

Into the Looking Glass

Programme

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The main series of concerts will be in the marquee at Welburn Manor.

The concerts in the dark squares are in churches within the North York Moors National Park and the concert pages are pale green.

Biographies of the musicians start at page 74.

Welcome



Welcome to the 2023 North York Moors Chamber Music Festival! This year we take you on a musical expedition, exploring Lewis Carroll's themes through the prism of sound.

Music is in some ways a cryptic language, completely open to interpretation and fully dependent upon a listener's perspective. The inspiration behind our fifteenth season came about from questioning what music means in a world where our understanding of what is real or even normal, has been somewhat challenged over the past three years.

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland/Through the Looking Glass* is a fascinating (if eccentric) body of work, and upon rediscovering these fantastical stories as an adult I was struck by the parallels they share with musical narratives. What may challenge one listener might be the pinnacle of perfection to another. This is what makes complex art so subjective and fascinating; it forces us to query what is being experienced, so we hope this year's run of concerts throw up a few questions (and hopefully some answers)!

We are fortunate to have a hugely talented musical team as part of the Festival family, prepared to give

up so much time from busy schedules. We would never have this opportunity to programme such daring repertoire without their fearless and passionate approach, for which I am very appreciative.

The Festival has an equally energetic team behind the scenes, be they volunteers, cooks, hosts, drivers, photographers, designers, box-office, organisers and many others who work tirelessly to make it run smoothly. Additionally, the financial contributions we receive from individuals and friends of the Festival, particularly as we host another year in the marquee, really helps us continue with our vision and move forward creatively. We would also like to thank the Normanby Charitable Trust for their continued support, and all those who prefer to remain anonymous but make such an enormous difference . . .

Finally, we dedicate this year's festival to the memory of our dear friend and former Festival Trustee Johannes Secker, who passed away earlier this year.

With my sincerest thanks.

Jamie Walton - artistic director



Programme devised by Jamie Walton
 Papercut images: Alice O'Neill
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 Photo on page 12: Foxbrushmedia (Will Coates-Gibson)

The North York Moors is a spectacular National Park in North Yorkshire, with one of the largest expanses of heather moorland in the UK. It covers an area of 1,436 square km (554 square miles) with a population of about 25,000. This region encompasses two main types of landscape: green areas of pastureland and the famous purple and brown heather moorland which gives the area its distinctive character. There are records of 12,000 archaeological sites and features within the National Park, of which 700 are scheduled ancient monuments. Radiocarbon dating of pollen grains preserved in the moorland peat provides a record of specific plant species that existed at various periods in the past. Around 10,000 years ago the cold climate of the Ice Age ameliorated and temperatures rose above a growing point of 5.5°C. Plant life was gradually re-established when animals and humans also returned.

Many contemporary visitors to the area engage in outdoor pursuits, particularly walking upon the vast swathes of unspoilt landscape and along its Jurassic coastline. The Park contains a network of rights-of-way routes almost 2,300 km (1,400 miles) in length and most areas of open moorland are now open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Car Parking

There will be volunteers on site to guide you and your car to the parking area, in the same field where the concerts take place. At Danby we use a nearby field which will be signposted. For Coxwold and Egton Bridge there is ample roadside parking, and at Lastingham there is parking in and around the village.

Toilets

Unisex portaloos will be located around the periphery of the Welburn site. There are local toilets in both Lastingham and Egton Bridge; the churches in Danby and Coxwold have their own facilities.

Refreshments

Feel free to bring your own picnic and drinks to enjoy within the gardens at Welburn before the concert or during the interval. There will be afternoon tea at Danby in the churchyard for £5 a head after the concert.

Venue postcodes and arrival guidance

The twelve main concerts will take place in a 4,850 square foot adapted marquee with wooden floor and acoustic panels, which is situated within the grounds of Welburn Manor for which the postcode is: YO62 7HH

Welburn Manor is 2 miles south-west of Kirkbymoorside enroute to Helmsley, off the A170. Take the turning onto Back Lane and continue for less than a mile. The field is on your left hand side and well signposted. We open the gates one hour before each concert starts. It is advisable to double check the start times beforehand. For users of the what3words app, the rectangle with the gate to the field is: [///shells.together.creatures](#).

The postcodes and what3words locations for the churches we are using this year are:
Coxwold: YO61 4AD [///regaining.conquest.fattest](#)
Danby: YO21 2NH [///cheaper.noble.introduce](#)
Egton Bridge: YO21 1UX [///initiated.heartburn.future](#)
Lastingham: YO62 6TN [///bystander.unrated.cackling](#)

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Sunday 13th August 2pm

Scenes from Childhood

Schumann	Kinderszenen op 15
Prokofiev	Sonata no 2 for violin and piano in D major op 94a*
Mendelssohn	Piano quartet no 3 in B minor op 3

* denotes interval

Schumann, Kinderszenen op 15

- i. *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen* (Of Foreign Lands and Peoples)
- ii. *Kuriose Geschichte* (A Curious Story)
- iii. *Hasche-Mann* (Blind Man's Buff)
- iv. *Bittendes Kind* (Pleading Child)
- v. *Glückes genug* (Happy Enough)
- vi. *Wichtige Begebenheit* (An Important Event)
- vii. *Träumerei* (Dreaming)
- viii. *Am Kamin* (At the Fireside)
- ix. *Ritter vom Steckenpferd* (Knight of the Hobbyhorse)
- x. *Fast zu ernst* (Almost Too Serious)
- xi. *Fürchtenmachen* (Frightening)
- xii. *Kind im Einschlummern* (Child Falling Asleep)
- xiii. *Der Dichter spricht* (The Poet Speaks)

Prokofiev, Sonata no 2 for violin & piano in D op 94a

- i. *Moderato*
- ii. *Presto*
- iii. *Andante*
- iv. *Allegro con brio*

Mendelssohn, Piano quartet no 3 in B minor op 3

- i. *Allegro molto*
- ii. *Andante*
- iii. *Allegro molto*
- iv. *Allegro vivace*

Schumann's *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood) are poetic piano miniatures, written in 1838 for the young piano virtuoso and composition prodigy Clara Wieck, whom he would marry two years later after a long battle for approval from her father. Schumann aimed to make the pieces "as easy as possible" in order to evoke childlike simplicity, inspired by Wieck's observation that he sometimes "seemed like a child". The thirteen short pieces in *Kinderszenen* were selected from a total of thirty, many of which were no more than a page in length. Those not included were published much later as part of two separate collections, *Bunte Blätter* (Colourful Leaves) op 99 and *Albumblätter* (Album Leaves) op 124.

Though today we associate Romanticism as a movement primarily focused on the more extreme human emotions and the sublime power of nature, the subjects of innocence and childhood were of central importance, too. We can see this in works like William Blake's 1794 *Songs of Innocence and Experience* or in the various collections of *Grimms' Fairy Tales* published from 1815 to 1857, where the purity of youth and children's fertile imaginations encounter supernatural terrors or worldly corruption.

The titles in *Kinderszenen* could be chapter titles in a children's book, and the pieces show a great sensitivity towards the inner life of children. From the tenderness of the first piece, *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen* (Of Foreign Lands and Peoples) we embark on a *Kuriose Geschichte* (Curious Story). Along the way, we experience breathless urgency in the game of *Hasche-Mann* (Blind Man's Buff), the almost comic yearning in *Bittendes Kind* (Pleading Child), the carefree meandering of *Glückes genug* (Happy Enough) and the regal pomposity of *Wichtige Begebenheit* (An Important Event).

The seventh piece, *Träumerei* (Dreaming) has become one of Schumann's best loved works. A perfect distillation of a dreamlike state into musical form, it seems suspended in time and totally weightless. *Am Kamin* (At the Fireside) paints a cosy scene of story time, and the galloping *Ritter vom Steckenpferd* (Knight of the Hobbyhorse) a riotous game on a hobbyhorse. *Fast zu ernst* (Almost Too Serious) perfectly captures the storm in a teacup of a child's momentary melancholy, whilst *Fürchtenmachen* (Frightening) evokes the uncertain, grotesque realm of a scary fairytale scene.

Kind im Einschlummern (Child Falling Asleep) is sad, peaceful and resigned, with deftly interlocking figures creating a rocking motion. The urgency builds towards a desperate, unfinished final chord – perhaps sleep is not a quiet refuge for this child, but a dangerous and uncertain place. The set of pieces concludes with *Der Dichter spricht* (The Poet Speaks), in which a storyteller captivates his young audience.

Sergei Prokofiev was a composer who lived through three Russian Revolutions, two World Wars and numerous waves of Soviet oppression and violence, at times a

victim of some of the most brutal censorship and public humiliation of the Stalinist era. His music sometimes feels like a direct, unflinching engagement with his political context, and sometimes like an attempt to escape to an alternative plane of existence, where joy, beauty, elegance and fantastical imagination rule supreme.

The contrast between Prokofiev's two violin sonatas is a case in point. *The Violin Sonata no 1 in F minor op 80* was begun during Stalin's Great Terror in 1938, when many of Prokofiev's associates were disappearing and death and mistrust were everywhere. The first sonata was actually completed in 1947, after the *Violin Sonata no 2 in D major op 94a*, which could not be more different. Starting out as a flute sonata in 1942, the second sonata was transcribed for violin with the help of great Russian virtuoso violinist David Oistrakh and premiered in 1944. It is a joyous, vibrant work that reminds us of Prokofiev the ballet composer, capable of creating music of the utmost refinement and brilliance. The first movement's high-flying violin melody pirouettes, leaps and stutters in tightly managed dialogue with the piano. The *Scherzo* that follows is mischievous in its spiky opening and closing sections, and ethereal in its central *Trio*. The *Andante* third movement returns to the serene balletic mode of the sonata's opening, before a virtuosic, march like finale that recalls some of the charm and dazzling energy of his score for *Romeo and Juliet*, composed a few years earlier.

Mendelssohn was apparently a greater child prodigy even than Mozart; we have this on the authority of Goethe, who remained a friend of Mendelssohn from their first meeting and who had seen the young Mozart play many years earlier. From when Mendelssohn was aged only twelve, large private concerts were given in the home of his wealthy parents in Berlin, with the local intelligentsia in attendance, in which works such as his twelve string symphonies (composed between the age of twelve and fourteen) were performed. His maturity is widely considered to have been reached at age sixteen with the composition of his *String Octet in E flat*, a breathtakingly fresh, uplifting and ambitious work for double string quartet which is a key part of the string chamber music repertoire today. Twenty two years later, Mendelssohn would write his sixth string quartet,

Quartet in F minor op 80, in response to the death of his beloved sister Fanny from a stroke, just two months before he died the same way. He died, aged 38, at the peak of his career; a prominent conductor who had been appointed to the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, turning down the position at the Munich Opera and editorship of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* – the most celebrated and influential musical journal of the day – to do so. Aged twenty, he had revived interest in the neglected Johann Sebastian Bach, staging one of the first performances of the *St Matthew Passion* since Bach's death in 1750, and on Schumann's discovery of the manuscript to Schubert's *Symphony no 9*, Mendelssohn immediately gave the work's premiere with the Gewandhaus Orchestra.

Despite Mendelssohn's obvious gifts, his parents were initially cautious about allowing him to pursue music as a career; they wanted the approval of established professionals first. Mendelssohn's *Piano Quartet no 3 in B minor* was completed in early 1825 (when he was 16) and taken to the Paris Conservatoire by Mendelssohn and his father in March that year. Having composed well over 100 works already, his three *Piano Quartets* were the first works to be numbered and included in his catalogue, and naturally the musicians (including Cherubini) were utterly astonished at what this barely sixteen year old composer had achieved.

Mendelssohn had in particular Mozart's two piano quartets as models, but by the time of the *Piano Quartet in B minor*, however, Mendelssohn's musical idiom had become more distinctly his own. A brooding opening movement bursts into displays of virtuosity in the piano that melt into tender melody. The spirit of Mozart's piano writing is very much alive in the florid upper melodies of the *Andante* second movement, strings accompanying sensitively with occasional interjections. The third movement is pure Mendelssohn, a perfect and thrilling example of the scampering *Scherzos* that became one of his trademarks. The final movement continues the sense of drama with its tense string *tremolandos* and relentless forward drive. At times there is a triumphant edge, but the return to the home key of B minor creates a dark, urgent ending.



Monday 14th August 7pm

Mirror, Mirror

Schubert	Notturmo in E flat major for piano trio
Pärt	Mozart-Adagio
Schubert	Fantasie in F minor D940 for four hands*
Pärt	Spiegel im Spiegel
Schubert	Fantasy in C major for violin & piano D934

Schubert, Notturmo in E flat for piano trio

Pärt, Mozart-Adagio

Schubert, Fantasie in F minor D940 for four hands

- i. *Allegro molto moderato*
- ii. *Largo*
- iii. *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*
- iv. *Finale. Allegro molto moderato*

Pärt, Spiegel im Spiegel

Schubert, Fantasy in C major for violin & piano D934

- i. *Andante molto*
- ii. *Allegretto*
- iii. *Tema e Variationzi: Andantino-Adagio*
- iv. *Tempo I*
- v. *Allegro vivace*
- vi. *Allegretto*
- vii. *Presto*

Unlike many other great composers of the era such as Mozart and Beethoven, Schubert had had no parallel career as a virtuoso performer, and rather unusually earned most of his income from publishing his compositions. The publishing industry was largely centred around the piano in the home, which meant piano solo, piano duo or piano and voice were the most popular genres. Schubert is practically unique in having composed almost as much piano duet music as solo piano music, and many of his most ambitious solo piano works were unperformed in his lifetime and published posthumously.

Looking at the combinations of instruments in these three works by Schubert, you might think that convivial, domestic music making would be their main function. Piano trio, piano duet for four hands and piano and violin duo would all be friendly enough prospects for a publisher at the time. The scale and depth of musical ambition on display, however, shows that Schubert was also capable of writing music for the ages – innovative, visionary works that would not come to be fully appreciated until long after the composer's death.

The *Notturmo in E flat* is a nocturne for piano trio, composed in 1827 and most probably a first attempt at a slow movement for what would become his *Piano Trio in B flat major*, D 898. Nocturnes had origins as vocal duets with guitar or piano accompaniment, habitually performed as nighttime entertainment. They became hugely popular as solo piano works in the first half of the nineteenth century, thanks first to John Field, and then to Chopin. Schubert's *Notturmo in E flat* pays tribute to the Nocturne genre's origins, first with violin and cello in richly harmonised melody over strumming, guitar like piano chords, and then with plucked string chords over serenely harmonised piano melody. The calm of this standalone slow movement is achieved partly by the astonishing harmonic stasis, which makes each big shift in harmony that follows seem monumental; it is intimate chamber music on a cosmic scale.

Staying with Schubert for a moment, the *Fantasie in F minor* D 940 intersects the demand for piano duet music from the publishing market and Schubert's grander musical ambitions, embodied so profoundly in his last three, posthumously published piano sonatas. Unlike the multi movement structure of his piano sonatas, however, Schubert chose to meld the changes of mood and tempo into a single continuous work. This is partly a continuation of a long tradition of music that aimed to transfer the spontaneity of improvisation into the coherence of a notated musical work – pieces called Prelude, Fantasie and Toccata, for example, all channel the long established practice of improvisation in keyboard music, and indeed Schubert's first surviving published work is a *Fantasie* for piano duet.

Here, however, the genre of Fantasie enabled Schubert to grapple with the specific problem of how to create a continuous musical narrative within a sonata. A precedent existed for him in Beethoven's *Sonata in E flat op 27 no 1, Quasi una fantasia*; unlike the more famous second sonata of the op 27 pair, known as 'Moonlight', Beethoven had intended the piece to run as a continuous whole with no separation between sections of the music. This is the approach Schubert takes, and it enables him both to give perfect expression to his freewheeling inventiveness and to create a poignant

circularity: the tragic, mournful music from the opening section reappears much later in the work, for example.

The first movement begins with an exquisitely ornamented melody that floats on a gently rocking sea of F minor harmony, with surges of anger threatening to break through the muted surface at any point; eventually it does so, with urgent triplets and forceful rhetoric. Yet in the midst of this are moments of humour and lightness, such as the transposition of the ornamented theme to a major-key version. The movement fades to a close, and then three declamatory chords herald the arrival of a grand *Largo*, in the style of a Baroque French overture, with a double dotted rhythm (that is, a long note followed by a very short note) and trills to add to the sense of significance. This builds to terrific, explosive proportions before the *Scherzo* emerges from the rubble quite naturally, its Baroque style dance in 3/4 time propelling the music forwards.

Schubert seems to use the subtly different colours available in the different registers of the piano as though they were distinct characters in a dialogue, and the changes of key serve as a moving scenic backdrop. His melodic lines and harmonic voice-leading feel completely intuitive, even as they guide us into uncharted territory. The final movement begins with a recapitulation of the opening theme, but the music becomes overwrought with layer upon layer of counterpoint, voices jostling for attention and growing louder and louder. After an abrupt silence, we end up back where we started, with the same muted texture and the original theme, never for a moment suspecting that we might have been lost along the way.

The approach to form taken in the final Schubert work in this programme is extremely similar. Another *Fantasie*, the *Fantasy in C major for violin and piano* runs as a continuous whole and makes use of the seemingly endless, freewheeling invention that Schubert had developed in his other late works. Widely feared by violinists and pianists alike as one of the most difficult pieces in the violin and piano repertoire, it is nevertheless not always the most virtuoso style passages that cause the most difficulty; rather it is perhaps the

precariouly exposed writing, combined with the sense that one is handling music that is extremely precious. The opening music sees a melody emerge from a haze of delicate piano figuration, mimicking the cloud of harmony created by an orchestral string section in *tremolo*. The music slides between C major and C minor – an ambiguity that is also present in the jaunty, A major/minor, Hungarian style music that follows. The music then sinks a semitone lower to the remote key of A flat major for a set of four, rather Paganini-esque variations on a Schubert song – his 1822 setting of Friedrich Rückert's *Sei mir gegrüsst!* (I greet you!). After a brief return of the opening music, a brilliant, heroic finale concludes this epic piece.

Arvo Pärt (b 1935) is Estonia's greatest living composer and a father figure in what has become known as 'holy minimalism'. The American minimalist school had emerged following the Second World War, deriving its name from composers' tendency to pair back the musical materials to the simplest possible and rely on musical processes to determine the rest, like clockwork. The result can be heard in the interlocking rhythms and motoric grooves of Steve Reich or the swirling arpeggios of Philip Glass. These composers were the other side of the coin from the ultra complex total serialists like Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt. Stylistically there was nothing in common, yet both movements were a reaction to the horror with which humanity was now regarding itself; both sets of composers tried to eradicate the composer's subjective choices, submitting their creative ego to technical processes, and both completely rejected prewar musical styles.

Arvo Pärt's brand of minimalism stands in stark contrast to his American counterparts, pristine and crystalline, and came about through a process of personal rebirth. His early, serialist style followed in the footsteps of Arnold Schoenberg, and earned him criticism from Soviet censors for showing "susceptibility to foreign influences". When he had a change of direction and wrote a sacred work, *Credo* (1968), his music was in turn vilified for its glorification of God in a secular regime. In the dark period that followed,

his music under an effective ban, Pärt turned towards Renaissance polyphony and Gregorian chant to help develop a new compositional voice.

He converted from Lutheranism to Orthodox Christianity, and devised a new style called *tintinnabuli*. This word's etymology is rooted in the Latin for bells which Pärt felt were expressed in the three notes of a triad. He further describes the style as follows:

"In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises - and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this... I work with very few elements - with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials - with the triad, with one specific tonality".

For Pärt, minimalism represents an age-old connection between simplicity and spiritual completeness. It is this, as well as the spiritual atmosphere of his music, that has led to his style being known as 'holy minimalism'.

Mozart, who sometimes seems to express the whole world with just a few notes, is something of a

kindred spirit for Pärt. The 1992 work *Mozart-Adagio* pays homage not just to Mozart, but also to a close friend of Pärt and great admirer of Mozart's music, the violinist Oleg Kagan, who had died in 1990. The piece is a transcription of the slow movement from Mozart's *Piano Sonata in F major K 280* with some additions and extrapolations by Pärt. The piano writing of the original is split across the three instruments of a piano trio; Pärt lingers on Mozart's dissonances and frames the piece with spare, simple pairs of notes in the violin and cello as introduction and coda.

The much earlier piece *Spiegel im Spiegel* dates from 1978, shortly before Pärt left Estonia. The title means 'Mirror(s) in the mirror', and refers to a so called 'infinity mirror', where two parallel mirrors create a seemingly infinite succession of reflections. Pärt creates this illusion in music with repeating, triadic (three note) figures in spaciouly pedal-laden piano, whilst melodic fragments echo between the bass of the piano and the melody instrument high above (originally for violin and piano, the work can be played on a wide range of instruments). The melody is so slow that it seems suspended in time; it rises and falls but remains rooted in the note 'A', as though a figure were walking towards and away from a mirror.







Tuesday 15th August 7pm

Vertigo

Ligeti	Vertige' (from Etudes book 2 no 9)
Lekeu	Piano quartet in B minor*
Fauré	Piano quartet no 2 in G minor op 45

Ligeti, *Vertige*' (from *Études* book 2 no 9)

Lekeu, Piano quartet in B minor

- i. *Dans un emportement douloureux (Très animé)*
- ii. *Lent et passionné*

Fauré, Piano quartet no 2 in G minor op 45

- i. *Allegro molto moderato*
- ii. *Allegro molto*
- iii. *Adagio non troppo*
- iv. *Finale—allegro molto*

György Ligeti was one of the most radical composers of the twentieth century. His mind-bending, cosmic works such as *Atmosphères* found a vast audience through their use in the films of Stanley Kubrick (notably in *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Shining*), but he is also one of many Eastern European composers who drew heavily on folk music. Indeed, though he was born a Romanian, he emerged from the Second World War under the regime of Communist Hungary, whose censors dictated that music had to be composed in a folkloristic style.

Like many truly great composers before him, Ligeti reinvented his compositional style numerous times, but remained unmistakably himself in his artistic voice. One of the threads running through much of his music is a beating heart and a visceral, gutsy energy that stems ultimately from the Hungarian folk music that he drew on in his earliest works, working closely with composer, pedagogue and ethnomusicologist Zoltán Kodály. This is true even in some of his latest works, such as his groundbreaking piano études (a type of piece, usually fairly short, that focuses on a particular technical difficulty). Ligeti's études are designed to test the intellect as much as the fingers with their bewildering rhythmic complexities.

The numbering runs continuously through Ligeti's three books of études, and the ninth, *Vertige* (Dizziness) was composed in 1990 as the third étude in Book 2. Swirls of chromatic scales spin round, the right and left hands separated by large intervals and new strands emerging suddenly up and down the keyboard. With this perpetual circular motion around a static pianist and

listener, the effect is a remarkable musical analogy for vertigo, in which the sufferer experiences uncomfortable dizziness and a spinning sensation whilst not actually moving.

The promising career of Belgian composer Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894) was cut short the day after his 24th birthday, when he succumbed to typhoid. There is a breathless, passionate sense of tragedy in much of his music, heightening one's sense that in his early death, a bright flame was extinguished too soon. Some have suggested that Lekeu's *Violin Sonata in G minor*, and not the *Violin Sonata in A* of César Franck (usually held as the most likely candidate), is the real-life model for Marcel Proust's *Vinteuil Sonata* that features in the novel *In Search of Lost Time*. This is in part because, as Proust suggests of his imaginary literary sonata, Lekeu wove traces of the same melodic material into various movements of the piece, treating the sonata as a cyclical rather than linear journey.

There is a further, pedagogical link with Franck, who taught Lekeu privately, and whose stylistic influence is clearly present in Lekeu's music. Lekeu's is a full-throated, harmonically rich Romanticism with powerful instrumental sonorities. This is particularly true of the *Piano Quartet in B minor*, in whose first movement the unison strings are often pitted against thundering double octaves in the piano. The tempo marking *Dans un emportement douloureux* (in a fit of grief) sets the mood for a stormy, fifteen-minute movement that rages and howls one moment and retreats to calm introspection the next. Once the waves have subsided, the strings take over. The *Piano Quartet* was commissioned by the celebrated Belgian violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe, who must have appreciated Lekeu's nuanced grasp of the expressive possibilities his instrument offered. Lekeu displays his melodic gifts in a slow movement that builds to an impassioned climax before fading away to conclude the piece.

For someone who spent the first part of their career primarily as an organist and teacher and is described by musicologist Richard Taruskin as straight laced, Gabriel Fauré was paradoxically the French composer who brought heightened sensuality and decadence

into his national school of composition – paving the way for the so-called Impressionism of composers such as his pupil, Maurice Ravel. He crystallised the art of French song into what became known as *Mélodie*, drawing on the fragrant poetry of far more Bohemian contemporaries, such as Baudelaire and Verlaine, with whom he became unlikely personal friends. His early, miniature masterpiece *Après un rêve* is one of the most famous of all French songs, and his later *Requiem* (a work differentiated to other requiems by critic Vuillermoz as "looking to Heaven, rather than to Hell") remains a hugely popular choral work. However, aside from a few favourite songs, as well as his *Pavane* and the *Requiem*, Fauré is not widely known outside of France.

Fauré's chamber music was appreciated in his lifetime, with his first essay in the unusual genre of piano quartet (violin, viola, cello, piano) contributing to his winning the Académie des Beaux-Arts' Prix Chartier in 1885. As a composer who felt most at home at the piano, he felt he needed the security of including a piano in the ensemble; it was not until his final year, 1924, that he composed a string quartet. Mozart, Schumann and Brahms had all composed piano quartets but there were otherwise few precedents.

Fauré's *Piano Quartet no 2 in G minor* was begun shortly after winning the Prix Chartier, and was first performed in 1887. The first movement is tumultuous from the outset, an impassioned unison melody sung out in the strings over a harmonically unsettled, rippling piano backdrop. The texture is periodically stripped back to the simplest of piano chords and a quiet solo from one of the instruments.

The second movement is a whirlwind of a *scherzo*, with almost manic, repeating piano figuration and the strings swerving wildly between quiet plucked accompaniment and a few bars of full-throated unison melody. The third movement *Adagio non troppo* is the most experimental, both in terms of the harmony and the narrative structure employed by Fauré. It alternates a resigned, plodding piano figure with an austere melody. The plodding figure recurs every few bars, a kind of refrain, and the answering melody becomes gradually more filled-out and elaborate with each restatement. It

is several minutes before the movement at last swells to a glorious, heartfelt song, and when the refrain recurs it is in the plucked string instruments, the piano is left to elaborate in the next answer.

The *finale* recaptures the first movement's storminess but with some of the unhinged dance character of the second movement – Fauré wanted to create a cyclical structure, in which memories of previous movements recur in a vague, almost metaphorical way. Unlike the first movement, there are no moments of reflection; the energy is unrelenting, and the wheels almost seem to fall off as the harmony shifts rapidly towards a joyful climax in G major.





Wednesday 16th August 2pm

Living Backwards

St Michael's, Coxwold

Saariaho	Nocturne for solo violin
Ravel	Sonata for violin and cello
Dvořák	Terzetto in C op 74
Telemann	Suite for two violins: 'Gulliver's Travels'
Biber	Passacaglia in D minor (Rosary sonata no 16)

Saariaho, Nocturne for solo violin

Ravel, Sonata for violin & cello

- i. *Allegro*
- ii. *Très vif*
- iii. *Lent*
- iv. *Vif, avec entrain*

Dvořák, Terzetto in C op 74

- i. *Introduzione: Allegro ma non troppo*
- ii. *Larghetto*
- iii. *Scherzo*
- iv. *Tema con Variazioni*

Telemann, Suite for two violins: 'Gulliver's Travels'

- i. *Intrada*
- ii. *Lilliputian Chaconne*
- iii. *Brobdingnagian Gigue*
- iv. *Reverie of the Laputans*
- v. *Loure & Wild Dance*

Biber, Passacaglia in G minor (Rosary sonata no 16)

Kaija Saariaho, who died this June at the age of 70, was a leading Finnish composer in a field of outstanding talent, including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Magnus Lindberg, Kalevi Aho and the late Einojuhani Rautavaara (d 2016), who are all considered to be among the most important composers of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This Finnish school of composition seems to draw on the same wellspring of inspiration from the natural world as their forebear Jean Sibelius (1865-1957). A fascination with sound and an ability to evoke the Nordic landscape are married to a sophisticated technical ability, and music that is often simultaneously modern and accessible.

This style stands in contrast to certain late twentieth-century trends towards ultra complexity and impenetrability, exemplified in two of Saariaho's teachers during her studies in Freiburg, Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. Saariaho broke free of this style through contact with the French 'spectralist' composers Tristan Murail and Gerard Grisey at the Darmstadt Summer

School in 1980. These composers were working at IRCAM in Paris, the French institute of research into music and sound, and were using technology to analyse sounds. From a single note on, for example, a trombone, Grisey would analyse all the pitches that made up that sound – its spectrum of pitches, with overtones and undertones – and use this as the basis of a musical composition.

Saariaho herself began to study at IRCAM and in doing so found a new way forward, forging a personal take on this spectralist style that has something unmistakably Nordic about it – stark, pure and beautiful. Her *Nocturne for solo violin* dates from 1994, a lonely, haunting work for unaccompanied violin that would later become a full-blown violin concerto, premiered at the BBC Proms in 1995 by Gidon Kremer. The piece is in memory of the great Polish composer Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994). Long, single notes are split apart into bracing, silvery harmonics and earthy, muffled textures, with glints of light and shadow shooting away suddenly.

Another musical tribute to a respected colleague, Maurice Ravel's *Sonata for violin & cello* was composed between 1920-1922 in memory of Claude Debussy, who had died in 1918. It began as one of many submissions included in a special commemorative edition of *La Revue Musicale*, a new music magazine founded in 1920. The first movement of Ravel's *Sonata for violin & cello* appeared alongside contributions from composers including Bartók, Stravinsky and Satie. The high esteem with which Debussy had been held by these great musicians is no surprise, but there was perhaps a special kinship between Debussy and Ravel in particular.

Together, the two composers were frequently called Impressionists, as their music somehow evokes a similar appreciation for subtleties of colour and light to the work of Impressionist painters. Both musicians rejected this affiliation (although Ravel thought it applied to Debussy and not to himself) and it was really the poetry of Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé that interested them more than the visual arts. What seems unarguable is that, in general, Debussy and Ravel's music was sensuous and evocative, and it is therefore surprising

that the *Sonata for violin & cello* is a rather sparse and austere piece. Perhaps it was a particular response to Debussy's later period, in which he composed music with great economy of means and clarity, eschewing the sumptuous sonorities of his earlier work. Ravel wrote of the piece, "The music is stripped to the bone ... Harmonic charm is renounced, and there is an increasing return of emphasis on melody".

At the start of the first movement, the two instruments' lines are entwined in a bluesy counterpoint, switching playfully between major and minor. There are moments in which the harmony becomes thornier, and the gestures more impassioned, but there is little sense of a dramatic climax before the abrupt, glassy chords at the end.

The second movement's major-minor clashes take on the flavour of Hungarian folk music, with snapping *pizzicato* (plucked notes) driving the music onwards and bracing, stabbing chords punctuating the searing melodic exchange between the violin and cello.

The third movement's melancholic cello line initially has the serene, plodding character of a ground bass (think of Pachelbel's *Canon in D*). As the violin enters, the music builds to repeated, angry climaxes, until the intensity fades to a Medieval-sounding coda.

Ravel ties the piece together by incorporating themes from the earlier movements towards the end of the finale. This fourth movement picks up where the second left off, with percussive string playing, wild harmonies and sliding figures like the whinnying of horses that recall the string writing of Bartók.

Dvořák composed the *Terzetto in C* in 1887, as he was approaching the peak of his international fame (four years later he would receive an honorary degree from the University of Cambridge, and the year after that would begin a stint as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York). Yet the piece's origins are quaint, domestic, and rather charming. Dvořák lived in a multigenerational household in Prague with his family and his mother-in-law. A spare room was rented to a young chemistry student, Josef Kruis. Kruis was a keen amateur violinist who studied with Jan Pelikán, a

member of the National Theatre Orchestra, and the two often played duets.

For a little light domestic entertainment, Dvořák decided to compose some trios for two violins and viola, in which the composer would play viola. He composed the *Terzetto*, but it proved too difficult for Kruis, so he wrote the less technically demanding *Miniatures* and also arranged these pieces for violin and piano, renaming them *Romantic Pieces*. The *Terzetto* was instead premiered by professional musicians, Karel Ondříček, Jan Buchal and Jaroslav Šťastný in March 1887 in Prague, and published by Simrock later that year.

The first movement of the *Terzetto* begins with the instruments in wistful close harmony, with the violin breaking out into scampering figures, which then form the basis of a more energetic central section. The opening music returns but slides directly into the second movement, a tender chorale with another contrasting middle section, this time marked by march-like dotted rhythms. The third movement is a Slavonic *scherzo* with a soulful central section. The vigorous opening and closing sections seem to be feigning seriousness, but it is upset by playful rhythmic games and joyful *pizzicato*. Despite the intended domestic setting and the quaint ensemble of instruments, the last movement is built of grand rhetorical gestures, separated by dramatic silences. The dark C minor key is finally brightened into C major over the course of ten short variations, and a virtuosic rush to the final chords brings the piece to a close.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) was a German Baroque composer, friend of both Handel and J. S. Bach, and godfather to the latter's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel. His more than 3,000 compositions make Telemann one of the most prolific composers of all time, dwarfing the nevertheless unimaginably large outputs of both Handel and Bach, though approximately half of these have been lost and many remain unperformed since the 18th century. He was a keen multi-instrumentalist rather than a keyboard master, playing a variety of wind, brass and string instruments, as well as organ and harpsichord, writing for almost every major instrument.

Telemann leapt enthusiastically upon the wildly successful *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726, and composed a suite for two violins that he published in serialised form in his magazine, *Die getreue Musik-Meister* (The Steadfast Music Teacher). A grand, stately *Intrada* evokes the ambitious, optimistic Gulliver as he sets off on his voyage. The *Lilliputian Chaconne* is a sped-up, miniature version of a usually-slow dance called the *chaconne* – a comic evocation of the tiny people of Lilliput dancing. By contrast, the *Brobdingnagian Gigue* is a usually-quick dance, slowed down to suggest the lumbering steps of these giants. In both cases, Telemann shares jokes with the performers; the *Chaconne* is in 3/32 time (three very short notes per bar) whereas the *Gigue* is in the almost unreadable 24/1 time (24 very long notes per bar). The fourth movement, *Daydreams of the Laputians and their attendant flappers*, describes sleepy Laputians being repeatedly startled awake by their rattles. The suite concludes with a *Loure of the well-mannered Houyhnhnms* being portrayed in a steady gigue, whilst simultaneously the *Wild dance of the untamed Yahoos* creates a bustling energy beneath.

A generation before Bach and Telemann, the Bohemian-Austrian violinist-composer Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704) made an astonishing contribution to the violin repertoire that was then lost for centuries. The *Rosary Sonatas*, sometimes also referred to as the *Mystery Sonatas*, lay in the Bavarian state library until 1890 and were only published in 1905, 229 years after their completion. As it is, the solo works for violin by J.S. Bach are today seen as the benchmark

for any aspiring violinist and the foundational stone for the violin repertoire. Many of the things that make Bach's music such a test, however, apply equally to Biber: the music requires absolute purity of intonation, technical mastery, a consummate grasp of harmony and counterpoint, and a brilliant imagination.

Biber was born in Stráž pod Ralskem, now part of the Czech Republic, in 1644, but lived in Salzburg from 1670 until his death in 1704, having abandoned his previous employer in favour of the Archbishop of Salzburg whilst on an instrument buying errand. He was eventually given a noble title by the emperor.

Relative to the standard of violin playing that was typical among the best violinists of Germany and Italy at the time, the technical requirements of Biber's violin music are roughly equivalent to Paganini's in the nineteenth century. Biber could play in 6th and 7th positions – where the fingers are at the top of the fingerboard, over the body of the violin, with thumb stretched back towards the neck – which is considerably more difficult without a modern shoulder rest. He could play fast runs of scales, had an advanced bowing technique, and had mastered the art of double-stopping (playing notes on more than one string simultaneously) to the extent that he could play intricate counterpoint on the violin, usually considered a single-line melody instrument. In addition, he experimented with *scordatura*, which is where the strings of the violin (usually G-D-A-E) are tuned to different notes, creating unusual harmonies and resonances; in the *Rosary Sonatas*, for example, each piece is in a different tuning.



Each of the sonatas in the *Rosary Sonatas* corresponds to one of the fifteen Catholic Rosary prayers (often represented by beads, a memory aid for those reciting the prayers in sequence). These Rosary prayers are opportunities to meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary, which describe events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, and the set of fifteen (standardised as such by Pope Pius V in the sixteenth century) are grouped into three sets of five: five Joyful Mysteries, five Sorrowful Mysteries and five Glorious Mysteries. Biber's sonatas follow the same divisions, and instead of titles, they are each preceded with a religious engraving.

At the end of the cycle of pieces, a sixteenth appears – and, like the first sonata, it is in the standard violin tuning of G-D-A-E rather than Biber's unusual *scordatura* tunings that are used for the others. The monumental *Passacaglia in G minor* is one of the first significant pieces for unaccompanied violin in the Western canon, and uncannily foreshadows the incredible *Chaconne* from Bach's second partita in D minor (though it is unlikely that Bach knew it). A passacaglia is a repeating bass line that is used as the basis for a set of variations, and in this case Biber has used the four-note sequence known as a *lamento* bass line. Heard throughout music from the Baroque period to *Hit the Road Jack* and beyond, the falling *lamento* bass carries with it a sense of circularity, inevitability and infiniteness, but also constancy; it remains unchanged despite the wildly inventive variations that take place above it. In the manuscript, the accompanying engraving is of a Guardian Angel leading a child, over whom they are keeping perpetual watch.





Thursday 17th August 7pm

The Pool of Tears

Mahler	Piano quartet in A minor
Schnittke	Piano quartet
Bridge	Phantasy piano quartet in F sharp minor*
Shostakovich	Piano quintet in G minor op 57

Mahler, Piano quartet in A minor

Schnittke, Piano quartet

Bridge, Phantasy piano quartet in F sharp minor

Shostakovich, Piano quintet in G minor op 57

- i. *Prelude: Lento*
- ii. *Fugue: Adagio*
- iii. *Scherzo: Allegretto*
- iv. *Intermezzo: Lento*
- v. *Finale: Allegretto*

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) pulled the rich tradition of Austro-German nineteenth century music into the twentieth century, largely through an expertise in writing for orchestra that was gained through a parallel career as one of the world's first superstar conductors. Despite numerous antisemitic detractors, he would go on to conduct the Vienna Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera. The cost to his legacy is that he only had his summers to compose; but the experience he gained with singers and orchestras is written all over his scores. The cost to his health may have been greater: he died of a heart defect aged just 50, at the height of his international career.

His musical language was heavily influenced by Richard Wagner, and his concept of the symphony - which he expanded to gargantuan proportions - owes much to Anton Bruckner. With the exception of this early *Piano quartet* movement in G minor and a lost violin sonata, he wrote exclusively song cycles (many with orchestral accompaniment) or works for orchestra (there are nine completed symphonies and one incomplete). In his symphonies and orchestral songs, players in the orchestra are given instructions - standing up, playing from offstage, playing with the bells of the instrument in the air, making an echo-like tone - which are both neurotically precise and also avant-garde, paving the way for a twentieth century filled with music in which every parameter of a performance, and not just the notes, are defined or questioned.

He was born into a Jewish family in what was then Bohemia, and was part of a small German speaking minority. His grandfather had been a pedlar, but his father eventually built up a distillery and tavern business. In his early childhood, the family moved to Iglau, Moravia, a bustling town where Mahler encountered the street songs, folk music, trumpet calls and military marches which later infused his symphonies. In quoting these folk influences within large Germanic symphonies, he was able to weave a musical fabric which had as many layers of cultural associations and memories as it did voices in the musical texture.

Having displayed early promise at the piano, Mahler was sent to the Vienna Conservatory, graduating in 1878. On his father's insistence, he then completed a degree in literature and philosophy at the University of Vienna in 1879. It was at the end of his first year at the Vienna Conservatory, in 1876, that Mahler is thought to have first performed his *Piano quartet*, which is presumed to be the first movement of a larger work that was never composed. It lay in a folder in his wife Alma's collection of manuscripts marked "early compositions" until its first twentieth century performance in 1964; the score was published nine years later.

The clearest exemplar for the young Mahler in the piano quartet genre was Brahms' *Piano quartet no 1 in G minor op 25*, and indeed many commentators have claimed the influence of Brahms is written all over Mahler's *Piano quartet*. However, the layering of musical lines and the approach to storytelling feels more like the collage of Mahler's symphonies than the rigorous development of short motifs that one finds in Brahms; if Mahler has borrowed anything from Brahms, it is the dark, brooding piano writing and the evocation of a gypsy musician in the violin cadenza near the end - Brahms' own *Piano quartet no 1* has a zither-like piano cadenza that is not dissimilar.

Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) took Mahler's *Piano quartet in G minor* as the starting point for his own *Piano quartet*. A Russian composer of German-Jewish heritage, Schnittke's teenage years in Vienna left an indelible mark on him; he felt a powerful sense of the city's musical heritage that is sometimes kaleidoscopically

strewn throughout his own work. He might have felt a particular affinity for Mahler with his Jewish background and Viennese musical idiom, and the two composers share an ability to flit from earnest expression to ironic irreverence.

Schnittke sometimes seems to be in awe of his musical predecessors, writing of his time in Vienna that he felt like "a link of the historical chain: all was multidimensional; the past represented a world of ever present ghosts, and I was not a barbarian without any connections, but the conscious bearer of the task in my life". On the other hand, his use of pre-existing music sometimes borders on the comical; his cadenza for Beethoven's *Violin concerto* is a romp through the violin concerto literature, quoting randomly from a selection of concert favourites. He felt comfortable at the high end of culture, often writing music that was redolent of Shostakovich and expressing poignantly the experience of living under Soviet oppression; but equally he earned much of his income writing film scores, of which he composed almost seventy.

Schnittke's ambivalence, and his postmodern willingness to grab a work of art with both hands rather than stand back and admire, is expressed neatly in his *Piano quartet*. He describes it as "at first the attempt to remember Mahler's *Piano quartet* movement, and then remembrance itself". This memory manifests as a shadow over the piece, which begins in a fever dream full of Mahler fragments. A swirling texture sees Mahler's melodies reflected around the quartet and distorted as though in the grotesque mirrors at a funfair; the harmony is contorted into clashing dissonances. In the sparser, more percussive interludes between bouts of Mahler-fever, Schnittke's own voice comes to the fore. Schnittke ultimately wins out over the Mahler quartet and the single movement piece draws to a hushed close, but the emotional impact conjures something of Mahler's Vienna, saturated with the thinking of Freud and its new and disturbing analysis of the subconscious mind.

Frank Bridge was championed heavily by his most brilliant pupil, Benjamin Britten, who wrote admiringly of Bridge's *Phantasy Piano Quartet*:

"Sonorous yet lucid, with clear, clean lines, grateful to listen to and to play. It is the music of a practical musician, brought up in German orthodoxy, but who loved French Romanticism and conception of sound—Brahms happily tempered with Fauré".

Like so many early twentieth century English composers, Frank Bridge absorbed prevailing musical styles from Europe, whether it was the French and German Romantic music that Britten heard in the *Phantasy Quartet*, or, later, absorbing Stravinsky and Schoenberg's strides into a modernist aesthetic and fusing it with his own language. He was also, as Britten hints, a first-rate performing musician, both as a conductor (he deputised for Sir Henry Wood) and as a violist (he was violist in the English String Quartet). He was also, however, an English composer, and a pacifist who abhorred the First World War; he expressed both of these identities in a stream of gorgeous pastoral works between 1914-1918, before resuming his innovative and modernist developments for the rest of his career.

When Britten alludes to the influence of Brahms and Fauré on Bridge's *Phantasy Quartet*, it is not just the sound of the music – the rich instrumental sonorities, the colours of his harmonic language – to which he refers, but its construction, tightly woven together from fragmentary motivic material, evidence of an analytical and incisive mind.

Composed in 1909-1910, the *Phantasy Quartet* was written for entry into a chamber music competition run by Walter Wilson Cobbett that allowed either a standard three or four movement structure, or else (thanks to Cobbett's interest in seventeenth century English music by composers such as Purcell) a Fantasy or Phantasy structure. The stipulation was that the piece should be a single movement work, up to fifteen minutes in length and consisting of disparate musical ideas, yet retaining a sense of unity. Not only did Bridge engage with the more niche option of Phantasy with enthusiasm, but it became part of his signature style, the idea of unifying a whole through motivic links recurring throughout his career. An impassioned, unison string melody launches from the low reaches of the piano, before the piano, seemingly improvising, guides us towards a heartfelt

second theme, and we are away on our journey. Each episode arrives seamlessly, whether it is the scampering, fleet-of-foot second paragraph or passages of rhapsodic lyricism. Bridge somehow conveys a vast range of musical ideas and emotional landscapes in a single sweep of music.

Shostakovich was one of the great composers of the Soviet Union, remembered for his struggle against the censorious political forces weighing down on him, and the power of the music which resulted from this desperate situation. As a young child he displayed a brilliant aptitude for music – having begun piano lessons aged 9 with his mother, he was able to repeat music from the previous week's lesson from memory – and he enrolled at the Petrograd Conservatory (now St Petersburg) aged just 13. His graduation piece, premiered in 1926 by the Leningrad Philharmonic, was his *Symphony no 1 in F minor op 10* – an exhilarating, virtuosic symphony with an almost cartoonish sense of momentum. Such early success led directly to commissions from the Soviet state, but also internationally: he competed as a pianist in the First International Chopin Piano Competition in 1927 (receiving an honourable mention), after which he met the conductor Bruno Walter who gave the *First Symphony* its Berlin premiere in the same year, and Leopold Stokowski, who gave its US premiere in 1928 with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Such fame had its positive and negative side effects, both for Shostakovich's working and living conditions in Soviet Russia, and for his reputation around the world. Coded criticism of the state, masked by musical parody and absurdity, abound in his symphonies; yet many international listeners heard only Stalinist propaganda in his powerful orchestral forces and triumphant, martial musical gestures. It was assumed by many that Shostakovich was a puppet for the censors. However, much of his music is an expression of the voice of the individual against the collective – whether in jeering sarcasm, heartfelt misery and despair, or defiant cheerfulness. All of the above can be found in abundance in his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (written in 1932), in which the claustrophobic confines of an

unhappy marriage, and then the torment of murderous guilt, are added to the list of oppressive circumstances that one might expect of an opera produced under Stalin's regime (though the opera is ostensibly set in nineteenth century Tsarist Russia). Premiered in 1934, the opera was then banned until 1961 by the Soviet censors, having been denounced in an anonymous article in *Pravda* which has widely been attributed to Stalin himself.

The *Piano quintet in G minor* was composed in 1940, having been commissioned by the Moscow based Beethoven Quartet, who had premiered Shostakovich's *String quartet no 1* two years earlier and would go on to give premieres of thirteen of his fifteen string quartets. It was intended as an excuse for the Quartet and Shostakovich to join forces as performers, which they did for the first performance (at the Moscow Conservatory on 23 November); it was a great success, and Shostakovich was awarded the 100,000 rouble Stalin Prize for the *Piano quintet* in 1941.

Although the Second World War was raging to the west at the time he wrote his *Piano quintet*, it was still a year before Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, voiding the non-aggression pact signed between the two states in 1939. The bleakness heard in the work is perhaps more a response to the fallout from Stalin's Great Terror of 1936-1938, in which an estimated 1.2 million Soviets were executed and there was widespread suspicion and police surveillance; many of Shostakovich's fellow artists and musicians were murdered. The string players of another string quartet, performing the work with the composer/pianist years later, found themselves at odds with Shostakovich: "We, the string players, wanted to 'sing', to play with more emotion", but Shostakovich tended towards emotional restraint and emphasised the music's constructive, motor elements. The very fact of the work beginning with a *Prelude* and *Fugue* suggests that, faced with such a terrifying political context, Shostakovich retreated from anything that could be interpreted as political, preferring to reference the purer musical forms of Bach.

The first movement, *Prelude*, begins with a piano introduction that recalls the bombast and stark beauty

of some of the organ preludes of Bach: austere, imposing and beautiful, yet also expositional and exploratory, with waves of contrapuntal lines rising and falling. The strings answer in a full-throated reply that could almost be a transcription of a funeral hymn from the Russian Orthodox choral tradition. An elegant faster section follows, nearly waltzing but never quite accelerating beyond gentle plodding, and eventually giving way to the return of the monumental opening *Prelude* material.

The second movement answers the first movement's *Prelude* with a *Fugue*, in a grand precursor to the 50 *Preludes and Fugues op 87*, that Shostakovich would compose ten years later – directly echoing the 48 *Preludes and Fugues* of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. A profoundly sad and delicate exposition introduces the four voices of the fugue in strict order: first violin, second violin, cello and viola, followed by a dry, thoughtful piano episode (initially reducing the texture to two voices, but soon expanding). A fugue inevitably builds in density and complexity: as more voices are added and continue singing (or playing) in counterpoint, so too Shostakovich raises the musical intensity. After a chilling climax, he reduces the texture and the tempo, sliding downwards seemingly towards an abyss.

The circus-like, clockwork *Scherzo* that follows makes a pantomime of the poignancy we have just heard, just as the cartoonish music in parts of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* perfectly capture the absurdities of Soviet life. Nevertheless, the repeated *ostinato* figures are thrilling, and there are even moments of grace and charm.

The *Intermezzo* is welcome respite from the intensity that has preceded it, an airy, song-like melody played over a *pizzicato* walking bass with other voices adding to the texture as if in a folk round. This process intensifies and reaches an impassioned climax before dissolving. Out of the ashes, the *Finale* emerges cautiously, and with an optimism that feels like a rebirth. Sometimes sadly beautiful, sometimes calmly spiritual, and sometimes ecstatic and jubilant, it is an emotionally complex movement; though it seems to resolve peacefully, there is perhaps a sense of smiling bravely through tears.





Friday 18th August 7pm

Along Treacherous Ways

Brahms	Piano quintet in F minor op 34*
Shostakovich	Piano trio no 1 in C minor op 8
Bridge	Piano quintet in D minor

Brahms, Piano quintet in F minor op 34

- i. *Allegro non troppo*
- ii. *Andante, un poco adagio*
- iii. *Scherzo: Allegro*
- iv. *Finale*

Shostakovich, Piano trio no 1 in C minor op 8

Bridge, Piano quintet in D minor

- i. *Adagio - Allegro moderato*
- ii. *Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro con brio*
- iii. *Allegro energico*

Brahms' *Piano quintet in F minor op 34* went through two radical transformations before reaching its final version, and each followed advice from his two most trusted musical advisors. The first of these advisors was Clara Schumann (1819-1896), the wife and muse of Robert Schumann, who was a virtuoso pianist and a composer in her own right, and for whom Brahms nurtured an unrequited love throughout his life. The second was the great violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), a close friend of Brahms and the Schumanns, who frequently advised Brahms on his writing for string instruments, as well as giving premieres of several of Brahms' compositions. The work had begun in 1862 as an attempt to write a piece for the same forces as Schubert's *Quintet in C*: two violins, one viola and two cellos. Clara Schumann was encouraging, but Joachim found that, for all its musical strengths, the work lacked "an attractive sonority... the sound is almost helplessly thin for the musical thought": in effect, the instrumental writing was not quite right.

Brahms revised the work, rescoring it as a sonata for two pianos and destroying the original string quintet version. Clara Schumann performed it with conductor and pianist Herman Levi in 1864, but she felt that "many of the most beautiful ideas are lost on the piano, recognisable only to the performer, and not enjoyable for the audience. The very first time I played it I had the impression of a transcribed work". Somehow, the combination of two pianos did not do justice to the piece's expressive content.

Brahms followed Clara's advice and the result is the work we know today as Brahms' *Piano Quintet in F minor op 34*, a combination of string quartet and piano that provides the power and clarity of the two-piano sonata version and the sustained, expressive warmth of the original string quintet. Brahms nevertheless maintained a fondness for the two-piano sonata and offered it for publication; both this version and the finished *Piano Quintet* were dedicated to Princess Anna von Hessen, who expressed her gratitude in turn with a gift to Brahms of an original manuscript of Mozart's *Symphony no 40*.

The first movement begins with a unison melody, resolving into a rich, warm cadence. This melody contains all the ingredients for the hugely varied succession of thematic ideas which follow over the course of what is a much more tempestuous journey than the noble introduction would suggest. Analysis reveals that the thematic source material is variously sped up, inverted, divided and mutated, all beyond recognition. Meanwhile, thunderous octaves in the piano, full-throated string quartet sonorities and a near constant tension of double-versus-triple rhythms propel us through a vast, brooding opening movement with scarcely a moment's respite.

The second movement, by contrast, seems to make time stand still in a profoundly beautiful, contemplative *Andante*. A gently rocking interplay of rhythms between the piano and the string quartet ebbs and flows in intensity, at times almost a lullaby, but often reaching heroic proportions, the power of the instrumental sonorities once again expertly controlled in Brahms' hands.

The *Scherzo* returns us to the stormy mood of the first movement, an ominous introduction setting the scene for a fearsome march-like theme. Sometimes the march grows and reaches outwards towards a triumphant, hymnal major-key theme, and at other moments is drawn into itself, the different instruments muttering together in *fugato* imitation (evoking the formal style of a fugue, in which a thematic idea is taken up in turn by successive independent voices). In its most extreme moments, the repeated notes in the piano and

the sawing string motifs threaten to turn the march into a dance of death. The central Trio section is gentler, but unmistakably physical, Brahms still drawing huge richness from the instruments at his disposal.

The last movement is perhaps one of the most overwhelming, impassioned movements in all of chamber music. After a slow, contrapuntal introduction in which the various instruments seem to be searching for one another, the cello and piano introduce an anxious theme over a repeated note. The piano frequently explodes in outbursts of ferocious virtuosity, the quartet at times reaching almost orchestral dynamics in adversarial opposition to its sheer intensity. Brahms deflates the music in the most beguiling episodes in between these recurring eruptions – the music sometimes glimmers with a golden inwardness, and sometimes sinks into moments of utter hopelessness – but with each reappearance of the movement's most forceful music ideas, the tension seems higher and higher. Finally, a coda of breathtaking, fearless energy emerges from string triplet chords, the piano and strings swirling together in a disorientating kaleidoscope, and the piece lurches to its climax.

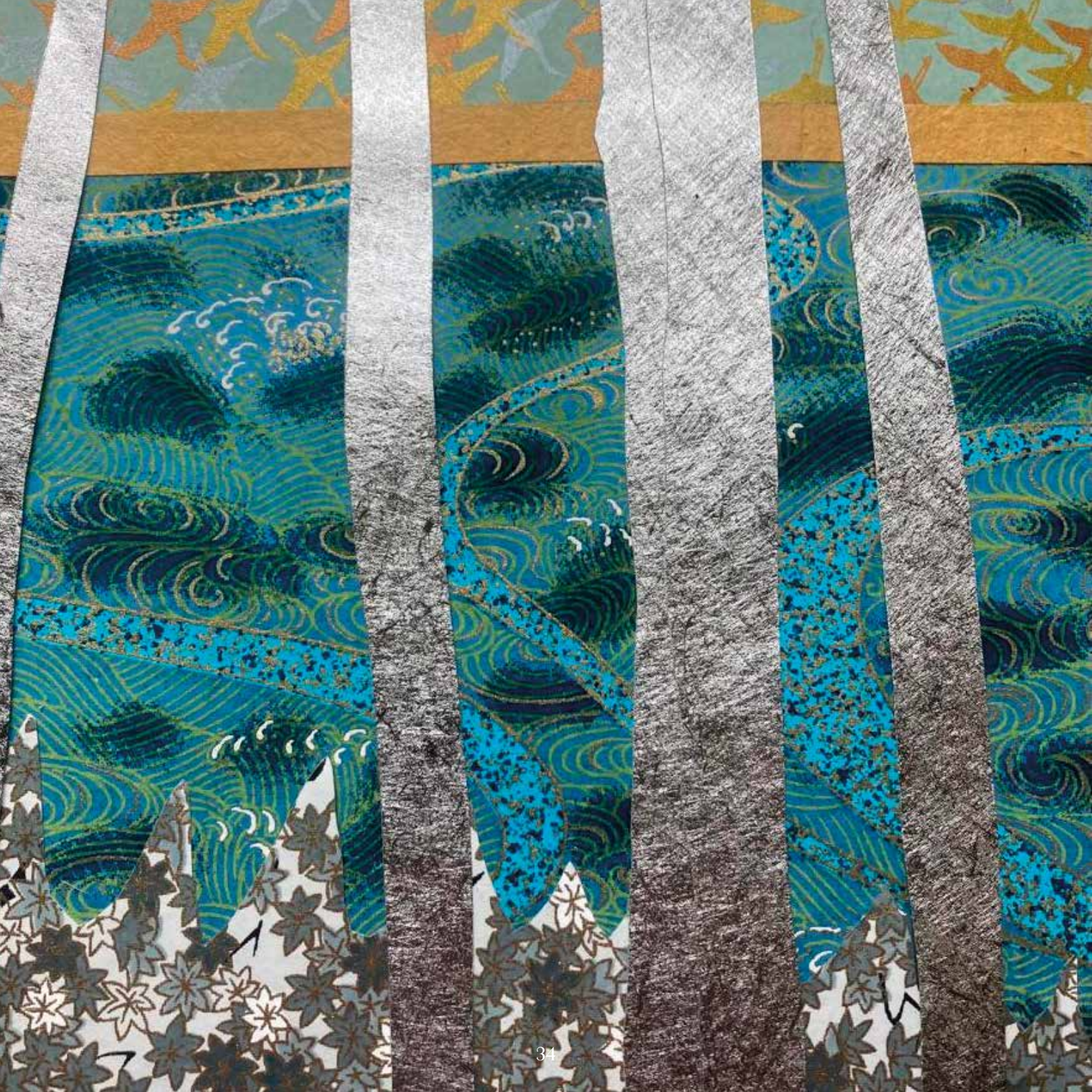
Shostakovich had begun his studies at the Petrograd Conservatoire (now St Petersburg) in 1920 at the age of 13, a prodigious talent as both a composer and pianist. His three years there were difficult, with low basic living standards after the 1917 Revolution taking their toll on his health; his father died in 1922, and Shostakovich himself contracted a form of tuberculosis that required a major operation shortly before his graduation piano recital. His exam programme included Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata*, which he performed with his neck wrapped in bandages, before being sent to a sanatorium in Crimea to recover. Whilst in Crimea he fell for a girl named Tatyana Glivenko, and wrote his *Piano trio no 1 in C minor* whilst there, dedicating it to her.

The *Piano trio* was performed by Shostakovich for his entrance audition to the Moscow Conservatoire in 1924, though he did not take up the place due to his poor health. It was then supposedly performed in a Petrograd cinema, where Shostakovich had a job as an accompanist to silent films in order to support his family.

For all its youthful naivety, the single movement *Piano trio* displays an artistic personality already in bloom, rather than budding. The gloomy first theme with its slimy, chromatic clashes frequently brightens to reveal moments of beautiful resolution. A cartoonish second theme foreshadows the parodic way he conveyed the absurdities of Soviet life in many later works. There is a strong, almost cinematic narrative style, with textures and themes moving on as though cutting to a new scene, including one particularly romantic segment that certainly justifies the piece's dedication to his new girlfriend. The overall strength of the piece lies in its sheer inventiveness and diversity of ideas, whereas the tight formal control of his mature pieces is somewhat lacking; nevertheless, the return to the first theme at the end feels dramatic, and creates a triumphant conclusion.

Frank Bridge began his *Piano quintet in D minor* in 1904, the year after he graduated from the Royal College of Music, where he studied with Charles Villiers Stanford. A young man, busy with performing engagements as a quartet violist and assisting Henry Wood as a conductor, he had not yet found his mature compositional voice, and in fact would not devote himself primarily to composition until after the First World War. In 1905, he left the *Piano quintet* complete, for now, as a four movement piece.

With the 1909 *Phantasy Quartet*, entered into the Cobbett competition, a new possibility for this other piece emerged: the English phantasy structure, honed by seventeenth century English composers like Purcell, offered a way to combine different musical moods and ideas within a coherent, single movement structure. Bridge revisited the *Piano quintet in D minor* in 1912, combining the middle two movements into a single phantasy structure, thereby incorporating elements of both a slow movement and a *scherzo* and creating a shorter, more concise work. Beyond this second movement, Bridge seems preoccupied with the subject of structural unity; a dark opening to the first movement yields a gentler second melody, which recurs in the next two movements; and earlier themes are argued out in the final movement.



Saturday 19th August 6pm

Wonderland

Alice Zawadzki trio | Adventures through Song

In a specially curated programme, this talented and highly original trio will take the audience on a spellbinding, mercurial journey through modern and invented folklore, ancient stories of love, loss and redemption. They explore the subliminal world of ghosts and the nocturnal, in a performance with intimacy at its heart. This is a magical world where the poetry of each song is distilled down to its essence, from Alice's own unique compositions to carefully chosen creations such as Simon Diaz's moonlit psychological

drama, *Tonada de Luna Llena*. Expect soulful Sephardic ballads, or perhaps a Sardinian protest song, but all chamber music at its most luminous and quixotic, from three of the UK's most celebrated artists.

Do feel free to arrive early and picnic in the grounds before the concert begins . . .







Sunday 20th August 2pm

Follow the Rules

St Hilda's, Danby

Bach | Goldberg variations (arr. string trio)

(Followed by tea party in the churchyard)

J.S. Bach, Goldberg variations (arr. string trio)

The title of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* originates in a story recounted by one of Bach's early biographers, Johann Nikolaus Forkel. Forkel recounts how Count Kaiserling, the Russian ambassador to the Dresden court of the Elector of Saxony, frequently stopped on his travels in Bach's town of Leipzig, in northern Saxony. There, the ambassador kept in his employment a young keyboard virtuoso named Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, whose job it was to serenade the count from his antechamber when he suffered from nights of insomnia. Whenever Count Kaiserling was passing through Leipzig, he had Goldberg sent off to Bach for lessons, and on one occasion the count had the idea of commissioning Bach to write some music to be played by Goldberg, "which should be of such a smooth and somewhat lively character that he might be a little cheered up by [it] in his sleepless nights". The result – so the story goes – was the *Goldberg Variations*, for which Bach was said to have received payment of one hundred gold coins presented in a golden goblet.

Forkel's biography was written in 1802 and the veracity of this story has been much disputed: Goldberg was just 14 when the variations were published in 1741, and most of the story's details – the insomniac count, the frequency of the ambassadorial visits, the excessive fee – smack of the fantastical. Furthermore, the dedication in the first edition of the Variations makes no mention of Goldberg or Kaiserling, describing the pieces simply as a "keyboard exercise, consisting of an aria with diverse variations for harpsichord with two manuals. Composed for connoisseurs, for the refreshment of their spirits".

The Theme and Variation format is potentially one of the most banal and formulaic of musical constructions: a short theme with an easily intelligible harmonic structure (perhaps divided into 8 - 16-bar sections) is played, and then a series of variations ensue, each taking this harmonic structure as a grid over which successively more virtuosic variations are played, perhaps culminating in a grand finale or a fugue – and perhaps with one variation taking a slower tempo and

minor key. The theme has to be simple so that the listener can hear what the composer is changing in each variation, and the form is repetitive by its nature, leaning naturally towards the conventional. Even great composers like Haydn and Beethoven occasionally failed to transcend the limitations of this format.

Not so with Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. The set begins and ends with an aria, a profoundly elegant and exquisitely ornamented sarabande whose bass line is taken up and reimaged in thirty variations. The repetition of the aria at the end of the work creates a beautifully symmetrical large-scale structure, within which there is further organisation. The work is divided in two, with a closure in G major at the end of Variation 15 before a new beginning in the grand French Overture that is Variation 16.

Nine strict canons (a form of musical imitation which creates counterpoint – as in the nursery rhyme *Frère Jacques*) are placed every three movements, each one in a larger interval: so Variation 3 is a canon at the unison (the voices enter on the same note, one after the other), Variation 6 is a canon at the second (the second entry is a major second above the first entry), Variation 9 at the third, and so on.

After each canon is a Baroque dance, and then an *arabesque* (a brisk, virtuoso variation), until the pattern is broken in the final variation, a *quodlibet*. A quodlibet combines several different melodies simultaneously, and in this instance Bach uses German folk songs; while most of these songs have since been forgotten and therefore cannot be identified, two of those included in Variation 30 can be named and their words are close to comic doggerel: one is *Ich bin solange nicht bei dir g'west, ruck her, ruck her* (I have so long been away from you, come closer, come closer) and the other is *Kraut und Rüben haben mich vertrieben, hätt mein' Mutter Fleisch gekocht, wär ich länger geblieben* (Cabbage and turnips have driven me away, had my mother cooked meat, I'd have opted to stay).

As with many great musical works, the structure of the Goldberg Variations is in itself the source of both intellectual and emotional satisfaction. After a vast survey of keyboard technique, musical styles and

contrapuntal processes, the circle is completed and we end up back where we started, with the aria. Yet despite the typically Bachian rationality underpinning these Variations, the real source of the work's power is in Bach's endless capacity for invention; his mastery of counterpoint always in service to musical expression; and the daring and freedom with which he toys with the rules of good contrapuntal writing. Perhaps this is best articulated in Variation 25, the longest variation by far, which is a three-part piece in G minor whose wrenching chromaticism and melodic fantasy make it the emotional high point of

the work – in Glenn Gould's words, "a masterstroke of psychology".

Performing the Goldberg Variations on the piano, which has just one manual (keyboard), rather than the two-manual harpsichord for which it was intended, presents numerous technical challenges, particularly in how the hands get in each other's way. The transcription for string Trio creates its own problems, of course, but one interesting positive side is the way the contrapuntal lines of music are separated out, being embodied by individual players rather than all fighting to be heard on one keyboard instrument.





Monday 21st August 7pm

Unstoppably Forward

Brahms	Piano quartet no 1 in G minor op 25*
Ligeti	Trio for violin, horn and piano 'Homage à Brahms'
Brahms	Intermezzo in B-flat minor op 117 no 2

Brahms, Piano quartet no 1 in G minor op 25

- i. *Allegro*
- ii. *Intermezzo: Allegro ma non troppo*
- iii. *Andante con moto*
- iv. *Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto*

Ligeti, Trio for violin, horn & piano 'Homage à Brahms'

- i. *Andantino con tenerezza*
- ii. *Vivacissimo molto ritmico*
- iii. *Alla marcia*
- iv. *Lamento. Adagio*

Brahms, Intermezzo in B flat minor op 117 no 2

Brahms was the son of a double bass player in the Hamburg State Theatre, who taught him violin, alongside his piano and composition lessons. From the age of 13, he earned money playing the piano at theatres, for dances, and, on occasion, in unsavoury taverns filled with prostitutes. In 1848, he made his public debut as a pianist in more salubrious circumstances in Hamburg; but he had a lifelong appreciation for so-called gypsy music, allusions to which abound in his compositions, not least in his *Hungarian dances WoO1*. In 1853, Brahms met the great violinist Joseph Joachim while in Hanover accompanying the Hungarian violin virtuoso Reményi on a concert tour. Joachim, who would later give the premiere of Brahms' *Violin concerto op 77*, was impressed by Brahms' compositions and wrote letters of introduction to Liszt and Schumann on his behalf. Schumann then launched Brahms' career with an article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* entitled *Neue Bahnen* (New Paths), hailing him as a genius. Brahms became extremely close to both Robert Schumann and his wife Clara, for whom he nurtured an unrequited love and provided support after Robert Schumann's early death. Thereafter, Brahms enjoyed a highly successful career in his own lifetime, as both a composer and pianist.

Brahms would go on to update the Classical forms of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven for the Romantic era. But the eclecticism of Brahms' formative musical

experiences perhaps made him particularly well-suited to integrating folk music into the language of Western art music in the second half of the nineteenth century. The memory of his encounters with Hungarian folk music through his early Hungarian concert tour permeates his *Piano quartet in G minor op 25*, which was composed gradually between 1856 and 1861, and whose final movement he entitled *Rondo alla Zingarese* (Gypsy Rondo). The bravura, mystery and exoticism that would have impressed the young Brahms is all here – but unlike in the unhinged virtuosity of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, Brahms keeps his *Piano quartet* within the limits of Germanic classicism, and conventional tonality and form. Though Brahms' ferocious piano writing certainly rivals Liszt's for its thunderous sonorities, a closer precedent for such a combination of classicism and Hungarian folk music might be Haydn's *Piano trio no 39 in G Hob XV/25*, which is nicknamed the "Gypsy Rondo".

The opening movement is thematically rigorous, doggedly exploiting the possibilities for variation that are latent in the main motif: a simple theme first heard in octaves, without any enriching harmony, for solo piano. Even when the shape of the melodic motif is transformed entirely, the four-note signature rhythm betrays the origin of the material. Yet it is not so much the tight musical argument that makes this movement a gripping concert piece, as the searing intensity of its sonorities. In the second thematic area, marked *animato* (faster) the four-note opening theme is compressed into shorter note values, effectively doubling its speed; it becomes an unmistakably Hungarian melody, over a repeated drone in the piano's left hand, paired with the cello. But it is rather the robust thickness of the melody's harmonisation in thirds which creates a sense of freshness in the musical narrative and takes us to Central and Eastern Europe – and not the ingenuity of Brahms' melodic development, which nevertheless drives the movement onwards almost relentlessly.

After the unyielding intensity of the first movement, Brahms gives us an *Intermezzo* in lieu of a *scherzo*. The cello's insistent, repeated notes keep us earthbound and tense until the piano enters in its sparkling upper

register, pulling us skywards. The repeated notes continue into the second theme, however, their sense of menace ebbing and flowing as the piano provides temporary release in its magical arpeggio figures. The movement is a masterclass in the control of stasis and momentum. The central *Trio* section, with its streams of quavers rolling up and down, evokes a world of Mendelssohnian lightness and Puckish caprice before returning to the earth-bound wistfulness of the opening themes. The coda briefly revisits the *Midsummer Night's Dream* world of the *Trio* before vanishing – in a series of ascending, evanescent piano arpeggios – into thin air.

The slow third movement of the work opens with a richly scored Song without Words, full of warmth and yearning – and difficult not to associate with Brahms' unrequited love for Clara Schumann. It achieves a sense of spaciousness by anchoring the slow, sustained melody with a static bass note, known as a 'pedal', or supporting it with heavy, deep, undulating figures in the piano. When the main theme is transferred to the left hand of the piano, each note reverberates like a giant's footsteps. Out of these reverberations emerges a searing heartbeat rhythm, which in turn becomes a skittering drum-like rhythm, preparing for the next major theme: a militaristic fanfare, heard first in the distance, and growing ever louder as the imagined procession approaches. The march-like theme reaches a climax of triumphant proportions, before passing on and allowing for the return of the lyrical first theme (its accompaniment now restive and refigured in triplets). The listener is once again immersed in a world of intense emotionality, and the recollection of love and longing.

The opening of the *Rondo alla Zingarese* – the work's *Finale* – comes as a visceral shock after the third movement's resigned and gentle conclusion. The new three-bar melody, with its accents evoking a peasant dance's foot stamps, and with its blistering virtuosity, has an irresistible, adrenaline-fuelled appeal. The movement's second theme, with scampering piano semiquavers and *pizzicato* strings, provides the piece with a much needed dose of humour, without losing any of the first theme's urgency and momentum. The

movement unfolds in the episodic, varied way that Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* do, each successive idea contrasting yet following on pleasingly from the last – and notably maintaining the unusual three-bar phrase structure throughout the multi-dance form. Just as the hysteria reaches its peak, the piano erupts into a cadenza – cascades of notes descending from the upper reaches of the piano to its bass, evoking the sound of the Hungarian gypsy cimbalom (a string instrument like a zither, sounded by small hammers striking its strings). The movement's headlong momentum seems briefly checked as we digress into a faux-melancholic string interlude, only to regain its speed once more, and collapse with yet another cimbalom inspired piano cadenza. But the movement's pent-up energy quickly reasserts itself, growing steadily faster and faster until it explodes in a frenzied final restatement of the Gypsy Rondo theme – now marked *Molto Presto* – and a heart-stopping coda which ends the work with a resounding 'bang'.

Four years after completing the *Piano quartet no 1* in 1861, Brahms wrote a trio for horn, violin and piano that seems to have been prompted by the death of his mother in 1865. Reflecting on his earliest years, perhaps Brahms remembered how his father had been a professional horn player, and taught Brahms how to play; Brahms took it seriously enough to play first horn in the Detmold orchestra in the late 1850s, though he was a first-study pianist.

Ligeti's *Trio for violin, horn & piano* was composed in 1982 as an *homage* to Brahms, modelled on Brahms' own trio for the same combination. It marked the beginning of a new stylistic chapter for Ligeti, who had continually reinvented his musical language. Having moved on from his Hungarian style, enforced by post-WWII Communist censors, he had experimented in every cutting-edge modernist medium before launching into a kind of postmodern maximalism. This reached its zenith in the 1977 absurdist opera *Le Grand Macabre* that quotes or alludes to music by Verdi, Rossini and Monteverdi, and it is not surprising that having accomplished something so mad and so extreme, he felt he could go no further.

In his *Trio for violin, horn & piano*, Ligeti sets out on a 'third way' that laid the foundations for the *Piano études*, of which the ninth was heard earlier in this festival. During these last decades of Ligeti's life, his earlier modernist experiments in mind-bending rhythm, sophisticated pitch organisation and finding previously unimagined timbres in his instruments are combined with a heartbeat that pulses with Hungarian rhythms. In this Trio, he also seems to contend with the profound losses he had suffered earlier in his life; like Brahms' *Horn trio*, it is a piece that looks backwards, to formative experiences. All of Ligeti's family, Hungarian-Jewish, perished in the Holocaust, except for his mother who miraculously survived Auschwitz.

The first and fourth movements, *Andante con tenerezza* and *Lamento - Adagio* are particularly grief-stricken. In the first movement, the violin and piano provide a haunting, sometimes sinister musical landscape within which the horn player wanders, seeming to evoke the horn calls of a German hunter; as Ligeti wrote, "somewhere inside my head I heard the sound of a horn as if coming from a distant forest in a fairy tale, just as in a poem by Eichendorff". The last movement is a tragic, quiet howl of pain, with tortured dissonances and long, drawn-out notes in the horn that seem to summon every last ounce of air from the player's body. These two movements enclose a dazzlingly diverse *scherzo* and a crazed march. Ligeti described the second movement as "a dance inspired by various kinds of folk music from non-existent peoples, as if Hungary, Rumania and all the Balkan countries lay somewhere between Africa and the Caribbean". The March, on the other hand, rapidly goes awry, like a mechanical toy soldier hobbling onwards as his bolts and limbs fall off.

At the end of his life, Brahms had an autumnal flourish of creativity prompted by hearing the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld play. As well as the late works for clarinet that came out of this, there are several sets of short piano pieces, including the *Three intermezzi op 117* of 1892. There is a gentle, nocturnal atmosphere tinged with deep sadness in the second, *Intermezzo in B flat minor op 117 no 2*. Peals of arpeggios fall like tears, and the solemn chords of its central section in D flat major feel like a prayer.







Tuesday 22nd August 7pm

A Desire to Sleep

Schumann	Violin sonata no 1 in A minor op 105
Boulanger	Three pieces for cello and piano
(Victoria) Kelly	'Sono' for piano trio*
(Clara) Schumann	Romance no 1
Mendelssohn	Lieder Ohne Worte op 62 no 1
(Clara) Schumann	Romance no 2
Brahms	Intermezzo in E flat op 117
(Clara) Schumann	Romance no 3
Brahms	Horn trio in E flat major op 40

Robert Schumann, Violin sonata no 1 in A minor op 105

- i. *Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck*
- ii. *Allegretto*
- iii. *Lebhaft*

Nadia Boulanger, Three pieces for cello and piano

- i. *Modéré*
- ii. *Sans vitesse et à l'aise*
- iii. *Vite et nerveusement rythmé*

Victoria Kelly, 'Sono' for piano trio

Clara Schumann, Romance no 1

Mendelssohn, Lieder Ohne Worte op 62 no 1

Clara Schumann, Romance no 2

Brahms, Intermezzo in E flat op 117

Clara Schumann, Romance no 3

Johannes Brahms, Horn trio in E flat op 40

- i. *Andante*
- ii. *Scherzo*
- iii. *Adagio mesto*
- iv. *Allegro con brio*

In the stories behind many of Schumann's compositions, the same few names appear frequently: first and foremost, his wife Clara, about whom more will be written shortly; Brahms, whose big, early professional break came through the Schumanns; Mendelssohn, who had hired Robert Schumann to teach at the Leipzig Conservatory when he became director there, and remained a close friend of both Robert and Clara; and the violinist Joseph Joachim, who would not only be the dedicatee of both Schumann and Brahms' violin concertos but would frequently advise them on string writing, and who was friends and musical partners with both Clara and Mendelssohn.

This cosy group of brilliant musicians was at the heart of German Romanticism as it emerged in the 1840s

and 50s in music (the literary version was far earlier). The greatness of Beethoven had been a completely new phenomenon, as was the reverence with which his music continued to be played after his death. This next generation of musicians seemed to continue in the serious vein of Beethoven's late works; yes, there was virtuosity, but seemingly in service to the music, rather than the performer; chamber music and symphonies were the focus, rather than theatrical works like opera; and a new, literary dimension was added, not only in the continuation of Schubert's newly elevated *lieder* (German art song) tradition by all these composers, but in the professional activities of Schumann and Mendelssohn in particular (Mendelssohn was editor of the *Neue Musikzeitung* magazine, and Schumann contributed).

Schumann's *Violin sonata no 1 in A minor* was composed in just a few days in September 1851, fuelled by a bad mood – perhaps relating to his rather unsuccessful time as conductor of the orchestra in Düsseldorf. It was performed at the Schumanns' home with Clara on piano and Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, a violinist who had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory under both Mendelssohn and Schumann and who would write the first major biography of Schumann in the years following Schumann's early death in 1856. It was then officially premiered in 1852, this time with Ferdinand David on violin – a renowned virtuoso who had premiered Mendelssohn's *Violin concerto in E minor* in 1845 and who taught at the Leipzig Conservatory as their first violin professor.

Clara, whose opinion on many of Schumann's (and Brahms') works seems to have been recorded for posterity, was pleased by the first two movements, but was not sure about the final third movement. It was only when Joachim played the work in 1853, whilst visiting the Schumanns in the early stages of their close friendship, that the piece "struck the inmost strings of the heart", according to Schumann.

The *Violin sonata no 1 in A minor* is, unusually for Schumann at this time, a work in three movements; however, he sneaks a *Scherzo*-like section into the otherwise halting and introspective middle movement. This follows a turbulent first movement that favours

the darker, lower registers of the violin, and precedes a dramatic, *moto perpetuo* third movement.

Interspersed throughout this programme are the *Three romances for violin and piano op 22* by Clara Schumann. Born Clara Josephine Wieck, she was one of the great pianists of the nineteenth century and an important composer – though she never pursued her compositional gifts to their maximum potential. Engaged to Robert Schumann aged 18 after a long courtship (protested by her father), they married three years later in 1840. Clara was not only a muse for Robert, the pianist for whom most of his music was written, but also a collaborator, offering critique and feedback on early drafts and holding considerable influence over him. After Robert Schumann died, she continued to champion his music, rather than returning to writing her own.

The same could be said for her artistic relationship with Brahms, who turned up at the Schumanns' house in 1853 at the age of 20 and prompted a ringing endorsement from Schumann in the *Neue Musikzeitung* journal (*Neue Bahnen*, 28 October 1853). Brahms continued to send drafts and ideas to Clara throughout his life, valuing her artistic insight. When Robert Schumann was confined to an asylum, Brahms moved in above Clara to help her look after her children. He left following Robert's death in 1856, but they remained close friends, even taking concert tours together. Despite friendly relations between the Schumanns and Brahms, it is clear from Brahms' letters to Clara that he was deeply infatuated with her, and remained so for many years. In 1859, he wrote in a letter to Joachim, "I believe that I do not respect and admire her so much as I love her and am under her spell. Often I must forcibly restrain myself from just quietly putting my arms around her and even – I don't know, it seems so natural that she would not take it ill". Conversely, she describes her affection for Brahms in platonic terms: "like a son".

The same year that Clara Schumann met Brahms, she composed her *Three Romances for violin and piano op 22*, which have been among her most enduringly popular compositions, as well as being some of the last music she wrote. Given her close working relationship with

her husband, it is perhaps unsurprising that she chose to write in some of the same genres as him, and that there should be a close stylistic similarity between the two of them. Robert Schumann's *Three Romances op 94* of 1849, originally for oboe and piano, exist as a clear precedent for Clara Schumann's own pieces: a set of three, characterful and evocative miniatures in ternary (A-B-A) form.

Clara Schumann's *Three Romances* were toured by her and Joseph Joachim to great acclaim, including a review in *The Times* that said, "lush and poignant, they make one regret that Clara's career as a composer became subordinate to her husband's". The first piece sees an achingly tender melody rise out of gentle, rocking piano figuration, with the lilting quality of a lullaby, but quickly becoming more impassioned. A dreamy central section with rising and falling arpeggios leads to a reprise of the main theme, which this time includes a knowing hint at the first violin sonata of Robert Schumann. The second occupies a similar fairytale world to that of Robert Schumann's *Märchenbilder* (Fairy Tales), and we might also think of the folkloristic woodland setting of so many early nineteenth century children's stories. The minor sections carry a sense of sinister foreboding, contrasting with playful birdsong in major-key sections. In the third of the *Romances*, a yearning melody soars over virtuoso piano arpeggios, the two instruments in equal partnership.

Mendelssohn composed eight books of *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words) between 1829 and 1845, each a set of six characterful piano miniatures with, as the genre title suggests, a singable melody at their heart. Though Mendelssohn was himself an astonishing virtuoso pianist, he dedicated the fifth book, published as op 62 in 1844, to Clara Schumann – a sign not only of friendship, but of professional respect. The right-hand melody with ebbing and flowing arpeggios beneath is a trademark texture for these pieces, which were hugely popular among amateur pianists; but there is also a sense of Clara's own melodic style in this particular piece with its yearning quality.

Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) was a towering figure in twentieth century European musical life. She was

an important composer, and the first woman to conduct many of the world's top orchestras, from the BBC Symphony to the Boston Symphony; she conducted world premieres by Copland and Stravinsky. Nevertheless, her reputation has traditionally rested on her teaching, and the fame of many of her illustrious students. From composers such as Elliot Carter, Aaron Copland, Astor Piazzolla and Philip Glass to conductors and instrumentalists such as Daniel Barenboim, Dinu Lipatti and John Eliot Gardiner, she can undoubtedly claim to have influenced a sizeable proportion of the twentieth century's greatest musicians.

Nadia Boulanger's small compositional output is sometimes attributed to the admiration she held for the abilities of her younger sister, composer Lili Boulanger, who died tragically young and left only a few published works behind. The need to focus on teaching (and to move away from composition) may have been rooted primarily in financial matters, however. Nadia Boulanger had enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire at the age of 9, where she came top in numerous subjects. She was 13 when her father died, and felt the need to continue to study hard so that she could provide for herself by taking on pupils. She launched her teaching studio in the family apartment at 36 rue Ballu. Her Wednesday classes, which she continued to the end of her life, were followed by a salon at which her pupils would mingle with guests such as Stravinsky and Fauré.

Fauré had been her main teacher of composition at the Conservatoire, and Boulanger's musical language owes much to his classical phrase structures and luscious harmonies; however, she has more in common with the chromatic, evocative style of Debussy. Boulanger's *Trois pièces* for cello and piano are a case in point. Dreamy piano writing provides a backdrop for sumptuous cello melody in the first piece, and for an ancient, plainsong-like chant in the second. The third is a capricious, fast moving kaleidoscope of contrasting ideas, jaunty dance rhythms giving way to moments of reverie.

Victoria Kelly (b. 1973) is a leading figure in both classical music and film and TV composition in her native New Zealand and beyond. For her, these

two strands of her creative output are separate. She writes: "If you choose to write a piece of music simply because you have a musical idea which occurs to you independently of any project or any associated thing, and you just write it because there is some burning need that you must express yourself and if not you'll explode, that music I consider to be truly my own".

Her piano trio *Sono*, composed in 2000, is one such piece. Inspired by the Portuguese word *sono*, describing the urge to sleep in order to rejoin a dream, it begins with a bold, dramatic gesture from the piano trio. As this fades away, it becomes the subject of a dream in the piano, with one insistent note remaining as a reminder of the real world. She writes, 'Around this note, the dreams wander in chords and gestures, deep breaths and ascending melodies.'

Returning to the world of nineteenth century Germany, Brahms' *Three Intermezzos op 117* are part of an old-age, post-retirement flurry of compositional activity that was precipitated by meeting clarinettist Richard Mühlfeld. Composed in 1892, they nevertheless have a nostalgic quality, perhaps looking back to the 1850s and time spent in the Schumann household. The first of these, a wistful lullaby in E flat, bears a quotation from a then centuries old Scottish ballad, Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament, whose protagonist has been abandoned, babe in arms, by her husband: 'Balow, my babe, lie still and sleep! / It grieves me sore to see thee weep.'

As mentioned in connection with Ligeti's tribute to Brahms earlier, Brahms' *Horn trio* was written in response to the death of his mother in 1865, and draws on his early memories of his father, a professional horn player who also taught Brahms how to play.

By the 1860s, the valve horn had all but superseded the 'natural' horn; it enabled a greater homogeneity between notes and across the instrument's range - the goal of most instrumental developments that were made in the nineteenth century. The natural horn, by contrast, could only play the notes of the harmonic series, and any in-between notes had to be achieved through the use of the horn player's right hand inside the bell of the horn. This see-sawing between the natural horn's veiled but clear sound and its buzzing 'hand-stopped' sounds

meant that adjacent notes could have radically different colours and expressive qualities. It was this antiquated instrument for which Brahms chose to write his *Horn Trio*; harking back to the horn lessons of his childhood and no doubt conjuring many memories of his recently deceased mother.

The horn also has associations with the pastoral thanks to its traditional use in hunting, and the first movement has a bucolic, open-air quality. Occasionally the clouds seem to darken, with stormy piano octaves momentarily interrupting the otherwise gentle contour of the music. The second movement *Scherzo* also references the hunting call, with a main theme

evoking a fanfare and cantering horses. To match the power of the horn, the piano tends towards the heavier techniques in its armoury, with octaves abounding. The lyrical central section allows all three instruments to sing in harmony, and after the return of the opening hunt theme, a third movement follows in the same cantabile fashion. Marked *mesto* (sad), its emotional effect is heightened by the sparse simplicity of its melody; the horn's lack of agility is used as a positive quality, and mirrored in the pared-back writing for violin and piano. The hunting calls and galloping piano figuration of the *Scherzo* return in the finale, a thrilling and heroic conclusion to the piece.





Wednesday 23rd August 2pm

Metamorphosis

St Hedda's, Egton Bridge

Brahms

Clarinet quintet in B minor op 115

Strauss

'Metamorphosen' for string septet

Brahms, Clarinet quintet in B minor op 115

- i. *Allegro*
- ii. *Adagio*
- iii. *Andantino*
- iv. *Con moto*

Strauss, 'Metamorphosen' for string septet

In 1891 Brahms, having vowed to 'retire' from composing the previous year, travelled to an arts festival in Meiningen, where he witnessed performances of Weber's *Clarinet concerto no 1 op 73*, and Mozart's *Clarinet quintet K 581*, by the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. Brahms was enchanted by Mühlfeld's beautiful tone quality, and that year composed his *Trio for Clarinet, cello and piano op 114*, and *Clarinet quintet in B minor op 115*, for him. In 1894, three years later, Brahms invited Mühlfeld (whom he nicknamed Fräulein Klarinette) to visit him in Vienna, and they played through two sonatas for clarinet and piano that would be the last pieces of chamber music that Brahms would complete before his death in 1897.

Brahms was extremely well known already, but he was nevertheless fortunate to have a champion for these late works for clarinet who was as much of a workaholic as Mühlfeld. His concert schedule would be busy by twenty-first century standards, in an age before air travel. It was not unusual for Mühlfeld to perform a concert tour of England and Scotland on his days off, hop on a train overnight and be ready to rehearse again the next morning in Meiningen, for example. Moreover, even when he was not required to play in the orchestra, Hans von Bülow regularly deputised his conducting duties to Mühlfeld. As a result of Mühlfeld's championing of these works, they were hugely influential (not least in a flurry of early twentieth-century works for clarinet by English composers), and have become among Brahms' best loved chamber music.

Of course the *Quintet's* enduring popularity is also thanks to the sublime nature of the music, which is really unlike anything else in Brahms' output in both form and content. The Mozart *Quintet* appears to

have served as a model in many ways; an *Allegro* first movement that, at first, feels like a slow movement; a time-stoppingly beautiful slow movement; and a fourth movement structured as a theme and variations. Where Mozart's *Quintet* is almost concerto-like in its use of the instruments, Brahms weaves the clarinet into the string quartet as a fifth member of the ensemble; but both composers sought to exploit the woody bottom end of the clarinet's range.

The piece begins with an expansive, sweeping first movement. The wistful first theme combines a questioning melodic motif (violins in thirds evoking the gypsy music that Brahms heard on his formative Hungarian tour as a young man) and a serene, spacious answer in the clarinet's rising arpeggios. The angular, rhythmic second theme expands the scope of the music to almost symphonic proportions. Brahms' characteristically inventive use of motivic development is evident on every level, from variations in texture, rhythm and melody to the ability to recast a theme in a completely new emotional colour.

The slow movement is perhaps the strangest of all. Its unbelievably beautiful outer sections feature a poignant duet between the first violin and clarinet, strings muted throughout. The middle section is a series of wild, mysterious gypsy music cadenzas in the clarinet with *recitativo* interjections in the strings.

The third movement begins and ends as a heartwarming chorale, with a *scherzo*-like faster section in the middle. The finale is a rich and sentimental exploration of the theme's potential in a series of variations, but towards the end we once again encounter the gypsy music of Brahms' youth; an achingly nostalgic dance, weaving sad melodic strands between the instruments, leads to a tragic restatement of the first movement's opening theme and a sombre conclusion to the piece.

The enormous arc of Richard Strauss's musical career (he lived 1864-1949) began with the twilight years of the Romantic era, followed by an interlude in which he put forward his own brand of twentieth-century modernism, and concluded with a retrospective later period when he returned to the Romanticism of

his youth. In his grand old age, he wryly commented, 'I have outlived myself. He is most famous as a composer on a grand scale: his operas *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Elektra*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Salome* and his tone poems *Don Juan*, *Ein Heldenleben*, *Eine Alpensinfonie* and *Also sprach Zarathustra* are for extremely large orchestras. His expertise as a conductor is revealed in the complexity of his orchestral textures, with numerous intricate contrapuntal lines combining to create a sweep of orchestral colour. He also had a capacity for refinement, best exhibited in his Lieder with orchestral accompaniment: *Morgen!* from op 27, or the *Four Last Songs* which he wrote just before he died - where a singing line is expertly supported with pianissimo string textures and delicate touches of colour from the harp and woodwind.

In spring of 1944, Strauss was commissioned to write a composition for strings by the Swiss music patron and conductor Paul Sacher, to be performed in Zürich. The commission was actually part of a plan by Karl Böhm and Sacher to smuggle Strauss out of Germany for health reasons - it was hoped that with a Swiss premiere on the cards, Strauss would be given permission from the Nazi government to make the trip. He replied saying he was already working on an *Adagio* for eleven strings. It was not until 1945, however, that work on the piece would continue in earnest, eventually resulting in the piece *Metamorphosen* for 23 strings.

Strauss' tone poem for strings, *Metamorphosen* is deeply bound up with the end of the Second World War. Strauss spent most of the War in his villa at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, near Germany's mountainous border with Austria. He maintained an uneasy, detached complicity with the Nazi regime. Having been given the presidency of the *Reichsmusikkammer* when the Nazis seized power in 1933, he was fired from this post and his two conducting posts in 1935 for choosing to work with Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig on opera *Die schweigsame Frau* (The Silent Woman). Zweig recounts how Strauss felt it necessary to keep his head down, fearing for the safety of his Jewish daughter-in-law and beloved grandchildren.

Metamorphosen was resumed the day after the destruction of the Vienna opera house in March 1945. It was completed in 'short score' (with reduced instruments, as a kind of shorthand) for seven instruments on 31 March, and then expanded to 23 strings on 12 April. The title, which translates to 'changes' or 'transformations', has led to various theories about the piece's meaning. Few believe it is about a musical transformation, but rather the destructive transformation of either Germany, or German culture, through the War. This is supported by the direct quotation from the funeral march of Beethoven's *Symphony no 3 'Eroica'*, and the words 'IN MEMORIAM!' which appear on the score. As Strauss wrote,

The most terrible period of human history is at an end, the twelve year reign of bestiality, ignorance and anti-culture under the greatest criminals, during which Germany's 2,000 years of cultural evolution met its doom.

This quote refutes one theory that the piece is a memorial to Hitler - a theory that has perhaps been supported by the *Eroica* reference, as Beethoven's work had originally been dedicated to another dictator, the emperor Napoleon. It is also worth noting that Hitler killed himself a few weeks *after* Strauss completed the work. In light of recent scholarship, another theory can be discounted: the piece is not about the destruction of Munich; another memorial waltz to Munich was found in the same sketchbook, but its music does not appear in *Metamorphosen*.

The septet version of this piece was discovered in 1990, and an edition was produced in 1994 which combined the reduced forces version with some of the musical ideas that had come to Strauss only when expanding the piece to its full twenty-three part version.

The style of composition employed here is fundamentally a narrative process. Themes appear, they are remembered, woven together, forgotten; listening in this way will reveal the most in the music. Throughout, however, the main theme keeps its reference to Beethoven's funeral march from *Eroica* somewhat hidden; it is only fully revealed in the final coda.



Thursday 24th August 7pm

Curiouser and Curiouser

Prokofiev	Five Melodies op 35b
Bartók	Contrasts*
Kurtág	Hommage à Robert Schumann
Schumann	Piano trio no 3 in G minor op 110

Prokofiev, Five Melodies op 35b

- i. *Andante*
- ii. *Lento, ma non troppo*
- iii. *Animato, ma non allegro*
- iv. *Allegretto leggero e scherzando*
- v. *Andante non troppo*

Bartók, Contrasts

- i. *Verbunkos*
- ii. *Pihenő*
- iii. *Sebes*

Kurtág, Hommage à Robert Schumann

- i. *Merkwürdige Pirouetten des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler. Vivo*
- ii. *E.: Der begrenzte Kreis... Molto semplice, piano e legato*
- iii. *...und wieder zuckt es schmerzlich F. um die Lippen... Feroce, agitato*
- iv. *Felhő valék, már süt a nap... (Töredék-töredék). Calmo, scorrevole*
- v. *In der Nacht. Presto*
- vi. *Abschied (Meister Raro entdeckt Guillaume de Machaut). Adagio, poco andante*

Schumann, Piano trio no 3 in G minor op 110

- i. *Bewegt, doch nicht zu rasch*
- ii. *Ziemlich langsam*
- iii. *Rasch*
- iv. *Kräftig, mit Humor*

A brilliant Russian piano and composition virtuoso, Prokofiev had sought his fortunes in the US whilst Revolution boiled over in Russia and the First World War gripped Europe – joining many other émigrés such as Rachmaninov. Unlucky coincidences meant his American career did not go as planned, and instead of returning home a failure, he settled in Paris in the 1920s, remaining there until he moved permanently to the Soviet Union in 1936. Prokofiev's output was widely played and loved at the time, as it is now, including his symphonies, piano and instrumental sonatas, numerous ballets (including *Romeo and Juliet*), five piano concertos, two violin concerts and much else

besides. However the return to the Soviet Union proved bittersweet; state support for the composer wavered, and he suffered humiliating denouncements. In a cruel irony, he died on the same day as his nemesis, Joseph Stalin, in 1953.

The premiere of Prokofiev's opera *The Love for Three Oranges* was postponed following the death of Campanini, the artistic director and conductor of the Chicago Opera. Desperate to keep his US career going, Prokofiev embarked on a concert tour. He was in California in 1920 when he met the Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Nina Koshetz and composed five vocalises (songs for voice with no words). In Paris four years later, inspired by a brilliant recital by Joseph Szigeti, Prokofiev was contemplating writing some more Songs without Words, this time for violin. His friend Cecilia Hansen, a violinist, pointed out that he need not bother writing any new music, because the five vocalises he had written in 1920 would work very well on violin.

In the end, Prokofiev turned to Paweł Kochański, the violinist with whom he had collaborated on his *Violin concerto no 1*, to help him adapt his five vocalises. The violin version, *Five melodies op 35*, is dedicated to Kochański, except for the second which is dedicated to Hansen and the fifth which is dedicated to Szigeti, in acknowledgement of their inspiration.

That these pieces were originally sung is clear from the lyrical melodies in each, though Prokofiev adds a wide range of violinistic techniques. A sultry waltz is followed by a characterful, Debussy-esque second movement. The third is a sumptuous, passionate piece with a changeable mood and more full-throated piano writing. The fourth returns to the Debussyan character of the second, in a charming *scherzando*. Bittersweet dissonances colour a serene fifth movement.

Another piece that began life with an encounter with Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti was Bartók's 1938 work for clarinet, violin and piano, *Contrasts*. Szigeti had been speaking with the renowned swing-era jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman, and they had decided to commission something from Bartók. The commission came from Goodman; with his superstar status, one

imagines he was probably the wealthiest of the three musicians.

Bartók was one of the most important twentieth-century composers and undoubtedly the greatest Hungarian composer since Liszt. He fused wild Hungarian folk music with twentieth-century modernism to create a language which is savagely beautiful, visceral and eternally contemporary. His pioneering studies of Eastern European folk music attempted to provide a valid framework through which musicians immersed in Western Art Music could understand oral folk traditions.

Where other composers incorporate folk melodies into otherwise Western music to give it a slightly exotic flavour, Bartók's whole style seems to share its essence with folk music. As writer Alex Ross observed about Bartók: "the best way to absorb a culture is to be from it". By age four he could play forty folk songs with one finger at the piano; his father taught at an agricultural school that educated peasants in modern farming methods; and Bartók nursed an almost fanatic rejection of anything urban in his folk sources, seeking music which originated only in the poorest rural communities.

Bartók had already demonstrated his mastery of all three instruments – for example, he had composed five string quartets, 44 violin duos, two violin sonatas, and countless piano works, as well as many orchestral works featuring the clarinet prominently. He felt that the clarinet, violin and piano all had rather different characteristics, however, and when beginning work on his new commission he decided to lean into this clash, giving the Trio the title *Contrasts*.

The piece is a sequence of dances that paints a scene of the Hungarian hussars' recruitment of young peasant lads in the countryside, where they were convinced, through persuasion and a great deal of alcohol, to join up. The first movement is a *Verbunkos*, a dance performed by recruiters for the Hungarian hussars to lure young potential soldiers; the last is a *Sebes*, a fast improvised dance that the young recruits would execute to celebrate joining the army. The second movement is a *Pihenő*, which refers to the 'breather' given to dancers during a folk music performance, when a slower piece of

music would be performed as they caught their breath between faster numbers. Gnashing, gnarled dissonances give each of these folk dances the earthy quality of the unwashed soldiers and unsuspecting peasant boys they depict, achieved with the most ingenious of modernist compositional means. The third movement requires the violinist to play a spare violin, tuned into the demonic tritones required for this diabolic dance.

A living heir to Bartók's musical legacy, composer and pianist György Kurtág (b. 1926) was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in what is now Romania, to Hungarian-Jewish parents. In 1946 he moved to Budapest and claimed his Hungarian citizenship in 1948. Whilst there, he met György Ligeti, who became a close friend, as well as his wife, Marta (the couple could still be seen playing piano duets in their old age until Marta's death in 2019). Kurtág spent much of his adult life in Budapest, except for a formative two year period in 1957-1958 in Paris, during the Hungarian Uprising against the USSR, when he studied with Messiaen and Milhaud. From the 90s onwards, his increasing international fame led him to live abroad more and more (for example, he was composer in residence with the Berlin Philharmonic from 1993-1995).

Kurtág is a composer who works in miniature, focusing on very short musical ideas and perfecting them over a long period of time, rather than developing them into large musical structures. For this reason, he has often attracted comparisons to Webern. His song cycle *Kafka-Fragments*, for example, consists of 40 short movements, each lasting not much more than a minute.

Kurtág composed many works dedicated to other musicians and composers – *Homage to Tchaikovsky*, *Hommage à Nancy Sinatra*, and so on – as well as making numerous transcriptions of other composers' music (notably, Bach, which he often played in four-hands arrangements at the piano with Marta). His *Hommage à Robert Schumann* is based on *Märchenerzählungen*, Schumann's trio for clarinet, viola and piano, and is in six short movements, with various literary subtitles.

The first movement *Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler's Curious Piroettes*, refers to E T A Hoffmann's alter ego Johannes Kreisler (a fictional, grumpy composer).

'Eusebius: the limited circle is pure' is the second movement, referring to Schumann's introverted alter ego; whereas '...and again it jerks Florestan painfully around the lips' is a reference to Schumann's extroverted alter ego. The fourth movement's title 'I was a cloud, the sun is shining' is in Hungarian, a quote from poet Attila József. The fifth is a Schumannesque *presto* entitled 'In the night'. The sixth and final movement, longer than the preceding five movements combined, describes the most level-headed of Schumann's three alter egos, Meister Raro, encountering the fourteenth-century composer-poet Guillaume de Machaut. A bizarre, ritualised finale fades to nothing, before the clarinettist plays a very quiet thud on a bass drum.

Schumann's first two piano trios were composed together in 1847, a pair of highly contrasted works that date from a turbulent time. Robert and Clara Schumann's son Emil had died at the age of 16 months, along with the sudden deaths of both Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny, who were good friends of the couple. Around the same period, Schumann had become increasingly preoccupied with the music of Bach, with many of his works making use of canons (an imitative type of counterpoint, where one voice exactly copies another). Though the D minor *Piano Trio no 1* is a stormy work with little in common with the F major *Piano Trio no 2*, both works create a lively,

complex dialogue between the instruments throughout, with particular use of counterpoint in each trio's slow movements, the three voices intertwining beautifully.

In 1851, having just finished his *Violin sonata no 1 in A minor*, Schumann began work on a third piano trio, unusually keeping his work private from Clara Schumann who knew only that it was in G minor. When she was at last able to read it through in rehearsal at the Schumanns' home, she wrote, 'It is original, and increasingly passionate, especially the *scherzo*, which carries one along with it into the wildest depths.'

The least well known of Schumann's piano trios, the *Piano trio no 3 in G minor* is dedicated to Danish composer Niels Gade, rated highly by Schumann and Mendelssohn, and who had assisted Mendelssohn at both the Leipzig Conservatory and at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. The first movement contrasts a tempestuous first theme and a sunnier second theme whilst exploring all the contrapuntal availabilities available to him in the ensemble. The second movement is a tender duet between the two string instruments that rises to a peak of intensity and then fades away. The third movement *scherzo* is a finely judged juxtaposition of tense passages over static 'pedal' harmonies and warm, lyrical sections. A heroic final movement ties together echoes of the themes heard over the preceding three movements.







Friday 25th August 7pm

Which Dreamed It?

St Mary's, Lavingham

Schumann	Adagio and Allegro op 70 for horn and piano
Debussy	Première Rhapsody for clarinet and piano
Schumann	Märchenerzählungen op 132*
Debussy	Le Cathédral Egloutie
Adès	Four Berceuses from 'The Exterminating Angel'
Simpson	Nachtstück
Messiaen	Appel Interstellaire for solo horn

Schumann, Adagio and Allegro op 70 for horn & piano

Debussy, Première Rhapsody for clarinet & piano

Schumann, Märchenerzählungen op 132

- i. Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell
- ii. Lebhaft und sehr markiert
- iii. Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck
- iv. Lebhaft, sehr markiert

Debussy, Le Cathédral Egloutie

Adès, Four Berceuses from 'The Exterminating Angel'

Simpson, Nachtstück

Messiaen, Appel Interstellaire for solo horn

Schumann was a central figure in German Romanticism, and one of the most unique voices in all of music. When composing he often attributed sections or movements of pieces to one of his two literary alter egos, signing the score with the names of either extroverted Florestan or introverted Eusebius, suggesting a conflicted inner life. He had an obsessive strand to his personality, which some have seen as a forewarning of the mental illness that caused him to spend the last two years of his life in an asylum, after a failed suicide attempt in the Rhine river. Until his thirtieth year he composed only piano music, and was fixated on becoming a piano virtuoso until he injured himself using a device he had built to stretch his fingers. Thereafter he composed in waves of enthusiasm for particular genres: in 1840, possibly overcome with emotion at finally being allowed to marry the young pianist and composer Clara Wieck, he composed almost exclusively songs, writing 138 of them. The following year, he focused on orchestral music, and in 1842 he composed a rich body of chamber works.

In 1849, living in Dresden with their five young children (their fourth of six to date, Emil, had died in infancy), Schumann composed prolifically with a domestic sheet music market in mind. This included

several books of pieces for children, but also works for instruments that were increasingly popular among domestic practitioners, of which there were many. That year he wrote his *Three romances for oboe and piano*, his *5 Stücke im Volkston* for cello and piano, *Fantasiestücke* for clarinet and piano and his *Adagio and Allegro* for horn and piano.

He had been particularly impressed by the recent technical innovations in the French horn, demonstrated by the principal horn of the Dresden orchestra, Julius Schlitterlau; it was now much more possible to move easily between semitones thanks to newfangled valves and improved manufacturing techniques. The *Adagio and Allegro* was originally described as a *Romanze*, and begins with one of his most beguiling, yearning melodies, before a galloping *Allegro*.

Towards the end of his life, Schumann's compositional output dwindled as his bouts of mental illness became more frequent. His close circle, comprising his wife Clara and good friends Brahms and violinist Joseph Joachim, provided him with some creative energy. They regularly played chamber music at the Schumanns' home, and a raft of pieces featuring violin (Joachim) and piano (Clara) emerged in 1851. By 1853, however, Schumann was severely unwell. One of the few pieces he produced at this time was *Märchenerzählungen*, op 132 (*Fairy Tale Narrations*), modelled on the same combination of instruments as Mozart's *Kegelstatt* trio: clarinet, viola and piano.

This fairytale-themed work follows on from his *Märchenbilder (Fairytale)* op 113 for piano and viola two years earlier, and is part of a surge of interest in folklorism and fairytales in Germany that was bound up with rising German nationalism. The Brothers Grimm published their collections between 1812-1858, and in *Märchenerzählungen* Schumann evokes something of their fantastical world, full of grotesqueries, magic and romance. Perhaps this make-believe realm also appealed to Schumann in the context of his struggles with depression. The third movement, *Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck* (Restful tempo, with tender expression) is a particularly ravishing love duet between the clarinet and viola,

melodic lines intertwining over the piano's undulating accompaniment.

Debussy's harmonic language has been one of music's most influential innovations, and is instantly recognisable. Paradoxically for music that is incredibly precisely-notated, chords are seemingly chosen for their colour (or, as Debussy himself declared, for no other motivation than *mon plaisir*), and many of his pieces create an atmosphere of vagueness of suggestion. This has resulted in anachronistic parallels being drawn with the French Impressionist school of painting. In fact, Debussy's circle of friends included a host of literary and artistic figures, such as Rodin, Monet, Paul Verlaine, Marcel Proust and Stéphane Mallarmé, and it was particularly the symbolist poetry of Mallarmé which provided artistic inspiration. Mallarmé experimented with free verse, and created delicately evocative and subtly intertextual poetry for which Debussy found perfect metaphor in his music.

This extraordinary roster of artists, writers and composers mingled in the salons of Paris' wealthy upper classes, at which Debussy was a regular feature. Seated at the piano in a perfumed, smoke-filled drawing room, he would play his piano compositions. Half a century earlier, Chopin had done the same, and it is perhaps no coincidence that some of Debussy's most evocative piano miniatures are in the genre that Chopin revived through his own set of *24 Préludes*.

Debussy's preludes are, like Chopin's, preludes to nothing; this gives them an allusive power, as though they are implying a great deal whilst saying little. Some are perfectly formed jewels, and others are bold modernist statements. *La cathédrale engloutie* is the tenth of his preludes. It is based on the Legend of Ys, a Breton myth about an island called Ys that rises out of the sea on clear mornings; mainlanders were said to be able to hear bells chiming, monks singing and an organ playing.

A year earlier, in 1909, Debussy was appointed to the advisory board of the Paris Conservatoire by Gabriel Fauré, and had to compose an examination test piece for the clarinetists at the conservatoire. The *Première rhapsodie* wears its virtuosic credentials lightly, but the combination of impossibly long phrases, awkward key

signatures and, in the final section, sheer brilliance make it a worthy test. Debussy described the work as "one of the most pleasing pieces I have ever written", and lavished a sumptuous orchestration on the piano part to create a version for clarinet and orchestra in 1911.

Now arguably Britain's leading composer, as well as an accomplished performer as a pianist and conductor of some of the world's top orchestras, Thomas Adès' works are played throughout the world by the most famous musicians. When Simon Rattle took over at the Berlin Philharmonic, he programmed Adès' *Asyla* for his first concert, remarking, "however head-scratching, stomach-churningly difficult the music is, the truth is that the better you play it, and the closer you come to his idiosyncratic vision, the more wonderful it sounds". The notoriously hard-to-please critic Andrew Porter could scarcely contain himself in his liner notes to an early Adès disc, feeling the need to explain himself thus: "If a hoary critic seems to be writing in the vein of a modern publicist, it's because he has again and again been excited by the way that in work after work young Adès, like Purcell and Britten, without repeating himself, has freshly touched and revitalised mainsprings of modern music".

Adès' opera *The Exterminating Angel* was premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 2016, and came to London's Royal Opera House the following year. An operatic adaptation of a 1962 Mexican surrealist film by Luis Buñuel, it depicts the wealthy guests of an opulent dinner party who find themselves mysteriously unable to leave when the meal is over. In 2018 Adès arranged three segments of the opera for the viola and piano, commissioned by British violist Lawrence Power, and entitled *Four Berceuses from The Exterminating Angel*. These are based on duets sung between the two lovers Beatriz and Eduardo, then incorporating an adaptation of Silvia's *berceuse macabre* in which she holds a dead lamb, rocking it to sleep and believing it to be her son.

Mark Simpson is another leading light in British – and indeed international – classical music. Having won both the BBC Young Musician of the Year and BBC Proms Young Composer of the Year competition in 2006, he has had a dual career performing as soloist and chamber

musician whilst composing for many of the world's top musicians. Like Adès' *Four Berceuses*, Simpson's *Nachtstück* for horn and piano was written with a specific performer in mind (and who we will hear it performed by): Ben Goldscheider. Ben won the brass category of the BBC Young Musician of the Year, ten years after Simpson had been overall winner. Simpson writes that the 'night' imagined in his *Nachtstück* is a time of "darkness and foreboding with a nervous energy that could break out into moments of optimism or even despair", and calls to mind the sometimes disturbing nocturnal pieces written by Schubert, Schumann and, later, Henze.

One of the most important French composers of the twentieth century, Olivier Messiaen updated the colouristic language of Debussy for a modernist era, fusing an obsession with birdsong (which he could transcribe accurately), symmetry (many of his melodic phrases are palindromic), and modality (he wrote exhaustive treatises on the scales and modes used in his music) with a deep affinity with Indian classical music and Javanese Gamelan. Famously synaesthetic, he experienced colours when he heard music and was capable of vivid descriptions of them: "blue-violet rocks, speckled with little grey cubes, cobalt blue, deep Prussian blue, highlighted by a bit of violet-purple, gold, red, ruby, and stars of mauve, black and white. Blue-violet is dominant". The metaphorical colour of his music is an essential, structural element, rather than being a decorative harmonic effect. Underpinning all this is a profound yet jubilant dedication to the Catholic faith, the source of inspiration for everything he ever composed. However Messiaen's music was also inspired by other cultures, from the mysticism and mathematics of ancient Greek and Hindu music, to the classical music of Japan and Indonesia.

Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles...* (From the canyons to the stars...) was commissioned in 1971 to celebrate the bicentenary of the US Declaration of Independence in 1976. The music's vast proportions – four soloists, a huge orchestra, twelve movements and mammoth length of nearly 100 minutes – as well as its musical material were inspired by a visit Messiaen undertook in 1972 to Utah and Arizona. The Mars-like rock formations

left Messiaen with a deep sense of awe – a feeling that is also central to his Catholicism – and he transcribed the birdsong he heard in Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks and Zion Park into his notebooks, along with the words 'immense solitude'.

The *Appel Interstellaire* (Interstellar call) begins the second section of the three-part, twelve-movement piece, echoing the very first movement which opens with a solo horn. This time, the horn is alone, without answering woodwind and piano, and Messiaen employs every technique available – a huge rainbow of colours, and an array of articulations, dynamics and registers. In the score, Messiaen quotes the Bible, from Psalms ("He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and gives to all of them their names"); and Job ("O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place"). Messiaen succeeds in conveying much of his experiences of the desert landscapes in his music; the sense of human insignificance, and the awesome majesty and emptiness of nature.







Saturday 26th August 2pm

Waking

Schubert		Piano quintet in A major D667 (Trout)*
Schubert		Piano trio no 1 in B flat major D898

Schubert, Piano quintet in A D667 'Trout'

- i. *Allegro vivace*
- ii. *Andante*
- iii. *Scherzo*
- iv. *Andantino - Allegretto*
- v. *Allegro giusto*

Schubert, Piano trio in B flat D898

- i. *Allegro*
- ii. *Andante*
- iii. *Scherzo*
- iv. *Rondo*

The popular image of Schubert is one characterised simultaneously by a Romantic inwardness and a cheerfully simple domesticity. He grew up playing viola in a family string quartet, and his songs were performed informally amongst a circle of friends at evenings devoted to Schubert's compositions, known as *Schubertiades*. Schubert was relatively unusual in that he earned most of his income directly from publishing his compositions – Schubert had no patrons on a scale of Beethoven's, nor did he have any full time church employment like Bach. With such a rich history of amateur music-making in his own family home and an extraordinary fluency with melody, it is no wonder that Schubert proved commercially successful in the genres most suited to domestic music making, in works that could be performed by amateurs.

A cosy domestic performance of Hummel's *Septet*, in the composer's reduced arrangement for five players, gave Schubert the occasion to write his *Piano quintet in A* in 1819, at the age of 22. Hummel was a celebrated composer, a former child prodigy who had been spotted by Mozart aged 8 and taught and housed by him for two years. Hummel was also one of the great piano virtuosos of the day; his own piano concertos are fiendishly difficult. The scoring was unusual, removing one of the violins from a string quartet and replacing it with a double bass, but it freed up the pianist from constantly having to balance the ensemble by playing chords and bass lines. One imagines that Hummel made use of this freedom to give his pianist wave after wave

of showy runs and arpeggios. Schubert exploited this in his own very different way; with the cello and double bass occupying the bass role, he allowed the pianist to explore the high reaches of the instrument, with both hands playing a melody one octave apart from each other, resulting in a distinctive instrumental colour that gives the *Piano quintet in A* its own particular sound world.

The recipient of this quintet (it was only published after Schubert's death) was a wealthy amateur cellist called Sylvester Paumgartner, who suggested that Schubert include some variations on one of his songs. The song in question was *Die Forelle*, D 550 (*The Trout*), a song Schubert had composed two years earlier to a text by the confusingly similarly named Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart. This was a poem warning young women (trout) not to be caught by men (fishermen), but Schubert removed Schubart's moralising last verse, so that it essentially became a song about fishing.

This theme and variations on the *Die Forelle* melody occupies the fourth of the piece's five movements. A bright and sincere, conversational slow second movement follows the excitement of the first, before a vigorous scherzo; a theme and variations then follows whose piano figurations glisten, like the light catching a fish's scales; and a vigorous finale. As an early piece in Schubert's output, it contains more unaltered repetition than in his later works, but many of Schubert's mature hallmarks are in evidence. He is always in control of tension and release, holding a bass note for just long enough to build a sense of expectation before allowing the music to flow forward. Excitable arpeggios and natural sounding, fluent melodic lines are subtly manipulated so that we enter surprising harmonic realms, slightly unsure of how we arrived there. The overriding character of the work is one of wholesome cheerfulness, supposedly inspired by a pleasant summer in the Austrian Alps.

In 1827, the year before he died, Schubert was working on his heart-wrenchingly bleak song cycle *Die Winterreise*. Simultaneously, perhaps knowing the bafflement this work was likely to produce, he began work on his *Piano trio in B flat*, his first essay in that

genre and a probable hit with the publishers. It was performed at one of Schubert's *Schubertiades*, a typical domestic setting for such music. Robert Schumann later remarked of it, "One glance at Schubert's *Trio* and the troubles of our human existence disappear and all the world is fresh and bright again".

The first movement's lyricism and jolly, Viennese rhythms do, as Schumann suggests, create a certain freshness, and offer a dose of clear mountain air; there is a galloping feel to the first theme that evokes 'hunt' music, while the tender second theme over rolling triplets suggests a gentle route through a changing landscape. Schubert makes use of many of the same extraordinary harmonic deftness that characterise his late piano works and symphonies, changing key with astonishing frequency in a way that

seems to be following a thread, rather than imposing large-scale structure. One imagines an amateur group might find themselves playing the wrong sharps and flats with great regularity, and this harmonic adventurousness gives the music a truly epic quality, transcending the intimate domesticity of its intended performance scenario.

The second movement is a serene lullaby, the melody passed around the instruments in imitative counterpoint. A central, minor-key section infuses the music with some Hungarian bravura. The *Scherzo* is a delicate, witty moment with a graceful, waltzing second section. Its first four bars secretly reference the *Trout quintet's Scherzo*. A charming theme and variations concludes the trio, including a sparkling, mischievous *Polonaise* and strange, dreamy episodes of *tremolo* playing.



Musicians

It is a great joy to welcome back so many fine artists year after year, now firm friends as well as colleagues, which I think translates to the atmosphere of the festival. Many take up residency for the entire fortnight and we're incredibly grateful for their generous commitment. One of the main thrills for us is the process of forming fresh groups for the repertoire, shaping each concert in a personal and collaborative fashion. Important too that we nurture and include young, emerging artists also - and we're thrilled to welcome Nikita Lukinov who will open the festival this year, as well as New Zealand cellist Jack Moyer, generously supported by the Royal Overseas League as part of an award. We all look forward to taking you on a fantastical journey! . . .



Alena Baeva
violin

Described as 'a magnetic presence' (New York Classical Review), Alena Baeva is considered one of the most exciting, versatile, and alluring violinists on the world stage today. She enjoys strong musical partnerships with many of the world's leading conductors and international orchestras in repertoire which spans over 50 concerti. Alena's regular sonata partner is the celebrated Ukrainian pianist Vadym Kholodenko, with whom she has established a dedicated collaboration for more than a decade.
www.alena-baeva.com



Katya Apekisheva
piano

Katya made her stage debut in Moscow aged 12 and has performed concertos with many international orchestras including the LPO and London Symphony Orchestra. An acclaimed recording artist, Katya frequently performs throughout the world as a renowned collaborative chamber musician, most notably the highly successful duo partnership with pianist Charles Owen with whom Katya set up the London Piano Festival in 2016. Her critically praised recordings have received numerous awards, including a Classical Brit.
www.katyaapekisheva.com



Benjamin Baker
violin

New Zealand virtuoso Benjamin studied in the UK and has developed a reputation as a consummate artist, appearing in festivals throughout Europe, Australia, USA, China, Argentina and New Zealand where he founded the 'At The World's Edge' Festival. Solo recordings include collaborations with the BBC Concert, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, as well as releases on Delphian Records with his long-standing duo partner Daniel Lebhardt. Ben recently toured the USA and performs on a 1694 Grancino violin on generous loan.
www.benbakerviolin.co.uk



Sascha Bota
viola

Sascha was born in Timisoara in a family of musicians. Playing both modern and baroque viola, his career as a chamber musician, soloist and orchestral player has taken him all around the world. He has recently relocated to London after spending 5 years in Sydney as a member of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Sascha is violist in the renowned Navarra String Quartet who have recently performed at the BBC Proms, Sydney Opera House, the Concertgebouw and Berlin's Konzerthaus.
www.navarra.co.uk



Christian Chamorel
piano

Known for his refined musicianship and limpid technique, Christian has toured throughout the US, Canada, Europe and the Far East. As a soloist and recording artist, his appearances have consistently reaped high critical praise, whilst collaborating with many notable musicians including baritone Benjamin Appl and longstanding duo-partner violinist Rachel Kolly. Christian is the founding member and artistic director of the 'Mont Musical', a Lied and chamber music festival in Le-Mont-sur-Lausanne.
www.christian-chamorel.ch



Meghan Cassidy
viola

No stranger to this festival, Meghan has appeared as a successful chamber musician all over Europe and the UK, appearing as Guest Principal Viola with many prime orchestras such as the London Mozart Players, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Meghan was a former member of the Solstice Quartet and founded the successful and fast growing Marylebone Music Festival, now in its sixth year.
www.marylebonemusicfestival.com



Scott Dickinson
viola

Born in Glasgow, Scott studied in Manchester, London and Salzburg where he won the Mozarteum competition. For five years he was member of the Leopold String Trio and subsequently appeared in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Vienna's Musikverein and Wigmore Hall. Scott has held the position of Principal Viola with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra since 2002, as well as appearing with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and World Orchestra for Peace.



Rebecca Gilliver
cello

Award-winning Principal Cellist of the London Symphony Orchestra amongst others, Rebecca has also performed as recitalist in venues such as Carnegie Hall and London's Wigmore Hall. A frequent guest of the Nash Ensemble, Rebecca is a regular participant at IMS Prussia Cove where she fulfils her love of chamber music coaching which she continues at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Rebecca lives in London with her husband and two dogs.



Bruno Heinen
piano

Bruno Heinen was awarded a PhD from the RNCM and has since gone on to release nine albums and tour extensively throughout Europe, Canada, US and the Far East. He started playing piano at the age of 4 and developed his unique style through studying diverse artists from Ellington to Ligeti, finding his true metier as an improvising pianist, composer and educator. He currently holds a Professorship at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music.

www.brunoheinen.com



Ben Goldscheider
French horn

The young virtuoso Ben Goldscheider has already appeared at many major concert venues across Europe, including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Musikverein Vienne, the Elbphilharmonie and Koln Philharmonie. He has appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, at BBC Proms (with the CBSO) and with the Philharmonia Orchestra with whom he's recorded a disc of Arnold, Schoenberg and Gipsy conducted by Lee Reynolds. His most recent release is *'Legacy: A Tribute to Dennis Brain'*.
www.bengoldscheider.com



Matthew Hunt
clarinet

One of Europe's leading clarinetists, Matthew is well known for his vocal quality and distinctive sound, appearing with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Guest Principal with the Concertgebouw and Solo Clarinetist of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Bremen. A frequent collaborator at many international festivals, he records for Chandos with the hugely renowned Orsino Ensemble. Matthew is also Professor of Chamber Music at Folkwang Universität der Künste in Essen.
www.matthewhuntclarinet.com



Vadym Kholodenko
piano

Gold Medallist of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Vadym's distinguished pianism, vast repertoire and profound artistic gifts have led to invitations from many of the world's finest orchestras and halls throughout Europe and North America. Recently described as possessing an 'iron-clad technique, capable of moments of crystalline delicacy' (Guardian), Vadym is also a thoughtful and committed chamber musician, most notably with violinist Alena Baeva with whom he has made numerous recordings. www.vadymkholodenko.com



Daniel Lebhardt
piano

Born in Hungary, Daniel studied at the Liszt Academy and then London's Royal Academy of Music. After early successes he was invited to record music by Bartók for Decca and has since performed concertos with the Hallé Orchestra and further appearances at the Barbican and Symphony Hall. As a committed chamber musician Daniel regularly collaborates with violinist Benjamin Baker with whom he frequently broadcasts and records. Recent highlights include solo performances at the Royal Festival Hall. www.daniel-lebhardt.com



Rachel Kolly
violin

Making her concerto debut aged just 12, the Swiss virtuoso Rachel Kolly is renowned for her fire, temperament and fine musicianship. She began her recording career with Warner Classics and in 2020 released the Bach Partitas to huge acclaim. Rachel has also enjoyed a long-standing collaboration with fellow Swiss pianist Christian Chamorel and their discography has been critically praised for their passionate and committed interpretations. Rachel plays on a magnificent Stradivarius violin made in 1732. www.rachelkolly.com



Nikita Lukinov
piano

Nikita is one of the most exciting pianists of his generation, making his concerto debut aged just 14 with Chopin's piano concerto no 1. Earlier this year Nikita made his Usher Hall debut in Edinburgh having performed throughout much of Europe, including at the prestigious Verbier Festival. Nikita is also the youngest member of senior staff to be appointed at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he was awarded First-Class Honours as part of his three diplomas. www.lukinoff.com



Siret Lust
double bass

A passionate chamber musician, London-based Siret was born in Tallinn, Estonia before taking further education at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. During this time, she performed with the European Union Youth Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester which then led to major international tours with many of the world's finest ensembles. Siret recently returned to her homeland to perform the Koussevitzky and Vanhal bass concertos with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra.



Misha Mullov-Abbado
double bass

Award-winning jazz bass player, composer and arranger, Misha combines great imagination with raw talent and a clear vision. He performs regularly all over the UK and around the world, including venues such as Ronnie Scott's and the Royal Albert Hall, collaborating with great artists from Viktoria Mullova to Alice Zawadzki. A prolific composer and arranger, his works include a Radio 3 commission for a cello concerto, premiered at London's Southbank Centre by Matthew Barley and the BBC Concert Orchestra.
www.mishamullovabbado.com



Jack Moyer
cello

Jack is from Wellington, New Zealand. As a talented chamber musician, Jack has toured with Chamber Music New Zealand and was part of the winning group of the 2020 National Chamber Music Contest. Jack has played Principal with various youth orchestras and has also appeared in the At The World's Edge Festival and through this has been awarded the ROSL Pettman Scholarship. This scholarship has allowed Jack to travel to the UK for lessons, masterclasses, and festival appearances . . .



Alice Neary
cello

Alice's versatility has led to a hugely varied career, giving recitals and concertos abroad and at home in venues such as Wigmore and Bridgewater halls. Chamber music remains key to her musical activities and as well as collaborating with the Nash Ensemble, she was a longstanding member of the Gould Piano Trio with whom she made numerous recordings and broadcasts. Alice is also Principal Cellist with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.



Emma Parker
violin

A graduate from the Royal Academy of Music, Emma has forged a hugely successful career in chamber music, firstly with the award-winning Badke Quartet and subsequently the Albion Quartet, with whom she made a number of acclaimed discs for Signum Records. Between 2014-2019 Emma was Principal Second Violin of the Manchester Camerata, and is also a founder member of the Oculi Ensemble, performing regularly at Wigmore Hall, Snape Maltings, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Louvre, Paris.



Frances Preston
double bass

Frances grew up surrounded by the double bass, her mother Caroline Emery being one of the founding members of the Mini Bass project and Professor at the Royal College of Music. She began playing aged just 5 and went on to study at the renowned Yehudi Menuhin School and the RCM Junior Department where she now teaches as an orchestral tutor. As a freelance musician, Frances is Principal Bassist for Orpheus Sinfonia and performs regularly with the London Contemporary Orchestra.



Tim Posner
cello

Tim was the first British prize-winner at the International Karl Davidov Competition. Since that early success, he has performed as soloist with orchestras including the NDR Radiophilharmonie, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Mozart Players. He also collaborates with a wide variety of ensembles and in 2010 founded The Teyber Trio alongside violinist Tim Crawford and violist Timothy Ridout, with whom he continues to perform internationally. He has also just been made Principal Cellist of Amsterdam Sinfonietta.
www.timposner.com



Victoria Sayles
violin

Chamber musician, soloist, orchestral leader, plus a former Director of Music, Victoria enjoys a wonderfully varied career which has taken her to various continents including Australia and Scandinavia where she currently leads the Royal Swedish Opera. A passionate communicator, Victoria also holds a Masters Degree in Education. Chamber music remains at the heart of Victoria's artistry and her vivacious, collaborative style has been a welcome fixture at this festival for many years.



Charlotte Scott
violin

Renowned for her generous tone and consummate artistry, Charlotte has built upon a hugely respected reputation as chamber musician, soloist and Concertmaster of many renowned orchestras. Her Oculi Ensemble has appeared at LSO St Luke's and the Concertgebouw, releasing their debut recording of Strauss to great acclaim. Charlotte also gives performance classes at London's Royal Academy of Music, and lives in Sussex with her violist husband Jon, their two children and a precious Stradivarius.
www.charlottescott.uk



Jamie Walton
cello

Jamie lives in the North York Moors National Park, where he fulfils his passion for running festivals, building recording studios and bringing world class musicians to the area. He has recorded 13 concertos with the Philharmonia and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as well as much of the sonata repertoire, and the complete works for cello by Britten. Jamie has performed all over the world but to save on travel, he now brings like-minded artists to North Yorkshire.

www.jamiewalton.com



Simone van der Giessen
viola

Simone was born in Amsterdam but studied violin and viola at the RNCM, Manchester, where she graduated with First Class Honours. She was a founding member of the Navarra String Quartet with whom she played with for 16 years before joining the acclaimed Elias String Quartet who recently recorded and performed the complete Beethoven string quartet cycle in Tokyo. Their discography includes the Schumann quartets as well as the Dvořák and Schumann piano quintets with Jonathan Biss.



Alice Zawadzki
singer/violinist

Described by the Guardian as 'a genuine original', award-winning multi-lingual singer, multi-instrumentalist and composer Alice Zawadzki regularly tours internationally, collaborating with many diverse artists in her thrilling projects, most recently the theatre-based 'Bag of Bones' which weaves European folklore with psychology, ceremony, and ritual. This year she makes her recording debut for ECM with Fred Thomas and Misha Mullov-Abbado, and was recently made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.
www.alicezmusic.com



