



Jansen/Maisky/ Argerich Trio

Tuesday 6 February 2018 7.30pm, Hall

Beethoven Cello Sonata in G minor, Op 5 No 2
Shostakovich Piano Trio No 2 in E minor, Op 67

interval 20 minutes

Schumann Violin Sonata No 1 in A minor,
Op 105

Mendelssohn Piano Trio No 1 in D minor, Op 49

Janine Jansen violin

Mischa Maisky cello

Martha Argerich piano

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Welcome

Tonight we are delighted to welcome three musicians so celebrated that they need no introduction. Martha Argerich and Mischa Maisky have been performing together for more than four decades, while Janine Jansen is a star of the younger generation.

Together they present two vastly different piano trios. Mendelssohn's D minor Trio is a work of tremendous fervour and brilliance, while Shostakovich's Second Trio, written during the Second World War, is coloured by the tragic death of the composer's close

friend Ivan Sollertinsky, an extraordinarily gifted man in many different fields.

We begin with Beethoven, and his Second Cello Sonata, a work that is groundbreaking for treating string instrument and piano equally and which ranges from sheer wit to high drama. Schumann's surging, ardent First Violin Sonata was written in a mere four days – an astounding feat even by this composer's standards.

I hope you enjoy the concert.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Cello Sonata No 2 in G minor, Op 5 No 2 (1796)

- 1 Adagio sostenuto ed espressivo –**
2 Allegro molto più tosto presto
3 Rondo: Allegro

Music for solo cello wasn't uncommon in Beethoven's time, but there is nothing from the latter half of the 18th century to compare with his two Cello Sonatas, Op 5. These were almost certainly written in Berlin during Beethoven's visit to the court of the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II – to whom both sonatas are dedicated. Friedrich Wilhelm was an enthusiastic supporter of the prolific cellist-composer Luigi Boccherini, but the cellist Beethoven apparently had in mind when he wrote his two sonatas was the outstanding virtuoso Jean Louis Duport, who gave the premieres with the composer at the keyboard. Not only did Duport bring a new technical wizardry to his cello playing, he showed that when it came to dazzling display and expressive power the cello could rival even the violin.

Beethoven had been deeply impressed by Mozart's groundbreaking violin sonatas, in which the relationship between the violin and the piano had acquired new drama and brilliance. Duport's playing, it seems, showed him a way to develop that kind of relationship – sometimes tenderly intimate, sometimes combative – in a new musical field. It resulted in two of the most impressive products of his mid-twenties – in fact there are times, especially in Op 5 No 2, when the daring mastery of the 'Pathétique' Piano Sonata (1797–8), the Op 18 String Quartets (1798–1800) and the First Symphony (1799–1800) don't seem so very far away.

In keeping with standard practice at the time, Beethoven's Op 5 Cello Sonatas were published

as 'Sonatas for Piano and Cello' – officially the keyboardist takes precedence, as in Mozart's violin sonatas. The slow, sombre opening of Op 5 No 2 suggests that this might really be the case: the piano leads, the cello comments discreetly. But then the cello opens out in full song for a couple of bars, after which the honours are distributed much more evenly: the two instruments pass ideas between each other, echoing or even interrupting one another, until they finally come together on an expectant half-close.

Then the Allegro begins its surging drama, the cello's searching opening phrases emerging deftly from the ending of the Adagio. Much of this movement is an impassioned, often lyrical dialogue between the cello and the piano's right or left hand, while the other hand releases torrents of racing triplet or duplet figures. This was the most ambitious sonata movement Beethoven had yet written, and it shows extraordinary command of long, soaring musical paragraphs.

After this dark-toned outpouring, the charming, witty playfulness of the Rondo finale may come as a surprise. Now equality shows itself in other ways, with the cello sometimes being consigned to an accompanying role, through the writing still requires some agility – another tribute to Duport's skill. This is much more 'courtly' music than what has gone before, in keeping, perhaps, with the royal dedication, but with little hints of the tigerish humour of Beethoven's later masterpieces – not least at the close of the sonata.

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–75)

Piano Trio No 2 in E minor, Op 67 (1944)

1 *Andante – Moderato*

2 *Allegro non troppo*

3 *Largo –*

4 *Allegretto*

Shostakovich is one of those composers whose music often seems to bear the imprint of its era like an open wound. Clearly recent events did leave their mark on the Second Piano Trio, composed in spring 1944. The score bears a dedication to the memory of one Shostakovich's friends, the musicologist and brilliant polymath Ivan Sollertinsky, whose sudden death in February had come as a terrible shock. 'I cannot express in words all the grief I felt when I heard of [his] death', Shostakovich wrote to Sollertinsky's widow. 'He was my closest friend. I owe all my education to him. It will be unbelievably hard for me to live without him.'

Shostakovich's choice of this particular medium as a musical vessel for the expression of loss follows in a solid Russian tradition of elegiac trios going back to Tchaikovsky's A minor Piano Trio (1882), composed in memory of his mentor Nikolai Rubinstein. It was also in 1944 that the tide of the Second World War began to turn in Russia's favour. The beginning of the process of 'liberation' of the Nazi-occupied Eastern European countries soon brought horrifying discoveries – not least the first indications of the human cost of Hitler's 'Final Solution'. Jewish resilience in the face of persecution moved Shostakovich deeply, especially when it came to its expression in music. It's no surprise then to find klezmer dance music, with its wildly bittersweet keening inflections, dominating the Trio's finale.

Do these references to the music's life and times actually 'explain' it? The correct answer (if there is such a thing) is probably, yes and no. According to some sources, Shostakovich began the Trio as early as December 1943 – two months before Sollertinsky's death, and in all probability too

early for news of the Nazi death camps to have reached the composer. In which case the eerie lament that opens the Second Piano Trio gets its inspiration from somewhere else entirely – something perhaps too mysterious and internal for easy explanation. In a daring imaginative stroke, Shostakovich has the cello sound a high, hushed folk-like melody in icy harmonics, under which the violin enters in imitation on its lowest string, followed by the piano in its lowest, darkest depths. After this desolate vision, the first movement accelerates steadily, with the first hints of klezmer music emerging towards the climax.

Dance music now takes on a savage, bitterly mocking grimace in the *Allegro non troppo*, a scherzo in all but name. This is unmistakably a dance of death and destruction: Shostakovich had seen plenty of both during the Nazi siege of his home city Leningrad (St Petersburg). After this comes – even more clearly – grief. Some of Shostakovich's most powerful elegiac statements are contained in the old variation form, the *passacaglia*. Here, in the *Largo* third movement, the variation pattern couldn't be much simpler: seven statements of a rotating chordal pattern on the piano, above which violin and cello weave searingly eloquent lines, again in imitation. This relentlessly repeating, circling pattern of heavily charged chords conveys powerfully the unappeasable nature of grief for those who have been devastatingly bereaved. Here the pain isn't ultimately resolved, it simply passes into the weird, spectral dance music of the finale.

Now the klezmer dancers take centre stage. Klezmer music is traditionally associated with celebrations, especially weddings, but many – including Shostakovich himself – have noted its

telling ambiguity. In the words of *Testimony*, the still-controversial 'Memoirs of Shostakovich': 'it is multifaceted, it can appear to be happy while it is tragic. It is almost always laughter through tears.' The finale's two leading dance themes build to a terrifying climax, at the height of which the Trio's opening lament sweeps back in through a flurry of piano figures. Ghosts of the two klezmer themes lead eventually to one last statement of the Largo's chordal pattern, now with more icy string harmonics – only this time the pattern doesn't repeat: its pain-heavy chords are allowed to fall

wearily onto hushed chords of E major, with faint motivic memories flickering on violin and cello. Resolution has come at last, and with it perhaps a hint that grief can at least be endured. In the end though it is the masterly marriage of form and feeling in Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio that raises it to a truly transcendent level, and ensures that ultimately, no matter how dark and pained its utterance, it is far from depressing.

interval 20 minutes

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

Violin Sonata No 1 in A minor, Op 105 (1851)

1 Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck ['With passionate expression']

2 Allegretto

3 Lebhaft [Lively]

In 1850, Schumann moved to Düsseldorf, in Germany's Lower Rhineland, to take up the post of musical director of the city's orchestra. At first his mood soared, and, as so often, his creativity soared with it: two masterpieces, the Cello Concerto and the Third ('Rhenish') Symphony, appeared with breathtaking speed in the closing months of that year. Schumann seems to have experienced a brief honeymoon period with the orchestra, but soon his shortcomings as a conductor became all too clear. Before long he was having to contend with opposition and severe criticism. Some of his frustration appears to have been channelled into the First Violin Sonata, which he wrote in just four days in September 1851 – it was 'composed', he told his friend and later biographer Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, 'when I was extremely angry with certain people'. It's possible that these associations clouded his judgement at first: 'I did not like the first sonata for violin and piano', he remarked, 'and so I wrote a second one, which I hope has turned out better.' But when Schumann heard the First Sonata performed by the stellar virtuoso Joseph Joachim, with his wife Clara at the piano, he changed his mind. This time, he noted, 'it struck the innermost strings of my heart'.

It is only recently, however, that violinists have begun to agree with Schumann's later verdict. For a long time the First Violin Sonata was

dismissed as technically flawed, and there were suggestions that some of its failings reflected Schumann's increasingly unstable state of mind during his years at Düsseldorf. But with time the perspective has changed. Yes, the piano writing in the first movement has a kind of sustained swirling impetuosity that in unsympathetic hands can feel relentless. But, given understanding and the kind of 'passionate expression' Schumann asks for, it can be captivating, its near-delirious momentum uplifting. And melodically this is vintage Schumann. Technically there are two contrasting themes – as there should be in a 'proper' sonata-form first movement – but in fact they're very similar rhythmically and in melodic contour, so that the effect is closer to a continuous outpouring of instrumental song.

After this comes not so much a slow movement as a playful, self-questioning intermezzo. The lilting opening phrase seems to promise a fuller melodic flowering, but frequently it halts in mid-phrase, yielding to something whimsical, mock-gruff or ironically teasing. The finale returns to the minor mode, with more feverishly active piano writing, but now with something of the demonic humour of Schumann's great piano cycle *Kreisleriana*. The end is unambiguously in the 'dark' minor key, but the sense of fun persists to the very last notes.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)

Piano Trio No 1 in D minor, Op 49 (1839)

- 1 **Molto allegro ed agitato**
- 2 **Andante con molto tranquillo**
- 3 **Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace**
- 4 **Finale: Allegro assai appassionato**

Composer, conductor, concert-pianist, educator, administrator – Mendelssohn was a busy man in the 1830s; but then, when was he anything else? Parental expectations had a lot to do with it. By all accounts, the composer's mother Lea was a classic Tiger Mother. According to one childhood friend, if Lea heard the sound of merry-making breaking out anywhere in the house, she would call out, 'Felix, tust du nichts?' ('Felix, are you doing nothing?'). Nor was his father any less demanding. Once young Felix had decided on the life of a pianist and composer, Abraham Mendelssohn made it plain to his son that he expected him to produce serious religious works in the manner of Handel, rather than wasting his time with 'elfin' trivia such as the the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – in other words the kind of thing for which he's most widely loved and admired today. When Abraham died in 1836, just too soon to see his son triumph with a suitably grand oratorio, *St Paul*, Mendelssohn was devastated: 'I will never cease to endeavour to gain his approval,' he wrote, 'even though I can no longer enjoy it.'

That said, there was a restless intensity to Mendelssohn that might well have driven him on to great things even if his parents had been less exacting. One can often hear it in his music: in the First Piano Trio it is reflected on the actual printed page with such markings as 'Molto allegro ed agitato' (first movement) and 'Allegro assai appassionato' (Finale). How else could he have found the time and energy to compose this magnificent Trio, while simultaneously working with the Gewandhaus Orchestra and at the Leipzig Opera House and St Thomas Church (where Bach had been director of music), not to mention several other of the city's musical organisations? Evidence of that restless energy

can also be seen in Mendelssohn's writing for his own instrument, the piano – for the pianist a whole bar's rest is a long-anticipated luxury in this piece. It's true that this partly reflects the advice of Mendelssohn's friend and fellow pianist-composer Ferdinand Hiller, who suggested he revise the piano writing in a more Romantic-virtuosic style. But the overall effect is still typical of Mendelssohn at his best: impassioned, tender, scintillating, richly imaginative and almost indecently full of wonderful melodies. After the first performance in 1839, Robert Schumann hailed Mendelssohn as 'the Mozart of the 19th century, the most illuminating of musicians' – a reminder that, for many at this time, Mozart was an early Romantic, not the exquisite 'Dresden China' Classicist he became in the latter part of the 19th century.

Outwardly the First Piano Trio's four-movement plan is fairly conventional: a fast sonata-form first movement, a slow movement in simple A–B–A song form, a quicksilver Scherzo and an urgent, brilliant Finale with a triumphant turn to the major key at the close. But the fusion of Beethovenian dramatic thrust with long-breathed lyricism in the first movement is a superb feat of musical engineering, as is the slow movement's arch of sustained song, while the sparkling Scherzo (with no central trio section) is a reminder of Mendelssohn's unique mastery of this form. And throughout the First Trio, Mendelssohn shows outstanding skill in the way he balances piano virtuosity with the demands of true chamber music for democratic equality and dialogue between the three instruments. Passion and formal elegance, brilliance and intimate conversation – Schumann was right: there is something Mozartean about such balanced, multifaceted mastery.

About the performers

Adriano Heitman



Martha Argerich

Martha Argerich piano

Martha Argerich was born in Buenos Aires. She had her first piano lessons at the age of 5 with Vincenzo Scaramuzza. In 1955 she moved to Europe and continued her studies in Vienna with Friedrich Gulda. Her teachers also included Nikita Magaloff and Stefan Askenase. In 1957 she won the Bolzano and Geneva Piano Competitions and in 1965 the Warsaw International Chopin Competition. Since then she has been one of the most prominent and popular pianists in the world.

She is particularly renowned for her performances of virtuoso piano works of the 19th and 20th centuries, though her large repertoire includes Bach and Bartók, Beethoven and Messiaen as well as Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, Franck, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky.

In addition to performing frequently at leading festivals and with the world's most prestigious orchestras and conductors, she also devotes a significant amount of time to chamber music. She regularly performs and records with pianists Nelson Freire and Stephen Kovacevich,

cellist Mischa Maisky and violonist Gidon Kremer.

She has recorded for EMI, Sony, Philips, Teldec and DG, and many of her performances have been broadcast on television worldwide. She has received many awards, including Grammy awards for her Bartók and Prokofiev concertos, Prokofiev's *Cinderella* with Mikhail Pletnev and Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos 2 and 3 with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Claudio Abbado; *Gramophone Magazine's* Artist of the Year and the Concerto Award for her Chopin piano concertos; *Le Monde de la Musique's* Choc for her Amsterdam recital; Artist of the Year from the German Record Critics' Awards; the *Sunday Times* Record of the Year; and a *BBC Music Magazine* Award in 2007 for her Shostakovich recording.

Her most recent recordings include Mozart's Piano Concertos, K466 and K503 with the Mozart Orchestra under Claudio Abbado, as well as duos by Mozart, Schubert and Stravinsky with Daniel Barenboim.

Since 1998 she has been Artistic Director of the Beppu Festival in Japan. In 1999 she created the International Piano Competition and the Festival Martha Argerich in Buenos Aires and in June 2002 the Progetto Martha Argerich in Lugano.

Martha Argerich has been appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French government, is an Honorary Member of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, was awarded The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette by the Japanese Emperor, and received the Praemium Imperiale from the Japan Art Association. In December 2016 Barack Obama awarded her the Kennedy Prize, which honours artists for their 'exceptional contribution to American culture through their life's work'.

Marco Borggreve/Decca Classics



Janine Jansen

Janine Jansen violin

Violinist Janine Jansen enjoys an enviable international reputation and works regularly with the world's most eminent orchestras and conductors. This season she is Perspectives Artist at New York's Carnegie Hall, performing a variety of concerto and chamber music programmes throughout the season, while tours are planned with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Daniele Gatti, London Symphony Orchestra under both Michael Tilson Thomas and Semyon Bychkov, and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie under Paavo Järvi.

Other highlights this season include engagements with the Berlin Philharmonic under Paavo Järvi, Munich Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, Staatskapelle Dresden under Sir Antonio Pappano, Philadelphia Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Czech Philharmonic under Jakub Hrůša, Oslo Philharmonic and Vienna Symphony orchestras under David Afkham, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic under Karina Canellakis and Iceland Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Blandulf.

She will also travel to the Far East and Australia, performing with the Singapore, Sydney and New Zealand Symphony orchestras.

She is a devoted chamber musician and tonight's concert is part of a major European tour with Mischa Maisky, Martha Argerich, Itamar Golan and Lily Maisky.

This season she gives a number of recitals throughout Europe with pianists Alexander Gavrylyuk, Elisabeth Leonskaja and Kathryn Stott. As part of her Perspectives Series at Carnegie Hall she will perform Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* with Lucas Debargue, Torleif Thedéen and Martin Fröst, as well as giving the US premiere of Michel van der Aa's Violin Concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Nézet-Séguin. Further concerts at Carnegie Hall include a chamber programme with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and the Dover Quartet.

She records exclusively for Decca Classics and since recording Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* back in 2003 she has been extremely successful in the digital music charts. Her latest release, conducted by Pappano, features Bartók's Violin Concerto No 1 with the London Symphony Orchestra and Brahms's Violin Concerto with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Other highlights of her discography include a recording of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No 2 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski; Beethoven and Britten with Paavo Järvi; Mendelssohn and Bruch with Riccardo Chailly; Tchaikovsky with Daniel Harding; and an album of Bach concertos with her own ensemble. She has also released a number of chamber music discs, including Schubert's String Quintet and Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and sonatas by Debussy, Ravel and Prokofiev with pianist Itamar Golan.

She has won numerous prizes, including four Edison Klassiek Awards, four ECHO Klassik awards, the German Record Critics' Award, NDR Musikpreis for outstanding artistic achievement and the Concertgebouw Prize. She has been given the VSCD Klassieke Muziekprijs for individual achievement and the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award for performances in the UK. In September 2015 she was awarded the Bremen MusikFest Award.

She studied with Coosje Wijzenbeek, Philipp Hirshhorn and Boris Belkin.

In 2003 she founded the acclaimed International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht. After 13 years she stepped down from her position as Artistic Director in June 2016 and named cellist Harriet Krijgh as her successor.

Janine Jansen plays the 1707 'Rivaz, Baron Gutmann' Stradivarius, kindly on loan from Dextra Musica.



Mat Hennek/DG

Mischa Maisky

Mischa Maisky cello

Mischa Maisky has the distinction of being the only cellist to have studied with both Mstislav Rostropovich and Gregor Piatigorsky.

He was born in Latvia, educated in Russia and emigrated to Israel. His performances have been enthusiastically received in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, New York and Tokyo, along with many other major musical centres.

He considers himself a citizen of the world. As he puts it: 'I play an Italian cello, using French and German bows, Austrian and German strings, my six children were born in four different countries, my second wife is half Sri Lankan, half Italian, I drive a Japanese car, wear a Swiss watch, an Indian necklace and I feel at home everywhere where people appreciate and enjoy classical music.'

He has been an exclusive DG artist for 30 years and has made many recordings with leading orchestras including the Vienna, Israel and Berlin Philharmonic orchestras, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de

Paris, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

His recordings have enjoyed worldwide critical acclaim and have been awarded prominent prizes, including Tokyo's Record Academy Prize (five times), the ECHO Klassik award (three times), the Grand Prix du Disque in Paris and *Diapason's* Record of the Year, as well as receiving a number of Grammy nominations.

One of the highlights of his career was a worldwide Bach tour in 2000, which included over 100 concerts. Bach is a composer particularly close to Mischa Maisky's heart and he has recorded the Solo Cello Suites three times.

Another highlight was a trio concert in December 2015 at Carnegie Hall with Itzhak Perlman and Evgeny Kissin. The following year he celebrated his longstanding friendship with Martha Argerich with a 40th-anniversary European tour.

Mischa Maisky is a regular guest at the world's leading festivals and has worked with great conductors, including Leonard Bernstein, Carlo Maria Giulini, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, James Levine, Charles Dutoit, Mariss Jansons, Valery Gergiev and Gustavo Dudamel.

Musicians with whom he has regularly worked include Martha Argerich, Radu Lupu, Nelson Freire, Evgeny Kissin, Itzhak Perlman, Lang Lang, Peter Serkin, Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, Vadim Repin, Maxim Vengerov, Joshua Bell, Julian Rachlin and Janine Jansen, to name just a few.



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