

The Clarinet Trio Anthology

Programmes

Daniel Ottensamer | clarinet

Christoph Traxler | piano

Stephan Konz | violoncello

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Programme I

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Arvo Pärt (*1935)

Max Bruch (1838-1920)

Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)

Alexander von Zemlinsky (1872-1942)

Nino Rota (1911-1979)

Piano Trio in B-flat major Op. 11 "Gassenhauer"

Mozart-Adagio for clarinet, violoncello and piano

Three pieces from: Eight pieces for clarinet, violoncello and piano Op. 83

Fragment for clarinet, violoncello and piano

Trio for clarinet, violoncello and piano

Trio for clarinet, violoncello and piano

A journey through the history of the Clarinet Trio

Beginning where it all started with a classic of the Clarinet trio, Beethoven's *Gassenhauer*, meaning popular song, this witty and good-humoured trio refers to a motif from Joseph Weigl's *L'amor marinaro ossia il Corsaro* which was drawing large crowds at the Burgtheater at the time and is inspired by Mozart's "Kegelstatt" trio. In his Mozart-Adagio, Pärt combines his own tintinnabular style with Mozartian elements to create a memory of grief and pain and forms a musical and spiritual encounter between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. In the selection of three pieces from Bruch's Op. 83 we encounter a world of musical fairytales and atmospheric portraits in music, from the highly dramatic third, the fifth with its Romanian folk melody to the sixth with its wonderful nocturne. The 16-bar fragment from Schönberg, discovered by Daniel Ottensamer in the archives of the Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna, gives the audience a delectable taste of a "lightning flash of inspiration". Zemlinsky's trio sits firmly within the Viennese tradition, which he, alongside Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, helped to define. Alongside his strict motive writing he lays the foundations for Modernism in his work. This programme ends with legendary film composer Nino Rota's trio which exemplifies cinema music at its good-humoured best.

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Programme II

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)	Trio Op. 120 for clarinet, violoncello and piano
Magnus Lindberg (*1958)	Clarinet Trio

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	Trio for clarinet, violoncello and piano in E flat major Op. 38

The Clarinet Trio – a wealth of possibilities

This programme opens with a trio which was originally conceived for clarinet, violoncello and piano, demonstrating Fauré's appreciation of the clarinet trio construction, but was later reworked for the more fashionable trio of violin, violoncello and piano following the advice of his publisher. This composition creates a particularly special sonority between the clarinet and violoncello. Lindberg's trio is all about exploring the technical and physical limits of the clarinet whilst examining the tonal possibilities of the clarinet, taking it up to the highest reaches of its range. Beethoven's Op. 38 exudes a love of life and an extrovert joviality, with a wonderful serenade and a Tempo di Menuetto celebrating Viennese burlesque dance music.

Programme III

Robert Kahn (1865-1951)	Serenade for clarinet, violoncello and piano
Isang Yun (1917-1995)	Rencontre
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	Piano Trio in B-flat major Op. 11 "Gassenhauer"

Jörg Widmann (*1973)	Nachtstück - Trio for clarinet or violin, violoncello and piano
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)	Trio in A minor Op. 114 for clarinet, violoncello and piano

London – Vienna – Berlin – Seoul

Professor at Berlin's Royal College of Music and member of the Prussian Academy of the Arts, Kahn placed himself firmly in his tradition of his idol Brahms. His Serenade, at times lively, at times melancholic, shows a skilful interplay of instruments, demonstrating the composers' virtuoso in his own right. In *Rencontre*, Yun creates a world of sound which is entirely his own which one can describe as "Pan-Asiatic", with the use of glissandos on cello, quarter tones, and harmonic and rhythmic uncertainty. This is followed by a classic of the Clarinet trio, Beethoven's *Gassenhauer*, meaning popular song. This witty and good-humoured trio refers to a motif from Joseph Weigl's *L'amor marinaro ossia il Corsaro* which was drawing large crowds at the Burgtheater at the time and is inspired by Mozart's "Kegelstatt" trio. Widman begins playfully with the as yet only tentative interaction of a musical box that ultimately suggest the idea of time slipping away with the twelve chimes heard on the piano. This is a piece that plays uninhibitedly and delightfully with a chamber of horrors made up of fear and terror. Brahms' Clarinet Trio is regarded as the prototype of his late-period style: mellow, detached and tranquil, while never denying an element of bitterness. Brahms, at a time when the clarinet had fallen out of fashion, played an instrumental role in the revival of this instruments' fortunes.

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Programme IV

John Ireland (1879-1962)	Trio for clarinet, violoncello and piano
Robert Muczynski (1929-2010)	Fantasy Trio Op. 26
Michael Glinka (1804-1857)	Trio pathétique Trio for clarinet, violoncello and piano in D minor

Paul Juon (1872-1940)	Trio-Miniaturen
Daniel Schnyder (*1961)	A Friday Night in August

Belcanto and Jazzy

Ireland's trio breathes damp British sea air, with the second movement full of playful moments in the style of an English jig and based on a sea shanty. The third movement tells of disaster as we hear a funeral and the constant toll of bells accompanying the soul of the departed on its journey heavenward. Muczynski's highly evocative *Fantasy Trio* contrasts groovy and rousing sections with contemplative interjections. Glinka's *Trio pathétique*, inspired by the composer's friend Bellini, reveals a musical style developed from the western operatic tradition and the world of Italian music with its arias and cantabile beauties. Legend has it that in writing this piece Glinka was seeking to come to terms with his own physical breakdown. At the work's first performance at La Scala the bassoonist, who at the time played the cello part, is said to have been so moved by what he heard that he exclaimed "Ma questo è disperazione!" ("This is what true despair sounds like!") Juon, likely inspired by the second movement of Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie pathétique*, gives a taste of Russo-Nordic colour. Four movements begin with sentimental stroke of genius in the form of a profoundly sensuous "Rêverie", followed by a "Humoreske". Elegie is a lament in F Minor, Danse phantastique is a kind of Swiss Ländler with eerie interjections which scuttle past us in our mind's eye. This programme ends on a distinctly jazzy note. Schnyder, who has previously produced arrangements of the Rolling Stones and Duke Ellington, transcends all limits that had characterized clarinet trio up till then with "A Friday Night in August".