

Total performance time: approximately 60', with no interval

## Pelléas Ensemble II

**Henry Roberts** flute, alto flute

**Luba Tunnicliffe** viola / violin

**Oliver Wass** harp

### **Jean-Baptiste Lully** (1632–1687)

Selections from Trios de la Chambre du Roi,  
LWV 35 10'

1. *Symphonie*
2. *Sarabande*
40. *Allemande*
3. *Menuet*
12. *Ah quand reviendra t'il*
47. *Chaconne*

### **Anna Clyne** (b.1980)

Beware Of (2007) 7'

### **John Dowland** (1563–1623)

arr. Pelléas Ensemble

In darkness let me dwell (1610)  
If my complaints could passions move (1597) 6'

### **Henry Purcell** (1659–1695)

Fantasia Upon One Note (1680) 4'

### **Ethel Smyth** (1858–1944)

Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin (1928) 8'

### **Claude Debussy** (1862–1918)

Sonata for flute, viola and harp (1915) 16'

- i. *Pastorale. Lento, dolce rubato*
- ii. *Interlude. Tempo di menuetto*
- iii. *Finale. Allegro moderato ma risoluto*

### **The Pelléas Ensemble** are Britten

Pears Young Artists for 2022–23 and are participants on Chamber Music in Residence at Snape Maltings.

The Pelléas Ensemble have made a name for themselves through their intimate, honest music-making and ambitious programming, and are regularly praised for their compelling performance and immediate connection with the audience. They have won awards from the Royal Philharmonic Society, the Royal Overseas League and the Tillett Trust, and performed extensively across the UK. Their critically acclaimed debut album, 'Nature and the Imagination', (Linn Records, 2021), presents a rich and expressive collection of repertoire spanning three centuries, and demonstrates the versatility of the ensemble.

Alongside creating their own arrangements of existing repertoire, the Pelléas Ensemble are dedicated to performing contemporary music, and have commissioned several new works. Misha Mullov-Abbado's 'Three Meditation Songs' was premiered at Wigmore Hall in 2016, and the ensemble collaborated with the Park Lane Group to commission Benjamin Graves' 'Scherzo', which features on their album.

### **Lully: Trios de la Chambre du Roi**

The King's Bedchamber was a central feature of every royal palace in 17th-century France. Ceremonies were conducted there, laws passed and audiences granted. While the rest of Europe venerated the throne, French royal authority was ultimately embodied in the bed itself. To be in charge of music in the bedchamber was one of the greatest honours available to a court composer and Lully, who was just 21 when he came to the attention of the young Louis XIV, rose steadily through the musical ranks at Versailles before obtaining the post shortly before his 30th birthday. These trios appeared as part of a large collection of pieces he created over the course of the next 25 years, although they remained unpublished until well after his death.

### **Anna Clyne: Beware Of**

Anna Clyne's music has been described as 'immediate, mystical and vibrant' (*New York Times*) – words that might have been written specifically for this short chamber work, in which Clyne blends the instruments with a tape featuring a poem written and read by her mother, Colleen. The work is built around a repeated four-note motif introduced by the harp, with flute and viola gradually providing disjointed punctuation, and the electronic tape helping to create an almost futuristic soundworld. Bursts of cascading notes are reminiscent of mini-explosions, but the music always returns to its regular, minimalist pattern and ends as abruptly as it began.

*Beware of beauty / Look beyond the fluttering wings  
Beyond the relentless display / Beyond the upheaval  
Wing flickerings evoke / As the beautiful one –  
In all guises – / Throws itself at you  
With stark deliberation*

### **Dowland: In darkness let me dwell**

#### **If my complaints could passions move**

The lute song had been highly regarded for centuries when John Dowland, the most prominent lutenist-composer of his day, made his contributions to this long, English tradition. In their original form, his songs treat the lute and voice as equal partners. These two works are typical of his tendency to melancholy: not for nothing was his personal motto 'semper Dowland, semper dolens' ('always Dowland, always doleful'). He published several song collections: this one appeared in 1610 in a set put together by his son, Robert:

*In darkness let me dwell, the ground shall sorrow be,  
The roof despair to bar all cheerful light from me,  
The walls of marble black that moist'ned still shall weep,  
My music hellish jarring sounds, to banish friendly sleep.  
Thus wedded to my woes, and bedded to my tomb,  
O, let me, living, living, die, till death do come.*

'If my complaints' comes from Dowland's first book of songs, which appeared in 1597. As was fashionable at

the time, it was based on a dance: a galliard in memory of Captain Digory Piper, a recently-deceased pirate.

*If my complaints could passions move,  
Or make Love see wherein I suffer wrong,  
My passions were enough to prove  
That my despairs had governed me too long.  
O Love, I live and die in thee;  
Thy grief in my deep sighs still speaks;  
Thy wounds do freshly bleed in me;  
My heart for thy unkindness breaks.  
Yet thou dost hope when I despair,  
And when I hope thou mak'st me hope in vain.  
Thou say'st thou canst my harms repair,  
Yet for redress thou let'st me still complain.*

### **Purcell: Fantasia Upon One Note**

This fantasia does exactly what its title promises. For the duration of the piece, one part sustains a single pitch while the others weave around it. The story goes that Purcell, who was just 21 at the time, had a friend who was unable to play the viol but who very much wanted to join in: the composer obliged by asking him simply to master one note.

### **Smyth: Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin**

'Bonny sweet Robin' was a popular Renaissance lament and here Smyth follows the example of her 16th-century predecessors, many of whom chose it as a basis for their own variations. It was one of her final works, written originally for flute, oboe and piano in the late 1920s, by which time she was suffering from increasingly severe deafness. Nonetheless, the variations sound remarkably fresh and modern for a composer almost in her 70s, whose formal musical training had finished almost half a century earlier.

### **Debussy: Sonata for flute, viola and harp**

1915 was a bleak year for Debussy. Not only was he profoundly affected by the war, his health was rapidly declining and he was facing a vicious and very public denunciation of his music at the hands of Saint-Saëns. Nonetheless, he persevered with a project to write six instrumental sonatas, although in the event, he completed just three before he died, including this one for flute, viola and harp. He dedicated the work to his wife and described the music as being neither melancholy nor joyful but possibly a combination of the two. 'I can't say whether one should laugh or cry,' he said. 'Maybe both at the same time?'

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