

# WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 4 November 2023  
7.30pm

Nicolas Altstaedt cello

Arcangelo

Jonathan Cohen director, harpsichord

Zefira Valova violin I, leader

Sophia Prodanova violin I

Emma Williams violin I

James Toll violin II

Florence Cooke violin II

Aliye Cornish viola

Jaume Pueyo Sola viola

Jonathan Byers cello

Ismael Campanero Nieto double bass

Christopher Palameta oboe

Sarah Humphrys oboe

Inga Maria Klaucke bassoon

Ursula Paludan Monberg horn

Nick Benz horn

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Symphony in E flat H654 (1757)

*I. Prestissimo • II. Larghetto • III. Presto*

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784)

Sinfonia in F F67 (c.1735-40)

*I. Vivace • II. Andante • III. Allegro •  
IV. Menuet I & II*

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Cello Concerto in C HVIIb/1 (c.1761-5)

*I. Moderato 1 • II. Adagio 1 • III. Allegro molto 1*

Interval

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805)

Cello Concerto No. 3 in G G480 (pub. 1770)

*I. Allegro • II. Adagio • III. Allegro*

Joseph Haydn

Symphony No. 45 in F sharp minor H1/45 'Farewell' (1772)

*I. Allegro assai • II. Adagio •  
III. Menuet. Allegretto - Trio •  
IV. Finale. Presto - Adagio*



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The most prolific and original of Johann Sebastian Bach's four composer sons, **Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach** began his professional career in 1738, as an employee at the court of Frederick II ('the Great'). Under Frederick's reign, musical life flourished in Berlin, with a special emphasis on the creation of instrumental music to be performed by the court orchestra. At this time, the concert symphony was a very new genre, and its evolution was heavily influenced by Italian models, especially the concerto and the operatic overture. The eight symphonies Carl Philipp Emanuel wrote in Berlin across a period of 20 years show clear developments in style and structure. The three-movement Symphony in E flat H654, composed in 1757, displays some of these innovations, including the use of sonata-like structures and a transition at the end of the first movement that leads directly into the second. The presence of horns, too, demonstrates the increasing importance of winds and brass in reinforcing orchestral textures and adding colour.

The symphonies (or 'sinfonias') of Carl Philipp Emanuel's elder brother, **Wilhelm Friedemann Bach**, mostly date from the period 1733-46, when he was an organist in Dresden. These works owe much stylistically to the instrumental music and overtures of contemporary Dresden composers, especially Jan Dismas Zelenka, Johann Adolf Hasse and Gottlob Harrer. Such connections are especially evident in the Sinfonia in F F67: to the typical arrangement of movements (fast-slow-fast), Wilhelm Friedemann adds a pair of minuets, showing the influence of the Baroque dance suite (one also thinks of his father's First Brandenburg Concerto), and anticipating the standard inclusion of the minuet in the Classical symphony. Although comparatively short, the preceding three movements are striking in their originality, defying any sense of conventional writing. The first, in particular, features extraordinarily daring chromatic harmonies and dissonances, whilst the second and third movements display clever imitative part-writing that unmistakably recalls the music of Hasse, but with a twist.

**Joseph Haydn's** two authentic cello concertos, which were composed approximately 20 years apart, are some of the most important works written for the instrument in the 18th Century. The first, the Cello Concerto in C HVIIb/1, was thought completely lost until a set of parts was discovered in Prague in 1961. It was composed around 1761-5, shortly after Haydn had become musical director of the orchestra at the wealthy Esterházy court at Eisenstadt, where he worked for nearly 30 years. The concerto was probably written for Joseph Weigl (1740-1820), the principal cellist of the orchestra and a close personal friend of Haydn. Its style bears a striking resemblance to Haydn's symphonies of the period, many of which feature solo cello sections. The superlative technique and beautiful tone demanded of the soloist in all these works suggest Weigl must have been a very fine cellist indeed.

Unlike the second concerto, all three movements of the C major concerto are in sonata form. The first is in a grand, courtly style, presenting an elegant theme, full of dotted rhythms and syncopation, that is initially stated by the orchestra and then taken up by the soloist. As in the slow movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 13, the middle *Adagio* is notable for its lack of winds, giving it an intimate character that perfectly suits the aria-like qualities of the solo part. The playful final movement is a virtuosic *tour-de-force* for the soloist, featuring brilliant passagework and extremely difficult, rapid changes from very high to low registers.

Haydn's Italian contemporary **Luigi Boccherini**, undoubtedly the pre-eminent cellist-composer of his day, wrote 12 cello concertos, amongst many other instrumental works. His Concerto in G major G480, published in 1770, is today best known for its expressive slow movement, due to its inauthentic insertion into a 19th-century arrangement of the more famous B flat concerto G482. In this movement, the solo cello is accompanied only by violins, with no bass line, creating a delicate, otherworldly atmosphere. The outer movements are typically *galant* in style, and although the solo part is technically very challenging, virtuosic displays are never allowed to impede a sense of grace and elegance.

The famous story behind the nickname of Haydn's Symphony No. 45 H1/45, the 'Farewell', comes from the composer's biographer Georg August Griesinger, who apparently heard it directly from Haydn himself. Each summer, Prince Nikolaus and the rest of the Esterházy court decamped from Eisenstadt to the grand but isolated Esterháza palace in the Hungarian countryside, requiring most of the musicians to leave their families behind for months. In 1772, when the prince extended his stay yet again, the frustrated musicians asked for Haydn's help, which came in the form of this remarkable symphony. Even its key is unusual: it is the only known 18th-century symphony written in F sharp minor, and the entire tightly structured work is imbued with extra-musical meaning. It begins in a stormy, agitated mood, before settling into a more graceful A major *Adagio* in the second movement, albeit with some dark undertones. After a cheeky minuet that features some jarring harmonies and deliberately weak cadences (pointedly suggesting that something was quite wrong at Esterháza), the *Presto Finale* begins as one would expect. But just as the music seems to be coming to a natural end, it suddenly breaks off, and, after a moment of silence, transitions to what is essentially a second slow movement, recalling the earlier *Adagio*. In an extraordinary piece of musical pantomime that must have astonished the prince, the orchestra gradually loses strength as, one by one, the musicians are instructed to snuff out their candles, get up and leave the stage. Finally, only two violins are left, and the piece ends *pianissimo*. Needless to say, the prince got the hint.

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