

SOMMCD 0601

*Céleste Series*

Charles Hubert Parry (1848-1918), Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)  
Edward Elgar (1857-1934), Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950)  
Roger Quilter (1877-1953), Herbert Howells (1892-1983), Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960)  
Virgil Thomson (1896-1989), William Walton (1902-83), William Alwyn (1905-85)  
Francis Chagrin (1905-72), Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006), Julian Anderson (b.1967)

## Alexander Karpeyev *piano*

Sam Pierce, Bradley Jones *trumpets\**

1	<b>Julian Anderson</b> Fanfare: SC-GH*	2:08	12	Singing a Song (Christopher Cox)	1:10
2	<b>Charles Hubert Parry</b> Prelude from <i>Hands Across the Centuries</i>	2:13	13	Wide Awake (Bill Katz)	0:58
3	<b>Roger Quilter</b> In a Gondola ( <i>Two Impressions</i> , Op.19)	3:14	14	<b>William Walton</b> Popular Song ( <i>Façade</i> , arr. Roy Douglas)	2:27
4	<b>Herbert Howells</b> Procession, Op.36	3:56	15	<b>Henry Balfour Gardiner</b> Shepherd Fennel's Dance	5:08
	<b>Francis Chagrin</b> Suite Roumaine	[4:45]	16	<b>Edward Elgar</b> In Smyrna	4:28
5	Allegro con spirito	1:05	17	<b>Edward Elgar</b> Serenade in G	2:14
6	Moderato	2:16		<b>Charles Villiers Stanford</b> Four Irish Dances, Op.89, arr. Percy Grainger	
7	Allegro	1:21	18	A Reel	4:44
8	<b>Malcolm Arnold</b> Variations on a Ukrainian Folk Song, Op.9	14:52	19	Leprechaun's Dance	3:40
9	<b>Arthur Benjamin</b> Scherzino	2:21	20	<b>Malcolm Arnold</b> Savile Centenary Fanfare*	1:15
10	<b>William Alwyn</b> Night Thoughts	4:51			
	<b>Virgil Thomson</b> Nineteen Portraits, 1981	[3:01]			
11	Round and Round (Dominique Nabokov)	0:53			
				Total duration:	65:17
				First commercial release	

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A piano recital by  
**ALEXANDER KARPEYEV**  
of music by 12 Savilian composers

framed by two trumpet fanfares composed for the club  
Sam Pierce, Bradley Jones (trumpets)

# Composers at the Savile Club

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## The Savile Club

Alexander Karpeyev's piano recital celebrates the rich musical heritage of London's Savile Club with works by 12 of its members from the 19th and 20th centuries; the programme taking a circular path chronologically from late romanticism to 20th-century modernism and back again. Two trumpet fanfares, composed for the Savile's 150th and 100th anniversaries respectively, frame the recital.

The Savile Club originated in 1868 as a reaction against – and an alternative to – the stifling formality that characterised London's exclusive (and excluding) clubs at the time. Its motto, "Sodalitas Convivium", translates as "good fellowship and conviviality". Then, as now, members from diverse backgrounds ate and drank around a communal dining table, with conversation expected. The Savile's informality soon attracted a host of distinguished names from the arts and sciences, including 17 Nobel Prize winners, among them the poets Rudyard Kipling and WB Yeats, and pioneering physicists Ernest Rutherford and John Cockcroft.

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, the first composer elected (in 1884) to the club featured in Alexander Karpeyev's recital, stands as a key figure in its musical history. In his early thirties, Stanford had recently been appointed Professor of Composition at the newly founded Royal College of Music. Over the years, he taught more than 40 composers, including fellow-Savilians Herbert Howells

and Arthur Benjamin. But his undoubted charm came with a quick temper. At first a friend and supporter of Sir Hubert Parry, he came to resent the latter's promotion over him as Director at the RCM and the two fell out bitterly; he likewise quarrelled with Sir Edward Elgar. He could also be brutally critical as a teacher – "That's damned ugly, me bhoy" was an oft-reported critique by several recipients emulating Stanford's Irish brogue – but he never had a harsh word for his favourite pupil, Howells.

Later generations of Savile composers benefitted from writing for film, a new and lucrative income stream that opened up during and after the Second World War. Arthur Benjamin, Virgil Thomson, Francis Chagrin, Sir William Walton and William Alwyn all exploited the medium, but none more so than the prolific Sir Malcolm Arnold. Arguably the Savile's most colourful musical member, he at times took the club's ethos of conviviality to extremes.

Roger Quilter and Henry Balfour Gardiner remain somewhat apart from other composers here. Both had considerable inherited wealth and did not need to earn a living from music; both used their money generously to support musical causes and fellow composers. Lack of financial pressure may have contributed to their relatively small outputs. It should be said that the list of Savilian composers in Karpeyev's recital is by no means comprehensive. Omissions, made regretfully, include among others Sir Arthur Bliss, William Lloyd Webber, Richard (Tony) Arnell, Bernard Herrmann and Philip Cannon.



# The Music

Current Savile member **Julian Anderson** composed ***Fanfare: SC-GH*** for two trumpets for the club's 150th anniversary in 2018. The letters stand for 'Savile Club' and 'Gavin Henderson', who commissioned the piece. Translated into notes, they form the opening musical motifs: 'S' = E-flat (from the German Es), and 'H' = B natural, again from German nomenclature. At the end, Anderson alludes to Malcolm Arnold's *Savile Centenary Fanfare*.

Composed in the final year of his life, the suite ***Hands Across the Centuries*** reflects the scholarly interest of **Sir Charles Hubert Parry** (a Savile member from 1886 until his death in 1918) in music of the past. The musical style introduced by the Prelude belongs to the late 19th century – as do the five movements that follow, their titles adding a touch of whimsy to the traditional dance elements of a baroque suite: 'The Passionate Allemande', 'The Wistful Courant' and so on.

**Roger Quilter** was a member of the Savile for 15 years to 1921. Best known for his exquisite songs, he also left a small body of piano music and composed the evocative ***In a Gondola*** (one of his Op.19 *Two Impressions*) early in 1914, following a trip to Venice the previous year. The First World War having intervened, the piece was not published until 1920, along with its companion 'Lanterns'.

**Herbert Howells'** early ***Procession*** may come as a surprise to those who know him from his liturgical music and works influenced by the pastoral tradition of Ralph Vaughan Williams. The heading to the piano score states "Howells claimed that the principal theme came to him in a dream, in which he found himself in a

big Russian city, and *Procession* depicts the approach of a large and potentially hostile crowd with a marked sense of menace". Composed around 1918, the Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia the previous year may have triggered Howells's dream. The composer's orchestral arrangement followed later; Howells (a Savile member from 1922-39 and again from 1957-83) dedicated the piano version to fellow Savilian, Arthur Benjamin.

The eclectic output of **Francis Chagrin** (whose five-year membership of the Savile Club spanned the 1960s and 1970s) ranged from television adverts to large-scale orchestral works. In the three-part ***Suite Roumaine*** composed in 1950, he dresses up the folk tunes of his native Romania in a highly dissonant manner, an impulse drawn, perhaps, from his involvement in founding what later became the Society for the Promotion of New Music.

**Malcolm Arnold's** Op.9 ***Variations on a Ukrainian Folk Song*** – his most substantial work for solo piano – from 1944 forms the centrepiece of this recital; a powerful early work demonstrating his ability to build a coherent whole from eclectic ingredients. Disparate influences among the 10 variations of an opening theme include, among others, a reference to Brahms's *Variations on a Theme of Handel* (Variation V) and a rumba (Variation VII). Arnold, whose membership of the Savile spanned the half-century to his death in 2006, dedicated his *Variations* to the Canadian-born violinist and pianist John Kuchmy, who had originally suggested the idea for the work.

Best known for his *Jamaican Rumba*, **Arthur Benjamin** (whose membership of the Savile Club lasted from 1935-60, interrupted only by the Second World War)

dedicated the virtuosic, diamond-sharp **Scherzino** of 1936 to concert pianist Irene Kohler, his former pupil at the Royal College of Music; Kohler often played the piece as an encore.

**William Alwyn**, who enjoyed a 37-year association with the Savile Club until his death in 1985, headed the score of **Night Thoughts** (1940) with a quote from Walt Whitman's collection of poems *Drum-Taps*, based on the author's experiences of the American Civil War 80 years earlier:

"By the bivouac's fitful flame,  
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow".

The poem goes on to describe thoughts aroused by the silence of an army encampment at night, "of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away". Alwyn's experiences as an Air Raid Warden during the Second World War may also have influenced the mood of a piece he dedicated to fellow Savilian Peter Latham, an author and music lecturer at the Royal College of Music.

The idiosyncratic American composer **Virgil Thomson** (a Savile Club member from 1974-80) composed 140 *Musical Portraits* and for most of them he asked his subjects to sit as if he were painting them. He would then compose the portrait on the spot, through a process of what he called "disciplined spontaneity".

Of the **Nineteen Portraits** of 1981, Dominique Nabokov (subject of *Round and Round*) was the widowed fifth wife of the Russian composer Nicolas Nabokov (the novelist Vladimir Nabokov's cousin); the piece is to be played "mechanically".

Contrastingly, Christopher Cox's portrait, *Singing a Song*, is marked *dolce, espressivo*; Thomson writes that Cox, the composer's secretary from 1975-77, was "a boy from Alabama... the portrait is a kind of Southern sentimental tune. The Southernness shows up there". The third portrait, *Wide Awake*, depicts Bill Katz, "a director and decorator of modernistic ballets", according to Thomson; hence perhaps the dissonance, which results from the imitation of the cheerful opening melody a semitone lower in the bass. Thomson explained the title with the remark "his eyes stay open like that".

At Oxford University in the 1910s, **William Walton** (a Savilian from 1945-74) met Sacheverell Sitwell; he was taken up by the well-connected family and lodged at their house in Chelsea. There, in January 1922, he conducted the first performance of *Façade – An Entertainment*, in which Edith Sitwell, Sacheverell's sister, recited her poems through a megaphone over Walton's music for chamber ensemble. The public premiere a year later brought notoriety to both and established Walton's name as a composer.

Roy Douglas, who died in 2015 aged 107, worked with Walton over many years, notably assisting in the orchestration of his film scores. Walton disliked the piano, so Douglas skilfully reduced the counterpoint of his original score for *Façade's Popular Song* to a challenging piano solo.

In its orchestral version, **Shepherd Fennel's Dance** (1911) was a popular success for **Henry Balfour Gardiner**, a Savile member from 1906-15 and great-uncle to the conductor John Eliot Gardiner. His inspiration came from fellow Savilian Thomas Hardy's short story *The Three Strangers*. The tale, set in the 1820s, unfolds

at a christening party given by Fennel and his wife in their remote cottage. Dancing takes place and goes on for longer than the hostess intended because a guest gives the musicians – a fiddler and serpent (precursor of the tuba) player – a crown to continue playing. The gentle middle section represents the harmonious relationship between Fennel and his wife.

At the height of his fame, **Sir Edward Elgar** embarked on a Royal Navy cruise to the Mediterranean in 1905 with friend and patron Frank Schuster, who knew the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford. During the trip Elgar (whose membership of the Savile Club spanned 1919-28) attended a reception given by the British ambassador to Turkey; an event recalled in the lyrically atmospheric *In Smyrna* (the large and ancient coastal city now known in Britain as İzmir).

Boasting a glancing kinship with *Salut d'amour* of 1888, with which it was probably contemporaneous, the lightweight **Serenade in G** only appeared in print towards the end of Elgar's life. It is dedicated to the composer's old Worcester acquaintance, John Austin, who had helped with copying parts of *The Apostles* in 1903 and the Violin Concerto in 1910.

In notes for a projected memoir the brilliant if eccentric pianist Percy Grainger revealed how his virtuosic arrangements of 40-year-long Savile member **Sir Charles Villiers Stanford's** Op.89 *Four Irish Dances* came about:

"There is no doubt that Stanford had some real love for me. My inborn weakness makes me a dish for old men [Grainger was bisexual]. He asked me to look in

& see him any and every Sunday morning when I could... One of these Sunday mornings, there he was dishing up his 'Four Irish Dances' for piano solo – easy grade. Sunday School stuff... I could not forbear saying that I thought such pieces should be pianised in a sparkling, show-off sort of way... So Stanford said: 'Very well. You do them. You're the man to do them'. And I did!"\*

Grainger played two of the arrangements at a London concert in 1905 and went on to perform the set some 300 times on tour in 1907-08. Heard here, **The Reel** is as infectiously animated as the dance it describes, while **The Leprechaun's Dance** – prefaced on the score with the tongue-in-cheek "A Leprechaun is a tiny man-fairy who wears a tall hat and knee breeches" – delicately, dexterously weaves together two tunes (a Jig and a Hop Jig) in 9/8 time.

Composed to mark the club's anniversary in 1968, **Malcom Arnold's Savile Centenary Fanfare** for two B-flat trumpets is written entirely on the note of C, standing perhaps for Centenary, Club and Convivium. The concluding section, marked *Maestoso* and *sonoramente*, strikingly takes as its rhythm the opening bars of the national anthem.

*The programme for this recital was researched and devised by Jeremy Barlow and Alexander Karpeyev and was originally released as a privately produced CD sent to members of the Savile Club on the occasion of its 150th anniversary in 2018. Thank you to Gavin and Piers Henderson for suggesting the inclusion of the two fanfares.*

Jeremy Barlow © 2019

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\*See: *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, Ed. Gillies, Pear and Carroll, (OUP, 2006).

Recently featured as a 'One to Watch' artist in *International Piano* magazine, **ALEXANDER (SASHA) KARPEYEV** is a Russian pianist resident in the UK. He has performed throughout the UK and Europe and toured in North America and Russia as a concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber music collaborator.

Karpeyev trained at the Moscow Conservatory with Vera Gornostayeva and Alexander Mndoyants, and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under Joan Havill. He is the winner of the Dudley International Piano Competition as well as the Norah Sande Award and the holder of a Silver Medal from the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

He is currently Music Curator of the Pushkin House Music Salon in London, where he appears both as a soloist and collaborator with guest artists. He also has a mission to devise and direct music festivals that imaginatively combine performance and scholarship. Building on the success of three recent Medtner festivals in London, he aspires to mount a bigger annual Russian Music Festival in London.

Karpeyev's recordings include *Russian Émigré Composers* (Claudio Records, 2018) and an album of Medtner songs with the Russian soprano Sofia Fomina soon to be released.

[www.akarkeyev.com](http://www.akarkeyev.com)

 @alec\_k



Photograph: Julian Dyson

**JEREMY BARLOW** studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music before working in the theatre as a musical director, flautist and composer, and at the BBC as a broadcaster and radio producer.

As a performer, he focused increasingly on early music, playing baroque flute, recorder and harpsichord. In 1979 he founded and directed the pioneering Broadside Band. Specialising in dance and popular music from the 16th- to 18th-centuries, its many, much admired recordings include the Edison Award-winning John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and the 18th-century Scottish composer James Oswald's *Airs for the Seasons*. Other notable discs include *Songs and Dances from Shakespeare; English Country Dances; Il Ballarino: Italian Dances c1600* and *Danses populaires françaises*.

Jeremy has worked closely with historically-informed dancers and been involved in many projects, seminars and conferences on the links between historical dance and music. He also served as a music director for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre, London.

He is the author of several books, including *The Enraged Musician: Hogarth's Musical Imagery; A Dance Through Time: Images of Social Dancing from the Middle Ages to Modern Times; The Cat and the Fiddle: Images of Musical Humour from the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, and *Forged Notes: Tricks of the Trade in Early Music Performance*. He has also produced many editions of 18th-century music.

In 2020, he will celebrate 60 years as a member of the Savile Cub.



Photograph: Ruth Barlow