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FENELLA HUMPHREYS, VIOLIN & MARTIN ROSCOE, PIANO

Thursday 2 October, 7.30pm
Djanogly Recital Hall

PROGRAMME

Five Melodies, Op.35

Sergei Prokofiev

Midsummer Moon

Rebecca Clarke

Eulogy

Adrian Sutton

Sonata in F minor, Op.4

Felix Mendelssohn

Interval

Sonata No.2, H.24

Arthur Honegger

Phantasy

Dorothy Howell

Suite Italienne

Igor Stravinsky

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off. Photographs and videos of the performance are not permitted.

There is a Sennheiser Infrared enhanced hearing system in the Djanogly Recital Hall; please request a headset from our front-of-house staff to enhance your enjoyment of this evening's concert.

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Five Melodies, Op.35

Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

1. *Andante*;
2. *Lento, ma non troppo*;
3. *Animato, ma non allegro*;
4. *Allegretto leggero e scherzando*;
5. *Andante non troppo*.

In 1918 Prokofiev left post-revolutionary Russia for the USA, expecting to spend no more than a few months there, but eventually staying for four years. He spent the first months of 1920 in California, following Chicago Lyric Opera's initial failure to stage his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*, which the company had commissioned the previous year (it was eventually given its premiere in 1921). His enchantment with the landscape provided a welcome distraction from his disappointment. As well starting work on a new opera, *The Fiery Angel*, he wrote five *Songs Without Words* for the Russian mezzo-soprano Nina Koshetz, who had recently settled in the USA. She was to sing the role of the comic enchantress Fata Morgana in *The Love for Three Oranges*, and went on to take the leading role of Renata in the concert premiere of excerpts from *The Fiery Angel* in 1928.

The songs have a mellow lyricism which possibly reflects Prokofiev's surroundings. They certainly suggest a new interest in the voice as sheer sound rather than simply the vehicle for a text, and as such the vocal parts lend themselves readily to transcription for instruments. Prokofiev orchestrated the second song, possibly later that same year, 1920. In 1925 he transcribed all five for violin and piano, following a suggestion from the Polish violinist Paweł Kochański, who had given him technical advice on the solo part of his First Violin Concerto of 1917.

The first, third and fourth of the transcriptions are dedicated to Kochański, No.2 to Cecilia Hansen, the violinist wife of Prokofiev's friend, the pianist Boris Zakharov, and No.5 to the Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti.

The first two pieces are wistfully expressive, with the second having a rather more capricious middle section. No.3 begins with a burst of energy which it is not quite able to recover after turning 'tender and languid' (Prokofiev's marking on the violin part) in the middle. The fourth piece is perkily humorous. The last returns to the lyrical mood of the opening pieces and, after a more animated section, ends, like No.4, with the violin high in ethereal harmonics.

Midsummer Moon

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

Born in Harrow, north London, to an American father and German mother, Clarke entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1903 to study violin. Two years later she transferred to the Royal College of Music, where she became Stanford's first female composition student. It was Stanford who suggested that she switch from violin to viola, and as a professional viola player, she was one of the first six women to be appointed by conductor Henry Wood to his Queen's Hall Orchestra, in 1912. Between 1916 and 1924 she lived in the United States, performing on extensive tours, before returning to London, where she appeared both as a soloist and in chamber music, with such leading contemporaries as Pablo Casals, Arthur Rubinstein, Percy Grainger, Jascha Heifetz and Arthur Schnabel. She returned to the USA in 1939 and eventually settled there, marrying a former fellow-student at the Royal College, pianist James Friskin, whom she met again by chance, in 1944.

She wrote *Midsummer Moon* in 1924 for the violinist Adila Fachiri, to whom it is dedicated, and who gave the first performance, with pianist Bertram Harrison, in Wigmore Hall, London, in May that year.

Exploring a heady nocturnal atmosphere, it frequently places the violin high above the piano's washes of sound. A short passage imitating birdsong leads to the more incisive central section, which is followed by an extended repeat of the birdsong. The violin's trills, chirps and swoops prompted writer Calum MacDonald to suggest that the piece could almost be retitled *The Nightingale Ascending*. For the slower final section, the violin is muted, ending poised high over the piano's final glance back at the birdsong.

Eulogy

Adrian Sutton (born 1967)

Born in Kent, Adrian Sutton lived for a number of years in Zimbabwe and South Africa. After returning to the UK, he studied at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He worked for a short time in television, before beginning a fruitful association with the National Theatre, London, providing music for the NT's productions of *War Horse*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, and *Angels in America*, among others.

He composed his Violin Concerto in 2023 for Fenella Humphreys, who gave the premiere with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London in June that year, and who recorded it with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Michael Seal. Written in 2021, *Eulogy* pre-dates the Concerto, but received its world premiere, by Fenella Humphreys and Martin Roscoe, on 29 September 2025 at the Stoller Hall, Manchester.

Adrian has kindly supplied the following note:

“Eulogies, in spoken or written word form, often reflect on the character and achievements of those recently-deceased, many of whom have been lucky enough to have had wonderful people – friends and family – surround them in their lives.

I wanted this simple, short piece to stand more specifically as a eulogy, in wordless musical form, for all those who, for whatever reason, were less fortunate in that regard – perhaps no family, or few if any friends at the end to sing their praises – but whose life, character and achievements are equally worthy of that praise and celebration.”

Sonata in F minor, Op.4

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

1. *Adagio – allegro moderato*;
2. *Poco adagio*;
3. *Allegro agitato*.

By the time Mendelssohn wrote his F minor Violin Sonata, in 1823, he was already an experienced and talented composer. He had previously worked on two violin sonatas, in 1820 – an unfinished work in D minor, and one in F major, which he completed, but which was not published until 1977. He was also a gifted instrumentalist, first on the piano, later the organ, and by May 1819, he had begun having violin lessons. His understanding of string technique, honed by joining in performances in his family home, marked a series of teenage chamber works, which culminated in his astonishing masterpiece, the Octet, Op.20, of 1825.

Like the Octet, his F minor Violin Sonata is dedicated to Eduard Rietz, one of his early violin teachers. The first movement opens with a short, slow passage for the violin, unaccompanied, marked to be played freely, in the style of a recitative. The piano starts the main quick section, introducing the two principal themes, each one taken up, in turn, by the violin; the piano leads

into leading into the major-key second theme by means of some exploratory figuration at the bass end of the keyboard. The repeated-note patterns, which appear later, for both instruments, provide linking material between the movement's different sections.

The quiet, meditative and slightly whimsical ending prepares the way for the slow second movement. Again, the piano takes the lead, and the violin follows, with a main theme whose classical manner sounds almost Mozartian. A short flourish for the piano, right hand, introduces the central section, whose tranquil new theme is floated by the violin over the piano's rippling accompaniment. A brief but agitated climax gradually subsides, taking us to the return of the opening theme. This movement, too, ends quietly.

The propulsive finale is driven by a restlessness that scarcely lets up. After a powerful climax, the energy level slowly ebbs, clearing a space for a ruminative unaccompanied violin solo. The headlong drive kicks in one last time, but the ending, again, is quiet and subdued.

Sonata No.2, H.24

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955)

1. *Allegro cantabile*;
2. *Larghetto*;
3. *Vivace assai*.

Honegger is one of the composers Adrian Sutton cites as an influence on his music. With his Swiss parentage, and his deep attachment to Beethoven and JS Bach, he stands somewhat apart from the other members of *Les Six*, the group of Parisian composers, including Poulenc and Milhaud, who were among the flag-wavers for everything smart and up-to-date in the city's cultural life in the early 1920s .

He had violin lessons as a child, and went on to study at the Zürich and Paris Conservatoires. His first numbered Violin Sonata, composed between 1916 and 1918, was preceded by seven others, none of them published in his lifetime.

No.2, dedicated to the violinist and string quartet leader Fernande Capelle, dates from 1919. The private first performance was given on a historic occasion, 8 January 1920, when *Les Six* was launched as a recognised group. Milhaud had invited to his Paris flat a number of journalists and five of his fellow-composers, including Honegger, who played the Sonata with the pianist, and his future wife, Andrée Vaurabourg. They gave the first public performance at the Paris Conservatoire on 28 February.

The first movement opens with an undulating violin theme, high over the piano's chordal and arpeggio writing. A precipitate drop from treble to bass on the piano brings a quiet but more rhythmically incisive idea, leading to a new theme for the violin, beginning with three slow repeated notes. Elements of all three themes interweave as the movement proceeds, with the opening theme taking it to its gentle conclusion.

At the start of the second movement, stern declamatory figures, low in the piano's range, alternate with fragile answering phrases from the violin, for which the instrument is muted. The mute comes off for much of the rest of the movement, as a slow, steady build-up in intensity moves towards a strident climax, which then swiftly fades. The violin is muted again for the slow, withdrawn final bars.

The fast, incisive finale is full of nifty energy. Piano and violin continually throw ideas back and forth to each other, as when the piano, left hand, plays a broad, lyrical melody, which the violin picks up and takes in a new direction. There is no let-up in the forward drive, until it is interrupted by a short slow, quiet passage for the piano alone. The hectic pace is then

relaunched, without fuss, and even faster than before, rising to a climax that breaks off abruptly, seemingly mid-phrase.

Phantasy

Dorothy Howell (1898-1982)

Born in Birmingham, Howell studied piano and composition at the Royal Academy of Music, London. The first performance of her symphonic poem *Lamia*, conducted by Sir Henry Wood during the 1919 Promenade Concert season, was such a success that he repeated it in each of the six seasons that followed. She was the soloist in the premiere of her single-movement Piano Concerto, conducted, again, by Henry Wood, in 1923.

Phantasy's origins are linked to the activities of Walter Wilson Cobbett (1847-1937), though the precise circumstances are disputed. Cobbett was a wealthy businessman and amateur musician with a particular enthusiasm for chamber music, commissioning new works and sponsoring composing competitions. He was especially keen on reviving the fantasia form of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, in which a single movement was built from a number of contrasting sections based on a single theme. Many British composers of the time took up the challenge, including John Ireland, Frank Bridge, Herbert Howells and Benjamin Britten. Some sources claim that Howell wrote her *Phantasy* in 1921, winning the Cobbett prize the same year. Others assert that there was no Cobbett competition that year, and that the piece was, in fact, commissioned by Cobbett in 1924.

The opening section, marked *Allegro energico*, begins with a mainly unaccompanied violin solo, additionally marked 'quasi recitative'. This is the theme on which *Phantasy* is based, and which the violin then develops over the more extensive piano part. A quieter section brings an expansive new theme, beginning with a gently falling phrase. Howell is soon playing references to both themes off against each other. The writing for both instruments becomes more florid, before the music eases into a new, gently undulating section, marked *Andante cantabile* (song-like), with the violin line combining elements of both themes.

The violin then plays a slower version of the main theme, twice – the first time over a largely static piano part. A short, brilliant passage for the piano leads to another new version of the main theme, now with a more waltz-like lilt. The violin and piano writing become more flamboyant again, leading into the final quick section, with the violin part marked 'scherzando' (literally, 'joking' or, at least, playful). A final surge of energy takes *Phantasy* to its emphatic ending.

Suite Italienne

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

1. *Introduzione*;
2. *Serenata*;
3. *Tarantella*;
4. *Gavotta con due variazioni*;
5. *Scherzino*;
6. *Minuetto e Finale*.

During the 1930s, Stravinsky gave a number of recitals with the Polish-born violinist Samuel Dushkin. Their collaboration began with the concerto he wrote for Dushkin in 1931, and he went on to write the *Duo Concertant* for the two of them to play in their recital programmes, as well as violin and piano transcriptions of a number of his earlier pieces.

Suite Italienne, the most important of these transcriptions, is based on numbers from his ballet score *Pulcinella*, dating from 1919. He had already made a violin and piano suite from the ballet in 1925; he adapted this for Dushkin in 1932, giving it its present title. He also collaborated with

the cellist Gregor Piatigorsky on a version for cello and piano (with a slightly different selection of movements) at the same time.

Pulcinella was composed for the impresario Sergey Dyagilev, who proposed a score based on music by the Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736), though, as we now know, only ten of the ballet's twenty-one numbers are based on music genuinely by Pergolesi. Ten more draw on music by other composers, issued under Pergolesi's name by unscrupulous publishers eager to cash in on his popularity; the remaining number is a nineteenth-century pastiche. In *Suite Italienne*, only the *Serenata* and *Minuet* are based on genuine Pergolesi.

The scenario of *Pulcinella* was taken from the traditional Neapolitan street-theatre known as the *commedia dell'arte*. The young men of Naples are jealous of Pulcinella because the girls are all in love with him. They hatch a plot to kill him, but after a series of intrigues and disguises – at one point there are four *Pulcinella* look-alikes on the stage – the real Pulcinella establishes his identity, and matters are finally set right.

Stravinsky described *Pulcinella* as “my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible.” The score inaugurated a new phase in Stravinsky's career, in which eighteenth-century musical procedures were refracted through his distinctive approach to rhythm, harmony and phrase structure. This so-called ‘neo-classical’ style answered a need for a music that was cool and objective in the wake of the First World War and the subsequent rejection, by many creative artists, of late nineteenth-century aesthetics. As a response to the crisis of confidence in European music, its implications were not lost on other composers of the same generation and after.

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FENELLA HUMPHREYS, VIOLIN

Fenella Humphreys, winner of both the 2025 and 2023 BBC Music Magazine Premiere Recording Award and the 2018 Instrumental Award, has attracted critical admiration and audience acclaim with the grace and intensity of her remarkable performances.

Fenella is one of the UK's most established and versatile violinists. She enjoys a busy career combining chamber music with solo work, performing in the most prestigious venues around the world and is frequently broadcast on the BBC, Classic FM, Scala Radio and international radio stations.

Fenella performs widely as a soloist. Her recent album of Sibelius' solo works with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and George Vass has been featured in BBC Radio 3's Building a Library, Gramophone Magazine's Guide to the Concerto, and was Album of the Week on Scala Radio. BBC Music Magazine has written of the recording: “it takes an unusually fine artist to be able to bridge the two extremes. Fenella Humphreys's playing is a genuine revelation in the way it brings out the music's dark and introspective qualities, with no shortage of technical panache meanwhile.”

Fenella has given the first performances of scores by a vast range of composers, most notably Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sally Beamish, Gordon Crosse, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Freya Waley-Cohen and Adrian Sutton. In June 2023, Fenella premiered a new violin concerto, dedicated to her by Adrian Sutton, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Fenella subsequently recorded the work, with the BBC Philharmonic and Michael Seal, for Chandos Records, with *The Strad* noting upon its release “Humphreys brings to her endlessly unfurling violin lines a taut, silvery weightlessness. The recording beautifully captures

her duets with woodwind, and a tremendous dynamic range..." The disc went on to win the 2025 BBC Music Magazine Premiere Recording Award.

Fenella's latest recording on Rubicon Classics, Prism, revisits the medium of unaccompanied violin repertoire - from new music written by young British composers to iconic recent works by Caroline Shaw, Jessie Montgomery and George Walker, with Fenella's new arrangement of Bach's Toccata and Fugue BWV565 at its heart. Immediately picked up by BBC Music Magazine as their June 'Instrumental Choice', the album is described as "a hugely accomplished release, fearlessly and vibrantly performed..." (BBC Music Magazine).

Throughout the 2025/26 season, Fenella will be resident at Wigmore Hall as part of a three-concert series where she will explore a variety of solo and chamber violin repertoire.

For the launch of Apple Music Classical in April 2023, Fenella was one of a handful of artists invited to record a 'Classical Session' at home, alongside Daniel Barenboim, Beatrice Rana and Gautier Capuçon.

Fenella is grateful for the support of the Royal Philharmonic Society, Harriet's Trust and Arts Council England for their support to keep making music during the Covid Pandemic. Fenella plays on a G.B. Guadagnini violin kindly on loan from Jonathan Sparey.

MARTIN ROSCOE, PIANO

With an extraordinary career spanning over five decades, Martin Roscoe is unarguably one of the UK's best loved pianists. Renowned for his versatility at the keyboard, Martin is equally at home in concerto, recital and chamber performances. His enduring popularity and the respect in which he is universally held are built on a deeply thoughtful musicianship and his easy rapport with audiences and fellow musicians alike. Martin is Artistic Director of the Manchester Chamber Concerts Society, and has previously been Artistic Director of the long-running Ribble Valley International Piano Week and Co-Artistic Director of the Beverley Chamber Music Festival.

With a repertoire of over 100 concertos, Martin continues to work regularly with many of the UK's leading orchestras, having especially close links with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Hallé Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Northern Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, where he has given over ninety performances. Martin also performs widely across Europe, Canada and Australia, sharing the concert platform with eminent conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Mark Elder, Gianandrea Noseda, and Christoph von Dohnányi.

A prolific recitalist and chamber musician, Martin tours the UK extensively every season, including regular appearances at Wigmore Hall, Kings Place and Bridgewater Hall. He has long-standing associations with Peter Donohoe, Kathryn Stott, and the Maggini Quartet, and worked closely with Tasmin Little and the Endellion String Quartet during their long and illustrious careers. Recent collaborations include with Jennifer Pike, Tai Murray, Fenella Humphreys, Liza Ferschtman and the Brodsky and Carducci Quartets. One of his most important ensembles, the Cropper Welsh Roscoe Trio (2005-2016), performed many times across the UK, most notably at Wigmore Hall. More recently, Martin formed the Roscoe Piano Trio with Fenella Humphreys and Jessica Burroughs for a celebratory concert in honour of Peter Cropper. The Trio has since gone on to perform across the UK, most notably at Bridgewater Hall.

Martin has made many commercial recordings for labels such as Hyperion, Chandos and Naxos. For the Deux-Elles label, Martin has recorded the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, for which he has received unanimous critical acclaim.