

The Pugin Foundation proudly presents

Pugin Bi-centenary Solo Violin Recital

St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, Sunday 4 March 2012, 2.00pm

Violinist: Peter Tanfield

Johann Sebastian BACH

Sonata in G minor for Solo Violin BWV 1001

1. Adagio
2. Fuga
3. Siciliano
4. Presto

Partita in D minor for Solo Violin BWV 1004

1. Allemanda
2. Corrente
3. Sarabanda
4. Giga
5. Ciaccona

Born in England in 1961, Peter Tanfield started the violin at the age of four. He studied in Germany, Israel, Switzerland and Holland where his teachers were Igor Ozim, Felix Andrievski, Alberto Lysy, Herman Krebbers and Yehudi Menuhin. Active as a teacher in Britain, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Australia, he has organised, coordinated and delivered courses and chamber music programmes for festivals and youth organisations.

Peter was a prize-winner at the Carl Flesch International Competition, International Mozart Competition and International Bach Competition among others. He has appeared as soloist with many major orchestras, including: the Philharmonia, City of London Sinfonia, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, West German Radio Orchestra and the Radio Symphony Orchestra of the RAI in Rome. As concertmaster he has also had extensive experience working with: the BBC Philharmonic, RSO RAI Roma, West German Radio Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Artists and composers he has worked and performed with include: Astor Piazzolla, Charlie Watts, Pinchas Zukerman, Yehudi Menuhin, Charles Wuorinen, Arvo Paert, Graeme Koehne, Gary Carr, Carlos Maria Giulini and Itzhak Perlman.

Peter was the foundation leader of the Australian String Quartet. Since January 2008 he has held the position of Head of Strings at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, where he is also director of orchestra and chamber music.

Recital Notes

The set of six works for unaccompanied violin, three sonatas and three partitas, written while Bach was Kapellmeister at the court in Coethen, are a truly outstanding achievement in the history of music. It was a period in Bach's life when he was not called upon to write sacred music, the court being of the Reform Church—music had no place in the religious ceremonies. These solo violin works are to some extent reflective and philosophical musings, experimental in a sense in their scale and depth, but invested with an intensity of devotion and incandescent feeling that, it would seem, Bach somehow needed to give vent to. Bach is known to have had a great affection for these pieces, having a copy with him - or very nearby - for much of his later life, as one might a treasured book of poems or letters. No mean violinist himself, he certainly played them, but possibly not necessarily for any audience. An intimate knowledge and understanding of the instrument and its possibilities is clearly evident in the writing, not only in the manifest understanding of the difficulties and extreme demands of the music, but also in the use of sonority and timbre and the natural strengths of the instrument.

Their true wonder is in the breadth and depth of expression and feeling, ranging from the exquisitely intimate and touching to the virtuosic and even heroic. The Sonatas all have the same movement structure, starting with slow aria-like movements, followed by fugues, then a slow singing movement and lastly a lively fluidly running movement to finish. The Partitas are all made up of a series of dances, with interestingly varied juxtaposition. The D minor is an arch overall, the first four dances leading up to and providing a balance for the massive form of the Ciaccona (Chaconne), a complex structure of uninterrupted variations on a ground bass. The Chaconne is an extraordinary achievement, deeply admired by many composers—Brahms, Busoni, Schumann, Mendelssohn, for example—and considered to be unequalled, even to the present day.

Peter Tanfield

February 2012