

# SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES

April 15, 2018

## Benedetti Elschenbroich Grynyuk Trio

Nicola Benedetti, violin  
Leonard Elschenbroich, cello  
Alexei Grynyuk, piano

*Adagio* from Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 148, D. 897, "Notturmo" (1827)

Franz Schubert  
(1797-1828)

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87 (1882)

*Allegro*  
*Andante con moto*  
*Scherzo - Presto*  
*Finale: Allegro giocoso*

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

~10 minute intermission~

*Duetto d'Amore* (2015)

*Duetto 1*  
*Duetto 2*  
*Duetto 3: Intermezzo*  
*Duetto 4*  
*Duetto 5: Blues*

Mark-Anthony Turnage  
(b. 1960)

Piano Trio in A Minor (1914)

*Modéré*  
*Pantoum: Assez vite*  
*Passacaille: Très large*  
*Final: Animé*

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1937)

### About the Artists:

Each acclaimed as leading soloists of their generation, violinist Nicola Benedetti, cellist Leonard Elschenbroich and pianist Alexei Grynyuk have been performing together as a trio since they met as young music students in London. While attending the Menuhin School, Benedetti and Elschenbroich played chamber music together and later met Alexei Grynyuk, who was studying at the Royal Academy of Music. They made their debut as a trio in the 2009/10 season with multiple concerts in the U.K. and at Schloss Elmau in Germany. Since then, **Benedetti, Elschenbroich and Grynyuk** have maintained their passionate commitment to chamber music with their regular and compelling performances at prestigious concert halls around the world.

The trio's recent highlights include performances at the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Royal Albert Hall London, Birmingham Symphony Hall, LSO St. Luke's, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Die Glocke Bremen, Hong Kong City Hall, two tours of South America, and an extensive tour of Scotland including concerts at Edinburgh Usher Hall and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. Festival appearances include Ravinia, Gergiev, Istanbul, Cheltenham and Edinburgh International.

In 2013, at the behest of Leonard Elschenbroich, composer Arlene Sierra wrote a work for the trio titled *Butterflies Remember a Mountain*, commissioned by the Bremen Philharmonic Society. The trio premiered the work in Bremen in November 2013 and have since then toured the work internationally in venues including Frankfurt Alte Oper, Cheltenham Town Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and London's Cadogan Hall. In September 2015, the trio played a sold-out BBC Proms appearance at London's Cadogan Hall. *The Arts Desk* lauded the concert as "a convincing Brahms Trio performance to end the [2015] Proms Chamber Music series.... Everything the trio did helped to reveal the complexities and demands of the work as a convincing whole. The poise and elegance of the hushed ending was remarkable."

In 2015-16, the Benedetti Elschenbroich Grynyuk trio made multiple appearances around the United Kingdom, culminating in a February 2016 performance on the Southbank Centre's International Chamber Music Series in London. In 2016-17, the trio performed in the United Kingdom, Istanbul, Copenhagen, Dortmund and had their New York debut at the 92nd Street Y. This highly anticipated New York appearance featured a first half of duos: a sonata each by Ravel and Debussy, followed by the U.S. premiere of Mark-Anthony Turange's *Duetti d'Amore*, inspired by Benedetti and Elschenbroich's relationship both on and off stage. The trio closed the concert with Tchaikovsky's poignant and lyrical Piano Trio in A minor.

In 2017-18, the trio commenced their season with summer appearances in South America. They performed concerts in Mexico, Lima, Colombia and Chile, marking their third tour to Latin America as a trio. In April 2018, they will perform recitals in North America at Vancouver Recital Society, Charlottesville (Virginia) and at Boston's Gardner Museum.

**Nicola Benedetti** is one of the most sought after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences with her innate musicianship and dynamic presence, coupled with her wide appeal as a high-profile advocate for classical music, has made her one of the most influential classical artists of today. With concerto performances at the heart of her career, Nicola is in much demand with major orchestras and conductors across the globe. Recent highlights include the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Berlin Konzerthausorchester, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Toronto Symphony and Melbourne Symphony. Benedetti frequently performs recitals in the world's leading concert halls and festivals with most recent and future highlights including Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rome, Copenhagen and Dortmund.

Aside from her work with the trio, Benedetti has also played chamber music at the Verbier Festival, Lockenhaus, Prussia Cove, Tuscan Sun Festival with Jean Yves Thibaudet, and at Tine Munch Music Festival with Truls Mørk and Leif Ove Andsnes. Winner of Best Female Artist at both 2012 and 2013 Classical BRIT Awards, Nicola records exclusively for Decca (Universal Music). Her most recent recording of Shostakovich and Glazunov Violin Concertos has been met with critical acclaim. Richard Morrison of *The Times* maintains that "This riveting performance of Shostakovich's First Violin Concerto is Nicola Benedetti's best recording to date". Her past seven recordings on Universal/Deutsche Grammophon include a varied catalogue of works from Szymanowski Concerto (London Symphony Orchestra/Daniel Harding) to *Homecoming: A Scottish Fantasy*, which made Nicola the first solo British violinist since the 1990s to enter the Top 20 of the Official U.K. Albums Chart.

**Leonard Elschenbroich**, described by *The New York Times* as "a musician of great technical prowess, intellectual curiosity and expressive depth", has established himself as one of the most charismatic cellists of his generation. His many awards include the Leonard Bernstein Award, Förderpreis Deutschlandfunk, Eugene Istomin Prize, and Borletti Buitoni Trust Award. In 2012 he was accepted onto the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme and was named as Artist-in-Residence of Deutschlandfunk for the 2014-15 season.

Elschenbroich has worked with a number of eminent conductors including Semyon Bychkov, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Mark Elder, Charles Dutoit, Manfred Honeck, Kirill Karabits, Dmitri Kitajenko, Andrew Litton, Yan-Pascal Tortelier, Vasily Sinasiky, and Edo De Waart. As a soloist he has performed with the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, WDR Symphony Orchestra, Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, Dresden Staatskapelle, Swedish Radio Symphony, Basel Symphony Orchestra, Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, Buenos Aires Philharmonic, Nagoya Philharmonic, Japan Philharmonic, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Minnesota Orchestra and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He has made five appearances at the BBC Proms.

A committed supporter of contemporary music, Elschenbroich has commissioned several new works from composers including Mark-Anthony Turnage, Luca Lombardi, Arlene Sierra, and Suzanne Farrin. In April 2018 he gives the world premiere of Mark Simpson's Cello Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, a work that has been especially written for him on a commission from the BBC. He recently gave the world premiere of Brian Elias' Cello Concerto at the BBC Proms and has also championed concertos by Gilbert Amy, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Peteris Vasks, and Magnus Lindberg.

**Alexei Grynyuk** performs throughout the world and in recital at the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatoire, Wigmore Hall, Southbank Centre in London, Salle Cortot and Salle Gaveau in Paris, Musica Sacra Festival in Netherlands, Duszynski Chopin Festival in Poland, Otono International Music Festival in Madrid, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and other prestigious festivals and venues. He has performed concertos with the Mexico State Symphony Orchestra, Krakow Philharmonic, Odessa Philharmonic, Brighton Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra. Forthcoming engagements include a U.S. concerto tour, a Japan recital tour, a tour with National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, and solo recitals at music festivals in Europe.

Grynyuk's recitals have been broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Hessischer Rundfunk, Bayerischer Rundfunk, KRO4 Hilversum, Radio France and Netherlands, and televised appearances on Ukrainian, Chinese and Russian channels. He commemorated Liszt's bi-centenary at a special concert in Kiev in 2012, performing the composer's Sonata in B Minor followed by both piano concertos. Later that year, his performance of the Sonata was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 as a part of 'Live in Concert' series in which he portrayed Chopin and Liszt. In 2013, Grynyuk released an all-Liszt album on the Orchid Classics label.

### **Program Notes:**

#### ***Adagio* from Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 148, D. 897, "Notturmo"**

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Aside from a single movement composed during the summer of 1812 (the so-called Sonatensatz in B-flat Major, D. 28), Franz Schubert wrote nothing for piano trio until just a year before his death, when he set to work on the two trios, D. 898 and D. 929. It was probably while working on the first of those two great works, the B-flat major trio, that Schubert wrote the lone movement in E-flat major that has since earned sobriquet "Notturmo," or Nocturne; in all likelihood, this adagio movement was at one point intended to be the slow movement of D. 898. Dismissed from that role the movement was issued on its own as Opus 148, two decades after Schubert's death.

The rich main theme of the "Notturmo" is possessed of an unusual rhythmic character – it cascades forward through the bar, either with pizzicati from the two string instruments or with the equivalent in rolled piano chords, only to suddenly halt each time; legend has it that this character comes from a folk tune Schubert heard one day while vacationing to the rural east of Salzburg. Exuberance, one might even say ecstasy, is not at all lacking in the faster contrasting sections; for the first of these Schubert moves up one half step to the key of E major, a modulation foreshadowed by a brief but passionate harmonic sequence earlier on in the piece.

--Blair Johnston

## Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

It seems to have taken Brahms over two years to complete the Opus 87 trio, but the result evidently pleased him and he boasted of the work to his publisher, Simrock. Brahms' close friend Clara Schumann pronounced the piece "a splendid work" and "a great musical treat." A generously proportioned work in four movements, it features a second movement *andante* and third movement *scherzo*, an arrangement common in his symphonies but reversed in his other piano trios.

The piece opens thickly, with strange dissonances and a heavy feel, and seems to proceed sluggishly. It is nonetheless dynamically, rhythmically, and chromatically challenging and gives the sense of being a major work, and the first movement ends with symphonic grandeur. The slow movement is similarly heavy of texture, and Brahms makes considerable use of double-stopping as a way of making the two stringed instruments sound like four or even more. The *scherzo*, a four-minute presto, is begun and ended by a fluttering figure which generates momentum and contains a lyrical passage of some tenderness. The *finale* is the most adventuresome of the four movements and contains puzzling transitions and modulations which resolve to produce powerful effects. The final dénouement of the work is positively huge, proving that, in the hands of Brahms, even the piano trio can be a large and imposing work.

--Michael Morrison

## Duetti d'Amore

Mark-Anthony Turnage (b. 1960)

Turnage describes the genesis of the new 15-minute duo [*Duetti d'Amore*]: "I met Nicola and Leonard...last summer. Although we didn't discuss a new piece I knew straight away that I wanted to write a new work for them. So when a few months later they asked me for a short work for violin and cello duet I jumped at it. Meantime, I did my research and read about their relationship. It was a very touching account of them meeting at music school and later falling in love. So I thought, why don't I write a piece that celebrates them as a couple. Hence, five love duets. A few of them are a little fiery and passionate but most of them tender and lyrical."

--Boosey & Hawkes

## Piano Trio in A Minor

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

The list of twentieth century piano trios may be short, but it contains several gems. One of the most precious is the brilliant specimen written by Maurice Ravel in 1914, shortly before he temporarily abandoned life as a musician to serve as a driver for the French army. The Piano Trio in A Minor is a true sonata for three players, rich in the harmonic and textural innovations Ravel had accomplished in the prewar years, but ultimately, and very possibly more significantly (Ravel certainly felt so), composed around balanced, quintessentially Classical patterns.

The trio has four movements: *Modéré*, *Pantoum: Assez vite*, *Passacaille*, and *Final: Animé*. The first movement is a strikingly new variety of sonata-allegro form. The first theme, announced by the piano in pianissimo parallel chords at the very opening of the piece and then taken up by the strings in octaves, is like a shadowy recollection of something out of Basque folk music. Its unusual ostinato rhythm seems to echo in the mind's ear even after Ravel has moved on to the *Plus lent qu'au début* second theme -- a second theme that is very unusually set in the same key as the first. (Ravel makes sense of this atypically tonic-saturated exposition by ending the movement not in the tonic but rather in the relative major, C.) A brief development makes way to a truncated recapitulation which in retrospect seems but a preface to an extended coda in which the ostinato's first idea lingers in the lowest bass of the piano until at last it becomes a faint, colorless drone that dies away into nothingness. This is a remarkable movement that deserves its reputation as a masterpiece.

The second movement is a playful scherzo that will likely sound the most typically French to most listeners. The *Passacaille* is of course a passacaglia, taking a slow, winding eight-measure pattern as the material to be repeated; the repetition is not strict, and soon a second thematic notion worms its way into the movement, helping to build a massive climax.

Ravel's love of shifting meters is put on display in the quick-paced *Final*, with contrasts between 5/4 / 7/4. Again sonata-allegro form shapes the course of the music, seeping through the cracks of what might at first seem to be a more freely composed exhibition of instrumental passion -- and the closing bars, filled with shimmering, never-ending trills from the strings and a wild whoosh or two from the piano, are certainly passionate.

--Blair Johnston

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