

## **The Arunda Trio**

**Irena Klimach (oboe) – Jenny Stephenson (clarinet) – Anna Mary Lynch (bassoon)**

### **Programme notes**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Divertimento N° 2 for three basset horns  
(arr. oboe, clarinet and bassoon), K439b

Allegro – Minuetto – Larghetto – Minuetto – Rondo

Composed around 1783, originally the five divertimenti were written for three basset horns, a predecessor of the clarinet. Today the basset horn would be most commonly heard in a performance of Mozart's Requiem or his Serenade for 13 Winds.

These five divertimenti each have similar structures. No 2 begins with a lively and colourful Allegro with the lyrical Larghetto sitting between two minuet and trio movements. The work culminates in an energetic Rondo.

Jacques Ibert (1890–1962)

Cinq Pièces en Trio

Allegro vivo – Andantino – Allegro assai  
– Andante – Allegro quasi marziale

Cinq Pièces en Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon was written in 1935 when Ibert was travelling around Europe conducting performances of his own works. The five pieces that make up this work demonstrate the charm and wit that can be found in much of Ibert's music. The miniatures contrast each other with alternating fast and slow tempi and each has an inviting tune that utilises all of the three instruments' ranges.

Georges Auric (1899–1983)

Romance

Georges Auric was a child prodigy. By the age of 15 his first composition had been published and before the age of 20 he had written music for many genres including ballets and stage productions. Auric was a member of Les Six, a group of composers who all emerged at a similar time in Paris in the 1920's who wanted to revolutionise French music. Although the members of Les Six were all of similar musical mind and intention, they very rarely worked collaboratively. They did however join forces in 1921 in order to help Georges Auric. Auric had been commissioned to write the music for the ballet *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, however as he ran out of time, with the first rehearsal approaching, he asked his fellow Les Six members to help. Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Tailleferre all contributed but Louis Durey refused.

The Romance is the lyrical second movement from a larger trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon. The three instruments blend with their intertwining, expressive melodies and although it was written over a decade after *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, it is said that Auric based his trio on the ballet. Auric loved to write classical chamber music for wind and went on to be a very successful and popular writer of film music.

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

“Largo al factotum” from *The Barber of Seville* (arr. David Buck)

“Largo al Factotum” is an aria from the opera *The Barber of Seville*. In the opera, the aria is the first time that we meet the title character Figaro who explains to audience why he is the most famous barber in town. In the story, Count Almaviva enlists Figaro’s help in order to pursue the beautiful Rosina who is also being wooed by Bartolo with hysterical consequences.

Arguably Rossini’s most famous work, he wrote the opera at the tender age of 24. Typical of Rossini’s compositional style, he completed the opera in less than three weeks. It was first performed in Rome in 1816 where his competitors caused so many problems that the audience hissed and booed, however its future performances were extremely successful with the work soon celebrated as a masterpiece of musical comedy. Indeed when Beethoven met Rossini in 1822, he told him the work was so enduring, that it would be played for as long as Italian opera exists.

*Largo al factotum* is a veritable tongue-twister being one of the most difficult baritone arias due to the repeated triplets of words ending in “...issimo”. The repeated phrase of “Figaro, Figaro, Figaro ...” (in this instance interpreted on the oboe) make this aria one of the most recognisable operatic works in popular culture.

Jacques Leclair (1959–)

La Petite Pâtisserie – The Little Bakery

La Tarte aux Pommes – Le Biscuite Roulé  
– Trois Croissants au Beurre – Le Nid d’Abeille

Based on the delicious cakes and biscuits found in a typical French bakery the work begins with a lively tale about Apple Pie. This is followed by a lyrical French waltz as the music interprets the Swiss Roll. The three butter croissants in movement three appear to be having a disagreement in a lively chromatic number as the instruments all vie for attention. The piece culminates with the arrival of a gâteau from the Alsace region, Bee’s Nest cake, which is a type of honey brioche.

Jean Françaix (1912–1997)

Divertissement

Prélude – Allegretto assai – Elégie – Scherzo

Jean Françaix was a French neoclassical composer, pianist and orchestrator, known for his prolific output and vibrant style. Françaix's style of writing is marked by lightness and wit, as well as a conversational style of interplay between the musical lines. A student of Nadia Boulanger (who had been a pupil of Fauré and a teacher to Ravel, Copland and Bernstein), Françaix once said his aim in writing music was to 'give pleasure'. This work manages to embody almost all the great virtues of Françaix's work in its short length, engaging wit, melodic grace and classical clarity.

The following comments were translated by Celia Skrine. In 1947, "I composed a 'Reed Trio' (a divertissement for oboe, clarinet and bassoon) which was quite an undertaking: the smaller the 'Aeolian consort,' the greater the danger of squeezing all the breath out of ones long-suffering performers by expecting them to play impossibly long musical phrases. Dear listeners, I know you may begin to doze off if a piece goes on too long, but my wish is that you should follow the example of the wise virgins and keep awake during my Trio. I hope you will also spare a kind thought or two for the efforts of my humble servants, the performers: their talents are easily underestimated, because their sensitive and intelligent artistry appears so perfectly easy and natural ..."

George Bizet (1838–1875)

Suite from *Carmen* (arr. Karen Evans)

Prelude – Seguidilla – Habanera – Gypsy chorus

French composer, George Bizet's passionate opera *Carmen* is arguably one of today's most loved romantic operas. The opera tells the story of Carmen, the beautiful gypsy and seductress who leaves army officer Don Jose for toreador Escamillo with disastrous consequences.

Alexandre Tansman (1897–1986)

Suite pour Trio d'Anches

Dialogue – Scherzino – Aria – Finale

Alexandre Tansman was widely known as a French composer and pianist. However, he was born in Poland in 1897 and attended the Łódź Conservatory and Warsaw University before moving to Paris in 1919. It was in Paris that his musical ideas were accepted and encouraged by his mentors and musical influences Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Ravel. Tansman later went on to write a biography of Stravinsky in 1948 that was extremely well received. In 1938, Tansman became a French citizen but shortly thereafter fled to Los Angeles in the face of impending war. His Jewish background put him in danger with Hitler's rise to power and it was the efforts of his friend Charlie Chaplin who helped manage to get him a visa into the USA. Returning to Paris in 1946 Tansman returned to his musical roots, drawing on his Jewish and Polish background to create some of his greatest works until his death in Paris, in 1986.

Like Stravinsky's music, Tansman's 'Suite pour Trio d'Anches' (Suite for Wind Trio, written in 1949) places great emphasis on the element of rhythm. Structured in four short movements arranged slow-fast-slow-fast in the manner of a Baroque trio sonata, the Suite features frequent ostinatos and passages contrasting slow-moving patterns with rapid ones. There is much detail in individual parts with emphasis on attack of notes and varying note lengths in the faster movements. The particularly moving 'Aria' movement is highlighted by a wandering, mournful oboe melody.