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VIENNA PIANO TRIO

King's Hall

Wednesday 15th February 2017



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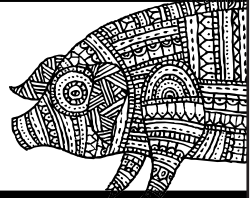
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TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

Mozart

Piano Trio in G major, K496
(Last performance at ICC 22/01/1986)

Schoenberg

Verklärte Nacht op 4 (arr. Steuermann)
(First performance of trio arrangement at ICC)

INTERVAL

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

Schubert

Piano Trio in B flat major, D898
(Last performance at ICC 06/12/2006)

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by the City of Bradford Metropolitan Council.



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PROGRAMME NOTES

MOZART
(1756-1791)

Piano Trio in G major, K496

Allegro

Andante

Allegretto (Theme and Variations I-VI)

To a much greater extent than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, it was Mozart who brought the expressive possibilities of the fortepiano to the audiences of Vienna. Arriving in the city in 1781, he acquired his own instrument by 1785 and quickly left behind the limitations of the harpsichord, composing chamber works and concertos tailored for his own particular piano skills – ‘quickness, neatness and delicacy ... and a sensitivity that went straight to the heart’, as an early biographer put it. At the same time, Mozart established a new relationship in his trios between the piano and the stringed instruments, in which violin and cello begin to take on less subsidiary roles.

Premiered in July 1786, the G major Piano Trio was composed at the peak of Mozart’s success in Vienna. *The Marriage of Figaro* had been launched to huge acclaim in May, two months after two of his finest piano concertos (K488 and K491).

The piano introduces the first theme, which is characterised by almost operatic decoration. The cello assumes its traditional role providing the bass line, but soon all three instruments play *fortissimo* before the cello takes up the musical argument in a way which would have surprised early audiences accustomed to the supremacy of the piano.

The Andante unfolds with unexpected depth, the sudden modulations and complex counterpoint reminding us of Mozart’s respect for Bach and Handel.

The finale is a set of variations on a stately gavotte (a medium-paced French dance). The fourth variation introduces a disturbing change of tone, the violin introducing a drone-like motif supported by a sombre bass line on the cello. The final variation sets everything up for a bravura ending, but the shadow of the drone returns before, at the last moment, Mozart brings the trio home in cheerful mood.

(Duration: 24 minutes)

SCHOENBERG
(1874-1951)

Verklärte Nacht op 4
(arr. Steurmann)

Originally composed for string sextet in 1899 (the same year as Elgar's *Enigma Variations*), this piano trio version of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*) was made by Edward Steurmann, who worked closely with the composer in Vienna before both men fled to the USA in the 1930s. This is music firmly in the tradition of the late Romantics – Wagner, Mahler and Strauss; the serial music revolution which, together with Webern and Berg, Schoenberg would lead lay some years ahead.

Although it largely abandons traditional harmony, what was new about this piece was less its musical style than its programmatic nature; it is an instrumental work with a narrative basis.

The music closely follows the story of a poem by the German writer Richard Dehmel. A young couple walk at night through a leafless grove. Strong moonlight illuminates their path. The woman is in despair. Finding no meaning in life, she has attempted to find solace in motherhood; but she has become pregnant by a man whom she does not love. By a cruel irony, she has now at last found love with the man with whom she walks and is overwhelmed by guilt. Her agitation, intense sadness and anguished confession are accurately mirrored in the music by rising sequences of melodic phrases reminiscent of

Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, but the woman's companion confounds her despair. 'Don't let these thoughts oppress you,' he tells her, 'Look at this brilliant, moonlit world. It is like a cold ocean, but there is a flame within each of us that warms the other and which will transfigure the child and make it mine also. You have brought me life and made me like a child.' They kiss, embrace and walk on through the radiant night. (Duration: 29 minutes)

INTERVAL

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

SCHUBERT
(1797-1828)

Piano Trio in B flat major, D898
Allegro moderato
Andante un poco mosso
Scherzo. Allegro
Rondo. Allegro vivace

'Anyone who had seen him only in the morning, in the throes of composition, his eyes shining, speaking, even, another language, will never forget it – though in the afternoon, to be sure, he became another person,' a friend wrote of Schubert's often violent changes of mood, especially in the years before his early death. 'There were also times when a black-winged demon of sorrow and melancholy forced its way into his vicinity; not altogether an evil spirit, it is true, since, in the dark concentrated hours, it often brought out songs of the most agonizing beauty,' observed another friend and, as we saw with the Trout Quintet earlier this season, even as he strove for new horizons in symphonies and substantial chamber works (such as tonight's trio), song writing always remained at the core of Schubert's creative soul.

For the most part, the music of the B flat trio, written just a year before Schubert's death, is bright and joyous, the 'black-winged demon' kept firmly at bay. However, themes from two of Schubert's songs are worked into the music and hint at something darker.

First, *Des Sängers Habe* ('*The Singer's Possession*') of February 1825 is quoted in the sweeping opening of the Allegro. The text perhaps summarises the composer's music-bound existence in his brother Ferdinand's flat after his illness had put an end to his much-loved jaunts into the countryside: 'Shatter all my happiness in pieces, take from me all my worldly wealth, yet leave me only my zither and I shall still be happy and rich!'

The Andante is one of Schubert's most beautiful creations, a flowing cello melody instilling a deep calm before a nervous, minor-key central section darkens the idyll which eventually returns, chastened and more reflective.

The Scherzo and Trio juxtapose two popular dance forms of the day, the *Ländler* (a folk dance in 3/4 time) and the *Waltz*, just the sort of thing Schubert would delight in improvising for the dancing of his many friends.

Schubert calls the finale a Rondo, but its theme returns with such extensive alterations that the movement is closer to a developmental sonata form than to a traditional refrain-based rondo structure. As it draws to a close, the second song theme emerges, *Skolie* (1815): 'Let us, in the bright May morning, take delight in the brief life of the flower, before its fragrance disappears.' (Duration: 44 minutes)

Programme notes © C.N. Lane

THE VIENNA PIANO TRIO

Stefan Mendl – piano
David McCarroll – violin
Matthias Gredler – cello

‘Celebrated for its finesse, infectious exuberance, tonal allure and its irresistible panache the Vienna Piano Trio has long been hailed as one of the world’s leading ensembles of piano, violin and cello’.

The Washington Post

The **Vienna Piano Trio** has been one of the most noted ensembles of its type since the last decade of the twentieth century. Founded in 1988, the group was coached in its early days by the Beaux Arts Trio and the Haydn Trio Wien. Individually, and as a group, they studied chamber music interpretation with such great performers as Isaac Stern, Ralph Kirschbaum and members of the Guarneri and LaSalle Quartets. Since its debut in 1989 the trio has won numerous international competition prizes and has played in major concert halls worldwide.

Particularly successful in repertoire by composers closely associated with Austria, the Vienna Piano Trio made its recording debut with the complete Brahms Piano Trios on the Naxos label. In 1995, the trio’s first release for the Nimbus label of Dvorak’s Opus 21 and Opus 90 trios, was chosen as BBC Radio 3 Record Review Critics’ Choice for 1996. The following year the trio performed all of Schubert’s works for piano trio as part of a festival celebrating the composer’s bicentenary. The performances took place in London’s Wigmore Hall and in the Brahms-saal of the Musikverein in Vienna. The Vienna Piano Trio was appointed ensemble-in-residence at Vienna’s Konzerthaus in 2006 and held a Wigmore Hall residency in 2011/12. The trio are currently ensemble-in-residence at the Turner Sims Hall in Southampton.

Highlights of the present season include a performance of Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with the Tonkünstler Orchestra at the Grufenegg Festival, a tour of the USA two concerts at the Concertgebouw and three appearances at the Wigmore Hall. Together the Vienna Konzerthaus and the Wigmore Hall have commissioned Thomas Larcher to compose a piece for the Vienna Piano Trio and tenor Mark Padmore. It will be premiered in both concert halls in June.

For further details of their activities and extensive recording see their website, www.viennapianotrio.com

Stefan Mendl - *piano* was born in Vienna and is the only remaining founder member of the Vienna Piano Trio. He studied with Alexander Jenner at the University of Music in Vienna and in his early career appeared regularly as a soloist in Austria and abroad. He appears frequently in duo recitals with cellist Clemens Hagen and works regularly with other established European soloists. He has given masterclasses at the Royal College of Music in London, in the USA and at the Toronto Summer Music Academy.

David McCarroll - *violin* is the newest member of the Vienna Piano Trio having joined in 2015. He was born in 1986 in Santa Rosa, California and began violin lessons at the age of four. As a teenager he studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and later at the New England Conservatoire of Music in Boston and at the Hans Eisler Academy in Berlin. In 2012 David won the European Young Artists Auditions and was Silver Medallist at the Klein International Competition. He has appeared in major concert halls in Europe and the USA as concerto soloist and recitalist. In his spare time, David maintains an active interest in social concerns and works with the Starcross Community to help AIDS orphans in Africa. He has played in programmes encouraging world peace promoted by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and has given concerts for Doctors Without Borders. With other members of his family he has worked to provide strings for young music students in Cuba. David plays a 1761 violin by A. & J. Gagliano.

Matthias Gredler - *cello* was born in Munich in 1975 to a family of Austrian musicians. He received his first cello lessons from his father who was the solo cellist of the Munich Rundfunkorchester. He went on to study with Heinrich Schiff and Clemens Hagen in Salzburg and Vienna. While still a student he was awarded many prizes, enabling him to play for an international audience early on. Through numerous appearances at renowned festivals Matthias made a name for himself as both a soloist and a chamber musician. He was a founding member of the Viatores Quartet and has held the position of Solo Cellist with the Munchner Kammerorchester. Matthias plays a 1752 cello by J.B. Gaudagnini.

(Biographical notes compiled by Sarah Warnes)

CLUB NOTES

TICKET RETURNS & REFUNDS

Very many thanks for letting me know when you are not able to attend a concert – the demand is sometimes so enthusiastic that a waiting list is in operation, so the sooner I know you are not coming the better. I do appreciate not all circumstances allow for this. The Club benefits considerably from donations of the sale proceeds – many thanks for letting me know if they are to be donated at the time of advising me the seats are available.

In the event of a refund request please do collect this at the following concert. If the seat has been sold, the refund will be available from the counter in the Winter Gardens in the interval or at the end of the next concert.

Can't go? Please email 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.

MEMORABLE CONCERTS

Most of ICC concerts are very good, but I expect many have a memories of concerts that were special. For me, one was Angela Hewitt in 2002 playing Bach's 'Goldberg Variations'. Judging by the responses we have had, Alessandro Taverna's concert will be amongst many people's favourites. One such, from Rosemary Hoyle was *'As a concert club subscriber of many years who always appreciates & enjoys the varied programmes, I just to say a really big 'thank you' for the quite exceptional performance last Wednesday. I was aware that I was experiencing something very special, really exhilarating and original. It's something I shall remember for a long time.'*

That made me think about what makes a concert special. Several factors are: choice of programme and quality of the music, both familiar and unfamiliar; the quality and charisma of the artists; how well the artists are treated – so they can concentrate on the music; the quality of the piano; the beautiful King's Hall; the huge and knowledgeable audience, etc. For this concert, I think all the above were just about as good as it gets.

Alessandro spoke to me enthusiastically about the beautiful hall with its excellent acoustics; the quality of the piano; the huge size of the audience; the reception they gave him – particularly noting your intense concentration. It is abundantly clear that artist, audience and venue play a large part. The Concert Season Planners Sarah Warnes, Josephine Wesley and David Pyett make great efforts in selecting artists and programmes. The Club committee, volunteers and King's Hall staff make a large contribution to the peace of mind and comfort of the artists. Suggestions are always welcome.

david@wharmby.demon.co.uk

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Mozart: One of the finest recordings of this work to have come my way is by the Kungsbacka Piano Trio on Naxos 8.570518 (medium price). The couplings are the Piano Trio K502 and the Divertimento K254. The ever reliable Beaux Arts Trio provide all the Piano Trios and the Clarinet Trio on Decca 446 1542 (2 CDs at budget price).

Schoenberg: The Boulanger Trio provide an excellent recording of the work, coupled with Brahms Piano Trio no 3 and Liszt Tristia, On Profil PH 11042 (medium price). For an alternative coupling of the Korngold Piano Trio no 1, the Fidelio Trio are well recorded on Naxos 8.572758 (medium price).

Schubert: Those with an enthusiasm for ‘authentic instruments’, and others, will enjoy the excellent new recording from Andras Staier (fortepiano), Daniel Sedec (violin), and Roel Dieltriens (cello), on Harmonia Mundi 902233-34 (2 CDs at budget price). Both Piano Trios are included with Nocturne D897. Once again, the Beaux Arts Trio provide superb interpretations of both Trios, on modern instruments, on Philips 475 7571 (2 CDs at budget price).

Raymond Waud. rayward@gmail.com

NEXT CONCERT – WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH 2017 AT 8PM



Maxim Rysanov – viola
Katya Apekisheva – piano

Schubert	Sonatina no 3 in G minor, D408
Enescu	Concertstück
Tabakova	Suite in the jazz style
Franck	Sonata in A major

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Chamber Concerts at Bradford Cathedral
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Emily Sun *Violin*

Jennifer Hughes *Piano*

Mozart Sonata for Violin and Piano K.379
Schubert Grand Duo for Violin and Piano D.574
Mendelssohn Sonata for Violin and Piano
Wieniawski Variations on an original theme

Friday 7 April 2017 7.30pm

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Haydn Mass in G *St Nicholas*
Mozart Horn Concerto No.4 K.495
Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings

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