The pursuit of Happiness

(instrumental items are oboe & piano except where specified, readings are in italics)

Overture: Reasons to be cheerful, Bill Bryson

1. Happiness through others
Air in G minor Henry Purcell
Sonnet 29 Shakespeare
Andante, from Duo Sonata in E minor J C M Widerkehr
Wuthering Heights (excerpt) Emily Brontë
Song without Words Op 53 no 2 (piano solo) Felix Mendelssohn
Memories of England (letter, 1829) Felix Mendelssohn
Allegro in F, K370 Mozart
Stranger on a Train Jenni Diski
Summertime (alto sax & piano) George Gershwin
A Subaltern’s Love-Song John Betjeman

2. Happiness and activity
The Wind in the Willows (start) Kenneth Grahame
Habana (cor anglais & piano) Ravel
My first cartoon Oliver Postgate
Impromptu No 4 Antony le Fleming
Vermeer paints his daughter Susan Vreeland
The Swan (cor anglais & piano) Saint-Saëns
I would like to be a Dot in a painting by Miró Moniza Alvi
Finale from ‘Three Piece Suite’ Madeleine Dring
Kwangde North Face David Breshears
Variations on ‘The Carnival of Venice’ Theodore Lalliet
At Lunchtime Roger McGough

3. Happiness in Spirit
The Smile William Blake
Pied Beauty Gerard Manley Hopkins
Gitanjali (Song Offerings) Rabindranath Tagore
Interspersed with movements from ‘Aspects of a Landscape’ by Paul Reade (oboe solo):
Birdsong - Sun Dance - Celebration Rudyard Kipling
Piece 4 in Folk-Style (cor anglais & piano) Schumann
In Praise of Alcohol Iain Banks
Begin the Beguine (alto sax & piano) Cole Porter
Getting Older Elaine Feinstein
The Watermill Ronald Binge

4. What the Gurus say
Days Philip Larkin
Con moto from Sonatina (1942) Franz Reizenstein
Letter to Menoeceus, c300BC Epicurus
Allegro from Sonata, BWV 1020 Bach
Brave New World (1932) Aldous Huxley
Presto from Sonata 53 (piano solo) Haydn
The Pursuit of Happiness Robert Holden
Poiray
How to be Happy Francis Shaw
Can Can (alto sax & piano) Gyles Brandreth

Performers:
JENNY AGUTTER (reader)
JEREMY POLMEAR (oboe, cor anglais, alto saxophone)
DIANA AMBACHE (piano)
ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Following the success of *English Places, English Faces* and *Rites of Passage*, Jenny Agutter and the Polmear Ambache Duo turn their attention to happiness.

Many and varied are the possible paths to happiness - through love and service to others, through work, through not working, by climbing vertiginous mountain cliffs, by lying in a field, via Spirituality or alcoholic Spirit - all these and more are covered in writings from Shakespeare to Gyles Brandreth, and music from Purcell to Offenbach and Gershwin.

And for those whom happiness still eludes, there are always the Gurus to tell us what to do. This programme is not just a fascinating and entertaining collection of readings and music, it aims to make you happier, too.

Among the writers: Jenni Diski (born 1947) wrote *Stranger on a Train* about a rail journey around the circumference of the US, in 2002. The Oliver Postgate excerpt comes from his autobiography *Seeing Things* (1999), and Susan Vreeland’s from *The Girl in Hyacinth Blue*. Moniza Alvi was born in 1954 in Lahore, Pakistan, and now lives in London. David Dring is a climber and film director; he directed the Imax movie *Everest*. Rabindranath Tagore was the first Asian writer to win a Nobel prize (with *Gitanjali* in 1913). Iain Banks has written twenty novels, and *Raw Spirit* is about his search for the perfect dram. Elaine Feinstein was born in 1930 in Lancashire; she has written several novels and translated Russian poetry. Dr Robert Holden is a lecturer and writer, and holds a PhD in the Psychology of Happiness.

Among the musical items: Johann Wenceslaus Widerkehr was an oboist and composer writing in Paris in the early years of the 19th Century. Felix Mendelssohn also went to Scotland (the *Hebrides* Overture) and Ireland (*Fingal’s Cave*). The Mozart piece is the first movement of his *Oboe Quartet*, originally with strings. Gershwin’s *Summertime* is arranged by Roger Cawkwell. Ravel’s *Habañera* illustrates the claim that ‘all the best Spanish music is written by Frenchmen’. Antony le Fleming wrote his *Impromptus* for the Polmear Ambache Duo. He also did the arrangement of *Begin the Beguine*. The *Swan* and *Piece 4* in *Folk-Style* were both originally written for cello and piano. Madeleine Dring was married to Roger Lord, principal oboe of the London Symphony Orchestra for 24 years. With them she made five recordings of *19th and 20th Centuries Oboe Music*, as well as many of chamber music. He has performed as a guest player with a number of London’s chamber orchestras including the London Mozart Players and the City of London Sinfonia. He runs the CD label *Oboe Classics* (www.oboe classics.com).

Jeremy Polmear has made four recordings of 19th and 20th century oboe music, as well as many of chamber music. He has performed as a guest player with a number of London’s chamber orchestras including the London Mozart Players and the City of London Sinfonia. He runs the CD label *Oboe Classics* (www.oboe classics.com).

Diana Ambache (piano) directed her own Ambache Chamber Orchestra (www.ambache.co.uk) for 24 years. With them she made five recordings of Mozart piano concertos and three of his chamber music. She was shortlisted for the European Women of Achievement Awards 2002 for her work reviving music by women composers (www.womenofnote.co.uk). Her two recordings of music by Amy Beach were awarded Rosettes by the BBC Music Magazine.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Jenny Agutter trained at the Elmhurst Ballet School. She made her debut aged eleven as a dancer in Walt Disney’s film *Ballerina*. She first played Roberta on television when she was fourteen, and almost three years later after filming *Walkabout* in Australia, repeated the role in the film of *The Railway Children*. The following year she played Fritha in the BBC TV film of *The Snow Goose*, for which she won an Emmy. Jenny joined the Royal National Theatre in 1973 to play Miranda in Sir Peter Hall’s production of *The Tempest* with Sir John Gielgud. She also played in *King Lear* and *Arden of Faversham*, and in *Breaking the Code* on Broadway with Derek Jacobi.

Her many films include *Logan’s Run, The Eagle Has Landed, An American Werewolf in London, Sweet William* and *Equis*, for which she won a British Academy Award. She was in the 2007 West End revival of *Equis*, with Richard Griffiths and Daniel Radcliffe.

In 2000 Jenny played her own mother in *The Railway Children* for Carlton TV. Other TV appearances include as Alan Clark’s wife in a dramatisation of his *Diaries* with John Hurt, and the hit BBC series *Call the Midwife*.

Jenny was in the 2011 Last Night of the proms, introducing the instruments of Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.

The *Polmear Ambache Duo* (www.PolmearAmbache.co.uk) was formed in 1977 for a British Council tour of India. They have since performed in thirty three countries, including programmes of Words and Music in the Gulf and Australia. London appearances include recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room. Some of the music in this programme appears on their download Album *Musical Meze* (2010).

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