

# WIGMORE HALL

Friday 9 September 2022  
3.00pm

## Belcea Quartet

Corina Belcea violin  
Axel Schacher violin  
Krzysztof Chorzelski viola  
Antoine Lederlin cello

Jean-Guihen Queyras cello

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) String Quintet in C D956 (1828)  
I. Allegro ma non troppo • II. Adagio •  
III. Scherzo. Presto - Trio. Andante sostenuto • IV. Allegretto

CLASSIC *fm* Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

### Friends of Wigmore Hall – celebrating 30 years of friendship

Over the past 30 years, Friends have been providing transformational support for the Hall, ensuring this historic building remains a home for great music making. Enjoy the benefits of friendship by joining as a Friend today, and be a part of the Wigmore story. Visit: [wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends) | Call: 020 7258 8230

FRIENDS OF  
WIGMORE HALL

30

*Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management.*

*In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.*

*Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141.*

*Wigmore Hall is equipped with a 'Loop' to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.*



*Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.*

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838  
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://Wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG  
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

Beethoven died in 1827. **Schubert** had visited him on his deathbed with a group of friends and was a torch-bearer at the funeral. 21 months later, on 19 November 1828, Schubert himself died, aged 31. For five years he had been suffering from syphilis, going in and out of a sickness made worse by the side-effects of the treatment, with self-deluding, 'back-to normal' periods of remission when the young composer could again dare to trust in youthful robustness. Inevitably, the shadows lengthened, but he kept on working, his creative focus becoming both sharper and broader. In the months after Beethoven's death, he delivered an astonishing surge of music of incomparable range and spiritual force in works such as *Winterreise*, the Symphony No. 9, the last three piano sonatas and the String Quintet - works that survived decades of posthumous neglect to go on to absorb, obsess and define musicians and listeners alike.

This period has also been considered as securing Schubert's assumption of the mantle of Beethoven, but that is too simplistic a view. Schubert deferred to him, and in the hot-house of musical Vienna could hardly avoid his influence, but his preoccupation with songs and the new Romantic poetry not only celebrated the poets themselves but honed his style into an inexhaustible, supremely melodic source of subtlety and directness. And then there is Schubert's relationship with classical sonata form as handed on to him via Haydn, Mozart and, crucially, Beethoven, which suited the more motivic element of the latter's style but was not such a tight fit for Schubert's linear lyricism. There are many examples of Schubert trying to square this particular circle, and it is no exaggeration that his approach records the early stirrings of the Romantic movement in music.

Schubert's last music was more concerned with creating time than with filling it. Schumann spoke of the 'heavenly length' of Schubert's 'Great' C major Symphony – a work that could easily have vanished immediately after Schubert's death – with big structural events such as the moment of recapitulation dwelt upon with quasi-philosophical intent, weighing up possibilities at the same time as sustaining momentum and argument. The last three piano sonatas take this to extremes, with the composer admitting performer and listener into the inward process of seeming to explain his own music to himself. Hence the remarkable elongations of expectation and stretched commitment to resolution. In the slow movements of his later symphonies, Bruckner was particularly adept at allowing his audience the illusion of taking part in the process of judgment and choice, and both composers

were masters at creating an appreciation of music that was, as Theodor Adorno wrote, like listening to a landscape.

In early October 1828, six weeks before his death, Schubert alerted his publisher that he had written three piano sonatas, some Heine settings (later incorporated into *Schwanengesang*) and the String Quintet. He had performed the sonatas but he never heard the quintet, which had to wait a further 22 years for its first performance. He scored it for two violins, one viola and two cellos, rather than the more usual two violas and one cello. His decision made a big difference to ensemble possibilities, as well as types of sound and character. Just the first section of the first movement gives an idea of the work's scale, with what sounds like a slow introduction laying down the home key, then a confident C major passage that seems to want to do the conventional thing and move to G major. But a descending three-note hiatus on the two cellos acts like a set of railway points diverting the music to a different, alien key - in this case to E flat, which is remote in C major terms - before a brief, rather Mahlerian march-like episode delivers the exposition safely to the expected G major. But not for long. A simple dominant seventh chord sets off the volatile central development based on the march we have just heard. The movement is both dramatically succinct and thematically generous, and the scoring suggests orchestral possibilities – the cello doubling in the second subject and much pizzicato delicacy – in the hands of chamber-music intimacy.

The *Adagio* is set in E major, with the first violin's fractured cantilena hanging in the air, relying on the second cello's pizzicato pulse for a sense of momentum, with the middle voices musing on a chorale-like theme. In another semi-tonal shift, the dramatic middle movement moves to F minor dominated by a violent triplet figure, then is guided back via a version of the three-note descent to E major, with high violin and low cello in a beautifully elaborate variation. There is just as drastic a contrast of material in the *Scherzo*, its Beethovenian ebullience giving way, in another semi-tonal shift from C to D flat, to the strange *Andante sostenuto Trio* that expands the three-note tag as a threnody first heard in viola and cello. The finale is a sonata-rondo that offers *Zigeuner* bravura, Viennese lilt and a sensational, fast lap of honour to close. The last thing we hear is another semi-tone slip, a defiant D flat to C from all five instruments in unison.

© Peter Reed 2022

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*