

# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 13 December 2022  
1.00pm

## Leeds Piano Competition 2021 prizewinner recital

Kaito Kobayashi piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Sonata in F K533/494 (1786-8)

*I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Rondo. Allegretto*

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Impromptu in B flat D935 No. 3 (1827)

György Kurtág (b.1926)

8 Piano Pieces Op. 3 (1960)

*Inesorabile. Andante con moto • Calmo •  
Sostenuto • Scorrevole • Prestissimo possibile •  
Grave • Adagio • Vivo*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

La puerta del vino from *Préludes Book II* (1911-3)

From *Préludes Book I* (1909-10)

*La sérénade interrompue • La danse de Puck •  
Minstrels • Ce qu'a vu le vent de l'ouest*

From *Préludes Book II* (1911-3)

*Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses •  
La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune •  
Ondine*

### 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

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

Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

LOTTERY FUNDED

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

Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

Advances in piano technology appear to have influenced the first two movements of **Mozart's** Piano Sonata in F K533, written in 1786–8. The Viennese instruments of the late 1780s certainly favoured the dynamic power and textual clarity of the work's opening *Allegro*, with its flowing contrapuntal lines, and the extraordinary expressive gradations that run through the *Andante*. The latter's sonata form supports music that owns the character of a free improvisation, from which Mozart draws an unsettling variety of intense yet introspective emotions. To complete the work he returned to and revised a free-standing *Rondo* he had written two years earlier. After an opening reminiscent of the sound of a musical clock, the *Rondo* takes a more sombre turn in its final episode before crowning the return of its theme with a concerto-like cadenza.

The generic term 'impromptu' catches the essence of solo pieces that often feel like they were invented in the moment. **Schubert's** Impromptu in B flat of 1827, one of his second and final set of such works, is far removed from the spontaneity of an improvisation; indeed, it stands as a highly organised set of five variations on an exquisitely simple theme, strikingly similar to a melody from his incidental music to the play *Rosamunde*. The composer's desire to express intimate, heart-felt emotions, a constant shaping force in his late works, finds its outlet here in bold contrasts of mood and rhythmic energy, an arresting shift to the tonic minor key for the third variation and pleasing digression into G flat major for the graceful fourth variation. Schubert subverts the charm of his final variation with a surge of energy in its second section and the wistful final appearance of the 'Rosamunde' theme.

In the late 1950s **György Kurtág** spent a year in Paris where he studied with, among others, Milhaud and Messiaen. His most valuable encounter there, however, proved to be with the psychologist Marianne Stein. While treating him for the depression Kurtág had suffered since the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, she suggested that he should explore the possibilities of simple ideas in his compositions. The *8 Piano Pieces* Op. 3, created in Budapest in May 1960, were among the composer's practical responses to Stein's advice. The first of the set, marked *Inesorabile*, conveys inexorable progress with an ostinato that changes almost imperceptibly beneath a flurry of bell-like tremolos. Each of the following miniatures concentrates on a particular musical gesture, interval pattern or keyboard colour, leading to the wild glissandos and looming note-clusters of the eighth piece.

A chance childhood meeting led **Debussy** to take piano lessons with the mother of a young café pianist. Madame Mauté falsely claimed an aristocratic pedigree and to have studied with Chopin; her teaching skills, however, were sufficiently true to prepare the nine-year-old Debussy for entrance to the Paris Conservatoire. She was, he later recalled, 'a small fat lady who threw me into Bach and who

played him as no one does nowadays, making him come alive.' Debussy's early encounters with the 48 preludes and fugues of Bach's *The Well-tempered Clavier* and the *Préludes* of Chopin provided a solid grounding for his own 24 *Préludes*, created as two books of 12 pieces between December 1909 and April 1913.

Although he failed to secure the Conservatoire's coveted *premier prix* in piano, Debussy made his way as an accompanist and piano teacher in the years before he won the Prix de Rome for composition in 1884. He remained a pianist of the utmost sensitivity throughout his life. The Italian composer Alfredo Casella recalled, 'No words can give an idea of the way in which [Debussy] played certain of his *Préludes*. Not that he had actual virtuosity, but his sensibility of touch was incomparable: he gave the impression of playing directly on the strings of the instrument with no intermediate mechanism; the effect was a miracle of poetry.'

Part of the enchantment of the *Préludes* flows from Debussy's quest for new textures and timbres, the breadth of their harmonic language and their stylistic variety. It is noteworthy that the composer, tired of comparisons of his music with so-called impressionist painting, placed descriptive titles at the end of each prelude, so the performer might work on the music before discovering what it was 'about'. Kaito Kobayashi's selection of *Préludes* opens the door to Debussy's boundless imagination. We hear the flamenco fervour of *La puerta del Vino* and the delicate tread of *Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses* ('Fairies are exquisite dancers'), the latter inspired by a childhood drawing by the composer's daughter, Chouchou. There is mischief afoot in *La danse de Puck*, the impish nature of which was supposedly Debussy's response to an Arthur Rackham illustration of Puck, 'the merry wanderer of the night' from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the clown's mix of melancholy and anarchic energy, meanwhile, finds expression in *La sérénade interrompue* ('The interrupted serenade'). *Minstrels*, the final prelude of Book I, presents a parade of travelling troubadours, some clearly more agile than others.

Debussy's knowledge of Symbolist poetry and its sensual pleasures left its mark on the shimmering surface of *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* ('The terrace of moonlight audiences'), the longest of the 24 *Préludes*. It also touched his beguiling impression of *Ondine*, the seductive sprite depicted by Rackham for an illustrated edition of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's eponymous fantasy novella. Another fairy tale, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Garden of Paradise*, published in French translation in 1907, supplied the imagery behind the dramatic contrasts and Lisztian virtuosity of *Ce qu'a vu le vent de l'ouest* ('What the West Wind saw').

© Andrew Stewart 2022

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.