

By kind permission of  
the Master and fellows



## Francis Pott Cello Sonata

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 | 8pm

Trinity College Chapel

Harrison Cole ..... piano

Sarah Henderson ..... 'cello

---

### PROGRAMME

---

ERNEST MOERAN Prelude for 'cello and piano  
(1894–1950)

FRANK BRIDGE Allegro Appassionato, H. 82  
(1879–1941)

FRANCIS POTT Sonata for 'cello and piano  
(1957–)

- I. Poco lento–Moderato con moto
- II. Allegro–Meno mosso–Allegro–Meno mosso, spazioso–Allegro
- III. Cadenza: Liberamente [*segue:*]
- IV. Elegy: Adagio  
molto–Adagietto–Allegro  
agitato–Larghissimo–Epilogue: Poco lento–Allegro

---

### PROGRAMME NOTES

---

#### Francis Pott: sonata for 'cello and piano [1995/ revised 2001]

The Sonata began as a memorial to my father, who had died of cancer in 1983, but composition was overtaken in 1995 by the sudden death of my mother. The solo cadenza movement and final elegy are therefore the products of sharper memory and grief than what precedes them. The style is unrepentantly romantic, as befits a work whose frame of reference is the 'cello's mainstream antecedence (Brahms, Rachmaninov,

Fauré, Elgar, Bridge, Barber). The Sonata embodies many aspects of cyclic form (whereby themes recur in changed guises across successive movements). The tritonal key relationship of the first movement's two main themes reflects a general ambivalence of tonality which persists until the end of the work. A varied recapitulation presents these themes in reverse order while also finding ways to blur the distinction between them by superimposition.

The Scherzo is a compound of many influences, including the Sonatas of Beethoven (his Opus 69) and Shostakovich. Two sections of more or less equal length are followed by a Trio section of slower material. A compressed return of the faster music leads to continuation of the Trio and to an impassioned climax. A headlong further Allegro abruptly dissipates in a retrospective coda. A lengthy 'cello cadenza now revisits past themes before leading into an Adagio, its onset marked by re-awakening of the piano. In the score appear these lines by the Second World War poet Alun Lewis:

*Out of the depths of the sea  
Love cries and cries in me.  
And summer blossoms break above my head  
With all the unbearable beauty of the dead.*

The music unfolds rhapsodically without losing sight of its principal motifs, now heard sometimes in inverted form. This leads into an Allegro characterised by driving rhythms and extensive reference to first movement themes. The music broadens into a declamatory lament which subsides at length into the Epilogue. Just when this seems doomed to final extinction it flickers back to life, before an ending of enigmatic suddenness recalls the terse final pages of Elgar's Cello Concerto, a work particularly loved by my mother.

The Sonata's original version was first performed by David Watkin and Howard Moody at Wigmore Hall, London, in 1997. In that year the same artists released a recording on the Guild label. The revised version was premièred by Raphael Wallfisch and Stephen Coombs at the Isle of

Man Arts Festival in 2009, and that performance broadcast the same summer on BBC Radio 3. – **F.P.**

---

BIOGRAPHIES

---



**Francis Pott** [b. 1957] was a music scholar at Winchester College and then at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood while pursuing piano studies privately in London with Hamish Milne. Throughout the 1990s Francis was Lecturer in Music at St Hilda's College, Oxford. In 2001 he became Head of London College of Music within the University of West London, the following year taking up the roles of Head of Research for the wider Faculty of the Arts and Head of Composition. In 2007 he acceded to the University's professorial Chair of Composition, a post from which he retires in August 2023. Francis's music has been performed and broadcast in over 40 countries, published by 5 UK houses and released worldwide on CD. Winner of four national and two international awards, in 1997 he received First Prize in the Sergei Prokofiev Composing Competition, Moscow. He is most widely acknowledged for his sacred choral and organ music but his output includes songs, chamber works, a Violin Concerto and three major pieces for chorus and orchestra. One of these, his oratorio *A Song on the End of the World* (1999), receives its next performance at The Three Choirs Festival on 25th July 2023. In 2021 Francis received the Medal of the Royal College of Organists – its highest award – for 'distinguished achievement in the fields of organ and sacred choral music'.

## **Sarah Henderson – cello**



Sarah is a second year Japanese Studies student at Trinity College, Cambridge. Having studied cello with Vanessa Lucas-Smith at the junior department of Trinity Laban conservatoire, she has given several recitals during her time so far in Cambridge, including a performance of the complete works of Kenneth Leighton for cello and piano with Harrison Cole in October 2022. She also plays in a piano trio as part of the university's Instrumental Award Scheme and has been co-principal cellist of the Cambridge University Orchestra for the past 2 years. Outside of cello playing, Sarah is a choral scholar in Trinity College Choir, a composer of several works including a chamber opera for CUOS Shorts 2023, and a keen quizzer. Sarah is excited to be continuing her cello studies with Yoko Hasegawa at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo next year.

## **Harrison Cole – piano**



Harrison Cole is 22 and is a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. He graduated this summer with a first and is currently studying for a Masters in Music, researching the piano music of Olivier Messiaen. He is also the college's Associate Organist, working with its world-famous choir, under the direction of Stephen Layton, where he plays for services, tours, recordings and broadcasts. Highlights include playing for a filmed production of Duruflé's Requiem at St. Eustache, Paris, currently available on Youtube, and featuring as accompanist and soloist on a forthcoming CD of English anthems. He was also Senior Organ Scholar at Wells Cathedral from 2018-19. As an accompanist and chamber musician, Harrison enjoys a varied schedule of playing with instrumentalists, singers and choirs. Last year, he was one of the pianists for the Pembroke College Lieder Scheme, under Joseph Middleton.

*Concerts from Trinity College Chapel are video webcast live and available to watch again. You may be identifiable as in attendance at the concert. Please ensure that all electronic devices, including cameras, are switched off. Any children should not be left unsupervised at any time.*