

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

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Friday 15 October 2021 1pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Max Bruch Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola and Piano Op 83 Nos 2, 4, 5 & 6
Jörg Widmann Fantasie
György Kurtág Hommage à Robert Schumann
Amadeus Mozart Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano in E-flat major K498, 'Kegelstatt'

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola and Piano Op 83

Nos 2, 4, 5, 6

Max Bruch

2 Allegro con moto

4 Allegro agitato

5 Rumänische Melodie

6 Nachtgesang: Andante con moto

These four pieces for clarinet, viola and piano are taken from a set of eight that Max Bruch composed when he was 70, and about to retire from his teaching post at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. They were intended for his eldest son Max Felix, a talented clarinettist, for whom Bruch also wrote a Double Concerto for clarinet and viola two years later. The combination of clarinet, viola and piano was still rare in 1909: Bruch had as models only Mozart's 'Kegelstatt' Trio, Robert Schumann's set of four Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales), and a Trio composed some six years earlier by his own former teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory, Carl Reinecke.

A more potent stimulus may have been the fact that Brahms, whom Bruch idolized, had made alternative versions for viola of his own chamber works featuring the clarinet. Bruch regarded his Eight Pieces as a set of independent miniatures. No 2 and 4 are fast. No 5 is based on a Rumanian folk melody which was apparently suggested to Bruch by the Eight Pieces' dedicatee, Princess Sophie zu Wied, who had a Romanian grandmother and had spent her childhood on the family estate in Moldova, surrounded by Eastern European folk music. No 6 is a romantic and melancholy Nocturne.

Antoine Tamestit viola
Jörg Widmann clarinet
Frank Braley piano

Fantasie

Jörg Widmann

The German composer, conductor and clarinettist Jörg Widmann studied with Hans Werner Henze and Wolfgang Rihm. He is a much sought-after performer, while his compositions include a Viola Concerto for Antoine Tamestit, which will be performed with the LSO on 31 October at the Barbican, and Five Bruch Pieces for clarinet. Fantasie for solo clarinet dates from 1993, and was first performed by Widmann himself the following year in a Bavarian Radio broadcast. It combines Romantic lyricism with excursions into dance, klezmer and jazz idioms. Widmann draws attention to its 'eccentric virtuosity and its cheerful, ironic fundamental character', and describes it as 'a little imaginary scene uniting dialogues of different people in close proximity in the spirit of the commedia dell'arte'.

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Hommage Robert Schumann Op 15d

György Kurtág

- 1 **Vivo** (Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler's Curious Pirouettes)
- 2 **Molto semplice, piano e legato** (Eusebius: the delimited circle is pure)
- 3 **Feroce, agitato** (... and again Florestan's lips tremble painfully)
- 4 **Calmo scorrevole** (I was a cloud, now the sun is shining)
- 5 **Presto** (In the night)
- 6 **Adagio poco andante** (Farewell: 'Meister Raro encounters Guillaume de Machaut')

This work by the Hungarian composer György Kurtág, who shares with Schumann a fascination with codes, ciphers and fantasy pieces, was completed in 1990. The six short pieces, scored for clarinet, viola and piano – the same combination as Schumann's Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales) – refer to several of the characters who inhabit Schumann's inner world, starting with E T A Hoffmann's fictitious Kapellmeister, the namesake of Schumann's cycle of keyboard miniatures Kreisleriana. Instrumental arabesques represent his 'curious pirouettes'. The next two movements refer to the two sides of Schumann's own personality – the introvert Eusebius, represented here by a brief canon based on a song, 'The delimited circle is pure', from Kurtág's own Kafka-Fragmente; and the extrovert Florestan, quivering with excessive emotion. The fourth movement, carrying a Hungarian title which translates as 'I was a cloud, now the sun is shining' from the poem Dal (Song) by Attila József, leads into a Bartókian piece of night-music filled with the flutterings of nocturnal insects. The final movement, 'Farewell', introduces Meister Raro, the wise and equable character whom Schumann imagined as reconciling the extremes of his own split personality. Raro's mediation occurs here through the application of repetitive isorhythmic techniques associated with the medieval composer Guillaume de Machaut, in which each instrument pursues an independent rhythmic path.

LSO Artist Portrait: Antoine Tamestit

28 & 31 October, Barbican

See Antoine Tamestit on-stage with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican. He concludes his Artist Portrait series with performances of Walton's Viola Concerto (28 October) – which established Walton as a leading British composer – and the London premiere of Jörg Widmann's Viola Concerto, written for Tamestit in 2015.

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Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano in E-flat major K498, 'Kegelstatt'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- 1 **Andante**
- 2 **Menuetto**
- 3 **Rondeaux: Allegretto**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed this trio for the unusual combination of clarinet (then a relatively new instrument), viola and piano in the summer of 1786, shortly after finishing his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. He dedicated it to his young piano student, 17-year-old Franziska von Jacquin. Mozart was very friendly with the Jacquin family, with whom he enjoyed 'discussions, games and music-making'. Franziska's father Nikolaus played the flute, and with Mozart playing the violin or viola and Franziska at the keyboard, they often gave little concerts together at the family's Vienna residence. It was there that the new Trio was first performed by Franziska, Mozart and Anton Stadler, the fine clarinetist who worked for the Viennese imperial court, and for whom Mozart went on to compose his Clarinet Quintet and Concerto. The nickname 'Kegelstatt' (a kind of bowling alley where people played skittles) was attached to the Trio much later: although we know that Mozart enjoyed playing skittles, there's no evidence that he did so while composing it.

The complementary mid-ranges of both clarinet and viola lend the Trio its attractively mellow timbre. It begins not with the customary Allegro, but with a lilting Andante. The central movement is a dramatic Minuet featuring contrapuntal dialogue between the instruments, enclosing a more agitated and chromatically inflected Trio in the minor mode, while the finale is a Rondo in seven sections based on an ingeniously varied melody inspired by the opening movement.

Programme notes by Wendy Thompson

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Antoine Tamestit

viola

Antoine Tamestit is recognised internationally as one of the great violists: as a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. He is notable for his peerless technique and profound musicianship, and for the depth and beauty of his sound, with its rich, burnished quality. His repertoire ranges from the Baroque to the contemporary. He has performed and recorded several world premieres.

Among Tamestit's concerto commissions is the Viola Concerto by Jörg Widmann. Since he gave the world premiere performance in 2015 with the Orchestre de Paris and Paavo Järvi, Tamestit has performed the concerto with the co-commissioners – the Swedish Radio Symphony and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, both under Daniel Harding – and with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris (again), the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony, and the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Tamestit's other world premiere performances and recordings include Thierry Escaich's *La nuit des chants* (2018), the Concerto for Two Violas by Bruno Mantovani (written for Tabea Zimmermann and Tamestit) and Olga Neuwirth's *Remnants of Songs*. Works composed for Tamestit also include Neuwirth's *Weariness Heals Wounds* and Gérard Tamestit's *Sakura*.

Tamestit is a founding member of Trio Zimmermann (with Frank Peter Zimmermann and Christian Poltéra). The Trio has recorded a number of acclaimed CDs for BIS Records (including Bach's Goldberg Variations, released in May 2019) and performed in Europe's most famous concert halls and series.

Tamestit was born in Paris, and studied with Jean Sulem, Jesse Levine and Tabea Zimmermann. He received several notable prizes, including First Prize at the ARD International Music Competition, the William Primrose Competition and the Young Concert Artists (YCA) International Auditions, won a Borletti-Buitoni Trust award and the Credit Suisse Award in 2008, and participated in BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists Scheme. He plays on a viola made by Stradivarius in 1672, loaned by the Habisreutinger Foundation.

Jörg Widmann

clarinet / composer

Clarinetist, composer, and conductor Jörg Widmann is one of the most versatile and intriguing artists of his generation. As Carnegie Hall's 2019/20 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer Chair his work was the season's focus. Future performances see him appear in all facets of his work. He appears as soloist with orchestras such as New World Symphony Orchestra and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and is artist in residence at WDR Sinfonieorchester and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Widmann's compositions are performed regularly by conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Daniel Harding, Valery Gergiev, Kent Nagano, Christian Thielemann, Mariss Jansons, Andris Nelsons and Sir Simon Rattle and premiered by orchestras such as the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, BBC Symphony Orchestra – and many others.

Frank Braley

piano

Frank Braley was born in 1968, and began his piano studies at the age of four. Six years later he gave his first concert with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Paris, Salle Pleyel. In 1986 he decided to devote himself entirely to music and abandoned his studies in science. He entered the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and was awarded unanimously first prizes for piano and chamber music three years later. In 1991, at the age of 22, he took part in an international competition for the first time: the Queen Elizabeth Competition of Belgium where he won the First Grand Prize. Public and press unanimously recognise him as a pianist with exceptional musical and poetic qualities.

Since then, Frank Braley has been regularly invited to Japan, Canada, the United States, and all over Europe, to play with various orchestras such as the London Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Orchestre de la Suisse-Romande, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, Bordeaux, Lille, Montpellier and Toulouse Orchestras, Berlin Radio Orchestra and many more.