



Friday 14 July 2023, 12pm – 1pm
St Mary's Church, Petworth

Royal Academy Lunchtimes: The Hygge Trio

Hugo Lau
Hei Chit Wong
Helen Meng

clarinet
cello
piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

Trio Pathétique in D Minor

Mikhail Glinka (1804-57)

- 1 Allegro moderato
- 2 Scherzo: vivacissimo
- 3 Largo
- 4 Allegro con spirito

Mikhail Glinka is widely regarded as the father of Russian music and the first to give it an individual voice, notwithstanding an assimilation of indigenous folk idioms. Early in his career he made modest contributions to chamber music and his Piano Trio was the product of a three-year visit to Italy between 1830 and 1833 where he went to develop his technique and ease a chronic chest condition. Written originally for piano, clarinet and bassoon for musicians at Milan's *La Scala*, his Trio Pathétique is usually performed by the present combination of piano, violin and cello. Despite its stormy opening bars, the first movement is suffused with a tender lyricism and reveals the composer's talent for forming a well-crafted musical 'argument'. A fleet-of-foot 'Scherzo' follows enclosing a central passage of considerable charm. Playfulness turns to poetic utterance for the 'Largo' with its *bel canto* vocal style and fulfils the promise of the work's title. Dramatic purpose occupies the tuneful Finale, a movement that flares with passion and scintillation but all too quickly Glinka extinguishes its blaze.

Aquila

Philip Cashian (born 1963)

Studies in Cardiff, London and Tanglewood have all variously formed Philip Cashian's fast-paced musical style, described as 'an uncompromising reflection of the modern world'. *Aquila* was commissioned by CHROMA and first performed at King's Place in November 2010. Inspiration for the work came from John Flamsteed's *Atlas Coelestis* (Star Atlas) where the composer imagined an eagle (Aquila) swooping across its pages but trapped in a vortex, destined to circle permanently around the heavens.

Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

- 1 Allegro
- 2 Adagio
- 3 Andantino grazioso
- 4 Allegro

Having intended to retire at fifty-seven, Brahms visited Meiningen in 1890 to hear its Court Orchestra where he immediately fell under the spell of its principal clarinetist, Richard Mühlfeld. So strong an impression did he create, that Brahms's creative energies soared, and he produced several late works each featuring the clarinet including this wonderful Trio in A minor. It was conceived during the summer of 1891 in the resort of Ischl near Salzburg and first heard in Berlin in a private performance on 24th November. Although the clarinet's timbre may have been the initial inspiration for the work, the cello more often takes centre stage and sets the work in motion with a rising theme. Its autumnal mood at the start is mirrored in the falling intervals of a secondary idea, also assigned to the cello. Between these themes and a series of scales from clarinet and cello the music reaches its first climax, while the movement draws to a close in an otherworldly mood.

The cantabile tone of the clarinet is heard to wonderful effect in the D major 'Adagio', in which the subtle relationships between the instruments are developed to maximum effect. Cast in rondo form, its melodious refrain is considerably varied on each return. There follows an elegant waltz-like intermezzo, while the energetic fourth movement abounds in rhythmic vitality.

David Truslove, 2023

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