

WIGMORE HALL 125

Monday 29 September 2025
1.00pm

New Paths

Lawrence Power viola, violin
Ryan Wigglesworth piano

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) None but the lonely heart Op. 6 No. 6 (1869)
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) Divertimento for violin and piano (1934)
*I. Sinfonia • II. Danses Suisses • III. Scherzo •
IV. Pas de deux. Adagio*
George Enescu (1881-1955) Concertstück (1906)
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) Viola Sonata in E flat Op. 120 No. 2 (1894)
*I. Allegro amabile • II. Allegro appassionato •
III. Andante con moto*



This concert is being broadcast on BBC Radio 3



Help us raise £125,000
for 125 years of music

To find out more visit wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate



Join & Support
Donations

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](https://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

Today's concert places two ingenious violin and piano arrangements alongside two works that highlight the soloistic potential of the viola.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's substantial *œuvre* includes around 100 Romances for voice and piano – Romances are the Russian equivalent of Lieder. 'None but the lonely heart' was composed in late 1869 and is the last of his 6 *Romances* Op. 6. The text is a Russian translation by Lev Mey of Goethe's poem 'Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt' (set by many German composers), in which the waifish Mignon expresses her sadness and longing for love. The song was first sung in Moscow in 1870 by the mezzo-soprano Yelizaveta Lavrovskaya. Its exquisitely simple, flowing melody infused with lyrical intensity has made it enormously popular both with singers and instrumentalists. Today's arrangement makes eloquent use of the violin's extensive range, and includes passages of double stopping (where the violinist plays chords) that reflect the anguish of Mey's text. The piece closes with the violin soaring to ethereal heights against a quietly throbbing piano accompaniment.

In 1927, the dancer Ida Rubinstein commissioned **Igor Stravinsky** to create a ballet to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Tchaikovsky's death. For his scenario, he chose Hans Christian Andersen's eerie story *The Ice Maiden*, in which a beautiful Swiss ice spirit kills a young mother whose child she marks as her own. The child, Rudy, grows up strong and handsome, and in due course becomes engaged to the local miller's daughter Babette. However, shortly before their wedding the Ice Maiden returns to claim him. Stravinsky saw the story as 'an allegory of Tchaikovsky himself', claimed by 'the muse [...] at the height of his powers'. His ballet, *Le Baiser de la fée*, reworks selections from Tchaikovsky's piano music and songs, incorporating the astringent harmonies and spare textures of neoclassicism. Immediately after the ballet's première in November 1928, Stravinsky turned some of its music into an orchestral suite. Then in 1934, he and the violinist Samuel Dushkin – for whom he had written his Violin Concerto (1930) – arranged this suite to make a four-movement *Divertimento* for violin and piano that they could perform together in recitals.

The opening *Sinfonia* – *Andante* portrays the death of Rudy's mother in a snowstorm, and is alternately wistful and turbulent. *Danses Suisses* is a series of catchy folk dances that owe as much to Slavic as to Swiss traditional music. In the ensuing *Scherzo*, fidgety outer sections featuring long violin trills contrast with a rustic trio with 'drone' effects for the violinist. The finale – which includes veiled quotations from Tchaikovsky's 'None but the lonely heart' – opens with an unashamedly romantic *Pas de deux* (dance for two) representing Rudy's and Babette's love. A somewhat jazzy *Variation* on this dance is followed by an increasingly agitated and vertiginous *Coda*, which depicts the Ice Maiden's arrival to claim her victim.

The Romanian composer and violinist **George Enescu** was a child prodigy. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire

from 1895 to 1899 and subsequently divided his time between his native country and the French capital. In 1906, his former teacher Gabriel Fauré asked him to write a piece for the Conservatoire's annual viola competition. The resultant *Concertstück* owes less to Romanian folk music than many of Enescu's compositions – rather, its richly chromatic harmonic language recalls the works of Debussy and of Fauré himself. (Its rhapsodic style also anticipates Debussy's 1910 *Première rapsodie*, another Conservatoire commission.) Throughout, the viola alternates between song-like lyricism and flamboyant episodes containing cascading figuration, double-stopping and trills. However, even in its most virtuosic passages the piece maintains an essential serenity.

Following the première of his String Quintet No. 2 in November 1890, **Johannes Brahms** decided to retire from composition. But he changed his mind the following March when he heard the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinet of the famous Meiningen Court Orchestra. Brahms was especially drawn to the clarinetist's warm tone and his musical expressiveness and sensitivity. In 1891 he wrote him two substantial compositions – the Quintet for clarinet and strings and the Trio for clarinet, piano and cello – following these in 1894 with two sonatas, his final chamber works.

Evidently Brahms wished these sonatas to have as wide a circulation as possible, as he prepared alternative versions for viola and piano. (He also produced an arrangement for violin and piano, rarely performed today.) In adapting the clarinet part for viola, Brahms made various subtle changes, which included adding passages of double-stopping, and occasionally extending the melody line. Both sonatas have become cornerstones of the viola repertoire.

The Sonata in E flat Op. 120 No. 2 is a more mellow and relaxed work than the stormy Sonata in F minor Op. 120 No. 1. Its opening movement is headed *Allegro amabile* (literally 'fast and tender') and is notable for its songlike beauty and seamless transitions between sections. While there are brief agitated episodes – usually introduced by the piano – the mood is predominantly tranquil, not least in the lilting coda with its gentle piano melody. Brahms scholar Malcolm MacDonald described the second movement as a 'heroic waltz'. Its impassioned outer sections contrast with a sonorous, hymn-like central episode. As in his Clarinet Quintet, Brahms closes the piece with five variations on a simple and graceful theme. The first three feature increasingly elaborate textures and much dialogue between the instruments, while the fourth is hushed and pensive. The mood briefly darkens in the minor-key fifth, which includes dramatic outbursts for both instruments. However, the expansive and increasingly flamboyant coda soon returns us to warm major-key sonorities, closing the work in a mood of celebration.

© Kate Hopkins 2025

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.