

Whitstable Music Society Programme Notes Sat 27th April 2019

The Gould Piano Trio with Robert Plane (Clarinet)

Louise Farrenc: Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano

1. Andante (Allegro moderato). 2. Adagio. 3, Minuetto (Allegro). 4. Finale (Allegro)

Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) enjoyed a considerable reputation during her own lifetime as both a performer and a teacher. Her chamber music is on a par with most of her well known male contemporaries, although unfortunately these works never achieved the renown they deserved and fell into oblivion shortly after her death. As a young girl, Farrenc, a piano prodigy, was fortunate in studying with such great masters as Moscheles, Hummel and Anton Reicha.

The Trio is dedicated to the French clarinettist Adolphe Leroy, is in four movements and opens with a short dignified introduction *Andante*. The first subject of the main movement *Allegro Moderato* is a lovely melody in the clarinet which recalls Carl von Weber. The interweaving of the rhythmic material is very skilfully handled and the writing for the clarinet and cello is perfect. The piano as is typical in most Farrenc first movements is given a glittering part. The second theme introduced by the cello is more representative of mid 19th century romanticism. The Adagio has a Beethovenian formality. Next comes a *Minuetto Allegro* in which the clarinet is given the lion's share of the thematic material which again recalls Weber. In the Finale the entire first theme and its restatement are given to the clarinet no doubt with the dedicatee in mind.

Theodor Kirchner (1823-1903). Bunte Blatter Op 83.

A set of Twelve Short Pieces

Theodor Kirchner was widely considered to be the undisputed master of the character piece, a short kind of free form work. Kirchner literally wrote hundreds of such pieces that can rightly be considered miniature masterpieces.

He was born in the town of Neukirchen near Chemnitz in the German province of Saxony and showed a prodigious musical talent at an early age. His father was initially reluctant to let him study music and it was only after hearing Schumann and Mendelssohn highly praise his son's talent that he permitted Theodor to attend the Leipzig Conservatory, where he studied with Mendelssohn, among others. It was upon Mendelssohn's recommendation that Kirchner in 1843 obtained his first position as organist of the main church in Winterthur in Switzerland. He was a friend of Robert and Clara Schumann as well as Brahms.

Kirchner's compositional talent was widely respected and held in the highest regard by Schumann, Brahms, Liszt, Wagner and many others, but he found himself unable to write large-scale works. Rather, he excelled at writing miniatures. He would often write several at a time and then publish them together, each with a different mood and feel and each perfect in its own way.

Interval

Huw Watkins: Four Fables (New Work)

1. Lento. 2. Allegro. 3. Lento. 4. Lento

Huw Watkins was born in Wales in 1976 and studied piano with Peter Lawson at Chetham's School of Music and composition with Robin Holloway, Alexander Goehr and Julian Anderson at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. In 2001 he was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he later taught composition. He is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

As the name suggests, *Four Fables* is comprised of four movements, with slower Lento movements encircling a faster allegro second movement. The unusual instrumental combination of clarinet, violin, cello and piano is one made famous by Olivier Messiaen with his *Quartet for the End of Time*, yet it was in fact the fanciful character of Robert Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen* (fairy tale narrations) for clarinet, viola and piano that most inspired Watkins.

Brahms. Piano Trio Op. 8 in B major

Allegro, Scherzo, Adagio, Finale.

The Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8 by Johannes Brahms was completed in January 1854, when the composer was only twenty years old, published in November 1854 and premiered on 13 October 1855 in Danzig.

The trio is scored for piano, violin and cello, and it is the only work of Brahms to exist in two published versions, although it is almost always the revised version that is being performed today. The work is homotonal, with two movements in the key of B major and two in B minor. It is also among the few multi movement works to begin in a major key and end in the tonic minor (another example being Felix Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony).

The Gould Piano Trio with Robert Plane (Clarinet)

Lucy Gould (Violin). Richard Lester (Cello) Ben Frith (Piano)

The Gould Piano Trio, directly compared to the great Beaux Arts Trio for their "musical fire" and "dedication to the genre" in the Washington Post, have remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for a quarter of a Century. The Gould has made extensive tours of N. America, the Far East and New Zealand, and has performed throughout Europe. In addition they have given master classes at the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme, Dartington, RWCMD and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where they enjoy discussing interpretation with the most promising young ensembles of our day.

Robert Plane. Robert Plane's hugely varied career has seen concerto appearances in Europe, Asia and the USA, with performances of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto in Madrid with the City of London Sinfonia, Beijing with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and in the USA with the Virginia Symphony. He made his BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall in 2011 with Simon Holt's double concerto 'Centauromachy'. Exploring a wide range of repertoire and commissioning new works, highlights of past seasons have included Piers Hellawell's *Agricolas* with the Ulster Orchestra and RTE Symphony Orchestra, Finzi with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Christian Jost with the Dortmunder Philharmoniker and Stanford with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Sponsors.

We are very grateful to our sponsors for this concert. **Pococks Solicitors of Whitstable** www.pococklaw.com and **Gill Smyth**. Our sponsors play an essential part in making these concerts financially viable.

