

# The Winter Solstice Concert

Sunday 22 December 2002

London

**Claire Wilkins, cello**  
**Dan Neville, viola and violin**  
**Robert Bekkers, guitar**  
**Anne Ku, piano**

## 1st movement

Piano trio in G major, Op. 1 No. 2, <i>Adagio and Allegro vivace</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven
Sonata in e minor for cello and guitar, <i>Largo and Allegro</i>	Antonio Vivaldi
Romanze Op. 85 arranged for viola and piano	Max Bruch
Lost is My Quiet arranged for voice and solo guitar by R. Bekkers	Henry Purcell
Fascinating Rhythm for voice and piano	George Gershwin
<i>Guest singers: Catherine Fish and Allan Fish</i>	

## 2nd movement

*“Siciliennes, and in remembrance”*

Sicilienne for violin and piano	Maria Theresia von Paradis
Sicilienne Op. 78 for cello and piano	Gabriel Fauré
Sicilienne from Suite Française, arranged for two guitars by R. Bekkers	Francis Poulenc
Thais Meditation arranged for violin and guitar by R. Bekkers	Jules Massenet
Two Play for viola and piano	Robert Bekkers
Theme from Schindler’s List for violin and piano	John Williams
Canon in D arranged by Daniel Dorff for violin, cello, piano	Johann Pachelbel

## 3rd movement

*“Let’s dance and be merry”*

Chinese Medley arranged for piano solo	Anne Ku
Pièce en forme de habanera arranged for cello and piano	Maurice Ravel
Roumanian Folk Dances arranged for cello and piano	Béla Bartók
“Tango” from Trio Nr. 2 for piano, violin, and cello	Heleen Verleur
Badinerie from Suite No. 2 arr. viola, cello, piano, and solo guitar by R. Bekkers	J.S. Bach
Christmas Medley for viola, cello, guitar, and piano	Robert Bekkers

## ***The performers***

### **Claire Wilkins, cello**

Born in St. Andrews, Scotland, Claire Wilkins studied the cello with Anna Shuttleworth of the Royal College of Music, gaining an ALCM diploma at the age of 16. She has performed solos in London at St John Smith's Square and has played in orchestras all over the UK and in Paris and Hamburg.

Claire worked for EMI Classics for three years, promoting artists such as Sir Simon Rattle and Nigel Kennedy as well as putting together compilation discs of "greats" such as Maria Callas and Jacqueline Du Pré. She now works as a freelance public relations consultant for local councils and arts organisations.

### **Dan Neville, viola and violin**

Dan Neville started playing the violin at the age of four and had lessons with Howard Davis from the Albarni String Quartet. In his early teens, he migrated to the viola and played with the National Youth Orchestra for two years.

Dan is a full-time peripatetic violin and viola teacher. He holds a MA in Sound Engineering and has made freelance recordings for BBC Radio 3 and numerous London ensembles. He also conducts the London Pharmaceutical Chamber Orchestra and has performed in France, Spain and Scandinavia.

### **Robert Bekkers, guitar**

After a diploma in electronics, Robert Bekkers attended the Conservatory of Maastricht where he obtained his teaching and performance degrees in classical guitar.

Robert is versatile in classical, flamenco, jazz and other styles. While accompanying flamenco dance classes, Robert formed the group "IMPETU", mixing flamenco and classical music. He has also played with the group Serenata Mexicana, toured with the Amstel Guitar Quartet and performed with the internationally known flute player Berdien Stenberg. In recent years, Robert has focussed on performing his own compositions and arrangements in a variety of settings both as a soloist and with the violinist Mira Roos in Duo Magenta. In addition to a demanding performance schedule, Robert has more than sixty guitar students in the Netherlands.

### **Anne Ku, piano**

Born in Brunei of Chinese parents, Anne Ku began taking piano lessons at age eight in Okinawa. Her love of sightreading brought her a succession of roles as page turner, choir accompanist, chief organist, musical production rehearsal pianist, contract party pianist, band keyboardist, and piano teacher all as a teenager.

In 2001, Anne started a programme of home concerts in London to introduce her music to local audiences. In 2002, she released her first CD "In Pursuit of Flexibility" containing 80 minutes of her original piano solo compositions and arrangements. She pursues "flexibility" as a cocktail pianist, piano teacher, freelance writer, webmaster, and author of a forthcoming book.

analyticalQ presents home concerts in London  
<http://www.analyticalQ.com/music/concerts/london/021222.htm>

## **About the music**

Alphabetically by composer

### **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

The orchestral suites of Bach all use traditional French dances. (Bach wrote several French suites and several English suites for keyboard.) In the second orchestral suite (B minor), the badinerie is the last dance. The *badinerie* is a relatively rare dance movement, and this is by far the best-known example of this genre. It rarely appears outside 18th-century suites, and is generally defined merely as a "dancelike piece of jocose character."

### **Béla Bartók (1881 - 1945)**

Peter Bates writes of Bartók's earlier works, including the *six Roumanian Folk Dances*, originally composed for piano solo: "Often when we hear our favourite composers' early works, it is like going through their laundry drawer. We're embarrassed or amused at what we find, as well as relieved we seldom see it shown in public. With these Bartók's solo piano works, most written before he was forty, the seams and rents are readily visible. But if we listen closely enough, we find pieces of remarkable strength and flexibility. Along with the callow experiments, there are flashes of innovation."

### **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1820)**

The piano trios span most of Beethoven's professional life, from his very first publication, a set of three trios published as op. 1 in 1795, to the popular "Kakadu" Variations, op. 121a, published in 1824. Altogether, Beethoven wrote nine works for piano trio that were published during his lifetime.

### **Max Bruch (1838 – 1920)**

Bruch was one of Germany's most important musical personalities of the Brahmsian era. The most interesting element in Bruch's music is that behind its formal perfection and even present optimistic nature, there was a quite selfish and egocentric personality only too eager to argue; an ability which cost him friendships with many of his contemporaries.

The Romanze in F Major, op. 85 was written around 1912 for viola and orchestra and is a wonderful representation of Bruch's writing in his later years. In the agitated though melodic outburst at the beginning of the second section, Bruch shows himself as a master of atmospheric music and as a musician who remained loyal to his romantic origins even when both times and musical style had changed. (Liza Grossman)

### **Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)**

Fauré was nicknamed the 'The Cat' by his friends who thought he had feline qualities in the casual way he moved and the impression he gave. Fauré's innate sense of delicacy and charm also won him many friends during his life. (A charm that can be heard in his music as well.) In 1893 Fauré wrote incidental music for a production of Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. The *Sicilienne* for this production was later used again in incidental music for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and later still won popularity in a variety of arrangements, including the composer's own orchestral version and arrangement for violin or cello and piano.

### **George Gershwin (1898-1937)**

Gershwin's family wasn't particularly musical and he had no access to a piano at home until he was about twelve. Before that he recalled being captivated by hearing Rubinstein's *Melody in F* on a player-piano in the street. But once he discovered the piano for himself, it focused his entire musical orientation. *Fascinating Rhythm* from *Lady be Good* (1924) is a dance number for Fred and Adèle Astaire, where Gershwin himself made a suggestion for their exit steps at the end of the number. What the composer called the tune's 'misplaced accents' come from ragtime.

### **Jules Massenet (1842-1912)**

Massenet was the most prominent French composer of the late nineteenth century. *Thais*, based upon Anatole France's 1889 novel about a courtesan-turned-saint in 4th century Egypt, combines passion and religion. Set in Coptic Egypt, the opera was groundbreaking in its departure from metric rhyme in the text. *The Meditation* is the entracte between acts 2 and 3 represents the spiritual awakening of Thais.

**Johann Pachelbel (1653 – 1706)**

Pachelbel was one of the great organist-composers of his day, a man who could count Bach's teacher among his pupils. His life was tinged with tragedy and hardship - his first wife died with her baby son in the plague of 1683, and he had to flee from the French invasion of Stuttgart in 1692 - but he settled in Nuremberg and his second marriage produced seven children, two of whom became musicians, one an instrument maker and one a painter. His lilting *Canon in D*, which was written in or around 1680, is a throwaway little piece by comparison to his big sacred works, but its charming grace has made it a favourite filler of compilation CDs.

You might have heard his Canon in the following places: films: *Father of the Bride*; *Ordinary People*; TV ads for: *Threshers Wines*; *Pure New Wool*, *British Gas*; *Coolio* rap single in 1997; 1968 Aphrodite's Child single *Rain and Tears*; in lots of shopping malls and other muzak palaces; at *Lady Diana's Funeral*; and the *Ambrosia* advert. (Ray Hutchings)

**Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759 – 1824)**

Maria Theresia von Paradis was the blind daughter of Imperial Court Secretary of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, after whom she was named. She was a pupil of Antonio Salieri and was a celebrated concert pianist in her day. Both Mozart and Salieri dedicated piano concertos to her. In later years she founded a musical conservatory for handicapped persons in Vienna. Few of her compositions have survived, and the original of the "*Sicilienne*" has not come to light. Scholars are divided as to how much (if any) von Paradis actually wrote and how much Samuel Dushkin, a violinist who used to do a lot of violin/piano duets touring with Igor Stravinsky, was responsible for. (John Speller)

**Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1922)**

Poulenc typifies in many ways the characteristic of being French and being in the 20th century. His music changes mood so fast that it cannot but hold your attention. His talent is huge and output profusely varied, his style cheekily indescribable. Above all, this self-taught composer was an individual - and one who delighted in fun (but could also be deadly serious). The *Suite Française* is scored for two each of oboes, bassoons and trumpets, plus three trombones, one percussionist - and a harpsichord! Ha, in Poulenc terms, that means: "Let's have some fun!" Written as yet another homage to French dance forms, the seven movements describe their music. (Chia Han-Leon)

**Henry Purcell (1659-1695)**

The author of the lyrics to "Lost is My Quiet" is not known. The song was written as a duet for high and low voice.

*Lost is my quiet for ever,  
Lost is life's happiest part;  
Lost all my tender endeavours,  
To touch an insensible heart.*

*But tho' my Despair is past curing,  
And much undeserv'd is my fate,  
I'll show by a patient enduring  
My love is unmov'd as her hate.*

**Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

Ravel is sometimes seen as a remote, detached and unemotional man - however much his music may say otherwise to his admirers. His life was not particularly eventful and does not provide ready insights into his nature. The short piece for low voice and piano was written in March 1907, and was commissioned by A.-L. Hettich as one of a series of studies by contemporary composers for use in his voice classes at the Conservatoire. It was subsequently arranged in various instrumental versions, including one for violin and piano, under the title *Pièce en forme de habanera*. It was composed at about the same time that Ravel was working on two other major works with a Spanish background.

**Heleen Verleur (b. 1964)**

A graduate of the Conservatory of Hilversum, Heleen Verleur lives in Amsterdam with her husband Jan and newborn twin girls Gaia and Rosa. After teaching children how to compose and writing short pieces for them, Heleen turned to writing serious classical work for piano solo, violin/piano, voice/piano, trios, and quintets. She has regular performances with a violinist as well as with a piano trio (violin, cello and piano). The *Tango from Trio number 2* was first performed and aired on Dutch radio in celebration of the wedding of the Dutch prince to his Argentine bride in Spring 2001.

**Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)**

Among Vivaldi's cello sonatas, the *fifth in e minor* seems to be the best-known. Vivaldi wrote most of his works for the girls residing at the Ospedale della Pietà orphanage in Venice, where he was employed in various musical capacities. The Sonatas for Cello and Continuo were apparently also composed for the young musicians there, whose considerable instrumental skills can be inferred from the rigors of these demanding compositions. The improvisation of the accompaniment based on the written figured bass line may just as well have been executed by either harp or lute as by the more traditional harpsichord or organ.

**John Williams (b. 1932)**

*Schindler's List* is in some ways barely recognisable as John Williams. The heart breaking simplicity of the melody sensitively rendered on solo violin with a chamber orchestra backing (strings and woodwind) conveys musically everything Spielberg set out to achieve in his film. This is touching music without sentiment, possibly one of the most difficult things of all. The main theme is used as a starting block for many of the other cues. It is sometimes quoted, but often inverted and adjusted in an almost theme and variations type way.