

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 11 November 2023
7.30pm

Alina Ibragimova violin
Basel Chamber Orchestra
Kristian Bezuidenhout fortepiano, leader

Susanne Regel oboe
Francesco Capraro oboe
Carles Cristobal bassoon
Olivier Darbellay horn
Mark Gebhart horn
Baptiste Lopez violin I
Irmgard Zavelberg violin I
Mirjam Steymans-Brenner violin I
Tamás Vásárhelyi violin I

Anna Faber violin II
Eva Miribung violin II
Nina Candik violin II
Mariana Streiff-Doughty viola
Bodo Friedrich viola
Christoph Dangel cello
Hristo Kouzmanov cello
Stefan Preyer double bass

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Symphony No. 52 in C minor H1/52 (?by 1774)
*I. Allegro assai con brio • II. Andante •
III. Menuetto. Allegretto - Trio • IV. Finale. Presto*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No. 9 in E flat K271 (1777)
I. Allegro • II. Andantino • III. Rondeau. Presto

Interval

Jannik Giger (b.1985)

Troisième œil (2023) *world première*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A K219 (1775)
*I. Allegro aperto • II. Adagio •
III. Rondeau. Tempo di menuetto*



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Troisième œil

Jannik Giger is interested in the peculiar, melancholic and chromatic chord progressions of the composition 'Qu'est devenu ce bel œil' by the French late-Renaissance composer Claude Le Jeune. He has completely broken up the hermetic form of the original piece and musical parameters such as melody, rhythm and harmony and reinterpreted the material in a very open-source and associative process. The result of this creative approach is dense and compelling music that proves to be a veritable dramatic scene.

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If Haydn had died in 1767, at the same age as Mozart, we should rate him no higher than other talented Austrian symphonists of his time. Yet over the next few years, as his art deepened and intensified, he emerged as incontestably the greatest instrumental composer of the day. This new dramatic intensity is epitomised by the minor-keyed symphonies Haydn produced in the early 1770s, including the 'Mourning' (No. 44), the 'Farewell' (No. 45) and No. 52 in C minor. The extreme emotional states they evoke have spawned the term *Sturm und Drang* ('Storm and Stress'), after Friedrich Maximilian von Klinger's 1776 play on the American Revolution - a useful stylistic label, perhaps, though the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement lay several years in the future.

Coloured by the acidulous sounds of horns in high C, the first movement of No. 52 draws thrilling capital from the wide leaps and driving rhythms of the main theme. Relief comes courtesy of a skipping theme that comes round twice yet each time peters out hesitantly. Haydn uncovers unsuspected dramatic potential in this quirky little tune both in the rampaging development and in the recapitulation, where its final bars are poignantly drawn out before the brutally abrupt close.

The C major *Andante* marries lyrical grace with caprice - a touch of antic humour, too, in the sudden laconic outbursts. C minor starkness returns in the angular minuet, unfolding in bare two-part counterpoint. The *Trio*, led by oboes and high horns, turns out to be a major-keyed variant of the minuet itself. Haydn caps the symphony with a *Presto Finale* whose tense, unremitting drive and explosive dynamic contrasts make it the epitome of *Sturm und Drang*.

Charming and accomplished as they are, nothing in Mozart's violin concertos, or the three keyboard concertos of 1776, quite prepares us for the E flat concerto K271 of January 1777, the month of his 21st birthday. Where his earlier concertos reflect the taste of their age, K271, composed for the French virtuoso Louise Victoire Jenamy (long wrongly identified as 'Mlle Jeunehomme'), represents a new and startling challenge. Here, for the first time, Mozart forges a unique amalgam of virtuosity, vivid operatic characterisation and elaborate symphonic organisation. In place of

refined, amiable discourse we now have an intensely dramatic relationship between solo and orchestra.

This new freedom of interplay is immediately established by the soloist's surprise entry in the second bar, a witty riposte to the orchestra's opening fanfare. From here on Mozart pulls something unexpected out of the hat at each new piano entry, whether in the long trill that overlaps with the end of the orchestral *tutti*, or the role reversal at the start of the recapitulation, where the piano-as-horn has the fanfare and the orchestra the answering phrase.

K271 is a work of striking contrasts, both between and within movements. After the first movement's assertive energy the dark-toned opening of the *Andantino*, with muted violins playing in canon, is especially moving. This is Mozart's first great minor-keyed slow movement, full of sobbing, broken phrases that constantly threaten to break into recitative. The *moto perpetuo* opening of the finale exuberantly re-affirms E flat major, in music that darts and scampers with effervescent glee. Then, midway through the piece Mozart introduces yet another extreme contrast: a delicately sensuous minuet, unfolded at leisure and repeated with filigree decorations against an exquisite texture of muted and *pizzicato* strings.

Mozart's five violin concertos come as close as any of his music to the 19th Century's image of the composer as the embodiment of Apollonian serenity, untainted by darker undercurrents. This view, of course, hopelessly misrepresents many of his later works. Yet in the violin concertos all is Arcadian bliss, shot through with a delicate sensuality so characteristic of Mozart's music from his late teens.

Dated 20 December 1775, the last violin concerto eclipses all its predecessors in structural sophistication and technical virtuosity. The orchestral introduction contrasts a rocketing arpeggio theme with a melody of courtly grace. The solo entry brings a magical surprise. Instead of striding in with the opening theme, the violin sings a lyrical aria over a murmuring accompaniment. When the *Allegro* tempo resumes, the soloist clothes the arpeggio theme with a new counter-melody of hectic brilliance.

The *Adagio* matches the slow movements of Mozart's earlier violin concertos in Elysian beauty and surpasses them in expressive depth, not least in the haunting dip from major to minor near the start of the recapitulation. In the rondo finale we can sense the teenaged Mozart's coltish glee at the disruptive contrast between the decorous minuet refrain and a violent episode in the then fashionable 'Turkish' style. In Mozart's day, though, the boundaries between Turkish and Hungarian music were blurred. While the orchestral strings evoke the ferocious strut of Turkish janissary music, with cellos and basses hitting the strings with the wood of the bow, the soloist's wild flights are based on actual Hungarian folk tunes.

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