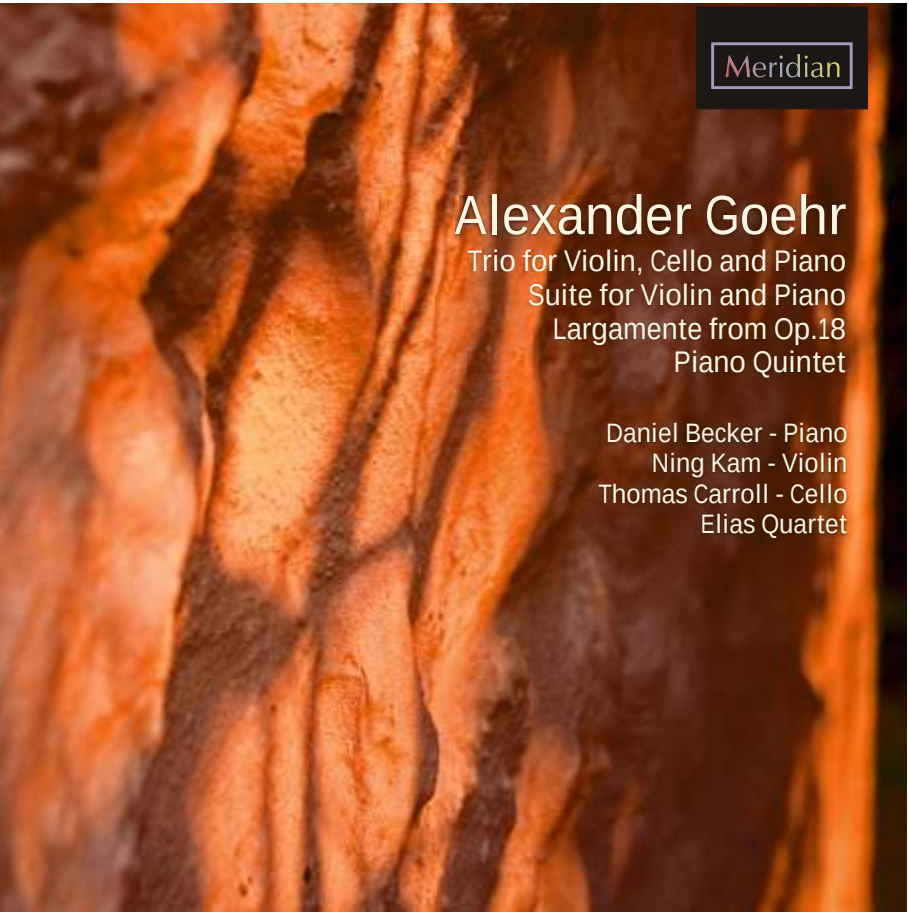

Meridian
Alexander Goehr
Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano
Suite for Violin and Piano
Largamente from Op.18
Piano Quintet
Daniel Becker - Piano
Ning Kam - Violin
Thomas Carroll - Cello
Elias Quartet

Alexander Goehr, composer and teacher, was born in Berlin on 10 August 1932, son of the conductor Walter Goehr, and was brought to England in 1933. He studied with Richard Hall at the Royal Manchester College of Music, where together with Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies and John Ogdon he formed the New Music Manchester Group, and with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod in Paris. In the early '60s he worked for the BBC and formed the Music Theatre Ensemble, the first devoted to what has become an established musical form. From the late '60s onwards he taught at the New England Conservatory Boston, Yale, Leeds and was appointed to the chair of the University of Cambridge in 1975. He has also taught in China and has twice been Composer-in-residence at Tanglewood. He is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a former Churchill Fellow, and was the Reith Lecturer in 1987.

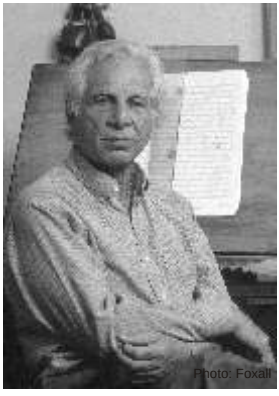
He has written four operas: *Arden Must Die*, Hamburg 1967; *Behold the Sun*, Deutsche Oper 1985; *Arianna*, lost opera by Monteverdi, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 1995 and subsequently recorded for NMC; *Kantan & Damask Drum*, Theater Dortmund September 1999; and a music theatre Triptych.

His orchestral works, including four symphonies, concerti for piano, violin, viola and cello and other orchestral compositions have at various times been performed by Dorati, Boulez, Barenboim, Pritchard, Haitink, Ozawa, Dohnanyi and Rattle, with soloists including Parikian, Ricci, Jaqueline du Pré, Ogdon and Barenboim. Peter Serkin has premièred and recorded several works, and Oliver Knussen regularly conducts his music. The cantata *The Death of Moses* was premièred in Seville Cathedral by the Monteverdi Choir conducted by John Eliot Gardiner; *Schlussgesang* was given its first performance at the 1997 Aldeburgh Festival by Tabea Zimmermann and the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Oliver Knussen. *Idées fixes*, for The London Sinfonietta's 30th Season, received its first performance with Oliver Knussen in December 1997. Premières in 2001 included two orchestral works, for the Halle Handel Festival and the BBC Proms, and a Suite for Pamela Frank and Peter Serkin commissioned by the Harvard Musical Society. This work is now in the repertoire of Midori, and featured in her groundbreaking 2005 Contemporary Music Project. *...around Stravinsky*, written for the Nash Ensemble, was premièred in March 2002. His *Piano Quintet*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Peter Serkin and the Orion Quaret, was given its first performance at the Aldeburgh Festival in June 2002 by Tom Poster and the Brodsky Quartet, due to the indisposition of Peter Serkin. However, Peter Serkin and the Orion Quartet presented the US première in the Zankell Hall in September 2003. Its London première took place in November 2005 with Daniel Becker and the Elias Quartet.

In 2003 Alexander Goehr completed a Koussevitsky commission, *Marching to Carcassone*, for Peter Serkin and the London Sinfonietta conducted by Oliver Knussen. A new version for orchestra was premiered by Serkin with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra in July 2005.

Recent works include an orchestral piece, Adagio (Autoporträit) commissioned by the Musikalischen Akademie des Nationaltheater-Orchesters Mannheim e.V; *Fantasie*, for Paul and Huw Watkins (who also recorded his Cello Sonata); and a series of piano pieces, *Symmetry Disorders Reach*, which is now available on WERGO performed by Huw Watkins.

Goehr's current projects are an opera, 'Promised End' based on King Lear, and a Clarinet Quintet commissioned by the BBC for the Nash Ensemble, to be premièred at Wigmore Hall, London on 12 March 2008.



Piano Quintet

I wrote my Piano Quintet at the request of Peter Serkin and completed it in 2000. Inevitably, the ensemble of piano and string quartet brings to mind the major works of Schumann and Brahms; but also the fact that Schoenberg required his pupils to compose a piano quintet at the last stage of their apprenticeships.

I mention this as, inevitably, it is almost impossible to imagine the composition of a form of music making which has been relatively neglected until recent years, without feeling the weight of distant tradition. Yet we are far removed from that tradition, and I feel it unlikely that I could at all emulate the intensity and, coming from it, the textural density that characterizes the greater part of the quintet repertoire. In trying to think of a way in which I might approach my task, I kept remembering the Haydn Piano Trios, where the string instruments seem primarily to function as a way of sustaining the classical piano's melodic lines.

In my Quintet, I aimed at a transparency of texture and much of the writing both for piano alone and for piano in connection with the string instruments reflects an interest in two-part invention, often writing in double-counterpoint. This, to be perceptible, requires a limited intervallic style.

The Quintet divides roughly into two parts. The first consists of two movements: first a kind of sonata allegro moderato, followed by a scherzo. At the half-way point of composition comes a chorale-like 'theme' for quartet alone (called Marlboro, because I wrote it there in the summer of 1999) and the second half of the piece consists of an elaborate set of sixteen variations being both slow movement and gigue-like finale.

The piece is dedicated to Peter Serkin and the Orion Quartet, for whom the work was commissioned by the Carnegie Hall. The first performance was given at the Aldeburgh Festival on 8 June 2002 by Tom Poster and the Brodsky Quartet.

Piano Trio

The Piano Trio, Op. 20 was written in 1966 for Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin and Maurice Gendron, in response to a commission from the Bath Festival Society. It was first performed by Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin and Maurice Gendron at the Bath Festival in June 1966.

The work is in two movements of which the first is a set of variations. Each variation might be considered a little character piece on its own which is built in a strophic form, roughly describable as A, B, A and B combined and coda. This formal structure is reproduced in each variation determining not only the musical material but the manner in which the instruments are disposed. In this movement considerable use is made of complex rhythmic relations, the violin and cello are frequently required to play in metres which do not concur with those of the

piano, leading to conflicting accents and bar lines. An incidental feature of this movement is the use of scordatura: the G string of the violin is tuned up to A flat to give the characteristic sound of the opening chords of the piece.

The second movement is an extended slow aria. The very slow tempo and the elaborate decorative techniques employed, make it a study in concentration for the performers.

Suite for Violin and Piano
My Suite for violin and piano was written in 2000. It consists of three movements. The first is an extended prelude and the second a set of variations on a setting I made of an anonymous (9th-11th century) Hebrew acrostic poem: Rain Song. "The days of summer are gone. The rainy season is here... Grain, wine and oil will flourish quickly. Seeds and buds will grow in beauty. 'Those who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy!'"

The song is transcribed and ornamented for the violin and there are four variations. In fact, the three-part invention which forms the finale is an extended fifth variation.

Three Pieces for Piano Op. 18
The Three Pieces for Piano were written in December 1964. The composer writes: 'All three of them develop ideas of musical structure and continuity in which classical twelve-note technique is combined with harmonic ideas which have not usually been associated with it. I have been preoccupied with this line of thought in my last four or five pieces.'

A characteristic of the first piece is the use of pedal points as a means of harmonic alteration. The bell-like motif, twice repeated at the opening, is harmonised and then developed in a manner slightly reminiscent of the "Catacombs" in Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. The piece is played generally without the aid of the sustaining pedals so that all the long pedal points have to be retained by manual control.

The pieces were dedicated to John Ogden "in gratitude for the many years of friendship and musical cooperation".

Alexander Goehr in conversation with Daniel Becker

<DB> How did the commission for the Piano Trio come about?
<AG> Menuhin, for whom it was written, asked Michael Tippett to write a trio for him, his sister and Maurice Gendron, but he opted out, and I was asked.

Do you know why Tippett opted out?
I don't know, probably he was busy. New piano trios didn't exist at the time when I wrote mine. Composer friends thought it an antiquated form: in fact I'd never heard a piano trio then. Now, forty years later, there are more piano trios than there are string trios being written. My Piano Trio was based on treating the piano and the two strings separately.

How did the original performers manage with the Trio's difficulties?
I think the most obvious difficulty in the Trio was the notating of polyrhythms. At the time I was very excited by Ives' polyrhythms which were only then becoming known. My first acquaintanceship with African music came through A. M. Jones' book about West African music. In the book polyrhythms are precisely notated. I was experimenting with the idea of the three instruments playing metrically independently. Of course, that raised problems unfamiliar to the Menuhins' normal mode of musical thought. As far as I can remember, it was a very good performance. It wasn't recorded and I don't know how accurate it was, but I certainly remember its elegance.

And do you remember anything of the audience reaction, of how it was received?
I don't know, I never know about that sort of thing. I generally worry about performers: they should worry about the audience. It was at the Bath Festival, of which Menuhin was the director and they did a number of my pieces. In fact, Menuhin conducted my Little Music for Strings, which he then took on tour. I was told that after he had conducted it several times he said "it's not so bad when you get to know it".

The second movement of the piece is an intensely slow movement, which is probably inspired by the *Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus* from Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*. What interested me was the idea of slow bowing: whether you could bow very slowly, as when a singer takes a very long phrase in one breath. Pupils of Messiaen, like myself were interested in the nature of duration; duration by breath and by bowing. I felt a kind of relationship between the strain of holding breath (or bow) and expression.

The first movement is in a kind of variation form. A form that occurs in all the chamber works on this disc
Almost all my pieces were (and are) in variation form. Without tonality, variation seems the natural way to combine what is necessarily brief. Invention in the 12-tone technique is more concentrated than any other kind of musical invention, and I believed that I could create the equivalent of complex and large scale forms by means of variation. In the Trio it was a strophic form: the violin and the cello play a short rhythmic invention, some six bars long. The piano, by contrast, plays a slower and at first unrecognisable variant, and the two are then combined to give a small three line strophe. It is five times repeated, each time varied. The second movement has a similar principle, but more masked: you wouldn't, as a listener become aware of it.

The basic idea in much of my music, is that if an initial idea is made of three bits related in a particular way, throughout the piece you retain those three bits and so create a strophic form. The duration can change, but the proportions remain constant.

The piano writing, particularly in the first movement, is strikingly sparse. Very often the piano is playing just a single line. Was that a conscious decision to avoid overpowering the strings?
One has the impression in the great 19th Century literature, if not in earlier chamber music with piano, of an overbearing struggle between Steinway and strings. Both in the Quintet and in the Trio I really wanted to level out the instruments rather than have the piano as a kind of independent protagonist. I don't like overbearing textures because I can't hear what everyone's playing; I want to write what is audible. I like two-voice writing very much and I like it when everything tells.

As regards the first of the Three Piano Pieces, which I wrote for my friend John Ogdon, one of the attractions of putting it on this disc is that you can hear, without too much explanation how it works. The material is very restricted. It lays out a way of dealing with harmony in a dodecaphonic ambience, which kept me going for 20 years or so. I'd found a very rich way of writing, which produced endless and varied materials. Then at the beginning of the '70s I suddenly realised that this was running out. I felt I was using my techniques rather like a fugue writer who only looks at the subject and immediately knows what the whole fugue will be; at that point I was impelled to throw it over. I replaced these dodecaphonically orientated techniques with a kind of bastard figure bass technique, which is actually doing freely what I did systematically earlier on. My father always liked to say that dodecaphony would only arrive when composers could compose in that manner freely and

without rows. I live in the ambience of my systematic work, although I only peripherally use such systematic means now.

Could the piece almost be described as a study?
I think so. There's an element of study in a lot of what I do. The pieces were the nearest I approached to a kind of minimalism, which wasn't inspired by musical minimalism, which hardly existed then. It was paintings by Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley which inspired this aspect of these pieces, and had I been more radical in departing from my own world, I might have become a kind of minimalist. Birtwistle's *Tragoedia* was the first use he made of repetitive and strophic techniques, and these pieces partake of that preoccupation. In fact, it didn't lead me anywhere. I didn't retain that repetitive element after the Trio very much.

The pieces make much use of pedal effects, placing a strong emphasis on sound and exploiting the resonance of the instrument.
Yes, well as a pianist you would call them pedal effects. In fact, as a composer they are what I called active pedals, because the way the music moves from one thing to another, or from one variant to another is determined by the relationship of music to pedal. The fact that a note is sustained determines the alteration in the pitch of the other voices. I found the idea in *Catacombs* from *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The piece is just a collection of chords, with a different dynamic on each chord, and long pedals are sustained throughout each of its three sections. Such pedal notes led me away from transpositional 12-tone technique - what we now call classical 12-tone technique - into a world of pan-tonality, which I still inhabit.

The Suite for Violin and Piano was written some 25 years after the Trio. How would you describe its style?
Well, the first movement of the Suite is in an austere idiom of two-voice invention style, which minimalizes concern with the vertical dimension. Two-voice writing is a great pleasure to do. An interval really sounds. As soon as you add further voices, interval loses something of its brightness. A lot of complex music of the 20th Century leads to the weakening of interval. Composers have wearied of intervals. They are used constructively, but lose their colour. But intervals are the personae of music. A third is a persona, a seventh is a persona; if you use too many intervals too quickly it's muddling and it makes things dull. As a composer I want there to be light and brightness in music. Complexity of texture is a trap. I don't want to dress things up; I want to say "I've only got this to say, no more, no less."

The second movement is yet again a variation form. It was based on a little song, to a Hebrew poem, which I composed for a friend's birthday - The days of summer are gone. The friend wasn't in the years of his summer either.

It begins with the piano very much in an accompaniment mode
Yes, because it was a simple pentatonic pseudo-folk song. It was written in an hour; but in its more sophisticated concert dress I used it as the basis for more varied violin writing.

And there's a certain playfulness
Yes, because it uses octaves and modes of playing to colour the violin part. And then, of course, having started in pentatonic with simplified accompaniment, it becomes more intense in the variations and ends with a quasi-academic gigue, which I like to use for finales.

And it ends on a single F flat for the piano
Yes, sorry about that; it happened to be the last note I could think of. Ending is a problem. I'm not terribly good at the grand gesture at the end of pieces. All my pieces, I suspect, more or less end saying "that's what I've got to say and that's enough." And so it's an F flat. Ends and beginnings tell a lot about a composer. The beginning depends on a spontaneous gesture: you make a mark. It affects everything that follows. But an end is rarely the result of what precedes it. Like a beginning, it demands a new gesture. For me, it comes generally with trouble and by surprise.

So perhaps beginning at the end with the Quintet. What does that say about its composer?
Well the end is like mist, isn't it? The long movement fades away. And this in many ways symphonic piece is the longest I'd written for a number of years. I was trying to rethink the piano quintet form in terms of invention technique, and, of course, variation technique. The first part of my quintet, the first two movements, were written independently, oddly enough with the same metronome mark, but quite different in effect: one an invention, the other a scherzo. There came a hiatus in the writing here, and then in Marlboro in Vermont I wrote a little chorale-like quasi-Classical theme, which I call Marlboro. It gives rise to a large number of variations.

Did you anticipate writing quite so many variations?
No, I anticipated writing more. Originally there were 24, because variations come in 15s and 24s and 32s and 48s. And when I'd done 15 and the finale, I said to myself "es ist genug". It's too long as it is. One's got to stop sometime.

And it ends with a gigue
It again ends with a gigue and no end. I love gigues. The gigues in the French and English Suites are incredible. They're polyphonic inventions which with the lightest of touches do the most amazing things contrapuntally, and I wish, before I end, that I could achieve one little gigue of that sort of quality. My god, they're good.

And there's another passage of difficult polyrhythms in the middle of the gigue where the players are in different tempi.
We talked about polyrhythm in relation to the Trio. There it was my first attempt at polyrhythm and it is made up of very strange and unrelated metrical figures. Later on, just as my harmonic language moves away from systematic writing, polyrhythm becomes the ingredient that propels most of my pieces along. In so many more examples than it would be interesting to enumerate, the way I proceed is to put a musical phrase or group of phrases, which suggest a strong beat and a weak beat on the "wrong" part of the bar in relation to an existing voice. It leads to alterations of harmony and to variations - that is the texture of my music. Ligeti in the *Piano Studies* systematically applies polyrhythmic techniques to create a saturation. I wouldn't want to do that, I haven't the patience to keep things going in quite that way. I want the polyrhythms to come in and go out. So you cannot exemplify polyrhythm in my music systematically because the rhythmic texture is fluid. I'm not systematic.

Daniel Becker has received great acclaim for his insightful interpretations of standard and contemporary repertoire. He was first prizewinner at the British Contemporary Piano Competition in 2003, where he also won the Sonic Arts Network Prize for his performance of Jonathan Harvey's *Tombeau de Messiaen.* Daniel was a prizewinner at the 2002 Ibla Grand Prize International Competition in Sicily, winning a special mention for his performances of Busoni. Daniel's performance at the Orléans 20th-Century Piano Competition won the Prix de composition Chevillion-Bonnaud for Kenneth Hesketh's *Three Japanese Miniatures.*

Daniel performs regularly in the UK and abroad as a solo recitalist and chamber musician. He gave his debut performance at the Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York, in March 2003. In 2004 he gave his Purcell Room debut with a solo recital for the Park Lane Group New Year Series. Of the latter concert, the Evening Standard wrote: “Becker dazzles with brilliant Boulez ... Becker performed [Incises] with a rare sense of freedom, and brought similar skills to everything he played”. He made his Paris debut in May 2005 at the Salle Cortot and his Wigmore Hall debut in June 2005. In November 2005 Daniel gave the London premiere with the Elias Quartet of Alexander Goehr's *Piano Quintet* at the Conway Hall. He returned to the Purcell Room in March 2006 to give a recital in the Fresh series, of which Musical Pointers said: "a recital to remember and a name to mark for future appearances."

Daniel's playing has been heard frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. He has given world or UK premieres of works by Edward Cowie, Alexander Goehr, Helen Grime, Kenneth Hesketh, Arlene Sierra, Eric Tanguy and Paul Whitmarsh, and has worked closely with many other composers, including Howard Skempton and Horatiu Radulescu.

Much in demand as a chamber and ensemble pianist, Daniel has performed with Endymion Ensemble, Britten Sinfonia, Lontano, Composers' Ensemble (at the Aldeburgh Festival) and Orchestra of the Swan. He performs in a piano duo with Huw Watkins and in the Zimro Trio with violinist Paul Barritt and clarinettist Neyire Ashworth.


Photo: Julie Kim

Born in London in 1977, Daniel began his keyboard studies at the Junior Guildhall School of Music. He read Music at King's College, Cambridge, studying piano with Jeremy Siepmann. Daniel then attended the Royal Academy of Music, working with James Lisney, where his studies were supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Other recordings include piano works by Howard Skempton and a disc of Beethoven Sonatas, Variations and the Fantasie.

Ning Kam was born in Singapore and began studying the violin aged six with her father, violinist and composer, Kam Kee Yong. From 1987 to 1993 she was a pupil at the Yehudi Menuhin School, after which she studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Jaime Laredo and the Cleveland Institute of Music with Donald Weilerstein.

In 1991, Ning won First Prize in the junior section of the Folkestone Menuhin International Violin Competition. She was a prizewinner at the Third International Pablo Sarasate Violin Competition in Pamplona in 1995, a finalist in the 2000 Henryk Szeryng Career Awards, and won Second Prize at the prestigious Queen Elisabeth Competition of Belgium in 2001. Hailed by *De Standaard* as "manifestly the best violinist of the competition", she also won the Flemish Radio and Television Audience Prize. The Strad Magazine praised her as a "strong artistic personality". Ms. Kam has also been honoured by the National Arts Council of Singapore with the Young Artist Award, presented in 2000 to a young artist of extraordinary talent. She has been featured in the documentary "Portrait of the Artist" on SBC, Singapore, and has broadcast on SBC Radio Singapore as well as on CBC Radio Canada's "Music Around Us" Series at the Glenn Gould Studio, Toronto. In October 2002, Ning was invited to partner Sarah Chang in Bach's double violin concerto with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Lan Shui. She was also the recipient of the 2005 Compass Artist Excellence Award, presented to her by the Composers and Authors Society of Singpore.

Photo: MasaLili

Ning Kam has given many concerts in Europe, Singapore, Canada and the United States, appearing with numerous orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Royal Flanders Philharmonic, National Orchestra of Belgium, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, and Swiss Italian Radio Symphony. She has worked with conductors such as Yehudi Menuhin, Lorin Maazel, Leif Segestam and Alun Francis. As a chamber musician, she participated in the prestigious Ravinia Festival at the Steans Institute for Young Artists 2000 where she collaborated with Timothy Eddy of the Orion Strong Quartet.

Ning released her first CD in 1997, featuring the works of Enesco, Sarasate, Kam Kee Yong, and transcriptions by Heifetz. In 2001, she released two more discs: a Cypres recording dedicated to the music of the Americas entitled "Transatlantic", as well as "Cicada", dedicated solely to the music of Kam Kee Yong, under the Avant Garde Productions label. American Record Guide has praised "Transatlantic" as "energetic and virtuosic" as well as having "humour, lightness and strength". She is also a member of the Elessar Trio, who have recorded works arranged for piano trio by Astor Piazzolla available for online download, with Illuminate Records, UK.

Ning plays on a 1793 Lorenzo Storioni violin, on generous loan from Mr and Mrs Rin Kei Mei of Singapore.

Born in Swansea, **Thomas Carroll** studied with Melissa Phelps at the Yehudi Menuhin School and with Heinrich Schiff in Austria. An exceptionally gifted cellist, he is one of only two artists who auditioned successfully for both Young Concert Artists Trust in London and Young Concert Artists, Inc. in New York. He has since gone on to give critically acclaimed debut recitals at Wigmore Hall (London), Alice Tully Hall (NY) and in Boston, California, Florida and Washington DC.

As a concerto soloist Thomas has appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, London Mozart Players, ViVA, Orchestra of the East Midlands, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Heinrich Schiff), English Chamber Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic, Sofia Philharmonic, and Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra.

Much in demand as a chamber musician, Thomas has worked with the Belcea Quartet, Chilingirian Quartet, Endellion Quartet, Yehudi Menuhin, Ivry Gitlis, Gidon Kremer, Steven Isserlis, Mischa Maisky, Michael Collins, Julian Rachlin at Wigmore Hall, the Edinburgh and Cheltenham International Festivals, among many others. His recordings include Michael Berkeley's String Quintet with the Chilingirian Quartet for Chandos.

Recent engagements have included concerts at Wigmore Hall, the Louvre in Paris, Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Dubrovnik Festival, Bath MozartFest, Mecklenburg Festival and The International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht with Janine Jansen, Julian Rachlin and Ensemble. Thomas has also given a series of concerts in Tokyo under the auspices of YCA Inc, been resident at the Delft Festival in Holland and appeared as soloist with the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (broadcast by BBC Radio 3), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Orchestre Regional de Cannes. In August 2007 he made his debut with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in a series of performances of Shostakovich's Concerto No.2. In the 2007-08 season Thomas returns as soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, performs the Dvorák with the Staatsorchester Braumschweiger and gives recitals in Holland, Ireland and Japan. Thomas is currently a Professor at the Royal College of Music in London and the Yehudi Menuhin School.


Photo: Hanya Chlala

Elias Quartet

Sara Bitlloch, **Donald Grant** *violins*
Martin Saving *viola*, **Marie Bitlloch** *cello*

The members of the Elias string Quartet all live in Sheffield but are originally from France, Scotland and Sweden. The Quartet was formed in 1998 at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester where they worked regularly with Dr. Christopher Rowland. They won all the RNCM quartet awards and became Junior Fellows and then "Associated Quartet". They also spent a year at the Hochschule in Cologne with the Alban Berg quartet.

The Quartet received second prize and the Sidney Griller prize at the 9th London International String Quartet Competition in 2003 (as the Johnston String Quartet). They were finalists in the Paolo Borciani Competition in 2005 and have twice been awarded scholarships from the Hattori Foundation.

They have performed extensively in the UK, and in France, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy, and the USA, in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Fairfield Halls, Stockholm Concert Hall, the Auditorium du Louvre, and Jordan Hall. They are currently Ensemble in residence at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge and have broadcast live on National Radio in the UK, France and Sweden. They have performed with artists such as Andrew Marriner, Ralph Kirshbaum, Joan Rogers, Mark Padmore, Roger Vignoles, Michel Dalberto, Peter Cropper, Bernard Gregor-Smith, Robin Ireland, and with the Endellion and Vertavo quartets.

They have been resident string quartet at the Britten Pears School three times where they worked closely with Hugh Maguire, and were subsequently invited to the International Academy of String Quartets. Other mentors in the Quartet's studies include members of the Amadeus, Endellion and Vermeer Quartets, György Kurtag, Gabor Takacs-Nagy, Paul Katz, Rainer Schmidt, Kim Kashkashian and Milan Skampa. In Febuary 2006 they held a week-long residency at the New England Conservatory in Boston.

The Quartet has released a disc of Mendelssohn Quartets with Sanctary Classics and a disc of French harp music with harpist Sandrine Chatron for the French label Ambroisie.

In 2005 the Elias were appointed resident String Quartet at Sheffield's Music in the Round as part of the Ensemble 360. The ensemble brings together 11 musicians from accross the globe; five wind players, a pianist, a double bassist and the Elias. Their home is at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, but they also tour nationally and are now also resident at Sheffield and York Universities. They began a series at the Wigmore Hall, London, in 2007. Ensemble 360 has released a disc of Mozart's chamber music with Sanctuary Classics, and will soon release discs of Spohr and Beethoven.

Sara plays on an 18th-century Italian violin kindly lent to her by Werner Dickel, and Marie plays on an 18th-century Italian cello kindly lent to her by the "Fond Instrumental Français".

Photo: Mark Crapper and Richard Stott

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Music by Alexander Goehr

Daniel Becker - Piano, Ning Kam - Violin
Thomas Carroll - Cello, Elias Quartet

Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano, op.20

[1]	Con anima	12:25
[2]	Lento possibile e sostenuto	9:26

Suite for Violin and Piano

[3]	Prelude	5:41
[4]	Rain Song "The days of summer are gone", with variations	7:54
[5]	Three-part Invention	2:22

Three Pieces for Piano, op.18

[6]	I, Largamente	5:43

Piano Quintet

[7]	I	7:11
[8]	II	5:30
[9]	III, Tema (Marlboro)	1:08
[10]	Variation 1, Poco più mosso	1:00
[11]	Variation 2	0:58
[12]	Variaton 3	1:00
[13]	Variaton 4, Tempo della Tema, misterioso	1:12
[14]	Variaton 5 (Tempo di Var.3)	0:59
[15]	Variaton 6 (Tempo di Tema)	1:37
[16]	Variaton 7, Poco mosso	0:53
[17]	Variaton 8	0:50
[18]	Variaton 9, Sostenuto	1:33
[19]	Variaton 10	1:41
[20]	Variaton 11, Moderato	0:40
[21]	Variaton 12	0:35
[22]	Variaton 13, poco meno mosso	0:50
[23]	Variaton 14, meno mosso	1:01
[24]	Variaton 15, Tempo di Tema	1:20
[25]	Variaton 16, Finale	3:19

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Meridian
Music by ALEXANDER GOEHR Daniel Becker - Piano, Ning Kam - Violin, Thomas Carroll - Cello, Elias Quartet
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