

**Iona Mitchell Final Recital – oboe**  
**Tracey Renwick – accompanist**  
**4<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**Alessandro Marcello (1673-1747)** Oboe Concerto in D minor – I: Andante spiccato  
*Edition Peters. E.P 12887*

**Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)** Fantasy Pieces opus 2 – 1: Romance 2: Humoresque  
*Edition Wilhelm Hansen. WH30736*

**Charlotte Bray (1982-)** Late Snow for solo oboe – 1: “An end. Or a beginning”  
*CE Composers Edition. ce-cb11s1*

**Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)** Interlude for Oboe & Piano  
*Boosey & Hawkes. B&H 20641*

### **Marcello**

Alessandro Marcello was a Venetian nobleman and a highly skilled amateur musician. His oboe concerto in D minor, originally for oboe, strings, and continuo, was first published in 1717 under a splendid pseudonym, Eterio Stinfalico, and for a long time was thought to be by Antonio Vivaldi. J S Bach was so impressed by it that he made a keyboard arrangement BWV 974 which now is the earliest surviving manuscript of the piece from 1715.

There are three movements of which I am playing the first, Andante spiccato. It has a steady tempo and predictable phrase lengths which leaves room for ornamentation, a key feature of baroque music. I add ornaments typically at the ends of phrases and during ongoing sequences where it might sound quite plain without the performer’s musical intervention.

### **Nielsen**

The Fantasy Pieces are made up of two movements, Romance and Humoresque, the first of which was completed in November 1889 and the latter in March 1890. The Danish composer Carl Nielsen was just 25 when it was completed. The first movement’s name Romance aptly fits the piece as it is a languishing, legato, expressive journey in a minor key, with some bright major moments higher up in the instrument’s range. The second movement is by contrast much faster and staccato throughout with sudden stops and changes.

Nielsen’s own description of the Fantasy Pieces were written in his programme notes 20 years after first publication. "The two oboe pieces are a very early opus. The first – slow – piece gives the oboe the opportunity to sing out its notes quite as beautifully as this instrument can. The second is more humorous, roguish, with an undertone of Nordic nature and forest rustlings in the moonlight."

## **Bray**

Charlotte Bray is a British composer born 1982, who studied at the Royal College of Music and the Birmingham Conservatoire. The most modern piece on the programme, Bray's *Late Snow* was published in 2009 and revised in October 2015. It is an unaccompanied oboe piece with three movements, of which I am playing the first. It has with a slow tempo and comma pause marks throughout which give the performer liberty to vary the tempo and lengthen pauses for expression's sake. The detailed score also has verbal markings such as 'agitated', 'impassioned' and 'with anguish' which help to add substance to the bare solo texture.

*Late Snow* is based on the poem 'Late Snow' by M. R. Peacocke:

An end. Or a beginning.  
Snow had fallen again and covered  
the old dredge and blackened mush  
with a gleaming pelt; but high up there  
in the sycamore top. Thaw  
Thaw, the rooks cried,  
sentinel by ruined nests.

Water was slacking into runnels  
from drifts and pitted snowbacks  
dripping from the gutter and ragged  
icicle fringes. Snow paused  
in the shining embrace of bushes,  
waiting in the ledged curds and bluffs  
to tumble into soft explosions.  
And suddenly your absence  
drove home its imperatives like frost,  
and I ran to a high field  
clumsily as a pregnant woman  
to tread our names in blemished  
brilliant drifts; because the time we have  
Is shrinking away like snow.

## **Finzi**

Gerald Finzi, most known for his song cycles and choral works is celebrated for his *Interlude*, written originally for oboe and string quartet. Starting writing in 1932, he did not let it be premiered until 1936 when Leon Goossens was asked to perform it. Goossens adored the piece and asked for it to be dedicated to him, which Finzi accepted happily. Oboe and string quartet was a rare combination, before Finzi only a handful of composers had written for oboe quintet since the baroque era including Gustav Holst and Arnold Bax. Although it is an early piece of Finzi's, musicologist Stephen Banfield writes it is "the first real manifestation of Finzi's mature idiom".

Finzi's *Interlude* is a showstopper and the longest piece on the programme. It shows off what the oboe can do from sustained, expressive, singing phrases, to quick note flurries and using the extended upper range at the fortissimo points.