# Beethoven Dedications

## Thursday 24 October 2024 1–2.05pm Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke’s

# Ludwig van Beethoven

# Sextet in E-flat major Op 71

# Rondino in E-flat major

# Octet in E-flat major Op 103

**LSO Wind Ensemble**

# Sextet in E-flat major Op 71

## Ludwig van Beethoven

1796

20 minutes

1. **Adagio – Allegro**
2. **Adagio**
3. **Menuetto quasi allegretto – Trio**
4. **Rondo. Allegro**

While still only a child, Ludwig van Beethoven began his career as a keyboard player atat the court of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne in Bonn, where he grew up. The Archbishop maintained both an orchestra and a wind ensemble consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, and Beethoven would have been familiar with the sound of such an ensemble (known in Germany as ‘Harmoniemusik’), which his employer liked to hear accompanying his mealtimes.

Beethoven’s own music for wind ensemble, which includes an octet, a quintet, two sextets and a septet (for winds and strings), mostly dates from his early years in Vienna, where he settled permanently in late 1792, shortly before his 22nd birthday. The E-flat major Sextet for pairs of clarinets, bassoons and horns was composed in 1796 – Beethoven described it as ‘one of my earlier works, written in one night’, but that was no doubt an exaggeration, as it seems that the third movement, a Minuet, was added later.

The piece as a whole had to wait another nine years before it received its first performance, at a private benefit concert on 15 April 1805 for Beethoven’s violinist friend Ignaz Schuppanzigh. It did, however, receive a glowing review in the influential German music journal Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung (General Music Newspaper), which described this ‘beautiful Sextet’ as ‘a work that impresses by its splendid melodies, effortless harmonic flow and a wealth of new and surprising ideas’. A slow introduction based on the chord of E-flat leads into a dance-like Allegro, while the bassoons come to the fore in the following Adagio slow movement. The horns are given a chance to shine during the brisk Menuetto, and the piece concludes with a cheerful Rondo.

# Rondino in E-flat major

## Ludwig van Beethoven

1792

6 minutes

This single movement, marked ‘Andante’, may have been composed as an alternative finale for the Octet, with which it shares its year of composition, key and scoring. Its opening melody, presented on a solo horn, serves as an increasingly elaborate refrain separating two minor-key episodes, the first featuring clarinet and oboe, the second two horns, and the piece ends atmospherically as muted horns create the impression of vanishing into the distance.

# Octet in E-flat major Op 103

## Ludwig van Beethoven

1792

21 minutes

1. **Allegro**
2. **Andante**
3. **Menuetto**
4. **Finale: Presto**

This early work, for pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, was composed in Bonn in 1792 for Beethoven’s employer, Maximilian Franz, Archbishop-Elector of Cologne, who was brother to the Austrian emperor Joseph II. Beethoven revised it shortly afterwards in Vienna under the direction of his teacher Joseph Haydn. The Octet was never published in Beethoven’s lifetime, partly because a few years later, around 1796, he recast much of its material as a string quintet. He may have been following the example of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who in 1787 had made a masterly string quintet arrangement of his own Serenade for Winds, K 388.

The Octet shows the young Beethoven’s confident mastery of technique and form. The key, E-flat major, is very suited to wind instruments, and the first movement displays elegance, charm and touches of humour in its handling of the instrumental forces. The slow movement features a lyrical duet between first oboe and first bassoon, while the Menuetto is already a scherzo in all but name, veering between filigree pianissimo and arresting forte outbursts in a wholly Beethovenian way. The brilliant finale is dominated by virtuoso fanfare figures on the horns and scurrying woodwind.

# LSO Wind Ensemble

## On Stage

**Oliver Stankiewicz** LSO Principal Oboe

**Rosie Jenkins** LSO Oboe

**Sérgio Pires** LSO Principal Clarinet

**Chi-Yu Mo** LSO Principal E-flat Clarinet

**Daniel Jemison** LSO Principal Bassoon

**Joost Bosdijk** LSO Bassoon

**Diego Incertis Sánchez** LSO Principal Horn

**Angela Barnes** LSO Horn