



GOMALAN BRASS QUINTET

Marco Pierobon, trumpet
Marco Braitto, trumpet
Nilo Caracristi, horn
Gianluca Scipioni, trombone
Oswald Prader, tuba

8pm St Mary's Church, Fotheringhay

Overture, 'La Forza del destino' **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901)

This arresting start to the programme, music first heard at the St Petersburg Imperial Theatre in November 1862, reflects Verdi's powerful creative energies, lust for living and immense appetite – some might even say his gluttony! And our artists, true Italians, have asked us to reflect upon this aspect of the composer's personality...

Verdi grew up among the genuinely homely aromas at the grocery and inn which his parents ran in Roncole di Busseto. Though he became more refined over the years, Verdi always maintained simple country tastes. In periods of intense work he could do without lunch and dinner and relied almost exclusively on coffee, a beverage that he adored and sourced carefully in the best shops.

The years passed but his delight in eating and drinking well and abundantly never waned, tolerated by the strongest of stomachs: 'My stomach is bearing up well, while my legs... unfortunately... But at the age of 87 I really mustn't grumble!' he said to his friend Don Conti. The finest demonstration of this can be seen in the rich menu, written out every day on a card bearing his entwined initials, and served by his personal waiter in his suite at the Grand Hotel de Milan on 7th January 1901, just twenty days before he died; he was almost 88 years old.

*Risotto alla certosina, Boiled bass with mayonnaise,
 Braised ox, Lamb cutlets, Cooked meat in the Parma style,
 Roast turkey, Salad, Sweet, Fruit and ice-cream with rum.*

Fugue No. 9 from 'The Art of Fugue' **J S Bach** (1685–1750)

J S Bach's Art of Fugue dating from the early 1740's is one of the composer's great monothematic cycles. Contrasting with 'The Musical Offering', the variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch' and the 'Goldberg Variations', Bach here celebrates and treats *ad ultimum* the strict rigours of fugal writing in many mind-bending dimensions, which make for a crowning achievement of western art.

Though Bach never specified his desired instrumentation for these fugues, simply writing them in open score, the agility and sustaining power of brass make a splendid medium in which to appreciate his staggering conceptions.

Call, for Brass Quintet (1985) **Luciano Berio** (1925–2003)

Berio was one of the most widely performed and productive post-war composers and was feted as a conductor of many of the world's finest symphony orchestras. He emerged from the second world war years as a dedicated young modernist, but by the mid-1960s he had developed an eclectic musical language in which any materials could be used if they promoted communication between composer and listener.

'I believe strongly in hierarchies, in values,' he said. 'The fascination of music is that it is meaningful on many levels. It's wrong to listen for only one element, because there are so many. The ideal listener is the one who can catch all the implications; the ideal composer is the one who can control them. In the past there was only one musical language, only one grammar. Today each composer has to invent his own language; it is much more difficult...'

'My language, my style, has to do with bringing together different things. I think that deep down we all feel a need to create harmony out of the multitude of things we know - not just those of the present, but also the things of the past.'

Berio's four-minute 'Call' (St. Louis Fanfare) was premiered by the Nashville Brass Quintet in August 1985.

Quintet for Brass, 1st movement **Malcolm Arnold** (b 1921)

Sir Malcolm Arnold was born in Northampton in October 1921, great-grandson of William Hawes, the composer and head of all music for the Chapels Royal and St Paul's. Through his student days, Arnold rose to prominence as a trumpeter and until 1948 was the much admired principal trumpet of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. From then until the early sixties, Arnold composed prolifically. Commissions flooded in and he became one of the most sought-after composers of the time, alongside Benjamin Britten and William Walton. Nine Symphonies, film scores and works for ensembles of all timbres characterise his output.

His Brass Quintet, dating from 1961, is a thrillingly deft composition.

Coro e Marcia Trionfale from Aida **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901)

Instantly recognisable melodies from Verdi's most famous operatic creation, needing no introduction!

Interval

Suite - An American in Paris (1928) **George Gershwin** (1898–1937)

This perennially popular American composer, whose works remain fresh and sparkling after 60 years, is for many the very essence of the razzamatuzz that is America. The stage world of the Broadway hit musical and the concert hall alike engaged his creative genius. From 'Oh, Kay!', 'Girl Crazy' and 'Lady Be Good' to his evergreen 'Rhapsody in Blue' and masterpiece opera 'Porgy and Bess', he encapsulates the DNA of the USA. And here he is in Paris...

Adagio for Strings, Op. 11 **Samuel Barber** (1910–1981)

American composer Samuel Barber often confuses critics: he founded no school and adhered to no one style. As a public figure, he seemed aloof from the various critical fights within American music: tonal vs atonal, Stravinsky vs Schoenberg, and old-guard vs modern. Barber seemed just to write music, and in so doing became controversial, someone to be attacked or defended. Above all he distinguished himself as a melodist.

Originally conceived as the second movement of a string quartet in 1936, Barber's now famous 'Adagio' was soon adapted for string



orchestra. In this form it became not only his most popular work, but also an unofficial American anthem of mourning, played after the deaths of Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy, and more recently at the last night of the BBC Proms, just days after the '9/11' disaster of 2001. Barber's 'Adagio' is a masterpiece and it sounds glorious arranged for brass.

Over the Rainbow **Harold Arlen** (1905–1986)

Ciao Fred! **Fred Buscaglione** (1921–1960)

That's a plenty! **Low Pollack** (1895–1946)

Harold Arlen's music is everywhere. You have probably heard, and maybe even hummed, a Harold Arlen song today and didn't even know it. Though he is most noted for composing the songs for the film 'The Wizard of Oz', particularly 'Over the Rainbow', which was recently named the 'Number One Song of the Century', he has written over 400 songs, including favourites such as: 'It's Only A Paper Moon', 'Stormy Weather', 'I've Got the World on A String', and 'Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive'.

Ferdinando 'Fred' Buscaglione was an Italian singer and actor who became very popular in late 1950s. His public persona - the character he played both in his songs and his movies - was a humorous mobster with a penchant for whiskey and women. His great passion for music showed up at a very young age, studying at the Verdi Conservatorio in Turin and performing in his hometown's night clubs as jazz singer, violinist or double bass player. During World War II an officer spotted his musical talent and he joined the orchestra of the Allies radio station of Cagliari. This enabled Buscaglione to encounter experimental new sounds