**CONCERTS IN THE WEST second July series in 2014**

18 and 19 July in Bridport, Ilminster and Lower Pulworthy, Hatherleigh

**Tamsin Waley-Cohen *violin*,Stephen Upshaw *viola*, John Reid *piano***

There are remarkably few opening bars that refresh the spirit as Beethoven’s appropriately named ‘*Spring*’ Sonata does. Tamsin and John had the instinct and charisma to make this happen. They were also able to turn on the heat when the thirty-one-year-old composer makes his demands. Such spontaneity was also required of these young players, each already established and well known in their field, in the finale of this Sonata; and again, to close the concert, with the equally persuasive playing of Stephen, in the rondo of Mozart’s *Kegelstatt* Trio. This is music to lift you from the pressures of everyday life.

Stephen and John were at the height of their powers in a work that, thanks to them and others, is appearing more frequently in recitals, the remarkably accomplished and substantial Viola Sonata of 1919 by Rebecca Clarke. Wide-ranging in expression over its three movements, we were moved by the assured playing – the sound of the viola, Stephen’s technique as well as the sheer beauty of tone. The work is well worth seeking out for its predating of style - Vaughan Williams and Ravel, for instance – but most of all for its originality from this one-time violist in Henry Wood’s Queen’s Hall Orchestra.

Tamsin is currently being engaged by Signum Artists for CD recordings each of which has stirred critics to heart-warming approval. At the Royal Academy of Music John has a role as Chamber Music Administrator and coach. Separately, both Tamsin and John can often be heard on BBC Radio 3.

Stephen has performed with many chamber and symphonic groups, notably playing contemporary music, internationally as well as in the UK, and like the others at present resident in London. What all three brought to this series of Concerts in the West was this opportunity to play together with such elegance and intensity.

ANTHONY PITHER