

Piano and Cello recital

Leo Nicholson and Samara Ginsberg

15 July 2021, 18.30

Parish Church of SS Peter and Paul, Chingford, E4 7EN

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) ***Sonata for cello and piano***

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) ***Cello Sonata no. 3 (A major) Op 69***

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) ***Introduction and Polonaise Brillante***

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Sonata for Cello and Piano (L144)

- i) Prologue
- ii) Serenade
- iii) Finale

Considered to be the first of the French 'Impressionists', Achille Claude Debussy was born near Paris at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Seine-et-Oise on 22 August 1862, the eldest of five siblings, to a family of modest means.

He showed sufficient musical talent (albeit from a relatively uncultured family) to gain admission to the Paris Conservatoire at just ten years of age.

He initially studied piano. By his later years he had become critical of German musical style and in particular, that of Richard Wagner. In the wake of his only operatic success, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1894) and while focusing on chamber music composition, he had planned a series of six sonatas for varying combinations of instruments. This, the first of the three completed before his death, dates from 1915.

The series was interrupted by Debussy's failing health (he became one of the first patients to endure a colostomy operation). Debussy died at home in Paris on 25 March 1918 during a period of continued German Artillery bombardment.

He was buried at the Passy cemetery which is to the rear of The Trocadero. His wife and daughter were later buried with him.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Cello Sonata No. 3 in A (Opus 69)

- i) Allegro ma non troppo.
- ii) Allegro molto.
- iii) Adagio cantabile – Allegro vivace.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn and baptised on 17 December 1770. This sonata was composed in Vienna during Beethoven's productive middle period. It is the third of Beethoven's five cello sonatas and was completed in 1808. First performed on 5 March 1809 by the Austrian cellist Nikolaus Krafft accompanied by one of Beethoven's students, Dorothea von Ertmann, the work was dedicated to Beethoven's friend and patron, Freiherr Ignaz von Gleichenstein.

The years between 1807 and 1809 are characterised by Beethoven having to endure increasing deafness and interestingly, the cellist Steven Isserlis, in a Guardian article retrieved on 25th August 2015, has described the sonata as the 'first in history to accord equal importance to both instruments'. Originally for clavicembalo and cello, nowadays piano and cello are commonly used.

The first sketches of the sonata appeared alongside both the fifth and sixth symphonies.

FREDERIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

Introduction & Polonaise Brillante in C (Opus 3)

Child prodigy Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin was born on 1 March 1810 at Żelazowa Wola in the Duchy of Warsaw, Poland.

Having completed his musical education, he left his native land and went to France, just managing to avoid a November 1830 uprising before settling in Paris and adopting the Francophone version of his forename.

He gained a reputation as a virtuoso pianist, formed a friendship with Hungarian composer Franz Liszt and numbered Robert Schumann among his admirers.

Most of Chopin's compositions are for piano, mainly solo piano but also two piano concerti and a few chamber compositions. During the last 18 years of his life, he gave around only 30 public performances. He derived his income from giving piano lessons to wealthy Parisienne and European families, from touring and from selling his compositions.

The *Introduction & Polonaise Brillante* straddles Chopin's emigration years; the *Polonaise Brillante* dates from 1829 while the *Introduction* followed in 1830. Publication followed in 1831 and the work was dedicated to the Austrian cellist Josef Merk.

Chopin died in Paris on 17 October 1849 after enduring over a decade of deteriorating health. His funeral service at La Madeleine was followed by burial at the Père Lachaise cemetery.

Samara Ginsberg began cello lessons at her local secondary school aged 13, gaining a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama five years later where she studied with Stefan Popov.

Now established in a varied freelance career, Samara works with several chamber ensembles, dividing her time between work in the UK and international touring. She works regularly with Lincoln Center Stage, based in New York and touring internationally. Back in London, she is the founder, arranger and artistic director of the Jukebox String Quartet, an ensemble specialising in virtuoso rock covers. In addition to her work in chamber music she is a regular freelancer with many of the UK's top orchestras, and is in increasing demand as a session musician and string arranger. She also runs a YouTube channel and is a regular contributor to Classical Music and The Strad magazines.

Samara lives in south-east London with her partner, pianist Leo Nicholson, and their incredibly spoiled Persian cat. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, sleeping, and popping bubble wrap.

Leo Nicholson specialises in chamber music and song accompaniment. In 2016 he received the Accompanist Prize at the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards, accompanying his cousin, bass-baritone Sam Carl. Leo has a long-standing duo with flautist Rosanna Ter-Berg, and their critically acclaimed Purcell Room début (under the auspices of the Park Lane Group) in January 2012 led to performances at the Wigmore Hall and the Bridgewater Hall, and an album, *Epigraphes*, released 2015.

He studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, where he continues to work as a staff accompanist. Leo is a regular at various British music societies, and also works as an orchestral pianist, and in theatre, opera and six-piano group Piano Circus.

Please note there will be no interval and no refreshments. Please leave the church promptly after the recital. Please wear your mask throughout the performance.