



BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION

7 January 2019 | 1.10pm
Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow

PROGRAMME

A Programme of the Music to be played under the direction of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch, at 6 Keppel Street, Bloomsbury, on Tuesday afternoon, 18 February 1896, at 5 o'clock.

John Jenkins Pavan for two viols (c. 1600)

Henry Lawes Two songs, accompanied by the lute

- i. Come from the Dungeon (pub. 1659)
- ii. Why shouldst thou swear (pub. 1652)

John Jenkins Three pieces for two viols, accompanied by the harpsichord

- i. Ayre
- ii. Ayre
- iii. Saraband

Henry Purcell Suite of three pieces for the harpsichord in D major (c. 1680)

- i. Prelude
- ii. Almand
- iii. Hornpipe

Johann Kuhnau Sonata for the harpsichord: 'The combat between David and Goliath' — No. 1 of a Set of six Sonatas entitled *Musical Representations of some Bible Stories*' (1700)

Benedetto Marcello Viol Sonata Op. 1, No. 4, accompanied by the harpsichord (c. 1720)

G. F. Handel Sonata No. 4 in E major for the violin, accompanied by the harpsichord (c. 1720)

J. S. Bach Prelude and fugue, No. VII in E flat major, from The Well-tempered Clavier, Book II

Jean Philipp Rameau *Cinquième Concert* for harpsichord, violin and viol (1742)

- i. Fugue La Forqueray
- ii. LaCupis
- iii. LaMarais

'Early music' has become a slippery term in recent years. It is now routinely employed in relation to music ranging from 12th-century troubadour songs to performances of Stravinsky ballets on gut strings — and to just about everything in between. If anything, it has come to be regarded as signifying a mindset rather than any particular historical period. The early music movement emerged in distinction to the classical musical culture that had become consolidated by the late nineteenth century. Rather than regarding performances as the revelation of an individual composer's ideal, it sought to understand the music of the past in a multi-dimensional context. Music became the starting point for an adventure, a voyage through time via instrumental technologies, aesthetic ideals and cultural values, approaching the past as though it were a foreign country.

The original champion of this revolution was Arnold Dolmetsch. Born in Le Mans in 1858, Dolmetsch trained as both a piano builder and organ builder under his father and grandfather. On completing his studies at the Brussels Conservatoire, he moved to London. He enrolled at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in its inaugural year, studying violin with Henry Holmes and composition and harmony with Frank Bridge. During his time there, Dolmetsch embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the music collections of both the RCM library and British Museum, where he encountered music and references to instruments that had been all but forgotten. Consequently, he employed his craftsmanship to produce copies of numerous antiquated instruments, including viols, lutes, virginals and clavichords.

Dolmetsch became well known in the artistic circles of late-nineteenth-century London, producing and performing music for performances of Shakespeare plays. He became associated with figures including Gabriele D'Annunzio, George Bernard Shaw, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, and William Morris — father of the Arts and Crafts movement — after whose encouragement Dolmetsch completed his first harpsichord in 1893. The following year, Dolmetsch moved to 6 Keppel Street in the city's Bloomsbury area, where he initiated a concert series. The performances were exclusive events, attended by some of London's leading artistic and literary bohemians.

This concert reimagines one of these concerts, as given on the 18th of February 1896. Preserved in the RCM archives, the programmes for the Keppel Street concerts provide a fascinating insight into the diverse and occasionally esoteric repertory Dolmetsch with which was acquainted. However, rather than presenting musical works as dead museum pieces, Dolmetsch possessed a unique imagination, which enabled him to allow music of the past to speak to listeners in a contemporary tongue. His programmes juxtaposed music by composers from England, France, Germany and Italy alike, and included music by Purcell, Rameau, Bach and Handel alongside lesser-known composers such as Johann Kuhnau, Benedetto Marcello and William Lawes. Dolmetsch's programming demonstrated a nascent kind of curatorial overview, juxtaposing the competing and parallel stylistic currents that characterised European music in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Over the course of a long and productive career, Dolmetsch went on to become a celebrated teacher, writer and multi-instrumentalist. He established an internationally renowned centre for the study and production of historical instruments in Haslemere in Surrey, and fathered a large family of celebrated musicians and scholars (both figuratively and biologically). He could hardly have known how his work would fundamentally transform our understanding of music, and the sense of how it defined our relationships with the past. Nevertheless, it was during the concerts at Keppel Street that the revolution first began — a revolution that was to last, at the very least, a century and a quarter.

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PERSONNEL

John Butt Director/Harpsichord (Mrs Elodie Dolmetsch)

Rachel Redmond Soprano (Miss Harding)

Huw Daniel Violin (Mr Arnold Dolmetsch)

Jonathan Manson Viol (Miss Hélène Dolmetsch)

Alison McGillivray Viol (Mr Arnold Dolmetsch)

Alex McCartney Lute (Mr Arnold Dolmetsch)

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