

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 1 July 2023
7.30pm

The Coleridge-Taylor Series is made possible with support from the Wigmore Hall Endowment Fund.

Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective

Elena Urioste violin
Rosalind Ventriss viola
Laura van der Heijden cello
Tom Poster piano

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

Piano Quartet in A flat (1822)

*I. Allegro moderato • II. Larghetto •
III. Tempo di Minuetto - Presto*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Quartet No. 2 in E flat K493 (1786)

I. Allegro • II. Larghetto • III. Allegretto

Interval

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

Piano Trio in E minor (1893)

*I. Moderato con espressione - Allegro con moto
II. Scherzo. Allegro leggiero
III. Finale 'Con Furiant'. Allegro*

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Piano Quartet No. 2 in E flat Op. 87 (1889)

*I. Allegro con fuoco • II. Lento •
III. Allegro moderato, grazioso •
IV. Finale. Allegro ma non troppo*

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



Our Audience Fund provides essential unrestricted support for our artistic and learning programmes, connecting thousands of people with music locally, nationally, and internationally. We rely on the generosity of our audience to raise £150,000 each year to support this work. Your gifts are, and continue to be, indispensable.

To donate, please visit <https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/support-us/wigmore-hall-audience-fund>

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 • 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



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



Fanny Mendelssohn was four years older than her brother Felix, who referred to her as 'The Boss'. He revered her advice, and they were often praised equally by those who knew them, their aunt and fellow musician Dorothea von Schlegel saying that Felix played 'with genius, Fanny with a virtuosity that defeated all understanding'. Aged only 13, Fanny astonished their father, Abraham, by playing from memory all the preludes from the first volume of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*. Yet, in adherence to the conventions of the time, Fanny was discouraged from pursuing her musical calling professionally, as Abraham wrote: 'Perhaps music will be Felix's profession, whereas for you it can and must be but an ornament, and never the fundamental of your existence and activity.'

Even so, she persevered. In the 1820s, while still a teenager, she set her mind to a number of genres, including the Piano Quartet in A flat, on which she worked privately between May and November 1822. The work was never performed or published during her lifetime. This ambitious piece opens with a confident, sparkling *Allegro moderato*, followed by a singing *Larghetto* and culminating in an ingenious final movement that combines minuet and trio with a dazzling *Presto* finale. Fanny, who found an encouraging ally in her husband Wilhelm Hensel, did eventually publish some of her works before she died suddenly aged 42; a devastated Felix died six months later.

It is always tantalising to imagine what a composer may have gone on to produce had they lived longer; this is certainly the case with Fanny Mendelssohn, and the same applies to **Mozart** and Coleridge-Taylor. It is astonishing, then, to think that one patron, Anton Hoffmeister, was so disappointed by the first of three proposed piano quartets commissioned from Mozart that he contemplated paying the composer *not* to write the remaining two. Thankfully, Mozart had already gone ahead and written the second in E flat major, K493, entering it into his catalogue on 3 June 1786 immediately after *The Marriage of Figaro*. Hoffmeister's dissatisfaction was of such strength that he even sold the plates of each part to a rival firm, Arturia, sacrificing his own efforts in order to get shot of the music. Arturia, in turn, made no profit from the undertaking, and the third piano quartet never materialised.

Whereas Mozart's First Piano Quartet in G minor is sinewy and dramatic, the Second is spacious and relaxed, its opening movement pervaded by a motif that first crops up in the second theme. The dreaminess reaches its apex in the *Larghetto*, one of Mozart's most expressive slow movements, in which all four protagonists participate in gracious conversation. Mozart shelved his initial ideas for the rondo finale, producing instead a movement in which the piano is to the fore, especially in a minor-key interlude during which the pianist spans the keyboard with almost concerto-like display. It is possible that Mozart first

played the work in Prague; in January 1787 he wrote of his host's excellent piano there, and that he and some friends had played through a little quartet for their own pleasure.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in Holborn and studied composition with Stanford at the Royal College of Music; it was while he was still a student that Coleridge-Taylor wrote his Piano Trio in E minor (1893). This remarkable work was unpublished during the composer's tragically short lifetime – he died aged only 37 – and remained so for some 90 years after his death. In the early 2000s, performing editions were prepared from manuscripts languishing in the College's archives. Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective consulted the original manuscripts and corrected some errors in these editions, and in 2020, at Wigmore Hall, gave what was probably the Piano Trio's first performance since a student rehearsal presided over by the composer.

Coleridge-Taylor's concise Piano Trio is an early demonstration of the skill for which he was recognised during his lifetime; Elgar described him as 'far and away the cleverest fellow going amongst the young men', his friend August Jaeger adding that Coleridge-Taylor was 'a genius'. Coleridge-Taylor in turn admired Dvořák enormously, an influence audible in this work – especially in the *Finale*, inspired by the Czech 'furiant'. But Coleridge-Taylor's distinctive voice was already emerging, and is clear in the work's arresting introduction and passionate first movement, and in the exhilarating *Scherzo* and trio.

In common, perhaps, with Mozart's Second Piano Quartet, **Dvořák's** Piano Quartet No. 2 in the same key of E flat major was premièred in Prague. This was on 23 November 1890, more than a year after Dvořák finished the work, which he had written in only nine days at the urging of his publisher Simrock. Dvořák was summering in his country house in Vysoká, Bohemia, from where he wrote to a close friend: 'I've now already finished three movements of a new piano quartet, and the finale will be ready in a few days. As I expected, it came easily, and the melodies just surged upon me. Thank God!'

The work almost spills over with thematic riches, with an opening movement that ranges between blustery drama and romantic lyricism, and a *Lento* that boasts no fewer than four themes: an ardent cello melody, shapely violin line, an animated piano part and a vigorous outburst from all the instruments. The third movement includes folk-like ideas, the first melody exuding the lilting air of Romani music, the second characterised by exotic inflections. The *Finale*, with its Slavic character, represents another profusion of ideas and textures, and almost sounds as though it will end bathed in a warm, serene glow – before the tempo picks up again for the resonant final bars.

© Joanna Wyld 2023

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.