



Thursday 21 July 2023, 7.30pm
Champs Hill, Coldwaltham

Maria Hegele & Friends - Soliloquies

Maria Hegele	<i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Anna Szalucka	<i>piano</i>
Gabriela Opacka-Boccardo	<i>violin</i>
Connie Pharoah	<i>viola</i>

BIOGRAPHIES

German mezzo-soprano **Maria Hegele** became a member of the Volksoper Vienna opera studio after graduating from the Royal College of Music's International Opera Studio, where she studied with Dinah Harris and Veronica Vesey-Campbell. She made her debut at Staatsoper Berlin in 2023. She is a passionate recitalist and has participated in masterclasses with Brigitte Fassbaender, Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Sarah Connolly, Jonathan Dove, Joseph Middleton, Dame Ann Murray, Wolfgang Holzmair. She is a Samling Young Artist, a Britten-Pears Young Artist, Heidelberger Frühling Scholar and Imogen Cooper Music Trust Scholar and is supported by Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben. In 2020, Maria recorded a programme of songs by Paul Willot-Förster for the SWR (Südwestrundfunk); in 2022, she performed Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin* at Snape Maltings and was invited to take part in the 50th anniversary Gala Concert of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme. Awards include 1st prize in the 2022 August-Everding Competition, 2022 Hidalgo Liedpreis and 2018 Claude Debussy Chamber Music Competition, 3rd prize in the 2021 Lies Askonas Competition and 4th prize and award for best sacred aria in the 2022 Mozart Singing Competition.

Anna Szalucka is an active soloist and chamber musician. Her work emphasis cross-arts productions and finding new formats for classical music concerts. 2021 saw the birth of the Piano Phase Project, bringing music installations to contemporary venues helping people from all walks of life to connect with and make music. Since 2018, she also teaches at London's Royal Academy of Music. Szalucka's discography includes *A Century of Polish Piano Miniatures* released with Naxos and *Sonatas after Mozart* for piano and trumpet recorded with Jonathan Freeman-Attwood for Linn Records. She has given numerous concerts and recitals around the world, cooperating with The National Fryderyk Chopin Institute, Wiener Beethoven Gesellschaft, Arthur Rubinstein International Music Foundation, The Worshipful Company of Musicians, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, Classic FM and Polish Radio. She was winner of the 1st Prize together with four Special Awards at the 3rd Tallinn International Piano Competition in Estonia. Anna Szalucka's work is supported by The Imogen Cooper Music Trust and The Craxton Trust.

In Poland, she was awarded the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage Prize for outstanding achievements in music.

Polish born, London based musician active in both the classical and cross-genre scenes. Recently cast in the theatre play "Duet For One" at the Orange Tree Theatre in London, "**Gabriela Opacka-Boccardo** gave a virtuosic performance on violin, beautifully emoting Oliver Vibrans' score" (Spy In The Stalls), played the Disney's musical Frozen in the London West End and joined Veles Ensemble for a recording of Egon Wellesz's "sequence of wonderfully spare, atonal miniatures, in which not a note is wasted" (The Guardian). Works also as an orchestral musician (London Philharmonic Orchestra), session violinist for film, TV and games, sings with the London Contemporary Voices performing at the Royal Albert Hall and Metropolis Studios, and recording for cross-genre artists such as Jules Buckley at Air Studios in London. Self-released an album featuring works by M. Ravel transcribed for violin and harp (w/ Oliver Wass). Currently working on the 'Górecki in Motion' project, combining chamber music and electronic sounds to achieve a fully immersive audiovisual experience.

British viola player **Connie Pharoah** performs across Europe as a soloist and orchestra leader, and internationally as a chamber musician. Based in Amsterdam, Connie is a member of the Marigold Piano Quartet and freelances with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. She has a wealth of chamber music experience and enjoys putting together collaborative chamber concerts. Her artistic and conceptual approach has been largely influenced by musicians she has played with at festivals and residencies, namely Yellow Barn, Maiastra, IMS Prussia Cove, Academia Internacional de Musica Solsona and Zermatt Music Festival. As an orchestra leader, Connie enjoys playing in a wide variety of groups ranging from chamber to symphony orchestras. Her inspiring experiences playing with the O Modernt, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Octave Ensemble, 12 Ensemble and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic lead her to found the Seida Ensemble.

This event is kindly sponsored by the Bowerman Charitable Trust