

Hannah Laurens & Tom McCoy
Music for Mothering Sunday

The Limes, Standlake, 26th May 2017

Programme

**Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart**
(1756 – 1791)

Sonata in E minor, KV 304 (300c)
I. Allegro
II. Tempo di Menuetto

Antonín Dvořák
(1841 – 1904)

Sonatina in G major, Op.100
I. Allegro risoluto
II. Larghetto
III. Molto vivace
IV. Allegro

Willem Kes
(1856 – 1934)

**Charakteristische Tanzweisen,
Op.3**

Interval

Robert Schumann
(1810 – 1856)

Sonata in A minor, Op. 105
I. Mit Leidenschaftlichem
Ausdruck
II. Allegretto
III. Lebhaft

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart's father, Leopold Mozart, regarded his young son as 'the miracle which God allowed to be born in Salzburg'; he felt it as his duty to nurture young Wolfgang's precocious talent and display the 'miracle' to the world. As a result, Wolfgang spent much of his formative years travelling across Europe with his close family,



performing before aristocracy and the public. At the age of 17, Mozart was employed as a court musician in his home town, Salzburg, where he composed many fine works including the five violin concertos. However, he was dissatisfied in Salzburg – the salary was low and it did not provide the opportunity to compose opera – so he resigned from this post in 1777. Mozart went travelling once more to look for new employment.

This journey took Mozart to Augsburg, Mannheim and Paris, accompanied by his mother, Anna Maria. Mozart loved her dearly: she was kind, loving and even appreciated his crude sense of humour. She ensured a healthy spirit in the family, and helped to manage the tension that sometimes existed between the conscientious Leopold and the capricious, party-loving Wolfgang.

However, this trip was to end tragically for Anna Maria: whilst in Paris she suddenly became ill and died in July 1778. Wolfgang was left alone and still without a steady job, despite 16 months away – he had refused the various offers of work that he had received. It was during this time that Mozart turned his hand to writing a set of sonatas for keyboard and violin, wishing to outclass similar duets he heard earlier on the tour in Munich by Joseph Schuster in 1777. Of Mozart's 35 Violin Sonatas, this work is the only one in a minor key; it may be a romantic notion to draw parallels between the life and works of a composer, but the darker tone of the music resonates strongly with what was a painfully emotional period in Mozart's life.

Antonín Dvořák

Originating from a humble background in Nelahozeves, a village near Prague, Dvořák's career was given the boost it needed when he won the Austrian State Prize for Composition in 1874. Unknown to him, the leader of the jury was none less than Johannes Brahms, who greatly admired Dvořák's music and would continue to speak highly of him. Brahms put Dvořák in touch with his own publisher, for whom Dvořák composed the popular *Slavonic Dances* in 1878.



Otilie (Otilka) Dvořáková

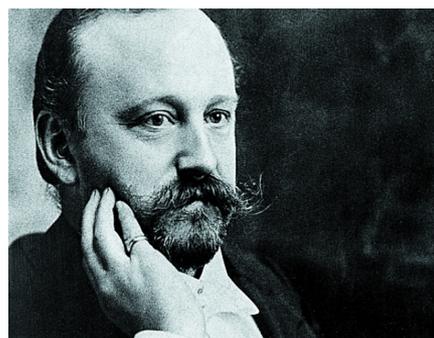
Antonín Dvořák and his wife Anna

Antonín (Toník) Dvořák II

Having gained an international reputation, Dvořák continued to compose, and performed widely across Europe. He met other famous musicians, including the violinist Joseph Joachim, for whom he wrote his Violin Concerto (although Joachim never performed it). It is in contrast to this esteemed background that the dedicatees of the Sonatina really stand out, for Dvořák wrote: 'Dedicated to my children, Otilka and Toník to mark the completion of my 100th work'. At the time of composition Otilie was fifteen years old and Toník just ten, a point reflected in the relative technical demands of the two parts.

Willem Kes

Kes was born in the city of Dordrecht in the Netherlands. His first lessons were given by the German Ferdinand Böhme, and he went on to study with other well-regarded musicians, including the celebrated violinists Ferdinand David in Leipzig and Wieniawski in Brussels. In 1888 he became the first principal conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra



in Amsterdam, and was a strict disciplinarian: any players late to a rehearsal would be fined, anyone playing badly would have to put in extra practice, and refreshments were not allowed during concerts or rehearsals. He also made demands from the audience, demanding silence in the hall – unusual for the time. However, through Kes's leadership, the Concertgebouw became an internationally-recognised orchestra. Among the many significant works he premiered in the Netherlands was Dvořák's 9th Symphony, '*From The New World*', composed around the same time as the Sonatina.



Robert Schumann

Schumann typifies the tortured romantic artist: a well-read intellectual prone to extremes of emotion. His wife, Clara, was the daughter of Schumann's piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck; he first met her when she was an 11-year old child prodigy, nine years his junior. Robert proposed to Clara when she was 18, but Friedrich was vehemently opposed to the marriage. After a legal battle, the court ruled in favour of the couple, who were wed three years later in 1840, provoking Schumann's prolific 'Year of Song'.

Clara was a remarkable woman: on top of being one of the most highly-regarded pianists of the time, making her the main breadwinner, she bore eight children (one of whom died in infancy), and also had to cope with Robert's mental difficulties. He personified his bipolar nature with the characters Florestan and Eusebius: one fiery and passionate, the other intimate and dreamy. In later life Schumann's visions became even more powerful, to the extent he attempted suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine in early 1854. The 1st Sonata for Piano and Violin was written a few years earlier in a matter of days, and was premiered by Clara Schumann and Ferdinand David – who taught Kes – in March 1852.

Hannah Laurens, violin

Hannah studied at the Junior Department of the Utrecht Conservatory and received her BA and MA from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Highlights of her career include the 2nd prize in the National Dutch Violin Competition (under 17s), live performances on Dutch radio and television, and solo performances of the Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky violin concertos. Hannah teaches the violin in Eynsham alongside working on a PhD at the University of St Andrews on Aristotle. Hannah plays a Montagnana/Cerutti violin, Cremona 1740/1880.

Tom McCoy, piano

Tom read Music at the University of Bristol, majoring in piano performance, before continuing his studies with an MMus at Royal Holloway, writing his final dissertation on the harmonic language of Rachmaninov. From 2006, Tom worked at the Marlborough School, Woodstock, where he led the choir on foreign trips and organised the music for numerous concerts and shows. Pursuing his own specialism, Tom now teaches piano in Freeland and in three schools: Oxford High, Kingham Hill and Stowe. In June 2016 Tom performed Mozart's Concerto No. 13 in C major as a soloist.

Hannah and Tom formed a duo in September 2015 and gave their debut recital in The Music Room in Eynsham last May. They have future concerts scheduled in Oxford and St Andrews. Further information can be found at www.laurensandmccoy.co.uk.