

Seaford Music Society

Sunday 4th February 2024, at 3.00 pm

I Shall Hear in Heaven

**Starring Tama Matheson, Anton Saliba and Melissa Woodbridge
and members of the London Mozart Players**

Tama Matheson's profound and beautiful play brings to life the devastating, thrilling, heart-breaking and triumphant story of Ludwig van Beethoven. A dramatic portrait of a child prodigy oppressed by his drunken father, to his emergence as the greatest musician of his day: Beethoven – a titan of will and imagination, a man who refused to be crushed by the buffeting of fortune, who overcame the worst obstacles that fate could put in his way.

Tama breathes life into the tortured composer, presenting a man of deeply human qualities, who wore heavily the burden of his own genius and who, despite the frangible condition of his own mortality, pushed the world of music to a blazing new level. This powerful depiction will be interspersed with Beethoven's works, written and arranged for piano trio.

Tama Matheson is a writer, director and actor with a passion for combining music and the spoken word. He frequently works with orchestras, and has done several productions with the London Mozart Players, as well as the Royal Philharmonic and the Tasmanian, Queensland, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. Tama is also Artistic Director of the Brisbane Shakespeare Festival in Australia. He has directed theatre and opera with companies as varied as Covent Garden, the Sydney Opera House, the Royal Albert Hall, the King's Head Theatre, and Oper Graz.

As an actor, he has played roles such as Bunthorne in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience*, Felix in *The Odd Couple*, Leo in Coward's *Design for Living*, and Michal in Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*, along with Hamlet, Richard III, Henry V, Oberon, Don Pedro, Banquo, Antonio, and Ariel, in the Shakespearean canon. Tama has written and produced several of his own plays, including dramas about Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Bach, Britten, Lord Byron, Nancy Wake, Andrzej Panufnik, and Australian poets Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson.

He has also written three opera libretti, and adapted *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* for the theatre. Both *I Shall Hear in Heaven* and *Bright Stars Shone for Us* (about Tchaikovsky) were nominated for RPS awards in London, with *Bright Stars* actually making it to the shortlist. He has won several acting and directing awards in Australia.



Seaford Music Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Newberry Tully Estate Agents

Anton Saliba is a Maltese actor, based in London, who graduated from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in 2018. He has since been working on projects across both stage and screen, and his recent credits include playing Lucilla's Praetorian in *Gladiator 2*, Docker in Sky Atlantic's *Das Boot* and Liam in *On the Other Hand We're Happy*.

As well as English, Anton speaks Maltese, Italian and Spanish. He has been writing for theatre for the past five years, having brought three original plays to theatres in Malta since then.

Melissa Woodbridge trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Her last play was the hugely successful *Wind of Heaven* at the Finborough. Over the past few years she has appeared in *Blithe Spirit* with Angela Lansbury at the Gielgud and on tour, and *Walking the Tightrope* at Soho and Edinburgh Festival. She has worked at The Park, Southwark, Theatre 503 and The Pleasance. Previously she was in Berkoff's *Kvetch*, Jack Thorne's *Whiff Whaff*, and David Greig's *Cello*, as well as Theatre Delicatessen's *Doll's House*. She was also in the West End with *Female of the Species* and has toured with Theatre Royal Bath. Melissa plays the lead in the feature film *My One and Only*, and she is a VoiceOver artist and audio book narrator.

Simon Blendis (*Violin*) joined the London Mozart Players as leader in 2014. He was a member of the Schubert Ensemble for twenty-three years, from 1995 until the group retired in 2018, leaving a legacy of over 80 commissions, 25 CD recordings and a large library of live performances on YouTube.

Simon is in demand as a guest-leader and has appeared in this role with most of the UK's major orchestras. He has also appeared as a guest-director with orchestras such as the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra and the Scottish Ensemble. Since 1999 he has shared the position of leader of Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan, with whom he has recorded Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* for the Warner label. As a soloist, he has appeared with orchestras including the Philharmonia, the RPO and the CBSO.

During the recent Coronavirus lockdowns Simon spent time researching the light music legacy of legendary violinist Max Jaffa. The resulting CD of 25 lost or forgotten gems from this archive, entitled *Love is Like a Violin*, was released in July 2022 to critical acclaim, and has already garnered over 1 million streams.

Increasingly sought after as a teacher, Simon is a professor of violin at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Sebastian Comberti (*Cello*) was born in London, and studied in Italy with Amedeo Baldovino and later with Derek Simpson and Sidney Griller at the Royal Academy of Music, from where he graduated in 1977.

In 1976 he became a founder member of the Bochmann Quartet, giving concerts throughout the UK and in Europe. In 1983 he was appointed principal cello with the London Mozart Players, since when he has appeared on numerous occasions as soloist, as well as being an active member of the LMP Chamber Ensemble.

As a member of several chamber groups, including the re-formed Divertimenti, which performs works written for two-cello quintet, he has recorded for CPO, CRD, EMI, Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, Meridian, Phoenix and RCA.

A keen interest in historically informed performance has resulted in participation with a great many of London's period instrument groups. Research into early cello repertoire has led to several recitals being recorded by the BBC. It has been this interest that has led to the founding of Comberti's record label, Cello Classics, through which he has released several acclaimed recordings in recent years.

Julian Rolton (*Piano*) is a highly versatile musician, equally at ease as a concerto soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. He has worked with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra in Canada, performed concertos by Britten, Shostakovich and Strauss in the London South Bank Centre, and Kagel's *Phantasiestücke* with Martyn Brabbins and Sinfonia 21 in the Ars Musica Festival in Brussels, the British première of which was broadcast by the BBC.

Having studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, Julian has performed for music clubs throughout Britain and played at festivals in Cambridge, Warwick, Peterborough, Bath and Oxford. As an accompanist he has appeared in recitals and recordings, and regularly played for master-classes at the Snape Maltings. He performs regularly with the violist Martin Outram and together they have recorded sonatas by Rawsthorne and Bliss for Naxos. He is a member of the Chagall Trio, which has released an acclaimed recording of works by Dame Ethel Smyth for Meridian, and appeared at festivals throughout Britain, with broadcasts on BBC Radio 3. Julian teaches at the Rudolf Steiner School, Kings Langley.

Do come and join us downstairs after the performance, for a cup of tea or coffee

There are toilets in the lobby at the back of the church, and downstairs via the stairs beside the stage.

If you are not already a member of Seaford Music Society and would like to join, please see our Treasurer, Paul Moore, at the desk at in the entrance lobby. The cost of your ticket today will be credited towards your remaining annual membership subscription.

Our forthcoming concerts

Sunday 10th March 2024, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

We welcome back our friends in the **Divertimenti Ensemble**, who will be offering us a fascinating programme of rarely-heard two-cello quintets by Boccherini, Gade and Brahms.

Sunday 14th April 2024, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

A not-to-be-missed concert, '**Sounds of the Unexpected**', featuring the world's most flamboyant virtuoso recorder player, **Piers Adams**, of Red Priest fame, and keyboard player **Lyndy Mayle**. This will be a shorter, one-hour concert, suitable for all ages.

(further concert overleaf)

Sunday 12th May 2024, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

For our final concert of the season, we are delighted to welcome the **Berkeley Ensemble**. The ensemble brings a selection of its favourite Malcolm Arnold scores to Seaford, alongside Tim Watts's delicate *Lullabies* for guitar and chamber ensemble, commissioned by the group for its 2018 Little Venice Music Festival. A selection from Robert Patterson's arrangement for strings of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* completes a colourful programme.

Membership of the Society grants you free entry to all the remaining concerts this season. Children and young adults (under 26) may also attend without charge, but children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

If you are not a member (and not under 26), tickets for single concerts cost £17.50 (£15.00 for the concert on 14th April). You can purchase your concert ticket in advance from Newberry Tully Estate Agents in Church Street; Seaford Tourist Information Centre; online through TicketSource; or from our Treasurer, Paul Moore. Or, of course, you can become a member! To join, see Paul at the desk in the entrance foyer.

Additional benefits for members of Seaford Music Society

Members of Seaford Music Society are entitled to bring one guest to any of our concerts, at a reduction of £3.00 on the single-concert ticket price.

As a Member, you can receive a £3 discount on your ticket when attending Uckfield Music Club, Haywards Heath Music Society and Nicholas Yonge Society concerts. Simply produce your Seaford Music Society membership card when you pay at the door.

Details of the concerts can be found on each organisation's website.

Uckfield Music Club (www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk):
tickets £15 instead of £18 (subject to review)

Haywards Heath Music Society (www.haywardsheathmusicsociety.org.uk):
tickets £12 instead of £15

Nicholas Yonge Society (www.nyslewes.org.uk):
tickets £17 instead of £20