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**CONCERTS**

*Chamber music in the Cathedral*

**2019-20**  
**Jubilee Season**



# The Virtuoso Violin

**Emmanuel Bach – Violin**  
**Jenny Stern – Piano**

**Monday 10 February 2020, 7.30pm**  
**Ripon Cathedral**

**Programme**

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## Welcome

Music is a gift – the ability to play it, to appreciate it and to share it. In 2019, the World Health Organisation published an international review which showed that it is a gift which should be valued by all people, communities, governments and those charged with delivering health care. Recent research has even shown that receptive engagement with cultural activities, including going to museums, art galleries, concerts or the theatre, can increase longevity and quality of life. There could be even greater health benefits from active participation in painting, singing and dancing. There is also increasing recognition that the arts can speak to those with dementia and other long-term medical conditions.

The reasons for the beneficial effect of the arts are not known. It may even be that those who choose to engage with cultural activities in later years may be those who have participated in childhood. This raises another very important debate: how we reverse the loss of musical education in schools and give every child access to the magic of music and the opportunity to participate in arts activities. Many arts organisations, including Opera North, are running spectacularly successful outreach musical projects to deprived schools. I hope that this evening's concert and others that have preceded it and will succeed it enhance your wellbeing.

**Roger Higson, Chairman**

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And any others who have donated to the Society since this programme went to press.

Monday 10 February 2020 | Ripon Cathedral

# The Virtuoso Violin

## Emmanuel Bach – Violin Jenny Stern – Piano

### Programme

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–1791)      Sonata in B flat K.454  
*Largo-Allegro • Andante • Allegretto*

**Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897)      Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78  
*Vivace ma non troppo • Adagio – Più andante – Adagio come prima • Allegro molto moderato – Più moderato*

- interval -

**Benjamin Britten** (1913–1976)      Three Pieces from Op. 6  
*March • Lullaby • Waltz*

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**      Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42  
(1840–1893)  
*Méditation • Scherzo • Mélodie (chant sans paroles)*

**Henryk Wieniawski** (1835–1880)      Polonaise No. 2 in A, Op. 21

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## About the music

**Mozart's Sonata in B flat major, K.454** (1784) is in a class all by itself among his violin sonatas. It owes its life to the Viennese debut of 22-year old Mantuan violinist Regina Strinasacchi, by all accounts an exceptionally flamboyant player, trained as an opera singer as well as a violinist. Mozart had been asked to compose a new sonata for her Viennese concert, which took place on April 29, 1784. Having left the composition till the last minute, as he often did, Mozart once again had no time to write out the piano part. The story goes that, after giving Strinasacchi her music, he had an empty sheet on the piano, as he played a part that only existed in his head. When he later wrote it down, he used ink of a different colour and had a hard time squeezing in all the semiquavers below the notes of the violin. According to Mozart's widow, even the Emperor Joseph II, looking through his opera glasses, noticed that Mozart had no music in front of him.

The introduction lends an imposing grandeur to the first movement as a whole, and enables the *allegro* to be set in motion with a quiet, yet urgent main theme. Despite the fact that the *allegro* itself contains a wealth of thematic ideas, Mozart chooses to base its central development section on new material, taking as his starting-point the tiny staccato cadence-figure that rounds off the exposition. The staccato idea makes a return in the coda, before a series of brilliant piano arpeggios brings the piece to a close.

Mindful of Regina Strinasacchi's fondness for slow, *cantabile* playing, Mozart originally designated the sonata's middle movement as an *adagio*, but he subsequently altered the marking to *andante*. It is among his most

profound slow movements, notable above all, perhaps, for the harmonic daring of the closing stage of its development section, where the music moves within the space of a half-dozen bars from B flat minor (the dark key in which the development begins) to a very remote B minor, and then threatens – but neatly sidesteps – an even more elliptical modulation into C minor. Mozart was to carry harmonic experimentation of a similar kind to a further extreme in the slow movement of the E flat sonata, K481.

The final *rondo* is based on a gavotte-like theme with a repeated-note upbeat. The tempo is *allegretto*, rather than *allegro*, but Mozart nevertheless provides the sonata with a brilliant conclusion through the simple expedient of writing nothing quicker than quaver triplets until the final moments, where the pianist is suddenly confronted with a virtuoso flourish of semiquavers.

**Brahms's Violin Sonata in G major Op. 78** is permeated by his earlier song *Regenlied*, from his '8 Songs Op. 59'. Its opening rhythm and various constructional "tags" come from that song and the last movement is closely founded on it. The sonata was written for violinist Joseph Joachim in 1878-9 as an immediate follow-up to the violin concerto.

The opening movement's main subject, unfolding quietly against sustained chords on the piano, arises out of the repeated-note rhythm that sets the song in motion. The subject has a smooth and flowing pendant in constant quaver motion which suggests that Brahms may have had at the back of his mind the mellifluous sound of Beethoven's last violin sonata, Op. 96, in the same key of G major. The sweeping second subject is more forceful and animated, while a third

idea beginning in the nature of a chorale becomes increasingly nervous as it proceeds. As he so often does, Brahms begins the development section with a return to the first subject in the home key, as though a varied repeat were about to commence, with the melody now given out by the piano to the background of pizzicato violin chords. But the flowing quavers soon lead the music in a new direction, and an elaborate development, almost entirely based around the main subject, gets underway. The recapitulation ends quietly and calmly, as though the music were about to die away into the distance; but a coda beginning in a mysterious *pianissimo* gradually gains in intensity, allowing the piece to come to a forceful conclusion.

The slow movement's almost hymn-like theme is given out, sonorously harmonised, by the piano alone. With the entrance of the violin the music delves into darker realms that are explored at greater length in the middle section, which, despite its more flowing tempo, has the aspect of a funeral march whose repeated-note rhythm harks back to the beginning of the first movement. The reprise of the opening section is elaborately varied, with the melody now given out in double-stops by the violin, and the piano providing an intricate accompaniment. A coda echoes the middle section's repeated-note rhythm while at the same time maintaining the music's slow tempo.

In the finale, Brahms quotes the melancholy *Regenlied* extensively, recalling not only the song's melody but also its accompaniment in imitation of the patter of raindrops. At the centre of the piece stands an episode that harks back to the theme of the slow movement, thereby drawing the sonata's

threads still closer together. The same theme returns towards the end, enabling the music to dissolve from minor to major, and to die away peacefully.

**Britten's Suite Op. 6 for Violin and Piano** was composed during 1934-35, and the first performance of the complete work was given in March 1936 as part of a BBC broadcast. We shall hear three pieces from the original Suite, as chosen by the composer in 1977: *March*, *Lullaby* and *Waltz*. The suite is one of Britten's more continental early works, and fluctuates between abrasive statements and charming humour. From the very first bars, Mediterranean and Viennese flavours can be heard. These make sense as Britten began writing the piece in Vienna, and John Bridcut, in his comprehensive biography of the composer, refers to his playing arrangements of Johann Strauss waltzes for violin and piano in 1935. Britten writes in a more obvious, virtuosic way, with bold phrasing – his melodies are very sure of themselves. There is undiluted humour, too, in the wonderful *waltz* finale, a flamboyant concert piece *par excellence*. This is the ideal riposte to the thoughtful and beautiful *Lullaby*, where time stops still for contemplation. It is easy to see why Anton Webern would have warmed to the *March*, with its sonorities along a similar line to Schoenberg's *Phantasy* for violin and piano.

*Souvenir d'un lieu cher* (Memory of a dear place) Op. 42, for violin and piano, was written by **Tchaikovsky** between March and May 1878. It consists of three movements. The *Méditation* was written in Clarens, Switzerland, where Tchaikovsky also wrote his Violin Concerto. It was originally intended as the slow movement of the concerto, but was rejected as too

slight for a concerto. Back in Russia, he started on a work in three parts for violin and piano, incorporating the discarded *Méditation*, as its first movement. The two additional movements, *Scherzo* and *Mélie*, which completed the *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, were written at the house of Nadezhda von Meck at Brailovo in the Ukraine. Tchaikovsky had the original manuscript sent as a token of gratitude to von Meck, but he always intended to publish the work, so he asked her to arrange for a copy to be made which was sent to the publisher, P. Jurgenson. Tchaikovsky dedicated the work to "B\*\*\*\*\*", which is understood to refer to Brailovo itself. It was published in May 1879, as Op. 42.

**Henryk Wieniawski** completed his *Polonaise brillante* in A, Op. 21, in 1870

and performed it (with orchestra) in St Petersburg on 17 March. The piano and orchestral versions differ from each other and exist side by side. Both came out simultaneously, published by the Schott publishers in Mainz, bearing the same publishers' plate number, though the orchestral version appeared only in the form of parts, which was a common practice in those days. The piece was most probably published not earlier than in 1875. It was immediately a hit with audiences and critics alike. As a composition it reflects its composer's astounding technique, always placed at the disposal of the musical content. The *Polonaise* is typical for Wieniawski's violin-playing technique, for example long *staccato* fragments played with one bow. It is one of the composer's most important works.



**Sunday Series**  
Chamber music and coffee

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**Ashwell Trio**  
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**Haydn**  
*Trio in C Major, Hob.XV:27*

**Huw Watkins**  
*Trio for Horn, Violin and Piano*

**W. A. Mozart**  
*Piano Trio in G Major, K564*

**Brahms**  
*Horn Trio in E-flat Major, Op.40 Major, K564*



**Esmé Quartet**  
Old Swan Hotel | Sunday 15 March | 11am

**Ligeti**  
*String Quartet No. 1, Métamorphoses Nocturnes*

**Mendelssohn**  
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## About the musicians

Violinist **Emmanuel Bach** won the Royal Over-Seas League String Competition 2018 and is gaining increasing recognition as a soloist and chamber musician. He has performed at venues such as the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, St James's Piccadilly, St George's Bristol and other halls. Among concertos he has performed are Bruch No. 1 and *Scottish Fantasy*, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Paganini No. 1, Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Sibelius and Mozart. Notable performances include a live-streamed masterclass on the Brahms Concerto conducted by Maxim Vengerov, and playing as co-soloist with Anne-Sophie Mutter in Bach's Double Concerto.

He was awarded an English-Speaking Union Scholarship and won a Fellowship to attend the Yale Summer School of Chamber Music, where he worked with the Emerson, Artis and Brentano Quartets, Peter Frankl and Boris Berman. He has coached young musicians at Pro Corda Chamber Music Academy, through a Leverhulme Fellowship. He also plays with the Bach Quartet, whose performances include playing on BBC Radio 3 Music Day.

He has received masterclasses with musicians including Miriam Fried, Dong-Suk Kang, Shlomo Mintz and Hugh Maguire, and attended courses including Académie de Musique Riviera with Pierre Amoyal.

Emmanuel read Music at Magdalen College, Oxford, gaining a double First. He studied with Natasha Boyarsky and took a Masters at the Royal College of Music. He recently completed an Artist Diploma at the RCM, studying with Radu Blidar. He has played on orchestral schemes with the BBC and London Symphony Orchestras.

He is grateful for support from the RCM, HR Taylor Trust, Drapers' Company, Countess of Munster Musical Trust, English-Speaking Union, Tompkins Tate Trust and Talent Unlimited.

[www.emmanuelbachviolinist.com](http://www.emmanuelbachviolinist.com)

South African-born pianist **Jenny Stern** has recorded for radio and television in Europe and her home country. She made her debut playing Mozart's Piano Concerto K.450, with the conductor Alberto Bolet. Following studies at the Royal College of Music with Lamar Crowson, she completed a Masters in South Africa, winning the prestigious Emma Smith Overseas Scholarship for further study.

She has performed extensively in the UK and abroad as a chamber musician, collaborating with principal players from orchestras including the English Chamber Orchestra and Royal Opera House Orchestra. In South Africa, her major performances include acclaimed live broadcasts of Rachmaninov's First Piano Concerto and the Grieg Piano Concerto, and concertos with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, Natal Philharmonic and Bloemfontein Symphony Orchestra.

Jenny has been invited to give masterclasses, at venues including Dartington Summer School of Music and Euro Music Academy in Vienna. She has given over 500 concerts and workshops at universities and schools. She currently teaches at Eton College and the Royal College of Music, Junior Department. Jenny performs regularly with violinist Emmanuel Bach. Their CD 'Musical Mosaics' was released by Willowhayne Records in 2018.

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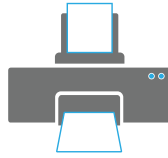
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