



# Insula orchestra Laurence Equilbey

Thursday 8 March 2018 7.30pm, Hall

**Beethoven** Concerto in C major for violin, cello and piano (Triple Concerto)

**interval** 20 minutes

**Louise Farrenc** Symphony No 3 in G minor

**Insula Orchestra**

**Laurence Equilbey** conductor

**Alexandra Conunova** violin

**Natalie Clein** cello

**Elisabeth Brauss** piano

## 6pm: Pre-concert platform

To mark International Women's Day, soloists from Insula orchestra introduce and perform chamber music by Louise Farrenc.

**Louise Farrenc** Piano Trio in E flat major, Op 44

**Louise Farrenc** Sextet in C minor, Op 40

**Anna Besson** flute

**Jean-Marc Philippe** oboe

**Alvaro Iborra** clarinet

**François Charruyer** bassoon

**Jeroen Billiet** horn

**Emmanuel Jacques** cello

**Nathanael Gouin** piano

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# Welcome

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Tonight's concert, which celebrates International Women's Day, features a very special programme. To conduct it, we're delighted to welcome back Laurence Equilbey and Insula orchestra, the ensemble she founded six years ago.

It's fitting that they begin with Beethoven, a figure to whom equality between all was absolutely paramount. His Triple Concerto is the most egalitarian of pieces and today's all-female line-up of soloists showcases three major talents: violinist Alexandra Conunova, cellist Natalie Clein and pianist Elisabeth Brauss, who has stepped in at short notice to replace Alice Sara Ott.

But for many, the main event will be the work in the second half: Louise Farrenc's

Symphony No 3 in G minor. She was born in Paris in 1804, the year Beethoven was completing his 'Eroica' Symphony, and completed three symphonies, as well as a cluster of chamber and instrumental works. Happily, we'll be able to sample her E flat Piano Trio and C minor Sextet, which will be performed by players from Insula orchestra at 6pm.

Farrenc's misfortune was not merely to be a woman composing in a man's world but also to be a woman composing symphonies when what the French were clamouring for was operas. But the time has surely come for a major re-evaluation of the legacy of this extraordinarily gifted composer.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

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# Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

## Concerto in C major for violin, cello and piano (Triple Concerto), Op 56 (1804–7)

**1 Allegro**

**2 Largo –**

**3 Rondo alla polacca**

**Alexandra Conunova** violin

**Natalie Clein** cello

**Elisabeth Brauss** piano

Beethoven first considered composing a concerto for violin, cello, piano and orchestra in early 1802, around the time he was finishing his Second Symphony. At that time he made several sketches for a work in D major for these instruments, and even began a full score, several pages of which still survive for the opening orchestral passage. The work was quickly abandoned, however, and he turned his attention to other compositions such as the Violin Sonatas, Op 30.

The following year he composed his Third Symphony, the 'Eroica', a work far grander and more complex than any previous symphony, and one that is often regarded as marking the start of his middle period. It was such a groundbreaking work that there could then be no turning back to the style of his first period. This may be the reason why, when he returned to the idea of a concerto in early 1804, he decided to compose an entirely new one in C major, rather than return to the embryonic one in D. This new work, which became the Triple Concerto, Op 56, has no material in common with the abandoned one, apart from the choice of instruments.

Concertos for more than one soloist had been common during the Baroque period (for example, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos), but in Beethoven's day it was far more common to

write for a single solo instrument. Where more than one was involved, various combinations were used, and in his early youth Beethoven himself had apparently written a concerto for piano, flute and bassoon (of which only a fragment survives). No other concerto for the combination of piano, violin and cello is known from Beethoven's period, however, and indeed he himself remarked in a letter that such an arrangement was 'surely something new'.

The Triple Concerto was given its first trial runs at the palace of Prince Franz von Lobkowitz (to whom the work was dedicated) around the end of May 1804, as is evident from documents discovered in the 1980s, but it had to wait until 1807 for publication and did not receive its first public performance until May 1808. There is no evidence that the piano part was written for Beethoven's friend Archduke Rudolph, as is sometimes stated, and it seems probable that Beethoven himself took the piano part in early performances.

In a concerto for these three instruments, the piano and violin are bound to be prominent, and there is a risk that the cello will be overshadowed by them. To counter this, Beethoven took trouble to ensure that it was given particular attention: in all three movements the cello is the first solo instrument to be heard, and the idea is even foreshadowed

in the opening orchestral passage, which is begun by orchestral cellos and double basses on their own for fully six bars.

The first movement is in the usual form of a Classical-period concerto, in which a series of themes – in this case five – are paraded by the orchestra before the soloists enter. Unusually, the orchestra then adds a sixth theme after a short solo passage but before the main solo exposition. The customary central section for orchestra is – again unusually – in A minor rather than the expected G major, though it begins with a highly dramatic and unexpected F major chord. Beethoven's concertos usually include an improvised cadenza for the soloist towards the end of the first movement but, since an improvisation for three soloists could be rather chaotic, there is no cadenza here.

The second movement, in A flat, begins with a motif related to the opening of the first, and this is then extended into a 20-bar theme. There

follows a variation of the whole theme, decorated by extraordinarily elaborate figuration from the piano; but, instead of further variations, Beethoven cuts the movement short, modulating towards a chord of G major. This then links to the finale without a break – the first time he had linked two movements in this way in a concerto.

The concluding Rondo is notable for its use of a *polacca* – a Polish-style dance in triple time. Beethoven probably derived this idea from his former teacher Christian Gottlob Neefe, who had also occasionally used a *polacca* for a finale. In the final coda the metre changes to a quick duple rhythm but the *polacca* rhythm then unexpectedly resumes and continues to the end. Although this is not one of Beethoven's most celebrated works, it is full of originality and surprises, and contrasts sharply with the heroic character of so many of his works from the early 1800s.

Programme note © Barry Cooper

**interval** 20 minutes

# Louise Farrenc (1804–75)

## Symphony No 3 in G minor, Op 36 (1847)

**1 Adagio – Allegro**

**2 Adagio cantabile**

**3 Scherzo: Vivace**

**4 Finale: Allegro**

Why isn't Louise Farrenc's name far better known? One obvious answer is her gender. Despite being lucky enough to have supportive parents – unlike, say, her contemporary Hector Berlioz – and despite encouragement from her piano teachers Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Nepomuk Hummel, she soon came up against the kind of obstacles all aspiring women composers had to endure. At 15, she was sent by her parents to study with Anton Reicha, composition teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, but these would have had to be private lessons, as women were excluded from official composition classes. Although she went on to achieve considerable eminence as a virtuoso pianist, and eventually became a much-admired Professor of Piano at the Conservatoire, it was only after the premiere of her delightful Nonet (1849) that the authorities took the radical step of awarding her pay equal to that of her male colleagues.

But there is another reason why Farrenc's compositions never achieved the success they deserved. The supreme musical form in Paris in Farrenc's lifetime – and for some time afterwards – was opera. For whatever reasons, Farrenc never wrote an opera. Her output is dominated by instrumental forms: piano music, chamber music and three symphonies. The symphony was widely regarded in France as a German form, and thus was an object of suspicion for many. As a result there simply weren't the resources in place for her to gain the kind of exposure necessary to make her name, and, partly as a consequence of that, French audiences were generally far less

receptive to large-scale abstract orchestral works. 'If the composer is unknown', wrote the critic François-Joseph Fétis in 1878, 'the audience remains unreceptive, and the publishers, especially in France, close their ears anyway when someone offers them a halfway decent work ... Such were the obstacles that Madame Farrenc met along the way and which caused her to despair.' That last remark is particularly telling. Farrenc did manage to secure a performance of her Third Symphony at the Paris Conservatoire in 1849, two years after it was written, yet afterwards she wrote no more symphonies, despite her obvious gift for thinking in this medium. It would appear that on that crucial occasion ears were largely closed.

It seems, however, that the musical world is at last beginning to recognise Farrenc's Third Symphony for what it is: a beautifully conceived, highly imaginative and original work by a composer with a strong feeling for symphonic form. Right at the start Farrenc reveals how fresh her thinking is. Many symphonies of the time open with portentous slow introductions; Farrenc, by contrast, begins with a brief but touching preface on solo oboe, answered by strings. An agitated Allegro emerges deftly from this, yet throughout the movement there are subtle reminders of that fleeting but very memorable opening vision, not least in the way the oboe leads into the faster coda at the end of the movement.

The eloquent slow movement that follows balances warm lyricism with troubling hints

of martial music on timpani. Then a brilliant, driving Scherzo returns us to the dark minor mode; there's a Beethovenian swing to this movement, but there's nothing imitative about it. Many composers of symphonies in the 19th century had trouble providing adequate final movements, but Farrenc's Finale is the crown of her Third Symphony: cogent, intensely dramatic, and – typically – memorably tuneful. After this, the listener might feel that she has earned the right to a triumphant major-key peroration, but the ending is concise, and firmly in the minor – and all the more effective for that.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

# About the performers

Jean-Baptiste Millot



Laurence Equilbey

## Laurence Equilbey conductor

Laurence Equilbey is conductor and musical director of the Insula orchestra and *accentus* choir, and is recognised for her rigorous, yet open-minded approach to her art.

She has conducted the orchestras of Lyon, Bucharest, Liège and Leipzig, the Brussels Philharmonic, Café Zimmermann, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Akademie für alte Musik Berlin, Concerto Köln, Camerata Salzburg, and the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, among others.

In 2012, with support from the Département des Hauts-de-Seine, she founded the period-instrument Insula orchestra, an ensemble devoted to the Classical and early Romantic repertoire. The orchestra is in residence in a new artistic venue, La Seine Musicale, on Île Seguin, close to Paris, and is in charge of selecting part of the programme for its 1,150-seater Auditorium.

Recent highlights include Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* staged by La Fura dels Baus (Grand Théâtre de Provence, La Seine Musicale, Theater an der Wien, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Elbphilharmonie), *Lucio Silla* (Theater an der Wien), *Albert Herring* (Opéra de Rouen Normandie and Opéra Comique), the ballet *Sous apparence* (Opéra de Paris) and *Ciboulette* (Opéra Comique). This year she conducts Gounod's *La nonne sanglante* at the Opéra Comique. She is an associate artist of the Grand Théâtre de Provence in Aix-en-Provence and has a close relationship with the Paris Philharmonie.

Under Laurence Equilbey's artistic direction, *accentus* interprets great vocal repertoire, ranging from a *cappella* works to fully staged productions and from the Baroque to the present day. She is also Artistic Director and Director of Education at the Department for Young Singers at the Paris Conservatory.

She has an extensive discography with *accentus*. With Insula orchestra she has recorded Mozart's Requiem, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass and orchestrations of Schubert Lieder. This season they record two discs of Beethoven featuring *accentus* and soloists Nicholas Angelich, Alexandra Conunova, Natalie Clein and David Kadouch. The release of *Comala*, recorded in Copenhagen with the Danish National Choir and the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, is scheduled for later this year.

Laurence Equilbey studied music in Paris, Vienna and London, and conducting with Eric Ericson, Denise Ham, Colin Metters and Jorma Panula.



Alexandra Conunova

### **Alexandra Conunova** violin

Alexandra Conunova attracted public and critical acclaim when she won First Prize at the 2012 Joseph Joachim Violin Competition in Hanover. She was praised by the jury for her vivid tone and her virtuoso artistry.

Recent highlights have included concerts at the Radio France Festival, Festival de Pâques, Schloss Elmau, Verbier Festival and others, a tour of Japan and performances with Camerata Bern, the Erfurt Philharmonic Orchestra, NDR Radio Philharmonic and the Moscow Soloists.

She has won major prizes at competitions including the 2015 Singapore International Violin Competition and 2011 George Enescu International Violin Competition, as well as at Tibor Varga (2010), Ion Voicu (2009) and Henri Marteau (2008). She was awarded the Julius Bär Prize for the most accomplished artist of the 2013 Verbier Festival Academy; this prize also included a solo recital in the main programme of the 2015 Verbier Festival.

She has established herself as a soloist on a high level and has performed with leading orchestras, including the Bucharest, Nuremberg, Saarbrücken and Wuhan Symphony orchestras, Hungarian State Opera Orchestra, Hermitage Orchestra, Mahler, Verbier Festival and Vienna Chamber orchestras, Moscow Soloists and NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. She has collaborated with conductors including Christian Badea, Yuri Bashmet, Teodor Currentzis, Hannu Lintu, Andrew Manze and Gábor Takács-Nagy.

She is also a devoted chamber musician and regularly collaborates with artists such as Boris Brovtsyn, Gérard Caussé, Renaud Capuçon, Frinčin Collins, Blythe Teh Engstroem, Katia

and Marielle Labèque, Yura Lee, Michail Lifits, Alexander Melnikov, Paul Meyer, Edgar Moreau, Andreas Ottensamer, Julien Quentin, Alexei Stadler, Kirill Trousov, Istvan Vardai and others.

Alexandra Conunova was born in 1988 in the Republic of Moldova and took up the violin at the age of 6. She studied with Petru Munteanu at the University of Music in Rostock, Krzysztof Wegrzyn at the University of Music in Hanover and Renaud Capuçon at the Haute École de Musique de Lausanne. She has taken additional classes with Ivry Gitlis, Igor Oistrakh and Igor Ozim, among others.

She currently plays a Santo Seraphin violin made in Venice in 1735, kindly loaned by the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben.



Natalie Clein

Natalie Clein

### **Natalie Clein** cello

British cellist Natalie Clein has built a distinguished career, regularly performing at major venues and with leading orchestras worldwide. Her playing has been praised for its range of colours and wide variety of expressive styles.

She is an exclusive recording artist for Hyperion Records and has recorded Saint-Saëns's two cello concertos, as well as Bloch's *Schelomo* and Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to great critical acclaim. A solo disc of works by Bloch, Ligeti and Dallapiccola was released in January 2017. She has previously released three discs on EMI.

Orchestras with which she has appeared include the Philharmonia, Hallé, the Bournemouth, City of Birmingham, Montreal and New Zealand Symphony orchestras, BBC National



Orchestra of Wales, Orchestre National de Lyon and Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires. She has performed with conductors including Sir Mark Elder, Sir Roger Norrington, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Leonard Slatkin, Stéphane Denève and Heinrich Schiff.

She is also a keen recitalist and chamber musician and recently performed Bach's Cello Suites Nos 1–6 in London, Southampton and Oxford; as well as curating a series of four concerts for BBC Radio 3 at LSO St Luke's. She is artistic director of her own chamber music festival in Purbeck, Dorset.

She regularly works with contemporary composers such as Thomas Larcher, Brian Elias and Dobrinka Tabakova and has also curated and been involved in cross-disciplinary projects with the dancer Carlos Acosta, writer Jeanette Winterson and director Deborah Warner, among others.

In 2015 Natalie Clein was appointed to the four-year position of Artist-in-Residence and Director of Musical Performance at Oxford University. Her duties there include curating a concert series.



Elisabeth Brauss

### **Elisabeth Brauss** piano

Elisabeth Brauss was born in 1995 to musical parents and received her first piano lessons at the age of 4. Two years later she entered the piano class of Elena Levit and in 2008 she also began studying in the class of Matti Raekallio. Since 2010 she has attended the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hanover in the class of Bernd Goetzke.

She has already given numerous concerts as a recitalist, chamber musician and concerto soloist. Orchestras with which she has appeared include the hr-Sinfonieorchester, the Bochum and Dortmund Symphony orchestras, Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Radiophilharmonie and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Elisabeth Brauss has appeared at the Berlin Konzerthaus, Hamburg Laeiszhalle, Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg and at the Beethovenfest Bonn, Heidelberg Spring Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Festival and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival. International concert tours have taken her to China, the USA, Norway, Russia, Ukraine and Taiwan.

In addition to first prizes at the Steinway Piano Competition in Hamburg and the International Grottrian Steinweg Competition in Brunswick, she was awarded Emerging Artists Prizes at the 2010 Schleswig-Holstein Festival and by the State of Lower Saxony in 2012. In 2013 she won the TONALi Grand Prix and the Audience Prize. Part of her prize was a performance with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen in the Laeiszhalle. In 2015 she won the 'Ton und Erklärung' in Frankfurt and in 2016 the Kissinger Piano Olympics. She has also received a number of prestigious scholarships.



## Insula orchestra

Insula orchestra was founded in 2012 by Laurence Equilbey with local government support from the Département des Hauts-de-Seine and is in residence in a new artistic venue, La Seine Musicale, designed by architects Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines on Ile Seguin, an island in the River Seine just a few miles downstream from Paris. The orchestra is in charge of selecting part of the programme for its 1,150-seat Auditorium.

Insula orchestra also performs at other major French and international venues and leading festivals. Since its foundation, the orchestra has been invited to play at the Philharmonie de Paris, Salzburg Mozartwoche, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Basle's Stadtcasino, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Essen Philharmonie and at the Palacio de Festivales de Cantabria.

Insula orchestra's repertoire focuses on the Classical and Romantic eras, with Mozart, Schubert and Weber forming a core. It performs both purely symphonic programmes and others featuring chorus and soloists. The orchestra performs on period instruments, tailoring its sound to large auditoriums.

The orchestra has developed a wide-ranging and innovative programme of cultural and educational initiatives across its home base in the Hauts-de-Seine department. It also reconsiders the formats of classical music with the aims of drawing in new audiences and creating an ongoing

dialogue between symphonic music, the spatial dimensions of the venue and the stage. It pitches its performance format midway between traditional concert versions and fully staged opera, exploiting the potential of leading international music venues. It also embraces new technology as a means of communication, using videos and online content to expand the artistic impact of any given project.

Highlights this season include guest appearances at the Grand Théâtre de Provence, Opéra Comique, Theater an der Wien, Warsaw Philharmonie, NOSPR Concert Hall in Katowice and here at the Barbican Centre.

Insula orchestra's first three recordings – Mozart's Requiem, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass have been highly critically acclaimed. This season it has released an album of orchestral arrangements of Schubert's Lieder with Stanislas de Barbeyrac and Wiebke Lehmkuhl and records two albums of Beethoven with accentus and soloists Nicholas Angelich, Alexandra Conunova, Natalie Clein and David Kadouch.

*Insula orchestra receives support from the Département des Hauts-de-Seine and is in residence at La Seine Musicale. Five Funding Partners joined the adventure: Carrefour, Fondation d'Entreprise Michelin, Grant Thornton, Meludia and W. Materne supports the cultural and educational activities of Insula orchestra. accio, the accentus and Insula orchestra circle of friends develops the involvement of individuals and companies. Insula orchestra is part of the FEVIS and the SPPF.*

# Insula orchestra

## Violin 1

Stéphanie Paulet *leader*  
 Catherine Ambach  
 Roldán Bernabé  
 Carrión  
 David Chivers  
 Carlotta Conrado  
 Víctor Martínez Soto  
 Louis-Jean Perreau  
 Michal Piotrowski  
 Anna Ryu  
 Enrico Tedde

## Violin 2

Daniel Deuter  
 Bénédicte Pernet  
 Maximilienne  
 Caravassilis  
 Adrien Carré  
 Cécile Kubik  
 Cécile Garcia  
 François Costa  
 Byron Wallis

## Viola

Brigitte Clément  
 Laurent Gaspar  
 Lika Laloum  
 Benjamin Lescoat  
 Julien Lo Pinto  
 Chloé Parisot

## Cello

Emmanuel Jacques  
 Pablo Garrido  
 Claire Gratton  
 Julien Hainsworth  
 Robert Smith

## Double Bass

Roberto De Larrinoa  
 Michael Chanu  
 Clothilde Guyon  
 Lino Maldonado

## Flute

Anna Besson  
 Morgane Eouzan

## Oboe

Jean-Marc Philippe  
 Anne Chamussy

## Clarinet

Alvaro Iborra  
 Ana Melo

## Bassoon

François Charruyer  
 Emmanuel Vigneron

## Horn

Jeroen Billiet  
 Gilbert Cami Farras

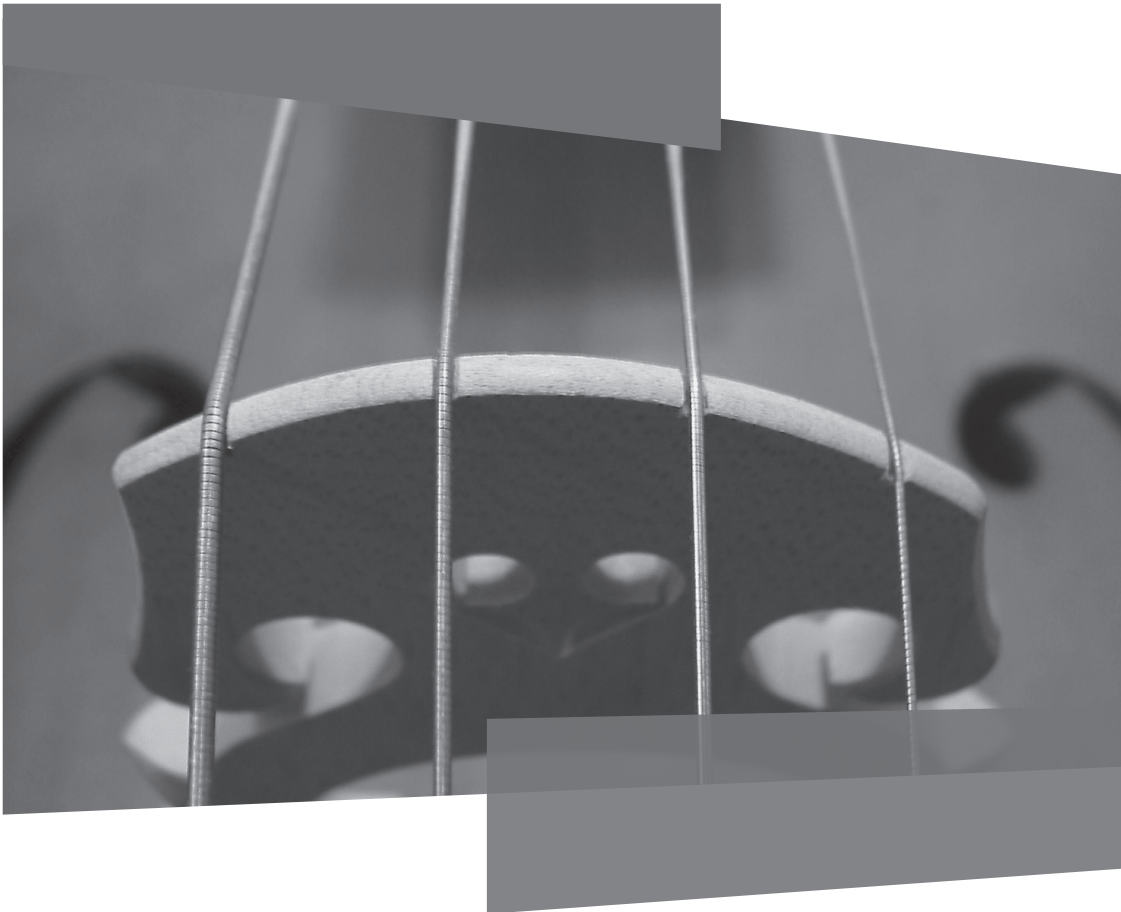
## Trumpet

Serge Tizac  
 Jean-Baptiste Lapierre

## Perussion

Koen Plaetinck

*The list of players was  
 correct at the time of  
 going to press*



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**International Women's Day** highlights that advocating **equality** isn't just the right thing to do – it's a necessity. Our Women's Initiative Network is committed to creating a firm culture where talented women are **recognised** and **empowered** to develop and advance.

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