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## **A “virtual” Coffee Concert recorded at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford**

**Sunday June 13, 2021 at 11:15**

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Virtual Coffee Concerts are pre-recorded at the Holywell Music Room in Oxford and are streamed from our YouTube channel at 11:15 on Sunday mornings. (These recordings are available for a limited time after release but, of course, there will be more to come.)

### **Rosalind Ventris (viola)**

- **Fuchs, Lillian: Sonata Pastorale for Solo Viola**
- **Bach, Johann Sebastian: Cello Suite no 3 in C major, BWV 1009**
- **Holst, Imogen: Suite for Unaccompanied Viola**

Professional violist Rosalind Ventris performs as a recitalist and chamber musician at some of the world’s most prestigious venues and festivals, including the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, West Cork, Purcell Room, Aldeburgh Festival, Auditorium du Louvre, Bozar, Great Music in Irish Houses, Slovak Philharmonic and Het Concertgebouw. As a concerto soloist, she has been invited to perform with the European Union Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia Cymru, l’Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie and the Belgian National Orchestra.

From almost as long as she can remember, chamber music has been at the heart of Rosalind’s musical life. Rosalind frequently performs as part of the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, which brings together some of the finest young chamber musicians in new and varied formations, with a specific and ardent commitment to celebrating diversity. The Kaleidoscope Chamber

Collective is a Wigmore Hall Associate Ensemble. Rosalind has been the violist of the flute, viola and harp trio, Trio Anima, since 2012 and performs with Ensemble Perpetuo. She has collaborated with internationally renowned artists such as Mitsuko Uchida (Malboro Festival), Tabea Zimmermann, Garth Knox, Thomas Hoppe (Wigmore Hall), the Arcanto Quartett (Beethovenhaus) and Gerhard Schultz (Salzburg Festival). Her work as a guest principal violist includes projects with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta and the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Recordings Rosalind has featured on as a chamber musician have received favourable reviews in the national and international press, as well as industry magazines (The Sunday Times Best Recordings of 2019, Editor’s Choice, Gramophone). Rosalind has recorded for Delphian, Signum and Navona record labels, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3, RTÉ Lyric FM, and NPO Radio 4. Rosalind

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also enjoys exciting contemporary music collaborations, having performed alongside composers Garth Knox and Sally Beamish.

As a former founder member of the Albion Quartet she recorded Richard Blackford's *Kalon* with the Czech Philharmonic at the Rudolfinum (Prague). She has also premiered several works by Edwin Roxburgh at major London venues, and recently gave the premiere of a new work by Rory Boyle with Trio Anima. In December 2020 Rosalind

recorded her debut album, featuring outstanding works by leading female contemporary and twentieth-century composers inspired by nature, folk music and dance.

Rosalind is currently a City Music Foundation Artist. In 2021 she became one of the Artistic Directors of the Cowbridge Music Festival in South Wales.

More information:  
<https://rosalindventris.co.uk/>

### **Sonata Pastorale, for Solo Viola by Lillian Fuchs (1902-1995)**

- 1. Fantasia. Maestoso – risoluto – allegro;**
- 2. Pastorale. Andante semplice – allegro – energico.**

New York-born Lillian Fuchs began her musical career as a pianist, but then studied violin at what is now the Juilliard School, New York. Following her professional debut in 1926, Fuchs changed to the viola, making several appearances as a soloist and in chamber music, performing and teaching widely across the USA and Canada. Several composers wrote works for her, including Czech emigré Bohuslav Martinů, who composed his *Three Madrigals* in 1947 for her and her violinist brother Joseph after hearing them play Mozart's two *Duos* for violin and viola.

Alongside the *Sonata Pastorale*, Fuchs published three sets of pieces for solo viola designed as both technical studies and pieces suitable for performance. The sonata had its premiere in 1953. The introduction to

the first movement alternates forceful, declamatory chords with a gentle, song-like theme. An emphatically rhythmic idea acts as a link into the main quick part of the movement – briskly energetic but punctuated by recollections of material from the introduction.

The theme which opens the second movement has a plaintive, folk-song quality, at least to start with, although the implied harmonies become progressively darker and more complex. The quick music that follows has a similar dance-like energy to its equivalent in the first movement. Two detached chords stop it in its tracks, and the folk-like theme from the opening returns. The first movement's introduction then makes a surprise re-appearance, before the dance music rounds the sonata off.

### **Suite for Solo Cello no 3 in C major, BWV 1009 by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

- 1. Prelude;**
- 2. Allemande;**
- 3. Courante;**
- 4. Sarabande;**
- 5. Bourée 1 & 2;**
- 6. Gigue.**

When Bach arrived in Cöthen (about 30 miles/48 Km north-west of Leipzig) in

December 1717 to take up the post of Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold, he entered a

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rather different musical environment from the one he had left in Weimar. There his energies were focused mainly on large-scale organ music and church cantatas. The chapel at Cöthen, by contrast, followed a strict Calvinist tradition which left little scope for church music. Secular music, on the other hand, flourished at Leopold's court. He himself was an accomplished musician who sang, and played the violin, viola da gamba and harpsichord. Much of Bach's instrumental music – though seemingly not as much as was once thought – dates from his time at Cöthen.

This probably includes his six suites for solo cello, although some may originate from his time in Weimar. But that is virtually all we know about their origins. There is no hard evidence to show why, or for whom, they were written. One suggestion is that they were composed for Christian Ferdinand Abel, cellist at Cöthen, whose son, Carl Friedrich, would later go into partnership with Bach's youngest son, Johann Christian, in promoting a prestigious series of concerts in London between 1765 and 1781.

Although the suites were never completely neglected after Bach's death, it was only when the Spanish cellist Pablo Casals encountered them in the 1890s and began playing them in public (after a long period

spent studying them away from the limelight), that they started to be recognised as one of the foundations of the cello repertoire.

The instrumental suite of Bach's day (for whatever medium) took the basic form of four contrasting dance movements: allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue. A prelude was often added and, occasionally, extra dances between the sarabande and gigue. This is the outline of Bach's instrumental suites, although he followed it more consistently in his suites for cello than in those for orchestra, and his partitas for keyboard, and for solo violin.

The Allemande, a basically slow dance with a florid melodic line, was considered serious, even solemn. The Courante, in a moderate triple time, was regarded as grand and majestic. The Sarabande probably originated in Spain, then moved to Italy where it made a colourful, exotic effect, often played with castanets and guitars. Louis XIV's dancing masters transformed it into a more dignified, expressive dance in slow triple time; by Bach's time it had acquired a profoundly introspective character. In Suite No 3 the Sarabande is followed by a pair of Bourées, the bourée being a lively dance in a fast duple time, originally from rural France. The Gigue is fast and lively; the name appears to be derived from the English 'jig'.

## **Suite for Unaccompanied Viola by Imogen Holst (1907-1984)**

**1. Prelude. Quasi lento; 2. Cinquepace. Vivace – poco meno mosso – tempo primo; 3. Sarabande. Andante molto cantabile; 4. Gigue. Presto.**

Imogen Holst is still perhaps best known for her activities as a conductor, teacher, author and editor, her tireless work on behalf of her father Gustav Holst's music, and her long association with Benjamin Britten, including over twenty years as an artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival. But her qualities as a composer are coming to be more widely recognised,

helped by a number of recent publications and recordings.

The Suite for Unaccompanied Viola is one of Holst's earlier works, dating from 1930, the year she graduated from the Royal College of Music, London. Its sequence of prelude and three dance movements recalls that of a typical baroque instrumental suite. The

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Prelude has something of Gustav Holst's exploratory, questing outlook. A cinquepace is not so much a dance in its own right as a pattern of five steps – hence the five-in-a-bar metre of the suite's second movement – common to a number of dances from the

Renaissance period, including the galliard. The Sarabande reflects the introspective character noted above in connection with the Bach cello suite. The Gigue, like Bach's, is spirited and energetic, but it also finds time to visit a few secretive corners along the way.

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