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PAUL LEWIS CBE

Livestream piano recital

Haydn Piano Sonata in C minor, Hob XVI:20

Beethoven Fantasia in G minor, Op 77

Schubert Piano Sonata in G, D894

Tuesday 22 September 2020 - 8pm UK Time

Welcome

In a year where live music has been notable by its absence, it is an absolute joy to present this recital by Paul Lewis direct from Turner Sims. Although the challenges around socially distanced seating mean that we are not in a position yet to welcome audiences in person, I very much hope that you enjoy the online experience with us. As the first in a series of online events from the concert hall in the coming weeks and months, we not only have a new opportunity to reach out to you, but also for you to interact with us, whether you are encountering Turner Sims for the first time or are a regular visitor (either in person or digitally).

This event of course does not happen without a significant amount of planning and preparation. Firstly I am hugely grateful to Paul Lewis for agreeing to perform in this very different environment. Paul has been a regular visitor to Turner Sims over the past two decades and is a favourite with audiences, so it is wonderful that he is able to launch this new venture. I must also thank Thomas Hull at Maestro Arts, and Simon Weir and the team at Classical Media for ensuring the smooth running of the event. Last, but not least, my thanks go to the home team at Turner Sims and University of Southampton. Like so many colleagues and friends, these past few months have presented innumerable challenges to deal with and respond to whilst working remotely from the venue. With live music coming from the concert stage once again, I hope that together we can offer optimism and energy as we contemplate a new musical future.

KEVIN APPLEBY

Concert Hall Manager, Turner Sims

PROGRAMME NOTES

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) Piano Sonata in C minor, Hob XVI:20

Moderato
Andante con moto
Finale: Allegro

Haydn's status as the father of the symphony and the string quartet is widely acknowledged, but his paternal claims on the piano sonata are scarcely less strong. It was Haydn who more or less single-handedly raised the classical sonata to the level of a high art-form, and the greatest among his works of the kind have a dramatic sweep that was only rarely equalled by Mozart, and was not to be surpassed until Beethoven revolutionised the form in the closing years of the 18th century. Beethoven completed his first set of piano sonatas in 1795, just a year after Haydn's long career as a composer of keyboard sonatas had come to an end, and it acknowledged its debt by bearing a dedication to the older composer.

The instrument for which Haydn composed his mature sonatas was not the still ubiquitous harpsichord, but the relatively new-fangled piano. Haydn set great store by the piano's expressive qualities, and the Sonata in C minor Sonata H.20 is not only his first to contain dynamic markings (they were almost certainly

added at the time the work was published, nearly a decade after it had been written), but also perhaps the earliest unequivocal masterpiece in the pianist's repertoire. Like all Haydn's pieces of the kind, it was designed for domestic performance by amateur players, the large majority of whom were women. Judging from the music's technical demands, many of them must have been remarkable pianists - in particular, the sisters Katharina and Marianna von Auenbrugger, to whom Haydn dedicated the set of six sonatas that includes the C minor sonata. When Haydn returned the proofs of the sonatas to his publishers, he told them, 'The approval of the Misses v. Auenbrugger is of the utmost importance to me since their manner of playing and their genuine understanding of the art of music equals that of the greatest masters.'

In the late 1760s and early 1770s Haydn's music underwent a stylistic revolution. His works of this so-called *Sturm und Drang*, or 'storm and stress', phase are explosively passionate, and Haydn was never again to concentrate so markedly on minor keys. His greatest and most ambitious keyboard work of this time is the C minor Sonata – the 'longest and most difficult', as he himself said, of the sonatas dedicated to the Auenbrugger sisters. Its intensified recapitulations, and its violent dynamic contrasts (a feature entirely new to Haydn's keyboard music at the time) owe an

unmistakable debt to the style of heightened expressiveness, or *Empfindsamkeit*, cultivated above all by C.P.E. Bach.

Haydn's seriousness of intent in the C minor Sonata is shown by the fact that all three of its movements are in sonata form. The opening movement, with its fragmentary melodic style and its sudden Adagio interventions, shows the composer's style at its most spectacularly forward-looking. The slow movement, on the other hand, casts more than a passing glance towards the past: the 'running' bass line in regular quavers that pauses only for the last two bars of each half has unmistakable roots in the early eighteenth century.

But perhaps the finest of the three movements is the finale; and the astonishing outburst in its recapitulation - a crossed-hands passage of explosive violence - was to find no parallel in Haydn's piano music for many years to come. Since the recapitulation up to that point has been greatly compressed, the music appears to progress in a single uninterrupted sweep from the development right through to its despairing conclusion.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) **Fantasia in G minor, Op 77**

During his earlier years, Beethoven's powers of improvisation were legendary. As his former pupil Carl Czerny later recalled:

'His improvisation was most brilliant and striking. In whatever company he might chance to be, he knew how to produce such an effect upon every hearer that frequently not an eye remained dry, while many would break out into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas and his spirited style of rendering them. After ending an improvisation of this kind he would burst into loud laughter and mock his listeners for the emotion he had caused in them. 'You are fools!', he would say.'

Beethoven's improvisatory style is reflected not only in the cadenzas he supplied for his own piano concertos and for Mozart's famous D minor Concerto K466, but also in his free fantasias and smaller sets of variations. It was common practice in Beethoven's day - as it

had been in Mozart's - for a composer skilled in the art of improvisation to include a demonstration of his powers when putting on a concert of his own music. On 22 December 1808 Beethoven presented a marathon programme in Vienna that contained not only the first performances of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and the Fourth Piano Concerto, but also a fantasia for piano solo, and - designed as the grand climax to the evening's entertainment - a Fantasy for piano, soloists, chorus and orchestra. The last of these items, the 'Choral' Fantasy Op 80, itself began with a piano improvisation which Beethoven wrote down only after the event, when the piece was published; and perhaps he made use of the contents of the solo piano fantasia he had played earlier in the evening when he came to compose his Fantasy Op 77, which was commissioned by the London-based composer and publisher Clementi, the following year.

No piece of Beethoven affords a more vivid picture of what his improvisations must have been like than this one. Its first half presents a bewildering succession of musical fragments in contrasting moods, punctuated by rushing scales or arpeggios - almost as though the individual pages of music were being violently torn off. One of those fragments consists of a series of 'sighing' two-note phrases forming an expressive melody that is broken off before it can establish itself; another, of a simple folk-like tune that likewise disintegrates before our ears; and a third, of a stormy episode in the minor. The Fantasy's latter half is a more orderly affair, consisting of a set of variations on a short theme in the luminous key of B major. The final variation introduces descending scale-fragments, so that the ensuing return of the scales from the Fantasy's beginning draws the various threads of the piece together.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) **Piano Sonata No 18 in G, D894 (1826)**

Molto moderato e cantabile
Andante
Menuetto. Allegro moderato
Allegretto

In his reminiscences of Schubert, the composer's friend Joseph von Spaun recounted how he called on him one October morning in 1826, to find him hard at work on a

sonata. 'Although I had interrupted him, he at once played me the first movement which he had just completed, and as I liked it very much he said: 'If you like the sonata, it shall be yours; I want to give you as much pleasure as I can.' And soon he brought it neatly written out, and dedicated to me.'

The sonata in question was the one in G major D894, composed shortly after Schubert's only other large-scale instrumental work in this key, the String Quartet D887. However, when the Viennese publisher Tobias Haslinger issued the sonata the following year, he gave it a title-page describing the work as a 'Fantasie, Andante, Menuetto und Allegretto'. Haslinger was a canny businessman, and must have realised that his sales figures were likely to be healthier if he presented the work to the public not in the unfashionable guise of a sonata, but as a collection of individual character-pieces. The title-page on Schubert's own autograph score of the Sonata (now housed in the British Library) quite clearly identifies it as his 'IV Sonata'. The first two were clearly the already published sonatas in A minor D845, and D major D850; but we cannot be so sure as to the identity of the third preceding sonata. Perhaps Schubert had in mind the one in E flat major D568 (the revised version of his D flat major Sonata D567), which was presumably ready for publication at this time.

Haslinger's description of the G major sonata's opening movement as a fantasy appears to have misled the reviewer of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, who complained that the piece did not share the freedom of expression of some of Beethoven's fantasies, and particularly of the then little known example in C sharp minor (i.e. the opening movement of the *Moonlight* Sonata). More perceptively, the reviewer pointed out that some of Schubert's writing would seem to call for a string quartet; and it is true that one can easily imagine the long-sustained chords of the sonata's inspired opening theme being played by strings, with the two lowest notes sounded as the cello's 'open' G and D strings.

Schubert's very first chord, topped by the note B, is similar in effect to the piano chord which begins Beethoven's Fourth Concerto. The chord, it is true, is the same, but the scoring is rather different: while Beethoven uses eight notes, Schubert has only five, and this translucent texture is characteristic of the movement as a whole. Also typically

Schubertian is the tempo marking of 'Molto moderato e cantabile': this is, indeed, one of the most profoundly calm of Schubert's opening movements. Its one moment of violence is provided by the development section, which is set largely in the minor and invokes the only *fff* markings to be found in his solo piano music. It is noteworthy, however, that the development's intensity is achieved without recourse to any increase in rhythmic or harmonic pulse.

Schubert's manuscript shows that the slow movement was originally very different from its now familiar form. In place of the forceful episode that follows the quiet opening theme, there was to have been a gentle melody in the key of B minor. Schubert wrote out the entire movement using this material, and must have had a change of heart only while working on the minuet or finale. He removed the pages containing the greater part of this earlier version, but could not destroy its start and end, since the conclusion of the first movement and the beginning of the minuet had already been written on the relevant reverse sides. That Schubert did discard this material is something for which posterity should be profoundly grateful, as the piece is infinitely stronger as it stands. The key of the rejected episode was retained for the rhythmically much more strongly defined idea that took its place, as well as for the minuet third movement.

The rhythm of the minuet's theme was one that Schubert seems to have remembered when he came to write his great Piano Trio in E flat D929, whose opening movement contains a remarkably similar B minor theme. The same repeated-note rhythm features in the theme of the rondo finale; and it is used to bring the sonata to an end in a manner forcibly reminiscent of the conclusion to the E flat piano trio's first movement. The rondo itself has episodes in the styles of *écossaises*, and the second of them is expansive enough to take the form of a self-contained dance, complete with a trio whose melancholy C minor melody suffers a radiant sea-change into the major. Schumann, who regarded this as the most perfect among Schubert's piano sonatas, commented on its organic unity; and punning on the title-page of the original edition, warned: 'Let anyone who lacks the fantasy to solve the riddles of the last movement keep away.'

Programme notes © Misha Donat 2020

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Paul Lewis CBE

Paul Lewis is internationally regarded as one of the leading musicians of his generation. His cycles of core piano works by Beethoven and Schubert have received unanimous critical and public acclaim worldwide, and consolidated his reputation as one of the



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world's foremost interpreters of the central European classical repertoire. His numerous awards have included the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year, two Edison awards, three Gramophone awards, the Diapason D'or de l'Annee, and the South Bank Show Classical Music award. He holds honorary degrees from Liverpool, Edge Hill, and Southampton Universities, and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours. In recognition of his artistic relationship with the Boston Symphony Orchestra he was selected as the 2020 Koussevitzky Artist at Tanglewood.

He appears regularly as soloist with the world's great orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony, New York Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic, and the Royal Concertgebouw, Cleveland, Tonhalle Zurich, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Philharmonia, and Mahler Chamber Orchestras. He has performed Beethoven concerto cycles with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, and the Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductors he has worked with include Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, Manfred Honeck, and Bernard Haitink.

The 18/19 season saw the conclusion of a two year recital series exploring connections between the sonatas of Haydn, the late piano works of Brahms, and Beethoven's Bagatelles and Diabelli Variations. His 2020 Beethoven anniversary celebrations have now been postponed to 2021 with Beethoven Concerto cycles in Tanglewood (Boston Symphony and Andris Nelsons) Erl (Salzburg Mozarteum and Andrew Manze) and at the Palau de la Musica Barcelona, and Teatro Massimo in Palermo.

In addition to his regular appearances at Turner Sims, Paul Lewis' recital career takes him to venues such as London's Royal Festival Hall, Alice Tully and Carnegie Hall in New York, the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Theatre des Champs Elysees in Paris, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Berlin Philharmonie and Konzerthaus. He is also a frequent guest at the some of the world's most prestigious festivals, including Tanglewood, Ravinia, Schubertiade, Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, and the BBC Proms where in 2010 he became the first person to play a complete Beethoven piano concerto cycle in a single season.

His multi-award winning discography for Harmonia Mundi includes the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, concertos, the Diabelli Variations and Bagatelles, Liszt's B minor Sonata and other late works, all of Schubert's major piano works from the last six years of his life including the 3 song cycles with tenor Mark Padmore, solo works by Schumann and Mussorgsky, and the Brahms D minor piano concerto with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Harding. Future recording releases include a multi-album series of Haydn sonatas, and a Bach album.

Paul Lewis studied with Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London before going on to study privately with Alfred Brendel. He is co-Artistic Director of Midsummer Music, an annual chamber music festival held in Buckinghamshire, UK.

Forthcoming digital events at Turner Sims...

Schubert's *Trout* Quintet

LIVESTREAM Sunday 4 October at 6pm

David Owen Norris *fortepiano*
Caroline Balding *violin*
Roger Chase *viola*
Sarah MacMahon *cello*
Peter Buckoke *double bass*



David Owen Norris and the Jupiter Ensemble perform Schubert's popular *Trout* Quintet in this exclusive performance livestreamed from Turner Sims. This masterpiece of the chamber music repertoire takes its title from the composer's song which forms the basis of a set of variations in one of the movements, and was a favourite of the work's dedicatee.

Online tickets £10

The Listening Heart

LIVESTREAM Tuesday 6 October 7pm

Sam Troughton *Beethoven*
Hasan Dixon *Casimir*
Lily Nichol *Juliet*
David Owen Norris *fortepiano*
Directed by **Barney Norris** (pictured right)

First broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 2002 David Constantine's play, *The Listening Heart*, is revisited for this dramatised reading with live music by Beethoven directed by renowned theatremaker Barney Norris.

The action takes us back to Summer 1802 when a traumatised Ludwig van Beethoven's life is at crisis point – will he be able to live with his impending deafness?

The composer's famous Open Letter to the World, bewailing his affliction, known as the Heiligenstadt Testament, was written on October 6th, in 1802. Constantine's work recreates this critical moment of the composer and pianist's life, set against a background of the music he was composing at the time.

A celebrated cast of young actors includes Sam Troughton in the role of Beethoven, whose recent work includes *CHERNOBYL* for HBO and David Eldridge's play *BEGINNING* at the National Theatre and in the West End. As in the original broadcast David Owen Norris improvises incidental music around Beethoven's music of the time, including the Moonlight Sonata and the great C minor Violin Sonata.

Online tickets £10

Post-event 'In Conversation' with David Constantine – join the playwright in a live Q&A session after the performance.

Event presented by Turner Sims in association with the University of Southampton Music Department and Up In Arms Productions.



Next online from Turner Sims...

In Conversation with... Cordelia Williams

Monday 28 September 7pm

In the first of a new series of artist conversations pianist Cordelia Williams joins Concert Hall Manager Kevin Appleby to talk about her musical life. This free online event presented live from Turner Sims will include piano music by Mozart, Schubert, Ravel, and Schumann.

This event is free to view but please consider donating to Turner Sims as we plan for the future. Access the event page at turnersims.co.uk

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