

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

BBC
RADIO 3

**BERTRAND CHAMAYOU & FRIENDS
CELLO & PIANO**

Thursday 29 February 2024 1-2.05pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Felix Mendelssohn Variations concertantes
Benjamin Britten Cello Sonata
Felix Mendelssohn Cello Sonata No 2

Bertrand Chamayou piano
Sol Gabetta cello

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

LSO

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THE CRYPT CAFÉ & BAR

The Crypt Café is open from one hour before concerts and during the interval (where applicable). Please note, card payments only. Only cold drinks are permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

PROGRAMME NOTE WRITER

Leah Broad is an award-winning music writer, historian, and broadcaster. She holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford and writes about twentieth century cultural history, particularly women in music. *Quartet*, Leah's award-winning first book, is a group biography of four women composers: Ethel Smyth, Rebecca Clarke, Dorothy Howell & Doreen Carwithen.

In accordance with the requirements of Islington Council persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly forbidden without formal consent from LSO St Luke's.

Please make sure that digital watch alarms and mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Variations concertantes in D major for Cello and Piano Op 17

Felix Mendelssohn



1829



9 minutes

'Concertante' works are an opportunity to showcase the players' technical skills, and Felix Mendelssohn holds nothing back in this lively set of variations. Penned in 1829 for his younger brother Paul, this work gives some sense of how unusually prodigious the four Mendelssohn children were. Felix was 20 when he composed this, and Paul just 17. Lea and Abraham wanted their children to have the best education available, and had made sure they grew up surrounded by music. Felix and Paul would likely have played this piece together, perhaps at one of the Sunday 'musicales' the Mendelssohns ran at their home so Europe's cultural leaders could come to marvel at the siblings' performances.

By the time Mendelssohn composed this piece he had written no fewer than five concertos, and his experience writing brilliant virtuoso works comes through clearly here. This is very much written for both players, though – from the beginning the simple theme is shared between the piano and cello, and as the variations

progress the theme is continually passed between them, giving both performers moments to shine. Mendelssohn combines tempestuous variations with more reflective and melodic passages, all leading to an explosive extended coda before the music trickles away.

Cello Sonata in C major Op 65

Benjamin Britten



1961



22 minutes

- 1 **Dialogo**
- 2 **Scherzo-Pizzicato**
- 3 **Elegia**
- 4 **Marcia**
- 5 **Moto perpetuo**

When Benjamin Britten first heard the Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich play, he was bowled over. 'This was a new way of playing the cello', he said – 'almost a new, vital way of playing music.' The pair met in 1960, and over the coming years Rostropovich became a friend, collaborator and muse. The Cello Sonata was the first in a series of works that Britten composed for Rostropovich, enthusing that he was 'a gloriously uninhibited musician'.

The opening movement is a dialogue both between players and between moods – it begins tentatively but bursts into more turbulent material, constantly alternating between the two. The scherzo is fiendishly difficult, with the cellist playing *pizzicato* (plucked strings) throughout at lightning speed, and the pianist having to manage intricate passagework without overpowering the cello. A passionate

elegy provides the sonata's lyrical heart, followed by a short, aggressive march built around a triplet figure. Britten uses a range of timbres dramatically and expressively throughout, but it is especially noticeable in this movement, full of *glissandi* (sliding from one note to another) and *sul ponticello* (playing close to the bridge for a nasal tone-quality). The 'moto perpetuo' brings the work to a ferocious conclusion, ending abruptly with an accented, *fortissimo* flourish for both players.

Cello Sonata No 2 in D major Op 58

Felix Mendelssohn



1843



25 minutes

- 1 **Allegro assai vivace**
- 2 **Allegretto scherzando**
- 3 **Adagio**
- 4 **Molto allegro e vivace**

The Mendelssohn who wrote this cello sonata was a more mature, experienced composer than the young man who wrote the Variations. By 1843, Mendelssohn had some extraordinary successes behind him, including all his symphonies. As a conductor, too, Mendelssohn had flourished, serving as musical director in both Düsseldorf and then Leipzig. Perhaps most importantly for his own composition, however, Mendelssohn had spearheaded a revival of Johann Sebastian Bach's music, which came to be a significant influence on his own work.

After the classically-leaning Variations, here Mendelssohn embraces a more contemporary, Romantic aesthetic but synthesises it with Baroque influences too. The rhapsodic first movement sets the tone, launching with an energetic statement of the joyful main theme. The light scherzando has echoes of the

fairies from Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which he was writing at the same time as this Sonata. The third movement's foundation is a Bach-like chorale, on which Mendelssohn builds a heartfelt lament. The sonata closes with a lively 'Molto allegro' which, like the Variations, is well balanced between both players, the cello's lines singing out over the piano's rippling arpeggios.

Bertrand Chamayou

piano



© Marco Borggreve

Bertrand Chamayou was born in Toulouse and studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Jean-François Heisser. He completed his training with Maria Curcio in London.

Chamayou performs regularly at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Lincoln Center and Wigmore Hall. He has appeared at festivals including New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Lucerne Festival, Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival and Beethovenfest Bonn.

Engagements during 2024 include recitals both solo and with cellist Sol Gabetta, flautist Emmanuel Pahud and soprano Barbara Hannigan; Grieg's Piano Concerto with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine under Emmanuel Villaume; Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand with the Filarmonica della Scala under

Philippe Jordan; Unsuk Chin's Piano Concerto and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G with the London Symphony Orchestra under François-Xavier Roth and Sir Antonio Pappano respectively and Scriabin's Piano Concerto with the Sinfonieorchester Köln under Andris Poga in Cologne.

As a chamber musician, he has recently worked with Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Quatuor Ébène, Antoine Tamestit and Sol Gabetta, and appeared in the Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series and at Salzburg Easter Festival, Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival, the Berlin Philharmonie and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Chamayou's many successful recordings include *Naïve*, a disc of music by César Franck, which was awarded several accolades. For his recording of Camille Saint-Saëns' Piano Concertos Nos 2 and 5 he was awarded the *Gramophone* Recording of the Year Award 2019. The only artist to win France's prestigious Victoires de la Musique on five occasions, he has an exclusive recording contract with Warner/Erato and was awarded the 2016 ECHO Klassik for his recording of Ravel's complete works for solo piano.

Sol Gabetta

cello



© Julia Wesley

In this 2023/24 season, Sol Gabetta reunites with Paavo Järvi on tour with the Estonian Festival Orchestra throughout Germany, Switzerland, Austria as well as with Wiener Philharmoniker under the direction of Andrés Orozco-Estrada at Mozartwoche Salzburg. Further ahead, Gabetta returns to the US for performances with the Cleveland orchestra under direction of Klaus Mäkelä followed by her debut with the New York Philharmonic.

Chamber music is at the core of Gabetta's work, visible in her upcoming trio recitals with Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov in Germany and Austria, her upcoming tour with her longtime recital partner Bertrand Chamayou through Italy, France and Austria, and appearances with Kristian Bezuidenhout and Francesco Piemontesi at Gstaad Festival and at the Schubertiade. In the past, chamber music

performances led her to venues such as New York's Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, Lucerne, Verbier, Salzburg, Schwetzingen and Rheingau festivals, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and Beethovenfest Bonn.

She continues to build her extensive discography with SONY Classical, the most recent releases being a recording of late Schumann works and a live recording of the cello concertos by Elgar and Martinů with the Berliner Philharmoniker and Sir Simon Rattle/ Krzysztof Urbanski. In 2017, Gabetta joined forces with Cecilia Bartoli on an extensive tour throughout Europe showcasing their album *Dolce Duello*, released on Decca Classics.

Sol Gabetta performs on several Italian master instruments from the early 18th century, including a cello by Matteo Goffriller from 1730, Venice, provided to her by Atelier Cels Paris, and since 2020, the famous 'Bonamy Dobree-Suggia' by Antonio Stradivarius from 1717, on generous loan from the Stradivari Foundation Habisreutinger. She has been teaching at the Basel Music Academy since 2005.

FUTURE CONCERTS

At LSO St Luke's

Friday 1 March 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU: SOLO PIANO

Maurice Ravel Jeux d'eau; Gaspard de la nuit

Unsuk Chin Piano Études Nos 4 to 6
Maurice Ravel Selections from 'Miroirs'

Bertrand Chamayou piano

Thursday 11 April 1pm

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU & FRIENDS

Johannes Brahms Two Songs for Voice, Viola and Piano Op 91

Plus music by **Clara Schumann**, **Robert Schumann** and **Joseph Joachim**.

Bertrand Chamayou piano
Fleur Barron mezzo-soprano
Tabea Zimmermann viola

lso.co.uk/radio3

At the Barbican

Thursday 14 March 7pm

BEETHOVEN AND UNSUK CHIN

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No 2
Unsuk Chin Piano Concerto
Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No 8

François-Xavier Roth conductor
Bertrand Chamayou piano
London Symphony Orchestra

Thursday 18 April 7pm

RAVEL PIANO CONCERTO

David Raksin
The Bad and the Beautiful – Suite
Maurice Ravel Piano Concerto in G major
Ralph Vaughan Williams Symphony No 5

Sir Antonio Pappano conductor
Bertrand Chamayou piano
London Symphony Orchestra

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