



Friday 23 October, 7pm on YouTube
available until Friday 30 October

POCKET-SIZED CLASSICS

Pocket Sinfonia

Rosie Bowker *flute*

Eleanor Corr *violin*

Mirjam Kammler *cello*

Emil Duncumb *fortepiano*

Animation

Kate Anderson

The music

Felix Mendelssohn 1809–1847 arr. **Eleanor Corr**

Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Op. 21 (1827)

Written when the composer was just 17 years old, Mendelssohn's Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a feast of musical images. The overture opens with four ethereal chords which take us into the world of the dreamers. This is immediately followed by scampering fairy music in the violin and fortepiano, denoting the mischievous tricks that are about to be played on the lovers. From the fairy theme, a great burst of energy brings a grand heroic theme which in turn melts into the lovers' sweeping melodic theme. The last character to be introduced in the music is of course Bottom, who can be heard in the prominent descending 9th (to denote a donkey braying) accompanied by rustic drones in the bass. All of these themes and characters are used again and developed throughout the overture, where magic and mystery abound in the music.

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827 arr. **Johann Nepomuk Hummel**

Symphony No. 6 in F, the 'Pastoral' Op. 68 (1807–8)

- I 'Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside'
- II 'Scene by the brook'
- III 'Merry gathering of country folk'
- IV 'Thunder, Storm'
- V 'Shepherd's song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm'

Beethoven found a great deal of inspiration and solace in the countryside that surrounded Vienna. In one of his letters from 1808, Beethoven exclaims: 'How happy I am to be able to wander among bushes and herbs, under trees and over rocks; no man can love the country as I love it. Woods, trees and rocks send back the echoes that man desires.'

The transcription that Pocket Sinfonia will perform is by a fellow Viennese composer of Beethoven's, Johann Nepomuk Hummel. The two men have been variously characterised as friends and musical rivals, though from the catalogue of Hummel's transcriptions of Beethoven's work, it is clear that Hummel greatly admired Beethoven's music and was an extremely talented pianist himself. This is the version of the Pastoral Symphony that would have been heard in Vienna's drawing rooms and salons, so that great admirers of Beethoven's music could experience the delights of this symphony again and again.

The performers

Using both period and modern instruments, **Pocket Sinfonia** was formed to recreate some of the atmosphere of wonderful 19th-century living room parties, where the intimacy of a chamber music performance could be applied to orchestral-scale pieces. This was made possible via transcriptions by composers including Hummel and Clementi. Pocket Sinfonia has since made its own arrangements, applying spontaneity and vigour to creations that are not merely smaller versions of great pieces, but are new and artistic in their own right.

Pocket Sinfonia has been lucky enough to perform at various places much bigger than most living rooms, including at Brighton Early Music Festival, Oslo Kammermusikkfestival and Norway's Mozartfestivalen. The Telegraph's Ivan Hewett came to see the ensemble at BREMF in 2018 and wrote that 'in terms of sheer energy, the palm must go to Pocket Sinfonia, who managed to make Mozart's brilliant Haffner Symphony burst with the energy of an orchestra; what's more, the little pauses from pianist Emil Duncumb infused it with a real chamber-style rhythmic pliability.'

pocketsinfonia.com

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Videography: Zen Grisdale & Eskild Abelseth

Pastoral and spoken sequences filmed at St Mary's House, Bramber and Danny House, Hurstpierpoint

Musicians filmed at Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo

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stmarysbramber.co.uk

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