

The image shows a concert hall with a Steinway & Sons piano in the foreground. The piano is dark wood with a light-colored keyboard. The background features rows of grey seats and a wooden balcony. The text "kings place" is overlaid in the top right corner.

kings place

Sunday 25 January

London Chamber Music Series

Raphael Wallfisch (cello) and
Linn Hendry (piano)

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

London Chamber Music Series

Raphael Wallfisch (Cello) and Linn Hendry (Piano)
Hall One, 6.30pm

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Sonata for Cello and Piano in A Major *Op 69* (1808)

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)
Sonata for Cello and Piano *Op 9* (1904)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Sonate pour violoncelle et piano (1915)

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
Cello Sonata in G Minor *Op 65* (1845-1846)

Raphael Wallfisch

At the age of 24 Raphael Wallfisch won the Gaspar Cassado International Cello Competition in Florence. Since then he has enjoyed a worldwide career playing with such orchestras as the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Los Angeles Philharmonic and many others. He is regularly invited to play at major festivals such as the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prades, Oslo and Schleswig Holstein. Teaching is one of Raphael's passions. He is in demand as a teacher all over the world, holding the position of professor of cello in Switzerland at the Zurich Winterthur Konservatorium and at the Royal College of Music in London. Raphael has recorded nearly every major work for his instrument. His extensive discography explores both the mainstream concerto repertoire and countless lesser-known works, including works by Dohnanyi, Respighi and Barber, as well as Richard Strauss, Dvorak and Khachaturian. He has recorded a wide range of British cello concertos, including the Walton concerto. Britain's leading composers have worked closely with Raphael, many having written works especially for him, including Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, James MacMillan and John Tavener. Raphael plays a 1760 Gennero Gagliano cello.

Linn Hendry was born in Canada and began her piano studies at the age of three. She has been a prizewinner in many competitions and appeared on television and radio as a soloist and in chamber music. Her many recordings include the Chandos recording of virtuoso cello music with Raphael Wallfisch. In concert she has worked with some of our best musicians. The strongest influence on her musical life was her late husband, the violinist, Jack Rothstein. They played both as a duo and in many chamber music combinations and she was often soloist with his Fine Arts Chamber Orchestra in concertos of Mozart, Beethoven and Shostakovich. In the last few years she has dedicated her time to coaching and playing with young string players.

Ludwig van Beethoven - Sonata No. 3 for Cello and Piano in A Major, Op. 69

- I. Allegro, ma non tanto
- II. Scherzo: Allegro molto
- III. Adagio cantabile -
- IV. Allegro vivace

Beethoven dedicated his Third Cello Sonata, written in 1808, to his friend and amateur cellist Baron Ignaz von Gleichenstein. The words *Inter lacrymas et luctus* (Amid tears and sorrows) were written in the original score, an apparently poignant gesture though one made with no obvious parallel in the music itself. Beethoven completed the sonata towards the end of the year while spending time in Heiligenstadt, on the outskirts of Vienna, and while he was putting the finishing touches to his Fifth Symphony. The sonata's opening sees the cello introduce the movement in the depths of its register, although from the outset the harmonic interplay between the two instruments is what drives the movement on. The introduction of the second subject, for example, is shared before the material is developed. Variation in the accompaniment, with a running triplet figure in the piano, marks the recapitulation. The second movement is cast in the form of an A-minor Scherzo, which is repeated as its frames the more virtuosic A-major Trio. It was not as uncommon as one might think for Beethoven to cut short his slow movements, as this brief E-major *Adagio cantabile* attests. This leads directly to the energetic, showy *Allegro vivace*.

Karol Szymanowski (transc. Kazimierz Witkomirski) - Sonata for Cello and Piano in D Minor, Op. 9

- I. Allegro moderato, patetico
- II. Andantino tranquillo e dolce
- III. Finale: Allegro molto, quasi presto

The Polish composer Szymanowski wrote his violin sonata in 1904 while still a student in Warsaw. Five years would pass before its premiere by Pawet Kochanski and Artur Rubinstein, although their calibre reflects how Szymanowski's domestic reputation grew in the interim. The cellist and teacher Kazimierz Witkomirski (1900-1995) subsequently adapted the sonata for cello. Although a juvenile work in one sense, the sonata already exhibits Szymanowski's individuality. The poverty of indigenous traditions after Chopin had quickly forced him to look beyond his borders to central and eastern European styles. His music, even in this relatively early period, skilfully synthesised the influences of Chopin, early Scriabin and the German Romantic masters.

The sonata's opening movement begins with a heartfelt theme, which, via a forceful dialogue between the instruments, leads to a more introspective second theme. Szymanowski's structural designs are rarely straightforward, despite the outwardly conventional form of this sonata. So it proves in the rhapsodic development, with its stuttering yet impassioned series of hesitations and intensifications before a (curtailed) return of the first theme. The subtly coloured second movement is an overlooked gem, with a melodic line broken only by variation through showy articulation and other techniques, for example the instruments joining in rhythmic unison. Its tender close is juxtaposed by a declamatory call to introduce the finale, which reprises the expressive heights of the opening movement but ends with a more fully-fledged coda.

Claude Debussy - Sonate pour violoncelle et piano

- I. Prologue
- II. Serenade -
- III. Finale

The war and ill health blighted Debussy's final years, but a summer spent on the channel coast at Pourville in 1915 marked something of a creative turning-point. There, he resolved to write six sonatas, although only three - for cello, for flute, viola and harp, and for violin - were complete upon his death three years later. That the Cello Sonata was given its world premiere in London in March 1916 attests to the composer's anglophilia: he visited England seven times up to 1914 and, generally, the admiration was mutual, especially among composers such as Bridge, Ireland, Scott and Hoist.

Debussy's original intention had been to name the sonata *Pierrot fache avec la lune* (Pierrot angry with the moon) - this points us not only towards the thematic preoccupation with *commedia dell'arte* characters shared by many composers at the time, but also in the direction of the sonata's palpable eccentricity. (The middle movement, for example, variously casts the cello as a guitar, mandolin and (possibly) a flute). Debussy also prefaced the sonata with the text '*presque classique dans le bon sens du mot*' (almost classical in the good sense of the word), to which we might attribute the rhythmic unity and, later, the melodic poignancy of the *Prologue*. The *Finale* follows the *Serenade* without a break and mirrors Debussy's fragile/confident state as it skips animatedly between glee and wistfulness, with little reconciliation between the two.

Frederic Chopin - Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op. 65

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Scherzo: Allegro con brio
- III. Largo
- IV. Finale: Allegro

Chopin's Cello Sonata is one of only a handful of works he wrote for an instrument other than piano. The sonata is among the most significant of these, principally because, as a late work composed from 1845-46, it tackles novel problems of form, genre and, of course, medium. It is also unusual in having caused the composer great difficulties and the scope of the opening movement alone suggests why this might have been the case. The piano-led introduction sets the scene for the tight-knit thematic structure that unfolds, progressing to a second subject in B-flat major then to the central development full of delicate exploration of other keys and an abridged recapitulation. The cello is prominent in the showy D-minor *Scherzo* and its related D-major trio. After the cello's initial lyricism, the brief slow movement shares the melody more equally, before a finale underpinned by a tarantella rhythm and full of melodic variation and articulative delights (such as the cello's double-stopping) draws the sonata to a close.