

Santiago Cañón-Valencia

Santiago Cañón-Valencia *cello*

Naoko Sonoda *piano*

Pittville Pump Room

Wednesday 10 July

Johann Sebastian Bach	Solo Cello Suite No. 2 in D minor	15'
Alfred Schnittke	Suite in the Old Style	15'
Arvo Pärt	Spiegel im Spiegel	10'
Santiago Cañón-Valencia	Ouróboros	5'

About the Programme

JS Bach Cello Suite No.2 in D minor

Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuet
Menuet
Gigue

No autograph score of Bach's cello suites has survived but the music has come down to us by way of a Leipzig copy prepared by Bach's second wife Anna Magdalena. There is good reason to believe that the first four suites were written for one of the two Cöthen cellists, Ferdinand Abel or Christian Bernhard Kinike. All of them pose considerable difficulties for the player as they exploit every technical characteristic of the instrument known at the time.

In the D minor Suite the *Prélude* is in two parts, the first of which has a strong recurring theme immediately introduced. The second is a scale-based cadenza section that leads to final powerful chords. The *Allemande* has short cadenzas which stray away from the strict dance form and the *Courante* and *Sarabande* take their usual form of a triple time 'running dance' and a stately and graceful dance of Latin American origin. Minuets form the *Galanterie* movements, the first of which has demanding chord shiftings and string crossings, and a lively *Gigue* ends the suite.

Alfred Schnittke Suite in the Old Style

Pastorale
Balletto
Minuetto
Fuga
Pantomima

While the use of a diversity of styles provided Alfred Schnittke with an effective way to express alienation and irony in his music, the ability to write in a Baroque style was also valuable from a professional standpoint: people do not always

wish to hear alienating, ironic music in film scores. The Suite in the Old Style for violin and piano is a transcription of certain movements from these film scores, with no commentary from [Schnittke](#) on what it meant to compose in baroque forms in 1973. The first two movements, a Pastorale and a Ballet, are taken from a film detailing the adventures of a dentist. Apparently, this was not a very adventurous dentist, as both these movements are cheery and inoffensive in the extreme; the Pastorale sounds sweet enough to be salon music. The Minuet was taken from a children's animation film - which raises some questions about Soviet children's animation, for this movement is extremely slow and melancholy. The piano imitates traditional ornaments, while the violin takes the subordinate role it sometimes had in Baroque violin works; the two even play in a resigned, almost exhausted canon at one point. A Fugue taken from a film about a sportsman is resolute and accomplished, driving quickly to its emphatic coda. Fittingly, the most daring piece here was also written for a children's animation work: the final Pantomime, despite its charming melody, features bare, exposed rhythms, striking pizzicati, and even what in context feels like a searing dissonance in the violin. The Pantomime does not end so much as trail away, perhaps providing a hint that an era of musical composition was over, or at least that [Schnittke's](#) serious work would never sound quite like this again.

Arvo Pärt Spiegel im Spiegel

Arvo Pärt is the first Estonian composer to achieve international recognition. His compositions in the 1960s, in defiance of the hostility of the Soviet authorities, used the *avant-garde* twelve-tone technique. However, he withdrew from active composition to study Renaissance music, Gregorian chant and the music of the Russian Orthodox Church and emerged with an entirely new and individual composing style which has received widespread acclaim, even amounting to cult status. His works are typically constructed from shifting patterns of basic musical materials, resulting in a hauntingly beautiful and contemplative atmosphere – nowhere more so than in Spiegel im Spiegel. A simple piano arpeggio, always moving at the same speed, and surrounded by individual, bell-like piano notes, accompanies a violin melody of the utmost simplicity, laid out in gradually lengthening phrases. The title, literally *Mirror in the Mirror*, has a double application: rising phrases are mirrored by falling phrases, and high piano notes by low ones; at the same time, the movement of the piano arpeggios exactly reflects the violin's phrases, always keeping in step with the gentle rise and fall of the melody.

Santiago Cañón-Valencia Ouróboros

Ouróboros is an ancient symbol originating from ancient Egyptian iconography and a Greek magical tradition depicting a dragon or a serpent eating its own tail. The *ouroboros* is often interpreted as a symbol for eternal cyclic renewal or a cycle of life, death and rebirth.

Artist Biographies

Santiago Cañón-Valencia *cello*

Colombian cellist **Santiago Cañón-Valencia** is a prolific soloist, composer, commissioner, recording artist, painter and photographer. A 2022 BBC Next Generation Artist, he was born in Bogotá in 1995 and made his debut with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá at age six before going on to win Silver Medal at the 2019 XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition, 2018 Starker Foundation Award, Third Prize at the 2017 Queen Elisabeth International Competition, and First Prize at the Carlos Prieto International Cello Competition, among many other prizes. Upcoming highlights include his Wigmore Hall recital debut; broadcasts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Ulster Orchestra; U.S. recitals and a return to the Alabama Symphony; the Mostly Cello Festival in Korea; and a return to Colombia to celebrate his latest album *Ascenso* (2022, Sono Luminus).

Cañón-Valencia's solo career has taken him around the world and he has recorded and released four commercial albums. Cañón-Valencia has been sponsored by the Mayra & Edmundo Esquenazi Scholarship through the Salvi Foundation since 2011. Learn more at www.santiagocanonvalencia.com.

Naoko Sonoda *piano*

Japanese-born pianist Naoko Sonoda is a prize-winner of several international piano and chamber music competitions, including those in Argento and Trieste (Italy), as well as the Łódź Competition (Poland). Solo and chamber music concert invitations have taken her throughout Europe, Asia, US and South America and to festivals such as Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Meckle-Vorpommern and Verbier Festival. Chamber music partners include Hartmut Rohde, Mark Gothoni and Danjulo Ishizaka and she has performed with such renowned orchestras as the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

Ms. Sonoda is in high demand as a collaborative pianist; she received prizes as best collaborative pianist at the International Music Competition in Markneukirchen (2013, 2019), the Lutosławski International Cello Competition in

Warsaw (2015, 2018), and the XV International Tchaikovsky Competition (2015, 2019). Her performances are regularly broadcast on international radio and TV, including Kulturradio RBB, ZDF and BR in Germany, NPO Radio 4 in Netherlands, Radio Romania, NHK-FM in Japan and the BBC.