**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

**Piano Trio in C minor, Op.101**

Allegro energico
Presto non assai
Andante grazioso
Allegro molto

**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)**

Brahms completed the C minor Piano Trio in 1886, during an extremely productive summer holiday at Thun in Switzerland that also saw the completion of the F major Cello Sonata and the A major and D minor violin sonatas. Brahms himself gave the first performance on 20 December 1886 in Budapest with violinist Jenő Hubay and cellist David Popper. It is the shortest of Brahms’s piano trios, and the most dramatic. A remarkable eye-witness account survives of Brahms himself playing the work, noted down on her copy of the score by the British pianist Fanny Davies, who was a pupil of Clara Schumann. She was present at a private performance at Baden-Baden in 1887, given in ‘a simple room, [with] a small upright piano’ by ‘the three giants’ – Brahms, Joachim and the cellist Robert Hausmann – with Clara Schumann acting as page-turner. On her copy, Davies noted the opening as ‘wild’, remarking too that Brahms’s playing was ‘so wonderfully poised’, and at the start of the coda she wrote ‘Tremendous’, adding that ‘it is overwhelming, and Brahms, his colleagues and his listeners were completely carried away with the magnitude of the idea’. Brahms took the Scherzo at a relatively steady pace, and in the Andante grazioso Davies noted that ‘Brahms played with unbelievable transparency, elegance, simplicity and ease of phrasing’ – words that could just as easily be applied to the music itself. In the finale, it was the players’ control of tempo and the resonant bass-notes of Brahms’s playing (even on a modest upright) as the work drew to its imposing close, that made it one of hard-won triumph.

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

**Piano Trio No.1 in B flat, Op.21**

Allegro molto
Adagio molto e mesto
Allegretto scherzando
Finale. Allegro vivace

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)**

Dvořák’s Piano Trio No.1 was actually his third (he destroyed the previous two) and its date of completion, 14 May 1875, is the same as his Serenade for Strings, which remains one of his most popular and regularly performed works. This Piano Trio is sadly under-performed, which is unfortunate because it’s most definitely the Dvořák we associate with his later and more celebrated pieces. It’s music by a composer who could take the most simple of melodies – almost naively simple – and enable them to generate substantial works of constantly fluctuating character. And in the latter two movements, although he doesn’t literally quote the folk music of his Bohemian homeland, there can be little doubt that the dancing energy is derived from polkas and furiants.

Ⓒ Tom McKinney

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In 1875, at the age of 34, Dvořák was still to make a name for himself anywhere outside of Prague, let alone internationally. But that year marked a very definite change in Dvořák’s music and – even more importantly for a composer who up until then had regularly burned scores with which he was unhappy – his own self-belief. This was undoubtedly driven by a major confidence boost after he entered a ream of compositions for the Austrian State Prize, a fund designed to assist struggling artists. Brahms was on the panel and Dvořák took the top prize. Brahms would continue to be one of his greatest champions, even helping to secure Dvořák a major publishing deal.

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**TIM HORTON piano**

**BENJAMIN NABARRO violin**

**GEMMA ROSEFIELD cello**

Friday 9 October
1.00pm & 7.00pm
Upper Chapel, Sheffield

**LEONORE PIANO TRIO**

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

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Formed in 2012, the Leonore Trio brings together three internationally acclaimed artists whose piano trio performances as part of Ensemble 360 were met with such an enthusiastic response that they decided to form a piano trio in its own right.

The Trio has given concerts throughout the UK, Italy, Norway (Bergen International Festival and Oslo Concert Hall), Denmark and in New Zealand. Whilst in New Zealand they played to and coached a group of young musicians as part of the Sistema Aotearoa programme, and were adjudicators of the Royal Over-Seas League New Zealand Chamber Music Competition. Their concert in Hamilton was broadcast on Radio New Zealand.

The Trio's debut recording for Hyperion of piano trios of Anton Arensky was released in March 2014. The disc received critical acclaim both nationally and internationally, with praise for the Trio’s “revelatory playing” (The Observer) and “impressively wide range of timbres” (Limelight Magazine). Their second and third discs for Hyperion – works by Lalo, and Rimsky-Korsakov and Taneyev, respectively – were warmly received, while their disc of David Matthews' complete piano trios, released on Toccata Classics, was described by the composer himself as “definitive”. Continuing their affinity for unearthing hidden treasures within the piano trio repertoire, they released a disc of Johann Peter Pixis' Piano Trios in late 2017 and a "fresh, intelligent and strikingly stylish" (Gramophone) account of complete Parry Trios in 2019.

The Leonore Trio's members are keen exponents of contemporary music: they gave the first performance of Holkham Beach, a piece written for and dedicated to the Trio by Simon Rowland-Jones; and they play the piano trios of distinguished composers including David Matthews, Harrison Birtwistle and Huw Watkins.

Recent highlights include a performance of the complete Beethoven Piano Trios at Kings Place, and an even broader long-term project, including all the works by Beethoven for piano trio, piano & violin, and piano & cello for Music in the Round in Sheffield.

The 2019/20 season's highlights included the Trio's return to Istanbul's Süreyya Opera House and the Sage Gateshead. Their next disc for Hyperion, of works by Henry Charles Litolff, was released in February 2020. They also concluded their Beethoven project in Sheffield for Music in the Round. In the current season, they return to the stage at Wigmore Hall as part of its revised Autumn Series, Oxford Coffee Concerts and Music in the Round, and continue to record for Hyperion.

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Music in the Round is the leading national promoter of chamber music. For over 35 years we have been bringing people and music closer together through our friendly and informative style of ‘in the round’ performances, touring to numerous venues around the country as well as presenting two concert series and the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival each year at our home venue, the Crucible Studio. Our concerts are characterised by passion, excellence and proximity, and even in these challenging times of a global pandemic we are striving to connect people through music by presenting socially-distanced live concerts and creating films featuring our musicians to enjoy online.

Find out more at www.musicintheround.co.uk

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