

**Programme Notes Online**  
**Chamber Music Series** Royal Liverpool Philharmonic  
**Tuesday 14 May 2013 7.30pm** St George's Hall Concert Room

**Tine Thing Helseth** trumpet  
**Kathryn Stott** piano

### **GEIRR TVEITT (1908-1981)**

**Vélkomne med æra** Welcome with honour  
from **Hundrad Hardingtonar, Op.151** A Hundred Hardanger Tunes

The Norwegian composer and pianist Geirr Tveitt studied in Leipzig, Vienna and Paris where he took private lessons with a number of eminent musicians including Arthur Honegger. He subsequently toured Europe as a concert pianist and on returning to Norway was awarded a life pension that enabled him to carry out an extensive study of Norwegian folk music. The haunting 'Vélkomne med æra' is a traditional song of the Tveitt family, a ceremonial greeting to neighbours visiting their home during harvest festival.

### **EDVARD HAGERUP BULL (1922-2012)**

#### **Perpetuum Mobile**

Edvard Hagerup Bull, who died in March last year, was another important voice in Norwegian music and a composer described by one of his teachers Darius Milhaud as "a musician with a solid technique and a truly very enthralling, vigorous and highly imaginative personality". These qualities are very much in evidence in this engaging miniature, a work written in 1995 to celebrate the 170th anniversary of the birth of Johann Strauss II, whose own *Perpetuum Mobile* provided some of the inspiration.

### **GEORGES ENESCU (1881-1955)**

#### **Légende**

The great Romanian violinist and composer Georges Enescu wrote his *Légende* in 1906 for Merri Franquin, a celebrated trumpet and cornet virtuoso and a Professor at the Paris Conservatoire. It is a single-movement work reflecting the influences of Enescu's teachers Massenet and Fauré as well as the impressionistic idioms of Debussy and Ravel. It begins in lyrical vein, the principal melody returning twice during the work: at the climax when it appears an octave higher and at the muted closure at its original pitch. In among this rich lyricism are passages of taxing virtuosity for both performers: extensive 'triple tonguing' and chromatic fingering for the trumpet; and extensive runs and arpeggios for the piano.

### **GRAHAM FITKIN (b.1963)**

#### **Helical Strake**

For nearly three decades the Cornish composer Graham Fitkin has been a major figure on the British musical scene. Studies with the one-time enfant terrible of Dutch music Louis Andriessen proved particularly inspirational for Fitkin, though in addition to his eminent teacher he cites as influences on his music artists as diverse as Stravinsky, Frank Sinatra and The Smiths. In a series of works written for ensembles such as Ice-Breaker and Ensemble Bash, Fitkin utilised electronic instruments and percussion to successfully cross over into rock music. Works for more traditional forces include five orchestral pieces composed during his residency with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in the mid-1990s.

Commissioned by Tine Thing Helseth and Kathryn Stott, *Helical Strake* was composed in 2012. About this new work, the composer writes: "Follow a line. Try not to be diverted. Continue to follow the line. If you are distracted and go off course then find your way back and hold the line tightly. You will be buffeted from outside. One always is. No matter, keep focus, maintain your position and prepare for the long game."

### **PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)**

#### **Sonata for Trumpet and Piano**

*Mit Kraft* with strength  
*Mässig bewegt* at a moderately tempo  
*Trauermusik – Chorale* funeral music – chorale

Players of instruments with relatively limited solo repertoires remain eternally indebted to the figure of Paul Hindemith. As a virtuoso on the most Cinderella-like of them all, the viola, Hindemith realised the need to expand the

literatures of instruments other than the perennial violin and piano and he set out on an ambitious project to compose sonatas for every instrument of the orchestra (most of which this remarkable musician could competently perform on himself).

Hindemith's Trumpet Sonata dates from 1939 when the composer was exiled in Switzerland, his music having been banned by the Nazi regime some years earlier. Troubled at the time by his homeland's aggressive and acquisitive foreign policy, the work became both a protest and a lament, one of several Hindemith works that challenges the commonly held view that he was a mere craftsman-composer, technically adept but emotionally detached.

The piece is in the standard three-movement form. The first (Mit Kraft) is a brooding, agitated affair in which the essentially lyrical trumpet line is punctuated by dramatic piano outbursts. The brief second movement (Mässig bewegt) blends its moderate-paced qualities with busier, more scherzo-like figurations. The last movement, Trauermusik – Chorale, is the work's soul, a funeral march that leaves us with a sense of sorrowful resignation in the form of a valedictory chorale.

INTERVAL

## MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

### Kaddisch

from *Deux mélodies hébraïques* Two Hebrew Melodies

Like many other creative artists of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, Ravel was deeply attracted to the foreign and the exotic. Most famous, of course, is his superbly orchestrated take on the Spanish *boléro*; but there are more examples of Ravel's engagement with other musical cultures including *Rapsodie Espagnole* (1907-08) and his virtuoso violin showpiece *Tzigane* (1924), a work inspired by gypsy music. Ravel composed his *Deux mélodies hébraïques* in 1914 following a commission from Alvina Alvi, a soprano with the St Petersburg Opera. The first song, *Kaddisch*, is a setting of an Aramaic text from the Jewish prayer book. It glorifies God and looks forward impatiently to the Messiah's second coming. Musically Ravel's treatment of the text is suitably 'middle-eastern' (authentically so or not) and its mood is one of restrained ecstasy with a wonderful tension between its melismatic vocal/trumpet line (with whole groups of notes sung/played to just one syllable of the original's text) and an exquisitely simple piano accompaniment.

## JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

### Five Songs, Op.37

<i>Den första kyssen</i>	The First Kiss
<i>Lasse liten</i>	Little lass
<i>Soluppgång</i>	Sunrise
<i>Var det en dröm?</i>	Was it a dream?
<i>Flickan kom ifrån sin elsklings mote</i>	The girl returned from meeting her lover

Sibelius's international reputation is built largely on his orchestral works and particularly on his masterly cycle of seven symphonies. Outside of Scandinavia his substantial output of smaller-scale compositions tends to be overlooked, even though the sheer number (nearly 100) and quality of his songs makes him one of the most significant Nordic song composers.

His Five Songs, Op.37, were all composed in 1904, about the same time as the Violin Concerto and just before the Third Symphony. The first, 'Den första kyssen', is a blissfully romantic setting. In it the heavens rejoice when a maiden is kissed for the first time and 'only death turns aside and weeps'. 'Lasse liten' is set in the form of a nursery rhyme and is essentially a lullaby, though the piano accompaniment darkens the mood. Tor Hedberg's poem 'Soluppgång' contrasts the beauty of nature with the impatience of a knight who stands at the window eagerly awaiting the excitement of battle. As dawn arrives he blows wildly on a horn. 'Var det en dröm?' and 'Flickan kom ifrån sin elsklings mote' are two of Sibelius's most frequently performed songs. The former recalls lost love while the latter tells of a girl who confesses to her mother that she has been secretly meeting a lover. Eventually the girl returns 'with pale cheeks, for they had paled because of the lover's unfaithfulness'. At the song's dramatic climax she asks her mother to carve the story into the headstone on her grave.

## MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

### Siete Canciones Populares Españolas Seven Popular Spanish Songs

<i>El paño moruno</i>	The Moorish cloth
<i>Seguidilla murciana</i>	Seguidilla from Murcia
<i>Asturiana</i>	From Asturia
<i>Jota</i>	
<i>Nana</i>	Lullaby
<i>Canción</i>	Song
<i>Polo</i>	

By far the most gifted Spanish composer of his generation, Manuel de Falla was born in Cadiz, Andalusia. The folk music of this region always remained a major influence on his music, though he also fell under the influence of composers such as Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky – three musicians he knew and befriended during his successful stay in Paris between 1907 and 1914. After returning to Spain he lived a busy life as a conductor before the outcome of the Spanish Civil War led him to Argentina where he was to spend the rest of his life.

Just after his return to Spain from Paris in 1914 Falla composed his *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*, a collection that represents the culmination of his work on folksong and features arrangements of songs from different regions of Spain. The first two 'El paño moruno' and 'Seguidilla murciana' (a seguidilla being a fast dance in triple time possibly of Moorish ancestry) originate in the Murcia region of Southeast Spain. The melancholy third song 'Asturiana' is from the Asturias region of Northern Spain, while the 'Jota' that follows is a lively example of the music of the Aragon region. 'Nana' is a lullaby thought to have been sung to Falla as an infant and 'Canción' is based on a melody known throughout Spain. The final song 'Polo' comes from Andalusia and evokes the flamenco music of the region's gypsies.

## KURT WEILL (1900-1950)

### Three Songs

*Nanna's Lied*

*Youkali*

*Je ne t'aime pas*            I do not love you

Although Kurt Weill was initially trained in the large-scale structures of the 'classical' tradition, he spent most of his career – in Berlin, Paris and New York – straddling the divide between so-called serious music and the popular. 'Music isn't bad just because it's popular,' he once remarked. 'Nanna's Lied' was one of many song collaborations Weill made with Bertolt Brecht. Typically frank and streetwise, the original song version tells of the highs and lows of 'the oldest profession'. 'Youkali' is a Tango Habanera, a musical tribute to 'the land of our desires, to happiness and pleasure, to the land where all worries are left behind' and 'Je ne t'aime pas' is a melancholy ballad dating from 1934, soon after Weill moved to Paris.

Programme notes by Anthony Bateman © 2013

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