

Saturday 15 July 2023, 7.30pm
Champs Hill, Coldwaltham

Anthony Marwood (violin) & James Crabb (accordion)

PROGRAMME NOTES

S.V.P., Tzigane Tango & Preparense (arr. James Crabb) Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Born in Argentina to Italian parents, Astor Piazzolla was to the tango what Johann Strauss was to the waltz. His career flourished during the 1950s following studies in Paris with the celebrated pedagogue Nadia Boulanger who recognised his true artistic path was in his Latin American roots. Almost overnight, his music morphed into an exotic blend of Gallic elegance and South American rhythm, qualities that led to the revival of the tango dance style in his prodigious output of over 3000 works. To his Paris years belong the café-infused S.V.P. (*S'il Vouz Plait*), his sultry 'Tzigane Tango' and the 'Preparense', all originally conceived for the accordion.

Much Ado About Nothing suite (arr. Crabb) Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

- 1 Overture
- 2 Bridal Morning
- 3 Dogberry and Verges
- 4 Intermezzo (Garden Scene)
- 5 Hornpipe

Whilst one might not readily identify Erich Korngold as a composer of chamber music, the medium occupied the composer across an extraordinary career that bridged the realms of serious music (his Violin Concerto) and swashbuckling film scores (*The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *The Sea Hawke*). Considered last of the great Romantics, he was that rare breed of *wunderkind* - acclaimed a genius at six by Gustav Mahler - who rose to international acclaim whilst still a teenager - his talent emerging in a piano trio written when he was just twelve. In a letter to Arnold Schoenberg, an envious Anton Webern declared, 'Publishers', performances - the boy has everything'.

Korngold's *Much Ado About Nothing* suite was written in 1918 as incidental music for a production of Shakespeare's eponymous play and first produced in Vienna in May 1920. Before the performance run had ended a version for violin and piano was made to accommodate absent musicians. The suite's five movements open with a breezy 'Overture', its optimism turning to uncertainty yet undeniable charm in 'Bridal Morning'. A witty interlude evoking drunken nightwatchmen follows in the march-like 'Dogberry and Verges' and the developing love of Beatrice for Benedick is captured in the heartfelt 'Intermezzo'. High spirits characterise the concluding 'Hornpipe'.

Lament from Seavaigers (arr. Crabb)

Sally Beamish (born 1956)

Sally Beamish has lived for more than 30 years in Scotland and its culture and history has been a major source of inspiration for this London born composer. Written in 2011, her 'Seavaigers' is a double concerto for fiddle and Scottish harp of which the haunting 'Lament' pays a moving tribute to the many seafarers who have perished at sea.

Variations on Two Scottish/Border Folk Melodies (arr. Crabb) Matt Seattle (born ?)

1. Mary Scott, Flower of Yarrow
2. Cuckold Come Out of The Amrey

Matt Seattle has been a musician for over 50 years, playing Border pipes for over half of that time. His focus on the Border piping tradition has gained him respect within the traditional music world, and having lived in Northumberland before moving to the Scottish Borders in 1998, his playing is grounded in the vibrant musical traditions flourishing on both sides of the Tweed.

Tango por una Cabeza arr. John Williams Carlos Gardel (1890-1935)

Known as the songbird of Buenos Aires, Carlos Gardel was an Argentinian tango legend. His song-writing talents during his twenties and his first recorded hit 'Mi Noche Triste' (My sad night) initiated the revival of the tango style. 'Por una Cabeza' (By a head) was written in the year of his death, its salon style permeated with Latin American elegance and vigour.

The Lark Ascending (arr Crabb) Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Lark Ascending is one of Vaughan Williams's most quintessentially English works and was first conceived in 1914 as a Romance for Violin and Orchestra. Inspiration for it came from an eponymous poem by George Meredith (1828-1909), and the score carries a quotation of the lark '... ever winging up and up'. The music begins with a long, improvisatory paragraph that anticipates much of the ensuing thematic material. New material is subsequently introduced, the violin continually evoking the motion and song of the lark. The work had been intended for the violinist Marie Hall, a pupil of Elgar who came to prominence just before the Great War and who, after Albert Sammons, was to be the leading British executant of Elgar's Violin Concerto. She gave the first performance of *The Lark Ascending* in its new arrangement for violin and piano at Shirehampton, Gloucestershire on 15 December 1920.

Libertango, Oblivion, Escualo (arr. Crabb) Astor Piazzolla

'Libertango' combines two words Libertad (freedom) and Tango, suggesting the transition from tango to Tango Nuevo. Its pulsing rhythms and engaging melody have ensured a permanent place in the repertoire. In addition to writing music for himself and his tango band, Piazzolla also provided scores for numerous films of which the smoky 'Oblivion' forms part of a score written for Pirandello's play *Enrico IV* - a tragicomedy about a man who thinks he is Henry IV, a delusion reflected in the music's reserve and dream-like quality. By contrast, 'Escualo' (meaning shark) is notorious within Piazzolla's output for its virtuosic violin writing, a tour de force of techniques and complex rhythms. The 'shark' of the title is not the music itself, but a reminder of the composer's shark fishing experiences in Uruguay.

David Truslove, 2023

This event is kindly sponsored by the Bowerman Charitable Trust