

Wethersfield Chamber Concerts

10 April 2022 – 4pm

BEN GOLDSCHIEDER

Horn

RICHARD UTTLEY

Piano

PROGRAMME NOTES *by John Woollard*

Beethoven (1770-1827): Horn Sonata in F major, Op. 17

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Poco adagio, quasi Andante
- III. Rondo. Allegro moderato

There is a rather incredible account by Beethoven's friend Ferdinand Ries that the composer began work on this sonata on the day prior to the performance. This work was premiered on April 18, 1800, in Vienna and Beethoven dedicated it to Baroness Josefine von Braun. Its first publication came in Vienna in 1801. Beethoven himself premiered the work with the French Horn virtuoso who had inspired its composition, Giovanni Punto (1746-1803), whose real name was Jan Vaclav Stich. Ries' story might be believable to those who view Beethoven's genius as boundless, but his account would also have to concede superhuman skill to Punto, who, talented though he certainly was, would either have to have learned the piece

in a matter of hours, or possess sight-reading ability of phenomenal caliber. Punto earned the reputation as the greatest horn player of his day, not, one can safely surmise, by recklessly testing his skills.

As suggested, this work is light and fairly uncomplicated, at least in its expressive language and generally cheery moods. The horn and piano parts are anything but easy: it was Beethoven's aim to write a showpiece for his favorite horn player and himself. The first movement is marked Allegro moderato and features attractive, if not particularly memorable music. The ensuing Poco Adagio -- quasi andante presents a ponderous mood and skillful writing for both instruments. The Rondo finale may be the best movement of the three: certainly the horn part is colorful and ebullient, and the piano accompaniment is deftly imagined.

Huw Watkins (1976): Lament (2020)

"When Ben Goldscheider asked me to write a new piece for a CD celebrating the legacy of Dennis Brain, I immediately thought of Poulenc's *Elégie* (written in memory of Brain) and its juxtaposition of violent anger and lyrical beauty, and felt I wanted to do something similar. *Lament* begins quietly, with long, expressive horn lines emerging from a web of piano harmony. At its climax, the horn writing becomes anguished, accompanied by increasingly dissonant piano chords, before a muted return to the opening music, the harmony less consoling now." – *Huw Watkins*

Ravel (1875-1937): Jeux d'eau

Piano solo. *Jeux d'eau* is a piece for solo piano written in 1901. The title is often translated as "Fountains" or literally "Water Games". At the time of writing *Jeux d'eau*, Ravel was a student of Gabriel Fauré, to whom the piece is dedicated. (*Wikipedia*)

Schumann (1810-1856): Adagio and Allegro in A flat, Op.70

1849 was Schumann's most productive year in terms of number of compositions, but it was also extremely rich in terms of the variety of works, which included choral pieces, songs, piano pieces, works for soloist(s) and orchestra, and several chamber pieces for solo instrument and piano. In a few of these works he made use of the relatively new valve horn, which had begun to show up in orchestras in the 1830s. One of Schumann's goals at the time was to create significant music that amateurs could use to further their skills on their instruments with what was called *Hausmusik*: meaningful, artistic music that they could play

in private, at home. The Adagio & Allegro for horn and piano, Op. 70, is one of these works, but it actually takes an extremely skilled amateur to meet the technical demands of the piece. Schumann also published versions of the piece with the violin or cello taking the solo part. The success of the horn version of Adagio & Allegro was a major factor in Schumann's decision to write the *Konzertstück* for four horns and orchestra, Op. 86, later that same year.

~~~~~ *Interval* ~~~~~

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## Alan Bush (1900-1995): Autumn Poem for horn and piano

This piece was written in 1954 as a tribute to the famous young concert-pianist, Noel Mewton-Wood. *Scott Goddard*, the music critic, wrote about it as follows: "Three times the horn, starting alone before the soft accompanying chord is heard, begins to rhapsodise over a melody which each time opens with a rising fifth. Each time the outline of this horn music is taken higher and ends lower; and with each announcement there is an increase in tone. Between these solo passages the pianoforte insinuates spreading contours. Then, as the pace slightly quickens, the main part of the poem is developed in the manner of an elaboration of the music each instrument has displayed in the introductory bars. There is one short moment of climax and then a slow release of tension as the music fades".

## Poulenc (1899-1963): Élégie for horn and piano, Op. 168

A short, one-movement work by the French composer Francis Poulenc, written in memory of the horn player Dennis Brain, who died in 1957. It was first performed in January 1958. Poulenc had a profound admiration for the British horn player Dennis Brain. When the latter died in a car crash in 1957, aged 36, Poulenc composed the *Élégie* as a tribute. The *Élégie* was premiered by the BBC in a broadcast on 17 February 1958, played by Brain's former Philharmonia colleague Neill Sanders, with the composer at the piano.

## Charles Trenet (1913-2001): Coin de rue, En Avril, a Paris (arr. Alexis Weissenberg)

Piano solo. Weissenberg was a world famous concert pianist and a great favourite of Herbert von Karajan. He arranged six Charles Trenet songs. The arrangements include 6 songs, of which we will hear two: *Coin de rue – Vous oubliez votre cheval – En avril, à Paris – Boum! – Vous qui passez sans me voir – Ménilmontant.*

## Jane Vignery (1913-1974): Sonata for horn and piano, Op.7

Jeanne Emilie Virginie Vignery was a Belgian composer, teacher, and violinist who published her compositions under the name "Jane Vignery". She is best remembered today for this work which was nominated for the Prix de Rome in 1941.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

At the age of 18 **Ben Goldscheider** was a Concerto Finalist in the BBC Young Musician Competition performing with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican. Highlights since then include his debut at the BBC Proms in 2018, appearances as soloist with the Lucerne Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Aurora Orchestra, English Chamber, City of London Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, the Prague Philharmonia and Sinfonie Orchester Berlin at the Berlin Philharmonie. In 2018 his debut album was released to critical acclaim, and he was selected as a BBC Music Magazine Rising Star and Gramophone Magazine One to Watch. He was selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2019.

A committed chamber musician, Ben has collaborated with Julian Prégardien at Wigmore Hall, Sergei Babayan at the Verbier Festival, Daniel Barenboim and Martha Argerich at Salzburg Festival (Haus Für Mozart) and in Buenos Aires, Matthias Pintscher at the Pierre Boulez-Saal and with Elena Bashkurova and Karl-Heinz Steffens at the Intonations Festival in Berlin. Nominated by the Barbican as an ECHO Rising Star, during the 2021/22 season Ben gives recitals at major concert halls including the Concertgebouw, Musikverein, Elbphilharmonie and Koln Philharmonie, including an especially commissioned new work by Mark Simpson. In 2022 he returns to the Pierre Boulez Saal to give a solo recital and to Wigmore Hall with Mahan Esfahani, Nicholas Daniel and Adam Walker.

Highlights over the last year have included the release by Three Worlds Records of *Legacy: A Tribute to Dennis Brain*, and a solo concerto recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra to be released this autumn. He returned to Wigmore Hall and made his debut at the Aldeburgh Festival. Ben is a member of the Pierre Boulez Ensemble and principal horn of the West- East Divan Orchestra. Born in London, in 2020 Ben completed his studies with honours at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Berlin with Radek Baborák.

British pianist **Richard Uttley** studied at Cambridge University, graduating from Clare College with a Double First in Music, and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Martin Roscoe. Noted for the integrity of his musicianship as soloist, chamber musician and recording artist in a wide range of repertoire, Richard has been recognised for his 'musical intelligence and pristine facility' (International Record Review), 'amazing decisiveness', and 'tumultuous performance' (Daily Telegraph).

His playing has frequently been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and has featured on BBC Two, BBC Four, BBC World Service, Classic FM and Sky Arts. He won the British Contemporary Piano Competition in 2006 and was a prize winner at the Young Classical Artists Trust International Auditions in 2011.

Richard has released several solo recordings to critical acclaim and appeared at venues and festivals including Auditorium du Louvre, Banff Centre, Bath Festival, Bridgewater Hall, Cadogan Hall, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Klangspuren Festival, Konzerthaus Berlin, Modulus Festival (Vancouver), Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Wigmore Hall, and has toured in China and Columbia. Highlights this season include appearances at Kings Place and Wigmore Hall. In 2019 Richard won the Yvar Mikhashoff pianist/composer commissioning prize with composer Kate Whitley.

**We hope that you will join us for our concerts on 24 April, 8 May & 5 June 2022**