

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

## Anne-Sophie Mutter, Maximilian Hornung & Lambert Orkis

Sunday 4 June 2023, 6pm  
Royal Festival Hall

Welcome to Classical Music: Spring/Summer 2023. With this programme, we continue to celebrate classical music in all its forms with leading artists and ensembles from the UK and around the world.

In close collaboration with our dynamic family of Resident Orchestras and Resident Artists, we are presenting the full spectrum of classical music, as well as embracing new approaches to how we do so. We are thrilled to welcome such an incredible range of global artists to our spaces – and beyond – to perform, and you to see them.

Toks Dada, Head of Classical Music, Southbank Centre

### Repertoire

Beethoven Piano Trio in D, Op.70 No.1 (Ghost) 26'

Sebastian Currier Ghost Trio (UK premiere) 23'

Interval

Clara Schumann 3 Romances for violin & piano, Op.22 10'

Brahms Violin Sonata No.3 in D minor, Op.108 21'

### Performers

Anne-Sophie Mutter *violin*

Maximilian Hornung *cello*

Lambert Orkis *piano*

*This performance lasts approximately 2 hours, including a 20-minute interval.*

### Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

#### Piano Trio in D, Op.70 No.1 (Ghost) (1808)

1. *Allegro vivace e con brio*
2. *Largo assai ed espressivo*
3. *Presto*

Beethoven's Piano Trio in D major, Op.70 No.1, is dedicated to the Countess Anna Maria von Erdödy – a figure who crops up a number of times in the composer's biography. She was a fine pianist and a devoted patroness and confidante – so much so that Beethoven is said to have called her his 'Father Confessor'. Both Beethoven's Op.70 Piano Trios were dedicated to the Countess, and were first performed at her home in Vienna in late 1808. This was at around the time Beethoven started to lodge with her; he lived and composed there until the spring of 1809, and the Countess enjoyed showcasing his music during her soirées. Later, in 1815, she would be the dedicatee of Beethoven's Op.102 Cello Sonatas.

The first of the Op.70 Piano Trios is the more dramatic of the two. An arresting opening statement both establishes the key of D and subtly undermines it when an F natural sounds. This is no passing gesture, but something that will prove pivotal later on, allowing Beethoven to reach the remote regions of B flat major via that very F.

The work's nickname comes from the eerie second movement, which unfolds with extraordinary slowness, the piano's brooding tremolos underpinning surreal exchanges between violin and cello. It seems likely that the title of 'Ghost' comes from Beethoven's student Czerny, who in 1842 observed that the movement reminded him of the first appearance of the ghost in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. With some relief, we return to the land of the living in the finale, although here, too, are moments of surprise, including modulations that recall those of the first movement. The writer ETA Hoffmann wrote of this finale in 1813:

'Just as the storm wind drives away the clouds, with light and shadow alternating in a moment, as forms then appear in the restless pursuit and commotion, disappear and appear again, just so does the music rush continuously onward ... [Yet] Beethoven's genius still remains serious and solemn. It is as though the master believed that deep, secret things can never be discussed in commonplace terms, but only in sublime, magnificent ones, even when the spirit, which is intimately familiar with them, feels joyously and happily uplifted.'

### Sebastian Currier (b.1959)

#### Ghost Trio (2018, UK premiere)

*Lyrical – Energetic – Remote – Ghost Scherzo – Expressive – Syncopated – Mysterious – Forceful – Gentle*

Sebastian Currier composed his nine-movement *Ghost Trio* for Anne-Sophie Mutter, who regularly champions his music. Currier began this piece with the premise that whereas the string quartet has never fallen out of fashion, the piano trio peaked in the 19th century. Looking back over the gulf of time that has elapsed since then, Currier saw these works as faded memories – or ghosts. They inhabit his *Ghost Trio* (a nod

to Beethoven's work of the same name) in ethereal, almost intangible ways, as Currier explains: 'Brief fragments of the trios of Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms appear as fleeting apparitions, like ghosts from the past, creating brief flashes of sound, gone before one can even fully perceive them.'

These 'ghosts' are created in a number of ways: 'Sometimes they are literal micro-fragments of past works', or they may be 'recastings of tunes, gestures and harmonies'. Elsewhere, Currier alludes to period techniques that are not direct musical quotations but which evoke the era: 'There are also passages that simply use harmonies and gestures characteristic of the 18th and 19th century practice, but don't refer specifically to any actual piano trio. I wanted to create a musical environment where these apparitions, these "ghosts", present themselves to us unpredictably in ephemeral, often ambiguous flashes of sound that always keep us guessing.'

## Clara Schumann (1819-96)

### 3 Romances for violin & piano, Op.22 (1853)

1. *Andante molto*
2. *Allegretto: Mit zartem Vortrage*
3. *Leidenschaftlich schnell*

It was the great violinist Joseph Joachim who introduced Robert and Clara Schumann to the young Johannes Brahms. Clara would go on to have lifelong friendships with both figures; with Brahms this was complicated by romantic feelings, and with Joachim by occasional differences of opinion – but they shared an understanding of the life of a virtuoso, and a sense of reverence for Robert's music.

Clara Schumann wrote her 3 Romances, Op.22, for Joachim, and regularly performed them with him; when George V of Hanover heard the duo play these pieces, he declared them to be a 'marvellous, heavenly pleasure'. Each has its own distinct character. The first is remarkably forward-looking, its rhapsodic violin lines, rich piano harmonies and subtle emotional ebb and flow anticipating the Gallic ease of cyclical works by Fauré or Franck. The second Romance, to be played in the manner of a tender conversation, is more animated but remains enigmatic, with mercurial shifts between solemnity and an almost impish playfulness. The final piece (marked 'passionate, fast') exhibits an ambitious sense of scale and emotional range. The title 'Romances' may suggest charming miniatures, but one senses a grander vision almost bursting its banks.

## Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

### Violin Sonata No.3 in D minor, Op.108 (1886-88)

1. *Allegro*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Un poco presto e con sentimento*
4. *Presto agitato*

Brahms' Third Violin Sonata represents the composer at his most economical: though lyrical, this is a compact work exhibiting a taut integration of ideas, and lasting in total only slightly longer than some of his first movements. It seems likely that Brahms composed the work in 1886, but for some reason he withheld its publication for two years. The Sonata is dedicated to the conductor Hans von Bülow, and opens with a striking movement in which tensions seem to simmer beneath the surface. The central section is unusual: one would expect excursions into remote keys, but Brahms opts for a timpani-like pedal note and static harmonies, and the movement's rather unsettling atmosphere is enhanced by the use of 'bariolage' in the violin – playing the same pitch quickly while alternating between open and stopped strings.

In the Adagio, Brahms deftly transforms the piano's apparently innocuous sighing figures into an achingly beautiful secondary theme that answers the violin's tender melody. This is followed by a movement marked 'con sentimento' – an unusual specification for a scherzo – a mysterious curiosity that makes the almost orchestral conception of the finale all the more powerful. In this final movement, Brahms' wide-ranging materials include the rhythms of the tarantella (an ancient Italian dance named after frenzied reactions to tarantula bites), and a chorale-like theme. Brahms resolves the apparent conflict between the two by moulding the chorale figure to become a pithier figure that matches the prevailing tone of the movement.

Programme notes © Joanna Wyld, 2023

#### Find out more

- ▶ Anne-Sophie Mutter
- ▶ Maximilian Hornung
- ▶ Lambert Orkis
- ▶ [southbankcentre.co.uk](http://southbankcentre.co.uk)

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## Randall Goosby in Recital

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Inspiring music by three great Black composers and their contemporaries are at the heart of this thrilling programme from two fast-rising superstar performers.