

Programme

Gardel Tango Suite

Gardel, Arr. Hilario Flores-Coni

Commission sponsored by Northern Vacuums Ltd.

Old American Songs

Copland

Soloist: Jonathan Forbes Kennedy

~ Interval ~

Symphony No. 2 - A London Symphony

Vaughan Williams

About tonight's music

Tango Suite - Gardel, Arr. Hilario Flores-Coni

Originally written by Carlos Gardel with lyrics by Alfredo Le Pera, the pieces that form the Gardel Tango Suite have been an important part of Argentine popular music and culture since their creation.

All composed and recorded shortly before both authors died tragically in a plane crash in 1935, their words and music remain, to date, probably the most famous in the history of tango. While only Gardel's singing accompanied by a small ensemble can be heard in the original recordings, the Gardel Tango Suite is made of arrangements of these for full symphony orchestra, without vocals. They were specially commissioned to Hilario Flores-Coni by the City of Carlisle Orchestra and their conductor, Leon Reimer.

For these new arrangements and orchestrations, harmonic key changes throughout the four pieces have been introduced, combined with changing orchestration. While some accompaniments to the melodies have been left unchanged, certain sections have been completely re-harmonised and have had further counterpoint added. Several short bridge-passages have also been composed by the arranger and added to the Suite, using material from each corresponding section in order to balance the overall structure of each tango and the Suite as a whole.

However, all the melodies from the original songs have been left unaltered, and major and minor modes have also been respected, as they play an important role in each song's structure. In this way the essence of the originals, together with the powerful tone expressed by the lyrics, is still present in the new Suite.

"Volver" is about mixed emotions felt by anyone who returns to their hometown after many years of absence. In "Por una Cabeza", a strong contrast between each section depicts the madness of a man whose whole life depended on a horse who lost a race by one head. A typical love song can be heard in "El Día que me Quieras", with hints of tango hidden in pizzicato strings. Finally, "Mi Buenos Aires Querido" combines its nostalgic hymn heard in the introduction and coda, with a joyful middle section that portrays the famous city of tango.

Written by Hilario Flores-Coni

Old American Songs - Aaron Copland

Copland embraced American Protestant hymnody as an essential strain of the American soundscape, much as Ives had done before him. One of his most famous works, *Appalachian Spring*, makes extensive use of the Quaker song "Tis the Gift to Be Simple," and his *Emblems* for concert band employs a quotation from "Amazing Grace." But the main repository of Copland's interest in this repertoire are the two sets of his *Old American Songs*, where sacred songs - such as "Simple Gifts," "Zion's Walls," and "At the River" - rub shoulders with songs of the entirely non-sacred "popular" tradition - such as the children's nonsense song "I Bought Me a Cat," the minstrel song "Ching-a-Ring Chaw," and old-time ballads such as "The Golden Willow Tree" and "Long Time Ago."

To Copland, these melodies were a sort of sub-species of American popular music and they could provide a pleasant sort of relaxation from his work on more strenuous creative projects. When, in the winter of 1950, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears approached him about composing a set of American songs for them to premiere at the Aldeburgh Festival, Copland happily broke off his current composition to fulfill their commission. Neither set of songs received much attention from critics, who seemed to write them off as trivial. Certainly they are among Copland's less groundbreaking achievements, but they are nonetheless adept, and they have won

over audiences for more than half a century. They are among Copland's most frequently performed works, whether in their original versions for voice and piano, in Copland's subsequent arrangements for voice and orchestra, in the choral arrangements by Irving Fine, or in any number of other transcriptions that have entered circulation.

A London Symphony (Symphony No. 2) - Vaughan Williams

The symphony as pure abstraction didn't interest Vaughan Williams. He needed a subject, and he found one literally under his feet. In 1912, he wrote a famous article, "Who Wants the English Composer?" in which he said that, to be of value, the artist's work "must grow out of the very life of himself, the community in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs... Have we not all about us forms of musical expression which we can purify and raise to the level of great art?" Vaughan Williams drew from a folk culture of a new sort - not endangered or vanishing in the country but vibrantly alive in the narrow streets of the city. As if to illustrate the point, he was then hard at work on *A London Symphony*.

By the time the symphony had been finished (late 1913) and performed (March 27, 1914), Vaughan Williams was responding to inevitable questions about what it "means". In a 1920 programme note Vaughan Williams wrote that "a descriptive piece" was "not the intention of the composer," and suggested that "Symphony by a Londoner" might make a better title. Perhaps Beethoven's description of his "Pastoral" Symphony - "more expression of feeling than painting" - should be the last word on *A London Symphony* as programmatic music. On the other hand, few listeners can hear the opening bars of this symphony's prologue without imagining the calmly flowing waters of the river Thames as it gently moves through a sleeping city at dawn. The passages of rising fourths are fluid and impressionistic, but they also introduce our ears to a musical interval that will figure prominently in the rest of the symphony.

The *Allegro risoluto* arrives - not as a gentle dawn, but suddenly, with a terrible groaning cry, triple-fortissimo. What follows is an exposition is a whirlwind of fast quaver rhythms, musical-hall ballads and even ragtime tunes. The groaning theme returns, interrupting this lively but chaotic scene with another full-orchestra

outburst. City-dwellers need rest, and we begin to find it as the Cor Anglais draws out the opening motive of the prologue into a three-bar phrase that is passed around the orchestra. The flute's bird-like tune takes us to the movement's still core: an interlude for solo string octet and harp that is as peaceful as a city garden or church. The rest of the movement is a bend of recapitulation and coda, as the movements' themes steal in one by one.

The impressionistic *Lento*, once described by the composer as being like "Bloomsbury Square on a November afternoon," resists efforts to fit it into a formal scheme; its evolution is more a matter of shifting instrumental colours and unusual instrumental pairings than of harmonic structure or development of themes. After a four-bar prologue of very soft, Debussy-esque sliding chords, the Cor Anglais plays a folksong-like melody, which is consequently broken up and passed around the orchestra. The solo viola introduces one of the symphony's most descriptive interludes, when all harmonic emotion seems to cease, and we hear the "Lavender Cry" on various wind instruments, and the hansom cab horse giving his jingles a shake. After a vibrant climax the movement ends with distant echoes of the central interlude, and the lone viola fades away to nothing.

The very title "Scherzo (Nocturne)" suggests the dynamic light and dark of a cityscape, but the jig-like triplets that flit with such ease around the orchestra seem to come from the fairy-tale world of Ravel. There is a comic, stomping *fugato* on an augmented version of the jig theme, and a little dance to a wheezing mouth organ, evidently a bow to Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*. The scherzo ends not with a bang, but with a slow fade leaving only a murky, lonely scene, marked only by echoing scraps of jig and a new murmur of anguish in the cellos and basses.

That murmur blossoms into a full-throated cry as the finale begins. A slow, calm dead-march, suggesting deep tragedy follows. The march speeds up to a turbulent *Allegro*, coloured with the dissonant harmonies of the movement's opening. After returning to its original tempo, the march builds to three tremendous outbursts on the groaning theme and chugging rhythm from the first movement. This gives way suddenly to the work's Epilogue, introduced by the Westminster Chimes. A watery ripple of strings and winds

accompanies the return of the rising fourths of the symphony's prologue. The cries of the city are distant, then inaudible, as a cool wave washes over the scene and ebbs away. Asked about this moment in 1957, Vaughan Williams cited H.G. Wells' *Tono-Bungay*. Here is the passage from the novel:

"Out to open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass - pass. The river passes - London passes, England passes..."

Written by Leon Reimer
(Music Director and Conductor)

The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violins

Rachael Coslette
Katherine Bowness
Sarah Wilson
Alice Reid
Isobel Fenton
Philippa Hall
Beniamin Budzynski

2nd Violins

Robert Charlesworth
Lorna Strong
Catherine Swarbrick
Graham Barke
Eleanor Buchan

Cello

Kenneth Wilson
Mary Lawler
Robert Denby

Viola

Peter Wood

Double Bass

Ben imThurn

Flute/Piccolo

Lyn Young
Terry Mullett
Samantha Willis

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Raven

Oboe

Glenys Braithwaite
Anthea Lee

Bassoon

Andrew Smith
Ann Bishop

Trombone

Graham Harris
Giles Wilson
Ruth Wood
Cliff Atwood

Horn

Jen Woodward
Julie Ratcliffe
Justin Borlase
David Logie

Percussion

Sue Roe
Matthew Birkett
Toby Cass
Paddy Davies

Trumpet

Alan Branston
Gordon Kydd

Tuba

Jacob Gallagher

Timpani

David Birkett

Thank you



All proceeds from tonight's interval refreshments will go to support Carlisle Refugee Action Group, which works to raise awareness and support refugees locally and around the world. If you want to find out more about the work, please contact agill.cowc@gmail.com

www.cowc.co.uk

Facebook Carlisle Refugee Action Group.

City of Carlisle Orchestra: next concert

Saturday 2nd December

Programme to include **Symphony No.8 - Dvorak**
and **Prelude to the Meistersingers – Wagner.**

Other classical concerts coming up soon:

12th September (Tues) MusicLive@Lunchtime - Carlisle Cathedral
Autumn series starts here

24th September (Sun) Keswick Music Society -Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
Royal Northern Sinfonia, Mozart, Sinfonia Concertante violin and viola
Strauss, Horn Concerto No 1, Beethoven, Symphony No 3 (Eroica).

25th September (Mon) Penrith Music Club -Penrith Methodist Church
Northern Chamber Orchestra, Elizabeth Jordan (clarinet)

28th September (Thur) Carlisle Music Society - St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle
Consome Quartet, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert

16th October (Mon) Penrith Music Club - Penrith Methodist Church
Anna Huntley (mezzo-soprano), Simon Lepper (piano)

22nd October (Sun) Keswick Music Society - Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
Patrick Hemmerle (piano), Beethoven, Chopin

26th October (Thur) Carlisle Music Society - St Cuthbert's Church, Carlisle
Ashley Fripp (piano), Bach, Ravel



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