

# WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 13 October 2024  
11.30am

## Soloists of the Kronberg Academy

Oliver Neubauer violin  
Bryan Cheng cello  
Alexander Warenberg cello  
Jérémie Moreau piano

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Cello Sonata (1915)  
*I. Prologue • II. Sérénade • III. Finale*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Violin Sonata in A K305 (1778)  
*I. Allegro di molto • II. Tema. Andante grazioso*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Cello Sonata in D Op. 102 No. 2 (1815)  
*I. Allegro con brio • II. Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto • III. Allegro fugato*



### SUPPORT OUR AUDIENCE FUND: EVERY NOTE COUNTS

Ensure Wigmore Hall remains a vibrant hub of musical excellence by making a donation today.  
[wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate) | 020 7258 8220



Join & Support  
Donations

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; Koch Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan



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



In the early summer of 1915, **Claude Debussy** declared that he was going to write 'six sonatas for various instruments', the first of which would be a cello sonata. He'd never composed sonatas before, and it had been over two decades since he'd last written any chamber work for strings – his Quartet, back in 1893. This resort to 'tradition' during the First World War was inspired in part by patriotic concerns. Not only did Debussy indulge in frequent anti-German tirades, but he wanted his new chamber sonatas to rekindle the glories of the 18th-century French masters. He even expressly stipulated that their title pages should bear the designation: 'Claude Debussy, musicien français'.

Debussy spent the summer of 1915 with his wife and daughter in Pourville-sur-Mer, a tiny little coastal town in Normandy whose vistas had been popular with the Impressionists back in the 1880s. Debussy had no piano there, but unlike Stravinsky – who couldn't compose without one – Debussy deemed it superfluous, and its absence conducive to focusing the emotions. By 5 August he was already able to confirm to his publisher Durand that a new Cello Sonata was on its way to them.

This Cello Sonata is in three movements: *Prologue*, *Sérénade* and *Finale* (the last two linked by a bridging passage). There are many references here to older models besides the mere title of 'sonata'. There is a hint of the French overture in the piano's opening phrases, and in contrast to several of his other contemporary works, this Sonata is decidedly tonal (it starts and finishes in D minor, with many a modal hint along the way). There is a cyclical element to the overall work – the cello ends the final movement with a phrase lifted from the first – though the ghost of sonata form also haunts the first movement, rondo form the last. There is even a decent dash of humour here when the cello plays pizzicato to mimic a serenading guitar in the second movement. From today's perspective, Debussy's last sonatas are an early example of the Neo-Classical movement that would dominate the European music scene in the years after the First World War. The Cello Sonata was given its first performance on 4 March 1916 in the Aeolian Hall in London, with C Warwick Evans accompanied by Ethel Hobday on the piano.

**Mozart's** Violin Sonata in A K305 is the fifth of a set of six that he composed in 1778, during a long European tour accompanied by his mother (playing chaperone to her impulsive son). The main purpose of their trip was to try and find Mozart a job. They stopped off at Munich, then Augsburg – where Wolfgang dabbled in dirty flirting with a teenage cousin – and then they went to Mannheim, where Wolfgang switched his affections (in vain) to an opera singer called Aloysia von Weber (four years later, he'd

marry her sister Constanze). It was in Mannheim that Mozart began composing his new violin sonatas. Paris was their next stop, in March 1778, where Mozart completed the set, including today's sonata. But in July of that year, his mother died in Paris. He returned home in the autumn, alone, though not before managing to get the local publisher Sieber to take on his six sonatas. Printing went ahead after he'd left Paris, but his copies caught up with him before he arrived back in Salzburg. K305 is in two movements: the first is a bucolic, 'hunting' *Allegro* in 6/8 time that in its intense melodiousness is often reminiscent of Italian opera; the second is a long series of variations whose inspiration seems to have come from Mannheim, with its crescendos, fortepianos and sense of drama – not to mention virtuosic figurations that sometimes sound prescient of Franz Schubert's 'Trout' Variations, not composed until 40 years later.

Mozart's tour to Munich, Mannheim and Paris was long regarded by commentators as a flop. It had taken over a year out of his life, he'd lost his mother, and he'd still not found a job. But in musical terms, Mozart had left Salzburg a former Wunderkind, and arrived back a mature composer. It matters not whether it was thanks to falling in love or because his mother's death had forced him to grow up: the Mozart who returned was the man who would soon author the glories that are the *Sinfonia Concertante* and *Idomeneo*.

**Beethoven** composed his last two Cello Sonatas, Op. 102 Nos. 1 and 2, in the summer and autumn of 1815. They were intended for his friend, the cellist Joseph Linke, and were dedicated to the latter's employer, the Countess Marie Erdődy. Beethoven had known Erdődy for a long time, though a quarrel between them a few years earlier had led to a freeze in relations. But the Countess relented, resuming contact with Beethoven in early 1815, and he reciprocated. He accordingly spent the following summer on her estates in Jedlesees (today a suburb of Vienna), where their renewed friendship provided the inspiration for these two sonatas. The Sonata in D Op. 102 No. 2 was Beethoven's last ever sonata for a string instrument. It is at times unusually austere. There are whole passages in the first movement where the cello is accompanied by one or two lines of music in the piano, while the third and final movement – a full-blown fugue – is often dominated by similarly sparse textures. The middle movement, however, is a large-scale D minor *Adagio* in ternary form whose central section, in D major, unfolds an expansive dialogue between the two instruments. This Sonata was first published by Simrock in Beethoven's native city of Bonn in 1817.

© Chris Walton 2024

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*