

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

## ZRI: Schubert at the Red Hedgehog Tavern (Double Bill)

Friday 5 December 2025, 9pm | Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall

We are proud to be a place where people come together to discover and connect with the wonder of classical music. Throughout the year, we provide unrivalled opportunities to encounter, live in person, the full range of music, and a variety of different ways for you to experience it.

Some of the world's most exciting artists, including our Resident Orchestras and Resident Artists, join us to shine a light on this incredible art form. Welcome to Classical Music: Autumn/Winter 2025/26.

Toks Dada, Head of Classical Music, Southbank Centre

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### Repertoire

Schubert String Quintet in C, D.956 rescored to include clarinet, santour & accordion and interleaved with traditional tunes

70'

### Performers

Zum Roten Igel (ZRI)

Max Baillie *violin*

Matthew Sharp *cello and baritone*

Ben Harlan *clarinet and bass clarinet*

Jon Banks *accordion*

Iris Pissaride *santouri (hammered dulcimer)*

*This performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. There is no interval.*

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There is a tavern in the town – the town being Vienna in the 19th century, and the tavern Zum Roten Igel (To the Red Hedgehog). Brahms often had his lunch there: meaty stews spiced with paprika, to be enjoyed in an atmosphere given spice by Hungarian or Roma musicians. Sometimes he would be sitting across a table from Bruckner. 'We can talk about anything but art', he'd said, when they'd first met. Bruckner had smiled, but his eyes were on the waitress who was setting down his beer.

The building was a large one, on Wildpretmarkt, not far from the Stephansdom, reaching back to the next street and having four floors plus attics. It dated back to the 14th century and seems always to have housed a mix of residential quarters and businesses. In the time of Brahms and Bruckner, the court bookbinder had his workshop above the tavern.

Schubert would have known the place – which already had a red hedgehog painted on its façade – for its Hungarian wineshop. Elsewhere in the building, soon after his death, a concert hall was opened, the old beams now resonating with Mozart as well as high-spirited dances from below.

But what if we press our ears to these ancient timbers to hear the two musics, raw and refined, infiltrating one another? What if there could have been a performance at this venue of Schubert's C major Quintet, on a night of revelry downstairs? What if one or two of the tavern musicians, in their faux-Hungarian costumes, might have gone up the stairs, heard the sound of tuning, and hurried on in to take part?

A building the size of No.1 Wildpretmarkt would have been a whole cosmos of servant families and court officials, craft workers and eccentrics, along with places of refreshment and togetherness. A concert room here may not yet have separated itself into the hush of silent listening, even when one of the sublimest works of chamber music had been playing.

In they come then, these players, clutching their instruments, up from the jollity of the inn to a different sort of shared musical enjoyment. They have arrived just as the performance is about to begin, and so can take part from the start. Recognising them as they come through the door, and smiling a welcome, the team gathered to play Schubert make room on the stage.

There isn't that much difference, after all, between the two groups. Both of them are made of professional musicians, people who picked up their trade from family members and older colleagues. They footle around a bit, making each other's acquaintance, maybe settling old scores, as it were, finding their way into the music. Pretty soon they're not two groups but one, and with a nod they're off, into the Schubert first movement.

Dialogue between violin and clarinet is just one touch that wasn't there in what Schubert wrote, a touch of camaraderie across a divide that's ceasing to be a divide. Or was the dialogue there all along? Did the musicians for whom Schubert was writing only ever play elevated chamber music? Might they sometimes have done gigs at an establishment such as the one downstairs, for money or for fun? And might they sometimes have brought the swirl of tavern music into their playing as chamber musicians?

And what about Schubert? He might have visited the wineshop here, not very likely as a customer himself but entirely possibly in the company of a wealthier friend. Taverns he knew, for listen

closely: there are turns of phrase in this quintet that would have been just as much at home in an alehouse.

Some in the audience are cheering, some laughing, for seamlessly, of one mind, the players have slipped out of Schubert's music and into a popular dance. 'Horã de Concert' is it? How are they going to get back? More cheers and laughter when they do.

With the first movement over, one of the musicians quickly whispers something to the others and they all launch into another hit from below. And another!

But there's more to this than meets the ear: the musicians are putting off the moment when they must devote themselves to the great death song that is this quintet's adagio. And how will they be able to switch from vim to gravity?

Oh, but they do.

Time is ticking.

They can even find a way from the adagio into a folk number – and a way back again.

Schubert's scherzo is very nearly itself a popular dance, just like the one the remaining musicians down there in the tavern are striking up this very moment. Hang on... Are both lots playing the same music? And still now, as Schubert gives way to more folk, up-tempo?

His trio takes us back into the underworld, where we meet, of all people, but so appropriately, a stranger from *Die Winterreise*.

On and on. The repeat of the scherzo, followed by a whole new slow movement in a Jewish lament, and the finale, breaking up in its exuberance to draw in a couple more popular dances.

And so it's over. The musicians embrace one another. The audience members are all on their feet. The applause could go on forever – except that one of the musicians in an embroidered waistcoat makes a gesture: time for everyone to repair downstairs.

**Programme notes © Paul Griffiths, 2025**

# After Dark: ZRI – Cellar Sessions

**Friday 5 December 2025, 10.30pm | Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer**

We leave the hall and move back to the foyer, where everything opens out. The Red Hedgehog is now the world, for Vienna in the 18th and 19th centuries was a world city, the hub of an empire that covered much of central Europe, from Prague to the Adriatic, from Switzerland to Transylvania. Musicians from across this vast region and beyond – composers, performing virtuosos – were drawn to its centre. We hear from a bunch of them, ZRI-style.

Of course, there were also the native-born Viennese, among them Schubert, who is still here, contributing a scary song and, at the end, a defamiliarised familiar farewell. Fritz Kreisler, too, was born in the city, and remembered it in his violin piece *Liebesleid* (Love's Sorrow), which, hoaxer as he was, he attributed to Joseph Lanner, the most popular waltz composer of Schubert's time.

Among the more celebrated immigrants are Mozart, who spent his last decade in the city, and Brahms, here for much longer – Brahms who ate his beef and dumplings at the Red Hedgehog. We hear from Mozart in the Turkish rondo he applied to a piano sonata he composed in Vienna (the Austrian Empire had a long southeastern border with the Ottoman Empire). Brahms meanwhile is paying attention to populations represented within the city: Roma (finale of a piano quartet)

and Hungarian (Hungarian Dance No.5), both no doubt to be encountered at his favourite lunch place.

Then there are the visitors. Dvořák often comes, from his homes in Prague and rural Bohemia, whose traditional music gets into his compositions (example: the furiant, a fast dance, in his Sixth Symphony). Rossini calls by in 1822, meets Beethoven, annoys Schubert by his success, and is remembered for the fast music from his *William Tell Overture*. Chopin, before settling in Paris, makes two visits and leaves a trace here in a waltz.

Finally, here for a night, the eternal travellers arrive, performers always on the road, with Vienna an inevitable way-station. Two on the popular-music circuit came from Roma families in Romania: Georges Boulanger, who survived the Nazi years in Germany and even appeared in German films, and, from a later generation, Aurel Gore. Django Reinhardt might have been on a train with either of them, getting the idea for his *Rhythm Futur*.

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*This performance lasts approximately 1 hour.  
There is no interval.*

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