

as Pugnani, Martini, and others – when Kreisler admitted in 1935 that these attributions had been a hoax, some critics were indignant, though others accepted it as a joke. It is strange indeed that so many experts were misled by pieces of such striking musical personality. They continue to form a delightful corner of the violin repertoire.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Tom Pigott-Smith made his London Debut in October 2001 and was hailed as one of the rising stars of the new generation of young violinists. A Scholar at the Royal College of Music, he studied with Itzhak Rashkovsky Prof. Yfrah Neaman. While at the College Tom won many prizes, including: The Leonard Hirsch Prize (for technical accomplishment), the WH Reed Prize, and the Dove Prize. Prizes won outside the College include two major awards by the Ian Fleming Charitable Trust, A Martin Musical Scholarship, and an award from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. In 1999, a Martin Scholarship enabled Tom to attend The International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove where he returned on a Jerwood Scholarship to study with Lorand Fenyves. In April 2000 Tom was awarded the prestigious Emily English Award of £5,000 made to “the most outstanding violinist” heard by the Musicians’ Benevolent Fund panel during their week of auditions.

Tom has spent four summers studying in Israel at the Keshet Eilon Violin Mastercourse which gives unique opportunities to some of the world’s finest young violinists. Its patron is Shlomo Mintz with Ida Haendel as guest artist in residence. Tom led the Keshet Eilon Ensemble in their gala concert in Tel Aviv which was later broadcast in the US and Europe. He also performed Vivaldi’s Concerto for Four Violins with Ida Haendel at Christie’s, London in November 1999.

Tom continues to give recitals at home and abroad Future engagements include Mozart concertos at Frome, the Stratford Festival, concerti in St. Martin in the Fields, London, the Isle of White and Cheltenham, Halifax, the Bach double violin Concerto in Cyprus alongside Levon Chillingirian and a return to the Wigmore Hall.

Huw Watkins was born in Wales in 1976, studying at Chetham’s School of Music. He read Music at King’s College, Cambridge, studying composition with Robin Holloway and Alexander Goehr and piano with Peter Pettinger. He went on to complete an Mmus in composition at the Royal College of Music, where he studied with Julian Anderson.

Huw’s rapidly developing career means regular appearances as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the country. He was described in the Independent on Sunday as “a pianist of alert intelligence and a composer with something to say.” He has performed at the Cheltenham, Brighton and North Wales festivals, and has broadcast live on Radio 3.

His works have been performed to great acclaim by the Nash Ensemble under Martyn Brabbins, the Vellinger String Quartet and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Huw is currently writing a piano concerto for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

STOUR VALLEY ARTS & MUSIC

52nd Season: 2002-2003

Tom Pigott-Smith, Violin

Huw Watkins, Piano

Friday 31 January 2003, 8pm

Constable Hall, East Bergholt

Supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust

Violin Sonata in E minor, Opus 82

Edward Elgar
(1857 -1934)

Allegro ; Romance (Andante) ; Allegro non troppo

Havanaise, Opus 83

Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835 -1921)

Allegretto lusinghiero - Allegro - Tempo primo ; Allegretto - Allegro non troppo - Allegretto

Violin Sonata

Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

Allegro vivo ; Intermède (Fantasque et léger) ; Finale (Très animé)

I N T E R V A L

Violin Sonata

Leos Janaček
(1854 -1928)

Con moto ; Ballada ; Allegretto ; Adagio

Gypsy Caprice and Syncopation

Fritz Kreisler
(1875 -1962)



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PROGRAMME NOTES

Elgar completed his Violin Sonata at Brinkwells, his Sussex cottage, in the late summer of 1918. His wife Alice's diary records "E. writing wonderful new music, different from anything else of his". W.H. (Billy) Reed, leader of the LSO, was staying at the time ("While I was there he finished the first movement and the opening section of the finale. We used to play up to the blank page. Then he would say: 'And now what?'- and we would go out to explore the wood or fish in the River Arun"). The first movement contrasts two themes, one passionate, with a distinctive rising three-note gesture, which is inverted in the second, more gentle melody. The Romance has a unique, whimsical aura. Elgar described it to Alice Wortley, who had recently broken a leg, as "a fantastic, curious movement with a very expressive middle section: a melody for the violin - they say it is as good as or better than anything I have done in the expressive way: this I wrote just after your telegram about the accident came". He characterised the final, major-key movement as "very broad and soothing, like the last movement of the 2nd Symphony". An optimistically rising shape contrasts with energetic, fanfare-like idea, whose dotted rhythm is extensively developed. A striking passage of eerie sliding semitones follows, before the first theme resumes to launch the development section. The work is rounded off with a stirring coda. Elgar often included personal allusions in his music: the reminiscence of the slow movement just before the finale's conclusion is a tribute to the memory of Marie Joshua, a friend who had recently died and to whom the sonata is dedicated.

Saint-Saëns' music is frequently coloured by the French musical manners of his time: besides the expected sonatas, symphonies and concertos deriving from the Viennese classical tradition in which he had been brought up, his output includes salon music, operas, and exotic pieces in abundance. In 1863 he had employed Spanish rhythms in his *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* to display the talents of the famous violinist Pablo de Sarasate. He went down the same avenue once more in the *Havanaise* of 1887. Listening to this music, it's hard to imagine that Saint-Saëns conceived it whilst watching a crackling fire on a cold, rainy night. The oft-occurring melodic leaps of a seventh impart a wistful, yearning mood to the sultry atmosphere.

Debussy's stylistic innovations opened up the musical path from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. His interest in colour and texture, allied to his playing down of repetition and large-scale thematic development suggested new approaches to musical architecture. It may have been from the Russians that he acquired his taste for ancient and oriental modes and for vivid colorations, as well as a certain disdain for academic rules: he wrote that, in Musorgsky, 'form is built up by means of a succession of little touches mysteriously linked together'. So it is in his own Violin Sonata. The very opening undermines our perception of regular rhythm with its unpredictable phrase-shapes. Even so, there are hints here of neo-classicism – a lyrical the first theme is contrasted with a more detached and leaping second. There is, too, a recapitulation, though it is substantially recomposed, and contains an entirely new second theme. The relatively simple structure of the first movement may have been intended to throw into relief the rather more recondite manner of the second, which has a spiky

character reminiscent of Stravinsky (who had played his *Rite of Spring* with Debussy in piano duet before its publication). The finale contains hints of rondo, whilst also making passing references to both of the preceding movements in its many and varied episodes. The sonata was completed in March 1917, at which time Debussy was seriously debilitated by cancer. He made his last concert appearance to give its first performance with Gaston Poulet at St Jean-de-Luz in the following September. He died in March 1918 during the German bombardment of Paris.

From his youth, **Janaček** was active as a conductor, music promoter, and teacher. He also collected and published folk songs and dances of his native Moravia, for which he wrote original arrangements, and composed a range of valuable studies, such as the Lachian Dances. An interest in ethnography led him to study popular speech, whose patterns he re-invented in musical terms and which underlie the character of his terse, vibrant melodic and rhythmic invention. A dedicated Czech nationalist, Janaček drafted his violin sonata while the Moravian people awaited the arrival of the liberating Russian forces at the beginning of World War I. He spent seven years intermittently revising the sonata, which was finally completed in 1921. It exudes an atmosphere of suspense. The first movement, in which some hear a reflection of the concerns of war, alternates an impassioned violin declamation, accompanied by an agitated figure in the piano, with a somewhat more plaintive theme. The *Ballada*, the only movement to remain unchanged in the composer's extensive revisions, is a lilting, pastoral movement that develops fluidly through the exchange of brief motifs between the two instruments. In the three-part *Allegretto*, the piano articulates a folk-like melody over a left-hand trill as the violin interjects descending scales; the violin then plays a melodious passage before the return of the opening material. The *Adagio* opens with passages marked "ferocious" in the violin. Near its conclusion, the violin sings a majestic, chorale-like theme over a high trill in the piano to depict, in the composer's words, "the Russian armies entering Hungary."

Seven-year-old Fritz **Kreisler** was the youngest child ever to enter the Konservatorium of the Viennese Musikverein. He gave his first performance at nine and won the gold medal when he was ten. A further two years were spent at the Paris Conservatoire, which Kreisler left in 1887, sharing the *premier prix* with four others each of whom was ten years his senior. From the age of twelve he had no further violin instruction. There followed several years during which the violin was hardly touched – high school, pre-medical school, military service. When he decided on a musical career, however, his technique quickly returned, and there were successful solo appearances in Berlin, Vienna, and London. He was the dedicatee of Elgar's concerto, of which he gave the first performance in 1910 with the composer conducting. His career continued until 1949, divided between Europe and New York. Reputedly, he practised little, yet all commentators testify to the effortless perfection of his playing, noting its elegant bowing, graceful phrasing, vitality of rhythm, and above all, a tone of indescribable sweetness and expressiveness. He was also a gifted composer, whose output includes a string quartet, an operetta, cadenzas for concertos, and dozens of shorter pieces. Some of these were at first attributed to 18th century composers such

