

# *Ilkley Concert Club*

King's Hall

Wednesday 8th November 2017



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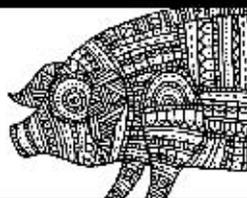
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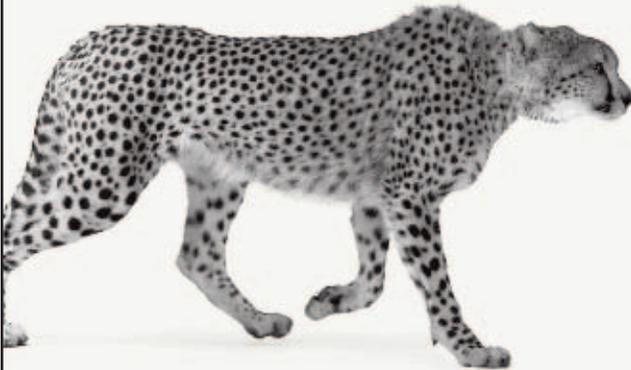
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# TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

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## **Sandström**

4 Pieces for Piano Trio (2012)

*(First performance at ICC)*

## **Smetana**

Piano Trio in G minor, op 15

*(Last performance at ICC 22/11/1978)*

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## **INTERVAL**

*(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)*

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## **Beethoven**

Piano Trio op 70 no. 1 in D major

‘Ghost’

*(First performance at ICC)*

## **Ilkley Concert Club**

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# PROGRAMME NOTES

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## **SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM 4 Pieces for Piano Trio (2012) (1942- )**

Sven-David Sandström is one of Sweden's leading composers. His career has embraced opera, oratorios, ballet, orchestral pieces, and film and television scores. He has combined composing with teaching, first in Stockholm at the Royal College of Music and later in the USA where, for ten years, he was professor of composition at Indiana University. In his early works, he experimented with quarter-tone tuning, later turning to tonal and modal forms and drawing on a wide variety of influences, including minimalism, jazz and popular music. He wrote Four Pieces for tonight's ensemble, Trio con Brio Copenhagen, in 2012.

The first and last movements are the longest (both about six minutes) whilst the second and third are fleeting (each less than three minutes). The rhythms are complex but there are also elements of minimalism together with the glittering clarity of sound reminiscent of his teacher, Ligeti, but the style is distinctively Sandström's own.

*(Duration: 16 minutes)*

## **BEDRICH SMETANA (1824-1884)**

### **Piano Trio in G minor, op 15**

**Moderato assai**

**Allegro, ma non agitato – Andante – Maestoso**

**Finale. Presto**

By 1849, after a brief involvement in the Bohemian revolt of the previous year, Smetana had finally begun to achieve the personal contentment and professional success which he had craved. His piano institute was flourishing and provided the financial stability which

enabled him to marry. Smetana's happiness was to be brief; by the end of 1856, he and his wife, Katerina, had lost three of their four daughters and Katerina had contracted the tuberculosis which would take her life in 1859.

As with the later string quartet, which so vividly depicts tinnitus, a symptom of the syphilis that would render him deaf by the age of 50 and kill him by 60, Smetana did not shy away from reflecting personal tragedy in his G minor String Trio. Despite its initially hostile reception, it is now recognised as his first great masterpiece. The work is dedicated to the memory of Bedřiska, the couple's eldest daughter who, at four years old, had begun to show musical promise when she was taken by scarlet fever in 1855.

All three movements feature the descending chromatic scale, emblematic of grief and lament since the Baroque period, but here employed to explore novel harmonies and with a sincerity far removed from cloying sentimentality. The violin opens the work unaccompanied with a passionate theme on the G string. A lyrical second subject offers brief respite before a turbulent development ushers in a free rhythm piano solo. Any reflection on happier times is swiftly ended by a stormy recapitulation and an explosive coda; throughout, the mood is of struggle negated by Fate.

The second movement begins with an attractive melody played in unison before each instrument takes a turn to examine it. The cheerfulness of the theme is tempered by the descending chromatic figure from the first movement. There are two trios (middle sections) labelled *Alternativo*, the first a lyrical romance with a Czech flavour, the second a dirge filled with dotted rhythms and bold dissonances. At the end, the opening dance returns in the major, but the dark harmonies maintain the sombre mood.



famous four hour concert took place in a freezing Vienna concert hall at which the fifth and sixth symphonies, the fourth piano concerto and the Choral Fantasy were premiered.

The ‘ghostly’ middle movement is introduced with an eerie, sustained three notes in the strings to which the piano responds mournfully. The strings and piano alternate through the introduction, the dark D minor melodies of the exposition become more forceful in its repeat. As the development begins, Beethoven modulates briefly to C major, then quickly moves on through several keys to re-establish the tense atmosphere. The end of the movement is characterised by gripping pauses and abrupt and intermittent stops and outbursts. With all its ghostly qualities, the movement’s effects are achieved quite simply, with slow crescendos and diminuendos, chromaticism and silences, as well as an impressionistic use of tremolando.

To emphasise the emotional impact of the ‘Ghost’ movement further, Beethoven dispensed with a scherzo and made the outside movements shorter (each about six minutes long) and much more direct in style. The first movement opens with a fast-moving rhythmic figure played in a vigorous unison; the main thematic material of the movement is delivered within the first several bars and is reminiscent of the turbulence of the fifth symphony. The third movement, following the unsettling disturbance in the central movement, marks a return to more lucid writing and offers a congenial, warm relief. The music omits the sharp contrasts of both preceding movements and instead flows serenely to its conclusion.

*(Duration: 30 minutes)*

*Programme notes © C.N. Lane*

# TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN

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**Soo-Jin Hong** *violin*

**Soo-Kyung Hong** *cello*

**Jens Elvekjaer** *piano*

*'Glowing reports hold true. The Trio con Brio Copenhagen clearly occupies a lofty perch in today's musical scene'.*

**Washington Post**

Founded in Vienna in 1999 by two Korean sisters, Soo-Jin and Soo-Kyung, and Danish pianist Jens Elvekjaer, Trio con Brio Copenhagen has been exploring the piano trio repertoire with 'freshness and curiosity, respect and reflection'.

Coached by the Alban Berg Quartet at the University of Music in Cologne and also in Budapest, the trio has won many of the competitions for Piano Trio, including the ARD (Munich), the Vittorio Gui (Florence), and Norway's Trondheim Competition. In 2005 the trio was the first ensemble to receive Denmark's most prestigious music award, the P2 Artists Prize, at a live televised concert, where they performed Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra.

These successes, together with a reputation for a new approach to works in the core repertoire, have led to Trio con Brio Copenhagen being in great international demand, appearing in major concert halls throughout Europe, the USA and Asia. Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, Wigmore Hall, Tivoli Concert Hall and the Konzerthaus, Berlin, have all hosted tonight's artists. This year alone the trio has completed three tours of the USA as well as a punishing European schedule.

Trio con Brio Copenhagen plays a central role in Scandinavia's vibrant contemporary scene. Several of Denmark's most prominent composers, such as Per Nørgård and Bret Sørensen as well as Swedish

composer, Sven-David Sandström, have composed and dedicated works to the trio. In 2011 Trio con Brio Copenhagen premiered a new Triple Concerto by Sandström with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi in Copenhagen's Koncerthuset. The following year they were invited to perform it with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra for the composer's 70th birthday concert.

As founders and artistic directors of the Copenhagen Chamber Music Festival, the trio searches for new and interesting paths and directions in chamber music as well as initiating concerts for the younger generation. As educators, the trio members teach at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen and give Masterclasses on their international tours.

Plans are well underway for the 2019/20 season when Trio con Brio Copenhagen will celebrate their 20th Anniversary. Exciting programmes with both new and familiar piano trio repertoire along with new commissions are scheduled. The recording of all the Beethoven Piano Trios and the interactive 'Beethoven Zoom' project will be performed in a cycle at the Volition Concert Hall in Copenhagen. International tours to the USA, South Korea, Germany and the Scandinavian countries have already been confirmed.

In the words of **Gramophone Magazine**, '*Any group would be hard-pressed to imitate this blend of verve and poise*'. Trio con Brio Copenhagen's distinctive sound almost certainly benefits from the superb instruments all three play. Soo-Jin plays a violin built by Andrea Guarneri in the 17th century. Soo-Kyung plays a Grancino cello and Jens is Denmark's first Steinway Artist.

Soo-Kyung and Jens are married and have a four year old daughter, Hannah. Already a seasoned traveller, she is here with them tonight.

*Biographical notes supplied by mam-vienna@uranet.ar and edited by Sarah Warnes*

# CLUB NOTES

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## TICKET RETURNS AND REFUNDS

Very many thanks for letting me know when you are not able to come to a concert – the demand is sometimes so enthusiastic that I have a waiting list for seats, so the sooner I know you are not coming the better. I appreciate that not all circumstances permit this. The Club benefits considerably from donations of the sale proceeds – many thanks for letting me know if they are to be donated, when you advise me that the seats are available. The artists also appreciate playing to the fullest possible house. We do our best to sell your returned seats. If your seats have been sold, the refund will be available at the following concert from the counter in the Winter Gardens in the interval or at the end of the concert.

**Can't go? Please email [icc.jennie@gmail.com](mailto:icc.jennie@gmail.com) or phone 01943 609045** between 10am and 7pm. When leaving a message please give details clearly, also do let me know if you would like to donate proceeds to the Club.

*Jennie Rundle—Single ticket sales Organiser*

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## C.R. (BOB) WALKER

It is with great sadness that I record the death of Bob on 17 September last. Bob joined our committee to take over from Charles Bainbridge the lengthy and sometimes difficult task of writing the detailed Programme Notes. This was a very different undertaking without today's computers and quite easy access to information, and even performance! It meant many visits to Leeds Lending Library for sheet music and scores and I recall that he even received from the inter-library scheme music from Paris to help him deal with a piece we were having! This care and attention to detail led to artists being so impressed that some asked for permission to use them elsewhere. This lasted for a remarkable 24 seasons – from September 1987 to May 2011; whilst over the same period Bob was also responsible for writing in the Ilkley Gazette the critique for each concert.

He took a very important role in designing programmes and helping choose artists for future seasons. With all this he contributed a great deal to the continued success of our concerts as well as being a very close friend whom I miss very much.

*David Pyett (ICC President)*

# RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

**Sandström:** There do not seem to be any commercial recordings available.

**Smetana:** The Trio con Brio Copenhagen made a recording in 2012, coupled with the Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, which is amongst the most recommendable of this work. The recording quality is excellent on Orchid ORC 100051 (full price). An alternative, lower price version, with the interesting couplings of the Suk and Novak Piano Trios, is by the Joachim Trio on Naxos 8.553415.

**Beethoven:** The Florestan Trio have recorded all the Beethoven piano trios to great acclaim, and the 'Ghost' is coupled with the Piano Trio no. 6 and the Allegretto in B flat on Hyperion CDA 67327 (full price). No less accomplished, at a super-budget price, the 'Trio Élégiague' perform all the works for piano trio by Beethoven on Brilliant Classics 94327 (5 discs at round the price of one full price CD). The recordings, made in 2012, are of excellent quality.

Raymond Waud. rayward@gmail.com

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*Programme:*

<b>Brahms</b>	Sonatenatz
<b>Debussy</b>	Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor
<b>Brahms</b>	Sonata for Violin and Piano in G, Op.78
<b>César Franck</b>	Sonata for Violin and Piano in A
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