

# Stratos Duo

**Louise Thomson and Anne-Marie O'Farrell**

Thursday 30th April 7.30pm,  
Firth Hall

PERFORMANCE  
VENUES  
CONCERTS

**Franz Schubert, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell** - Fantasie in F minor, op. 103, D. 940

**Ekaterina Walter-Kühne** - Fantaisie Sur Un Theme De l'Opéra Eugene Onegin par P.  
Tchaikovsky

**Jean-Michel Damase** - Sonatine for two harps

INTERVAL

**Caroline Lizotte** - Raga

**Claude Debussy, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell** - Six Épigraphes Antiques (selection)

**Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell** - Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D  
minor, BWV 903

**Philip Hammond, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell** - The Beardless Boy

## Stratos Duo

Louise Thomson and Anne-Marie O'Farrell first came together as part of the inaugural Manchester Harp Festival where they gave the world premiere of O'Farrell's arrangement of Schubert's iconic *Fantasia in F Minor*, originally for piano duet, now written for two pedal harps. They share a passion and curiosity for expanding pedal harp repertoire, which has led to their highly innovative and attractive programming, featuring works by Damase, Debussy, Philip Hammond and Caroline Lizotte.

Louise Thomson is a versatile and accomplished harpist who has performed across the UK both solo and with leading ensembles. Her innovative and virtuosic approach enables her to explore the pedal harp's capabilities in full. This exceptional talent has taken her across the UK to prestigious concert venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and Cardiff's St David Hall, and to leading ensembles such as the Hallé and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2022, Thomson was selected to perform at the World Harp Congress in collaboration with presenter Polly Ives.

Dr Anne-Marie O'Farrell is a leading lever harpist of her generation. Hailing from Dublin she has performed all over the world as a solo artist, accompanist and in ensembles. On lever harp, she is particularly recognised for her expansion of repertoire and levering techniques. Her work resulted in the world's leading harp makers, Salvi Harps, redesigning their lever harps to become concert instruments. She has performed with numerous orchestras including the Irish Baroque Orchestra and the RTE National Symphony Orchestra. As a musician experienced in performing at state events, she was called upon to play during the state visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Ireland and has performed for numerous presidents including President Bill Clinton.

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### **Franz Schubert, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell - Fantasia in F minor, op. 103, D. 940**

*I - Allegro molto moderato*

*II - Largo*

*III - Scherzo. Allegro vivace*

*IV - Finale. Allegro molto moderato*

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) was an Austrian composer whose musical talents led him to winning a place in the Vienna Imperial Court Chapel Choir aged ten. Despite his musical upbringing, Schubert was expected to have a career in his family's business of teaching. It was during his time as a teacher that he began to write his most widely-renowned pieces, using composition as an escape from his hatred of the profession. He went on to compose nine symphonies and over 600 lieder, in addition to a number of chamber works (**Classic FM**).

Schubert's *Fantasia in F Minor* was written in 1828, the final year of his life. The four movements are played without pause, creating an interconnected piece which builds on the traditional sonata form. The piece was written for four hands- two players at the same piano- and has an 'elegiac' atmosphere throughout (**G. Henle Verlag**).

### **Ekaterina Walter-Kühne - Fantaisie Sur Un Theme De l'Opéra Eugene Onegin par P. Tchaikovsky**

E. A. Walter-Kühne is one of the outstanding Russian harpists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She was active in performing and teaching, being a soloist at the Mariinsky Theater and a professor at St. Petersburg Conservatory. Whilst very little is known about her life, she made a

significant contribution to the development of harp composition, performance and pedagogy, and expanded the traditional harp repertoire by performing arrangements of many piano miniatures (**Journal of Moscow Conservatory**).

*Eugene Onegin* is an opera by Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and is based on Pushkin's verse novel. The opera explores themes of love, regret and selfishness, which Tchaikovsky scores symphonically, transforming typical Western European structures into an 'undeniably Russian work' (**The Metropolitan Opera**). Walter-Kühne transcribes the Waltz theme from Act II of the opera in her *Fantaisie Sur Un Theme De l'Opéra Eugene Onegin par P. Tchaikovsky*, a piece which remains a staple of classical harp repertoire.

### **Jean-Michel Damase - Sonatine for two harps**

Jean-Michel Damase was an award-winning pianist and composer whose early interest in composing and performing music won him the *Premier Prix* in piano at the Paris Conservatoire aged just 15. He was inspired by the works of Fauré and Ravel, and was interested in composing for ballet- his first being for *La Croqueuse de Diamants* (The Gold Digger). Following his successful international touring career, Damase devoted his knowledge to teaching, serving on the boards of numerous international musical organizations and societies, judges competitions, and conducts master classes in Europe, the United States and Japan (**Chez Damase**).

Damase's *Sonatine for Two Harps* can also be played on two pianos, and showcases intricate interplay between the players, weaving a tapestry of melodic lines and harmonious textures (**JW Pepper**).

### **Caroline Lizotte - Raga**

Caroline Lizotte is a Québécoise harpist and composer whose works have become pillars of the contemporary harp repertoire. Her music is performed internationally by leading harpists and regularly featured at major harp festivals and competitions. An associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre, Lizotte began composing at an early age and has an extensive catalogue of works, original transcriptions and arrangements for various ensembles. A frequent recipient of grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, she receives several commissions works from harpists, notably Judy Loman, Jennifer Swartz, Valérie Milot, Heidi Krutzen, Marta Power, Elizabeth Jaxon, Jasmine Hogan, Lori Gemmell, Heather Cornelius and Noël Wan, as well as from organisms such as the Orchestre Symphonique de Trois-Rivières, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal.

### **Claude Debussy, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell - Six Épigraphes Antiques (selection)**

Despite his disliking of the label, Debussy is often considered to be one of the first impressionist composers, whose atmospheric compositional style often prioritised colour and mood over structural integrity, unlike his classical and romantic predecessors. Debussy was born into a non-musical family, but with piano tuition from Madame Maute, who herself studied with Chopin, he found a place at the Paris Conservatoire and became a highly influential composer.

Debussy's *Six Épigraphes Antiques* is a suite written for either four or two hands at the piano. It takes its inspiration from mythology, as the composer was so often inspired by.

## **Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell - Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903**

Johann Sebastian Bach was a German composer, organist, harpsichordist, violist, and violinist of the Baroque Era, and is widely regarded as one of the greatest musicians of all time. Son of the court trumpeter for the Duke of Eisenach, Bach received a grammar school education, and learned to sing in his school choir. He further developed his musical talents being taught organ and harpsichord by his older brother, Johann Christoph. After being appointed Cappellmeister (the highest position for a musician within the Church) for the first time at the Court of Anhalt-Cöthen, Bach was able to nourish his compositional talents, eventually earning the legacy he holds to this day (**Baroque Music**).

Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor* was probably composed between 1717 and 1723 while Bach was in Köthen. The piece enjoyed great fame during Bach's lifetime, with its chromatic exploration of all twelve keys. The fantasy, as a genre, was popular with much later composers, from Mendelssohn to Liszt and Brahms, to demonstrate their virtuosity and expressiveness, showing the true extent of Bach's progressiveness (**Interlude**).

## **Philip Hammond, arr. Anne-Marie O'Farrell - The Beardless Boy**

Philip Hammond was born in Belfast in 1951. He graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 1974 as a Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts. He was awarded a Doctorate of Music from Queen's in July 2003. His career has encompassed teaching, performing and writing. His work as a broadcaster and composer brings him regularly before public attention either on radio, television or on the concert platform. He was appointed a director of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in 1988 and seconded to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure from 2005-2007 in order to programme and direct a four month arts festival in Washington DC as part of "Rediscover Northern Ireland". He retired from the Arts Council in 2009. As a composer, Philip Hammond has been regularly commissioned by individuals and groups in Ireland and in Britain such as the Ulster Orchestra, the contemporary ensemble Lontano, the Brodsky String Quartet, James Galway, Sarah Walker, Suzanne Murphy, Tasmin Little, Barry Douglas, Nikolai Demidenko and Ann Murray (**Philip Hammond Music**).

*The Beardless Boy* was originally composed for piano as part of his set of works, *Miniatures and Modulations*, and featured on Micheal McHale's debut album, *The Irish Piano*.

## Coming Soon:

We've got loads of great events coming up, you can visit our website for full details -

[www.performancevenues.group.shef.ac.uk](http://www.performancevenues.group.shef.ac.uk)

### University of Sheffield Chamber Choir

**Saturday 2nd May - 7:30pm**

**£7.50-£14**

**Firth Hall**

Experience the beautiful tones of the University Chamber Choir inside the stunning Firth Hall.

Sheffield University Chamber Choir sing a wide array of sacred and secular music. Performances range from the music of the 16th to the 21st century. Past highlights have included recitals at Sheffield Cathedral, St Marie's Cathedral and St John's Church Ranmoor.

They perform several concerts at the University and throughout the city annually, and also lead the University's Service of Remembrance and the official University Carol Service.

The choir goes on an annual summer tour, performing in historic venues including churches and cathedrals. Past locations include Milan, Kraków & Prague.

### Sheffield University Wind Orchestra

**Sunday 3rd May - 7:30pm**

**£7.50-£14**

**Firth Hall**

A performance from one of the University's leading student orchestras.

For over 25 years, Sheffield University Wind Orchestra have been impressing audiences with their skill and love for their craft. Made up of over 60 student performers, they are led by conductor Gareth Widdowson, and regularly tour across Europe.

The programme will include performances of the works of composers Eric Whitacre, Gustav Holst and Philip Sparke and other renowned Wind Orchestra composers.

## Free Concerts on campus

Throughout term time we run free informal recitals and events in Firth Hall, including visiting guests and the performances from the talented students from the Department of Music.

These events are free to attend and are performed at lunch time and rush hour, which we believe make the events accessible for everyone to enjoy. To find out more about these events and to reserve your ticket, head to our website.

Wednesday 6th May	Rush Hour Concert - Pop & Jazz Ensembles	Mappin Hall	17:45
Monday 11th May	Lunchtime Concert - MA Ensembles	Firth Hall	13:10
Wednesday 13th May	Rush hour Concert - Final Year Pop & Jazz Ensembles	Firth Hall	17:45