

Kleptomania!

Borrowed Baroque

The brass septet is a brand new invention. There is no canon of repertoire, no grand history of great compositions, hence Septura's compulsion to steal and the title *Kleptomania!*

All of this performance's music has been arranged for brass septet by one of the players, Simon Cox. The arrangement of the Stravinsky is a collaboration between Simon Cox and Matthew Knight.

This programme is a focus on the 18th-century orchestra, borrowing from Handel's *Rinaldo* and Rameau's *Dardanus*. Their Pergolesi, by contrast, is third-hand: Stravinsky got there first, and his neoclassical *Pulcinella* is re-imagined for brass, alongside some early neoclassical piano works by Prokofiev.

Rameau: Dardanus

Despite not composing his first opera until he was almost 50, Rameau quickly

became the principal composer of French opera, inheriting a well-established tradition from Lully. Whilst the main plot of his 1739 opera *Dardanus* was so absurd (a convoluted love story with sea monsters, magicians and dream sequences) that it had to be extensively re-written after its premiere, the prologue is a straightforward allegory rooted in classical mythology. Cupid banishes Jealousy, but Love can't survive without her — Cupid and the Pleasures fall into a deep sleep, and Venus has to recall Jealousy to bring them all back to life.

Prokofiev: Suite Op 12

Without doubt one of the most original and distinctive voices of the early 20th Century, Prokofiev's reputation in the West was diminished by Cold War antipathies, and his music has perhaps never been celebrated as much as that of Stravinsky and Schönberg. However, whereas those composers turned to atonality, Prokofiev's unparalleled gift was to create original music that remained tonal. The spiky opening March foreshadows the more famous March from his opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*. The *Humorous Scherzo* ironically sets a rapid and agile dance in the grumbling low register, and the effect

is heightened by arranging it for comically inelegant and unwieldy instruments — Prokofiev himself arranged it for four cumbersome bassoons, and luckily Septura has its own comedy troupe, three trombones and a tuba!

INTERVAL

Handel: Rinaldo

Handel's 1711 crusader opera *Rinaldo*, which pits the Christian Rinaldo against Argante, the Muslim King of Jerusalem, was the first Italian-language opera composed for the London stage. Handel composed it in just two weeks, aided by the recycling of much existing material including two arias: *Sibilar gli angui*, here given to solo trombone, which was lifted completely from a dramatic cantata, and *Il vostro maggio*, here a trumpet solo, in which mermaids lead Rinaldo astray with a song about love's delights. The opera was particularly noted for Handel's innovative use of brass instruments, harnessing their uniquely expressive powers for the war and pageantry scenes. Argante's entrance is a fine example, where the sudden blast of trumpets provides 'an effect of splendour and exhilaration that time has not dimmed'.

Stravinsky: Pulcinella

Pulcinella marked the beginning of Stravinsky's fruitful neoclassical phase. – As he himself put it, '*Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible'. Diaghilev had come up with the idea for a ballet based on an 18th-century *commedia dell'arte* libretto with corresponding 18th-century music. Stravinsky was initially unenthusiastic, commenting that 'when he said that the composer was Pergolesi, I thought he must be deranged'. He became convinced when he actually studied the scores that Diaghilev had unearthed – 'I looked, and I fell in love'.

The ballet was scored for three solo singers and chamber orchestra, with the "modern" sonorities derived in large part from the extensive use of trumpet and trombone. In 1922, two years after the premiere, Stravinsky created a purely orchestral suite from the music, and it is this which has been arranged.

Programme notes based on those of Matthew Knight, 2018.

Septura

One of the very best international brass ensembles!



Trumpets

Philip Cobb, principal Trumpet of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, having previously held the same position in the London Symphony Orchestra from the age of 21.

James Fountain, principal trumpet of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of 20, before moving to the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Simon Cox, founder of Septura and principal trumpet of the Aurora Orchestra

Trombones

Matthew Gee, principal trombone of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and teacher at the Royal Academy of Music,

Matthew Knight, co-principal trombone of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and teacher at the Royal College of Music.

Daniel West, a busy & versatile freelance musician, including the *Phantom of the Opera* orchestra.

Tuba

Sasha Koushk-Jalali, much in demand as a freelance tuba player in London.

KLEPTOMANIA!

A unique opportunity
to hear brass music
at its best!

Music in Fermanagh

Thursday, 19th March 2020 8pm

Tickets £15 Under 25s: £6

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