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METAMORPHOSES



King's Hall

Wednesday 12th February 2020



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TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

Mozart

Clarinet Trio in E flat major, K498 '*Kegelstatt*'

(Last performance at ICC 03/12/1997)

Röntgen

Trio in E flat major

(First performance at ICC)

INTERVAL

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

Schumann

Märchenerzählungen, op 132

(First performance at ICC)

Françaix

Clarinet Trio

(First performance at ICC)

Ilkley Concert Club

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PROGRAMME NOTES

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756-1791)

Clarinet Trio
in E flat major, K498
'Kegelstatt'

Andante
Menuetto
Rondeaux: Allegretto

For years, audiences have marvelled at a genius who could compose this complex masterpiece amid the clatter of a skittle alley (*Kegelstatt*). The only problem is he didn't. The reference to skittles ('Wien den 27.t Julius 1786 untern Kegelscheiben' [Vienna, 27th July 1786, while playing skittles]) appears not on the manuscript of this trio but on a Duet for Horns completed nine days earlier and even then, it is not in Mozart's own hand. The mix-up seems to have occurred in the 1860s during the compilation of Köchel's pioneering catalogue.

No composer before Mozart had written for this combination of instruments. The trio was composed for the clarinetist Anton Stadler, who also inspired the Clarinet Concerto and Clarinet Quintet, and Franziska von Jacquin, one of Mozart's best piano pupils. At the first performance, the composer himself played the viola. The genial opening *Andante* is permeated by a five-note ornamental turn or gruppetto that occurs at the outset. An intimate, dignified *Menuetto* follows, filled with a yearning chromaticism. A four-note motive begins to circle in on itself in half steps, alternating with spates of running triplets, producing a delightful and novel effect. The sunny finale is a seven section *Rondo* (A-B-A-C-A-D-A); every time the main theme returns, it is ingeniously varied. A sudden outburst in the minor from the viola darkens the mood before the sun returns to bring matters to a close.

(Duration: approx. 21 minutes)

JULIUS RÖNTGEN
(1855-1932)

Trio in E flat major

Andante
Allegro deciso
Sostenuto
Allegro – comodo

Julius Röntgen's career bridged an extraordinary span of European cultural development. Taught piano by one of Schubert's best friends, Franz Lachner, he became a great friend of Brahms, whose second piano concerto he performed in 1887, conducted by the composer himself. And yet, after he abandoned his native Germany following the First World War and became a Dutch citizen, Röntgen not only experimented with atonality but would occasionally pop up in his local cinema to accompany the latest Buster Keaton movie. A prolific composer (he wrote twelve piano trios, five in the last year of his life) Röntgen was also an influential teacher. He founded the Amsterdam Conservatory and co-founded the Concertgebouw Orchestra. The E flat major Trio was written in 1921 and has been accurately described as 'post-Brahmsian'. It opens at walking pace with purposeful but heartfelt themes shared between the instruments. The 'decisive' *Allegro* is a delight, brimming with snatches of the Scandinavian folk melodies which Röntgen adored. The finale opens with ominous statements on piano and clarinet before the mood lightens.

Julius Röntgen and the inventor of X Rays, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen, were distantly related; the grandfather of the physicist and the great grandfather of the composer were brothers. Once, after Julius had arrived for his annual holiday at Fuglsang, Denmark, a local newspaper reported: 'Yesterday Professor Röntgen arrived, though not the famous one.' In his speech at Röntgen's 60th birthday party, his friend Edvard Grieg was on hand to put the record straight: 'I tell him that he is "the famous one" after all, he deserves to be, because the X-rays go no further than the bones, whereas his rays go right through!'

(Duration: approx. 15 minutes)

INTERVAL

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

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

Märchenerzählungen, op 132
(Fairy tale narrations)

Lively, not too fast
Lively and strongly stressed rhythms
Reposeful tempo, with tender expression
Lively and strongly stressed rhythms

‘They are predominantly cheerful pieces, picturesque and the fanciful ... written with a light heart’, Schumann told his publisher and these four delightful character studies, which do not seek to describe any particular fairy story, are, for the most part, filled with a child-like naïveté and follow an uncomplicated three-part form (A-B-A). Only in the third piece do shadows fleetingly appear and give a hint of the disturbing backdrop of a faltering career and mental collapse against which the late works were completed. The chronology reveals the depressing truth. In 1850, the Schumanns had moved to Düsseldorf full of hope, Robert taking up the post of municipal music director. By 1853, his fragile mental health, ineptitude as a conductor and frequent irritability had created a rift with the musicians and, in November, he was forced to resign. However, the arrival of the 21-year-old Brahms on 30 September had brought a fresh creative stimulus. When inspired, Schumann wrote at extraordinary speed; the *Märchenerzählungen* were completed in only three days at the beginning of October and published on 20 February 1854. On 27 February, Schumann tried to commit suicide by jumping half-clothed into the Rhine. A week later, he was admitted to the asylum where he died on 29 July 1856.

(Duration: approx. 20 minutes)

JEAN FRANÇAIX
(1912-1997)

Clarinet Trio

Prelude. Largo
Allegrissimo
Scherzando
Largo
Presto

The parents of the precocious Jean Françaix arranged for their son to have lessons with the celebrated Nadia Boulanger, the teacher of (amongst many) Philip Glass, Daniel Barenboim and Aaron Copland; she considered Françaix to be her most talented student. He wrote more than 200 works, ranging from symphonies to solo pieces for virtually every instrument. The Clarinet Trio is a late work, composed in 1990, although its spirit is located firmly in the earlier styles of Poulenc and Honegger. The Trio is vibrant and filled with melody, but the rhythms are complex and the harmonies occasionally challenging. In an instant, we shift from introspective musings to circus gallops and out-of-kilter waltzes. This is music light years away from the output of contemporaries such as Pierre Boulez but, equally, although it is not 'easy-listening' in the usual sense, it is both engaging and satisfying.

(Duration: approx. 22 minutes)

Programme notes © C.N. Lane

METAMORPHOSES

Jean Johnson – *clarinet*

Roeland Jagers – *viola*

Elena Fischer-Dieskau – *piano*

‘These performances are sincere, imaginative and fresh as paint...’ *Gramophone*

Metamorphoses is a new trio of world class musicians based in Holland. As recently as 2016 Jean Johnson, Roeland Jagers and Ilona Timchenko got together to perform Mozart’s *Kegelstatt* Trio. (As pianist Ilona is currently on maternity leave, we are delighted to welcome Elena Fischer Dieskau who is replacing her tonight). Repertoire for the combination of clarinet, viola and piano is not exactly plentiful but the group are strong advocates of contemporary music as can be seen this evening in the work of Jean Françaix. Metamorphoses have received excellent reviews from their concerts in The Netherlands, Spain and the UK and in 2018 the trio released their first CD to great international acclaim.

Jean Johnson (clarinet) is an international collaborator in chamber music programmes and as such has played in some of the world’s finest venues, notably the Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and the Esplanade, Singapore. She has been featured as a soloist in Singapore, Wuhan, China, and in Scotland performing concertos by Mozart, Weber and John McLeod among others. She regularly gives duo recitals with her husband, pianist Steven Osborne. Jean has taken part in many prestigious music festivals including Mostly Mozart at the Lincoln Center, New York, the International Chamber Music Series at the Southbank Centre, London, the Bath Music Festival, the Prussia Cove and the St Magnus Festivals. She has collaborated with the Hebrides Ensemble, Heath Quartet, Edinburgh Quartet, T’ang Quartet and the Barony Ensemble.

American-born Jean was a student of Michael Sussman at the University of Massachusetts. She attended Indiana University as an Associate Instructor in Clarinet. As a Fellow at the Aspin Music Festival she studied with Theodore Oien. Jean began her career with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra in the posts of Associate and Acting Principal. As a guest Principal she has worked with the Bergen Philharmonic, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Camerata Ireland. She has recently released a recording of both Brahms Sonatas and the Rózsa Sonata and Sonatina on the Avie label with Steven Osborne.

‘[a] fine recording by the poised clarinetist Jean Johnson. Beautiful renditions of Brahms’s Clarinet Sonatas Nos. 1 & 2 round out this lovely album.’

New York Times

Roeland Jagers (viola) is the founding violist of the prize-winning Rubens Quartet which maintained a busy touring schedule throughout Europe, Israel and the USA for 16 seasons. A laureate of several competitions, he performs regularly in the Concertgebouw, Tonhalle in Zurich, Vienna's Konzerthaus and Berlin's Philharmonie. He is also a frequent guest at international festivals across Europe and the USA.

A student at the Brabant Conservatoire where he received his Bachelor of Music diploma, Roeland continued his studies at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague with Vladimir Mendelssohn, gaining a Master of Music diploma with distinction. As a soloist he has appeared with various ensembles including the Philips Symphony Orchestra at the Concertgebouw. Some years ago, he performed to great acclaim the Solo Sonata of Ligeti, a highlight of the viola repertoire which is considered by many to be unplayable.

Roeland is a regular faculty member of the Summer String Academy at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He plays on a viola made by Giovanni Pistucci from the collection of the Dutch National Instrument Foundation, with a bow made by Joseph Henry in 1865.

Elena Fischer-Dieskau (piano) has been described by the German newspaper Schwäbische Zeitung as 'a magician of the piano who combines intense drama with delicate lyricism'. Her performance of the Rachmaninov 2nd piano concerto with the Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira in Rio de Janeiro was critically acclaimed and attended by the famous pianist Nelson Freire, who called her 'a great revelation' in the Brazilian press. In recent seasons she has appeared in many prominent European and North American venues such as the Brahmsgesellschaft in Schleswig-Holstein, the Liszt Festival in Chateauroux, Festival Jeunes Talents in Paris, Earthquake Concert Series in Friedrichshafen, Pianofest in the Hamptons, USA and in the Perth Concert Hall in Scotland. The BBC recently featured her in an interview with two live performances. Elena was chosen by the French film director Mia Hansen-Love to play the piano in the film *All is Forgiven*, performing works by Beethoven and Schumann on screen.

Born in Berlin, Elena took her first piano lessons at the age of six and soon started winning prizes in German national competitions. She studied with Vladimir Krainev at the Hochschule für Musik Theater und Medien, Hannover until his death. She was then accepted into the class of Leon Fleisher with a full scholarship to pursue her graduate degree at the John Hopkins University Peabody Institute of Music in Baltimore.

Elena is the daughter of two professional cellists and the granddaughter of the German baritone, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

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

CLUB NOTES

CD STALL REQUEST FOR NEW RECORDINGS

‘New to us’ CDs are the backbone of the success of our CD stall – they keep our regular customers on their toes hoping to find new treasures! We have managed 100+ new CDs per concert for nearly two full seasons BUT to continue this beyond our April concert requires some new donations.

If you (or your family/friends) have CDs that you would like to donate, please ring Tony Hudson on 01943 430798 or bring them to our stall at a concert. Literally anything goes! – with the more unusual classical CDs proving very popular as well as Jazz and what we call ‘Miscellaneous’! Thank you in advance.

Tony Hudson

A GRAND CONCERT FOR THE 75th SEASON!

I am excited to tell you about the concert that we have arranged for the Concert Club in April 2021! We have booked old favourite, the clarinettist Michael Collins, who last played here in 2015. He will bring his ensemble London Winds for a concert of wind music by Mozart and Beethoven. This will include a performance of the magical Serenade in B flat major for 13 wind instruments, otherwise known as the ‘Gran Partita’, as well as the rarely-played Octet for winds by Beethoven. This will be largest ensemble to play for the Club probably since the last performance of the Gran Partita in 1999.

CELEBRATION PROGRAMME

For our 75th season, the Committee is hoping to prepare a Celebration Programme as a souvenir of the season. This will obviously contain information about artists and programmes and material bringing the history of the Club up-to-date. However, we are also hoping to include writing by Club members: these could be memories of seasons past, of concerts which were especially memorable or just short pieces about your favourite music, artist or CD. If you feel you would like to contribute, please see me.

Chris Skidmore
Chair, Ilkley Concert Club

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Tonight's programme has been thoughtfully recorded, with just the Röntgen missing, by Metamorphoses on an excellent Music & Media, full price, CD (MMC 122). Good alternatives for the Françaix tend to be rather difficult to obtain, so I shall only suggest them for Mozart and Schumann. There are no currently available recordings of the Röntgen, although copies of a deleted RCA CD (88697 158372) may be available via the internet.

Mozart: A very interesting Naxos CD (8.550439 at medium price) contains the Clarinet Trio and two Clarinet Quartets. K317d is an arrangement of a Violin Sonata, and K496 of a Piano Trio. The *Kegelstatt* Trio is beautifully performed by Bela Kovács (clarinet), Jeno Jandó (piano), and György Konrád (viola).

Schumann: Brilliant Classics CD-95871 (budget price) has Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* op 73, 3 Romances op 94, as well as tonight's work. The disc is completed by Glinka's *Trio Pathétique*. The performances by Giovanni Punzi (clarinet), Jákup Lützen (viola), and Galya Kolarova (piano) are very good, and the recording quality is fine.

Finally, there is a full price Chandos recording (CHAN8776) containing the Mozart and Schumann works, coupled with Bruch's 8 Pieces for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, performed by Janet Hilton (clarinet), Nobuko Imai (viola), and Roger Vignoles (piano).

Raymond Waud. raywaud@gmail.com

NEXT CONCERT – WEDNESDAY 4th MARCH 2020 AT 8PM

ENEDELLION QUARTET



Mendelssohn String Quartet in E minor, op 44 no. 2

Beethoven String Quartet in F minor, op 95

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Chamber Concerts at St George's Hall

Friday 21 February 2020 7.30pm

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MOZART Quartet in D minor, K421
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