

Gala concert in aid of a personal friend – the cellist Jacqueline du Pré

The advent of 2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the death of the celebrated cellist Jacqueline du Pré. In the first of several events in her honour, her friend and confidante Moray Welsh, is organising a unique gala concert with a stellar line up of classical musicians. He's approaching it with a very personal point of view.

Jacqueline du Pré, was a beautiful, vibrant and gifted cellist when she met her husband Daniel Barenboim. Together they took the musical world by storm, enjoying the kind of publicity and status that had something of Beatlemania about it. They were the doyens of the British musical scene and appeared in concerts all over the world. But then tragedy struck as du Pré succumbed to the debilitating illness, Multiple Sclerosis. With Barenboim overseas for much of the time, du Pré turned to her friends – especially those who shared her riotous sense of fun. Moray Welsh (ex-Principal cello of the LSO) was one of those friends who supported her as the fatal disease took its hold.

'This concert celebrates Jackie' he says, from the London home he shares with his partner, pianist Jonathan Papp. *'It's being held around the time of my birthday so it celebrates the friends and colleagues who have shared a life of music with me. But it also celebrates the extraordinary courage of other men and women who have been affected by the terrible disease of MS.'*

Moray is referring in particular to the work of British Violin Making Association member - the violin maker Roger Hansell, who is very severely affected by the disease but, continues to make instruments of world class quality through his amanuensis. Twenty years ago, Hansell made Moray a copy of his 1705 cello that was so exact his desk partner in the LSO didn't realise he was playing a different cello – 3 weeks rather than 300 years old. In a strange quirk of fate, Hansell also copied Jackie du Pré's 'Davidoff' Stradivari cello now played by Yo Yo Ma. *'Roger will be at the concert'* continues Moray, *'and I am privileged to have him there because he sums up what can still be achieved even when struck by this awful disease.'*

The concert, to be held in The Royal Overseas League Princess Alexandra Hall, will be given by 25 outstanding colleagues and ex pupils of Moray Welsh, some at the beginning of their careers, some already international performers. A unique event, it is also a personal story that will bring together several generations of classical musicians, celebrating the life of one of the greatest cellists of all time.

The concert will be in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Gala Concert:

Sunday 26th February 2017

Princess Alexandra Hall Royal Overseas House Park Place St James Street London SW1A 1LR 6.00pm

Contact:

For further details please contact Moray Welsh moraywelsh@thecello.net

Personal telephone: 020 89333032