



**T B S**



**Tessa Uys Ben Schoeman**



**21 April 2024**  
**[www.tilbach.org.uk](http://www.tilbach.org.uk)**

## **Programme**

### **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)**

#### **Symphony No 1 in C major, Op. 21**

Transcribed for four hands by Franz Xaver Scharwenka (1850-1924)

*Adagio molto – Allegro con brio; Andante cantabile con moto*

*Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace; Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace*

Beethoven did not compose his Symphony no. 1, Op. 21 until he was 29 but the first outlines may be found in his manuscript notes as early as 1794. The work was completed six years later and was dedicated to Baron van Swieten. The first performance was given on 2nd April 1800 at the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna. The Symphony earned immediate popularity, but although the critics admitted that "the symphony was undeniably rich in ideas and original", they regarded the seventh chord at the opening of the first movement as a "threat to the art". Several of them found the symphony too reminiscent of Haydn and stamped the work as "a caricature of Haydn's symphonies." However, the work was so popular that publishers had it arranged for quintet – an undertaking against which Beethoven protested energetically but in vain. The Symphony no. 1 has been called "the swan song of the 18th century"; it is certainly an expression of the symphonic form as it was before Beethoven began to adapt it to suit his personality and the new age.

### **Interval**

### **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)**

#### **Symphony No 3 in E flat major, Op. 55 ('Eroica')**

Transcribed for four hands by Franz Xaver Scharwenka (1850-1924)

*Allegro con brio; Marcia funebre: Adagio assai*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivace; Finale: Allegro molto*

In 1803 Beethoven started composing his Symphony no. 3, Op. 55. His secretary Ferdinand Ries wrote the following a year later:

*"In writing this symphony, Beethoven had been thinking of Buonaparte, but Buonaparte while he was First Consul. At that time Beethoven had the highest esteem for him and compared him to the greatest consuls of Ancient Rome. Not only I, but many of Beethoven's closer friends, saw this symphony on his table, beautifully copied in manuscript, with the word "Buonaparte" inscribed at the very top of the titlepage ... I was the first to tell him the news that Buonaparte*

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*had declared himself Emperor, whereupon he broke into a rage and exclaimed, "So he is no more than a common mortal! Now, too, he will tread under foot all the rights of Man, indulge only his ambition; now he will think himself superior to all men, become a tyrant!" Beethoven went to the table, seized the top of the title page, tore it in half and threw it on the floor. The page had to be recopied, and it was only now that the symphony received the title Sinfonia Eroica."*

The first movement does not commence with the customary slow introduction, but rather with two defiant accented E-flat major chords. The major-third interval becomes a ubiquitous building block at this point. It can literally be traced throughout this symphony and many later works. This third interval can be heard in the first, third and closing movements of the Eroica Symphony. The second movement is entitled "funeral march": The dramatic pathos in this movement expresses Beethoven's inner torment of his impending deafness. The operatic potential of this music did not escape the later composer, Giuseppe Verdi. The descending minor-third interval of Beethoven is mirrored by the opening of the Libera Me from Verdi's Requiem of 1874.

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### Franz Xaver Scharwenka (1850 -1924)

Scharwenka was born in 1850 near Posen in East Prussia and died in Berlin in 1924. Although he began learning the piano by ear when he was three, he did not start formal music studies until he was 15, when his family moved to Berlin where he enrolled at The Akademie of Tonkunst. He travelled widely as a piano virtuoso and scored a considerable success in England in both this capacity and that of composer. Scharwenka was an inspiring teacher, and a composer of symphonies, piano concerti and an opera, as well as a quantity of instrumental music, including the transcriptions for piano duet for four hands of all the 9 Symphonies by Beethoven.

### Historic Background

In the years before recordings, when CDs, iPods, Spotify, and YouTube were unknown and live concerts the prerogative of the wealthy, piano transcriptions were widely admired, making such music as tonight's symphony and other orchestral masterworks available to a generation of listeners who might not otherwise have come to know them. Amongst the most illustrious of such transcriptions were those by Franz Liszt and tonight's composer, the German/Polish Franz Xaver Scharwenka.

Tessa Uys has a very personal connection with the music, as her concert pianist mother, Helga Bassel was from Berlin, the city where Scharwenka lived. In the 1930's along with thousands of Jews she fled the city seeking refuge in Cape Town where her daughter was born. By a stroke of good fortune, she had been able to take not only her beloved Blüthner piano with her but also her collection of piano music including the Scharwenka transcriptions, which were eventually bequeathed to Tessa. In 2004 the piano was returned to the Blüthner factory in Leipzig for restoration and finally gifted to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, thus completing a journey from Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa to a new era back in Germany.

The complete cycle of Beethoven's symphonies has never been presented in this format and leading publications such as BBC Music magazine, Gramophone, International Piano Magazine and The Sunday Times have unanimously praised Uys and Schoeman for their "enthraling" and "ground-breaking" recordings of these beloved works.

**Compact Discs for sale at the entrance. Also consult the SOMM Recordings website:**  
<https://somm-recordings.com/artist/tessa-uys-and-ben-schoeman-piano-duo/>

### Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman Piano Duo

In 2010, Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman established a duo partnership after being invited to give a two-piano recital at the Royal Over-Seas League in London. Ever since, they have performed regularly at music societies, festivals and at the BBC, and in 2015 they embarked on their journey with the nine Scharwenka/Beethoven Symphonies transcriptions.

Born in Cape Town, **Tessa Uys** was first taught by her mother, Helga Bassel, herself a noted concert pianist. At 16, she won a Royal Schools Associated Board Scholarship and continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied with Gordon Green.

In her final year she was awarded the MacFarren Medal. Further studies followed in London with Maria Curcio, and in Siena with Guido Agosti. Shortly after this Tessa Uys won the Royal Over-Seas League Competition and was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. During the past decades, Tessa Uys has established for herself an impressive reputation, both as concert performer and as a broadcasting artiste, performing at many concert venues throughout the world and with such distinguished conductors as Sir Neville Marriner, Walter Susskind, Louis Frémaux and Nicholas Kraemer.

Also born in South Africa, **Ben Schoeman** studied piano with Joseph Stanford at the University of Pretoria and then received post-graduate tuition from Boris Petrushansky, Louis Lortie, Michel Dalberto, Ronan O'Hora and Eliso Virsaladze in Florence, Imola and London.

He obtained a doctorate from City, University of London and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He won 1st Prize in the 11th UNISA International Piano Competition, the Gold Medal in the Royal Over-Seas League Competition, the contemporary music prize at the Cleveland International Piano Competition, and the Huberte Rupert Prize from the South African Academy for Science and Art. He has performed at Wigmore Hall, the Barbican Centre and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, and Carnegie Hall in New York. Ben Schoeman is a Steinway Artist and a senior lecturer in piano and musicology at the University of Pretoria.

This piano duo is currently touring countrywide performing all the Symphonies by Beethoven and promoting their new album and the complete six-CD box set.

### **Future Farnham Concerts**

**Spire Church, South Street, Farnham, GU9 7QU**

7-30pm Saturday 18 May: Elizabeth Cooney (violin) & Daniel Hill (piano)  
JS Bach Violin Sonatas 1 & 4; Beethoven Violin Sonatas 1 & 10

7-30pm Saturday 25 May: Dante String Quartet  
Haydn "Fifths", Beethoven Opus 135 & Brahms Opus 51 No 1

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Tilford Bach Festival will be held 14-16 June in Tilford Church

**[tilfordbachfestival.com](http://tilfordbachfestival.com)**

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### **Future Conservatoire Concerts**

**Godalming Baptist Church, GU7 1BA**

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