

WIGMORE HALL 125

Thursday 4 December 2025
7.30pm

Belcea Quartet

Corina Belcea violin
Suyeon Kang violin
Karolina Errera viola
Antoine Lederlin cello

Bertrand Chamayou piano

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Capriccio in E minor Op. 81 No. 3 (1843)

Fugue in E flat Op. 81 No. 4 (1827)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

String Quartet No. 2 in C Op. 36 (1945)

*I. Allegro calmo, senza rigore • II. Vivace •
III. Chacony. Sostenuto*

Interval

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957) Piano Quintet in E Op. 15 (1921)

*I. Mässiges Zeitmass, mit schungvoll bluhendem
Ausdruck • II. Adagio: mit grösser Ruhe, stets äusserst-
ausdruckvoll • III. Finale: Gemessem, beinahe pathetisch*



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

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



W

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 • 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

Tonight's concert is the first in a series of three in which I will be participating this week. A solo recital on 7 December and two important partnerships in my life as a musician: a recital with Barbara Hannigan on 6 December, and tonight a concert shared with the Belcea Quartet.

The Belcea Quartet is also a loyal regular at Wigmore Hall.

We met while playing Fauré's two quintets and Brahms's quintet together in 2007 at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. It was immediately obvious that we wanted to play together again, but it took a few years for that to happen. Despite not seeing each other for several years, I remember our reunion in Berlin around Dvořák's quintet as if we had played together the day before. We haven't been apart since, and tonight we have the immense pleasure of playing Korngold's rare and superb quintet together for the first time.

At first glance, this programme combining Mendelssohn, Britten and Korngold does not seem to be put together in a very logical way.

What strikes me about the combination of these three composers, however, is that it is, in a way, the antithesis of the concert we will be giving in two days with Barbara Hannigan, which will be dedicated to composers in search of the unprecedented.

The three composers featured this evening are each firmly rooted in tradition in their own way and proud of it, even though each has found his own style.

Mendelssohn is the most classical of the composers of the 1810 generation. Perhaps because of his extremely precocious talent, we can imagine that his style developed at the dawn of Romanticism. Consider that he was already writing his first masterpieces during the lifetimes of Beethoven, Schubert and Weber.

He remained attached to this language throughout his life, without succumbing to the siren call of modernism, as evidenced by the two pieces presented this evening as a prelude, which were composed in the last years of his life.

Britten's Second Quartet was premièred here at Wigmore Hall on 21 November 1945, the exact 250th anniversary of Henry Purcell's death.

While the second movement is a kind of nocturnal music, the third is an undisguised homage to Purcell, a *Chaconne* consisting of a series of 21 variations interspersed with cadences from the cello, viola and first violin.

While Mendelssohn remained attached to classicism and Britten looked to Baroque music, Korngold was certainly the last breath of Viennese Romanticism.

He, too, was an extremely precocious composer, writing his piano quintet at the height of his fame in 1921, barely a year after the enormous success of his opera *Die Tote Stadt*.

It is a powerful, passionate score, brimming with ideas and rich harmonies, whose emotional heart, the second movement, consists of a series of nine variations on the third of his *Chants d'Adieu* Op. 14, composed in the same year.

A prescient title for this towering figure of late Romanticism, who would soon have to flee Nazism and become a successful film composer, exporting elements of Viennese music and contributing greatly to the invention of Hollywood music.

After the war, he returned to his native Austria, presenting a monumental symphony, among other works, but the world had changed in the meantime and his anachronistic style prevented him from regaining his former success.

© Bertrand Chamayou 2025

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.