

Harmony Beyond Music

Introduction

A series of seven chamber recitals exploring themes of equality and diversity, performed by internationally recognised musicians brought together by Reiko Fujisawa, with introductions and insights devised by Peter Quantrill.

Description

Music has never been written, performed or appreciated in a bubble. It engages with the time and place of its composition and performance. Social and political themes are expressed through the music of the day. Racial and social justice, political and gender oppression, the struggle for freedom and recognition of the individual: music illuminates these themes as a mirror of its time.

Harmony Beyond Music features composers such as Joseph de Boulogne and Louise Farrenc, whose work is only now emerging from obscurity caused by their social status and the privileges of the white, male or wealthy. The series also includes masterpieces by the great names of the classical canon, which take on new significance in an unfamiliar context.

Music by J.S. Bach and Anton Webern is paired to show how harmonic language has mirrored political progress towards democracy and equality. Pablo Casals maintained self-imposed exile from his native Spain in protest against dictatorship, whilst the piano quintets of Shostakovich and Grazyna Bacewicz are shouts of joy in the teeth of oppression. Their music expresses the experiences, fears and hopes of generations past and present with a timeless power.

Perhaps the most celebrated freedom fighter in classical music was Beethoven. He makes several appearances in the series, as a friend to the black violinist George Bridgetower, as an inspiration to others, and simply as himself, a fiercely independent individual who resisted conformity with the norms and protocols of Vienna in the early 19th century.

Harmony Beyond Music takes themes of conflict, exclusion and prejudice into the concert hall, bringing us face to face with shadows from the past and giving us hope for the future.

Website

<https://www.reikofujisawa.com/harmony-beyond-music>

Performers

- Ofer Falk (violin)
- Richard Harwood (cello)
- I Musicanti with Leon Bosch (piano quintet)
- Principals of Sound (wind quintet)
- Matthew Denton (violin) and Emma Denton (cello)
- Reiko Fujisawa (piano)
- Peter Quantrill (introductions and insights)

Enquiries

admin@reikofujisawa.com

Harmony Beyond Music

Voices of Protest

- Arvo Pärt: Fratres
- Martinu: Cello Sonata no. 2
Interval
- Beethoven: Variations on 'Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen'
- Weinberg: Cello Sonata no. 1
- Casals: Song of the Birds



Protest doesn't have to take the form of grim defiance. Arvo Pärt rebelled from Soviet conformity with a new and timeless voice of calm. Martinu wrote his Second Sonata in the US as a wartime exile from his beloved Czech lands, but he translated his exile into music of joy in adversity. In the hands of Weinberg and Casals, the cello becomes an extension of the human voice, conquering struggle with heroic defiance.

Three's Company

- Charlotte Sohy: Piano Trio
- Rebecca Clarke: Piano Trio
Interval
- Cecilia McDowall: Cavatina at Midnight
- Clara Schumann: Piano Trio



A group of women composers resolving the piano-versus-strings tension at the heart of the piano trio. Clara Schumann broke a path for female musicians in 19th-century Germany as much more than a wife to her composer husband. Rebecca Clarke and Charlotte Sohy composed music of new-found freedom in early 20th-century England and France. Coming up to date, Cecilia McDowall encloses a tribute to music's perpetual revolutionary Beethoven at the heart of her magical nocturne.

Overshadowed Voices

- Joseph de Boulogne: String Quartet op. 1 no. 5 in G minor
- Hélène de Montgeroult: Piano Etudes nos. 55, 62, 97, 101 and 107
- Haydn: String Quartet op. 55 no. 1
Interval
- Grazyna Bacewicz: Piano Quintet no. 1



Born in Guadeloupe to an African slave, Joseph Boulogne became a champion fencer and virtuoso violinist at the court of King Louis XVI. Hélène de Montgeroult saved her aristocratic head from the revolutionary block by improvising on the Marseillaise, and went on to become the first female piano professor of the Paris Conservatoire. Grazyna Bacewicz put down her violin and dedicated her life to composition in post-war Poland. Their music is as rich and individual as their life-stories.

Beyond Black and White

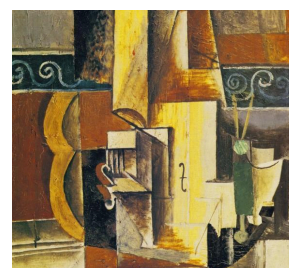
- Dussek: Violin Sonata op. 28 no. 1
- Jesse Montgomery: Peace for violin and piano
- George Walker: Violin Sonata no. 1
Interval
- Beethoven: 'Kreutzer' Violin Sonata



Beethoven wrote his mighty 'Kreutzer' Sonata for the Black virtuoso George Bridgetower. The concerto-like grandeur and heroism of the 'Kreutzer' tower over the 18th-century charm of Dussek's sonata for the salons of lords and ladies. Two pieces by Black Americans of our time remind us that making music in the chamber sphere continues to represent the struggle of inclusions and exclusions between musicians, institutions and the world at large.

Taking Liberties

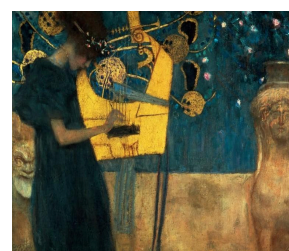
- Mel Bonis: *Soir, Matin* for violin, cello and piano op. 76
- Elise Bertrand: Sonata for violin and cello op. 8
- Lili Boulanger: *D'un Soir Triste, D'un matin de printemps* for piano trio
Interval
- Louise Farrenc: Piano Quintet no. 1 op. 30



Musical women in France during the 19th century took advantage of unrivalled freedom of education and opportunity. Louise Farrenc, Lili Boulanger and Mel Bonis all became important figures in Parisian musical life, even while struggling to overcome prejudice and personal tragedy. Juxtaposed with them is a lyrical and light-filled sonata from one of France's most talented young composers of our own time.

Outsiders

- Satie: Preludes nos. 1 & 2 for solo piano
- Langgaard: *Som en tyv en natten* for solo piano
- Nielsen: Wind Quintet
Interval
- Beethoven: Quintet for Piano and Winds



A quartet of composers who never belonged to polite society. Satie and his music took a sideways look at Belle Epoque Paris, while Rued Langgaard stuck to his Romantic voice in a Danish world of music dominated by Carl Nielsen. Growing up as a labourer's son on a small island, Nielsen himself never fitted other people's ideas of a sophisticated artist, while Beethoven tugged at the strings of patronage which dictated the terms of a composer as servant to his masters. Compromise was an alien word to all four composers, and their music is proud to be different.

Harmony Beyond Music

Every Note is Equal

- Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 - Preludes and Fugues nos. 1 and 24
interspersed with
- Webern: Piano Piece in C and Variations for solo piano
- Bach: The Art of Fugue - Contrapunctus 1 and 4 (arr. string quartet)
- Webern: Langsamer Satz for string quartet
Interval
- Shostakovich: Piano Quintet



Music in Europe changed forever at the end of the 17th century with a tuning system of 'equal temperament'. Bach's preludes and fugues were among the first to make this bold marriage of art and science. Then it changed again at the beginning of the 20th century with a revolutionary new composing method that further equalised the 12 notes of the scale, and Anton Webern made poetry from musical democracy. Composed in the depths of the Second World War, Shostakovich's Piano Quintet looks both back to Bach and forward to a brighter future.