

Programme Note by Chris Darwin: please use freely for non-commercial purposes

**Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Chacony in G minor (c.1680) (arr. Britten)**

Purcell, whose father and uncle were both court musicians, probably wrote this piece in the post that he had obtained in 1677 as composer for the court violin band (the Twenty Four violins), succeeding Matthew Locke. Its title is an idiosyncratic version of *Chaconne*, a set of variations on an 8-



bar figure with a repeating bass line. Britten particularly admired the clarity of Purcell's music, and made arrangements and realisations of many Purcell works: he created and performed a realisation of *Dido and Aeneas* and in 1945, to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Purcell's death, used the Rondeau from his *Abeldazer* as the theme of a set of variations for an instructional film '*The Instruments of the Orchestra*'. Britten's contribution to this version of the Chacony for string quartet involved primarily adding dynamic markings.