

HEIRLOOMS

10:00 AM
SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER 2025
REARDON THEATRE



TRADITIONAL

Two Scottish / Border Folk Melodies
(extended variations by Matt Seattle) (arr. Crabb)

Zoë Black, *Violin*
James Crabb, *Classical Accordion*

Mary Scott, Flower of Yarrow
Struan Robertson's Rant / Cuckold Come Out of the Amrey

Johann PACHELBEL (1653 – 1706)
Chaconne in F minor (arr. Crabb)

James Crabb, *Classical Accordion*

Franz SCHUBERT (1797 – 1828)
Sonata for Arpeggione and Piano in A minor, D. 821
(arr. Crabb)

Timo-Veikko Valve, *Cello*
James Crabb, *Classical Accordion*

1. *Allegro moderato*
 2. *Adagio*
 3. *Allegretto*
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TRADITIONAL

Two Scottish / Border Folk Melodies (extended variations by Matt Seattle) (arr. Crabb)

Mary Scott, Flower of Yarrow
Struan Robertson's Rant / Cuckold Come Out of the Amrey

James Crabb writes, "Traditional music of the 19th century was generally played by solo instruments and passed down from player to player. *Mary Scott* is a beautiful slow air in 3/4 time that was known north and south of the border. *Struan Robertson's Rant* is a traditional Scottish strathspey originally in E minor for solo violin. (A strathspey is a traditional dance tune in 4/4 time with lively dotted rhythms.) *Cuckold Come Out* has the same melody, but in B minor, and was known south of the border as a fast reel. Both *Mary Scott* and *Cuckold* have several variations which have been expanded on by Northumbrian piper Matt Seattle. In addition, I have complemented both tunes with my own harmonies, rhythms and counter-melodies."

Johann PACHELBEL (1653 – 1706)

Chaconne in F minor (arr. Crabb)

Though history has granted Pachelbel a curious kind of immortality through the Canon in D, he would probably be relieved that musicians like James Crabb are giving some of his other works more exposure. The Chaconne in F minor is one of over 200 pieces that Pachelbel wrote for the organ – and those 200 works are themselves just a portion of his prolific output. As with so much music of the Baroque era, we cannot say for sure when this chaconne was composed, but its sophistication hints that it could be one of Pachelbel's later works.

In essence, a chaconne is a musical form built on a repeating bass line or harmonic progression, over which a melody can be presented and varied with each repetition. Pachelbel's Chaconne in F minor is a mesmerising aria and 22 variations on a ground bass known as the "lament bass", a progression used by many Baroque composers, including Monteverdi and Purcell (as in *Dido's Lament*). In contrast to the relatively even character and conventional melodic variation of the Canon in D, the Chaconne in F minor is darker and more searching, its variations more adventurous, its textures weightier, and its expressive range greater. Here we encounter Pachelbel, the master craftsman and progressive composer. In this morning's concert, James Crabb presents a striking rendition on classical accordion.

Franz SCHUBERT (1797 – 1828)

Sonata for Arpeggione and Piano in A minor, D. 821 (arr. Crabb)

1. *Allegro moderato*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Allegretto*

At the turn of the 19th century, Vienna was well placed to call itself the music capital of Europe, its vibrant culture a beacon to the likes of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. During Schubert's life, it was also becoming a flash point for another kind of musical obsession, one that was sweeping the continent – a craze for all things guitar. Besides generating a surge among luthiers, virtuosos, composers and publishing houses, this guitar fever also resulted in a burst of invention and experimentation in instrument design.

Around 1823, a particularly interesting specimen emerged from the workshop of renowned Viennese guitar-maker, Johann Georg Stauffer. Variouslly dubbed the "guitar-cello", the "bowed guitar" and the "guitar d'amore", it had rounded curves, frets, and six strings tuned the same as a guitar; but, akin to the cello, it was played with a bow, on long strings stretched over a bridge. And the finishing touch – the player held it between their legs in the manner of a viola da gamba.

Alas, Stauffer's chimera was not meant for this world, and within a decade all interest in the "guitar-cello" had evaporated. However, like Cinderella and her glass slipper, it left behind a perfect little memento: a sonata, written by Franz Schubert around October/November 1824. In the work's title, Schubert called the instrument an "arpeggione" – not easy to translate directly, but literally something like "big arpeggio-maker". Due purely to this sonata, the name "arpeggione" has stuck and superseded all the others.

Exactly why Schubert decided to write the sonata is uncertain, but it was probably on a commission from Stauffer, or perhaps Vincenz Schuster, the instrument's chief practitioner and exponent, who purportedly gave the first performance of the sonata at the end of 1824. This was a difficult year for Schubert, who was already grappling with the illness that would ultimately take his life. But productive as ever, he continued to churn out one masterpiece after another, among them the Octet in F major and the *Death and the Maiden* String Quartet.

Far from the quasi-symphonic sweep of the Octet and the intense *sturm und drang* of *Death and the Maiden*, the Arpeggione Sonata inhabits a more introspective, pensive, and delicate sound world. As the instrument which inspired the work has largely fallen into obscurity, the cello has become the favoured instrument to embody this work's special melancholic tone. The first two movements in particular never fully escape their shadow, making the sunnier pastures of the rondo-finale all the warmer. All three movements display Schubert's heavenly blend of melody and dance. This morning, we hear James Crabb's intriguing arrangement of the sonata for cello and classical accordion.