

Ilkley Concert Club



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SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE



PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN CLARK

King's Hall
Wednesday 14th March 2018



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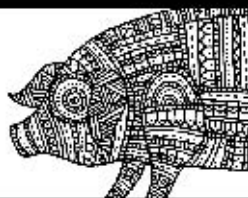
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TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

Bruch

Piano Quintet in G minor, op posth.

(First performance at ICC)

Bray

Zustände for Piano Quartet

(First performance at ICC)

INTERVAL

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

Dvořák

Piano Quintet no. 2 in A, op 81

(Last performance at ICC 16/02/2011)

Ilkley Concert Club

Registered Charity No. 506886

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PROGRAMME NOTES

MAX BRUCH
(1838 - 1920)

Piano Quintet in G minor, op posth.
Allegro molto moderato: Tranquillo
Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Finale: Allegro agitato

Although chiefly known today for only two works – the G minor violin concerto op 26 and *Kol Nidrei* op 47 – Bruch was a well-known teacher and a prolific composer, writing three operas, sacred and secular choral music, songs, symphonies, concertos and chamber music, all set firmly in the great nineteenth-century German tradition exemplified by Brahms, with whom Bruch was often unfavourably compared. To such comparisons Bruch would reply that he had many family commitments, so had to ‘write works that were pleasing and easily understood’. Quite what Brahms made of these remarks is not recorded! Bruch’s importance to German music was finally recognised in the 1890s in Berlin when he received the title of Professor. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in music by Cambridge University in 1893.

The G minor piano quintet was written for an amateur string quartet which met regularly at the Liverpool home of Andrew G. Kurtz, a fine amateur pianist to whom Bruch dedicated the work. Bruch and Kurtz became friends in 1880 at the start of Bruch’s rather chequered three-year career as Director of the Liverpool Philharmonic where he found the musicians lacking the disciplined approach of German orchestras.

He completed the first three movements while in Liverpool but seemed to prevaricate over the fourth movement which was not finished until 1888. Bruch obviously gave some thought as to what would technically best suit an amateur group so the strings often play in unison while the piano part is not virtuosic although it requires considerable skill and

agility. The work remained in manuscript until 1988 when it was published for the first time.

The first movement's interplay between the strings and piano sets the tone of the piece, beginning with a lovely chorale theme on the strings, twice answered by the piano before a stronger, faster theme takes over and this fast-slow alternation continues throughout the movement, indeed throughout the work. The song-like *Adagio* (in 3/8) begins quietly but works up to a passionate climax before ending in a quiet reflective mood. Mendelssohn might well have influenced the light and airy *Scherzo* and its lyrical *Trio*, while the final *Allegro agitato*, which again alternates a heroic theme with more peaceful passages, is reminiscent of Brahms.

(Duration: approx. 25 minutes)

CHARLOTTE BRAY **Zustände for Piano Quartet**
(1982-) **The three movements are suggested by:**
Brittle cracking ice
A lone iceberg
An ice field

Three new and varied works by the talented and prolific young British composer, Charlotte Bray, were premiered in 2017: *Voyage*, commissioned by the Nordic Saxophone Quartet, *Blaze and Fall*: a homage to Kurtág, commissioned by the Jacquin Trio, and *Zustände* (meaning 'states' or 'conditions') commissioned by the Schubert Ensemble in partnership with the Wiltshire Music Centre where it was first performed in March 2017.

Bray wrote this work after a visit to Greenland, a country largely covered by its internationally important ice sheet (or ice field) and its tripartite structure was inspired by three photographs of different types of ice.

The first movement focuses on instrumental colour, using various techniques, such as tremolo and pizzicato to create the unique sound of cracking ice breaking away from a glacier and slowly disintegrating in the sun. The music follows this weakening and fragility with very slow harmonic progressions in a high register. The second movement was suggested by the photograph of an iceberg and was shaped by the outline of the iceberg itself. As an iceberg rests firmly on its unseen nine-tenths below the water, so the music has a steady secure base, emphasized by block chords on the piano. The final movement is a musical description of Greenland's ice sheet and is in four sections, each representing a different physical state, from alert activity and brightness to stillness and intensity. All four sections recur throughout the movement but in a constantly changing order.

(Duration: approx. 10 minutes)

INTERVAL

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

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
(1841-1904)

Piano Quintet no. 2 in A, op 81
Allegro ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro

Dvořák's A major quintet for piano, two violins, viola and cello was composed in 1887 and received its premiere in Prague in January 1888. Since then it has been acknowledged as a masterpiece of Romantic chamber music and as one of the pinnacles of the genre, ranking alongside the piano quintets of Schumann, Brahms and Shostakovich. Its composition arose from Dvořák's wish to revise an earlier A major piano quintet (op 5) but, dissatisfied, he eventually destroyed this manuscript and composed an entirely new quintet in the same key, a

work full of engaging melodies, expressive lyricism and never very far away from Czech folk music, the use of which is a Dvořák trademark. However, he rarely used existing traditional tunes; rather he used and developed Czech folk styles within the European classical tradition. In the A major quintet, the folk elements consist of Dvořák's interpretation of two dances: the second movement *Dumka*, a dance which suddenly alternates between melancholy and exuberance, and the *furiant*, a strongly accented fast and fiery Bohemian dance heard in the third movement. Dvořák's first two Slavonic Dances are familiar examples of works that use these dances and he showed his particular affection for the *Dumka* in his well-known Piano Trio op 90 which is based entirely on the style, giving rise to its nickname of The Dumky.

The cello accompanied by the piano opens the work with a lovely tune, after which there are characteristic Dvořákian major-minor alternations and an exuberant coda. The second movement, the *Dumka*, has an ABACABA thematic structure, where A is the slow elegiac refrain, B is much brighter and C quick and vigorous. Each time the A tune returns, it is with an enriched texture. The third movement *Scherzo*, the *furiant*, is certainly fast and furious with the slower *Trio* picking up the main melody before returning to the dance. The finale is in rondo form that pits the strings against rapid syncopation in the piano before bustling joyously to an exuberant conclusion.

(Duration: approx. 40 minutes)

Programme notes © Ann Keith

SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE

Simon Blendis and **Alexandra Wood** *Violins*

Douglas Paterson *Viola*

Jane Salmon *Cello*

William Howard *Piano*

'The Schubert Ensemble of London are a marvellously unified ensemble, imparting their energy and lyricism to anything to which they turn their expert hands.'

Classic FM Magazine

'To say they played with seasoned eloquence, a unanimity of feeling born of deep communal consideration, is an understatement, for they demand superlatives.'

Sunday Times

Over the years the Ilkley Concert Club has been delighted to welcome back artists who have become friends, and never more so than the five members of the **Schubert Ensemble**. They have performed for us on no less than 4 previous occasions over the last 20 years. The committee is particularly thrilled that they have managed to fit us in to their tremendously busy, and, sadly, final season. Yes, after 35 years at the forefront of British chamber music, The Schubert Ensemble has decided that this is their last season. They leave behind a significant legacy, and can look back on many memorable highlights.

Touring has taken them to major venues in cities such as Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles and Amsterdam, but also to many extraordinary and unlikely venues in countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, Malaysia, Malta and Lebanon to name but a few. In 1998 their contribution to music in the UK was recognised with Royal Philharmonic Society's best chamber group award, for which they were short-listed again in 2010.

Commissioning has always been part of the Ensemble's work, and they have established ongoing relationships with many of the UK's leading composers. Their final major commission, by Judith Weir, will be their 50th and will be premiered at Wigmore Hall next Wednesday. These pieces sit alongside over 45 shorter works that were commissioned through the Ensemble's Chamber Music 2000 project for young and amateur musicians. As well as creating this ground-breaking education project, the Ensemble has always prioritised working with young musicians, and has carried out over 500 workshops with young musicians both in this country and around the world as well as having had residencies at Bristol University, Wiltshire Music Centre, the Hall for Cornwall, Cardiff University and Birmingham Conservatoire.

In the recording studio the Ensemble have produced over 25 critically acclaimed CDs of repertoire ranging from Brahms and Mendelssohn through to John Woolrich and Judith Weir. Recently the Ensemble have been adding to their recording legacy with a series of live filmed concerts that can be found on their You Tube channel. Always searching out new and interesting repertoire, the Ensemble has championed previously neglected masterpieces by composers such as Enescu, Martinu, Chausson, Farrenc, Korngold and Vaughan Williams, as a result of which these works are now widely played.

This farewell season, which ends with a final concert on 30th June, has seen the Ensemble return to many favourite venues, giving opportunities for the five members, almost unchanged for 23 years, to say thank you and goodbye to the many good friends they have made over the lifetime of the Ensemble.

(Biographical notes supplied by Schubert Ensemble and edited by Sarah Warnes)

CLUB NOTES

REFUND FOR THE CANCELLED RUISI CONCERT

We are sorry that a very late illness caused the cancellation of the Ruisi Quartet concert on 10 January 2018, and that this disappointed many and in some instances caused a wasted journey to the Kings Hall. We are pleased to offer a per seat refund as follows:

Boxes / Balcony	£8.50
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Hopefully everyone has received the notice about how to collect their refunds during this concert or if necessary at the April or May concerts. If not please let us know so can ensure we have correct contact details for you. Briefly:

- Refunds to the individual who booked the season ticket(s)
- 3 collection locations in the **Winter Gardens**
 - Boxes or Balcony – upstairs
 - Stalls – downstairs (Rows C-K & Rows L-T)
- Collections before and after the concert and during the interval

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SEASON 73 (2018-19) DATES

We are just putting the final touches to next season’s concerts and will be letting you know shortly about the programme. In the mean time I am pleased to give you notice of the concert dates so that you can mark your diaries. As usual all are Wednesdays at 8:00pm.

10 Oct 2018	14 Nov 2018	12 Dec 2018	16 Jan 2019
13 Feb 2019	13 Mar 2019	10 Apr 2019	8 May 2019

David Wharmby – Chairman

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Bruch: This charming work has attracted two recommendable recordings. One, at full price from Hyperion CDA 68120, is performed by the Goldner Quartet with Piers Lane (piano). The coupling is Bruch's String Quartet no.1 and Swedish Dances. My favourite is from CPO 999 451-2 at medium price, played by the Ensemble Ulf Hoelscher, and includes Bruch's String Quintet and String Octet. Both CDs are very good, and the couplings may help a decision.

Charlotte Bray: There does not appear to be a commercial recording of this work.

Dvořák: There are many superb recordings of this work, but my favourite is a new one by the Pavel Haas Quartet with Boris Giltburg (piano) on Supraphon SU 4195-2 (full price). They also play the String Quintet, op 97. Equally recommendable is the version by tonight's artists on Chandos CHAN 10719, coupled with the Piano Quartet no. 2. Finally, a wonderful version, in good, but older, stereo, has Clifford Curzon with the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet on Eloquence 480 4715 (medium price), with Dvořák's String Quartet op 51.

Raymond Waud. rayward@gmail.com

NEXT CONCERT – WEDNESDAY 11th APRIL 2018 AT 8PM

ALINA IBRAGIMOVA violin **CEDRIC TIBERGHEN** piano



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Brahms Violin Sonata no. 2 in A major, op 100

Brahms Violin Sonata no. 3 in D minor, op 108

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