



**The Society of Strange and  
Ancient Instruments**

**The Trumpet Marine Project**

**The Citadel  
14 July 2021 1.00 pm**

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**Online Premiere  
17 July 2021 1.00 pm**

Descente de Mars – Prologue de Thésée Air de Trompette – Allemande Menuet en Rondeau	<b>Jean-Baptiste Prin</b> (c. 1669–1742)
Eileen Aroon Scots Rant - A la Mode de France	<b>Traditional Irish</b> <b>John Playford</b> (c. 1623–1686)
Suite in G major <i>Preludio</i> <i>Musica</i> <i>Sarabanda</i> <i>Giga – Al Genio Turchesco</i>	<b>Nicola Matteis</b> (1650–1714)
Menuet Menuet Gigue Gigue	<b>Prin</b>
Young Terence McDonough Princess Royal (The Arethusa) Drops of Brandy	<b>Turlough O’Carolan</b> (1670–1738)
Janya <i>(first performance)</i>	<b>Liam Connery (b. 1995)</b>
Chaconne raportée	<b>Jean de Sainte-Colombe</b> (1640–1700)
Suite <i>from</i> The Tempest <i>Introduction</i> <i>Galliard</i> <i>Gavot</i> <i>Saraband</i> <i>Lilk</i>	<b>Matthew Locke</b> (1621–77)
Le Mirliton March Rondeau de Monsieur Prin	<b>Prin</b>

# The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments

**Emilia Benjamin** *trumpet marine, bass viol*

**Reiko Ichise** *trumpet marine, bass viol*

**Jean Kelly** *trumpet marine, harps*

**Clare Salaman** *director, trumpet marine, nyckelharpa*  
with

**Steven Player** *dancer, actor, musician*

## The Trumpet Marine Project

The trumpet marine, or tromba marina, can be over two metres tall. It has one long, thick playing string, which is supported by a foot-like bridge. When bowed vigorously, the vibrating string causes the bridge to tremble against the table of the instrument. This produces its trumpet-like sound. In fact, the trumpet marine is the only instrument designed to sound like another instrument, and its main use was as a trumpet substitute. Some trumpet marines also feature a host of sympathetic (resonating) strings. Melodies are produced by touching the harmonic nodes of the playing string with the thumb. The trumpet marine can produce the most extraordinary sounds, ranging from its characteristic, loud trumpet-like buzz to a soft and fuzzy fluty tone. It's also beautiful to look at. So why did this majestic instrument become obsolete?

Iconographic evidence dates back to the twelfth century. At that time, the trumpet marine was simpler. It was also smaller and was often held horizontally or vertically in front of the player, and it regularly appeared as a member of mixed instrumental ensembles.

By the seventeenth century the trumpet marine had grown in size, towering above all but the tallest humans. Many surviving instruments were found in convents. It seems that trumpet marines were a staple of the Northern European nun's musical instrument collection. Maybe wind instruments were off-limits to nuns, or perhaps the trumpet was the domain of the professional soldier. Whatever the reason, the sound was needed in liturgical works and ceremonial music and the trumpet marine provided a solution.

As the seventeenth century wore on, the trumpet marine began to appear in secular public music-making. The late seventeenth-century virtuoso, Jean-Baptiste Prin made a career of it, entertaining French and English audiences with his huge

collection of trumpet marines and producing a treatise on how to play the instrument. His father also played the instrument and famously amused Pepys on 24 October 1667:

‘It doth so far out-do a Trumpet as nothing more, and he doth play anything very true and it is most remarkable; and at first was a mystery to me that I should hear a whole concert of chords together at the end of the pause... [this was the effect of the sympathetic strings] And [these instruments] would make an excellent consort, two or three of them, better than trumpets can ever do because of their want of compass.’

And sure enough, in 1674, the *London Gazette* advertised the following concert:

‘A Rare Concert of four Trumpets Marine, never heard before in England! If any persons desire to come and hear it, they may repair to the Fleece Tavern, near St James’s about two of the clock in the afternoon, every day in the week, except Sundays. Every concert shall continue an hour and so begin again.’

It is this Fleece Tavern performance that we are re-imagining today. For your pleasure we aim to conjure the curious sights and compelling sounds of late seventeenth-century England with old works for trumpet marine ensemble and other combinations of exotic musical instruments. We will also present a new work by Liam Connery, commissioned by NCEM, that reveals the instrument in new and exploratory ways, introducing the trumpet marine to the twenty-first century. Liam introduces his piece on the following page. We hope that a revival of this glorious instrument might establish it in the heart of today’s composers and audiences.

Reviving the trumpet marine is an important piece in the jigsaw of reconstructing the more eccentric instruments of years gone by, like the viola bastarda, keyed fiddle, bray harp and hurdy gurdy. Its history reveals a general fascination for the obscure and curious no different from that which is held by many people today and it provides further proof that music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries included sounds that seem bizarre to modern ears – buzzes, resonating strings, and in the case of the tromba marina, notes that don’t conform to the expectations of harmonic structure in music.

The harmonics on the trumpet marine result in an untempered scale that sounds idiosyncratic to the modern ear. Perhaps it is this feature in particular that provides the answer to our question about the tromba marina’s obsolescence – the

instrument simply didn't 'fit' with most other eighteenth-century instruments and the harmonic constraints of late eighteenth-century music. In fact, maybe it only survived as long as it did because of its magical sonic and visual qualities. However, times have changed and maybe, just maybe, the trumpet marine will have its day again.

© Clare Salaman

## **Janya**

*(commissioned by the National Centre for Early Music;  
first performance)*

**Liam Connery**

*Conversations with Clare around a new commission for SSAI's Trumpet Marine Project started in 2018 with the NCEM wanting to engage the imagination of the ever-growing list of composers who had taken part in its annual composition award. The response was very encouraging, and we were delighted to see how many young composers were able to unite their artistic imagination with practicalities of playing these fabulous instruments from the past. In the end, Liam's piece caught the group's imagination and we are delighted that we can – finally – hear the premiere of this new piece in public – a couple of years later than intended! Delma Tomlin*

Given the various fascinating aspects of the trumpet marine, it took a while to think of the correct form for a piece. I decided to look towards the sound of Indian classical music, as the sympathetic strings of the instrument very much reminded me of a sitar's natural resonances. Beyond that, the way in which one can run between harmonics and generate passing melody notes can create a very interesting sonority, and the sliding embellishments of Indian music also sprang to mind here. Furthermore, the natural harmonics giving their non-equal-tempered sonic quality made me think of raga scales and their interesting combinations. I began by creating a scale which emphasises those particular harmonics. The title 'Janya' comes from the Carnatic music tradition of southern India, where a janya raga is a scale which has been developed from one of the melakarta or fundamental ragas. The word itself means 'derived', and I want the whole piece to feel like it blossoms out of, or is derived from, this one simple idea: a scale system taken from the harmonic series.

© Liam Connery

**The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments** was founded in 2010 by Clare Salaman to explore a musical repertoire that ranges from folk songs and earthy dances to high art music from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, and newly composed pieces.

The Society takes its inspiration from a group of musicians called La Société des Instruments Anciens who gave a series of performances of ‘easy listening’ baroque music in Paris in the 1900s. At the time, their instruments – hurdy gurdy, viola d’amore, viola da gamba and harpsichord – were considered wildly exotic, and audiences were enthralled by the group’s fresh, innovative presentation that injected new life into familiar pieces. The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments’ repertoire extends beyond that of the Société to include Medieval, Renaissance and new music, but the aim is still to enchant listeners with the unexpected sounds and sights of their instruments. The members of The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments are leaders in the fields of traditional and historically informed performance with many years of performing and recording experience.

The group has performed numerous concerts, released three acclaimed CDs and has been featured on BBC Radio 4’s *Midweek*, Radio 3’s *Early Music Show*, *In Tune* and *Sunday Breakfast Show*.

[strangeandancientinstruments.com](http://strangeandancientinstruments.com)      [claresalaman.com](http://claresalaman.com)



THE SOCIETY  
OF  
STRANGE AND ANCIENT INSTRUMENTS

The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments would like to express their thanks and gratitude for the financial support of Arts Council England and the many individual donors who have made this ambitious project possible

**Emilia Benjamin** *trumpet marine, viols*

Little did I know, when I began the violin as a five-year-old, that my journey through life via bowed string instruments would end with the single-stringed Trumpet Marine. I started adding to my skill set at university, where I studied History of Art but spent more time in the music department. From the violin it was a small step to the viola (people always need violas), and then, after seeing a concert of Dowland's *Lachrimae*, the heavenly sound of the five viols prompted me to take up the treble viol and join the university consort. I loved the instrument so much I even made one for myself in the workshop of a lute maker, which serves me trustily to this very day in the viol consort, Phantasm. Realising that it might be a good idea to actually earn money from doing what I loved most, I followed my degree by going to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, took up the bass viol, and emerged two years later blinking into the light. After quite a few years of orchestras, chamber groups and viol consorts, something possessed me to take up the lirone, which has 13 strings and has been the subject of many of my nightmares. However, it does sounds amazing, so it's worth it. And from the sublime to the ridiculous, my new venture, all on one string. How hard can it be, right?

**Reiko Ichise** *trumpet marine, viols*

I was born in a busy big city, Tokyo. I started copying my mother playing piano when I was in the kindergarten. I always loved music and I still do. After studying the piano in music school, I changed my course and took musicology at the music college in Tokyo. There I had to learnt two ancient musical instruments. Purely for my curiosity, I chose to learn ryuteki (Japanese ancient flute) and viola da gamba. The ryuteki was far too difficult and, somehow, I fell in love with the gamba. The crazy passion for gamba took me to London to study and I am still here, happily playing. I also work with talented young musicians at the Royal College of Music where I was once a student a long, long time ago. Unusual instruments have always fascinated me. Now I am privileged to play trumpet marine with such lovely musicians. I am a football fan and UFO believer.

**Jean Kelly** *trumpet marine, harps*

I grew up in Cork City, in a lively Irish household full of musical instruments. My parents and my three siblings are professional musicians; we used to call ourselves the 'Von Trapped' family. We attended folk, jazz and classical music concerts constantly. I was drawn to the harp as a versatile instrument on which I could play many different styles of music. I play a variety of harps and enjoy an eclectic and nomadic career – from playing Mozart concertos in posh concert halls with my classical flute and harp duo, to extemporising harp accompaniments to silent films,

or folk festivals on rainy, muddy days with my electric Celtic harp. I particularly enjoy early music concerts – for the freedom to improvise within a group and to extend beyond the printed notes, and also because I feel it is here that I can draw on all of my past musical influences.

**Steven Player** *dancer, actor, musician*

As a teenager, I never thought I would have a life that would involve performance, let alone dance. My only interest at school was art. I was fortunate to have an inspired art master whose mantra was ‘the eye perceives all’. I always think about what I see. I was also fortunate to have to wait for a bus home from school outside a guitar shop. Idly wandering in one day, I met the Spanish guitar virtuoso, proprietor and teacher who inspired me to play. At art school in Cornwall I danced to two-tone reggae and new wave punk and discovered the unspoken joy of sharing and expressing rhythm with an accomplice. After art school, by coincidence and with no plan ahead of me, I met a man who owned a shop that sold craft materials and, in a box, a little sheet music. When buying an arrangement for guitar of the *Lachrimae* Pavane of John Dowland, it transpired he also made musical instruments. He lent me a lute and so my interest in early music developed. With the winter country evenings to fill, I went with him and his wife to a Renaissance dance course. There I discovered pavaues, galliards, Italian balletti and the wonderful canarios. One thing led to another and through a very happy life of coincidence and opportunity I met all the people I now enjoy working with. I count myself very lucky to have been inspired, led and encouraged to experience all these different means of communication, for I have hopped and strummed my way around the world and entertained people on four continents, and we are all the same.

**Clare Salaman** *director, trumpet marine, nyckelharpa*

I have always been drawn to interesting sounds, especially those which include plenty of jangle and scrape. At first this led me to the baroque violin, and then to more obscure instruments – the hurdy gurdy, nyckelharpa, medieval vielle and Hardanger fiddle. My first job, in The English Concert, instigated five years of touring the world with period instrument orchestras but since then my work has become increasingly diverse. I have played accordion with a contemporary dance theatre company, been a member of the Dufay Collective and the Ian McMillan Orchestra, and have made a music theatre piece involving boa constrictors with Tanzanian street kids. I have also composed music for theatre, led projects in the Royal Academy of Music and other conservatoires and enjoyed many exciting collaborations with musicians from different musical traditions. I have written and presented three programmes for BBC Radio 3’s *Early Music Show* which I have found



immensely enjoyable and satisfying. I founded The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments in 2010 and this is now my main focus. The organisation includes a forum for discussion through social media and an active performance group. Its aim is to share the colourful world of strange and ancient instruments in the most creative and generous way possible.

**Liam Connery** started his musical career as a treble in two Royal Opera House productions and as a member of the semi-professional boys' choir Libera, recording CDs and performing in world tours from 2007-2012. He attended the London Oratory School, where he sang with the renowned Oratory Schola Cantorum, after which he read music at Christ Church, Oxford, holding a choral scholarship at the cathedral. Liam continued to perform whilst studying, appearing in multiple plays, musicals and operas both in Oxford and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. He was also a lay clerk at Croydon Minster, a joint position he held alongside teaching at Whitgift School in South London from 2017-2020.

Liam has composed and arranged music for many ensembles, beginning his career with choral pieces sung by the men of Christ Church Cathedral Choir in concerts and events at Christ Church. His first commissioned work, *A Cradle Song*, was written for the Colla Voce Singers and performed at their 2018 Christmas Carol Concert. He was shortlisted as a finalist for the National Centre for Early Music's 2019 Young Composers Award for bass viol and live electronics, and was commissioned by Flöduo to write the violin and flute duet *Gígnomai*. He has worked with the choir Sansara on a few projects, including a newly composed piece involving viol player Liam Byrne and live electronics.

Liam is also a producer and has written music for film, having been commissioned to write the soundtrack to the short film *Empty Nest* by Benedict Philipp (released as part of the Indoors Project Film Festival, 2020). Liam now also works in a recording studio for pop artists in London, as well as playing keyboards for jazz groups and musical theatre bands – including his own jazz/funk band SONDA, for which he is producing a debut EP.

**YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL** is directed by Delma Tomlin MBE and administered by the National Centre for Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation (registered charity number 1068331)

Artistic Advisors: John Bryan, Steven Devine, Lindsay Kemp, Peter Seymour

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