

# WIGMORE HALL

Monday 21 February 2022 1.00pm

**Ben Goldscheider** horn

**Richard Uttley** piano

BBC  
RADIO



This concert is being broadcast on BBC Radio 3



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**Paul Dukas** (1865-1935)

Villanelle (1906)

**Alexander Glazunov** (1865-1936)

Rêverie Op. 24 (1890)

**Eugène Bozza** (1905-1991)

En forêt Op. 40 (1941)

**Mark Simpson** (b.1988)

Nachtstück (2021)

**Sergey Rachmaninov** (1873-1943)

Andante from *Cello Sonata in G minor* Op. 19 (1901) *arranged by Ben Goldscheider*

**Jane Vignery** (1913-1974)

Horn Sonata Op. 7 (1948)

*I. Allegro • II. Lento ma non troppo • III. Allegro ben moderato*

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While not always willing to admit it, trumpet and trombone players covet the horn's rich repertoire. Ben Goldscheider has done much since lifting the winner's trophy in the 2016 BBC Young Musician competition to fuel their envy by swelling the instrument's stock of new compositions and retrieving existing works from undeserved neglect. His recital this lunchtime includes a commission from Mark Simpson and Jane Vignery's little-known Horn Sonata Op. 7 as well as his arrangement for horn and piano of the haunting slow movement from Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata, a staple of the chamber repertoire since its publication in 1902. It also draws from the legacy of pieces intended to test the virtuosity of outstanding young players and demonstrate the instrument's seemingly limitless range of expression.

Many will know **Paul Dukas** as composer of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, made famous by its part in the soundtrack to Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. Dukas became embedded in the literary and artistic world of Belle Epoque Paris and was elected to membership of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. He complemented his output of orchestral, choral and stage scores with work as a music critic for some of the most influential Parisian journals of the early 1900s. *Villanelle* was written in 1906 as a test piece for students at the Paris Conservatoire. The work's beguiling opening melody is marked to be played on the horn's natural harmonic series, without employing the instrument's valves. Dukas's fluent song without words, graced by subtle changes of pulse, is interrupted by a vivacious new theme, introduced by the piano and propelled by the horn (now with the help of its valves). A hand-stopped 'echo' passage and final triple-tongued flourish introduce textural variety while measuring the soloist's technical prowess.

**Alexander Glazunov** became one of the most influential composers and pedagogues in late imperial Russia. He created a successful synthesis of the national and the international in Russian music, absorbing lessons learned from his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov and elements of works by, among others, Tchaikovsky and Borodin. Glazunov's practical musicianship was not confined to the piano; he was also an accomplished player of violin, cello, clarinet, trumpet, trombone and horn. *Rêverie*, first published in 1890, evokes a dream-like state with its lyrical main melody, contrasting episode (complete with a slow descent into the horn's sepulchral low register), and ghostly concluding hand-stopped notes.

Childhood studies with his Italian-born father, a violinist in French Riviera casino bands, gave **Eugène Bozza** a flying start as a performer. He developed his skills during the First World War in Rome as a student at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and during the so-called Roaring Twenties at the Paris Conservatoire. Bozza became leader of the famous Padeloup Orchestra in 1925 before returning to the Conservatoire to study conducting. He went back to school again in 1932, this time to study composition with Henri Büsser, and made his breakthrough in 1934 by winning the Prix de Rome.

*En forêt*, first published in 1941, was written as an examination piece for the Paris Conservatoire. It provides advanced players with a thorough workout of everything from lip trills and tonguing technique to hand-stopping and glissandos. The piece recalls the horn's ancient associations with the hunt, not least by quoting two hunting calls from Thiberge's *Fanfares et tons de chasse* (1848) and the venerable St Hubert fanfare; Bozza also made space to quote a fragment from Respighi's *Feste Romane* and the plainsong melody *Victimae paschali laudes*, which Respighi had used so effectively in his *Concerto Gregoriano* for violin and orchestra (1921).

*Nachtstück* ('Night Piece') was written in 2021 for Ben Goldscheider's season as an ECHO Rising Star. **Mark Simpson's** poetic work rises from the tonal and textural nuances of a rich piano chord, stated and subtly varied. The horn breaks into the piece with a strong idea of its own, its sense of menace underlined by tongue-stopped notes and a terrific surge of energy. 'I imagined this night not as a time of tranquillity and reflection but one of darkness and foreboding with a nervous energy that could break out into moments of optimism or even despair,' observes the composer. 'The title also alludes to the volatile *Nachtstücke* that you might find by Henze, Schumann or Schubert.' Simpson here turns virtuosity to serve the expression of strong emotions. *Nachtstück* sets significant technical hurdles for both its players but uses them to establish an impassioned expressive atmosphere, unsettling and wild.

**Jane Vignery**, born Jeanne Emilie Virginie Vignery in Ghent, came from a family of musicians. She began playing violin during childhood and received her first lessons in music from her mother and grandfather. Having made swift progress as a student at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent, Vignery moved to Paris in her late teens to study violin at the Ecole Normale de Musique; she also took private lessons in harmony and counterpoint from Nadia Boulanger and Jacques de La Presle and in musical analysis from Paul Dukas. Physical impairment influenced her decision to abandon violin in favour of composition, a daunting prospect despite the career path so recently broadened for women by Boulanger and Germaine Tailleferre.

In 1941, with her homeland under Nazi occupation, Vignery was nominated for Belgium's Prix de Rome; the following year, she received the Prix Emile Mathieu for her Horn Sonata Op. 7. Vignery's only work for horn opens with a swaggering solo melody, part of a sonata-form first movement developed in close dialogue with the piano. The work's impressionistic central movement, cast in the AABA form of a popular ballad, consists in melancholy and nostalgia. Vignery crowns her piece with a dashing rondo, its fairground jauntiness spiced by eerie hand-stopped episodes and fleeting lurches into the minor mode.

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