

Additional Programme Notes

An Evening with Arvo Pärt | Fri 14 Mar

Arvo Pärt is one of those composers in the world, whose creative output has significantly changed the way we understand the nature of music. In 1976, he created a unique musical language called tintinnabuli, that has reached a vast audience of various listeners and that has defined his work right up to today. There is no compositional school that follows Pärt, nor does he teach, nevertheless, a large part of the contemporary music has been influenced by his tintinnabuli compositions.

In his quest for self-expression, Pärt turned even more intensively towards the early music and became absorbed for years studying Gregorian chant, the Notre Dame School and Renaissance polyphony. The first signs of this appear in his Symphony No 3 (1971) – one of the very few works that premiered in these years.

It was also the time of important events in Arvo Pärt's personal life as he married and joined the Orthodox Church in 1972.

In 1976, Pärt emerged with a new and highly original musical language, which he called tintinnabula (from tintinnabulum – Latin for 'little bell'). The new style first appears in a short piece for piano, *Für Alina*, followed soon by works like *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Tabula rasa* (1977) and *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978). Pärt has now been composing in his tintinnabuli-style for over 40 years, and it has proven to be a rich and inexhaustible creative source.

Tintinnabuli music can be defined as a distinct technique, which in essence unites two monodic lines of structure – melody and triad – into one, inseparable ensemble. It creates an original duality of voices, the course and inner logic of which are defined by strict, even complicated mathematical formulas. Through that duality of voices Pärt has given a new meaning to the horizontal and vertical axis of music, and broadened our perception of tonal and modal music in its widest sense.

Tintinnabuli music can also be described as a style in which the musical material is extremely concentrated, reduced only to the most important, where the simple rhythm and often gradually progressing melodies and triadic tintinnabuli voices are integrated into the complicated art of polyphony, expressing the composer's special relationship to silence.

In addition, tintinnabuli is also an ideology, a very personal and deeply sensed attitude to life for the composer, based on Christian values, religious practice and a quest for truth, beauty and purity.

Bristol Ensemble

Roger Huckle	Violin / Conductor
Simon Kodurand	Violin
Hugh Blogg	Violin

Matthew Everett	Violin
Joanne Green	Violin
Rebekah Allan	Violin
Marian Givens	Violin
Carl Hill	Viola
Fran Higgs	Viola
Juliet McCarthy	Cello
Sue Norton	Cello
Jub Davis	Bass
Jeremy Little	Percussion
Paul Israel	Piano

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