

'Two Romantics'

Brahms

Liebeslieder Walzer

Weltliche a cappella Gesänge

Schubert

Fantasia in F minor

Gott ist mein Hirt



Joyful Company of Singers

Peter Broadbent - Conductor

Nigel Clayton & Francesca Leonardi - Piano

Thursday 20 June

St James's Church, Sussex Gardens, Paddington



JOYFUL COMPANY OF SINGERS

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The Friends of JCS play a crucial part in enabling the choir to continue performing our wide and varied repertoire and to maintain our commitment to contemporary music.

Friends receive a complimentary ticket to one concert nominated by JCS each season, which includes a drinks reception to which each Friend and their guests are invited. Friends are listed in the programmes for our own-promotion concerts, unless wishing to remain anonymous.

When we formed as a young choir in 1989, we set out to sing challenging music to the highest standards. Now, as an experienced choir, we recognise the value and energy that young talent continues to bring to music-making, and so we have set up a fund with two aims:

- to commission new music from young composers for performance by JCS and other choirs;
- to provide a bursary to engage young choral conductors and singers to work with JCS.

If you would like to support our performances and the rising generation of excellence in choral music, please consider becoming a Friend of JCS or making a separate donation to the JCS.

To know more, either talk to one of the JCS singers this evening, or use the contact form on www.jcos.co.uk or send an email to friends@jcos.co.uk.

The JCS is indebted to our current Friends:

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PROGRAMME

Weltliche a capella Gesänge (Op.104)

Johannes BRAHMS

1. *Nachtwache I*; 2. *Nachtwache II*; 3. *Letztes Glück*; 4. *Verlorene Jugend*; 5. *Im Herbst*

Fanatasie in F minor (Op 103 D940) for Piano 4 hands

Franz SCHUBERT

Nigel Clayton & Francesca Leonardi

INTERVAL

Psalm 23 Gott ist mein Hirt (Op 132 D706) for SSAA and Piano

Franz SCHUBERT

Liebeslieder Walzer (Op.52)

Johannes BRAHMS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>Rede, Mädchen, allzu liebes</i> | 1 Tell me, maiden |
| 2 <i>Am Gesteine rauscht die flut</i> | 2 Beating waves on rockbound shore |
| 3 <i>O die Frauen *</i> | 3 O ye maidens |
| 4 <i>Wie des Abends schöne Röte **</i> | 4 Would that I a maiden lonely |
| 5 <i>Die grüne Hopfenranke</i> | 5 The young vine's twining tendrils |
| 6 <i>Ein kleiner, hübscher Vogel</i> | 6 A tiny bird that flew so high |
| 7 <i>Wohl schön bewandt war es †</i> | 7 How fair the May |
| 8 <i>Wenn so lind den Auge mir</i> | 8 When thine eyes with love alight |
| 9 <i>Am Donaustrande</i> | 9 By Danube's water |
| 10 <i>O wie sanft die Quelle</i> | 10 O how soft the streamlet flows |
| 11 <i>Nein, es ist nicht auszulmmen</i> | 11 No! I cannot bear the gossips |
| 12 <i>Schlosser auf, und mache Schlösser</i> | 12 Locksmith, come and make me padlocks |
| 13 <i>Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft</i> | 13 O'er the sea the swallows fly |
| 14 <i>Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar</i> | 14 See how clear the moonbeams play |
| 15 <i>Nachtigall, sie singt so schön</i> | 15 Nightingale, you sing so sweetly |
| 16 <i>Ein dinkeler Schacht ist Liebe</i> | 16 O love is a deep dark well |
| 17 <i>Nicht wandle, mein Licht §</i> | 17 Do not wander out there in the fields, my love |
| 18 <i>Es bebet das Gesträuche</i> | 18 The tree's high branch is trembling |

**Jamie Powe (Tenor) & Andy Mackinder (Baritone)*

***Nicola Roberts (Soprano) & Bernice Arthur (Alto)*

†*Alexandra Loewe (Mezzo Soprano)*

§*Jamie Powe (Tenor)*

PROGRAMME NOTES

***Weltliche a capella Gesänge (Op.104)* Johannes Brahms**

Brahms' Op. 104, is a song cycle of five part songs for mixed choir composed in 1888 when he was a 55-year-old bachelor. The five songs reflect an intensely nostalgic and even tragic mood. Brahms has chosen texts which centre on lost youth, summer turning into fall and, ultimately, man's mortality.

1. *Nachtwache I* (Night Watch I), text by Friedrich Rückert, B minor, SAATBB

The musical writing reflects the frail beatings of a heart awakened by the breath of love the text speaks about. The dynamics alter swiftly from the soft to the very strong, sounding like the actual breathing of the narrator who seeks an answer to his love.

2. *Nachtwache II* (Night watch II), text by Rückert, E♭major, SAATBB

All at once, the mood is set by a more confident and reassuring tone in the music as well as in the text. The repeated calls of "*Ruhn sie?*" in all six voices is an imitation of the horns of the night watchmen, telling their listeners to confidently put out their lamps and let themselves be enveloped by the peaceful night. This is the shortest of the five songs, with just 21 bars.

3. *Letztes Glück* (Last happiness), text by Max Kalbeck, F minor, SAATBB

Winter is coming and dead leaves from the trees are falling on each other—a picture wonderfully recreated in the music with its swiftly changing chords, sounding like breaths of an autumn wind. These are followed by long and sad melodies in all parts. The piece temporarily switches to the major mode as the narrator experiences a feeling of hope that spring will swiftly come again, but this is quickly crushed by the image of the "late wild rose".

4. *Verlorene Jugend* (Lost youth, Bohemian poem), D minor, SATBB

This is the most lively and boisterous song in the series, perhaps due to the folkloristic character of the text. It is clearly divided into two verses, both of which can be divided into a fast and slow part. Once more, the ageing of man is contrasted with nature, particularly in the end, when we realise that while a stone thrown into a stream always resurfaces (portrayed by a fast canon between the baritone and the soprano), youth can never be recovered.

5. *Im Herbst* (In Autumn), text by Klaus Groth, C minor, SATB

This sombre song is written for four parts and divided into three verses. Its simple structure is deceptive, for this is where the mixed emotions of the previous songs come together to form an impressive climax to this work. The vocal parts are repeatedly intertwined and small seconds apart from each other, creating an almost disturbing image of the inevitability of man's own autumn which heralds death. Suddenly, in the third verse, the voices rise and the dynamic level of the piece (which is very quiet throughout) grows to an ultimate high as a tear glitters in the eyes of a man who knows his life will soon be over—but the tear is one of bliss, and the work ends in a quiet and meditative major chord.

Fantasie in f minor (Op.103 D940) Franz Schubert

Between January and April 1828, a few months before his death, Schubert wrote this last fantasy that seems to answer his first composition which bears the same title. But this time we are in the presence of a kind of testament. It is a farewell to numerous characters and to all the things Schubert loved. With his incredible modesty he turned it into a fantasy which he dedicated to Karoline Esterhazy. In this dedication can be seen the reason behind his return to the piano for four hands; Schubert played countless hours with her when he was contracted as her private piano teacher some years before. Schubert refined the innovative design of his earlier *Fantasie in C (D. 760)*, the so-called "Wanderer" fantasy, a virtuoso piano showpiece dating from 1822. Before Schubert, 'Fantasie' usually implied improvisatory material and structural freedom, but the F minor *Fantasie* is a tightly constructed work in which four movements are fused into one, to be played without pause.

To open the duet, he abandoned the explosive bravura of the "Wanderer" in favor of an elegiac theme that is unforgettable after first encounter. The very beginning, *Allegretto molto moderato*, is simply haunting with its murmuring accompaniment, and the higher voice laying out the wistful first theme. As with the 'Wanderer' *Fantasie*, it may be considered a sonata form, with the *Largo* and *Scherzo* serving as development. This progression of movements proves Schubert a master of transition, as each seems to flow inevitably from what precedes. At the same time all sections of the piece are subtly related through the recurring appearance of dotted rhythms, the prevalence of the rising interval of the fourth, the characteristic Schubertian shifts between major and minor, and the use of ornamental trills.

The larger coherence of Schubert's structure is unmistakable when the haunting opening reappears to initiate the fourth section, acting as a recapitulation and leading to a fugue. The theme appears once more, in the coda, a final gesture of intimacy and longing before the heartwrenching dissonances of the closing measures. The four parts of this fantasy are less rigorous in their construction than the preceding fantasies, D. 894 and D. 934, but the work is surrounded with something like the echo of an inner richness to which one cannot remain indifferent. It is the breath of a desperate hope. Schubert played the piece himself with his good friend Franz Lachner on May 9, 1828.

David Brodbeck

Psalm 23 Gott ist mein Hirt (Op.132 D706) Franz Schubert

The opus number of this piece is misleading because it is one of the many published posthumously. It was written for the pupils of Anna Frölich who was a singing teacher in Vienna in 1820 who in 1827 cajoled the composer into writing the *Grillparzer Ständchen* for Mezzo Sopranon and Womens' Chorus in 1827. Most of Schubert's choral wros were for male voices, but Psalm 23 became a popular success from its first performance in 1821. The calm triplets in the piano accompaniment establish an atmosphere of calm spirituality, underlined by the key of A♭major. The lyricism combined with Schubert's ingenious harmonic imagination and sensitive word painting explain the work's continued success.

***Liebeslieder Walzer* (Op.52) Johannes Brahms**

Brahms's *Liebeslieder Walzer*, Op 52, play an integral role in a kind of "Schubert project" that occupied the composer during his first decade in Vienna. Brahms edited a number of Schubert's unpublished compositions at this time, including one book of 12 *Ländler* (D. 790) in 1864 and a second of 20 *Ländler* in May 1869 (D. 366 and 814). To each he quickly responded with a cycle of his own making – the Op. 39 Waltzes in January 1865 and the Op. 52 *Liebeslieder* (marked, tellingly, "Im *Ländler*-Tempo") in August 1869.

For all their Schubertian background, however, the vocal waltzes reflect a more contemporary source of influence as well. From time to time Brahms drew inspiration from the Waltz King himself, Johann Strauss Jr. Thus No.9 *Am Donaustrande, da steht ein Haus* seems indebted to the beloved "Blue Danube" Waltz, not only for its essential imagery, but perhaps for certain musical details as well. Brahms conceived of the *Liebeslieder* as pieces of genuine *Hausmusik* – he described them as such when sending the manuscript of the first book to his publisher Simrock in the summer of 1869.

The texts of the *Liebeslieder* are East European folk poems in translations by Georg Friedrich Daumer. As we might expect, Brahms's settings are hardly the "trifles" described by their self-effacing composer in a note to his publisher. True, the first piece *Rede, Mädchen* begins simply, with "oom-pah-pah" vamping. But the music rapidly becomes more sophisticated, as Brahms eschews literal repetition – a hallmark of popular Music – in favour of continual variation. Most striking, perhaps, is the return of the original tune in free inversion twice later in the piece, with corresponding changes in the counterpoint of the accompaniment. The first waltz thus contains within itself a striking contrast between popular and art music, and throughout the rest of the work these opposing forces are played out with a sure hand.

The *Liebeslieder Walzer*, in short, are quintessential Brahms. Though their charm may derive in part from the contrast in which they stand to his work as a whole, their eternal freshness stems from technique refined in larger forms. As Ernest Newman, the critic and Wagner biographer put it, "had Brahms never been stretched to the tension of such works as the C-minor Symphony and the Requiem, he could never have relaxed to the charm of the waltzes." This image tells a familiar story – of an uncompromising composer who brought the highest artistic sensibilities to every expression of his muse.

Peter Broadbent, the founder conductor of the Joyful Company of Singers, is one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He has conducted the London Mozart Players, Divertimenti Chamber Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Southern Sinfonia, the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Apollo Voices and the BBC Singers, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

Guest engagements outside the UK include concerts with the Debrecen Philharmonic Orchestra and Kodály Chorus in Debrecen (Hungary), a broadcast concert with the National Chamber Choir in Dublin and a European tour with the World Youth Choir. Next year he will make his Bulgarian debut conducting the Sofia Philharmonic Choir.



Broadbent gives workshops and master classes throughout Europe and was the first Director of Training for the Association of British Choral Directors. In 2007 he was presented with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture for his services to Anglo-Hungarian musical relations, and in 2017 was presented with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit.



Francesca Leonardi

Performing in public from a young age, pianist Francesca Leonardi regularly appears in prestigious venues and festivals around the world. In 2015 she was a part of the Remembrance Day performance in the Santa Cecilia Hall of the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, broadcast worldwide by RAI. Other distinguished performances include Sala Verdi and Teatro dal Verme in Milan, Royal Albert Hall in London, "Les Flâneries Musicales" Festival in Reims, "Accademia Chigiana" in Siena and Politeama Theatre in Palermo for the Opening of the "Amici della Musica" season.

Highlights of the past season included a Trio tour and performances of Beethoven's Triple Concerto alongside the Budapest MAV Orchestra, Laura Bortolotto and Amedeo Cicchese. The live recording of one of the performances has been published as a supplement to the music magazine "Amadeus" in August 2018.

She is the first Italian female pianist to record for the prestigious label "Deutsche Grammophon", recently completing a recording of the Beethoven Violin Sonatas with regular violin collaborator of fourteen years, Francesca Dego.

From her earliest years Francesca has earned distinction in many national and international competitions, winning 14 first prizes and, in 2011 she was awarded the Phoebe Benham Junior Fellow in Piano Accompaniment at the RCM. She gave her soloist debut at 16 performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 13 in C major with the Rosetum Orchestra and has since been invited to join many Italian and international orchestras as a soloist. She has toured Japan, China, the US, where she is completing the set with all Beethoven piano concertos, and South America, where she performed at the Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires, for the "Semana musical Llao Llao" in Bariloche and Teatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro for the opening ceremony of the Football World Cup in 2014, on a number of occasions.

Francesca is actively involved in the field of chamber music performance and regularly performs with instrumentalists, singers and chamber ensembles. Since 2011, she frequently collaborates with acclaimed English pianist Nigel Clayton in piano duo performances.

Francesca has performed in many live broadcasts on RAI Radio and TV, Tv2000, Radio Classica, the Italian Swiss Radio, the Vatican Radio and selections from her CDs have been included in the soundtrack of the 2008 film "The beautiful Truth" by prize-winning director Steven Kroschel. Her first solo recording – Debussy's Second Book of Preludes and Chopin's Andante Spianato e Grande Polonaise, was published by "Classica Viva" Musical Editions in May 2007.

Born in Milan in 1984, Francesca began studying the piano at the age of three under the guidance of Graziella Bianchi and Paolo Bordoni. She graduated from the Milan Conservatoire in 2004 with top marks, cum laude, and special mention. She continued her studies at the Musical Academy in Pescara, at the Chigiana Academy in Siena and at the Royal College of Music in London where she was awarded both a Masters in Performance and Artist Diploma in Piano Accompaniment with Distinction in 2012, under Nigel Clayton and Roger Vignoles, generously supported by The Gordon Calway Stone Memorial Award.

From a very early age Francesca has shown enthusiasm and passion for teaching and following this passion has become a chamber music tutor at the "Cantelli" Conservatoire in Novara (Italy).



Nigel Clayton studied with Stephen Savage and Angus Morrison at the Royal College of Music London, where he won prizes in every category of piano performance and was awarded the College's yearly prize for his Bachelor of Music Degree. Whilst there, a particular interest in chamber music and accompanying developed and was further encouraged by international prizes from competitions in London, New York (Concert Artist Guild) and

from the English Speaking Union. Since then his worldwide travel has included four major tours of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan with Indian cellist Anup Kumar Biswas, tours of the Middle East and America with Wissam Boustany, of Scandinavia with Gerard LeFeuvre and several throughout Europe; he has also appeared at most of the music clubs and festivals in Great Britain, appearing regularly on the BBC's radio network, at the Wigmore Hall, and at the South Bank Centre, where he has given more than fifty recitals.

Nigel continues to perform as a soloist and has played over one hundred solo recitals on board British luxury cruise liners; he has performed concertos by Beethoven, Grieg, Schumann, Shostakovich, Ravel, Rachmaninov, Liszt and Mozart (directed from the keyboard), and was a soloist in Poulenc's two piano concerto in the Royal Albert Hall whilst a junior student at the Royal College of Music. He has performed many times in Japan including two concerto performances in Tokyo and a solo recital tour and since 2013 has made regular recital and lecture tours of Indonesia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Apart from longstanding partnerships with Gina McCormack, Elizabeth Anderson, Michael Cox, Lorraine McAslan and Joan Enric Lluna, Nigel has appeared with Madeleine Mitchell, Michael Collins, Sylvia Marcovici, Ofra Harnoy, Lionel Handy, Luis Claret, Paul Marleyn, Tasmin Little and Bryan Rayner Cook, the Chilingirian, Navarra, Sorrel, Bridge, Maggini and Bingham Quartets and with instrumentalists from Japan, Korea, Canada, Spain, America, Poland and Iceland. His twenty-year partnership with violinist Beth Spendlove has resulted in more than one hundred recitals particularly in Essex and Suffolk where they also frequently perform as founder members of the Kingfisher Ensemble.

He was engaged for twenty-one years as Official Accompanist for the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition in Switzerland and more recently several summer schools there; he is also a regular coach at Benslow Music Trust Courses in Hertfordshire. He has been principal teacher of piano at the North East of Scotland Music School, Aberdeen, for more than twenty years and is a professor on the Keyboard Faculty and Art of Teaching lecturer at the Royal College of Music, London.

For his services in the musical world Nigel was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal College of Music in 2017.

JOYFUL COMPANY OF SINGERS

One of Europe's most prominent chamber choirs, the **Joyful Company of Singers** is known for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the 16th Century to the present day, including many first performances. Formed in 1988 by conductor Peter Broadbent, the choir first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1990. Since then it has maintained its profile in the music world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions leading to many invitations to perform. Concert appearances include most of the leading UK festivals and regular concert tours in Europe, broadcasting in many countries as well as on BBC and Classic FM. A discography of over 25 CDs includes Rachmaninov's *All-night Vigil* on Nimbus – '*beautifully characterized and shaped by Peter Broadbent*' (International Record Review).

The JCS has also instituted a Youth Fund to encourage the development of young choral conductors, singers and composers. The first composition competition was won by young Australian composer Chris Williams and in 2016 the JCS co-commissioned the major work *Dancing Star* from Toby Young along with Bristol Choir Exultate and Strathclyde University Chamber Choir. In addition, we have funded four Fellowships for young conductors to work with the choir.

Tonight's Singers are:

SOPRANOS

Amanda	Abbitt
Cathryn	Caunt
Sarah	Intrieri
Charlotte	Webb

Margaret	Green
Alexandra	Loewe
Nicola	Roberts

ALTOS

Francesca	Caine
Bridget	Coaker
Debbie	Johnstone

Bernice	Arthur
Hannah	Bale
Lorna	Perry

TENORS

Jamie	Powe
Mark	Johnstone
Nick	King

BASSES

Kevin	Bailey
Andy	Mackinder

Peter	Da Costa
Mark	Fenton
Jonathan	Lane
Garrod	Stephen



**The next JCS performance will be at the
St. Marylebone Festival:**

On Wenlock Edge: A Vaughan Williams Celebration

This concert showcases this most English of composers, including his Mass in G Minor and partsongs; the song cycle for tenor *On Wenlock Edge*, and his Blake Songs for oboe and tenor.

The Joyful Company of Singers – Peter Broadbent, conductor
Christopher Bowen, tenor; Clare Hoskins, oboe; The Bell Quartet; Gavin Roberts, piano

**Tuesday 23 July at 7.30pm
St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5LT**

Buy tickets online from www.stmarylebonefestival.com/events

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