



T B S



Yoanna Prodanova - cello

Gamal Khamis - piano



8 October 2022

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Programme

We are most grateful to HSH Dr Donatus Prince of Hohenzollern for his financial support for our concerts this year

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Sonata in A minor "Arpeggione" D.821

Allegro moderato; Adagio; Allegretto

The arpeggione was a six-stringed instrument the size of a cello but with a guitar-like body and a fretted fingerboard. It was played with a bow. Its chief exponent was Vincenz Schuster, who knew Schubert and commissioned this Sonata for Arpeggione and Piano. It is usually played on the 'cello, but is also occasionally heard on the viola.

Schubert wrote the work in November 1824 after returning to Vienna from a summer spent at Zseliz in Hungary in the service of the Esterházy family, which he had previously visited in 1818. In 1824 he also composed the A minor and D minor quartets, the Grand Duo and the Octet, although not the opera or symphony he had hoped to work on at Zseliz.

The first movement of the sonata opens with a flowing theme first on the piano, then the 'cello. A few flourishes lead to a dance-like second subject that is passed between the instruments. The development refers to the first theme but reverts to the second subject and the dancing semiquavers continue and eventually appear in the bass on the piano supporting harmonic changes and leading into the recapitulation. In the coda Schubert finds fresh uses for his theme.

The slow movement in E is short and forms an interlude between the outer movements. It is appealing, with a song-like melody proceeding to sonorous bass phrases on the 'cello below repeated piano chords. The adagio leads without a break into the finale that has pleasantly varied episodes in A major, D minor and E major.

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)

5 Stücke in Volkston, Op 102

In Schumann's *Five Pieces in Popular Style* (1849), his only work for cello and piano, the "popular" style of these pieces is evident in their simple A-B-A formal structure, their strongly profiled melodies, and their frequent use of drone tones in the bass.

The first piece is entitled *Vanitas vanitatum*, a phrase from the book of Ecclesiastes ("Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"). It is likely meant to depict a drunken soldier like the one featured in Goethe's well-known poem of the same name. Its heavy peasant swing conveys something of the soldier's alcoholic swagger, or perhaps even stagger, but offers glimpses of his tipsy charm, as well.

The second piece is like a drowsy lullaby, or perhaps just something cozy to play in a room with plenty of coals on the fire and a hot bowl of punch at the ready. This is warm home life distilled into sound.

An aura of mystery seems to pervade the third piece, which opens with a sad waltz in the cello dogged by furtive interruptions in the piano. More lyrical material occupies the middle section, notable for the high register used in the cello and the double-stop writing in 6ths.

The fourth piece offers one of those bravely optimistic and celebratory anthems that one often finds in Schumann, alternating with more fretful expressive outpourings in its middle section.

The least 'amateur' of the set is the fifth piece that features copious scoops of double thirds in the piano part and a restless, roving cello line determined to sing out its line on its own terms.

Interval

Top-ups of drinks are available at the table at the entrance

Clara Schumann (1819 - 1896)

Flüchtige Stücke in F, op 15 no 1

Clara Schumann was one of the world's first piano virtuosos, and many of her early compositions are written exclusively for her own instrument. Shortly after marrying Robert in 1840, Clara began working on Vier Flüchtige Stücke, a series of four short character pieces for solo piano, all in ternary form (ABA), which she would dedicate to Maria Wieck, her younger half-sister.

Romance in G minor, op 21 no 3

Clara Schumann composed her Three Romances for piano in 1853, during what was the last year that she and Robert would have a relatively conventional relationship. Within a year, after a failed suicide attempt, Robert would be living in a mental asylum, and Clara would be left to take care of seven children while also performing and touring internationally. This was also the year that the young Johannes Brahms came into the Schumanns' lives – the start of a musical and personal relationship with Clara that would last over four decades.

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)

Mondnacht

Robert composed almost exclusively for solo piano until his marriage to Clara in 1840, when he suddenly began to write so many song cycles, including his second set of "Liederkreis". It was based on the poetry of Joseph von Eichendorff and included Mondnacht, which would become known as his Year of Song. Clara would play many of these works on the piano alone, weaving the vocal lines into Robert's piano parts, and no fewer than thirty of her transcriptions of these songs would be published during her lifetime. With its ethereal and dream-like mood, "Mondnacht" is perhaps the most famous individual song from the "Liederkreis" set.

Frédéric Chopin (1810 - 1849)

Cello Sonata

Allegro moderato in G minor; *Scherzo* in D minor, Trio in D major;

Largo in B-flat major; *Finale. Allegro* in G minor, ending in G major

The *Cello Sonata*, Chopin's last chamber work, was conceived in the atmosphere of his acrimonious affair with the woman writer George Sand and his struggle against tuberculosis. It was written with the help of his friend the 'cellist Auguste-Joseph Franchomme (1808–84), to whom it is dedicated. Franchomme, with whom Chopin had cooperated on a *Grand Duo Concertante* in 1833, was appointed professor of 'cello at the Paris Conservatoire in 1846; together they gave a private première of the Sonata in 1847, and on 16 February 1848 they performed the last three movements at the Salle Pleyel. It was to be Chopin's last public concert appearance in Paris, although others were to follow during his ill-fated tour of England and Scotland later that year. He died in Paris in October 1849.

Chopin conceived all his music in terms of the keyboard and the success of the '*Cello Sonata* reflects Franchomme's expert guidance, especially in the string writing. The work draws on styles which Chopin had developed through the piano concertos and sonatas and other larger-scale works for solo piano. It lacks the innovative approach, however, of other late works of his; he was too ill and tired while he was writing it to wrestle with new musical forms or language.

The piano introduction to the first movement recalls the orchestral introductions to the two piano concertos, but what follows illustrates the subtlety and inventiveness of Chopin's keyboard writing. The *Scherzo* has surprising vigour, which calls for a light touch from the 'cellist in order to bring out the vitality of the movement. The *Largo*, on the other hand, is a movement of sublime tranquillity, which recalls the language of the *Nocturnes* and of Chopin's Polish heritage. The breadth and richness of the *Finale* bring the *Sonata* to a close in great style.

TBS continues to operate with a retiring collection rather than fixed-price tickets.

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Yoanna Prodanova

Yoanna Prodanova, from Bulgaria, completed her studies in 2019 at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she was a Bicentenary Scholar on the prestigious Advanced Diploma course, already having obtained her Bachelor and Master's degrees at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2019 she gave her recital debut in Switzerland at the Studio Ernest Ansermet where she played the Swiss premiere of Valentin Gheorghiu's sonata for cello and piano with her duo partner Mihai Ritiviu. This recital was broadcast live on RTS Espace 2.

Yoanna's debut album including works by Janacek, Fauré and Chopin with Mihai Ritiviu was released in 2020 on the Linn Records label. She has also recorded the Brahms clarinet trio with Joseph Shiner and Somi Kim for Orchid Records.

Ioanna plays a beautiful cello made by Giuseppe Gagliano in 1788 and kindly loaned by the Canimex Group.

Gamal Khamis

Described by The Times as a pianist with "formidable keyboard skills", Gamal Khamis discovered the piano at the age of four while at his grandmother's house in Honduras. He first performed at the Wigmore Hall at the age of 10, and he completed his formal education at the Royal College of Music, after gaining a degree in Mathematics from Imperial College London.

Gamal has played at Carnegie Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Sage Gateshead, as well as all over Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. He has won major prizes at the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition and the Ferrier Awards, and he has worked with many of Britain's leading composers.

He is a regular contributor to BBC Radio 3 In Tune, where he has collaborated with Sol Gabetta, Vilde Frang and Erwin Schrott.

"The highlight of the evening was pianist Gamal Khamis, whose sensitivity and imagination shone out of his three performances" *Financial Times*

Future Farnham Concerts

7-30pm Saturday 29 October

Spire Church (URC), South Street, Farnham GU9 7QU

**Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux (violin)
& Joseph Havlat (piano)**

Beach, Poulenc, Bartok, Brahms

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Spire Church (URC), South Street, Farnham GU9 7QU

Zemlinsky Trio

Schumann, Beethoven, Janáček, Brahms

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