is a scurrying scherzo in which the cello soars above a sparsely scored orchestral texture.

The third, an eloquent song without words, leads attacca into the finale where syncopated rhythms and colourful orchestrations abound. The work's closing bars are vintage Elgar: tender sentiment and the stiff upper lip! A desolate passage marked *poco piu lento* is dismissed by a brusque entry of the orchestral tutti with a restatement of the introductory music, as if finally to banish introspection and regret.

It seems that early performances of this wonderful concerto lacked conviction, and it took some forty years before the work really came on song, under the bow of Jacqueline du Pré and the baton of Sir John Barbiroli (himself originally a professional cellist).

Tonight's soloist, Julian Lloyd Webber, is acclaimed as today's definitive interpreter of the Elgar concerto.

### interval

**Symphony no 3 in E flat, Eroica**  
**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

*Allegro con brio; Adagio assai; Allegro vivace; Allegro molto*

In 1802 Beethoven was reported as saying: 'Henceforth I shall take a new path'. The result was his 'Eroica' Symphony, a magnificent work with a miraculous musical structure. Originally Beethoven dedicated the composition to Napoleon Bonaparte and the title page of the score bore the words 'Grand Symphony entitled Bonaparte'. However, when news reached the composer that Napoleon had declared himself Emperor, he removed the title page and promptly renamed the symphony 'Heroic'.

The length of the work exceeds that of any previous symphony. The first movement is particularly extensive and incorporates a substantial coda. The second movement, *adagio assai*, is a funeral march in C minor and further illustrates Beethoven's desire to explore new ground. Never before had such a sombre march been built into a symphonic structure.

The scherzo totally effaces the corresponding minuet and trio associated with earlier classical masters. Syncopations and staccato writing provide the main driving force.

The finale *allegro molto* comprises a set of variations on a bass line and later a theme that Beethoven had already exploited on three occasions. After the introduction the music begins calmly with careful manipulation of the theme; an orchestral tutti follows the flute's statement of this tune. Then the music plunges into G minor and distinct echoes are heard of Mozart's Symphony no 40. More statements of the theme are presented before the *poco andante* variation (solo oboe) marks the start of a long, climactic conclusion.

### Julian Lloyd Webber

Widely regarded as one of the most creative musicians of his generation, Julian Lloyd Webber has brought many new listeners to the cello. He has given more than fifty works their first recording, including Frank Bridge's *Oration Concerto Elegiaco*, Britten's *Suite no 3*, Holst's *Invocation*, and the new Concerto by Gavin Bryars, *Farewell to Philosophy*. His award-winning recording of the Elgar Concerto with Sir Yehudi Menuhin and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was recently chosen as the finest-ever recorded version by BBC Music Magazine.

Recent concert performances include two works written for Julian Lloyd Webber: Michael Nyman's *Double Concerto* for Cello and Saxophone, and Gavin Bryars' *Concerto*. Two further works are currently being written for Julian Lloyd Webber by the composers James MacMillan and Philip Glass. His most recent recording is *Cello Moods*, a collection of favourites and rarities with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under James Judd.

### John Farrer

John Farrer is Senior Guest Conductor of English Sinfonia, and also is a regular guest with orchestras in England, including the London Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic and the London Mozart Players. He is on the faculty of the American Symphony Orchestra League's conducting workshops, and has received the Governor's Award for Excellence and Achievement, New Mexico's highest arts honour.

### Janice Graham

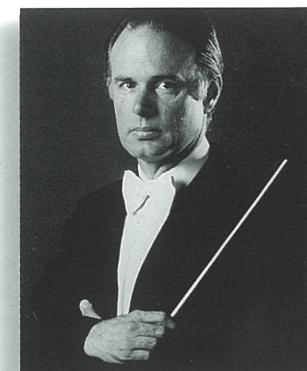
In addition to her position as leader of the English Sinfonia, Janice Graham is also associate leader of the London Symphony Orchestra and leads the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Janice studied at the Purcell School, and later the Juilliard School in New York. In 1990 she won the Shell/LSO Competition and the string section of the Royal Over-seas League competition. Since September 1995 she has been a professor at the Royal College of Music.

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film at the festival  
**hilary and jackie (15)**  
dir. arnand tucker 1998  
10pm  
festival club

The career of legendary cellist Jacqueline du Pré, famed for her performances of Elgar's Cello Concerto, is put under the spotlight in Tucker's uplifting film. The limitations of the biopic are transcended to exult in Jacqueline's artistry, even as the film poses profound and troubling questions about communication, destiny and the artist's sense of her own identity.