

Wethersfield Chamber Concerts

24 April 2016 – 4pm

Sophie Westbrooke
Recorder

David Gordon
Harpsichord

PROGRAMME

- I. Lamento di Tristano and La Rota de La Manfredina - Anon
- II. La Tricotea, Tres Morillas, Enemiga le soy madre, Vamos Vamos a Cenar and Pensad ora 'n al from the Cancionero de Palacio - Anon
- III. Recercadas 1 and 2 - Diego Ortiz
- IV. Flow my Tears / Pavane Lacrymae - Dowland / van Eyck
- V. Amarilli Mia Bella - van Eyck
- VI. Sonata Prima - Dario Castello
- VII. Sonata Representiva - Biber
- VIII. Marokawia's Lament and Song of the Dancing Skunk from Moon Dances - Walter Mays
- IX. The Alchemist and the Catflap; Tom's Midnight Garden; Brandy for 4 - David Gordon
- X. Harpsichord Solo
- XI. Five on the Dice
- XII. A set of Choros arr. David Gordon

Each item on the programme will be introduced by the artist

THE RECORDER

The recorder is a woodwind musical instrument in the group known as internal duct flutes—flutes with a whistle mouthpiece.

Recorders are made in different sizes with compasses corresponding to different vocal ranges. The sizes most commonly in use today are the soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Recorders are traditionally constructed from wood and ivory, although the use of plastics is now common. Other characteristics of their construction, such as bore profile and fingering systems, have varied over time and between instruments.

The recorder is first documented in the Middle Ages, and continued to enjoy wide popularity in the renaissance and baroque periods, but was little used in the classical and romantic periods. It was revived in the 20th century as part of the historically informed performance movement, and became a popular amateur and educational instrument. Composers who have written for the recorder include Monteverdi, Lully, Purcell, Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann, J.S Bach, Paul Hindemith, Benjamin Britten, Leonard Bernstein, Luciano Berio, and Arvo Pärt. Today, there are many professional recorder players who demonstrate the instrument's full solo range and a large community of amateurs.

The sound of the recorder is often described as clear and sweet, and has historically been associated with birds and shepherds. It is notable for its quick response and its corresponding ability to produce a wide variety of articulations. This ability, coupled with its open finger holes, allow it to produce a wide variety tone colors and special effects. Acoustically, its tone is relatively pure and odd harmonics predominate in its sound.

The instrument has been known by its modern English name at least since the 14th century. David Lasocki reports the earliest use of "recorder" in the household

accounts of the Earl of Derby (later King Henry IV) in 1388.

Today, recorder sizes are named the different vocal ranges. This is not, however, a reflection of sounding pitch, and serves primarily to denote the pitch relationships between the different instruments. Groups of recorders played together are referred to as "consorts."

Historically, recorders were used to play vocal music and parts written for other instruments, or for a general instrument. As a result, it was frequently the performers' responsibility to read parts not specifically intended for the instrument and to choose appropriate instruments.

Modern nomenclature for such recorders refers to the instruments' relationship to the other members of consort, rather than their absolute pitch, which may vary. The instruments from lowest to highest are called "great bass," "bass," "basset," "tenor," "alto," and "soprano."

The alto is the standard recorder of the Baroque, although there is a small repertoire written for other sizes. Recorders have historically been constructed from hardwoods and ivory, sometimes with metal keys. Since the modern revival of the recorder, plastics have been used in the manufacture of recorders, both by mass manufacturers and individual makers.

Today, a wide variety of hardwoods are used to make recorders, including Maplewood, pearwood, plumwood and boxwood.

The recorder achieved great popularity in the 16th century, and is one of the most common instruments of the Renaissance. From the 15th century onwards, paintings show upper-class men and women playing recorder. Famously, at Henry VIII of England was an avid player of the recorder, and at his death in 1547 an inventory of his possessions included 76 recorders in consorts of various sizes and materials. Some Italian

Wethersfield Chamber Concerts

paintings from the 16th-century show aristocracy of both sexes playing the recorder, however many gentlemen found it unbecoming to play because it uses the mouth, preferring the lute and later the viol.

At the turn of the 17th century, playwright William Shakespeare famously referenced the recorder in "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," creating an extended metaphor between manipulation and playing a musical instrument. Poet John Milton also referenced the recorder in his most famous work, the epic poem Paradise Lost published in 1667.

The recorder was revived around the turn of the 20th century by early music enthusiasts, but used almost exclusively for this purpose. It was considered a mainly historical instrument.

The eventual success of the recorder in the modern era is often attributed to Arnold Dolmetsch in the UK and various German scholar/performers. While he was responsible for broadening interest beyond that of the early music specialist in the UK, Dolmetsch was far from being solely responsible for the recorder's revival.

Among the influential virtuosos who figure in the revival of the recorder as a serious concert instrument in the latter part of the 20th century are Frans Brüggen and David Munrow. Brüggen recorded most of the landmarks of the historical repertoire and commissioned a substantial number of new works for the recorder. Munrow's 1975 double album *The Art of the Recorder* remains as an important anthology of recorder music through the ages.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sophie Westbrooke began playing the recorder with her mother at the age of five, as a way of learning to read music to aid her violin and piano studies. She moved to formal lessons a year later and passed her Grade 8 at the age of nine. Sophie studies recorder with Barbara Law at the Junior Royal Academy of Music and often plays alongside 2012 BBC Young Musician Finalist Charlotte Barbour-Condini. In 2013 Sophie passed her ABRSM Performance Diploma with Distinction, and she has also gained distinction at Grade 8 on both piano and violin.

Sophie was the second-ever recorder player to reach the Concerto Finals of the BBC Young Musician Competition, performing Gordon Jacob's 'Suite for recorder and strings' arranged for chamber orchestra by David Knotts. Following the competition, Sophie has performed concertos with Henham Chamber Orchestra and National Youth Recorder Orchestra. This summer she toured Germany and Belgium as concerto soloist with the Lydian Orchestra.

Sophie aims to expand awareness of the recorder through the performance of a wide repertoire of music from the medieval to the modern. She is experimental in interpretation, often using improvisation and different combinations of instruments to accompany her ever-growing collection of different instruments. A music scholar at Sevenoaks School, Sophie also participates in many choirs, orchestras and chamber groups. Her string quartet was chamber champion in the Pro Corda National Chamber Music competition 2014.

A keen composer, Sophie wrote a Christmas carol 'Music of Christmas Day' which won both the Junior Carol Competition at RAM and was the overall winner of the Sevenoaks School carol competition in 2012. The following year, she was invited to compose a piano piece and perform at the Hastings International Composers' Festival alongside pieces by Nigel Hess, Stephen Warbeck and others. She is currently working on a set of pieces for recorder to premier in upcoming concerts. Sophie also enjoys studying conducting at school, where she has conducted orchestras and choirs.

Sophie is involved in music production, and co-wrote, recorded and produced a pop album with her band, playing guitar and keyboards with a school friend on vocals and her brother on drums, raising over £800 for the charity HopeHIV. Having studied jazz piano at a young age she regularly accompanies bands and singers in local charity concerts and events. When not at school or practising, Sophie likes running and cooking.

David Gordon studied mathematics and logic before embarking on a career as jazz pianist, harpsichordist and composer.

As harpsichordist, he plays with many of the leading baroque orchestras, including appearances at the BBC Proms, the Musikverein in Vienna, and Carnegie Hall, New York. He has also performed with violinists Andrew Manze and Nigel Kennedy, and leads the early music/jazz group Respectable Groove, whose most recent projects, their ground-breaking versions of Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas* and of 'Bach and the Organist's Daughter' have been critically acclaimed both in the jazz and early music press. His solo harpsichord recitals usually include a large element of improvisation, and he has twice appeared as guest artist and director of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra at the Risør Chamber Music Festival in Norway.

As jazz pianist, he tours and records with his own international jazz trio, including festival appearances in the UK and Denmark, on BBC Radio 3 and a debut at London's King's Place in December 2011. In addition he regularly collaborates with violinist Christian Garrick and singer Jacqui Dankworth, and with spoken word in the jazz/poetry collective Riprap. He is also joint musical director of, and an explosive pianistic force in, the gypsy tango band Zum, which has toured Croatia, Finland, France, and the United States. In spring 2013, he premiered a specially-commissioned work at London's Cadogan Hall he wrote for his trio and the London Chamber Orchestra.

As composer, his jazz style interweaves with his knowledge of the baroque and vast understanding of innumerable diverse musical influences, and his works appear on around 20 CDs, with regular commissions to write for various groups, the award-winning community opera *Semmerwater*, written and premiered in 2009, and winner of an AMI award, being the result of one of these. A firm advocate of the power of improvisation, he believes that improvising – in groups or alone – allows us access to parts of the human spirit other forms of music-making cannot reach.

We hope that you will join us for our next concert on 8 May 2016