

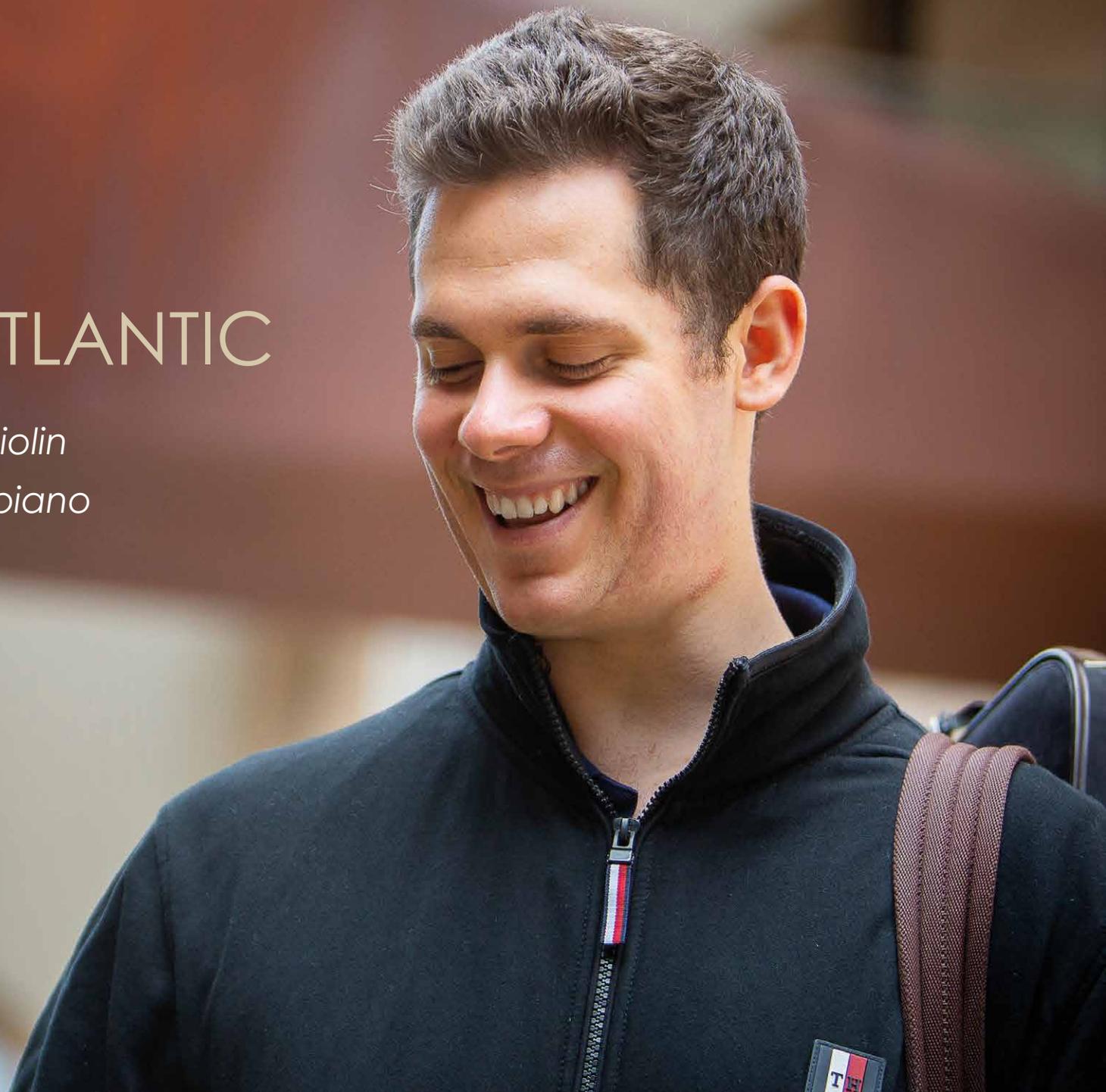


ORCHID CLASSICS

# TRANSATLANTIC

Callum Smart, *violin*

Richard Uttley, *piano*



## TRANSATLANTIC

### Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Violin sonata in E minor, Op. 82

- |   |                     |      |
|---|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro             | 9.42 |
| 2 | Romance             | 8.29 |
| 3 | Allegro, non troppo | 9.13 |

### Amy Beach (1867-1944)

- |   |         |      |
|---|---------|------|
| 4 | Romance | 7.02 |
|---|---------|------|

### Kate Whitley (b.1989)

Three pieces for violin and piano

- |   |                            |      |
|---|----------------------------|------|
| 5 | Very freely, approx ♩ = 92 | 4.01 |
| 6 | Tenemarente ♩ = 60         | 4.34 |
| 7 | Allegro furioso ♩ = 136    | 2.34 |

### Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

- |   |                |       |
|---|----------------|-------|
| 8 | Romance, Op.39 | 10.43 |
|---|----------------|-------|

### John Adams (b.1947)

Road Movies

- |    |                      |      |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 9  | ♩ = 106              | 5.22 |
| 10 | ♩ = 58 Contemplative | 5.32 |
| 11 | ♩ = 130 '40% swing'  | 5.40 |

### Traditional, arranged by Callum Smart

- |    |               |      |
|----|---------------|------|
| 12 | Amazing Grace | 2.05 |
|----|---------------|------|

**Total time** **75.06**

Callum Smart, *violin*

Richard Uttley, *piano*

## **Transatlantic**

This album is a musical selection from the past to present day of the two countries I have lived in, America and England.

The programme was born out of the COVID-19 quarantine, and offered me a chance for both outward discovery and inward reflection. It combines music that's part of my heritage and that I grew up listening to, as well as music I discovered anew but already felt some intrinsic connection to. My programming decisions were purely instinctive, based on music I am deeply in love with, from the two places I call home.

*Callum Smart, 2020*

In *The Canterville Ghost*, Oscar Wilde quipped that English people “have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language”, an idea echoed by George Bernard Shaw when he declared that “England and America are two countries separated by the same language”. The cultural relationship between Britain and America is one that continues to fascinate and to provoke debate, their superficial similarities shot through with deeper contrasts, their historical timelines sometimes overlapping and at others veering off in quite different directions. Benjamin Britten, who lived in America during the Second World War, wrote in 1940 an essay entitled ‘An English Composer Sees America’ in which he debated the different attitudes to music found in both places:

“At the turn of the century young English composers were sick to death of the preponderating German influence which had been stifling English music for 150 years. There were two reactions to this: one on the part of practising musicians like Elgar and Frank Bridge, who realised the value of the classical tradition yet whose utterances were characteristically English; the other, and temporarily more influential, reaction was that of the folksong group... Let American composers take warning from this. There is no more malignant disease than nationalism. Why not make the best of both worlds?”

Edward Elgar (1857-1934) is sometimes portrayed as the quintessential English composer: reserved, but with the hint of secret passions simmering beneath a stiff upper lip half-hidden by his resplendent Edwardian moustache. Yet, as Britten argued, whereas composers like Vaughan Williams sought out English folk music, Elgar was more interested in Germanic precedents including Wagner; his ‘Englishness’ was of a kind that absorbed European trends while exhibiting traits considered to be characteristically English – resignation, jauntiness, gravitas.

Elgar began his Violin Sonata in E minor, Op. 82, in August 1918, finishing it by 5 September. Much of the work was written while the violinist W.H. Reed, known

as Billy, was staying with Elgar. Reed recalled: "We used to play up to the blank page and then he would say 'And then what?' – and we would go out to explore the wood or fish in the River Arun." Elgar wrote to his German-born friend, Marie Joshua: "It is full of golden sounds and I like it, but you must not expect anything violently chromatic or cubist." The sonata was first performed in October 1918 at Elgar's home in Hampstead. Elgar wrote of the work: "The first movement is bold and vigorous, then a fantastic, curious movement with a very expressive middle section; a melody for the violin ... they say it is as good or better than anything I have done in the expressive way ... the last movement is very broad and soothing, like the last movement of the second symphony."

Amy Beach (1867-1944) was a child prodigy who from an early age could improvise vocal countermelodies and replicate four-part hymns at the piano. Of Anglo-American heritage, she was born in New Hampshire and gave her first public recital at the age of seven. After the family moved to Boston, her piano studies continued with teachers including Dr Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, whom Amy married in 1885. Dr Beach requested that his wife limit her career as a pianist, so she turned her attention to composition, teaching herself everything from fugue to orchestration using a variety of theory books. Her 'Gaelic' Symphony (1896) was both a response to Dvořák's use of Native and African-American themes, and a reflection of her family background, drawing on several British and Irish tunes. Her colleague George Chadwick wrote of the symphony: "I always feel a thrill of pride myself whenever I hear a fine new work by any one of us, and as such you will have to be counted in, whether you will or not – one of the boys." The *Romance*, Op. 23 (1893) is Beach's first work for violin and piano and her earliest published chamber work. The *Romance* is dedicated to Maud Powell, one of the foremost American violinists of the time, and lives up to its name, the violin unfurling a warm, tender melody to the piano's rich harmonies. Powell gave the work's premiere, with Beach at the piano, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

Kate Whitley (b.1989) is a composer and pianist based in South London. She co-runs the innovative Multi-Story Orchestra, which performs in car parks around the UK, and has received a number of prestigious commissions including a piece for the BBC marking International Women's Day 2017, for which she composed *Speak out* to words by Malala Yousafzai. In the following year her orchestral work *Sky Dances* was performed by over 100 musicians in Trafalgar Square. Whitley's *Three Pieces for Violin and Piano* (2014) were inspired by Janáček's Viola Sonata, and possess a similarly taut, skittish energy and sense of intimate and intense dialogue between the protagonists.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was born in Holborn and studied composition with Stanford at the Royal College of Music. His first work was published when he was 16, and he composed his Symphony in A minor aged just 20. Coleridge-Taylor was particularly celebrated in America, first visiting in 1904, when he was invited to meet President Roosevelt at the White House, after which he regularly conducted his own music on far-reaching American tours. Back in the UK, Coleridge-Taylor was appointed conductor of the Handel Society of London in 1904, a position he held until his death aged 37. He was also made Professor of Composition at both the Guildhall School of Music and Trinity College of Music. After meeting the poet P.L. Dunbar in 1897, Coleridge-Taylor became increasingly interested in his heritage and in promoting the dignity of people of African descent. In the following year, the Three Choirs Festival approached Elgar to commission a work, and he responded: "I am sorry I am too busy to do so. I wish, wish, wish you would ask Coleridge-Taylor to do it. He still wants recognition, and he is far and away the cleverest fellow going amongst the young men." Elgar's friend, the publisher August Jaeger (who inspired Elgar's 'Nimrod'), added that Coleridge-Taylor was "a genius". The Festival did approach Coleridge-Taylor, who composed his orchestral *Ballade* for the occasion. His beguiling *Romance* in G major, Op. 39 for violin and orchestra followed in 1899; we hear an arrangement for violin and piano.



John Adams (b.1947) is the most celebrated living American composer. He has been at the forefront of the 'minimalist' style, using small motivic fragments that shift subtly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, as the music evolves, often with a pronounced sense of rhythmic momentum. In less subtle hands this technique might result in churning monotony, but Adams has a lightness of touch that results in music of exceptional sophistication and nuance, enhanced by his use of popular American idioms and colourful instrumentation. Adams often paints on large canvasses and has produced numerous orchestral scores and operas, but occasionally he creates a delicate miniature using smaller-scale forces, an example of which is *Road Movies* (1995) for violin and piano. Adams explains: "The title 'Road Movies' is total whimsy, probably suggested by the 'groove'

in the piano part, all of which is required to be played in a 'swing' mode". The work is founded on pithy motifs that expand and contract, with two propulsive movements framing a contemplative, sparse central movement reminiscent of Copland. According to Adams, the first movement, a type of rondo, is "a relaxed drive down a not unfamiliar road", followed by "a simple meditation of several small motives. A solitary figure in an empty desert landscape." The final movement "is for four-wheel drives only, a big perpetual motion machine".

The famous hymn *Amazing Grace* has become a powerful symbol of transatlantic creativity. The words were written by John Newton (1725-1807), an Englishman who was involved with the slave trade for many years. When his ship was nearly wrecked during a storm in 1748, Newton called out to God for help, precipitating his religious conversion. He retired from his naval role in 1755 and became a clergyman, writing the words to *Amazing Grace* in 1772. In 1779 the hymn was published in England but did not enjoy widespread recognition there. Across the Atlantic, however, *Amazing Grace* proved popular with evangelical preachers during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, set to a number of different tunes. Then in 1835 the American composer William Walker (1809-1875) set Newton's words to a melody called 'New Britain', and this version has become the most widely-performed to this day, interpreted by musicians in a range of styles. We hear an arrangement by Callum Smart; the singing tone of the violin is beautifully suited to this timeless melody and its universal message of finding hope in adversity.

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## **Callum Smart**

Callum Smart is quickly developing an international reputation as one of Britain's finest young violinists. Playing with 'an inherent nobility that speaks to the heart' (International Record Review), he is celebrated for combining 'brilliant technique with the confidence to take risks' (Bachtrack) and his 'utterly convincing' interpretations (BBC Music Magazine).

Recognised as a rising star since winning the BBC Young Musician strings category and being the top European prize-winner at the Menuhin Competition in 2010, Smart now enjoys concert appearances with the UK's leading orchestras, including re-invitations to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra. In 2020-21, Callum makes his debut with the Hallé Orchestra performing Korngold's Violin Concerto, and also a Boston debut with the Lexington Symphony Orchestra performing Elgar's Violin Concerto.

Last season, he made his debut with the BBC Philharmonic performing Berg's Violin Concerto, and this season sees his return to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and debut with the Manchester Camerata.

Now with two recital albums to his name, 2016 saw the release of Smart's second album on the Orchid Classics Label with pianist Richard Uttley. 'La Voix' – including works by Fauré, Poulenc and Ravel – featured as one of the Strad Magazine's recommended recordings of the month, and was accorded 4 star reviews both in the BBC Music Magazine and the Observer.

Smart plays on a c.1730-35 violin by Carlo Bergonzi and is a Hattori Foundation Award Winner 2019.



## **Richard Uttley**

Richard studied at Cambridge University, graduating from Clare College with a Double First in Music, and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Martin Roscoe. His playing has frequently been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and has also featured on BBC Two, BBC Four, BBC World Service, Classic FM and Sky Arts. He won the British Contemporary Piano Competition in 2006 and was selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust in 2011.

Richard has released several solo recordings to critical acclaim and appeared at venues and festivals including Auditorium du Louvre, Banff Centre, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Klangspuren Festival, Konzerthaus Berlin, Modulus Festival (Vancouver), Royal Festival Hall, and Wigmore Hall, and has toured in China and Columbia.

Richard's long-term chamber music collaborators include composer-clarinetist Mark Simpson, violinists Savitri Grier and Callum Smart, and horn player Ben Goldscheider. He has participated in Open Chamber Music at International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove. In 2019 Richard won the Yvar Mikhashoff pianist/composer commissioning prize with composer Kate Whitley.

Richard is a piano professor at the Royal College of Music and also teaches at City, University of London, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama.



Producer / engineer: Patrick Allen

Recorded on the 1st-3rd of August, 2020, at Stoller Hall, Manchester

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