



PROGRAMME
NOTES
31st March 2018

Lisa Bucknell Trio

Lisa Bucknell (viola) Chad Vindin (piano)
Som Howie (clarinet)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales), Op 132 (1853)

1. *Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell* (lively, not too fast)
2. *Lebhaft und sehr markiert* (lively and strongly stressed)
3. *Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck* (relaxed tempo with tender expression)
4. *Lebhaft, sehr markiert - Etwas ruhigeres Tempo - Erstes Tempo* (lively, strongly stressed – somewhat more relaxed tempo – first tempo)

A clarinet-violoncello-piano trio differs from the traditional piano trio, i.e. piano-violin-violoncello, clarinet-violin-piano and clarinet-cello-piano, by the fact that the viola and the clarinet share roughly the same range. The combination of viola and clarinet is thus distinguished by the timbre (tone quality or colour) of the instruments rather than register (high versus low ranges, like violin compared with cello). W A Mozart was the first to write for this combination of instruments with his *Kegelstatt Trio*, K.498 (1786). There are only two other notable works for this distinctive combination of instruments, Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen*, and Max Bruch's *Eight Pieces*.

Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen* for clarinet, viola and piano is one of his very last works. It was composed during October 1853, when his increasing mental fragility and depression was temporarily alleviated by the visits of Joseph Joachim and the 20-year-old Johannes Brahms. The four 'Fairy Tales' are testimony to Schumann's fondness for the picturesque and the fanciful, though he left no clues as to their content. The opening movement alternates between march and dream, with a constant exchange of roles between the three instruments. The second piece is dominated by march rhythms, now with a distinct rustic flavour, alleviated by a lyrical central episode. The third, marked *Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck* (relaxed tempo, with tender expression), clarinet and viola sing a dulcet love duet against the piano's rippling semiquavers. The fourth Fairy Tale, marked *Lebhaft, sehr markiert* (Lively, and strongly stressed) like the second, but in somewhat more relaxed tempo, mixes truculence and Schumannesque caprice. As in the second piece, too, there is a songful interlude for duetting clarinet and viola in a remote key. With his love of cyclic forms, Schumann then brings the work full circle by quoting a prominent theme (beginning with a rising arpeggio) from the opening piece.

Huw Watkins (b. 1976)
Speak Seven Seas (2011)

A British composer and pianist, Huw Watkins was born in South Wales, and studied piano and composition at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. He then went on to read Music at Kings College, Cambridge, where he studied composition, and completed an MMus in composition at the Royal College of Music. He was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he is now a professor of composition.

In 2011 Huw Watkins was invited to be Composer in Residence at the "Spannungen" Chamber Music Festival in Heimbach, Germany, by pianist and Artistic Director Lars Vogt (b.1970), who founded the Festival in 1998. As part of the residency, Watkins was commissioned to write a new work for viola, clarinet and piano, which was entitled Speak Seven Seas. It showcases Watkins's propensity to create an unselfconsciously lyrical flow of material and to balance it with a consciously meticulous craftsmanship. This trio has an apparently easy ebb and flow, but its dramatic tension was manipulated with the same unerring control.

❧ ❧ INTERVAL ❧ ❧

**Max Christian Friedrich Bruch (aka. Max Karl August Bruch)
(1838 - 1920)
Selections from Eight Pieces Op. 83 (1910)**

1. Andante 2. Allegro con moto 3. Andante con moto 4. Allegro agitato
5. *Rumänische Melodie* (Rumanian Melody): Andante 6. *Nachtgesang* (Night Song):
Andante con moto 7. Allegro vivace, ma non troppo 8. Moderato

Written in Berlin in 1910 for his son Max Felix, the Eight Pieces are nostalgic in tone, often slow, and all are in minor keys except No 7. His resistance to change and a firm belief in traditional forms and harmonies meant that works written at the end of his life sound much the same as compositions written sixty years earlier. Despite being written at a time when many composers were experimenting with modernism, they are thoroughly romantic in style. The instrumentation allows for the production of a luscious sound, and Bruch responds with melodies and harmonies that are correspondingly rich and glowing. Although only Rumanian Melody and Night Song carry descriptive titles, all eight are programmatic in the sense of presenting a characteristic mood or idea.

The clarinet and viola share similar timbres and ranges. While Mozart and Schumann accentuate the differences in the Kegelstatt Trio and *Märchenerzählungen*, Bruch treats them the same. Clarinet and viola often mirror the same melodic line, sometimes in canon. The melodies are nobly inspired and Bruch's handling of the individual instruments is masterful and effective.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 -1791)

The Kegelstatt Trio, K. 498 in E flat major (1786)

1. Andante
2. Menuetto
3. *Rondeaux*: Allegretto

According to the tradition, the Kegelstatt Trio, K 498 for clarinet, viola and piano was composed while Mozart was playing skittles (*Kegelstatt*, in German). The Kegelstatt Trio was composed for his piano pupil Franziska Jacquin, for his friend clarinet player Anton Stadler and for himself to play the viola. Wolfgang did play the viola; that is why he wrote so beautifully for it. The trio is a very intimate composition; you can imagine these three friends enjoying themselves playing this lovely music.

The first movement is written in 6/8 time and consists of 129 bars, and repeats neither its exposition nor the remainder of the movement. The second movement is written in 3/4 time and consists of 158 bars, almost all of which are repeated. The last movement is written in 2/2 time and consists of 222 bars. The musical format of this movement is a seven-part rondo, which explains the title *Rondeaux*, the French plural form of *Rondeau*. The movement ends with a flowery, operatic coda (bars 185–222).

The viola and clarinet have both a similar, mellow voice and Mozart writes in a way that allows them, and the piano as well, to appear in turn as the soloist or accompanying each other.

Musicians

Lisa Bucknell began her studies on viola after winning a scholarship at the Sydney Conservatorium Open Academy, and has completed a Master of Performance with Distinction at the Royal College of Music. She was a prize-winner at the North London Festival of Music, and has extensive orchestral experience. She has performed in prestigious venues including the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Opera House, Cadogan Hall, and the Sydney Opera House.

Chad Vindin, winner of several accompanist prizes, is one of the rising young stars of the accompaniment world. Whilst maintaining a full workload as a staff pianist and vocal coach at both the Royal College and Royal Academy of Music, he performs regularly across the UK and internationally. He is a founding member of the Sydney Chamber Opera Company, and is an avid orchestral musician, performing with various orchestras. As a chamber musician, he performs as part of a horn trio called Trio SOL.

Som Howie graduated with a Bachelor of Music Performance in 2012, and received his AMus in clarinet at the age of 17. In 2009 he won the Conservatorium Concerto competition, and since then has performed as a guest clarinetist with several Australian orchestras. In 2013, Som completed a 12-month fellowship with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and won the Musica Viva Chamber Music Competition as well as the Australasian Clarinet and Saxophone Conference Competition.

Lisa, Chad and Som all studied for their Bachelor's degrees at the Open Academy at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, before they each relocated to the UK.



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