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Saturday 27 February 2016, 8pm
West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

R. Strauss Overture and Dance scene
from Ariadne auf Naxos

Chris Mortlock Between the Spheres
CUMS Composer in Residence world premiere

Ibert Flute Concerto

Beethoven Symphony No.4

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Gerry Cornelius conductor

Rosalind Ridout flute

CUMS Concerto Competition 2015 prize-winner

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Richard Strauss (1864 –1949)

“Overture” and “Dance Scene” from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Op.60 (1916)

Strauss’ operas, renowned for their dramatic intensity and notoriously challenging vocal writing, have sustained perhaps the most consistent reputation of any twentieth-century opera composer. They represent a body of work which stretches over the composer’s life. The first, *Guntram*, was first performed in 1894; the last, the quixotic and unconventional *Capriccio*, received its premiere just a few years before his death. In some sense, then, the operas may be viewed as a kind of ‘watermark’ for Strauss’ progression as a composer, and trace an unprecedented evolution of craftsmanship and artistic individualism from the last master of German Romanticism.

Ariadne auf Naxos represents the midpoint of this trajectory. Completed in 1912 and then later modified in 1916, it is probably the most popular of Strauss’ works for the stage, after *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier*. Despite serving as a vehicle for some of Strauss’ most inventive writing, its sparse performance history is in no doubt due to the disorientating and disarming qualities of the libretto. A troupe of burlesque musicians and an elite opera company prepare for a performance at a lavish dinner party, when they are informed that, due to time constraints, they must perform simultaneously. The resulting ‘play within a play’ becomes a disturbing exploration of the relationship between high and low culture, as an archetypal *opera seria* narrative, of Ariadne’s abandonment by Theseus on the isle of Naxos, is constantly interrupted

by slapstick comedy and bawdy burlesque numbers. Anticipating the metatheatrical trends of the twentieth century by some distance, it represents a turning point in Strauss’ composition towards the more nuanced and expressive vocabulary that cemented his success in the following years.

The Overture, one of the two extracts from the opera being performed tonight, begins with an expressive leap downwards of a major seventh. Strauss’ influence by Wagner and Mahler is evident in the yearning tonality that develops in the string section. Yet, despite this interest in a contemporary tonality, it would be improper to ignore Strauss’ reference to the composers of which his ‘opera within opera’ is a parody; subtle choices of cadential phrase and the extraordinary restraint given to the soaring melodies suggest an older style of writing, reminiscent both of French and Italian *opera seria*.

The more mischievous Dance scene, a sprightly *allegretto*, affords Strauss the opportunity to indulge in the orchestral colour that was to develop into the complex textures used in works such as *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Dialogues between various sections demonstrate a flair for eccentricity in orchestration without a loss of control; if the Overture can be said to encapsulate the tragic and serious side of the opera, then perhaps the Dance scene allows its burlesque troupe a word in this masterly musical argument.

James Martin

Chris Mortlock

Between the Spheres (world premiere)

Within *On the Heavens*, Aristotle posits the existence of two cosmological orbs; the sublunary sphere, which encloses the four terrestrial elements, and the celestial sphere of the heavens, which contains Aether: the fifth element. ‘Between the Spheres’ explores the musical possibilities suggested by this system.

The piece positions the listener as an observer at the boundary between the sublunary and celestial spheres, each of which is afforded individual musical treatment. Throughout the piece the music of each sphere is sounded concurrently but with oscillating priority, as though the attention of the observer is in

constant flux. These musical ideas germinate from the same seed but are distinct by the nature of their development.

The sublunary music maintains a continual forward trajectory and is only interrupted by its tendency to fracture or become corrupted. In contrast, the music of Aether and the celestial sphere is cyclical and self-referential, reflecting the incorruptible eternity of the

heavens. These musical tendencies are informed by Aristotle's own descriptions of the motion of terrestrial and celestial elements: the former travelling linearly whilst the latter follow circular paths.

A finale unites the spheres in concord, but the stability is fleeting. The piece fractures at the last, leaving just the slowly fading 'aethereal' music.

Chris Mortlock

Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

Flute Concerto (1934)

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Andante*
- III. *Allegro scherzando*

The image of the composer is one of an artist who comments on but remains at an intellectual distance from society and the world at large. It is fitting that in Cambridge the works of Jacques Ibert find a variety of opportunities for performance, since the French composer so eloquently evades this kind of stereotype or categorisation.

Ibert studied music from the age of four, presumably due to the influence of his mother, who was a successful pianist. An exceptional student of the Paris Conservatoire along with Honegger and Milhaud, his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914, and Ibert soon found himself serving as a Naval officer at the age of 25. After returning from the war, he married and thereafter won the prestigious Prix du Rome. From here he began to build a relatively successful career as a composer, publishing and conducting many of his works.

Nevertheless, Ibert's life was once again interrupted by conflict. His works were banned under the Vichy Government in 1940, and soon after he fled in exile to the south of France and then Switzerland. He was later called to return to Paris by Charles de Gaulle, where he took up the post of administrator for the *Paris Opera* and *Opera-Comique*. At the head of France's two most prestigious musical institutions, he retired soon after and died in 1962.

Ibert's style in the Flute Concerto is remarkably restrained and conservative for a composer who lived at the intellectual centre of Paris. It was here that this work was composed, written at the height of his powers during the inter-war period. His works bear a distinctive stamp of French writing, with some influence from the preceding generations of musicians, including Faure, Debussy and Ravel. However, Ibert remains relatively cosmopolitan and even inoffensive in his compositional choices, with a fondness for Mediterranean musical allusions from his time at sea. The concerto is presented in a conventional three-movement format, with two Allegro movements enclosing a reflective and graceful Andante. The opening of the work swiftly crescendos to a climax, before allowing the soloist to engage in humorous dialogues with the orchestra. Syncopation and sharp delineations of sections demonstrate an eclectic style. The first movement ends with a typically Ibertian dynamic contrast.

Of particular interest in the slow movement are the subtle variations in phrases and piquant, unexpected cadences, which constantly refocus a listener's attention on the gradually expanding texture. The final movement, marked 'Allegro Scherzando', distractingly tumbles through a succession of ideas, with a dazzling display of virtuosity from the soloist.

James Martin

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No.4 in Bb major, Op.60 (1806)

- I. *Adagio – Allegro vivace*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegro vivace*
- IV. *Allegro ma non troppo*

Premiered in 1807, the Symphony No.4 sees Beethoven fully established in his so-called 'Middle Period'. It was written at the request of Count Franz von Oppersdorff, who enjoyed a performance of the young composer's Second Symphony so much that he immediately paid for another. The product of one of Beethoven's particularly creative summers, the summer of 1806, it received some of its greatest criticisms from Beethoven's successors, particularly Berlioz, who was enraptured by its third movement, and Schumann, who famously called it "a slender Greek maiden" between the "two Norse giants" that comprise the 3rd and 5th Symphonies. This classical rhetoric is, whilst apparently ridiculous, not entirely unjustified, given the work's rapidity and copious reference back to the classical masters of the previous century. A metamorphic work, it is capable of varying expressive intentions from performance to performance, perhaps more so than any other of Beethoven's symphonies. This is in no part due to its sense of wit, borrowed, presumably, from Haydn.

This is particularly evident in the opening movement, which begins in a ponderous, Bb minor tonality. This decidedly foreboding section seems to anticipate a work filled with Beethoven's characteristically calamitous or

tragic expressive intentions; it is therefore highly surprising when, at the crux of this passage, an eruption of a bright, major tonality catapults us into the first movement proper. Beethoven spells out his *modus operandi* for us in plain terms; though a slender and supple work, the symphony will by no means be a conventional or 'hack' work.

The second movement does not reduce or retreat from the grandeur of the preceding one; the springing rhythms and inclusion of tutti brass punctuate the melody of the string sections. Rather than allow the second movement to act as relief or rest, it instead evolves through its meandering route into a structure of greater complexity and depth than what has come before.

The third movement, ostensibly a minuet, in fact seems more aptly defined as a scherzo. Its eccentricity is evident in the juxtaposition of varied dynamics and the 'competitive' orchestration Beethoven often used to characterise his players, as various sections and instruments strive for dominance. The result of this is a mercurial and charming preparation for the finale, which almost seems to combine the characters of each movement into a thoroughly-light hearted end to the symphony.

James Martin



Gerry Cornelius

Gerry Cornelius was born in London and studied music and conducting at Durham University, the Royal Academy of Music and the State Conservatory of St Petersburg where he was in the class of Ilya Musin.

Since making his debut in the UK at the Almeida Opera Festival, he has gone on to conduct for many of the country's leading orchestras, ensembles, opera and ballet companies. These include recent appearances with English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, English National Ballet, BBC Concert Orchestra, Spitalfields Festival and The Opera Group. He also regularly conducts in Europe, Asia and America and has recently enjoyed revisiting the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Bochumer Symphoniker, RuhrTriennale Opera Festival, Klavierfestival Ruhr and New York City Ballet.

As well as mainstream opera, ballet and symphonic repertoire he is particularly in demand to conduct first performances of major new works. These include award-winning new operas and ensemble pieces by George Benjamin, Olga Neuwirth, Thomas Ades, Julian Anderson, Judith Weir, Richard Causton, Colin Matthews, Errollyn Wallen, Edward Rushton, Julian Philips and Elena Langer. He has recently worked with ensembles including musikFabrik Cologne, House of Bedlam and London Sinfonietta and for Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Bregenz Festspiele and Festival d'Automne Paris.

In education he has been a visiting conductor and tutor at the University of London - Goldsmiths, English National Opera Studio, The Royal College and Royal Academy of Music – the latter of which has just elected him an Associate. He was the Associate Conductor for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and recently conducted Music Mix concerts for children with the BBC Concert Orchestra as well as large scale community projects for WNO Max Department and Spitalfields Festival.

Recent performances include his debut for English National Opera in the world premiere of Tansy Davies' *Between Worlds*, the British premiere of Olga Neuwirth's *American Lulu* for the Opera Group at the Edinburgh Festival, Bregenz Festival and at the London Young Vic, the world premiere of Catherine Kontz's *Neige* in Luxemburg, performances of *Swan Lake* and *Romeo and Juliet* with English National Ballet at the Royal Albert Hall and *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Nutcracker* for the Hong Kong Ballet and concerts in Cambridge, Blackheath Halls, for the LPO in London and London Sinfonietta at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Rosalind Ridout

CUMS Concerto Competition 2015 prize-winner

A music finalist at the University of Cambridge, Rosalind started playing the flute when she was 7. After playing in local youth orchestras and at school, she went on to study Flute Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for a year. This was sandwiched between years working in a primary school in North London and as an Au Pair in Paris. While at GSMD she learnt with Philippa Davies, with whom she continues to study. Rosalind is looking forward to taking up a scholarship to study at postgraduate level at the Royal Northern College of Music next year with Laura Jellicoe, and has been elected to be RNCM's UK Postgraduate ABRSM scholar for 2016-2017.



Rosalind has performed with a number of ensembles in Cambridge. She has been the principal flautist of CUMS Symphony Orchestra and CUCO and, through her passionate advocacy of contemporary music, has performed with The New Music Ensemble and alongside the Britten Sinfonia. She particularly enjoys working with composers, and was fortunate enough to work with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, playing as part of the Cambridge Festival celebrating his life and work. As a soloist, Rosalind has performed with Cambridge University Wind Orchestra, and was a winner of the CUMS Concerto Competition. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Gerry Cornelius and Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra in this performance of Ibert's Flute Concerto.

Rosalind is deeply committed to musical outreach and has been involved with many projects for a number of years. She is the President of Sing Inside, a society which runs singing workshops in prisons local to Cambridge, and sees the power of music uniting people and breaking down barriers. Aside from her musical commitments, she enjoys walking (and talking about) her beloved chocolate Labrador, has recently taken up Krav Maga, and has embarked on a 'Curry Adventure', reflecting her enthusiasm for Indian cuisine.



Chris Mortlock

CUMS Composer in Residence 2015-2016

Chris Mortlock is a composer and educator based in Surrey. He currently works at St John's School, Leatherhead where he is the Composer in Residence, writing and arranging music for a variety of school ensembles, and a teacher of academic music.

Chris left Cambridge University in 2014 with a Distinction in his M.Phil in Music where he was also awarded the Arthur Bliss Prize for Composition. Whilst at Cambridge, he was the co-chair of the Cambridge New Music Ensemble and a member of the Robinson College Chapel Choir. He has been taught by Martin Butler and Richard Causton, and now continues his studies with Tarik O'Regan.

His current position as CUMS Composer in Residence has led to commissions from the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra and the Cambridge University Chamber Choir; the latter work to be included in the Shakespeare 400 Festival.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

FLUTE

Jack Mainwaring, *CHU*
Jenny Whitby, *PEM*

OBOE

Pip Elmer, *EM*
Annabel Green, *T*

CLARINET

Helen McKeown, *CC*
Daniel Malz, *T*

BASSOON

Freddie Brewer, *F*
John Cremin, *PET*

HORN

James Liley, *DAR*
Tom Archer, *K*

TRUMPET

Katie Lodge, *EM*
Joe Penaliggon, *CL*

TIMPANI

Robin Otter, *DOW*

VIOLIN I

Stephanie Childress, *JN*
Aditya Chander, *M*
Ziruo Zhang, *HH*
Kieran Reed, *SE*
Emma Werner, *CAI*
Clare Rees-Zimmerman, *T*
James Downs, *W*
Peter Grishin, *Q*

VIOLIN II

Josh Michaels, *TH*
Stella Hadjineophytou, *EM*
Eleanor Thompson, *SE*
Amelia Drew, *CAI*
Sacha Lee, *JE*
Grace Catherine Greiner, *CL*

VIOLA

Hannah Gardiner, *K*
Dorothy Hoskins, *JE*
Konrad Viebahn, *T*
Konrad Bucher, *G*

CELLO

Ben Michaels, *CL*
Christopher Hedges, *G*
Linden Ralph, *T*
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Myles Nadarajah, *PET*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS) is one of the oldest and most distinguished university music societies in the world. It offers a world-class musical education for members of the University and local residents, nurturing the great musicians of the future and providing performing opportunities for over 500 Cambridge musicians every year.

The Society has played a pivotal role in British musical life for almost 170 years. It has educated such luminaries as Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Edward Gardner, Christopher Hogwood and Robin Ticciati, has given world or UK premieres of works by Brahms, Holloway, Lutoslawski, Maxwell Davies, Rutter, Saxton and Vaughan Williams, and has given successive generations of Cambridge musicians the experience of visiting conductors and soloists including Britten, Dvořák, Kodály, Menuhin and Tchaikovsky. Since the 1870s, CUMS has enjoyed the leadership of several of Britain's finest musicians, including Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir David Willcocks, Sir Philip Ledger, and, from 1983 to 2009, Stephen Cleobury.

In 2009 Stephen Cleobury assumed a new role as Principal Conductor of the CUMS Chorus, and Sir Roger Norrington was appointed as Principal Guest Conductor. Martin Yates, 'one of the most exciting and versatile British conductors of his generation' in

the words of *The Times*, joined the team as Principal Conductor of the CUMS Symphony Orchestra; and a Great Conductors series was launched with the objective of exposing CUMS members to a succession of world-class visiting conductors.

In February 2010 CUMS entered another new phase of its development when it merged with the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra and Cambridge University Music Club. In October 2010 the Society launched the Cambridge University Lunchtime Concerts — a new series of weekly chamber recitals at West Road Concert Hall showcasing the University's finest musical talent. In 2011 it merged with the Cambridge University Chamber Choir, which is directed by Martin Ennis and David Lowe.

CUMS continues to provide opportunities for the University's finest student soloists and conductors by awarding conducting scholarships and concerto prizes, and it actively encourages new music by running a composition competition and premiering at least one new work each year. Recent highlights have included Wagner's *Parsifal* (Act III) conducted by Sir Mark Elder, a recording of *The Epic of Everest's* original score for the British Film Institute, a concert of Haydn and Mendelssohn at Kings Place, London conducted by Sir Roger Norrington and Act One of Verdi's *Otello* conducted by Richard Farnes.



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