



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

CONCERT SERIES

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2021

Covid Advice

information for ticket holders for the Imogen Cooper recital

Your checklist before attending the recital:

Please answer the following questions on the day of the concert:

- Have you felt hot or cold or shivery today?
- Do you have a new persistent cough? (This means coughing a lot for more than an hour.)
- Do you have a loss of smell or taste?
- Have you had recent contact with anyone who is ill with Covid?

If you or anyone in your party attending the concert answers "YES" to any of these questions, we respectfully ask, in the interests of the safety of the College and of the town community that you do not attend the concert.

We further request that all adult members of your party should be:

- 'double vaccinated' and /or have taken a lateral flow test with a 'negative' result on the day of the concert

By supporting our requests, you will be helping to safeguard future performances from our concert series.

While attending the recital:

- Please wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) on arrival and on leaving the Memorial Hall
- Please park as usual in the Water Meadows car park and proceed to the 'basin' area in front of the Memorial Hall. We will endeavour to keep waiting times to an absolute minimum, but please do bring an umbrella if the weather is inclement!
- Please use the sanitiser available before entering the hall
- Face coverings may be removed once seated but should be worn while moving around the hall
- Toilet facilities will be available on the lower level of the hall
- Seating will be socially distanced, though audience members from the same household /bubble will be able to sit together.

Other Advice:

- Please note that while these measures have been put in place for your safety, the College further advises individuals to make their own assessment as to whether they feel comfortable attending the concert
- Unfortunately, for Covid hygiene reasons, we will not be able to offer

our customary glass of Mionetto at this concert, but we hope to do so at subsequent concerts

- If you are unable to attend, please do let us know by emailing mccs_tickets@marlboroughcollege.org or by telephoning our enquiries line (01672 892566) as we have a waiting list of people eager for tickets!

Celebrating Beethoven ...

The October recital was originally conceived as a commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth.

Two prominent pieces are featured, both of which emerged from a relatively fallow period (1816-1819) for the composer: the **Sonata in A flat major (Op.110)** and the **Diabelli Variations (Op.120)**.

The late 1810s were physically and emotionally challenging for Beethoven. He had fought a see-saw custody battle gaining and losing the guardianship of his young nephew, suffered increasing deafness that reduced direct communication to writing in a 'conversation book', and experienced poor health worsened by the historically unprecedented cold Winters of this decade.

The Op.120 variations take their name from the music publisher and occasional composer Anton Diabelli, who in 1819 wrote a waltz theme and invited all the composers in Vienna to write a single variation, which would later be published as a collection.

Beethoven, not generally enamoured by collaborative ventures set about writing a series of variations, though his attention wandered towards the *Missa Solemnis* (Op.123) before returning to the waltz theme. Numerous theories have been postulated as to why Beethoven might take up the challenge, though none is conclusive. One suggestion is that he had in mind the accomplishments of his pupil, Archduke Rudolf of Austria, who previously had taken one

of Beethoven's themes and developed 40 variations from it.

Another proposition is that he wrote the full suite in order to demonstrate his musical prowess. Whatever his motives, the resultant 33 variations rank in stature alongside JS Bach's *Goldberg Variations* as one of the most impressive collections for keyboard.

To play for us is the ever-green Imogen Cooper, newly made Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE).

Youngest of four siblings, Imogen was born into an artistic family imbued with an atmosphere

of music. As a child, she says: "It was natural to climb up on the piano stool and experiment."

At 11 years, she auditioned with French pianist and tutor Jacques Février, who declared: "She has a lot to learn but she already has what I cannot teach her." She moved to Paris to study at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique*, where six years later she was awarded the *Premier Prix de Piano*. Among her mentors, Alfred Brendel is most prominent. "He gave me time without parameters," she says. "We would work for hours, then we would sit and listen to Furtwängler, Fischer, Cortot, the Busch Quartet, Kempff, Lotte Lehmann ... It was an education." ■



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