THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

dance and verse for strings

Bartók Rumanian Folk Dances
Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings
Butterley Canzona, from *Goldengrove*
Walton Two Pieces from *Henry V*
Warlock Capriol Suite

John Napier, tenor
Graham Nichols, horn
David Angell, conductor

2.30 pm, Sunday 28 July 2002

St. Stephen's Church, Newtown

Welcome to this year's second Bourbaki Ensemble concert. We trust that the new electrical system in St. Stephen's will work better than it did at our winter concert last year – if you were there you will probably recall that the lights went out during interval! During the second half of the programme our audience was left in semi–darkness as we played the Shostakovich *Chamber Symphony* to a background of rolling thunder.

Today we present a programme centred upon three works with literary associations. Benjamin Britten's *Serenade* includes settings of verse from six different sources, while Nigel Butterley's *Goldengrove* takes its title from a poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins. William Walton's *Two Pieces* were originally part of his film score for Shakespeare's *Henry V*. We begin with a short suite of Rumanian Folk Dances, a by–product of Béla Bartók's pioneering fieldwork in recording the music of Eastern Europe, and finish with Peter Warlock's attractive and vigorous evocation of a sixteenth century French dance manual.

We hope that you will join us for our third and final performance this year, to take place in St. Stephen's on Sunday 17 November. You can find full details of this concert on the back cover of this programme. If you would like to receive advance information about Bourbaki Ensemble performances, please fill out the enclosed form and leave it in the box at the door.

The Bourbaki Ensemble's most recent project was not a live concert but a film soundtrack. We spent a fascinating evening in St. Stephen's, recording various items of music and background effects which were subsequently edited and coordinated with the visual part of the film. *Compost Monster*, a not–entirely–serious horror movie, premiered at the Valhalla Cinema, Glebe, on May 7. Many thanks to all our supporters who went along. The film is currently being considered for screening at a number of Australian and overseas film festivals – we wait in hope!

PROGRAMME

Béla Bartók Rumanian Folk Dances, arranged for strings by Arthur Willner

I Jocul cu bâtă
II Brâul
III Pe loc
IV Buciumeana
V Poargă Românească
VI Mărunţel
VII Mărunţel

Benjamin Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

I Prologue
II Pastoral
III Nocturne
IV Elegy
V Dirge
VI Hymn
VII Sonnet
VIII Epilogue

John Napier, tenor; Graham Nichols, horn

INTERVAL — 20 minutes

Nigel Butterley Canzona, from *Goldengrove*

William Walton Two Pieces from *Henry V*

I Passacaglia on the death of Falstaff
II Interlude: "Touch her soft lips and part"

Peter Warlock Capriol Suite

I Basse–Danse
II Pavane
III Tordion
IV Bransles
V Pieds–en–l'air
VI Mattachins

Béla Bartók (1881–1945) was born in Nagyszentmiklós, a village then in Hungary but nowadays a part of Rumania. Beginning in the early years of the twentieth century, he undertook frequent trips recording by phonographic methods, and then transcribing, the songs and dances of his native region and other areas of Hungary. In the course of his studies he came to realise that the true Hungarian/Rumanian village music was altogether different from the gypsy music which had earlier been taken as native Hungarian.

For Bartók, composition and the study of folk music were always two aspects of the same musical life. The melodic and rhythmic shapes of Eastern European music influenced his own compositions, while on the other hand he used his compositional skills to arrange and disseminate the music of the villages. The set of seven *Rumanian Folk Dances* was written by Bartók first for piano and then in a version for small orchestra, and also exists in a version for strings alone. It is fascinating to compare these arrangements with the originals, as transcribed in Bartók's book *Rumanian Folk Music*. In some cases the complex rhythms of folk music have been "straightened out"; perhaps Bartók felt that audiences (or performers!) would have difficulty with rapid alternations of nine–, ten– and eleven–semiquaver bars. Many of the melodies also use intervals which do not occur in the standard Western scales; these would be hard to play accurately on orchestral instruments, and quite impossible on the piano.

The titles of the dances in the suite performed today can be translated as stick dance, sash dance, dance in one spot, horn dance, Rumanian polka and fast dance. They include round dances and dances for couples. The Jocul cu bâtă is a young man's solo dance in which, as a concluding act of bravado, the dancer is required to kick the ceiling!

The English twentieth–century musical repertoire includes many fine songs by composers such as Gerald Finzi, George Butterworth and, perhaps the greatest, **Benjamin Britten** (1913–1976). All three wrote songs with the traditional piano accompaniment; Britten also wrote a number of song cycles for voice and strings. In these works, typically, Britten selects his texts from more than one source, and adds to the ensemble one or more *obbligato* instruments. This is the case both in the *Serenade*, with its solo horn part, and in the later *Nocturne* which calls for no fewer than seven additional instruments.

One of the instantly obvious features of the *Serenade* is its imaginative and virtuosic horn writing, in which Britten clearly had in mind the extraordinary abilities of Dennis Brain, for whom the part was originally written. Besides the normal sound of the horn, which in itself is admirably suited to Britten's choice of texts relating to sunset, night and sleep, the composer draws on a wide range of alternative tone colours. The *Prologue* and *Epilogue*, for horn alone, recall the instrument's origins by using solely natural harmonics, the very restricted selection of notes available to the old valveless horn. Not all of these notes are in tune with standard modern pitch, and Britten specifically instructs that the intonation not be "corrected". (So don't imagine that the soloist can't play in tune – it's meant to sound that way!) The *Serenade* also makes use of hand–stopping, where the performer uses his right hand to close off the tube and produce a somewhat buzzing sound; this effect is spectacularly combined with "open" (ordinary) playing at the end of the *Elegy*. By inserting a wooden mute into the bell the player can produce a similar but different, rather "distant", tone, superbly used by Britten to illustrate "the horns of Elfland faintly blowing" in the *Nocturne*. In yet another variation on the horn's basic sound, the final *Epilogue* is heard from offstage.

The vocal part in the *Serenade* was also created with a specific performer in mind: the tenor Peter Pears, who gave the premieres of many of Britten's works. After the *Prologue*, the first song, *Pastoral*, begins quietly with a dreamy rocking accompaniment like a lullaby as the voice describes the long shadows of evening. The *Nocturne* centres upon three cadenzas shared between voice and horn above a quietly murmuring string background. In the *Elegy* Britten begins to explore the less

From *The Evening Quatrains*
Charles Cotton (1630–1687)

The Day's grown old; the fainting Sun
Has but a little way to run,
And yet his steeds, with all his skill,
Scarce lug the chariot down the hill.

The shadows now so long do grow,
That brambles like tall cedars show;
Mole–hills seem mountains, and the ant
Appears a monstrous elephant.

A very little, little flock
Shades thrice the ground that it would stock;
Whilst the small stripling following them
Appears a mighty Polypheme.

And now on benches all are sat,
In the cool air to sit and chat,
Till Phoebus, dipping in the West,
Shall lead the World the way to rest.

From *The Princess*
Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory:
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes,
[dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes,
[dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer,
[dying, dying, dying.

The Sick Rose
William Blake (1757–1827)

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

A Lyke–Wake Dirge
Anonymous (Scottish, 15th century)

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleete and candle–lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
To Whinnymuir thou com'st at last;

If ever thou gav'st hos'n and shoon,
Sit thee down and put them on;

If hos'n and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane,
The whinnies sall prick thee to the
[bare bane;

From Whinnymuir when thou may'st pass,
To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last;

From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass,
To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last;

If ever thou gav'st meat or drink,
The fire sall never make thee shrink;

If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleete and candle–lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.

comforting aspects of night. The setting of Blake's *The Sick Rose* begins and ends with a duet for horn and *pizzicato* bass, accompanied by syncopated strings which evoke "the invisible worm that flies in the night" and underline the poem's images of hidden evil and death.

The *Dirge* might almost be the soundtrack to a horror movie. The vocal line recounts the soul's journey after death, repeating the same phrases (both musical and verbal) over and over in an image of eternity. The strings suggest creeping, lurking figures, half perceived and half imagined, sometimes rising from an unseen lair and sometimes descending into a fearful abyss. With the entry of the horn the music reaches a peak of wild terror. As the voice continues its chant, the orchestra is eventually reduced to a single bass line. Jonson's *Hymn* to the moon contains hunting allusions which Britten translates into musical terms, taking the opportunity to write a *scherzo* demanding immense agility from both voice and horn. The wayward rhythms and harmonies of the final song suggest the transition from consciousness into sleep. With this *Sonnet* and the concluding *Epilogue* Britten's sometimes nightmarish journey ends in peace.

Hymn to Diana
Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep:
    Hesperus entreats thy light,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
    Bless us then with wishèd sight,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
    Thou that mak'st a day of night,
    Goddess excellently bright.

To Sleep
John Keats (1795–1821)

O soft embalmer of the still midnight!
    Shutting with careful fingers and benign
Our gloom–pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,
    Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close
    In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,
Or wait the "Amen" ere thy poppy throws
    Around my bed its lulling charities;
    Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes, –
    Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;
    Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd Casket of my Soul.

Australian composer **Nigel Butterley** was born in Sydney in 1935. Notable among his earlier compositions are *Laudes* and *Meditations of Thomas Traherne*; more recent works such as *For Sorrowing Earth* have shown a concern for the natural environment. Butterley's *Spell of Creation* was premiered in June 2001 and was awarded the Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize. Nigel has also been active for many years as a pianist, and has received particular acclaim for his recording and live performances of the *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano by John Cage.

Butterley regards *Goldengrove*, written in 1981–2, as one of the most "English" of his compositions, citing the influence of works by Tippett and Vaughan Williams. Other inspirations were the motet *O Nata Lux* by Thomas Tallis, from which some of the thematic material for *Goldengrove* has been derived, and Gerard Manley Hopkins' *Spring and Fall*, which gave the work its title. Hopkins' poem is addressed to a young child and deals with her first recognition, in the falling autumn leaves, of the transience of beauty, and of life itself. Today we shall perform the second of the three movements of *Goldengrove*. Entitled *Canzona*, it is based on the dual theme (not, the composer insists, a theme with accompaniment) which appears at the very outset. One strand, initially heard in the second violins, is characterised by its steady quaver movement and expressively arching contour; the other, on first violins and violas, by longer notes with a cooler, more serene rise and fall. A slightly faster interlude contrasts brief solos with the full string orchestra before leading into further statements of the paired themes. The movement ends with sus-

Spring and Fall: to a young child
Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889)

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you *will* weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

tained harmonies in the violins, and quiet but perhaps somewhat uneasy scales in the lower instruments.

Two symphonies, concertos for viola, violin and cello, and various other pieces earned **William Walton** (1902–1983) a reputation as one of England's foremost composers of orchestral music; possibly less well known is his position as a leading composer for film. Walton's soundtrack for Olivier's 1943 film of Shakespeare's *Henry V* includes two short pieces for strings. The first is a passacaglia – a theme heard repeatedly in the lower instruments, harmonised and elaborated in the upper parts – written for the death of Sir John Falstaff. Falstaff lies in bed, close to death, and recalls his dismissal by the newly crowned, and newly "respectable" King Henry V. The second piece illustrates Pistol's farewell to Mistress Quickly as he leaves the Boar's Head Tavern for France.

Peter Warlock was born in the Savoy Hotel, London(!) in 1894 and died in 1930. His best works are for voice, small ensemble, or both, and include a setting of Yeats' *The Curlew* for tenor, flute, cor anglais and string quartet. The *Capriol Suite* uses tunes from Arbeau's 1589 dance treatise *Orchésographie*, but clothes them in Warlock's own brand of chromatic harmony. The *Basse Dance*, a "serious sort of dance" (Scholes) where the dancers' feet were not raised from the floor, was customarily paired with a *Tordion*. In Warlock's suite, the two are separated by a *Pavane*: of Italian origin, this form has been used by Ravel and Fauré to suggest the gentleness and grace of a bygone era. *Bransles* was a vigorous rustic French dance; the slower *Pieds–en–l'air* displays Warlock's boldest harmonies. *Mattachins* was a sword dance for men wearing gilded cardboard "armour".

David Angell, conductor

David has been playing viola for many years with some of Australia's best–known non–professional orchestras, including the Australian Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, and various Sydney community orchestras. As a violist and chorister he has performed for such well–known conductors as Sir Charles Mackerras, Stuart Challender and Richard Bonynge.

David took up conducting in 1998 with a highly successful season of *West Side Story* for Holroyd Musical and Dramatic Society. In 2001 he assembled the Bourbaki Ensemble and conducted its inaugural season, performing works by Sculthorpe, Mahler, Shostakovich and others. He is excited that the Ensemble has reached its second year, and hopes that there will be many more! David studies conducting with Richard Gill.

John Napier, tenor

John received his initial voice training from Jack Stevens in Brisbane. Performances as a boy soprano included as soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and with the Australian Opera. As an adult, he studied cello and voice at the Queensland Conservatorium, where his vocal teacher was Greg Massingham, a student of Peter Pears. On graduation he won the Conservatorium Medal for Excellence. After a period as principal cellist of the Queensland Theatre Orchestra, John moved to Sydney. His colourful and eclectic career includes performances ranging from the classical *Trio Slav* to intercultural groups *Southern Crossings* and *Sangam*, and Latin–Funk band *The Mambologists*. Since 1990 he has worked extensively as a performer and scholar of Indian music, receiving a doctorate in 2001. He recommenced work as a classical singer two years ago and recently sang the tenor solo in *Messiah*. John currently lectures at the University of New South Wales, and pursues research into epic singers in rural India.

Graham Nichols, horn

Over the last twelve years Graham has played horn in everything from Broadway musicals to opera with the Australian Opera and concerts with the Sydney Symphony. He has also performed at music festivals in Japan, Germany and France. Graham studied in Sydney with Anthony Buddle at the Conservatorium of Music, privately with Robert Johnson, and overseas with Andrew Joy and Ab Koster in Germany and Anthony Halstead in London. He is currently engaged with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra for the winter opera season.

In 1995, frustrated at the difficulty of finding music and accessories for horn in Australia, Graham started a small business to cater for the needs of horn players. *Hornarama* now stocks over a thousand titles of sheet music for horn, and supports a monthly email newsletter for horn players in the Australasian region.

The Bourbaki Ensemble

The Bourbaki Ensemble is made up of professional string players, advanced or recently graduated students, and leading amateur players. The Ensemble's repertoire ranges from classical masterpieces to contemporary Australian music.

Violins Warwick Pulley, Margaret Howard,
Esther Cheng, Valerie Gutenev,
Paul Hoskinson, Emlyn Lewis–Jones,
Heather Orr, Rebecca Pulley.

Violas Kirrillie Abbott–Raymonde, Dana Kern,
Suzanna Powell, Philip Silver.

Violoncellos Guy Curd, Margaret Lazanas,
Ian Macourt.

Bass Stephen Newton.

THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

baroque and beyond: music for strings

Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 3
Corelli Christmas Concerto
Vivaldi Summer, from *The Four Seasons*
Brumby The Phoenix and the Turtle
Villa–Lobos Bachianas Brasileiras No. 9
Respighi Ancient Airs and Dances: Suite No. 3

Valerie Gutenev, violin
David Angell, conductor

2.30 pm, Sunday 17 November 2002
St. Stephen's Church
189 Church St, Newtown

Tickets $15, concessions $8

The third of Bach's magnificent *Brandenburg Concertos* precedes two seasonally appropriate Baroque works, while Villa–Lobos' homage to Bach in Brazilian style is matched with Respighi's loving look at old Italian music. Colin Brumby's piece for strings and harpsichord was inspired by Shakespeare's poem of the same name.

St. Stephen's church, designed by Edmund Blackett, has marvellous acoustics and is a superb venue for small ensemble concerts. Both church and cemetery contain fascinating reminiscences of famous and infamous characters from Sydney's early history, and may be inspected on a free tour before or after the concert.

Programme details subject to change