

An entertaining and informal concert by the
Barnet Chamber Music Club

Dum spiro, spero

Sunday 8th July 2012
St. Stephen's Church
Bells Hill, Barnet
EN5 2UR
8.00pm



Admission is free!

Programme

Trio sonata number 5 in F– J. D. Zelenka

*Malcolm Messiter and Christopher Hooker oboes, John McDougall bassoon, Kim Murphy
contra bassoon, Katy Miller harpsichord*

Quartet number 1 for winds – Rossini

Jennifer Stinton flute, Helen Paskins clarinet, David Horwich horn, John McDougall bassoon

----- Interval -----

“Summer Music” for wind quintet – Samuel Barber

*Jennifer Stinton flute, Christopher oboe, Helen Paskins clarinet, David Horwich horn, John
McDougall bassoon*

Overture to Light Cavalry – Franz von Suppé (arr. Messiter)

*Jennifer Stinton flute, Malcolm Messiter and Christopher Hooker oboes and cor anglais, Helen
Paskins clarinet, David Horwich horn, John McDougall bassoon, Kim Murphy Contra bassoon,
Dietrich Bethge cello, Katy Miller harpsichord*

The next concert will be at 8.00 P.M. on Sunday August 5th 2012
Please see www.messiter.com for details.

Programme notes

From Internet research

Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745) was born in a small Bohemian village, studied in Prague, and had arrived in Dresden by 1712, where his skill as a contrabassist earned him a position with the Cappella Polacca. Zelenka's six extraordinarily vivid and exotic sonatas for oboes, bassoon, and continuo (ZWV181) can be viewed as derivative of the Italian and Austrian "church sonatas" with their ingenious and sophisticated use of imitative and fugal writing. They date from around 1720, but little is known of their circumstances or purpose. An autograph score of all six sonatas can be found in the Dresden State Library, along with performing parts for three of them written out by Zelenka and a copyist. The writing for oboes and bassoon is among the most difficult ever composed, indicating that the sonatas were intended for the virtuosi of the Cappella Polacca. Richter would almost certainly have been one of the oboists but the identity of the other oboist and the superhuman bassoonist are unknown.

Rossini (1792 – 1868) once described the quartets he wrote in three days when he was a 12-year-old as "dreadful". They're not. Lightweight? Yes. Charming? Yes. Saccharine? No. Great music? No. But as guilty pleasures go they're near the top of the pile, especially in this transcription for wind quartet--flute, clarinet, horn, and bassoon--where the timbral variety and piquant sound of the instruments lends a welcome edge to the works. All six quartets reveal a precocious melodic imagination; they're teeming with simple melodies that stick in the memory. Some movements anticipate the operatic arias. All six are brightly sunlit; this is music with nary a cloud in the sky. Most of the pleasure derived from these pieces comes from the sheer beauty of the sound of the instruments. The first five quartets follow similar structures--a longish first movement at a moderately fast tempo followed by brief Andante and Allegretto or Rondo movements. The two-movement Quartet No. 6 diverges from this, opening with a short Andante followed by a theme and variations movement that gives each of the instruments a chance to shine. The sound is excellent, timbres true and each instrument clearly caught whether alone or in ensemble.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)'s Summer Music originated with a commission – one of the most unusual in American music. In 1953, Barber was asked by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit to compose a septet to mark the society's 10th anniversary season the following year. The music – for the unusual combination of three woodwinds, three strings and piano – was to be performed by the principal instrumentalists of the Detroit Symphony. Barber waived his usual fee, accepting instead the proceeds from audience contributions with the society guaranteeing \$2,000. As Barber recalled, "The idea was that if this caught on, music societies around the country would take up similar collections and use the funds to commission young local composers who needed experience and exposure." As things turned out, Barber was preoccupied with his opera *Vanessa*, and was unable to meet Detroit's timetable. In the summer of 1954, however, Barber heard a concert at Blue Hill, Maine, by the New York Woodwind Quintet. A number of leading composers – Elliott Carter, Irving Fine, Paul Hindemith, Jean Francaix, Gunther Schuller and Heitor Villa Lobos – had written music for the New Yorkers, and Barber now asked for their cooperation in fulfilling the Detroit commission.

Franz von Suppé (1819 – 1895)'s Light Cavalry Overture is an energetic and lively overture from the *Leichte Kavallerie*, an operetta. He composed many operettas and comedies, most of which have now become obsolete. However, his overtures continue to be played in many orchestras, as well as being found in movies, cartoons and advertisements. The Light Cavalry debuted in 1866 in Vienna. During this time, Austria was about to become part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The citizens of Vienna were fascinated by Hungary, the land of the Gypsies, and composers added eastern melodies and Hungarian characters in their operas, giving their music a distinct sound. In the Light Cavalry, heroic fanfares and eastern Hungarian melodies can be heard, making it a perfect overture to a grand adventure. The Overture starts off with a brilliant fanfare played by the oboes (or trumpets in the original), like a military reveille preparing soldiers for battle. Then at Allegro, the flute plays a theme of quick triplets, as the enemy soldiers stealthily approaching the battlefield. At Allegretto Brillante, the oboes play a galloping theme as the cavalry rides to battle, and the rest join in. Then, the music changes into a minor key as the battle starts and the cavalry charges. At the end of the first battle, soldiers and their general die, and the clarinet mourns the deaths in its cadenza. A solemn Hungarian melody (on cor anglais and then cello) starts at Andantino con moto, as the people of the country mourn its lost soldiers. Allegretto Brillante returns as the cavalry regroups for another charge, defeating the enemy and ending the overture in a triumphant victory.