

# WIGMORE HALL

Monday 27 June 2022 7.30pm

**Elisabeth Brauss** piano

## In honour of the Wigmore Society

Our Wigmore Society was created to recognise all those individuals who have included Wigmore Hall in their Will. Legacy gifts, when they are realised, are so important to the Hall's well-being, both now and long into the future. This concert is dedicated to everyone who has chosen to remember the Hall in this way. Thank you.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Op. 109 (1820)

*I. Vivace ma non troppo – Adagio espressivo • II. Prestissimo •  
III. Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung. Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo*

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963)

In einer Nacht... Träume und Erlebnisse Op. 15 (1917-9)

*Müdigkeiten • Sehr langsam • Phantastisches Duett zweier Bäume vor dem Fenster •  
Rufe in der horchenden Nacht • Ziemlich schnelle Achtel • Sehr lebhaft, flimmernd •  
Nervosität • Scherzo • Programm-Musik: Kuckuck und Uhu •  
In der Art eines langsamen Menuetts • Prestissimo • Böser Traum. Rigoletto •  
Foxtrott • Finale. Doppelfuge mit Engführungen*

## Interval

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)

4 Klavierstücke Op. 119 (1893)

*Intermezzo in B minor • Intermezzo in E minor • Intermezzo in C • Rhapsody in E flat*

**Robert Schumann** (1810-1856)

Faschingschwank aus Wien Op. 26 (1839-40)

*I. Allegro • II. Romanze • III. Scherzino • IV. Intermezzo • V. Finale*

Anyone can leave a legacy gift to Wigmore Hall and be a part of the Wigmore Society. For more information please contact Marie-Helene Osterweil: [mhosterweil@wigmore-hall.org.uk](mailto:mhosterweil@wigmore-hall.org.uk)

CLASSIC *fm* Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM

### Support Us

Recovering from the impacts of the pandemic is an ongoing challenge for us and the artists we work with. If you can, please make a contribution to our Audience Fund before the end of the season and help ensure the health and vitality of the music making you see on our stage. Your support makes a real difference.

[wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate)

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



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



Early in 1821, three years after the 'Hammerklavier', **Beethoven** finished a sonata that, as well as being smaller, is distinctly odd. The slow movement that serves also as finale occupies about two-thirds of the work's length, the two preliminary movements being not only compact but also formally irregular.

Beethoven may originally have intended the first movement as one of the bagatelles he was working on, a gliding-dashing sequence of two-note motifs, played alternately by the two hands. Into this, after just eight bars, he interpolated music of an entirely different kind: an *Adagio espressivo* of diminished chords and arpeggios – though, of course, one soon learns that the difference is not as extreme as all that. The coda begins by beautifully collapsing the main theme into harmonies.

The following *Prestissimo* supplies at once a proper sonata movement and a scherzo – and this all in two and a half minutes. Its leaping first theme, in E minor, introduces the trochaic rhythm (strong-weak) that helps give the music its powerful onward urge. The second subject includes a syncopated idea that adds to the drive and a forceful, downward marching scale. From a sonata-movement point of view, the ensuing slow music is the development; shifting the frame to scherzo, it is the trio section. In either event, what follows is all reprise.

Both of Beethoven's markings for the third movement – the German and the Italian – justly draw attention to its songful character; indeed, this is one of those late Beethoven slow movements that seem to uncover immemorial melody. It is also one of those late Beethoven variation movements where extraordinary variety serves to take the melody ever more deeply into itself. There are five variations, of which the first transports the tune up into soprano territory (and beyond) and towards the opera house. The second variation changes to a complementary character for the repeat of each half of the theme. Invertible counterpoint breaks in with the third variation, whose brevity and robustness are offset by its luminous successor. The fifth variation is fugal, but this is not the end, for then the theme is recalled, taken on one last tour, and brought back where it began.

**Hindemith** wrote *In einer Nacht...* in the late months of 1919, incorporating a scherzo (No. 8) from two years before. The 'dreams and experiences', to quote the work's subtitle, are highly varied, this 'one night' finding time for solitary experience of nature, a visit to the opera house (Hindemith led the Frankfurt Opera orchestra at this time) and a spin in a dance hall (No. 5 as well as No. 13). Hindemith's bluff humour is in place, not least in the *Rigoletto* parody, but so too is a freshness that comes from the use of simple intervals (octaves, fifths and fourths). Debussy is often in the background – and there are foretastes of Ligeti's études in the layered texture of the second piece and the rush of triplets against regular quavers in the eleventh. Two trees speak an unearthly language (No. 3); two birds, cuckoo and owl, take off from *Hansel*

and *Gretel* (No. 9). Most of the pieces last no more than a minute or so, the exceptions being Nos. 4, 10, 13 and 14.

**Brahms** composed his last piano pieces in 1893 and divided them into sets of six (Op. 118) and four (Op. 119). Of the first piece in the latter group he wrote to Clara Schumann: 'Every bar and every note must sound like a ritardando, as if one wanted to suck melancholy out of each and every one, lustily and with pleasure out of these very dissonances!'

The ruffled rhythm of the second piece might suggest a search for a waltz that is found in the middle section, in the major mode, then lost again. Next comes a short piece featuring C major brightness and jostling syncopations, though the shadows may still be there.

The march at the start of the finale carries a tone of triumph. However, this does not last. Cascades and chorales follow, and then a return of the march, which seems to generate its own catastrophe. There is a middle section of wobbling expectation and dancing (Hungarian cakewalk, perhaps), after which the march comes back and the whole thing happens over – to end, firmly, in the troubling minor.

**Schumann** wrote two carnivals, the second of them emanating from a visit to Vienna that lasted from November 1838 to April the next year and so included the carnival season, known in Austria and southern Germany as '*Fasching*'. It was soon after that Fasching of 1839, in mid-March, that he composed the essentials of the piece, but he did not complete it until the following winter, when he was back in Leipzig.

He described this *Faschingsschwank* ('Carnival Jest') as a 'grand Romantic sonata', by no means inappropriately, but it does not start with a movement in sonata form. The first movement is, rather, a dance medley. Schumann could have encountered the first Johann Strauss and his orchestra, but Vienna for him was the city of 'my Beethoven and Schubert', and one of Schubert's waltzes (the E major from the *Valses nobles* D969) provided the model for his main theme, in B flat. This proudly introduces and punctuates a succession of other dances that at once contrast and correspond with one another, the last of them a piece in silvery steps offset by disconcerting chromatic edgings.

This ten-minute opener is followed by three much shorter movements, beginning with a suddenly disturbing apparition at the ball in G minor. After working its way with overt difficulty to C major, it comes back as before. Dancing continues in the *Scherzino*, in B flat, succeeded by a song in E flat minor, with characteristic rippling inner action.

Then the colour and swirl of carnival are back, in a *Finale* that is at last in sonata form, with a melodious second subject, a short development, and a presto coda.

© Paul Griffiths 2022

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*