

2024
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL
6 - 13 JULY

Cubaroque

Songs from two Golden Ages

National Centre for Early Music

Sunday 7 July 7.30pm

Cubaroque

Nicholas Mulroy *tenor*

Elizabeth Kenny *guitar, lute, theorbo*

Toby Carr *guitar, lute, theorbo*

Songs from two Golden Ages

Music for a While	Henry Purcell 1659-95
Si Dolce E'il Tormento	Claudio Monteverdi 1567-1643
Alfonsina y el Mar	Ariel Ramirez 1921-2010
Los Imposibles [instrumental]	Santiago de Murcia 1673-1739
Cucurrucucú Paloma	Tomas Mendez 1927-95
Oh Fair Cedaria	Purcell
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Oleo de Mujer con Sombrero	Silvio Rodriguez b. 1946
Ojala	Rodriguez
Retrato de un Medico Violinista [instrumental]	Nico Rojas 1921-2008
Tempo la Cetra	Monteverdi
Silencio	Rafael Hernandez 1892-1965
La Gaviota	Rodriguez
Unicornio	Rodriguez
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Quel Sguardo Sdegnosetto	Monteverdi
Prelude and Sarabande in D [instrumental]	Robert de Visee c. 1655-1732/3
In the Black Dismal Dungeon	Purcell
Hoy Mi Deber	Rodriguez
Te Recuerdo Amanda	Victor Jara 1932-73
Evening Hymn	Purcell

This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast on the Early Music Show at 5.00pm on Sunday 22 September. Please silence mobile phones and any other electronic devices.

El amor es como un violín. La música podrá detenerse ahora o después, pero las cuerdas lo recordarán por siempre.

(‘Love is like a violin. The music can stop now or after, but the strings will remember it forever.’)

Silvio Rodríguez

The beginning of the Baroque era, around 1600, marked a turn away from florid beauty and unity, and towards a more faithful reflection of the complexities and even chaos of a human’s interior life. Think of the plays of Shakespeare or the paintings of Caravaggio, where the artist homes in on the moment of highest drama or most acute crisis. Claudio Monteverdi was also at the vanguard of this shift, and is now known as the first great composer of opera; his *L’Orfeo* (1607) absolutely withstands the rigours of time and still packs a devastating emotional punch. It’s here and elsewhere that he teases out the possibilities of musical dialogue between a bassline, its implied harmony, and a voice: the balance of caressing harmony and stinging dissonances, creating music built (in the composer’s words) ‘upon the foundations of truth’. His music administered a kind of shock therapy to the expressive capacity of song.

All of the songwriters in this programme work on those foundations, and have urgent truths to tell us. One of the things these songs convey is a sense that, while the world turns and changes, the bigger, messier human emotions remain. Here are tales separated by time and space, but drawn together by a common and eternal desire to tell stories in music.

Listen to the dialogues between Henry Purcell’s sinuously mobile ground (repeated) bass patterns and the voice in these songs, or the way in which Monteverdi can spin melody and meaning over the simplest chord progressions.

As we leap forward almost 300 years, it’s remarkable that the compositional techniques employed by Monteverdi and Purcell (two of the very greatest songwriters) remain intact. These Latin American songs by Silvio Rodríguez, Víctor Jara and Mercedes Sosa all contain twentieth-century siblings of the ground bass: listen to the rising rapture of ‘Oleo de Mujer con Sombrero’ or the gentle Bolero sway of ‘Te Recuerdo Amanda’.

All of these musicians are wildly famous and hugely consequential to the musical story of Latin America in the twentieth century, but largely unknown in the English-speaking world, which alone is reason enough to offer these songs here. In the same

way that Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa defined a new literary reality of their time and place, here are songs that embody a politically engaged and poetically rapturous musical movement which gave voice to an entire continent at a time of rapid progress and violent change. They all belong to their own branch of the *nueva canción* ('new song') set, whose very name suggests the quest for a new and urgent mode of musical expression. You might notice that we're back in the same artistic position as Italy at the start of the seventeenth century...

In putting these two apparently disparate traditions together, we invite the listener to find their own connections. Many will not be familiar with both traditions represented here; it's the intention to spread the word about this wonderful, evocative music, as well as to offer it in a context that might be both rewarding and illuminating.

All these works share an idea that song – with its marriage of text and music, and its ability to articulate, communicate what lies beyond words, and to touch both heart and mind – is a powerful political instrument. These songs arrive not as a shout, but as a whisper on the ear, but are no less effective for that. They also vividly reflect these artists' insights on eternal human themes: love, loss, fear, ecstasy, and much more besides, are all expressed here, in songs full of meaning, beauty and unflinching truth.

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Si Dolce E'il Tormento

So sweet is the torment
That lies in my heart,
That I can live content
With unfeeling, infatuating beauty.
In this earthly paradise
Vanity grows
And piety fades:
Yet like a rock
Against the wave of pride
My faith will always hold fast.

False hope
Turns away from me,
Neither pleasure nor peace
Descend upon me,
And the unholy woman I adore
Does not grant me the relief
Of her favour:
Amidst infinite pain
Amidst forlorn hope
My faith will live on.

From fire and ice
I have no respite
but at heaven's gates
I will find peace...
if the fatal blow
of an unwavering arrow
pierced my heart,
overturning my fate
brought by death's dart
I will heal my heart...

If the flame of love
Has never yet been felt
By the hard heart
That has stolen my own,
If I am shown no pity
By the cruel siren

That has enchanted my soul:
Then let it be that one day,
Languishing in pain and repentance,
She will sigh for me.

Alfonsina y el Mar

Alfonsina and the Sea

By the soft sand
That the sea laps
Her small print
Will not return
One path alone
Of pain and silence reached
The deep water.
And one path alone of mute pains reached
Up to the foam.
God knows what anguish followed you
What old sorrows silenced your voice
To lie you down again, lulled by the song of the sea shells.
The song that the shell sings in the dark depth of the sea.
You leave, Alfonsina, with your solitude.
What new poems were you seeking?
An old voice of wind and salt
Breaks your soul and takes it away,
And you go towards it, as if in dreams,
Asleep, Alfonsina, clothed by the sea.
Five small sirens will take you
Along paths of coral and seaweed
And dazzling seahorses will whirl
Beside you.
And the sea-dwellers soon will
Play by your side.
You leave, Alfonsina, etc....

Cucurrucú Paloma

They say that in the night
He would only drink
They said he wouldn't eat
And could only weep
They swear that heaven itself

Stretched out on hearing his lament.
How he suffered for her
That even in death
He called to her.
Ayayayay he sang
Ayayayay he wept (x2)
A sad dove
Very early one morning goes to sing to him
To his house alone
With its doors wide open
They swear that the dove
Is none other than his soul
Which still awaits her
Still awaits the return of the unhappy woman.
Cucurrucú Dove
Cucurrucú don't cry
The stones never, dear dove,
What can they know of love?

Oleo de Mujer con Sombrero ('Oil Painting of a Woman with a Hat')

A woman has missed
Knowing the delirium and the dust
She has missed this beautiful madness,
Her brief waist beneath me
She has lost my way of loving
She has lost my footprint in her sea.
I see a light that flickers
And promises to leave us in darkness
I see a dog barking at the moon
With another figures that looks like me
I see more, I see that she didn't find me
I see more, I see that she lost herself.
Cowardice is the subject
Of men and not of lovers,
Cowardly loves don't become loves
Or histories, they remain there,
Not even memory can save them
Nor the best orator conjure them.
An unnamable woman
Flees like a seagull

And I quickly dry my boots
I blaspheme a note and turn off the clock.
Love should beware me:
For I can sing its song.
A woman with a hat
Like a painting by old Chagall
Corrupting herself in the centre of fear,
And I, who am not good, began to cry.
But then I was crying for me,
And now I cry to see her die (x2)

Ojalá ('If only')

If only the leaves wouldn't touch your body as they fall
So you don't turn them into glass.
If only the rain would cease to be a miracle that descends along your body
If only the moon could come out with you.
If only the earth would not kiss your steps.
If only you would cease to have the constant look
The precise word, the perfect smile
If only something would happen to erase you suddenly.
A blinding light, a shot of snow,
If only, at least, death would take me,
So as not to see you so much, so as not to see you always
In every second
In every vision
If only I couldn't even touch you in song.
If only the dawn wouldn't give shouts that fall on my shoulders
If only your name would forget that voice.
If only the walls wouldn't retain your sound, of your tired tread,
If only desire went behind you.
To your old government of the dead and of flowers.
If only you would cease to have... etc

Tempo la Cetra ('I Tune my Lyre')

I tune my lyre, and to sing the praises of Mars, elevate the tone of my style and songs; but I strum her in vain, and it seems impossible to me that she will ever resound for anything but love.

Thus in the arena or in amongst flowers, Love again gives me amorous notes, nor does she wish that I should sing of weapons If not of those that wound the heart.

The humble plectrum and the coarse undignified inflections, oh Muse, tune them, as once you did, that by the song of the sublime Lyre, Heaven deems you worthy.

Return to the tender jokes: that, meanwhile, the warrior god, tempering his fierce wrath, may sleep in the lap of Venus, lulled by your song

Silencio

They sleep in my garden
The white lilies,
The tuberose and the roses
My soul, very sad and heavy
Wants to hide its bitter sorrow
From the flowers
I don't want the flowers to know
The torments that life gives me
If they knew what I am suffering
For my pains they would weep too.
Silence, the tuberose and the lilies
Are sleeping
I don't want them to know my pains
Because if they see me crying, they will weep too.

La Gaviota ('The Seagull')

The days ran as the war ended
A soldier returned intact
Intact from the mortal cold of the earth
Intact from the flowers of horror in his room.

He raised his eyes, breathed deeply
The word 'heaven' formed in his mouth
And, as if there were nothing else in the world,
across the sky passed a seagull.

Seagull, waltz of balance
Incredible cadence, called on the shoulder
Seagull, white of the lily
Air and dancer, seagull of amazement.

Where are you going, song of the breeze?
So fast, so restrained
A shot in the senses and shrapnel in the smile
Seagull that passes and takes away life.

The days ran as the war ended,
A seagull passed, flying, flying
Slowly, like a time of love that closes
Empire of the wing, of heaven and of time.
Seagull, etc...

The days ran as the war ended,
A seagull passed flying
and he who remained intact circled the earth
Orphan, naked, wounded, bleeding.

Unicorn

I lost my blue unicorn yesterday
I left him grazing and he disappeared

Any information
I will happily pay for
The flowers he left
Have not wanted to speak to me

I lost my blue unicorn yesterday
I don't know if it left me
I don't know if it got lost

And I have nothing else
But a blue unicorn
If anything knows anything about him
I beg for information

One hundred thousand or a million
I will pay

My blue unicorn
I lost him yesterday
He left.

My unicorn and I
We made friends
A little with love
A little with truth

With his horn of indigo
He fished for a song
Knowing how to share it
Was his vocation

My blue unicorn
Yesterday I lost him
And it may seem
Perhaps an obsession

But I have nothing else
But a blue unicorn
And even if I had two
I only want that one.

Any information
I will gladly pay
My blue unicorn
I lost him yesterday
He went away.

Quel Sguardo Sdegnosetto ('That haughty glance')

That haughty little glance,
bright and menacing,
that poisonous dart
is flying to strike my breast.
O beauties for which I burn,
by which I am severed from myself:
wound me with your glance,
but heal me with your laughter.

Arm yourself, O eyes,
with sternest rigor;
pour upon my heart
a cloud of sparks.
But let lips not be slow
to revive when I am slain.
Let the glance strike me;
but let the laughter heal me.

O fair eyes: to arms, to arms!
I am preparing my bosom as your target.
Rejoice in wounding me,
even until I faint!
And if I remain vanquished
by your darts,
let your glances strike me – but let your laughter heal me.

Hoy mi Deber ('Today my duty')

Today my duty was to sing to the fatherland,
Raise the flag, to join the crowd at the square.
Today was a rather optimistic moment,
A rebirth, a sun of conquest.

But I miss you, for so many days now,
That I want to, but can't have, happiness
I think of your hair, that blows on my pillow
And I no longer have any fight in me.

Today I had to sing in the choir
I hide from the day, I whisper this alone.
What am I doing so far, giving reasons
For this cruel game of the senses?

Your small mouth, within my kiss
Conquers, owns, does not relent.
Your body and my body, singing perspiration,
Sounds possessed, febrile tremblings.

Today my duty was to sing to the fatherland
Raise the flag, join in at the square,
And I think, perhaps, I have finally managed this,
Dreaming of your embrace, flying by your side.

Te Recuerdo Amanda ('I Remember You, Amanda')

I remember you, Amanda
I remember you, Amanda
The wet street
Running to the factory
Where Manuel worked.
Your wide smile
The rain in your hair
Nothing mattered
You were going to meet with him
With him, with him
Just five minutes
Life is eternal in five minutes
The siren sounds
Back to work
And you, walking

Illuminate everything
Those five minutes
Make you bloom.
I remember you, Amanda etc...
He who went to the mountains
Who never did any harm
And went to the mountains
And in five minutes was destroyed
The siren sounds
Back to work.
Many didn't come back. Manuel didn't either.
I remember you, Amanda
The wet street
Running to the factory
Where Manuel worked.

Nicholas Mulroy

Born in Liverpool, Nicholas Mulroy was a chorister at the Metropolitan Cathedral before reading Modern Languages at Cambridge, and completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music. He has enjoyed prolonged collaborations with some of the world's leading directors, ensembles and chamber musicians, with a particular emphasis on music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and its expressive and communicative possibilities.

He is known for his performances in Bach's Passion narratives: he has sung these in Bach's churches in Leipzig, Arnstadt, Weimar, as well as in the Royal Albert Hall (BBC Proms), the Sydney Opera House (with the Australian Chamber Orchestra), and Boston Symphony Hall. He has also sung Monteverdi at New York's Carnegie Hall, Versailles Palace and the Salzburg Festival, and Rameau at the Opera de Paris.

Recent highlights have included collaborations with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque (USA), as well as with today's musicians, Elizabeth Kenny and Toby Carr; their album *De Pasión Mortal* was released in June 2024. Nicholas's discography includes all of Bach's major oratorios, as well as Handel's *Messiah*, *Esther* and *Acis*

and Galatea. Other recordings include Piazzolla's extraordinary *Maria de Buenos Aires* and several versions of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*.

Nick is a Visiting Professor at RAM, a Musician in Residence at Girton College, Cambridge, and the Associate Director of the Dunedin Consort.

nicholasmulroy.com

Toby Carr

Lutenist and guitarist Toby Carr is known as a versatile and engaging artist, working with some of the finest musicians in the business. While studying the classical guitar at Trinity Laban he was introduced to historical plucked instruments, an interest he pursued during a postgraduate degree at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, graduating in 2016 and welcomed back as a professor in 2021. Now in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and continuo player, Toby has performed with most of the principal period instrument ensembles in the UK and beyond, as well as with many symphony orchestras, opera companies and ballet companies. Highlights have included touring over a dozen shows around the country with English Touring Opera from 2016 to 2023, joining the orchestra of the Royal Opera House for a new ballet featuring the music of Henry Purcell in 2019, and performing at the BBC Proms 2022 with La Nuova Musica. He is a member of Ceruleo, Lux Musicae London and Ensemble Augelletti, works frequently with vocal groups Fieri Consort and Ensemble Pro Victoria, and has appeared on recordings with all of these groups.

Collaboration is at the heart of his work, from song recitals with singers such as Helen Charlston, Alexander Chance and Emma Kirkby, to more unique projects such as Cubaroque. Performances have included the Ryedale, Lammermuir and Baroque at the Edge festivals, as well as Kings Place, London with Aurora Orchestra. Other innovative partnerships have included with oud player Attab Haddad for a cross-cultural concert organised by NW Live, as well as with pianist Christina McMaster for her series, Lie down and listen.

Toby is a professor at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, specialising in guitar chamber music. His duties include organising concerts, coaching guitarists in a variety of ensembles, overseeing and encouraging creative collaborations, and working in the historical performance department teaching basso continuo practice. He is delighted to share his passion for chamber music and collaboration with the next generation of musicians.

Settled in Greenwich, south-east London with his wife and collaborator, harpist Aileen Henry, Toby's interests outside of music include reading, cooking and travelling, though when not working he generally tries to do as little as possible.

tobycarr.co.uk

Elizabeth Kenny

Elizabeth Kenny is one of Europe's leading lute players. In twenty years of touring she has played with many of the world's best period instrument groups and experienced many different approaches to music making. She played with Les Arts Florissants 1992-2007 and with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 1997-2015 and still returns to initiate seventeenth-century projects such as *The Hypochondriack* and *A Restoration Tempest*.

Her research interests have led to critically acclaimed recordings of Lawes, Purcell and Dowland, and to the formation of her ensemble Theatre of the Ayre. As well as regular collaborations with singers such as Robin Blaze, Ian Bostridge and Nicholas Mulroy in recital, she has a great fondness for the viol consort repertory and has recorded *William Lawes: The Royal Consort* with Phantasm, as well Dowland's *Lachrime* (2016). Elizabeth also appears alongside Ian Bostridge on Warner Classic's *Shakespeare Songs*, which won a 2017 Grammy Best Classical Solo Vocal Album award.

As a soloist she is committed to a diverse range of repertoire, from the ML Lutebook (a much-praised CD released on Hyperion records) to new music for lute and theorbo: she has premiered works by James MacMillan, Heiner Goebbels and Benjamin Oliver, which were recorded alongside seventeenth-century solo music for theorbo for Linn records. With Theatre of the Ayre she judged the National Centre for Early Music's Young Composers Award in 2016.

Liz Kenny is Director of Performance at the University of Oxford, and professor of Lute at the Royal Academy of Music. She was Professor of Musical Performance and Head of Early Music at Southampton University 2009-18 and was an artistic advisor to the York Early Music Festival from 2011 to 2014.

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York Early Music Festival is administered by the National Centre for
Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation
(charity number 1068331)

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