

# WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 5 October 2022  
7.30pm

Christian Tetzlaff violin  
Kirill Gerstein piano

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Violin Sonata (1914-5, rev. 1916-22)  
*I. Con moto • II. Ballada • III. Allegretto • IV. Adagio*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor Op. 108 (1886-8)  
*I. Allegro • II. Adagio •  
III. Un poco presto e con sentimento •  
IV. Presto agitato*

Interval

Thomas Adès (b.1971)

Suite from 'The Tempest' (2022)  
*I. Caliban: 'This island's mine' (Act 1 Scene 4) •  
II. Ariel: 'full fathom five thy father lies' (Act 1 Scene 5) •  
III. Miranda: Aria and Quintet • IV. Caliban and Ariel, Free*

György Kurtág (b.1926)

3 pezzi Op. 14e (1979)  
*Öd und traurig • Vivo • Aus der Ferne*

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Violin Sonata No. 2 BB85 (1922)  
*I. Molto moderato • II. Allegretto*

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



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

## Friends of Wigmore Hall – celebrating 30 years of friendship

Over the past 30 years, Friends have been providing transformational support for the Hall, ensuring this historic building remains a home for great music making. Enjoy the benefits of friendship by joining as a Friend today, and be a part of the Wigmore story. Visit: [wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends) | Call: 020 7258 8230

FRIENDS OF  
WIGMORE HALL

30

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



Though **Janáček** was primarily an opera composer, his relatively small chamber music output contains some outstanding and highly idiosyncratic works. These all demonstrate an unerring grasp of writing for instruments, yet human drama is never far below the surface, as can be heard clearly from the opening of his Violin Sonata. It was begun in the summer of 1914, during the early days of the First World War, and seems to convey a premonition that the fabric of life in the composer's homeland – for so many years dominated by Austria and the Habsburg monarchy – was about to change irrevocably.

Janáček had long chafed against the Czech lands' subservience to a German-speaking empire, and this feeling of resentment had prompted him to become a fervent Slavophile and to seek inspiration in Russian rather than Austrian culture. The protracted genesis of the Violin Sonata – which only reached its final form in 1922 – coincided with the composition of the opera *Kát'a Kabanová* (1921), based on a play by the Russian dramatist Alexander Ostrovsky, and the two works are similar in atmosphere and share some thematic similarities. In particular, the opening idea of the scherzo-like third movement is reminiscent of the 'troika' motif in *Kát'a*.

Unlike Janáček, **Brahms** never wrote an opera and conversely produced a large body of chamber music. Few of his chamber works yield any hint of being programmatic in nature, and although his first two violin sonatas contain quotations from the composer's own songs, the Violin Sonata No. 3 offers few clues as to its sources of inspiration. This does not mean, however, that it is lacking in drama or eloquence; far from it.

Given that Brahms spent much of his performing career partnering violinists – notably Joseph Joachim, with whom he enjoyed a close friendship that spanned going on for half a century – it is something of a mystery that he did not get round to writing his first violin sonata until he was in his mid-40s. The next two appeared in fairly quick succession, and all three were written mainly during the composer's summer holidays in various Austrian and Swiss resorts, suggesting that he found a relaxed atmosphere free from everyday pressures most conducive to the production of such works.

But while the first two sonatas are relatively relaxed in tone, No. 3 takes the genre to a new level of intensity. Unlike its predecessors, it has four movements, providing scope for an even wider range of contrasts – from the broad sweep of the first movement via the warmly eloquent *Adagio* and mercurial scherzo through to the barn-storming élan of the finale.

On its première at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in 2004, **Thomas Adès's** opera *The Tempest* was immediately acclaimed as one of the first operatic triumphs of the 21st Century. The composer has now returned to the music of the opera and created a four-movement suite for violin and piano,

which he describes as a set of 'character studies'. In these pieces, the world of *The Tempest* is re-made and re-heard on a more intimate scale. The Suite was written for Christian Tetzlaff and Kirill Gerstein and was first performed by them on 1 October 2022 at the Casals Forum in Kronberg, Germany.

Born to ethnic Hungarian parents in the western Romanian town of Lugoj, **György Kurtág** did not move to Hungary until the age of 20, when he became a student at Budapest's Franz Liszt Academy. Though he has lived and worked in other countries, much of his career has been devoted to teaching piano and chamber music at the Liszt Academy.

The Hungarian musicologist Zoltán Farkas has described Kurtág as 'a poet of aphoristic brevity' and has drawn attention to his ability to condense 'an emotion, gesture, or a whole drama' into 10- or 20-second miniatures. The most extreme examples of this ability are to be found in *Játékok* ('Games'), a series of piano pieces begun in 1973. Averaging out at around two minutes each, the *3 pezzi* (1979) may seem positively self-indulgent compared to some of the extremely short pieces in *Játékok*, but here too brevity is the order of the day.

**Bartók's** Violin Sonata No. 2 (1922) was written soon after he had begun to have second thoughts about what he had previously regarded as the clear distinction between Hungarian folk music and urban popular music. The latter was heavily influenced by the *verbunkos* ('recruiting music') style, which often incorporated elements of *csárdás* dance music. Bartók had at first rejected this style as tawdry and inauthentic but had come to accept that it could be just as authentic as peasant song.

The Sonata No. 2 is cast in the *lassu-friss* ('slow-fast') pattern typical of the *verbunkos* style: the first movement unfolds in a leisurely *parlando-rubato* style and is characterised by elaborate ornamentation and subtle changes of tempo, while the second is more strictly rhythmical and at times even approaches the style of a *moto perpetuo*. The work still exhibits the complexity and harmonic astringency that had characterised much of the music written by Bartók during the previous decade, but despite the dissonances the second sonata is already a more accessible work than its predecessor, composed only a year earlier.

Both works were written for the Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Áranyi, the great-niece of Joachim. A graduate of the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music (the forerunner of the Liszt Academy), d'Áranyi later moved to England but stayed in touch with Bartók, whom she had already got to know in Budapest. In May 1923 she performed the Sonata No. 2 with the composer in London, at a recital that was declared by the *Westminster Gazette* to be 'of exceptional interest'.

© Paula Kennedy 2022

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*