

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

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BEETHOVEN DEDICATIONS

Thursday 26 September 2024 1-2.05pm

Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Ludwig van Beethoven 12 Variations on 'Se vuol ballare' (from
Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro')
Violin Sonata No 9, 'Kreutzer'

Chloë Hanslip violin

Danny Driver piano

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

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THE CRYPT BAR

The Crypt Bar 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

Kate Hopkins is English-language editor (concerts) for Salzburg Festival. She has written articles for organisations including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia, the Salzburg Festival and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and book reviews for *NB Magazine* and *The Wagner Journal*.

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.

12 Variations on 'Se vuol ballare' (from Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro')

Ludwig van Beethoven



1792-93



12 minutes

This delightful set of variations was composed in the winter of 1792-3, around the time that Ludwig van Beethoven arrived in Vienna to study with Joseph Haydn, dispatched from his native Bonn by his friend and supporter Count Waldstein with the exhortation: 'Through your unflinching efforts, receive Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands'.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had been dead for just a year, and Beethoven chose to honour his memory by selecting as the theme of his variations the catchy air 'Se vuol ballare' from *The Marriage of Figaro*, in which the valet Figaro declares his determination to thwart his master's nefarious intentions with regard to his fiancée Susanna, saying that the count may wish to dance, but he'll play the tune.

Beethoven's Mozartian homage consists of twelve variations with a coda, in the key of F major. The tune is announced on pizzicato violin, imitating a guitar. The fourth variation features baroque-like counterpoint; the slow sixth and seventh are both cast in the minor mode, with first

the piano, then the violin, accompanying a mournful variation of the tune played by its partner, and Variation 9 is a brilliant *tour de force* for piano alone.

From Variation 11 onwards the texture thickens with violin double-stopped chords, while the coda features a sequence of quiet trills, which Beethoven warned might be difficult for pianists to play, but that they shouldn't be 'intimidated or discouraged'. His own virtuoso skills on the keyboard, particularly as an improviser, were already much admired in Vienna, and a year or so later, he admitted that he wouldn't have bothered writing down 'this kind of piece' if he hadn't noticed that people were starting to copy his style of improvisation and trying to pass it off as their own, probably with publication in mind.

In fact, he got there first – the prestigious firm of Artaria published the 'Se vuol ballare' Variations in 1793. Beethoven dedicated the piece to his former piano pupil Eleonore von Breuning, the daughter of a cultured and wealthy Bonn family, who had taken the impoverished young man under their wing and steered him towards an illustrious future.

Violin Sonata No 9, 'Kreutzer'

Ludwig van Beethoven



1803



34 minutes

- 1 **Adagio sostenuto – Presto – Adagio**
- 2 **Andante con variazioni**
- 3 **Finale: Presto**

Beethoven went on to compose ten violin sonatas, the majority during his first decade in Vienna. The (now lost) autograph manuscript of the ninth of these jokingly stated that it was 'a mixed-race sonata composed for the mixed-race Bridgetower'.

George Polgreen Bridgetower (1778 – 1860), the son of a Black British man and a Polish mother, had been playing the violin professionally since childhood in London. In the spring of 1803 he visited Vienna, where he impressed Beethoven as 'a very able virtuoso and complete master of his instrument'. Composer and violinist performed the A major Sonata at a concert in Vienna's Augartensaal on 24 May 1803, but since Beethoven had only completed the sonata that day, Bridgetower had to tackle the huge first and second movements almost at sight.

Beethoven was apparently delighted by the violinist's cadenza-like improvisatory flourishes, but their relationship was soon afterwards truncated by a quarrel – Beethoven, distressed by progressive hearing loss, was by then notoriously

short-tempered. In a letter of October 1804, he instructed his publisher that the printed version of the Sonata should be dedicated to the French virtuoso Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766 – 1831), whom he had met when Kreutzer visited Vienna, and whose 'modesty and natural ways' appealed to him. Kreutzer reportedly declared it too difficult, and may never have actually played the piece that bears his name.

This fine work, written in 'almost concerto-like style', heralds a new genre – the virtuoso sonata, in which both instruments play an equal role. Its opening movement is conceived on a grand scale – and for the first time, the sonata opens with the violin, rather than the piano, which up to then had been regarded as the dominant partner. A slow introduction played by the violin on stopped chords, then echoed on the piano, leads into a passionate Presto in the dark-hued key of A minor. This was the movement that inspired Leo Tolstoy's famous short story of fatal marital jealousy, 'The Kreutzer Sonata'.

The slow movement is a set of four increasingly elaborate variations on a serene tune in F major, with an extended coda that effectively acts as a fifth variation. A commanding chord of A major from the piano launches the Presto finale, a brilliant tarantella in sonata- rondo form.

Chloë Hanslip

violin



© Laure Bernard

Chloë Hanslip has already established herself as an artist of distinction on the international stage. Prodigiously talented, she made her BBC Proms debut at 14 and her US concerto debut at 15 and has performed at major venues in the UK (Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall), Europe (Vienna Musikverein, Hamburg Laeiszhalle, Paris Louvre and Salle Gaveau, St Petersburg Hermitage) as well as Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Arts Space in Tokyo and the Seoul Arts Centre.

Hanslip has an extensive discography and her latest releases feature the complete Beethoven Violin Sonatas on Rubicon Classics with regular duo partner, Danny Driver. Her other recordings include concertos by John Adams with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Leonard Slatkin and Max Bruch Concertos with the

London Symphony Orchestra on Warner Classics, for which she won an Echo Klassik Award and a Classical BRIT.

With a particular passion for contemporary repertoire, she has championed works by John Adams, Philip Glass, John Corigliano, Michael Nyman, Huw Watkins, Michael Berkeley, Peter Maxwell Davies and Brett Dean. A committed chamber musician, she is a regular participant at festivals across Europe including Båstad, West Cork, Prussia Cove and Kutna Hora with recital partners including Angela Hewitt, Danny Driver, Igor Tchetuev and Charles Owen.

She plays a Guarneri del Gesu 1737.

Danny Driver

piano



© Felix Broede

Danny Driver's studies at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music inspired his holistic approach to performance, from which he derives a vibrant brand of programming that he brings to concert halls and music festivals across the UK, Europe, Asia and North America. His breadth of repertoire and musical curiosity are also reflected in his recordings, many of them on Hyperion Records, in which he has explored both mainstream and neglected music from the baroque period through to the present day, recently releasing György Ligeti's complete *Études for Piano* to widespread international acclaim.

A Gramophone Award nominated artist, Driver has performed with orchestras across the globe including the BBC Scottish Symphony, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, BBC NOW, Hallé,

Minnesota, Bournemouth Symphony, Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, American Symphony, RTÉ Concert, Hong Kong Pro Arte, Queensland Symphony, Kuopio Symphony, and Uppsala Chamber Orchestra. His collaborations with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra have included performances across the UK, at London's Cadogan Hall and at the BBC Proms (where he has performed twice as a soloist). He has worked with conductors including Andrew Litton, Charles Dutoit and Sir James MacMillan.

Driver's recital career has included numerous appearances at London's Wigmore Hall, including four live-streamed solo and chamber recitals, and a three-concert series in 2021-22 devoted to György Ligeti and his musical world. From September 2025 he will embark on a solo five-recital 'Variations' series there, juxtaposing works such as J S Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* with neglected romantic masterpieces and contemporary works.

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Thursday 3 October 1pm
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ORNAMENTS OF THE BAROQUE

A selection of Sonatas by **Georg Philipp Telemann**

Forma Antiqua

Thursday 3 October 6pm
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ORNAMENTS OF THE BAROQUE

A selection of pieces by **Francesco Geminiani, Johann Sebastian Bach, Benedetto Marcello, Francesco Geminiani,** and **Antonio Vivaldi**

Victor Julien-Laferrrière cello
Justin Taylor harpsichord

Friday 18 October 1pm
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NEW GENERATION ARTISTS

A selection of pieces by **John Corigliano, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Liszt,** and **Frédéric Chopin**

Alexander Gadjiev piano

Thursday 24 October 1pm
LSO St Luke's

BEETHOVEN DEDICATIONS

Ludwig van Beethoven
Sextet in E-flat major Op 71
Octet in E-flat major Op 103
Rondino in E-flat major

LSO Wind Ensemble

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