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**ALINA
IBRAGIMOVA**

**CÉDRIC
TIBERGHIE**

King's Hall

Wednesday 11th April 2018



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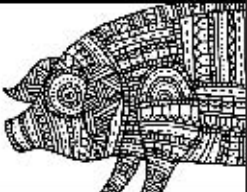
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TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Violin Sonata no. 1 in G major, op 78

(Last performance at ICC 25/10/1972)

Violin Sonata no. 2 in A major, op 100

(Last performance at ICC 15/03/2006)

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

Violin Sonata no. 3 in D minor, op 108

(Last performance at ICC 09/04/2008)

Ilkley Concert Club

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PROGRAMME NOTES

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Violin Sonata no. 1 in G major, op 78

Vivace ma non troppo

Adagio

Allegro molto moderato

Struggling under the mighty shadow of Beethoven, Brahms was 43 years old when he finally produced a symphony. His attempts to compose a violin sonata were subjected to even more intense self-criticism; five early efforts, starting in 1853, were all consigned to the fire. Only in 1879, three years after the premiere of the First Symphony, did Brahms publish his first sonata. It was intended, as with the two sonatas which followed, for Brahms's friend Joseph Joachim and may have been a response to the death at the age of only 24 of the composer's godson, Felix Schumann, the youngest son of Clara and Robert. Felix was born after Robert Schumann had finally left the family home to spend his last years in an asylum and Brahms had been especially close to the boy. Upon receiving the completed manuscript, Clara Schumann wrote to Brahms, 'I must send you a line to tell you how excited I am about your Sonata. It came today. Of course, I played it through at once, and at the end could not help bursting into tears of joy.'

Each of the three movements shares musical material with two of Brahms's songs from 1873, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang* op 59; the sonata is sometimes referred to as the 'Rain Sonata' (*Regen-Sonate*). The song compares raindrops to tears; there is sadness but also the notion of water as an agent of regeneration. The sonata captures this mood of grief tempered by hope. The first movement opens *mezza voce* with both instruments playing in a hushed manner. The violin launches the main theme, memorable for its repeated, raindrop 'D's in a dotted rhythm taken from the earlier 'rain' song. This motif appears in all three

movements; in the middle section of the second movement, it appears as a funeral march whilst the Rondo structure of the finale enables Brahms to revisit material from the first two movements in a gentle reminiscence of happier times past. In 1889, when she was in poor health, the 70 year old Clara Schumann wrote to Brahms, ‘Joachim was here on Robert’s eightieth birthday and we had a lot of music. We played the [op 78] Sonata again and I revelled in it. I wish that the last movement could accompany me in my journey from here to the next world.’

(Duration: 25 minutes)

Violin Sonata no. 2 in A major, op 100
Allegro amabile
Andante tranquillo – Vivace – Andante –
Vivace di piu – Andante – Vivace
Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

The shortest and most lyrical, the second violin sonata in A Major was composed in the summer of 1886 whilst Brahms was staying at his favourite retreat on Lake Thun, Switzerland. In this idyllic location, far from the artistic hurly burly of Vienna, the nervous, self-doubting Brahms felt at ease. He told a friend that the area was ‘so full of melodies that one has to be careful not to step on any’. That summer he eagerly anticipated the visit of Hermine Spies, the young contralto for whom he wrote many of his late songs. There are thematic connections between the music of the sonata and three songs which Brahms wrote for Hermine, including ‘*Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer*’ (My slumber grows more and more peaceful) – which climaxes with the words, ‘*Komm, O komme bald*’ (Come, O come soon). That urgent phrase appears at the climax of the finale of the sonata although the overall mood of the work is more mellow and relaxed; Brahms’s friend Elisabeth von Herzogenberg remarked that ‘the whole sonata is one caress’.

For ardent Wagnerians in the late nineteenth century, Brahms represented the last gasp of a moribund conservatism in music whilst to many

admirers of Brahms, Richard Wagner was a little more than a modernist charlatan. Given the hostility between these two factions, it is perhaps surprising that the first three notes of the first movement of the sonata are very similar in both melody and harmony to the opening notes of ‘Walther’s Prize Song’ (*‘Morgendlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein’*) from Wagner’s music drama, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. There is no evidence to indicate that the quotation is deliberate but it is worth noting that, despite the factionalism, Brahms remained an admirer of Wagner’s achievement in opera, a musical form which Brahms himself never attempted.

The first movement combines two lyrical themes in a standard sonata form. The second falls into two alternating sections, a bucolic *Andante* contrasting with a humorous, folk-like *Vivace*, before the movement ends in a brief blaze of excitement. The finale, a graceful and elegant rondo, begins with a soulful line expressed in sustained legato. Mid-movement, there occurs an impassioned outburst (‘come, O come soon!’) before the calm theme of the opening returns to end the work in an expression of dignified triumph.

(Duration: 24 minutes)

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

Violin Sonata no. 3 in D minor, op 108
Allegro
Adagio
Un poco presto e con sentimento
Presto agitato

Composed over two summers at Lake Thun and premiered in December 1888, Brahms’s last violin sonata differs from its predecessors in several respects. It has four, rather than three, substantial movements and a more

expansive, symphonic character requiring a concert hall rather than a salon to achieve full effect. However, the sonata is both concise and highly dramatic; despite its extra movement, it is no longer than the first two sonatas.

Violin and piano share equally the thematic material of the opening movement: the violin presents the principal subject, a lyrical inspiration marked by long notes that give way to quick neighbouring tones. The piano's arching second theme is superbly constructed from a two-measure motive of stepwise motion followed by a hesitant dotted-rhythm figure. The development section is largely taken up with an examination of the main theme. A full recapitulation and an ethereal coda drawn from the main theme close the movement. The *Adagio* is one of Brahms's most endearing creations, combining a touching melody and seductive harmonies in a slow, waltz-like rhythm. At the end, a brief echo of the opening theme leads to a final, subdued cadence. The piano dominates the third movement which is more *scherzo* than *intermezzo*, more subversive than sentimental. A playful exchange between the instruments returns in a more serious mood eventually drifting into reverie before abruptly returning to the minor key music of the opening. The virtuosic finale is all serious endeavour. A chorale-like second subject initiated by the piano provides some contrast, but the stormy, unsettled mood of the first theme remains dominant through the remainder of the movement, Brahms employing throbbing syncopations and eerie unisons to underline the force of the musical argument. 'Perfect as each movement of the three Violin Sonatas is', wrote Karl Geiringer, 'they seem, in this last movement, to have reached their culminating point.'

(Duration: 25 minutes)

Programme notes © C.N. Lane

ALINA IBRAGIMOVA

Performing music from Baroque to new commissions on both modern and period instruments, **Alina Ibragimova** has established herself as one of the most accomplished and intriguing violinists of her generation. This was illustrated in her prominent presence at the 2015 BBC Proms, which included a symphonic concerto, a performance with a baroque ensemble and two late-night Royal Albert Hall recitals to capacity audiences featuring the complete Bach partitas and sonatas. **The Guardian** commented *'The immediacy and honesty of Ibragimova's playing has the curious ability to collapse any sense of distance between performer and listener'*.

Born in Russia in 1985 Alina studied at the Moscow Gnesin School before moving to Britain with her family when her father, Rinat, was appointed principal double-bassist of the London Symphony Orchestra. She then studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Royal College of Music. Alina has been the recipient of many awards including the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award 2010, the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award 2008 and the Classical BRIT Young Performer of the Year Award 2009. She was a member of the BBC New Generation Artists Scheme 2005-7 and was made MBE in the 2016 New Year Honours List.

As a recitalist Alina has appeared at many prestigious venues worldwide. Her long-standing duo partnership with pianist Cédric Tiberghien has featured highly successful cycles of the Beethoven and Mozart violin sonatas at the Wigmore Hall. Their most recent release, the fourth volume of their Mozart Violin Sonata cycle on Hyperion Records attracted critical acclaim. This season's highlights include a three-week tour of Japan and Korea, extensive touring of North America, regular returns to the Wigmore Hall and a Berlin debut recital at the Boulez Saal.

Recent concerto engagements include debuts with the Boston Symphony, Montreal Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Hungarian National Philharmonic, Scottish Chamber and Tokyo Symphony orchestras. There are also numerous return engagements booked with many of the great national and international orchestras over this season and the next. The list is exhausting to read. In a recent interview she admitted that she only spends about five or six days a month at home in London and is used to living out of a suitcase.

CÉDRIC TIBERGHIE

Cédric Tiberghien is a French pianist with a truly international career. He has been particularly applauded for his versatility, as demonstrated by his wide-ranging repertoire, interesting programming, an openness to explore innovative concert formats and his dynamic chamber music partnerships. Regular chamber music partners include violist Antoine Tamestit and baritone Stéphane Degout. However, Cédric has a particularly strong relationship with Alina Ibragimova. Apart from numerous duo recitals this season, he and Alina are creating a formidable discography. So far they have recorded complete cycles of music by Schubert, Szymanowski and Mozart on the Hyperion label and a Beethoven Sonata cycle on Wigmore Live.

As a concerto artist Cédric returned to the Cleveland, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and City of Birmingham Symphony orchestras last season as well as to the BBC Proms, performing Saint-Saëns and Franck with Les Siècles. He also had an extensive residency with the Orchestre de Bretagne during which he performed concertos by Saint-Saëns, Mendelssohn and Mozart, the later directed from the piano. He has collaborated with the Boston Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony and Tokyo Philharmonic orchestras.

Cédric recently presented a major focus on the music of Bartok, including a three-volume exploration of his solo piano works which has received huge critical acclaim. His solo discography also includes Szymanowski's *Masques & Études*, Franck's *Symphonic Variations* and *Les Djinns* with the Liège Philharmonic and François-Xavier Roth and Brahms' *Concerto no. 1* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Jiri Bělohlávek. His recital discs include repertoire by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Debussy. He has been awarded four Diapason d'Or for his solo recordings on Hyperion.

'Superlative pianism' **Chicago Classical Review**

'...not just brilliantly played but brilliantly conceived' **The Telegraph**

(Biographical notes compiled by Sarah Warnes from notes supplied by the agent)

CLUB NOTES

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SECRETARY AND ARTIST HOSPITALITY REPLACEMENT

Following the request a couple of months ago, we are delighted to have interest in the secretary's role, but we have had no volunteer to take on the job of coordinating **Artist Hospitality**. If you are interested in finding out what this job involves this please contact Josephine Wesley at 01943 601248 or josephine.wesley@virginmedia.com

TEA AND COFFEE SERVERS AND PROGRAMME SELLERS

Our evenings would not run so smoothly without the volunteers supporting Pip Cowling, who took on the role of co-ordinating the coffee servers this year and Andrew Walbank's team of programme sellers. I'd like on your behalf to extend a warm thank you to them all.

We are on the lookout for some additional coffee servers and if you would like to volunteer could you please contact Pip at pipcowling@hotmail.com

NEW WEBSITE

During the past year we have worked with a local website designer Ian White of Bluehoop, based in Ilkley's Riverside Business Park to refresh and upgrade our website. The new website is now live but with a new address.

<http://ilkleyconcertclub.org.uk/>

We hope you like the new format, and any suggestions for improvement can be sent to Robert Templar (rdtemplar@btinternet.com).

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

There are so many highly recommendable recordings of Brahms's Violin Sonatas that choice is difficult. Here are three of my favourites in different price ranges.

First, a new recording from Chandos, at full price (CHAN 10977), with Tasmin Little (violin) and Piers Lane (piano). These are keenly felt readings with excellent sound.

Next, down at super-budget price, on Brilliant Classics 94824, the young Hungarian violinist Kristóf Baráti is partnered by the experienced pianist Klara Würst, and they repeat their success that they had with the complete Beethoven Violin Sonatas. The sound quality is very good.

Finally, my favourite, and a classic recording, by Josef Suk (violin) with Julius Katchen (piano) on Decca 466 393-2 (medium price). Everything about this recording seems to me to be right, and the performances are enhanced by Suk's lovely violin tone. The sound quality is very natural in this latest re-mastering.

Raymond Waud. raynaud@gmail.com

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