



**Friday 14 July 2023, 7.30pm – 9.20pm**  
**St Mary's Church, Petworth**

**The Yehudi Menuhin School Presents...**

**Bridge Three Idylls H.67**

*violin* Sasha Parker / *violin* Chloe Lui / *viola* Jemimah Quick / *cello* HaoRan Li

**Shostakovich String Quartet No 8 Op.110**

*violin* Vadym Perig / *violin* Ignacy Stefanowicz / *viola* Kenza Stamselberg / *cello* Filippo Ramacciotti

—INTERVAL—

**Brahms Piano Trio in C minor Op.101**

*violin* Dora Olivia Devoghel / *cello* Chris Liu / *piano* Jude Usborne

**Bottesini Gran Duo Concertante**

*violin* Yume / *double bass* Levi Andreassen

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Three Idylls, H67

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

- 1 Adagio molto espressivo
- 2 Allegretto poco lento
- 3 Allegro con moto

Of the generation of English composers that included Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bax and Ireland, Frank Bridge's stylistic journey was the most far-reaching. Beginning in a late-Romantic tradition, his early works such as these Three Idylls follow a conservative idiom that share a measure of wistful innocence. From the mid 1920's his musical language explored a more chromatic path, mirroring the European avant garde and his style reached an atonal cul-de-sac which was to find little favour with the public or critics alike.

At the outset of his career Bridge established his reputation through a series of prize-winning chamber works that demonstrated both impeccable craftsmanship and a wholly idiomatic understanding of string instruments. This is clearly audible recognisable in his Three Idylls of 1906, a trio of works dedicated to Ethel Elmore Sinclair who later became his wife. The nostalgic outer panels of the first Idyll enclose a central passage of great charm. Likewise, the poignancy of the neighbouring 'Allegretto' is set off by a more animated central panel. The influence of Debussy might be discerned in the bustling finale, whose own quartet Bridge had admired from his student days. After its Wigmore

Hall premiere, *The Times* praised its clear design, 'Colour has been the composer's principal aim' for the first two movements, while the third afforded the 'easiest of comprehension'.

**String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110**

**Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)**

- 1 Largo
- 2 Allegro molto
- 3 Allegretto
- 4 Largo
- 5 Largo

Of Shostakovich's 15 string quartets, the eighth is amongst his most autobiographical and emotionally lacerating. In addition to borrowing ideas from earlier scores (including his First Symphony and the Cello Concerto), the quartet reflects the traumas of July 1960 when he was sent with a film crew to Dresden to create a soundtrack for an East German documentary *Five Days and Five Nights*. Still in shock during his stay in the spa town of Görlitz, he wrote the quartet in just three days, confiding to a friend, 'however much I tried to draft my obligations for the film, I just couldn't do it. Instead, I wrote an ideologically flawed quartet that nobody needs'.

A bleak fugue-like movement initiates proceedings, constructed on the composer's initials - D, E flat, C and B, which in German translates as DSCH – D. SHostakovich. Its short imitative phrases yield to a 'wintry' lyricism, but relief from earlier solemnity is only temporary. Hysteria pervades the brief second movement where the DSCH signature theme dominates, heard as a frantic cry for help and set against a relentless rhythmic background. From its abrupt close, the waltz-like 'Allegretto' follows, a movement of mocking despair that makes a grotesque parody of the motto theme. The fourth movement weaves together three new ideas; a series of percussive knocks, a slow folk-like tune and a beautiful bitter-sweet melody. The motto theme leads to the fifth movement with a fully worked out 'discussion of the four-note motif in a consoling prayer for peace.

**Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, Op. 60**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-97)**

- 1 Allegro ma non troppo
- 2 Scherzo: Allegro
- 3 Andante
- 4 Finale: Allegro comodo

Of all the nineteenth-century composers after Beethoven it was Brahms who made the most substantial contribution to chamber music, thirty-years of creativity generating numerous staples of the repertoire. His Third Piano Quartet in C minor is a revision of his unfinished first Piano Quartet of 1855, its mood reflecting the emotional turmoil he was experiencing during the period of a developing passion for Clara Schumann. Prior to its publication in 1875, he requested a cover illustration that would show a picture of a head with a pistol to it; and hinted that the Quartet was a musical illustration of Goethe's novel *Werther* whose protagonist falls in love with a married woman. The parallels with

Schumann's personal life are clear, but happily the resulting product is one of Brahms's most satisfying works.

A hesitant two note 'cell' sets the first movement in motion, later yielding to a flowing secondary theme that gives rise to a group of four variations. A strenuous development is followed by an extension of the variations and an anguished coda subsides seemingly all energy spent. Energy returns (albeit of a nervous kind) for the rhythmically propulsive 'Scherzo' – a wonderfully muscular movement that ends on a note of defiance. Relief arrives in the lingering beauty of the 'Andante' which carries a song-like cello theme in E major and provides the work's emotional still centre. Dancing patterns initiate the finale which might at first indicate a lighter mood, but this would be to mistake a restless anxiety where melodic fragments, with chorale-like elements, combine to form a dense structure closing with a brusque final cadence that hints at, rather than affirms, triumph.

### **Gran Duo Concertante**

**Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889)**

Acclaimed as a double bass virtuoso, Giovanni Bottesini was a much sought after performer on both sides of the Atlantic during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His much-performed Gran Duo Concertante for Double Bass, Violin and Orchestra belongs to the 1840s and began as a work for two double basses, before its revision for violin by Bottesini's touring companion Camillo Sivori.

David Truslove, 2023

**This event is kindly sponsored by John & Gloria Horwell and Kingston Estates**

