

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 20 May 2025
7.30pm

Trasimeno Music Festival 20th Anniversary Concert

Angela Hewitt piano

Valo Quartet

Maria Włoszczowska violin

Tim Crawford violin

Lilli Majjala viola

Amy Norrington cello

Mark Simpson clarinet

Anu Komsu soprano

Jonathan Ferrucci piano

Julia Hamos piano

Mishka Rushdie Momen piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata in D for piano 4 hands K381 (c.1772)
I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Allegro molto

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Sonatine (1903-5)
I. Modéré • II. Mouvement de menuet • III. Animé

Mark Simpson (b.1988)

Lov(escape) (2006)

Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)

L'oiselet (1864)

Coquette (1864)

La jeune fille (1865)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen D965 (1828)

Interval

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Piano Quintet in A minor Op. 84 (1918-9)
*I. Moderato – Allegro • II. Adagio •
III. Andante – Allegro*



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This concert looks forward to the Trasimeno Music Festival, now in its 20th year, a week of music and lectures running from June 26 to July 2. Angela Hewitt is the artistic director and plays in most of the eight concerts that take place in Perugia and Magione. The Umbrian location on Lake Trasimeno is magical, Hewitt's programming is extremely imaginative, and the artists performing tonight have all played in previous Trasimeno festivals.

During the 1760s, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** and his elder sister Nannerl (born in 1751) toured Europe as child keyboard prodigies, under the controlling hand of their father Leopold. This Sonata for four hands K381 was the first of three he wrote during the 1770s, and its attractions jump off the page, with its strongly Italian flavour, lots of operatic fanfares and dashing passage work. Throughout – and especially in the *Andante* middle movement – there is a characterful, conversational tone that cannot help but raise a smile.

Maurice Ravel was not a great virtuoso pianist, yet he wrote some of the most challenging music in the repertoire. He composed his *Sonatine* (1903-5) in response to a competition for the first movement of a piano sonata organised by the magazine *Weekly Critical Review*; the panel of judges was to include Widor and D'Indy. Ravel was the only contestant, and the magazine went bankrupt. He added two further movements, the poised, 'antique' *Minuet*, and a concluding and extrovert *Toccata*.

Mark Simpson runs parallel careers as clarinetist and composer – his 2016 opera *Pleasure*, set in a gay club, created quite a stir. Simpson wrote *Lov(escape)* in 2006 for one of his BBC Young Musician recitals. As the composer has written: 'The title refers to the relationship between the two gestures that characterise the first idea: the opening is yearning and romantic, whilst the second is more erratic and desperate to escape.' There are three sections, working through ideas of conflict and reconciliation.

Pauline Viardot was a superstar of the arts throughout Europe in the 19th Century. Born into the Spanish Garcia family of opera singers, her father was Rossini's favoured tenor and her older sister was the formidable Maria Malibran. After Malibran's early death, Viardot abandoned her ambitions as a pianist and took to opera as a mezzo with a fine technique and compelling stage presence. One of her closest friends was Chopin's lover George Sand, and Viardot often stayed at her house at Nohant, where she played duets with Chopin. With his permission, she adapted some of his mazurkas as songs setting sentimental poems by Louis Pomey. *L'oiselet* takes Chopin's Op. 68 No. 2 – a little bird, sad and silent, is excluded from love. *Coquette* transcribes the Mazurka Op. 7 No. 1 – a young man loves a beautiful, cruel girl. *La jeune fille* takes the Mazurka Op. 24 No. 2 – a pretty, innocent girl soon knows her worth. Viardot had great success with

her transcriptions, and sang them in recitals to great effect.

Schubert wrote *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* in October 1828, about a month before he died on November 19, as a show piece for the opera singer Anna Milder-Hauptmann, whom Schubert had admired since he was a teenager. She gave its first performance in 1830, before the work disappeared until 1902. It is a dramatic *scena* for soprano and clarinet obbligato, with a challenging piano role. As the clarinet improved technically, so its range, colour and elemental lower register increasingly flattered the voice, the soprano particularly, and Schubert indulges virtuosic, Italianate display for both as much as he does the more reflective episodes, as the lonely shepherd pines for his sweetheart, turning to melancholy isolation, then finds hope springs eternal.

Elgar's beloved wife Alice died in 1920, and his urge to compose slowed down considerably, although he did respond to the BBC commission for a symphony, the third, which was unfinished when he died in 1934. In 1917 the Elgars had rented a cottage called Brinkwells in rural Sussex so that he could recover after throat surgery. He worked consistently on a trio of substantial chamber works, the Violin Sonata, the String Quartet and, the biggest of the three, the Piano Quintet Op. 84, finished in 1919 (as was the Cello Concerto). That was more or less the end of his composing career.

In its mix of symphonic-like sweep and chamber-music intimacy, the Piano Quintet follows models by Schumann, Brahms and Dvořák. It has been suggested that Elgar was evoking the atmosphere of a group of sinister trees near their cottage, all that was left of some sacrilegious Spanish monks of long ago – Lady Elgar mentioned the legend in her diary – which may explain the ghostly opening. Less fanciful are the three elements Elgar presents in the introduction, which thread through the whole work – a brief and pungent rhythmic cell, and two themes that develop from chant-like fragments, the first recalling the shape of the *Dies irae* chant, the second the opening of the *Salve Regina*, an anthem to the Virgin Mary. Elgar was a Roman Catholic and would have known this music well – and perhaps it is the basis for a programme, albeit one known only to him. Yet these musical tags give the first movement an intense feeling of progress, especially as one evolves into a strange, Spanish-like dance. Opening with a lovely melody on viola, the *Adagio* is a gentle elegy, its bittersweet climax echoing the drama of the first movement. The introduction to the Finale recalls unequivocally the *Salve Regina*-based tune, then opens out into an *Allegro*, in A major and marked 'con dignita', of great power and brilliance, bringing this remarkable work to a triumphant close.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata in D for piano 4 hands K381 (c.1772)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro molto

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Sonatine (1903-5)

- I. Modéré
- II. Mouvement de menuet
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Mark Simpson (b.1988)

Lov(escape) (2006)

Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)

L'oiselet (1864)

Louis Pomey

Le ciel est clair et l'air est doux,
Tout rit, tout jase autour de nous;
Toi seul, ô mon pauvre oiselet,
Toi seul languis triste et muet.

Le printemps qui tout ranime
De nos monts verdit la cime;
De la brise matinale
Un parfum d'amour s'exhale,
Aux champs, dans le secret des bois,
Tout ce qui vit dit à la fois
Le mot que la nuit dit au jour,
Le mot charmant, le mot d'amour.
Ah! Assise loin de son troupeau,
Et le suivant d'un oeil rêveur,
Chloé ne sait quel feu nouveau
Soudain s'allume dans son coeur.

The little bird

The sky is clear and the air is soft,
everything laughs, everything chatters around us;
only you, oh my poor little bird,
only you languish, sad and mute.

Spring, which revives everything,
greens the peaks of our mountains;
from the morning breeze
a scent of love exhales,
in the fields, in the secret of the woods,
everything that lives says at once
the word that night says to day,
the charming word, the word of love.
Ah! Seated far from her flock,
and following it with a dreamy eye,
Chloé doesn't know what new fire
suddenly ignites in her heart.

Mais toi l'on ne peut te charmer,
Tu fuis le doux plaisir d'aimer.
Celui de qui tu plains les maux
Gémit captif sous les barreaux,
Adieu! l'amour et la gaîté
Pour qui n'a pas la liberté.

But you cannot be charmed,
you flee the sweet pleasure of love.
he whom you pity in his suffering
laments as a captive behind bars,
farewell! Love and joy are not for those who lack freedom.

Coquette (1864)

Louis Pomey

De n'aimer que toi,
Je donne ma foi,
Tra la la,
O fille gentille,
Mais ma fidèle ardeur,
Tra la la,
O fille gentille,
Ne peut toucher ton cœur.

Coquette

To love only you,
I have pledged,
Tra la la,
O pretty girl,
but my faithful ardour,
Tra la la,
O pretty girl,
cannot touch my heart.

Si dans tes regards j'ai su lire,
Tu plains malgré toi mon martyre,
Mais d'amour que je meure,
C'est un deuil d'un jour ou d'une heure.
Ah – Je ne veux que toi,
Tu cherches pourquoi,
Tra la la,
Fillette, coquette, coquette,
Eh bien! dis-moi comment,
La la la
Fillette, coquette,
Comment faire autrement.

If I have learnt to read your eyes,
you mourn, despite yourself, my suffering,
but for the love from which I die,
you mourn for a mere day or hour.
Ah – it's you alone I want,
you seek to know why,
Tra la la,
Little girl, little coquette,
Ah, but tell me how,
Tra la la,
Little girl, little coquette,
I could do otherwise.

Quand l'amour s'en vient nous surprendre,
On veut d'abord lui résister,
Mais sa voix devient si tendre,
Qu'un jour il faut l'écouter.
Ah! Donc, si tu m'en crois,
Accepte ma foi
La la la,
O belle cruelle,
Et laisse-toi charmer,
La la la
O belle cruelle,
Par qui saura t'aimer.

When love comes to take you by surprise,
you try at first to resist it,
but its voice becomes so tender,
that one day you have to listen.
Ah! If, therefore, you believe me,
accept my pledge,
La la la,
O fair cruel girl,
and let yourself be charmed,
La la la,
O fair cruel girl,
by him who will know how to love you.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

La jeune fille (1865)

Louis Pomey

Quand on est jeune et
gentille,
Comment ne pas le
savoir?
Tout d'abord, la jeune fille
interroge son miroir:
Lui plaît-il de mieux
s'instruire?
La plus simple n'a qu'à
lire
Dans un œil brillant d'espoir.
Un jour vient où
l'innocente,
Sur ce sujet est
savante:
Il suffit d'entendre ce que dit
une voix tendre.

Prends pitié, belle
inhumaine, de ma peine!
Ou termine mon martyre, ou
j'expire!
Mais de ce délire, le mieux
est de rire.
Oui, de ce délire il faut
rire.
Beaux oiseaux, au riche
plumage,
On connaît votre ramage,
Et certes le plus sage est de
fuir tout servage.

Quand on est jeune et
gentille,
Force est bien de la
savoir –
Tout d'abord la jeune fille
interroge son miroir.
Lui plaît-il de mieux
s'instruire?
La plus simple n'a qu'à
lire
Dans un œil brillant d'espoir.

The young girl

When one is young and
pretty,
how is it possible not to
know it?
At first, the young girl
asks her mirror:
would it like to teach her
better?
The simplest has only to
read
eyes shining with hope.
A day will come when the
innocent one
will know all about this
subject:
it's enough to hear what a
tender voice says.

Take pity, beautiful inhuman
one, on my torment!
Either my suffering must
end or I must die!
But it is best to laugh at
this madness.
Yes, one should laugh at
this madness.
Beautiful birds, with rich
plumage,
we know your song,
and it is certainly wisest
to flee all servitude.

When one is young and
pretty,
there's no choice but to
know it well –
At first the young girl
asks her mirror:
would it like to teach her
better?
The simplest has only to
read
eyes shining with hope.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen D965 (1828)

Wilhelm Müller (stanzas 1-4
& 7) and Karl August
Varnhagen von Ense
(stanzas 5 & 6)

Wenn auf dem höchsten
Fels ich steh',
In's tiefe Tal hernieder
seh',

The shepherd on the rock

When I stand on the
highest rock,
look down into the deep
valley

Und singe,

and sing,

Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln
Tal
Schwingt sich empor der
Widerhall
Der Klüfte.

From far away in the deep
dark valley
the echo from the
ravines
rises up.

Je weiter meine Stimme
dringt,
Je heller sie mir wieder
klingt
Von unten.

The further my voice
carries,
the clearer it echoes back
to me
from below.

Mein Liebchen wohnt so
weit von mir,
Drum sehn' ich mich so
heiss nach ihr
Hinüber.

My sweetheart lives so far
from me,
therefore I long so to be
with her
over there.

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich
mich,
Mir ist die Freude hin,
Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung
wich,
Ich hier so einsam bin.

Deep grief consumes
me,
my joy has fled,
all earthly hope has
vanished,
I am so lonely here.

So sehndend klang
im Wald das
Lied,
So sehndend klang es durch
die Nacht,
Die Herzen es zum Himmel
zieht
Mit wunderbarer Macht.

The song rang out so
longingly through the
wood,
rang out so longingly
through the night,
that it draws hearts to
heaven
with wondrous power.

Der Frühling will kommen,
Der Frühling, meine Freud',
Nun mach' ich mich fertig
Zum Wandern bereit.

Spring is coming,
spring, my joy,
I shall now make ready
to journey.

Interval

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Piano Quintet in A minor Op. 84 (1918-9)

I. Moderato – Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Andante – Allegro

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