

ENSEMBLE 360

Premieres on Thursday 13 May, 1.00pm

Live-streamed Performance

Crucible Studio, Sheffield

NAOMI ATHERTON horn

TIM HORTON piano

BENJAMIN NABARRO violin

BEAMISH St Andrew's Bones

BRAHMS Horn Trio

SALLY BEAMISH (b.1956)

St Andrew's Bones

Just before starting work on this piece I happened to attend a Catholic Mass at the University Chaplaincy in Glasgow. The priest, in his address, spoke about the bringing of St Andrew's relics to Fife, and of the powerful imagery of relics and ruins. Referring to a poem of Joseph Clancy, he described the beauty of St Andrew's Cathedral as being just as moving as a living place – the ruin standing as it does against sky and sea 'like the rib-cage of some long-dead god'.

I became aware of sounds triggered in my mind by this image – ancient bells and horns, and the chanting of pilgrims. St Andrew's Bones draws on three elements: the thirteenth-century hymn to St Andrew, 'Vir Perfecte'; the pitches of ninth-century Scottish bronze bells; and the natural series of a medieval horn, which opens the piece. In this context, the three instruments began to come together, creating for me a stark and poignant echo across the centuries – resonances of an ancient and powerful devotion.

St Andrew's Bones was commissioned by the English Horn Trio, with funds provided by the Eastern Arts Board, Arts Council England and the Holst Foundation.

It is dedicated to the memory of Father Eric Thacker.

Sally Beamish, 1997

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Horn Trio in E flat Op.40

Andante

Scherzo (Allegro)

Adagio mesto

Allegro con brio

Composed in May 1865 at Baden-Baden, Brahms's Trio was written for piano, violin and natural horn. It was first performed on 28 November 1865 at a concert in Zurich, with Brahms at the piano, the violinist Friedrich Hegar and horn player Herr Gläss. It was – and remains – an extremely unusual instrumental combination, and Brahms adapts the sonata form of the first movement to the exigencies of the natural horn (without too many excursions into remote keys), evoking a mood that seems to capture something of the shadowy romantic forests that surrounded Brahms in Baden-Baden when he wrote the piece. The second movement exploits the 'hunting' characteristic of the horn to memorable effect, with a darker contrasting section in the unusual key of A flat minor. The Trio is at its most personal in the slow movement, with its rare marking of mesto (sad, or melancholy). Brahms's mother had died three months before he composed this piece, and it is easy to hear this heartfelt movement as a lament for her. Just before the end, the horn, then the violin, play a melody that is a premonition of the main theme of the finale. The finale itself is a bucolic delight, galloping to a joyful conclusion.

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ENSEMBLE 360

Ensemble 360 has gained an enviable reputation across the UK not only for the quality and integrity of its playing, but also for its ability to communicate the music to a range of different audiences. Formed in 2005, 11 musicians of international standing came together to take up residency in Sheffield with Music in the Round, establishing a versatile group of five string players, five wind players and a pianist. The musicians believe that concerts should be informal, friendly and relaxed occasions, and perform 'in the round' wherever possible. Critical acclaim has greeted all the group's CDs to date: Mozart and Spohr (ASV Gold), Beethoven and Poulenc (Nimbus Alliance).

Ensemble 360 has performed at many of the leading festivals and venues in England, including Wigmore Hall, National Centre for Early Music, Bath and Buxton International Music Festivals. It appears regularly on BBC Radio 3 and at a number of small-scale venues nationally with Music in the Round. Ensemble 360 is at the heart of chamber music in South Yorkshire, appearing regularly in Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster as part of Music in the Round's concert series, and is central to the nine-day Sheffield Chamber Music Festival in May each year.

Outside Ensemble 360 many of the musicians have highly successful careers, performing with groups including the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, English National Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Bern, Manchester Camerata and Nash Ensemble.

MUSIC IN THE ROUND

Music in the Round is the leading national promoter of chamber music. For over 35 years we have been bringing people and music closer together through our friendly and informative style of 'in the round' performances, touring to numerous venues around the country as well as presenting two concert series and the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival each year at our home venue, the Crucible Studio. Our concerts are characterised by passion, excellence and proximity, and even in these challenging times of a global pandemic we have been striving to connect people through music by presenting socially-distanced live concerts and creating films featuring our musicians to enjoy online.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SHEFFIELD CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Sheffield Chamber Music Festival is the highlight of the year for all of us, so although it's online again, we have put everything into creating a digital event that everyone can come together to enjoy, across Sheffield, South Yorkshire, the UK, and even the world!

Your generosity in the last year has made it possible for us to continue with our aim to bring people closer to music. It is thanks to you, our Friends, supporters and audiences, that we are able to bring you such a full Festival programme this May.

We are not charging for any of the events, but we are relying on your generosity to keep us going. For over a year now, musicians have been unable to work properly and earn a decent living. After facing such a challenging time for so long they need us more than ever. Any support that you give us makes a difference to them. **Please donate as you feel: every single gift makes a difference.**

Music in the Round is a registered charity no. 326811