

# WIGMORE HALL

Friday 28 October 2022  
7.30pm

## Roaming Spirits

Christoffer Sundqvist clarinet  
O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra

Hugo Ticciati violin, leader  
Vicky Sayles violin I  
Zane Kalnina violin I  
Laura Lunansky violin I  
Emma Purslow violin I  
Susanne von Gutzeit violin II

Julian Arp cello

Annette Walther violin II  
Hannah Dawson violin II  
Edua Zadory violin II  
Sascha Bota viola  
Edgar Francis viola  
Riikka Repo viola

Miklós Lukács cimbalom

Claude Frochoux cello  
Edward King cello  
Iurii Gavryliuk double bass  
Alexander Jones double bass  
Jordi Carrasco-Hjelm double bass

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Hungarian Dance in G minor WoO. 1 No. 1 (1868) *arranged by Johannes Marmén*

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Duos for 2 violins BB104 arranged for violin and clarinet (1931)  
*Teasing Song • Hungarian March • Sorrow • Ruthenian Song • Ruthenian Kolomejka*

Trad/Roma

Béla Bartók

Zöld az erdő (Green is the Forest) *arranged by Miklós Lukács*  
Divertimento for string orchestra BB118 (1939)  
*I. Allegro non troppo • II. Molto adagio • III. Allegro assai*  
Interval

Johannes Brahms

Adagio from Clarinet Quintet in B minor Op. 115 (1891)  
*arranged by David Lundblad*

Hungarian Dance in F minor WoO. 1 No. 4 (1868)  
*arranged by Johannes Marmén*

Trad/Roma

Béla Bartók

Hajnali dal (Dawn Song) *arranged by Miklós Lukács*  
6 Romanian Folk Dances BB68 (1915)  
*arranged by David Lundblad*  
*Stick Dance • Sash Dance • In One Spot • Horn Dance • Romanian Polka • Fast Dance*

Boris Pigovat (b.1953)

Jewish Wedding (2002-8)

Johannes Brahms

Hungarian Dance in F sharp minor WoO. 1 No. 5 (1868)  
*arranged by Johannes Marmén*

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Danger, glamour, sex and gruesome violence are the themes of a famous Romany folk tale, *Nita's Lover*, in which the ghastly villain of the piece is a vampire. Not for the faint-hearted, it incorporates many familiar motifs, but one surprising swirl might be unique to the Romany tradition. A plucked flower stands in a vase in the bedroom of a sleeping prince. Rising into the air, it turns a somersault and is transformed into the beautiful Nita. The somersault is a wonderful arabesque, an abracadabra moment that encapsulates some of the fascination that Romany culture has exerted on composers. Such 'Travellers' tales' thrive on the impromptu flourish: the transgressive allure of unfettered emotions and a world free of formal restraints. Transferred into the classical mainstream, these characteristics have inspired composers to convention-bursting flights of fancy, and this evening's concert extends the freewheeling ethos by adding Miklós Lukács's cimbalom to the conventional instrumental line-up. Central to the repertoire are **Brahms's** *Hungarian Dances*, written for the piano, three of which are performed this evening in an arrangement by **Johannes Marmén** for strings and cimbalom. The pieces are generally based on Hungarian dances known as *csárdás* (from the old Hungarian word for a roadside inn) – some of which, in Brahms's case, turned out to be more authentically Romany than others. Towards the end of Brahms's career, the terpsichorean vigour of Traveller music is condensed in the *Adagio* (the second movement) of Brahms's Clarinet Quintet, where, against the backdrop of muted strings, the arabesques of the virtuoso clarinet achieve a surprising intensity. Composed in 1891 for the outstanding German clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, the piece is often considered to be nostalgic in tone and inspiration, but its paradoxical character, which is evident in the *Adagio*, fuses a raging resistance to the dying of the light with a consummate creative artistry that brings tranquillity. With specific reference to the instrumental forces deployed this evening, the rhapsodic middle section of the movement also recalls the sounds of the cimbalom.

A significant figure in the creation of modern ethnomusicology, **Bartók** was an avid supporter of the Hungarian nationalist movement. His devotion to the cause was catalysed when he heard a young woman singing a Transylvanian folk tune in the summer of 1904. That life-changing experience convinced Bartók to begin systematically collecting peasant music, first transcribing pieces by hand and later making field recordings using a portable phonograph. His *6 Romanian Folk Dances*, composed for piano in 1915, are based on a particular set of tunes from Transylvania, but the musical strategies that Bartók discovered in folk music profoundly influenced his entire creative life. *44 Duos for 2*

*Violins* (1931), commissioned as a pedagogical work and this evening performed on violin and clarinet, exemplifies the principle. Made up almost exclusively of arrangements of peasant songs, the duos are presented in order of difficulty, but they also develop a compositional interest in the ways in which the traditional tunes could be elaborated using classical devices of counterpoint and harmony. Technically, Bartók's three-movement *Divertimento* (1939) places rhythmic and melodic elements relating to Romany sources in a neoclassical framework (the *divertimento*) that is further modified to accommodate the expressive strategies of a Baroque concerto grosso, characterised by alternating solo parts and ensemble ripieni. Emotionally, those complications inform the work's gripping succession of starkly contrasting moods that doubtless reflect Bartók's state of mind as he finalised his plans to emigrate to America, following the outbreak of World War II, when Hungary was preparing to join the Axis.

This evening's concert includes instrumental arrangements of two traditional Romany songs. 'Zöld az erdő' ('Green is the Forest'), also known as the Travellers' hymn, laments the plight of a people who exist outside the bounds of established society, accepting the vicissitudes of fortune, but also plagued with cares. 'Eternal vagabonds', as the song says, they live like 'thieves' forever on the run, but what – if anything – did they actually steal? Only a 'nail' from Jesus's bleeding hand. The legend ultimately derives from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, where Nicodemus helps to take Christ down from the cross and then removes the nails from his hands and feet. Identified with Nicodemus, the metal-working Romani, who were believed to have journeyed across Europe and Asia, were judged to be miscreants. Secondly, in an arrangement by **Miklós Lukács** and **David Lundblad**, the Romany folk song 'Hajnali dal', which means aubade or 'Dawn Song' in English, is rendered with a melancholy optimism (here inflected with jazz chords) that captures the essence of the genre. Finally, taking a sideways leap, Jewish klezmer, which includes dance tunes, ritual melodies and improvisations, is the name given to a type of Ashkenazi instrumental music that is traditionally played at weddings and social functions. Dedicated to the clarinetist Giora Feidman, **Boris Pigovat's** 'Jewish Wedding' is a rhapsodic klezmer that was composed in 2002, but later reworked for clarinet and string orchestra at Feidman's request. Also at Feidman's suggestion, the title of the piece was changed from *Tzfat*, the name of the city that hosts an annual klezmer festival, in order to signal its inspiration and to add a more readily recognisable context.

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