

Love *beyond words*

AN Easter Celebration Concert

Sunday, April 11, 2021, 11:30 am

featuring



**Kathryn
Hilger**
VIOLA



**Nathan
Humphrey**
VIOLIN



**Kai-Han
Yang**
PIANO



**Li-Hsin
Chen**
PIANO



≡ program ≡

Parmenides Variations on a Mood (world premier)Robert Sandford (1964-)
Li-Hsin Chen, Piano

First Meeting.....Eric Coates (1886-1957)
Kathryn Hilger, Viola
Li-Hsin Chen, Piano

Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108, Movt. II....Johann Brahms (1833-1897)

Salut d'amour Op. 12.....Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Nathan Humphrey, Violin
Li-Hsin Chen, Piano

Piano Trio "Kegelstatt" in E-flat Major, KV. 498.....
.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

- I. Andante
- II. Menuetto
- III. Rondeaux: Allegretto

Nathan Humphrey, Violin
Kathryn Hilger, Viola
Li-Hsin Chen, Piano

Sheep May Safely Graze.....J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Selections from Operas

I. Mélodie (from Orfeo ed Euridice).....C. W. Gluck (1714-1787)

II. Intermezzo (from Cavalleria Rusticana).....Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

III. Lippen Schweigen (from Die Lustige Witwe).....Franz Lehar (1870-1948)

IV. Brindisi (from La Traviata).....Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

V. Nessun Dorma (from Turandot).....Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Li-Hsin Chen and Kai-Han Yang, Piano

≡ program notes ≡

ROBERT SANDFORD (1964-): PARMENIDES VARIATIONS ON A MOOD (FROM THE COMPOSER)

All that survives of the work of the ancient Greek philosopher, Parmenides, are fragments that hint at an age when philosophy and mythology, intellect and soul, were still one. Today, we forget that ideas that define us (like "progress") have deep tangled roots; that they have us more than we have them; that, as it is with all the arts, they are the soul singing us into life. Forget-

ting this, we live estranged from our nature.

The first iteration of this piece written nearly 30 years ago was little more than a sketch for guitar. It was my of honoring the mood of remembrance that seized me when I first meditated on Parmenides' fragments. Now, essentially re-written for piano, it is living art singing full-throated the call from the depths to fall in love again with God's most beautiful creation, the human soul.

ERIC COATES (1886-1957): FIRST MEETING

First meeting (souvenir) stands as a rare chamber work from a British composer best known for his orchestral miniatures as commandeered by generations of BBC producers, Coates' much-loved Sleepy lagoon still ushering in Desert Island Discs. Composed in late 1941, First meeting was written on the request of Coates' past viola teacher at the Royal Academy, the esteemed performer and near-evangelical champion of the instrument, Lionel Tertis. Having enrolled in Trinity College of Music in 1892, Tertis was eager to commemorate his fiftieth anniversary as a viola player and invited his erstwhile student to compose a work in celebration, Coates responding with a tender vignette of their first encounter.

According to Coates' son Austin, the informal 'premiere' play-through of the work drew a warm reception from the elderly Tertis: 'after lunch we went into the drawing room, and Tertis and my father played the work... Tertis played as if he'd known the work all his life... He was so delighted that he insisted on their doing it again.' Yet curiously Tertis never further performed the work. While there is understood to have been no rift between the pair, when the piece was published in 1943 it was transcribed for violin and piano – presumably as a more marketable duo amid war-straitened times – and newly inscribed with a dedication to Coates' son "on his twenty-first birthday". Still bearing the hallmarks of Coates' warm, lyrical style, First meeting nonetheless marked a shift in the composer's approach, moving away from the easy sparkle of his many orchestral miniatures to a more complex, rigorous composition style. Composed in ternary form, the delicate brooding of the nocturne-like opening gives way to a more spirited central section. The work's closing reprise sees the viola line floating across the top register of the instrument, aloft two final pentatonic spreads in the piano.

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934): SALUT D'AMOUR OP. 12

British composer Edward Elgar's beloved wife, Alice, was his greatest champion and brought him through some severe bouts of low self-esteem and depression. Had it not been for her constant support, Elgar almost certainly never would have persevered to write some of Western music's most beloved pieces, such as his Enigma Variations and his fleet, tender Salut d'Amour.

Salut d'Amour was British composer Edward Elgar's first published work and fittingly so. While Elgar and his beloved wife Alice were courting, the composer went on holiday in 1888 with an old friend. Alice bid him a happy trip with a poem that she had written called "Love's Grace." In short order, Elgar responded with a musical reply dedicated to her and entitled "Liebesgruss" (Love's Greeting)—and a marriage proposal. They were soon married, and Liebesgruss was soon sold to Elgar's publisher for virtually pennies. But it was a milestone, and it was the beginning of so many great things

continued

to come for Elgar and his soul mate, Alice. Not long after, Elgar's publisher changed the title to something more French sounding, *Salut d'Amour*, and the work has been winning hearts ever since. Though the work is simple and direct, one can't help but hear the joy and devotion for Alice that inspired the young composer. Here is Elgar at the beginning of his great career with a song-poem to his beloved. When Alice died in Elgar's arms in 1920, Elgar grieved to a friend: "Bless her! You, who like some of my work, must thank her for all of it, not me. I should have destroyed it all and joined Job's wife in the congenial task of cursing God."

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791): PIANO TRIO "KEGELSTATT" IN E-FLAT MAJOR, KV. 498

Mozart signed the autograph copy of this trio "Vienna, 27 July, 1786, while playing skittles." As happens frequently to musical compositions, a mysterious statement from the composer leads to a fanciful interpretation being applied to the music in this case, the popular rumor that Mozart dashed off this composition while playing a game of skittles in the street. ("Kegelstatt" means "skittle alley".) The finely crafted music would indicate, though, that Mozart spent some careful time composing this work, and the inscription more likely refers in general to happy times spent with friends. The trio is in three movements: a moderato, a minuet, and an allegretto. Mozart wrote the piano part for one of his students and the clarinet part for a friend. As he often enjoyed being in the middle of the musical texture, he played the viola part himself.

The "Kegelstatt" Trio is cast in three movements. The opening Andante, in sonata form, favors the clarinet (or violin) and piano in the presentation and development of the two main themes, although the viola does play the second theme in the recapitulation. The second movement is a robust minuet. In the contrasting trio section, in minor mode, the viola becomes more active with agitated triplet accompaniment figuration. The main theme of the trio returns in the coda to the closing minuet. The finale, a seven-part rondo, exhibits the influence of the concerto style with virtuosic writing for all three instruments and equal distribution of thematic material.

J. S. BACH (1685-1750): SHEEP MAY SAFELY GRAZE

The Aria *Sheep May Safely Graze* in B flat major, written in 1713 by German composer J.S. Bach, is one of the most frequently played selections from his cantata *Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd*, BWV 208 ("The lively hunt is all my heart's desire"). Originally *Schafe können sicher weiden* ("Sheep May Safely Graze") was arranged for second soprano (Pales, a Roman god was a deity of shepherds) and accompanied by two recorders and continuo. The cantata of which it forms a part was originally written for a birthday celebration, that of Christian, Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels. Bach was based at the nearby court of Weimar, and musicians from both courts appear to have joined together in the first performance in Weissenfels. Bach is known to have used the music again for other celebrations, but it remained unpublished until after his death.

This aria has been widely adapted in transcription to many instruments including the piano duets.