

Musical Meze

Jeremy Polmear (oboe, cor anglais, alto sax) and **Diana Ambache** (piano) play music from their British Council tours and their Words and Music programmes. Notes by Jeremy Polmear.

OBOE AND PIANO

1. Maria Hester Parke, **Andante Espressivo** from Sonata II, Op 13 (1801). Parke is one of Diana's 'discovered' women composers. The Sonata was for violin, but the melody of this first movement works very well on oboe.
2. Ronald Binge, **The Watermill** (1958). Ronald Binge comes from the heyday of British Light Music. His best known melody today is 'Sailing By' on BBC Radio 4. The Watermill was written originally for oboe and strings, and shows his understanding of writing for a singing instrument.
3. Erol Erdinç, **Danse de la Mer Noire**. Erol Erdinc is conductor of the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra as well as being a composer and pianist. He gave us a Suite of four pieces for oboe and piano when we were performing there; this is the final movement.
4. J S Bach, **Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring**. In this arrangement of Bach's classic melody, the oboe part is mostly unchanged; the orchestra and choir are played by Diana.
5. Nicholas Maw, **Complaint** (1962). This is a movement from 'Chamber Music' for oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano. Nicholas Maw explained that the final piano bars are a memory of him as a child, in bed, hearing his mother playing Chopin downstairs. (His mother died of tuberculosis when he was fourteen.)
6. Alan Bush, **Northumbrian Dance**, based on the Mitford Galloway (1956). This Dance is one of a set of three 'Northumbrian Impressions', originally written for the Northumbrian small pipes. We performed it a lot in our early British Council tours, when we wanted English music that wasn't by Vaughan Williams.
7. Ennio Morricone, **Gabriel's Oboe** (1986), from the movie 'The Mission'. Jeremy Irons plays it on a baroque oboe (with full Symphony Orchestra) to seduce the natives, who seem about to kill him. It works, though one of the Indians subsequently snaps the oboe across his knee. Being a baroque oboe, it snaps quite easily.
8. Antony le Fleming, **Impromptu** (1994). Antony wrote a set of four Impromptus for us, of which this is the fourth. The outer movements are jazzy in style, the inner ones lyrical. As the composer says in his own programme note, the overall effect is of quirkiness and charm.

COR ANGLAIS (ENGLISH HORN) AND PIANO

9. Cornish Traditional, **Trelawney March**. In 1981 we toured China with the performer, arranger and composer Roger Cawkwell. We asked him for a suite on Cornish themes, and here is the opening. 'And shall Trelawney die? There's 20,000 Cornishmen will know the reason why.'
10. Henry Purcell, **Dido's Lament** (1688). In one of the first English operas, Dido and Aeneas, Dido sings this aria bemoaning her fate after she has been abandoned by Aeneas. It seems a natural for the cor anglais.
11. Maurice Ravel, **Pièce en forme de Habañera** (1907). Ravel originally wrote this piece as a song without words for bass and piano. It has since been arranged for just about every instrument.
12. Francis Shaw, **Gaelic Lament** (1980). Francis Shaw wrote this originally for 'Ireland: A Television History'. The cor anglais featured in the original score. He subsequently made a piano arrangement, out of which we have re-instated and extended the cor anglais part.

ALTO SAX AND PIANO

13. Cole Porter, **It's All Right with Me**. Roger Cawkwell arranged four tunes from the Cole Porter Songbook for us. In this extensive arrangement Roger uses both Latin and Jazz rhythms, and also wrote out solos for us to play.
14. Cole Porter, **Let's Do It**. This Cole Porter arrangement is by Antony le Fleming. It one might be subtitled 'Cole Porter meets Mozart'; the outer sections are in a classical style, with some delicate jazz in the middle.
15. Duke Ellington, **It Don't mean a Thing (if it ain't got that Swing)**. Another Songbook, another arrangement by Roger Cawkwell, again including a written-out jazz solo.
16. Arthur Benjamin, **Jamaican Rumba**. This arrangement for saxophone and piano was made by Peter Wastall, a flute player, who also taught me the oboe at school. It is a Grade 3 piece.
17. George Gershwin, **Summertime**. We often ended our British Council concerts with music like this. The tune is by Gershwin, the first solo is by Roger Cawkwell, and the final section is by me.
18. Leonard Bernstein, **America**. Francis Shaw arranged a suite from West Side Story for us, of which this is the final number.