

London Mozart Players and Roxanna Panufnik launch music video to raise money for Myanmar refugees



14-20 June 2021

Video release during Refugee Week

Roxanna Panufnik *Letters from Burma* (2004)

i. Aung-ze Paing-ze ii. Young Birds Outside Cages iii. Thazin iv. Kintha Dance

London Mozart Players

Ruth Rogers leader **Olivier Stankiewicz** oboe

London Mozart Players and oboist Olivier Stankiewicz join forces with renowned composer Roxanna Panufnik to highlight the crisis in Myanmar and **raise money for Myanmar refugees** who are fleeing attacks by the military. The ensemble releases a brand-new video of Panufnik's *Letters from Burma*, her 2004 composition inspired by Nobel Peace Prize-winner Aung San Suu Kyi's remarkable collection of the same name describing everyday life in the country, and written during her time under house arrest.

This spring, the military in Myanmar once again seized power in a coup, launching a brutal crackdown on people peacefully protesting against military rule, and this has cast the composition in a new and poignant light. LMP's moving and thought-provoking video weaves Roxanna Panufnik's evocative melodies – which assimilate elements of the country's traditional music – with recent footage from Myanmar. The video also includes an interview with noted human rights activist **Benedict Rogers**, brother of LMP's leader, Ruth Rogers. Benedict Rogers is the Senior Analyst for East Asia at the human rights organisation Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), and author of three books on Myanmar.

All money raised by the video will go to the **refugee charity [Advance Myanmar](#)**, which is providing emergency aid to thousands forced to flee their homes. The video, filmed by students from Surrey University, will be released during **Refugee Week (14–20 June 2021)** a UK-wide festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. The video was recorded at **St Martin-in-the-Fields Church** in Trafalgar Square, famous for its music and its charitable foundation supporting vulnerable people.

Roxanna Panufnik said:

"My father fled a totalitarian regime 70 years ago, and the courage and kindness of those who helped him stays with my family to this day. Letters from Burma is inspired by a collection of the same title, of Aung San Suu Kyi's correspondence to a Japanese newspaper during her house arrest in the 1990s. They describe every facet of the beauty and also the severe hardship of the country but my piece finishes in triumph. I hope and pray Burma's suppressed will do so, one day too. Please help support those brave enough to endeavour to make this happen and the innocent victims of totalitarian oppression."

Roxanna Panufnik's ***Letters from Burma*** is a 2004 composition in four movements inspired by Aung San Suu Kyi's vivid and poignant picture of her native land. 'Aung-ze

Paing-ze' is based on the traditional Myanmar folk song about the power and valour of the King, while 'Young Birds Outside Cages' depicts the harrowing image of children trying to touch parents who are political prisoners behind bars. The Myanmar orchid 'Thazin' is a romantic national symbol; the final movement, 'Kintha Dance', evokes Myanmar's courageous Mon sword dancers. Originally written for oboe and string quartet, London Mozart Players present *Letters from Burma* in its orchestral version with oboist Olivier Stankiewicz.

Inaugural Associate Composer with the London Mozart Players, **Roxanna Panufnik** has long fused a great love of world music with her compositions for opera, ballet, music theatre, orchestras and choirs, which are performed all over the world. Panufnik's father, the Polish composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik, arrived in Britain as a political refugee. Her new CD *Heartfelt*, which features a new recording of *Letters from Burma* by the Sacconi Quartet with Nicholas Daniel (oboe) will be released by Signum Classics later in May.

London Mozart Players is the UK's longest established chamber orchestra and is orchestra-in-residence at Croydon's Fairfield Halls. All musicians from London Mozart Players have given their time for free, despite the fact that many have lost huge amounts of work due to the pandemic.

Since the **coup in Myanmar** began on 1st February 2021, more than 700 people have been killed by security forces in Myanmar, including almost 50 children. More than 5,000 people have been arrested, and are subject to beatings, torture and sexual assault. The military are hunting for more than 1,000 people involved in protests or who have simply criticised the military on social media. Thousands of people are also fleeing the cities seeking safety.

In areas such as Karen State the military have been using fighter jets to bomb civilian villages, forcing 40,000 people to flee their homes. They are now living in the jungle and in desperate need of food, shelter and medical care.

Donations on behalf of the Myanmar refugees are being invited via the Charity **Advance Myanmar**, which has **long-standing relationships** supporting human rights activists in Myanmar and has moved quickly to provide life-saving support. The charity is providing **emergency aid** to thousands of villagers forced to flee their homes. It is helping people escape arrest and torture, and reach places of safety. It is funding the building of shelter, food, clothing and medical care for protesters who have fled to remote areas of Myanmar for safety. These protesters and activists would otherwise be arrested, but are now left with nothing, forced to leave their homes at short notice leaving everything behind.

The charity is also **helping with communications** to make sure the world knows what's going on, despite the internet shutdowns by the military. Advance Myanmar receives no government funding and **the charity relies on donations** to provide this life-saving support. Donations can be made via Advance Myanmar's website at: www.advancemyanmar.org/donations/refugee-appeal/

Anna Roberts, Executive Director, Advance Myanmar said:

"It's wonderful that the London Mozart Players and Roxanna Panufnik are creating this opportunity for their beautiful music to raise awareness of the continuing humanitarian and human rights crisis in Myanmar after the military coup. This event will raise vital funds to help support refugees fleeing the brutality of Myanmar military attacks."



London Mozart Players



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The London Mozart Players, the UK's longest established chamber orchestra, was founded in 1949 by Harry Blech to delight audiences with the works of Mozart and Haydn. Over the last seventy years, the LMP has developed an outstanding reputation for adventurous, ambitious programming from Baroque through to genre-crossing contemporary music, and continues to build on its long history of association with many of the world's finest artists including Sir James Galway, Dame Felicity Lott,

Jane Glover, Howard Shelley, Nicola Benedetti, James Ehnes, John Suchet and Simon Callow. The orchestra enjoys an international reputation, touring extensively throughout Europe and the Far East, most recently Dubai and Hong Kong, and records frequently for Naxos, Chandos, CPO, Signum and Hyperion Records.

londonmozartplayers.com

Advance Myanmar



Advance Myanmar is founded and run by a team of people with decades of experience of the humanitarian and human rights situation in Myanmar/Burma. We provide humanitarian assistance at times of crisis, but also assist local communities to promote positive change to tackle the root causes of those crises.

We maximise our impact by supporting organisations and communities who receive little or no support from larger donors. Working directly with local community organisations reduces costs on administration ensuring more aid reaches the communities. In addition, by working with and supporting local community organisations, we help empower communities to address their own problems rather than being passive recipients of aid. Affected communities are best placed to ensure help goes where it is most needed and will have the most impact.

Since the military coup on 1st February Advance Myanmar has provided emergency aid for tens of thousands of people in remote parts of Burma who are fleeing attacks by the Burmese military.

Advance Myanmar is a registered charity, Charity Number 1139662

advancemyanmar.org

Roxanna Panufnik



Roxanna Panufnik b.1968 ARAM, GRSM(hons), LRAM studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music and, since then, has written a wide range of pieces – opera, ballet, music theatre, choral works, orchestral and chamber compositions, and music for film and television – which are performed all over the world.

Roxanna has a great love of world music – this has culminated in her “Four World Seasons” for violinist Tasmin Little, the world premiere of which was picked by BBC Radio 3 to launch their Music Nations weekend, celebrating the London Olympics; her multi-faith Warner Classics CD “Love Abide” (www.loveabide.com) and “Dance of Life: Tallinn Mass” for Tallinn Philharmonic (www.tallinnmass.com), commissioned to celebrate Tallinn’s reign as European Capital of Culture.

She is especially interested in building musical bridges between faiths and her first project in this field was the violin concerto “Abraham”, commissioned for Daniel Hope, incorporating Christian, Islamic and Jewish chant to create a musical analogy for the fact that these three faiths believe in the same one God. This work was subsequently converted into an overture for the World Orchestra for Peace and premiered in Jerusalem and London under the baton of Valery Gergiev, in 2008 and at the 2014 BBC Proms.

Her 2017 opera “Silver Birch”, commissioned by Garsington Opera, was met with great audience and critical acclaim.

2018, Roxanna’s 50th Birthday year, saw some exciting commissions and premieres for the BBC Last Night of the Proms and a co-commissioned oratorio “Faithful Journey – a Mass for Poland” for City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Poland, marking Poland’s centenary as an independent state. In 2019, she had a new commission for two conductors and two choirs, premiered by Marin Alsop and Valentina Peleggi with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She spent much of that year writing “Ever Us” for the Rundfunk Chor Berlin plus 9 other choirs from all over the world, to be premiered at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2022. She is currently writing a new opera “Dalia” for Garsington, for 2022.

Roxanna’s compositions are published by Peter’s Edition Ltd and recorded on many labels including Warner Classics, Signum, Chandos, and EMI Classics.

roxannapanufnik.com

Olivier Stankiewicz



Olivier Stankiewicz is highly sought after as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher, performing widely in Europe, Japan and the USA. In 2015 Olivier was appointed principal oboe of the London Symphony Orchestra, and is currently Professor of Oboe at the Royal College of Music. Olivier first performed with London Mozart Players in October 2020 as part of the digital series Classical Club, playing the Strauss Oboe Concerto.

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