

FENELLA HUMPHREYS AND MARTIN ROSCOE

VIOLIN AND PIANO Fauré100

 Sunday 7 July  3pm – 5pm  St John's Church

Fenella Humphreys, winner of the 2023 BBC Music Magazine Premiere Recording Award, has attracted critical admiration and audience acclaim with the grace and intensity of her performances. With her playing described as 'alluring', 'unforgettable' and 'a wonder', Fenella is one of the UK's most established and versatile violinists, having also won the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Instrumental Award. She enjoys a busy career combining chamber music with solo work, performing in venues around the world and is frequently broadcast on the BBC, Classic FM, Scala Radio and international radio stations.

With a career spanning over five decades, Martin Roscoe is 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. The respect in which he is universally held reflects his deeply thoughtful musicianship and easy rapport with audiences and fellow musicians alike.

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor, Op. 75

1. *Allegro agitato – adagio*; 2. *Allegretto moderato – allegro molto*

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

This afternoon's recital marks the centenary of Fauré's death, including music by his teacher, two of his pupils, and a gifted younger contemporary.

Saint-Saëns, with whom Fauré studied from 1861 to 1865, composed his First Violin Sonata in 1885. Its two extended movements are each divided into two, so that the overall design reflects a conventional four-movement structure.

The restless opening eventually gives way to a more lyrical theme for the violin over rippling arpeggio figures on the piano. The second section is effectively the slow movement, beginning and ending calmly, but with a central passage built from an obsessively repeated rhythmic pattern.

The second movement's first half is a light, airy scherzo, eventually petering out in fragments of the opening theme and a solemn chorale-like idea for the piano. The fast second section forms the finale. A broad, song-like theme prepares the way for a quiet episode, when the first movement's lyrical melody returns. The music then gathers momentum and virtuosity, for both players, driving to a triumphant conclusion.

Romance in B flat, Op. 28

Andante, Op. 75

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Fauré's Romance for violin and piano was composed in 1877. It begins and ends in graceful lyricism, with a more turbulent central section; a brief unaccompanied violin cadenza leads to the return of the opening

In its final form, the Andante dates from July 1897. It is believed to be based on the second movement of the Violin Concerto on which Fauré worked between 1878 and 1879, of which only the first movement survives. The poised grace of the opening and closing sections are complemented by a more animated central passage, and Fauré's typically subtle use of harmony runs right through the piece.

Impromptu Concertant

George Enescu (1881-1955)

Enescu was one of the twentieth century's most remarkably gifted and versatile musicians. He left his native Romania at the age of seven to study composition at the Vienna Conservatory. After graduating, three years later, he went on to study with Massenet and Fauré in Paris. *Impromptu Concertant* (the title implies a concerto-like style) dates from 1903, but was not published until 1958. Its two main sections are played without a break. The first is energetic and impassioned,



full of wide leaps for both instruments. The second, a little slower, is expressively more restrained. Enescu asks the violinist to play much of this section using only the instrument's bottom string, to create a rather husky sound. The ending is quiet and gentle.

INTERVAL

Nocturne; Cortège

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Lili Boulanger achieved a considerable amount in her tragically short life, dogged by illness following an attack of pneumonia at the age of three. She did not begin formal musical education until she was sixteen, yet three years later she became the first woman to win the Paris Conservatoire's prestigious Prix de Rome.

Nocturne, composed in 1911, originally for flute and piano, is a gentle piece whose quietly insistent accompanying figures offset the violin's lyrical melodic line. *Cortège* dates from June 1914. The French word 'cortège' can mean any kind of procession, not necessarily a funeral one. This procession is full of carnival high spirits.

Violin Sonata in A minor, 'Sonate Posthume'

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ravel composed this, his first chamber work, in 1897, shortly after beginning his second period of study at the Paris Conservatoire, with Fauré as his composition teacher. It consists of a single movement, though possibly others were intended to follow. It is thought to have had a performance at the Conservatoire, probably by George Enescu (though there is some doubt about this) and Ravel. The score was discovered only after Ravel's death, and the work was not publicly performed or published until 1975, with the title *Sonate Posthume*.

The music's predominant air of cool detachment, established by the violin's unaccompanied opening theme, is typical of Ravel in certain moods. An extended central passage features an ecstatic violin line soaring and dipping over a richly harmonised piano part. The opening theme returns and eventually leads the music to its rarefied conclusion.

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A, Op. 13

1. *Allegro molto*; 2. *Andante*; 3. *Allegro vivo*;

4. *Allegro quasi presto*

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

This was Fauré's first chamber work, written between 1875 and 1876. The surging energy of the piano's expansive, lyrical melody is marked by syncopated rhythms, carrying over into the first of the violin's two themes, and propelling the whole movement. A distinctive rhythm also characterises the opening of the Andante, this time a gently pulsing figure set up by the piano as support for the violin's tenderly yearning phrases. The music gradually builds to a passionate climax before gently dying away.

The third movement is a dazzlingly vivacious scherzo, full of quick-fire exchanges between the two instruments; a calmer section provides a temporary let-up. The finale begins with a melody for the violin whose gentle opening masks an air of quiet determination that sees the music through to its powerful conclusion.