programme

AAM ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

TRANSFORMATION

2024-25

Friday 27 June 2025 | 7.30pm Barbican Hall

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony



David Blackadder trumpet Academy of Ancient Music Laurence Cummings conductor

AHLEFELDT Telemachus on Calypso's Isle HAYDN Trumpet Concerto

Interval: 20 minutes

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5

Friday 27 June 2025 7.30pm Barbican Hall

This concert will be filmed. For the benefit of those around you and those at home, please try to keep coughing and other extraneous noise during the performance to a minimum.

The 2024-25 season has been generously supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council



from John Mc<u>Munn</u>

chief executive

'Should baroque orchestras play Beethoven?' BBC Music Magazine Online posed this question in a piece written by Laurence Cummings ahead of this evening's performance. The obvious and immediate answer, of course, is an emphatic 'No!' – if perhaps with the winking qualification that classical or early-romantic orchestras might do so fruitfully...

Pedantry aside, the question demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the work that AAM and other historically informed orchestras do. Far from simply presenting music of specific periods – the baroque, in this case - historical performance seeks to meet music where it is, to understand it on its own terms, and explicitly not to drag it kicking and screaming into the modern world out of a misguided sense of 'progress'. The results this has yielded in our understanding of music of earlier eras - from medieval times, through the renaissance and on to the baroque - have been staggering, so it's hard to imagine extending the enguiry into later periods wouldn't produce similar riches. Yet the question persists, and AAM is once again called a 'baroque' band.



Well, let's allow tonight at least to begin to settle the debate. Onstage, we have forces amassed as Beethoven would have known them at the world-shaking premiere of his iconic Symphony No. 5 in 1808, we feature a keyed trumpet akin to the instrument Haydn had in mind when composing his beloved Trumpet Concerto, and we present quite possibly the modern premiere of ballet music by Maria Theresia Ahlefeldt – music which might have been forever consigned to the dustbin were it not for the efforts of historical performers. Is it 'baroque'? Absolutely not. Will it be thrilling? I have no doubt, and I cannot wait to share it with you all.

John M. M.

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Maria Theresia Ahlefeldt (1755-1810) Telemachus on Calypso's Isle (1792)

Maria Theresia von Thurn und Taxis was a woman who fought against her fate. Born in Regensburg in 1755 into a princely German house, she had two elder brothers – the second of whom died just months after Maria Theresia was born – and three younger siblings who survived into adulthood. Maria Theresia was well-schooled in keyboard playing and became interested in composition. At the age of 16 she had already begun to grapple with orchestral composition, a youthful sinfonia survives in the Regensburg archives scored for a sizeable orchestra including strings, flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets and timpani. Around this time Maria Theresia was betrothed to a noble German prince. As the eldest daughter she was born a political pawn, bred to bear children and expected to do as the family patriarch and his counsellors decreed. Four years after her engagement, the 21-year old Maria Theresia was discovered having an affair with a prince more than 50 years her senior who she announced she intended to marry. This scandal inevitable led to the breaking of her former engagement though her family were successful in preventing her intended marriage from taking place.

At the age of 25 Maria Theresia became romantically involved with Count Ferdinand Ahlefeldt, a minor Danish noble who held similar musical and artistic interests. Her family, horrified by the idea of her marrying so far below her princessly rank, threatened to have the young couple arrested but they escaped the authorities and fled to nearby Ansbach where Ferdinand found employment with the local Margrave as a court marshall and the manager of the theatre. Maria Theresia actively participated in the amateur theatre company – organised by the English Lady Craven, who had made herself notorious as the Margrave's mistress - and provided librettos and songs for theatrical productions. The couple moved to Copenhagen in 1792 where Ferdinand secured a position as manager of the Royal Theatre. In this year, Maria Theresia composed the music for Telemak paa Calypsos Øe (Telemachus on Calypso's Island), the plot of which tells the following tale adapted from François Fénelon's novel Les Aventures de Télémague (1699): Ulysses' son, Telemachus, is shipwrecked on the selfsame island where his father had previously been ensnared by the nymph Calypso. Calypso falls in love with Telemachus and tries to persuade him to remain with her but her love is unrequited; the god Cupid has been up to his usual tricks and has bound together Telemachus and Calypso's handmaid, Eucharis. Calypso curses Telemachus, but he is aided in his escape by the goddess Athena.

Considered revolutionary at the time for its mixture of ballet and opera, the work remained in the repertoire for nearly two decades and was praised for its innovative

orchestration. This evening's performance of highlights from the piece – quite possibly the first performance since the early 19th century – uses a score and set of manuscript orchestral parts dating from 1805 as the basis of a new performing edition.

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) Trumpet Concerto in E flat major Hob VIIe/1 (1796) David Blackadder *trumpet*

Allegro Andante Finale: Allegro

Joseph Haydn's Concerto per il Clarino was originally composed in 1796 but had to wait until 28 March 1800 for its first performance at Vienna's Burgtheatre at a benefit concert for the 'Imperial Royal Court and Theatre Trumpeter', Anton Weidinger. The concert announcement advertised 'an organised trumpet which [Weidinger] has invented and brought – after seven years of hard and expensive labour – to what he believes may be described as perfection' and included, alongside the concerto, at least three symphonies by Haydn, an aria and a duet by the late Mozart, a sextet by Ferdinand Kauer for two trumpets, timpani, two clarinets and bassoon, and an aria by Franz Süssmayer accompanied by Weidinger on his new trumpet.

Trumpet design in the 18th century was relatively simple. A cylindical, hole-less length of metal tubing was coiled between a mouthpiece and a flared bell. Players could only produce a limited number of notes which were spaced far apart at the lower end of the instrument's range and gradually became closer as the pitches became higher. Having flourished at the start of the 18th century, by 1800 virtuosic trumpet playing – exploiting the high *clarino* register where more notes were available though at the cost of great physical exertion – had largely died out and the instrument's musical function and range had become narrowly confined. Various attempts to increase the melodic capabilities of the instrument had been made but none had gained widespread acceptance. Weidinger, who had made a name for himself playing in the trumpet's lower registers, decided that he needed to find a way to overcome the natural limitations set by the trumpet's simple design. His solution was to introduce a series of holes into the bore of the instrument, each of which could raise the pitch of the natural note by a semitone – a system totally different from today's modern valves, which was developed in the early 19th century

and works by adding a length of tubing to the trumpet, thereby lowering the pitch of each natural note.

Haydn's relationship with Weidinger is largely undocumented, but it was amicable enough that the composer served as a witness at the wedding of the trumpeter's daughter in 1797. Haydn must have worked very closely with Weidinger in order to exploit the new trumpet's capabilities to the full. Written while he was at the height of his powers, the year after his second triumphant tour to London, Haydn brought to the concerto a symphonic scoring and scale which, when accompanied by the charm, lyricism, and wit of each of the three movements, resulted in what has become one of his most famous works. Given the modern-day popularity of the piece it is astonishing that, after the premiere, it lay forgotten and only came to light again in the 1920s. The lacuna in the piece's performance history may be due to the fact that Weidinger's mechanical innovations, as with previous attempts, failed to gain traction with professional trumpeters.

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Symphony No. 5 in C minor Op. 67 (1808)

Allegro con brio Andante con moto Scherzo: Allegro Allegro – Presto

Just five days after Weidinger's benefit concert, another musician famous for fighting against fate gave their first benefit concert before the Viennese public. Little did the attendant audience realise that they were witnessing musical history: the first performance of the First Symphony in Ludwig van Beethoven's genre-defining cycle of nine symphonies. Beethoven's music was initially criticised as being 'glaring', 'bizarre' and even 'morally corrupting', according to the Prague Conservatoire, who banned performances of the Third Symphony, but opinion began to change. After the premier of Fifth Symphony, the critic ETA Hoffmann wrote, 'Beethoven's instrumental music opens to us the realm of the colossal and the immeasurable.' He goes on to describe the fated opening of the symphony:

The first Allegro [...] begins with a principal idea only two bars long, which reappears in many different guises in the course of the movement. In the second bar there is a pause, followed by a repetition of the principal idea a tone lower, and by another pause... Not even the tonality is yet established; the listener expects E flat major. The second violin begins again with the principal idea, and in the following bar C, the fundamental note, is played by cellos and bassoons, while the viola and the first violin, entering in imitation, establish C minor."

All that to describe about ten seconds of music. Yet Hoffman manages to distill the essence of why this, the most striking music in the canon, is so arresting, so anarchic. We are wrong-footed from the outset and then spend the rest of the movement trying to keep pace with the music as it races away in a frenzy of four-footed leaps and bounds.

Beethoven began sketching the Fifth Symphony in Spring 1804 and it was first performed in December 1808 at a concert for Beethoven's benefit that lasted about four hours and also included the premieres of the Sixth Symphony, two movements from the Mass in C, the Choral Fantasia, the public premiere of the Fourth Piano Concerto (already published), a rendition of his concert aria *Ah! perfido* and a substantial keyboard improvisation.

Beethoven had initially promised the dedication of the Fifth Symphony to his friend Count Oppersdorff. In the end, Oppersdorff received the dedication of the Fourth Symphony instead, but a touchingly personal letter from Beethoven to the Count survives which, with the benefit of hindsight, is remarkable in showing how innocently unaware Beethoven once was of the value of his eternal masterpiece:

I was really very much hurt that you, my beloved friend, should have run away without even letting me know anything about your departure - Perhaps something about me annoyed you, but certainly it was nothing deliberate on my part – I have too little time today to write much more to you. So all that I will add is that your symphony has been ready for a long time and that I am now sending it to you by the next post – You should add 150 gulden, for the copies I have had made for you have cost that amount at least – But if you don't want the symphony, let me know this well before next post day - If you do take it, however, then cheer me up as soon as possible with the 300 gulden which are still due to me – The last movement of the symphony has three trombones and a piccolo – and, although, it is true, there are not three kettledrums, yet this combination of instruments will make more noise and, what is more, a more pleasing noise than six kettledrums. I am still nursing my poor unfortunate finger and on this account I have not been able to go out at all for the last fortnight - All good wishes - Let me soon have some news of you, dearest Count - I am not at all well -

In haste, your most devoted

BEETHOVEN

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Laurence Cummings

conductor



Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. He is Music Director of Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto as well as AAM's current Music Director, and celebrated his 25th and final year as Musical Director of the London Handel Festival last year.

Frequently praised for his stylish performances in the opera house, he has conducted productions across Europe at houses including Opernhaus Zürich, Theater an der Wien, Chatelet Paris and

Gothenburg Opera. In the UK he has been a regular guest at English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera and Opera North. He made his main stage debut at Royal Opera House conducting Handel's *Jephtha* last season.

Equally at home on the concert platform, he is regularly invited to conduct both period and modern orchestras worldwide, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, Handel and Haydn Society Boston, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, and in the UK with Hallé Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

His recordings include discs with Emma Kirkby and Royal Academy of Music on BIS, Angelika Kirschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG, Maurice Steger and The English Concert for Harmonia Mundi, as well as a series of live performances for Accent recorded at the Göttingen International Handel Festival where he was Artistic Director from 2011-21. He has also released numerous solo harpsichord recital and chamber music recordings for Naxos.

Until 2012 he was Head of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music and is now the William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance.

Laurence was awarded an OBE for services to Music in the New Year Honours List 2024.

David Blackadder

trumpet



David took up the trumpet aged nine following in the footsteps of his grandfather who was a bandmaster in the North East.

He joined the English Baroque Soloists and Orchestre Revolutionaire et Romantique as principal trumpet under Sir John Eliot Gardiner and also became principal trumpet with AAM.

In 1993 he formed the groundbreaking group Blackadder Brass which quickly became the resident educational ensemble at Symphony Hall in Birmingham, playing to over 40,000 children there in its first three years and

going on to perform at major venues throughout the UK.

David is principal trumpet with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the City of London Sinfonia and is renowned as a soloist having performed and recorded many of the great trumpet masterpieces with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Roger Norrington and Stephen Cleobury. He has also played and recorded works specially composed for him by Peter Maxwell Davies and John Tavener.

His most notable recordings include the second Brandenburg Concerto three times, one of which with Trevor Pinnock won a Gramophone Award.

David is much in demand as a specialist and educator of baroque trumpet repertoire. He is currently a Professor of Natural Trumpet at both The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has also taught at both the Royal College of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music.

In 2018 David had the huge honour of performing Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine* at the Royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to a live global television audience of 1.9 billion viewers.

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Have Your Say

TRANSFORMATION

2024-25

We love to hear your feedback. Here's what you said about our last concert, *Bach's Art of Fugue*, in May.

Last night's performance was amazing. Beautiful music as always but the actors added another dimension, giving context to the pieces played. I wasn't sure what to expect. I wasn't disappointed!

I adored this. It was creative, unusual, very interesting and beautifully executed. Good to see something more creative than a 'standard' concert.

> We both thought the concert was excellent, and a very clever way to explain the concept of a fugue.

It was an interesting experiment, and the play was witty (almost Stoppardian at times), informative and moving. And while you went for a happy ending in the chorale, there is something unbearably moving when the last fugue stops mid-bar, where Bach might have died.

> Thank you for a wholly different evening of music with theatre. The actors were excellent and the telling of Bach's story in his final work very cleverly achieved with explanation too of his manner of output. Excellent playing as ever.

I congratulate AAM on boldness in presenting such an innovative format (actors & musicians), scripted by an established author. It is good to experiment, and I support and applaud that. The content did lead me to think about the Art of Fugue is some new ways, which pleased me. The music playing was superb. The script and acting left a bit to be desired, but nevertheless provoked thought and enjoyment. Thank you and thanks to all who participated. This was an interesting experiment but not one I'd encourage you to try again.

I loved the music but don't feel the combination with acting worked. It broke the performance up and made it feel bitty. The acting seemed heavy handed and contrived. I'm sorry as I was open to the experience.

We have enjoyed the series of concerts. The standard of musicianship is excellent. We appreciate the idea of you trying something different at last night's event but were not convinced by the experiment. The theatrical element reduced the amount of music that could be played but did not (for us at least) add sufficient interest, information or enjoyment to merit doing so.

> I loved the music but was disappointed in the dramatic performance. I had hoped it would stand alongside the music and that each would add to the other – instead I found it a bit superficial and just distracted from the music. Sorry to be negative, as the idea was interesting.

The music and acting were very well performed and clearly appreciated by the audience. But for me personally I found the whole programme rather obscure and rarefied, and the music rather samey. Not my favourite Bach work.

> This concert didn't really 'float our boats' I'm afraid. We found the actors to be a huge distraction from our enjoyment of the music.



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Wednesday 5 February 2025 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge Friday 7 February 2025 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Transatlantic: Classical Masters

Mozart's Clarinet Concerto joined centre-stage by Brazilian genius

Wednesday 12 March 2025 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge Thursday 13 March 2025 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Bach's St John Passion

A dramatic and powerful Easter tradition

Friday 18 April 2025 | Barbican Hall, London

Bach's Art of Fugue

you are

here

Actors, musicians & an unparalleled musical mind

Wednesday 14 May 2025 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge Thursday 15 May 2025 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

The world's most famous symphony alongside Haydn's Trumpet Concerto

Friday 27 June 2025 | Barbican Hall, London



Music Director: Laurence Cummings OBE Founder: Christopher Hogwood CBE

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Registered charity number: 1085485 All details correct at time of printing Associate Ensemble at the Barbican Centre, London Associate Ensemble at the Teatro San Cassiano, Venice Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge Orchestra-in-Residence at The Apex, Bury St Edmunds Artistic Partner to London's Culture Mile Design by SL Chai



Associate Ensemble

臨環 UNIVERSITY OF 電影 CAMBRIDGE ORCHESTRA-IN-RESIDENCE





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