

Saturday 17th July

Celebrity Concert

Evelyn Glennie

Armonico Consort

7.30pm
Oundle School Chapel

Christopher Monks, director
Nathan Vale, tenor solo
Christopher Allsop, organ
Angela Moore, harp
Moira Usher, percussion

Otce nás **Leos Janáček** (1854-1928)
The sacred cantata *Otce nás* (Our Father) was commissioned in 1901, not by a church but by a women's home in Brno. Janáček was asked to compose musical interpretations of a series of paintings by the Polish painter Josef Krezesz-Mecina which were to be 'staged' by a local amateur dramatic group as *tableaux vivants*. Many characteristics of *Otce nás* are also found in his setting of 'Zdrávas Maria' (1904). Both works betray the composer's interest in utilising the Czech language for religious works, his liking for distinctive scoring, and the development of a musical style that owed much to his work with transcribing and arranging Czech folk melodies.

Ilijas **Nebojsa Zivkovic** (b.1962)
Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic received his diploma in composition, music theory and percussion at the Heidelberg-Mannheim High School of Music and completed his postgraduate studies in both subjects at the Stuttgart High School of Music. Since 1980 Zivkovic has been living in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Commissioned by marimbist Rebecca Kite, this rhapsodic piece is at times very pianistic in terms of technical and musical demands. Once again, the melodic and rhythmic influences of the Balkans is unmistakable.

Sechs Miniaturen **Mattias Schmitt** (b.1958)
These are six short pieces for solo marimba, reminiscent of the collection of pieces written for children by composers such as Debussy, Tchaikovsky, Schumann and Khachaturian. The six pieces explore the wonderful musical qualities of the marimba ranging from mellow and flowing to more harsh and percussive.

Chichester Psalms **Leonard Bernstein** (1918-1990)
Bernstein was commissioned by The Very Revd Walter Hussey whilst he was Dean of Chichester Cathedral for the 1965 Southern Cathedrals festival. *Chichester Psalms* is a collection of three movements based on Psalms 100, 23 and 131 respectively. Bernstein wrote *Chichester Psalms* after a period of a year during which he experimented with twelve tone music, all of which he threw away, saying it was not him. The result of returning to tonal music was this collection,

which he claimed to be "The most accessible, B flat majorish tonal piece I've ever written . . . Any kind of music which is genuine human expression is valid for me".

The opening chorale of *Chichester Psalms* uses the compelling interval of the seventh, and leads directly into a joyful, dance-like setting of Psalm 100 in a 7/4 meter. A lyric solo (Psalm 23) intended for a boy alto accompanied by the harp starts the second movement. This is repeated by the sopranos, but is interrupted by a warlike outburst from the men (from Psalm 2). The violence grows distant, but it continues softly while, above it, the sopranos resume Psalm 23 'blissfully unaware of the threat'. An impassioned instrumental meditation follows, subsiding into the finale, a warm song of comfort in a flowing 10/4 meter (Psalm 131). The work ends with an *a cappella* version of the opening chorale, a coda of yearning for peace (from Psalm 133).

Interval

A Little Prayer **Evelyn Glennie**
Evelyn Glennie writes: "Written in 1981, *A Little Prayer* expresses my religious feelings as well as a rather pleasant and relaxed dimension to marimba playing."

Rhythmic Caprice **Leigh Howard Stevens**
The composer writes: "This piece is my first attempt at composition for the marimba. Three new *col legno* (with wood) effects are used in the work: the birch handle is used on the edge of the bar instead of the mallet head; the mallet head and the handle are used simultaneously (dubbed both 'marimshot' and 'Stevens pizzicato' by my students) and the whole length of both handles is used to produce what I tentatively call 'splash/cluster'."

The first section of the piece is derived from a simple descending modal figure first heard in the right hand after the short introduction. In the middle section the new melodic interest is in the performer's left hand, while the right hand accompanies with progressively more complicated ties and splashes. The last section is based on a three-note fragment from the first. The very limited melodic and harmonic materials of the piece all evolve rhythmically from simple, to complex, to polyrhythmic, to driving, to spasmodic, ultimately returning to simple rhythm in the six-measure codetta.

The Long Lost Son **Jonathan Girling** (b.1972)
The Long Lost Son is based on a specially commissioned libretto by Paul Wignall, written in English and Classical Greek. The choir tells the story of two sets of two sons, with one common voice (expressed through the solo tenor line), being the elder son. In each story the younger son seems to have been the more favoured of the two. This gives rise to understandable jealousy and resentment in the older son, a situation that is further exacerbated by the father's reaction, inflaming the older son's sense of injustice even more.

The libretto is based on Cain & Abel and The Prodigal Son from the Bible, and although separated by many thousands of years, the stories have similar choices at the end: shall the elder son be reconciled to his fast-living brother, or shall he give vent to his anger and deal with his wayward brother once

and for all? That's the audience's choice - Love or Death! Jonathan Girling has composed two endings, one based on Cain's story and once based on the Prodigal Son. It's up to you to vote!

Apart from the choir and the solo tenor line, there is a third protagonist in all this: the percussion soloist. The percussion fills in the psychological drama for us, working in counterpoint with the double choir, sometimes supporting the tenor, while at other times providing a dramatic backdrop for the drama to unfold. Some special instruments have been written for in this piece, being the Waterphone (heard at the start), Spring Drums, Lion's Roar, and a beautiful set of five Double-Mark Trees (played by the choir and Evelyn), specially made for Evelyn Glennie. Although not a 'concerto' in the traditional sense, the percussion occasionally overwhelms the choir and tenor, giving rise to, for example, a major solo in metal at the centre of the piece, which could be seen as the titanic struggle going on within the older brother.

Evelyn Glennie
For the first ten years of her career virtually every performance Evelyn Glennie gave was in some way a first: the first time an orchestra had performed with a percussion soloist, the first solo percussion performance at a venue or festival, or the world premiere of a new percussion concerto.

Evelyn now gives more than one hundred performances a year all over the world and has performed with most of the world's finest orchestras and conductors. She has also



commissioned over one hundred works for solo percussion, and is not only the first person to create and sustain a full-time career as a solo percussionist, but is redefining the expectations of percussion students and audiences the world over.

Evelyn also has a flourishing recording career: many of her seventeen CDs won awards, the most recent being *Oriental Landscapes* (BIS) and *Fractured Lines* by Mark-Anthony Turnage (Chandos).

Currently studying Psychology and Law through the Open University, Evelyn has in recent years also written her autobiography, *Good Vibrations*, and hosted two series of her own television programmes for the BBC. She regularly appears on television across the world, and composes and records music for film and television.

In 1993 she was awarded the OBE for her services to music.

Armonico Consort
Christopher Monks and Armonico Consort have established themselves amongst the foremost interpreters of Baroque and Renaissance music. Nurturing younger professional singers, and accompanied by some of the finest instrumentalists from this country and abroad, they are in much demand from major festivals across the UK. Their recent Wigmore Hall debut, featuring newly discovered music by Francesco Scarlatti, was a critical success, and the forthcoming CD of the same music marks the start of a partnership with the Deux-Elles label. Gramophone have picked this CD as one of the top five choral releases of 2004.



Alongside their authoritative approaches to Baroque and Renaissance repertoire, they are also known for their innovative programming of lesser-known gems such as the Victoria 'Requiem', and for attracting large audiences to works such as the Rachmaninov 'Vespers'.

Future plans include the establishment of a Baroque Opera Showcase starting with a fully-staged version of Purcell's 'The Fairy Queen', which will later tour, and a recording of the Victoria 'Requiem'.

Christopher Monks is a conductor and continuo player whose work takes him around the UK and Europe. Founder and Artistic Director of Armonico Consort, he has received critical acclaim for his interpretation of music from the baroque and renaissance periods. A former organ scholar at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, he studied under David Hill as organ scholar at Winchester Cathedral. Christopher plays the keyboard with groups such as the CBSO. He has featured on over 17 CDs and is heard regularly on radio and television.

Angela Moore is one of the UK's busiest freelance harpists, working regularly with all the major orchestras including the Royal Opera House, The London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She is equally at home playing solo or chamber music, particularly within an established flute and harp duo. She combines orchestral rigour with personal brio, bringing a fresh approach to the spectrum of traditional and modern works.