

Southwell u3a Music Lovers Group – 4 March 2020

YouTube Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ-BqfXjq0o&list=PLQHiO9b3Dnlu4pahrt2OXQO1DBJBz3x3Z>

Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963) Sonata for Flute and Piano FP164 14:00
Francis Poulenc: Sonata for Flute & Piano - Claudio Barile, flute - Paula Peluso, piano
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ-BqfXjq0o>

The Sonate pour flûte et piano (Flute Sonata), FP 164, by Francis Poulenc was written in 1957. It is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, an American patron of chamber music. Poulenc composed it for the flautist Jean-Pierre Rampal, and he and Rampal gave the première in June 1957 at the Strasbourg Music Festival. It is now one of Poulenc's best known works and is a prominent feature in 20th-century flute repertoire.

Anton Bruckner (1824 – 1896) Symphony No. 4 in E Flat Major (The Romantic) 1:11:07
London Symphony Orchestra Conductor Bernard Haitink / François-Xavier Roth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oix_tX2FUb8

(At the meeting on 4 March, the last before lockdown, some of the movements were omitted) Bruckner's Fourth Symphony is the only one of his nine symphonies to which he gave a subtitle. Although he was not essentially a Romantic composer his Romantic Symphony does evoke Teutonic Romanticism in its allusions to the hunt and in its brilliant spotlighting of the horns. Here we play the first and third movement, with the LSO and different conductors.

Bruckner cast this symphony's first movement (**Moving, not too fast. 22:41**) in a sort of extended sonata form. Nonetheless it is, in fact, quite unorthodox in its development of motifs and its harmonic layout. Bruckner never seems to be in a great hurry, and the opening subject of the Fourth Symphony is a case in point, unrolling over the grand course of seventy-four measures. The solo horn is given pride of place right at the outset, introducing a haunting melody that seems to hover between the major and the minor modes. Other wind instruments join in, strongly suggesting the awakening of nature, and then the melody develops with full orchestration. The second theme group arrives with a lighter texture and an insouciant, dance-like tune, reminding us that Bruckner had some instinctive connection to the Austrian countryside. Here's how he described the first movement: Medieval city—dawn—morning calls sound from the towers—the gates open—on proud steeds the knights ride into the open—woodland magic embraces them—forest murmurs—bird songs. Not romantic?

Andante quasi allegretto 16:28 Though some interpreters view this movement more as a study in out-and-out tragedy, it might be worth at least acknowledging that, in his scenario, Bruckner called this a "rustic love-scene" in which "a peasant boy woos his sweetheart, but she scorns him" (familiar territory to Bruckner personally).

The Scherzo 10:27 Its opening mirrors the beginning of the first movement, with horns (here a whole section of them) proclaiming what Bruckner actually calls in the score a Jagdthema (Hunting Theme)—quietly, as if from a distance—against a hushed accompaniment of string tremolos. Other brass instruments join in the hunt, and after considerable working out and quite a lot of thrilling dissonance brought about by piling up sonorities above pedal points, we arrive at the relaxing contrast of the Trio section. "The Hunting of the Hare" is what Bruckner called his Scherzo, with the Trio being a "Dance Melody During the Huntsmen's Meal."

Finale or “Folk Festival 22:00” as Bruckner identified it in his program, without further elaboration one imagines Bruckner seated at the organ in Saint Florian or Linz with one foot planted firmly on the pedal-board while his hands build all manner of tension on the manuals.

Anton Bruckner Os Justi (Motet) arr. Stephen Hicks - Septura (Brass Septet) 4:44

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fggzubxZpDw>

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820 - 1881) Violin Concerto No 4 in D Minor Op 31 30:00

Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen Conductor Paavo Järvi, Hilary Hahn violin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tctk3Uy1w5s>

Andante-Moderato 9:13 Adagio Religioso 5:53

Scherzo: Vivace-Trio: Meno mosso 4:18 Finale Marzial 10:34

Vieuxtemps was born in Belgium (then part of The Netherlands). He received his first violin instruction from his father and a local teacher. Soon he was giving concerts in Liège and Brussels where he met the violinist Charles Auguste de Bériot, with whom he began studies. In 1829, Bériot took him to Paris where he made a successful concert debut, but he had to return the next year because of the July Revolution and Bériot's marriage to his mistress Maria Malibran. A tour of Germany in 1833 brought friendship with Louis Spohr and with Robert Schumann, who compared the boy to Niccolò Paganini. During the following decade he visited various European cities, impressing with his virtuosity not only audiences but also famous musicians such as Hector Berlioz and Paganini himself.

His Violin Concerto No. 1 was acclaimed; Berlioz found it "a magnificent symphony for violin and orchestra". Based in Paris, Vieuxtemps continued to compose with great success and performed throughout Europe and the United States. He was particularly admired in Russia where he resided permanently between 1846 and 1851 as a court musician of Tsar Nicholas I and soloist in the Imperial Theatre. He founded the violin school of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. In 1871, he returned to his native country to accept a professorship at the Brussels Conservatory, where his most illustrious pupil was Eugène Ysaÿe. A paralytic stroke disabled his right arm and he moved to Paris again but another stroke in 1871 ended his career as a violinist for good.

The bulk of Vieuxtemps' compositions were for his own instrument (violin) including seven violin concertos. Vieuxtemps's personal favourite among his concertos was the Violin Concerto No 4 in D minor Op 31, which he composed while he was court violinist in St Petersburg. A heroic work on a substantial scale, it was described by Berlioz—who was perhaps comparing it with his own Harold in Italy for viola and orchestra—as a symphony with violin solo. In fact, Vieuxtemps's writing for the orchestra is as assured and resourceful, and sometimes as imaginative, as his treatment of the violin, though there is no doubt that the solo instrument remains the leading actor in the drama.

Encore: J. S. Bach: Partita nr. 1 BWV 1002 Sarabande

4:21

Guarneri del Gesù Violin

Vieuxtemps is also known for owning and playing what is now referred to as the Vieuxtemps Guarneri del Gesù, (literally “of Jesus”) a violin, built in 1741, that is considered one of the finest examples of the craftsmanship of Giuseppe Guarneri. At Vieuxtemps' funeral the violin was carried upon a pillow behind the hearse carrying the body. The instrument was later played by noted violin masters like Yehudi Menuhin, Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. In January 2012 the instrument was purchased, by a private collector, for an undisclosed sum and lifetime use of it bequeathed to violinist Anne Akiko Myers.

Pieces by Anne Akiko Myers from:

Anne Akiko Meyers World Premiere of Arvo Pärt's (b 1935) Estonian Lullaby 4:06
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHHnQY-eMk4>

Fritz Kreisler (1875 – 1962) Liebeslied 4:30
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnW_Nhpt7no

'O Magnum Mysterium' Morten Lauridsen (b 1943) Meyers & Eguchi 6:19
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTr6a9ctTpl>

Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No 4

The Andante first movement opens quietly, almost mystically, in the manner of a chorale. This is only the beginning of an extended and deeply expressive introduction that stealthily gathers pace, fills out in orchestration, and briefly turns turbulent and tempestuous, only to subside into a solemn march-rhythm and a swirling ostinato-figure in the strings that suggests billowing clouds. The soloist finally enters at stratospheric heights, and launches into a voluble, dramatic expostulation, assisted by the orchestra. A lyrical contrasting theme, Moderato, completes the roster of the movement's material, whereupon the soloist launches into a passionate cadenza featuring fearsome triple- and quadruple-stopping.

A brief, swaggering cadential passage fades out on a long-held horn note that provides a link to the second movement, Adagio religioso. This too begins with a chorale-like idea, in the woodwind; and the violin's first entry is largely concerned to decorate and extend this idea in a vein of warm sentiment. Ardour and virtuosity are not far away, however, and the movement turns dramatic for a while. When the passions subside we find the violin in a chaste duet with a harp, as it revisits the pieties of the movement's opening, rising to a brief pinnacle of ecstasy before the close.

Vieuxtemps gave his performers the option of omitting the next movement, Vivace, but that course is not taken on this disc. It is a full-scale scherzo (in D minor) and trio (in D major), the former largely based on the violin's opening theme in skittish dactylic rhythm. The scherzo's deft, swooping phrases form the backbone for a remarkable bout of pyrotechnic virtuosity. The central trio is more rustic in character, with drone fifths in the orchestra and hunting-horn thirds and sixths in the solo part that are taken up and imitated by the horns themselves. After the reprise of the scherzo a scintillating coda brings this brilliant movement to an end.

Vieuxtemps calls his last movement Finale marziale. It begins with a review of the material of the first movement by the orchestra alone, thus allowing the soloist a much-needed rest—which is prolonged as the orchestra launches into the festive march-tune that is the finale's main focus. The soloist re-enters, and soon takes over the march-tune, though in a good-humoured and less than military manner. Hair-raising fusillades of triple-stopping and trills punctuate the recurrences of the march, and as the end is approached the violin indulges in ever more breathtaking prodigies of bravura right up to the concluding bars.