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Free Concert Programme

London Symphony Orchestra

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Editorial Photography

Oliver Helbig, Felix Broede

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TONIGHT'S CONCERT

VERONIKA EBERLE & SIR SIMON RATTLE

Saturday 12 March 2022 6.30–8pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Ludwig van Beethoven

Violin Concerto Op 61, with cadenzas by Jörg Widmann
Fragment from Violin Concerto in C major

Sir Simon Rattle conductor

Veronika Eberle violin

Recorded for **LSO Live**, generously supported by
the **Anja Fichte Stiftung** and **Felix Mauser**

Anja Fichte Stiftung



Violin Concerto in D major Op 61

Ludwig van Beethoven



1806



54 minutes

- 1 **Allegro ma non troppo**
- 2 **Larghetto**
- 3 **Rondo (Allegro)**

With cadenzas by Jörg Widmann

For Ludwig van Beethoven, the concerto was not a form to be taken lightly. His only completed violin concerto is a work of unprecedented warmth and serenity that its first audiences evidently found rather puzzling. 'The opinion of connoisseurs admits that it contains beautiful passages but confesses that the context often seems broken and that the endless repetition of unimportant passages produces a tiring effect', ran one account of its first performance. Clearly, a little more action was expected.

It was not until one of the 19th century's greatest violinists, Joseph Joachim, performed it in London in 1844 that the work came to be recognised as the sublime masterpiece that it is.

Beethoven had rushed to complete the piece in time for its first performance in Vienna in December 1806, and the soloist, Franz Clement, was apparently forced to sight-read much of the music at the concert. This sounds hard to believe, but it is surely significant that the autograph score contains many alterations to the solo part, perhaps made at Clement's suggestion, after what we can only imagine was a somewhat hairy premiere. If Beethoven made things hard for his soloist, Clement did not show the Concerto to its best advantage by playing the second and third movements at opposite ends of the concert from the first, and inserting some virtuoso showpieces in between (including one played with the violin upside down).

Although Beethoven knew how to play the violin, it was not really his instrument, so we should not be too surprised that this Concerto does not adopt the confrontational and virtuoso tone of his piano concertos. And unlike the piano, the violin cannot accompany itself, with the result that the orchestra has to play along almost all of the

time. Beethoven does not fight against this. Instead he turns it to an advantage by writing a supremely conciliatory concerto in which the violin and orchestra are in agreement throughout; as the musicologist Donald Tovey said, 'all its most famous strokes of genius are not only mysteriously quiet, but mysterious in radiantly happy surroundings'. This is certainly true of the work's unusual opening, where five gentle drum beats introduce the sublime first theme, and then proceed to dominate and unify the whole movement through repeating and recycling their insistent rhythm in different contexts. When the solo violin first enters it is not to contradict the orchestra, or even to contribute any new themes of its own, but to enrich the music with soaring embellishments and eloquent refinements of the movement's melodic material.

This non-aggressive attitude is even more noticeable in the placid slow movement, which seems to start out as a straightforward set of variations on the theme introduced right at the beginning on muted strings – so straightforward that

the music never leaves the key of G major and the solo violin at first offers no more than gentle accompanimental arabesques. After the third variation however (a loud restatement of the theme by the orchestra alone), the soloist introduces a brief but sonorous new tune, which is then alternated with the main theme before a peaceful coda, a fanfare-like outburst from the strings and a cadenza lead straight into the finale. Here again, the form is simple – a rondo whose uncomplicated treatment may owe much to Beethoven's haste to complete the Concerto, but whose recurring theme is irresistible nevertheless. And there is real originality in the way in which the movement opens with the theme given out by the soloist over a bare, prompting accompaniment from the cellos and basses, and in the way that, just when you feel Beethoven has proved that he could carry on forever, he wittily brings the Concerto to an end.

Programme note by Lindsay Kemp

Fragment from Violin Concerto in C major

Ludwig van Beethoven



ca 1790–92



8 minutes

The young Beethoven's father taught him to play both violin and piano, and he evidently became proficient enough to be able to play viola in the electoral court orchestra in his hometown of Bonn; but while he was destined to become a virtuoso pianist, his friend Stephan von Breuning (to whom Beethoven later dedicated his D major Violin Concerto) said that Beethoven never showed any notable ability on the fiddle, and tended to play out of tune. His understanding of violin technique was honed by contact with outstanding players such as Franz Clement, for whom he wrote the D major Concerto. But his earliest attempt at a violin concerto dates from the last two years he spent in Bonn between 1790 and 1792, when he was around 21 years old.

He may well have been encouraged then by working alongside the excellent violinist Andreas Romberg, who was playing in the electoral court orchestra during

that period. Only a section of an opening movement (*Allegro con brio*) from this Concerto survives, and it is not known whether the piece was ever finished, or if part of the manuscript has been lost. Scored for solo violin with accompaniment for flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons and horns, and strings, this fragment consists of two complete orchestral tutti sections framing the solo violin's first statement, and the beginning of its second.

The opening ritornello begins with a fanfare and features strongly contrasted material in a second subject, concluding with a re-statement of the opening fanfare. The violin writing is lyrical (as with the later D major Concerto), and favours the instrument's upper register. The fragment came to light in 1870, and several violinists since have attempted to complete it to produce a performable movement. Today we hear only the original extract written by Beethoven, without completion.

Programme note by Wendy Thompson

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770 (Germany) to 1827 (Austria)



Ludwig van Beethoven showed early musical promise, yet reacted against his father's attempts to train him as a child prodigy. As a boy he attracted the support of the Prince-Archbishop, who supported his studies with leading musicians at the Bonn court. By the early 1780s Beethoven had completed his first compositions, all of which were for keyboard. With the decline of his father, Ludwig became the family breadwinner as a musician at court.

Encouraged by his employer, the Prince-Archbishop Maximilian Franz, Beethoven travelled to Vienna to study with Joseph Haydn. The younger composer fell out with his renowned mentor when the

latter discovered he was secretly taking lessons from several other teachers. Although Maximilian Franz withdrew payments for Beethoven's Viennese education, the talented musician had already attracted support from some of the city's wealthiest arts patrons.

His public performances in 1795 were well received, and he shrewdly negotiated a contract with Artaria & Co, the largest music publisher in Vienna. He was soon able to devote his time to composition or the performance of his own works. In 1800 Beethoven began to complain bitterly of deafness, yet he created a series of remarkable new works, including the *Missa Solemnis* and his late symphonies and piano sonatas. It is thought that around 10,000 people followed his funeral procession on 29 March 1827. Certainly, his posthumous reputation developed to influence successive generations of composers and other artists inspired by the heroic aspects of Beethoven's character and the profound humanity of his music.

Composer profile by Andrew Stewart

Sir Simon Rattle

LSO Music Director



Sir Simon Rattle was born in Liverpool and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. From 1980 to 1998, he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and was appointed Music Director in 1990. In 2002 he took up the position of Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, where he remained until the end of the 2017/18 season.

Sir Simon became Music Director of the London Symphony Orchestra in September 2017, and will become Conductor Emeritus from the 2023/24 season. He will then take

up the position of Chief Conductor of the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks in Munich. He is a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Founding Patron of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

Music education is of supreme importance to Sir Simon, and his partnership with the Berlin Philharmonic broke new ground with the education programme Zukunft@Bphil, earning him the Comenius Prize, the Schiller Special Prize from the city of Mannheim, the Golden Camera and the Urania Medal. He and the Berlin Philharmonic were also appointed International UNICEF Ambassadors in 2004 – the first time this honour has been conferred on an artistic ensemble.

Sir Simon Rattle was knighted in 1994. In the New Year's Honours of 2014 he received the Order of Merit from Her Majesty The Queen. In 2019, he was given Freedom of the City of London.

Veronika Eberle

violin



Veronika Eberle's exceptional talent and the poise and maturity of her musicianship have been recognised by many of the world's finest orchestras, venues and festivals, as well as by some of the most eminent conductors. Sir Simon Rattle's introduction of Veronika aged just 16 to a packed Salzburg Festpielhaus at the 2006 Salzburg Easter Festival in a performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic, brought her to international attention.

Key orchestra collaborations since then include the London Symphony (Rattle), Concertgebouw (Holliger),

New York Philharmonic (Gilbert), Montreal Symphony (Nagano), Munich Philharmonic and Gewandhaus Orchestras (Langree), Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin (Janowski), Hessischer Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester (Järvi), Bamberger Symphoniker (Ticciati, Nott), Tonhalle Orchester Zurich (Sanderling), NHK Symphony (Kout, Stenz, Norrington) and Rotterdam Philharmonic (Rattle, Gaffigan, Nézet-Seguin).

Born in Donauwörth Southern Germany, she started violin lessons at the age of six and four years later became a junior student at the Richard Strauss Konservatorium in Munich with Olga Voitova. After studying privately with Christoph Poppen for a year, she joined the Hochschule in Munich, where she studied with Ana Chumachenco from 2001 to 2012.

Veronika Eberle plays on a violin made by the Italian violin maker Antonio Giacomo Stradivari in 1693, which was made available to her on generous loan by the Reinhold Würth Musikstiftung GmbH.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Guest Leader

Natalia Lomeiko

First Violins

Clare Duckworth
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Claire Parfitt
Elizabeth Pigram
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur

Second Violins

Julián
Gil Rodríguez
Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
Matthew Gardner
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogany
Andrew Pollock
Paul Robson

Violas

Edward
Vanderspar
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Germán Clavijo
Stephen Doman
Julia O'Riordan
Sofia Silva Sousa
Robert Turner

Cellos

Tim Gill
Alastair Blayden
Noël Bradshaw
Daniel Gardner
Laure Le Dantec
Amanda Truelove

Double Basses

Dominik Wagner
Patrick Laurence
Matthew Gibson
Thomas Goodman
José Moreira

Flute

Gareth Davies

Oboes

Olivier
Stankiewicz
Rosie Jenkins

Clarinets

Sérgio Pires
Chi-Yu Mo

Bassoons

Rachel Gough
Joost Bosdijk

Horns

Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes

Trumpets

James Fountain
Kaitlin Wild

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

London Symphony Orchestra

The London Symphony Orchestra strives to inspire hearts and minds through world-leading music-making. We were established in 1904, as one of the first orchestras shaped by its musicians.

Today, we're ranked among the world's top orchestras. As Resident Orchestra at the Barbican, we perform 70 concerts here every year. Our family of artists include Music Director Sir Simon Rattle, Principal Guest Conductors Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth, and Conductor Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas.

Through a world-leading learning and community programme, LSO Discovery, we're connecting people of all ages and walks of life to the power of great music. Based at LSO St Luke's, our music education and community centre and a leading performance venue on Old Street, LSO Discovery's reach extends across East London, the UK and the world through in-person and digital activity.

In 1999, we formed our own recording label, LSO Live, and

revolutionised how live orchestral music is recorded, with over 150 recordings released so far.

Through inspiring music, educational programmes and technological innovations, our reach extends far beyond the concert hall. And thanks to the generous support of The Corporation of the City of London, Arts Council England, corporate supporters, trusts and foundations, and individual donors, we are able to continue sharing extraordinary music with as many people as possible.

ALWAYS PLAYING

In 2020 we launched the Always Playing Appeal to help the LSO rebuild a secure future following the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the help of our audiences and supporters, we can continue bringing the greatest music to people in London and beyond.

iso.co.uk/appeal
development@iso.co.uk



The LSO is funded by Arts Council England in partnership with the City of London Corporation, which also provides the Orchestra's permanent home at the Barbican.



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