

Beethoven Unwrapped (4)

Beethoven Piano Trios (3)

Hall One, 11.30am

PLEASE NOTE: Due to ill health Martin Roscoe has been replaced by Benjamin Frith

Peter Cropper violin **Moray Welsh** cello **Benjamin Frith** piano

Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1 No. 3

Allegro con brio; Andante cantabile con variazioni; Menuetto. Quasi allegretto;

Finale: prestissimo

The Trio in C minor Op 1 No 3 tells an altogether different story from the other Op 1’s. Starting with a ‘fate’ motive, we know from the outset that this world of febrile intensity is not going to evaporate as it does in the opening of No. 2. Though the moves into the major keys for other more yearning themes dispel some of the darkness, the taut energy of the opening mood is never banished for long. The movement fnishes with three brusque C minor chords, which defantly close the door, and the argument – that is that!

Knowing that his audience might need some light relief after the restlessness of the frst movement, Beethoven follows it with a poised set of fve perfectly symmetrical variations on a *cantabile* theme. It revisits the more conventional world of the 18th century salon, away from which the frst movement had so clearly moved, though it does interrupt the constancy of its home key of Eb with a telling fourth variation excursion into Eb minor with its six fat key signature.

The last two movements are again (mostly) in C minor. But quite swift changes of mood (and key) give both a restlessness which is never quite dispelled, even when it seems to be trying to move into calmer waters. The Presto, in particular, is a forerunner of the Presto of the *Ghost* Trio, and its main theme is more of gesture than a melody, based around the reiteration of the crucial interval of the minor third (in upward and downward versions), which started the whole piece.

Piano Trio Op. 44 in E fat

14 Variations on a theme

The Variations in Eb Op. 44 may even pre-date the Op. 1 Trios, sketches existing from 1792, though their publication was not until 1804. Said to be based on a theme Carl Dittersdorf’s Opera *The Little Red Cap*, one can see that, as a prototype and forerunner of the later *Kakadu* Variations, this set with fourteen variations establishes a form which was a model for later compositional developments in this genre.

Piano Trio in B fat, Op. 97 Archduke

Allegro moderato; Scherzo: Moderato; Andante cantabile;

Allegro moderato – Presto

Beethoven’s fnal essay into the piano trio, Op. 97, owes much to the fact that its dedicatee Archduke Rudolph was a sometime pupil of Beethoven. It was the frst opus of the triumvirate which were inspired by the two men’s friendship, the others being the *Hammerklavier* Sonata Op. 106 and the Missa Solemnis, and as in those two works a central preoccupation is the relationship between the keys of Bb and D major. From bar one the frst movement feels epic – a large canvas is going to be needed to accept these large ideas. There is a symphonic grandeur about the shape of the piece, and the three instruments sometimes strain to carry the weight of the orchestration.

The second stage of the journey (and playing this piece really does feel like going on a journey) starts as a brisk Scherzo, but contrasts the jaunty music of the opening with several more tense chromatic contrapuntal sections. They in turn are each followed by a rousing outburst from the piano - Prometheus won’t be bound by the slightly sinister chromaticism which threatens to drag the music down – and, as in the frst movement, Beethoven liberally decorates these moments

of exuberance. Then, at the heart of this work, comes the central glorious slow movement – one of the most moving pieces in all of Beethoven’s chamber music output. And the key reserved for this deeply-felt hymn is again D major, which musicologist Wilfrid Mellers suggested was associated, as in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, with the Godhead. As the variations progress, Beethoven takes us into a more and more unearthly world where time almost stops. Though it is of surpassing beauty, we arrive at a point where the equilibrium feels threatened by the music’s inability to move forward. The violin and cello repeat a fragment of melody again and again, over an ocean of repeated chords in triplets in the piano, as though searching for a way out of this stasis. Release comes suddenly and volcanically after a pregnant dominant-seventh cliff-hanging chord, and the last movement bursts forth like a whirling Dervish. Here, as in the late piano sonatas, the pianist, in particular, is required to perform superhuman tasks, using widely leaping intervals and having to overcome considerable awkwardness in the writing. Technical limitations are ignored as the music struggles to be free of any shackles, straining mind and sinew. This was a trajectory that was to fnd its apotheosis ffteen years later in the *Grosse Fugue*.

Moray Welsh

Peter Cropper - For over 40 years the name Peter Cropper was synonymous with that of the Lindsay Quartet whose impassioned style and close identification with the quartets of Beethoven (as well as Mozart, Haydn and Schubert) set it in the vanguard of British chamber ensembles. As well as leading the Lindsays Cropper maintained an active solo career which has blossomed after the disbandment of the quartet in 2005. A duo partnership with Martin Roscoe has produced more insightful recordings of Beethoven (the complete violin sonatas), and with Moray Welsh adding cello, Cropper is enthusiastically exploring the piano trio repertoire anew. Recognised for his imaginative programming. His Sheffield-based ‘Music in the Round’ won the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Festival award, and has evolved into a major force not only in the city but UK-wide. *BBC Music Magazine* praised ‘Cropper’s passion and intensely focused musicality’

Benjamin Frith

“Prodigy of Prodigies” was how British pianist Benjamin Frith was described by Dennis Matthews when, aged just fourteen, he won the Dudley National Concerto Competition. Since then, he has been a frst prizewinner in the Rubinstein Piano Masters Competition, a prizewinner in the Mozart Memorial Competition (London), and was awarded top prize in the Busoni International Piano Competition. Having achieved rave reviews from his American and Edinburgh Festival debuts, Frith established himself as an international concert artist. He has given recitals and concerto performances throughout Europe, Northern America, India, Kazakhstan and the Far East. He has appeared with many of the world’s fnest orchestras including the Berlin Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Polish National Radio, Halle, BBC Scottish, C.B.S.O, London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic and BBC Philharmonic; with such conductors as Zubin Mehta, Antoni Wit, Vasary, Skrowaczewski, Bamert, Atzmon, Barry Wordsworth and Gianandrea Noseda.

Moray Welsh studied at the Moscow Conservatoire with Mstislav Rostropovich, at the behest of Benjamin Britten, who recognised his talent when Welsh was at York University. As well as a distinguished career as a soloist, Welsh has directed his own string sextet, the Arienski Ensemble, and recorded the Bach Trio Sonatas with James Galway and Kyung Wha Chung. Other chamber partners have included Midori, Andre Previn, Yuri Bashmet and Leif Ove Andesnes. In 1992 he was appointed joint principal cellist of the LSO, with whom he has also appeared as a soloist. In June 2007 he relinquished this position to concentrate on chamber music. He gave the premieres of both David Blake and Ronald Stevenson’s Cello Concertos, and has made numerous recordings: a recent disc of works by Rachmaninov with Martin Roscoe was an Amazon record of the month. ‘A truly top class interpreter, whose highly structured musicianship and luminous tone, which is rarely heard at this intensity, totally captivated the audience...’ *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*

London Chamber Music Series

Hall One, 6.30pm

Ruth Palmer (Violin) and Alexei Grynyuk (Piano)

Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

Romance in F minor *Op 11* (c.1873)

Leos Janáček (1854-1928)

Sonata for Violin & Piano (1921)

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Romanian Folk Dances (1915)

Transcription for violin & piano by Zoltán Székely

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Geoff Palmer (born 1951)

Chansons (Première)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Sonata for Violin & Piano No 3 in D minor *Op 108* (1888)

Violinist **Ruth Palmer** is fast developing an international reputation for her intense physical performances, deeply sonorous sound and championing of new music. She won the *Young British Classical Performer 2007* award at the Classical BRITS. Ruth’s debut CD with the Philharmonia Orchestra was released to huge critical acclaim worldwide. Ruth has performed regularly at Wigmore Hall and with the English Chamber and London Chamber Orchestras among others and at various festivals at home and abroad. She appears regularly on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4. Ruth has worked frequently with some of Britain’s leading choreographers and dancers and has toured as soloist with the Rambert Dance Company. Ruth plays the Yfrah Neaman Stradivari, kindly loaned to her by his family.

Ukrainian pianist **Alexei Grynyuk** studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Hamish Milne. Notable competition successes include frst prize at the Diaghilev (Moscow), Vladimir Horowitz (Kiev) and the Shanghai Piano Competitions. Alexei’s increasingly international career has included appearances at Wigmore Hall, Great Hall of Moscow Conservatoire and Metropolitan Museum, New York. His performances have been broadcast on BBC 3, Hessicher Rundfunk Frankfurt and Radio France. Alexei has been invited to appear at the Cervantino Mexico, Montpellier France and Newport USA festivals.

Antonín Dvořák – Romance in F minor, Op. 11

Published in 1879, Dvořák’s composition of his *Romance* is thought to have been begun in 1873. Certainly it was in this year that he wrote his F minor string quartet, with which the *Romance* shares its principal theme. Op. 11 began life as a work for violin and orchestra before its current arrangement for violin and piano was made. This explains why the entry of the frst subject is announced by the piano. A Schubertian second subject triggers much of the work’s characteristic and delightful violin fguration before the principal theme is recalled.

Leoš Janáček – Sonata for Violin and Piano

I. Con moto / II. Balada / III. Allegretto / IV. Adagio

The A-fat (G-sharp) minor Violin Sonata was written over the course of seven years and underwent various revisions before its completion in 1921. The resulting work garnered much interest at the 1922 ISCM Festival (after its premiere in Brno). An unaccompanied, improvisatory passage opens the work and the frst movement follows a modifed sonata form thereafter, with only one theme to speak of, but with a repeated exposition. The *Balada* (Nocturne) follows a typical...

Continued overleaf...

This Week at Kings Place

Sun 1 Mar	Beethoven Unwrapped: Week 4
Hall One	Beethoven Piano's Trios (3)
11.30am	
Hall One	London Chamber Music Series
6.30pm	Ruth Palmer and Alexei Grynyuk
Mon 2 Mar	Words on Monday
Hall One	The Guardian Debate , Capatalism in Crisis - Part Two
7pm	The Global Economy - Can We Fix It?
Tue 3 Mar	This Is Tuesday
Hall Two	This Isn't For You
8pm	Curated by Matt Fretton
Wed 4 Mar	Sacconi Quartet: Exploring The Arts
St Pancras Rm	Pre-concert talk
6.30pm	Robin Holloway on The Dance in Western Music
Hall One	Sacconi Quartet: Exploring The Arts
7.30pm	The Dance
Hall Two	Sacconi Quartet: Exploring The Arts
9.45pm	Later...with the Sacconi Quartet
	Late-night set of contemporary dance
Thur 5 Mar	Sacconi Quartet: Exploring The Arts
Hall One	Haydn on Haydn
7.30pm	
Hall Two	Sacconi Quartet: Exploring The Arts
9.45pm	Later...with the Sacconi Quartet

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Dale Atkinson: A Pocket of Air**

Pangolin London **In The Mix**

Next Sunday 8 March 6.30 pm

Badke Quartet

Haydn – String Quartet in G major Op 76 No 1

Mozart – String Quartet in D major K 499 'Hoffmeister'

Schumann – String Quartet in A major Op 41 No 3

path of developing variation; the *Allegretto* has a clearer, tripartite structure, characterised by its contrast of a modal song with a harmonically more remote middle section. The closing *Adagio* recalls the opening movement in presenting only one fully-fedged theme, with only a terse suggestion of a second. Listen out for the recapitulation, in which the opening chorale theme is given to the violin with *tremolo* accompaniment in the piano – Russian armies on the prowl, said the composer.

Béla Bartók (arr. Zoltán Székely) – Romanian Folk Dances

1. Jocul cu bata (Stick Dance) / 2. Braul (Sash Dance) / 3. Pe loc (In One Spot)
4. Buclumeana (Horn Dance) / 5. Poarga romaneasca (Romanian Polka) / 6. Măruntel (Fast Dance)

As with Dvorák's *Romance*, Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances* is a staple in the violinist's repertory, but one not originally conceived for its more typical configuration of violin and piano. Based on material gathered from Romanian sources in Hungary, the dances were written for piano in 1915 but are now equally well known in Zoltan Szekely's arrangement. The six miniatures each reflect Bartók's passion for folk music and exhibit his characteristic ability to use 'found' melodic material as the origins for new works. The dances begin with a rhythmically jolting 'Stick Dance', proceeding to a brief but graceful 'Sash Dance' and an eerily expressive 'In One Spot' (written entirely in harmonics). Horn Dance is more pastoral, while the 'Romanian Polka' and 'Fast Dance' both give the work a bombastic conclusion.

Geoff Palmer – Chansons (première)

Chanson en fa (1989); *Chanson en sol* (1999); *Chanson en la* (2009); *Chanson en mi bémol* (1979)

The composer writes: "*Chansons* is a compilation of character pieces, written with extraordinary regularity over the past 30 years. The interplay of lightness and darkness seems to be a common thread running through each piece – and through Elgar's wonderful *Chanson de nuit* and *Chanson de matin* which to some extent inspired them all. *Chanson en fa* was written in 1989 for Ruth. Ten years later, the Institute of Socio-Cultural Development, Japan, commissioned *Chanson en sol* for Haru and Maki Sekiya, who gave the first performance in Leicester Cathedral. *Chanson en la* was completed another ten years on, in January this year, specifically for tonight's concert. In Debussyesque vein, its subtitle, 'Breezes and Shadows of a Summer's Day', appears at the end of the score. The earliest piece, but last of the set, *Chanson en mi bémol*, began life as a Christmas carol, setting John Donne's Divine Poem *Annunciation*. Its theme and set of variations forms the slow movement of a violin concerto currently being completed for Ruth."

Johannes Brahms – Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108

I. Allegro / II. Adagio / III. Un poco presto e con sentimento / IV. Presto agitato
Brahms's Third Violin Sonata was written during a summer spent at Lake Thun in 1888. Even for Brahms, the work is remarkable for its rich intensity, of which there is little let up after the opening few bars. The piano introduces an F-major second subject in the formally conventional *Allegro* movement. The *Adagio* offers greater harmonic contrast, while the *Scherzo*, with its typical interplay between the instruments, continues to shift about various tonal regions. The *Presto agitato* counterbalances the work, its emphatic first subject contrasts with the more tranquil second.

Sunday evening concerts promoted by the

London Chamber Music Society

President: Levon Chilingirian OBE

Artistic Director: Peter Fribbins

Sunday 1st March

Beethoven Unwrapped: Week 4

Beethoven Piano Trios (3)
Peter Cropper, Moray Welsh and Benjamin Frith

London Chamber Music Series

Ruth Palmer and Alexei Grynyuk

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society