



MOZART AND HAYDN

WITH NICOLAS ALTSTAEDT

26-28 October 2023



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MOZART AND HAYDN

WITH NICOLAS ALTSTAEDT

Thursday 26 October, 2pm, The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Friday 27 October, 2pm, City Halls, Glasgow

Saturday 28 October, 2pm, Aberdeen Music Hall

HAYDN Cello Concerto in C

KODÁLY Dances of Galánta

Interval of 20 minutes

VERESS Transylvanian Dances

MOZART Symphony No 38 in D 'Prague'

Nicolas Altstaedt Director/Cello



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ORCHESTRA

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Marta Gómez

Oboe

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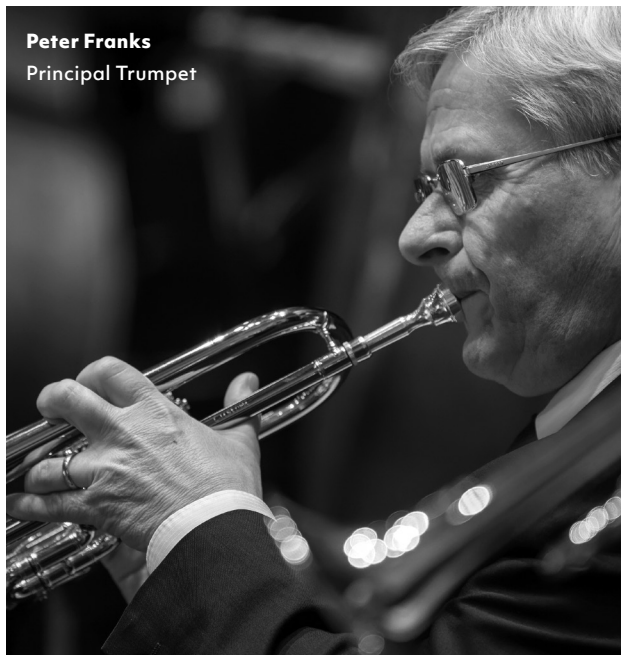
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Louise Lewis Goodwin

Percussion

Kate Openshaw
Jack Fawcett

Peter Franks
Principal Trumpet



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

HAYDN (1732-1809)

Cello Concerto in C (1761-65)

Moderato

Adagio

Allegro molto

KODÁLY (1882-1967)

Dances of Galánta (1933)

VERESS (1907-1992)

Transylvanian Dances (1943/1949)

Lassu: Poco rubato

Ugrós: Allegretto

Lejtós: Andantino

Dobbantós: Allegro vivace

MOZART (1756-1791)

Symphony No 38 in D 'Prague' (1786)

Adagio – Allegro

Andante

Finale: Presto

Look to the east: despite the familiar Austrian names of Haydn and Mozart among today's composers, there's a web of connections between the concert's pieces that take us far further eastwards than the bright lights of Vienna. Haydn's C major Cello Concerto, for example, was written in what's modern-day Hungary (and comes to us courtesy of the Czech Republic). Kodály named his colourful Dances explicitly after the small Hungarian town of Galánta (now Galanta – without an accent – in Slovakia). We visit what's now Romania courtesy of Sándor Veress, and Mozart delivered his Symphony No 38 to the Prague audiences he knew adored his music – even if he didn't actually write it for them.

For a long time, it looked like we might never get to hear Haydn's C major Cello Concerto. The 'other', probably better-known Haydn Cello Concerto, in D major, had been a well-established fixture in the instrument's repertoire virtually since the composer wrote it in 1783. It had always been known, however, that there'd been another one – Haydn said as much himself in the exhaustive catalogue he kept of his own works. The problem was that nobody knew where it was.

Until 1961, that is, when Czech archivist and musicologist Oldřich Pulkert discovered a set of orchestral parts among documents from Radenín Castle in Bohemia, held in the collection of the Czech National Library in Prague. They matched sketches in one of Haydn's composition books, and the identity of the mystery piece was confirmed: this was indeed Haydn's 'missing' C major Cello Concerto. It duly received its modern-day premiere in 1962 from Czech cellist Miloš Sádlo and the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Charles Mackerras.



Franz Joseph Haydn

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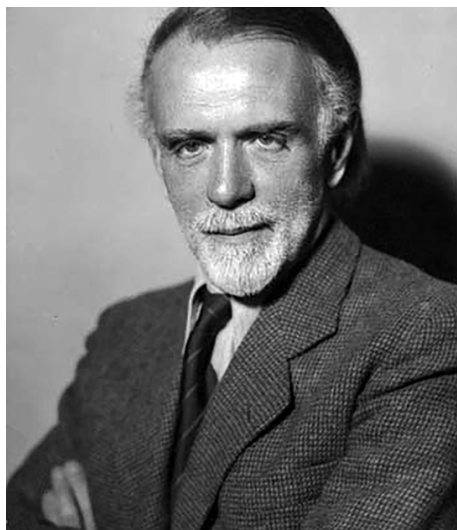
And it proved a very different piece from the better-established D major Concerto. For a start, Haydn wrote it around 20 years earlier, probably between 1761 and 1765, when he was just beginning what would end up as almost three decades of employment with the Esterházy family – almost certainly for Joseph Franz Weigl, principal cellist in the Esterházy court orchestra. This was only a bit more than a decade after the death of JS Bach, even fewer years after the death of Handel, and Haydn's music accordingly draws heavily on the conversational to-and-fro of those earlier composers' instrumental music, while nonetheless looking ahead to the clarity, balance and elegant restraint that he would make his own.

His opening movement, accordingly, feels more akin to an amiable discussion between soloist and orchestra, rather than the fierce struggle for survival of concertos from just a few decades later – though there's no lack of muscularity to the solo cello's strongly

defined line. There's an almost ecclesiastical mood to Haydn's deeply felt slow movement, which includes certain passages that wouldn't sound out of place in an instrumental piece by Handel. Listen out, too, for the soloist's 'secret' entry: their first, long note, virtually unheard, emerges from behind more assertive activity from the orchestra, only slowly taking over the movement's main melody.

Haydn's brisk, propulsive finale is the movement in which he most overtly displays the wit that would become his trademark. After another 'secret' entry, the solo cellist has a lot of fun in a part that dives and soars right across the instrument's fullest range, finally pushing the orchestra all the way to the Concerto's brusque conclusion.

We leap forward in time more than a century and a half for today's next piece. 'If I were to name the composer whose works are the most perfect embodiment of the Hungarian spirit, I would answer: Kodály.' That's composer Béla



Zoltán Kodály

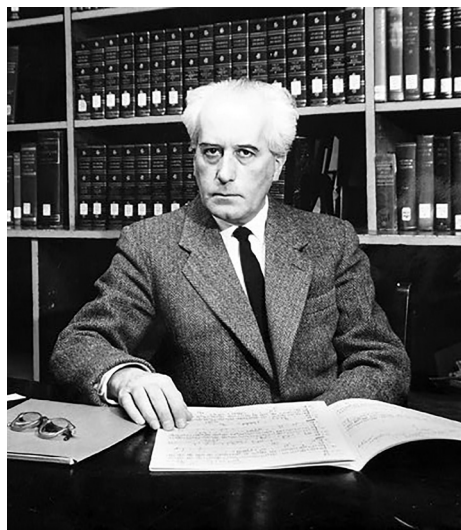
'If I were to name the composer whose works are the most perfect embodiment of the Hungarian spirit, I would answer: Kodály.'

Bartók's flattering appraisal of his compatriot, colleague and lifelong friend Zoltán Kodály. Traditional Hungarian tunes and rhythms played pivotal roles in both men's music – indeed, they scoured together the villages of their homeland (and far further afield), noting, recording and obsessively cataloguing the songs and dances they encountered. But if, for Bartók, folk music was one of many raw ingredients in his works' pioneering modernism, Kodály was more content to allow his folk inspirations to shine in their own terms – as they do brightly in his 1933 *Dances of Galánta*.

When the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned Kodály to write a short work to celebrate its 80th anniversary, the composer hit upon a very personal theme. Galánta was the small Hungarian town where he had lived as a child, and where his father was stationmaster on the main train line connecting Budapest and Vienna. Kodály headed back there for research, looking up old schoolmates and family friends to

supply him with material. In the end, however, what he remembered most vividly were the travelling Romani troupes who would take up residence in Galánta, and whose exotic bands provided some of his earliest musical experiences. Setting aside the material he'd personally sourced, he turned instead to volumes of 'gypsy' dances, collected in Galánta and published in Vienna around 1800, selecting favourite melodies to bring together in this whirling medley.

For his overall structure, however, he looked back to a traditional Hungarian form. The *verbunkos* had become wildly popular in the 18th and 19th centuries as a showy dance put on by Hungarian hussars hoping to entice potential enlistees. It comprised a passionate slow introduction (called 'lassú') followed by increasingly energetic dances, together intended to convey the apparently endless enjoyment of a soldier's life. Kodály makes prominent use of a solo clarinet (classical cousin to the *tárogató*, a Hungarian folk



Sándor Veress

And like Bartók, Veress was so immersed in folk tunes and rhythms that they seemed to permeate his entire musical personality, emerging in his music as an inseparable part of his language.

instrument) in his own slow introduction, before embarking on five dances of steadily increasing wildness, building to the breathless delirium of the piece's exuberant conclusion.

From Kodály's colourful expression of Hungarian spirit, we travel even further east for today's next piece. Sándor Veress came from the generation after Kodály and Bartók – in fact, he studied with both of them at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, composition with the former and piano with the latter. In 1907, when he'd been born, his birth city was Kolozsvár or Klausenburg, part of the eastern Austro-Hungarian Empire (today we'd call it Cluj-Napoca in Romania). And like both his teachers, Veress was a devoted folk music researcher, even working as Bartók's assistant at one point. His own focus, however, was again further east, into the music of Transylvania and Moldavia as well as that of Hungary.

And like Bartók, Veress was so immersed in folk tunes and rhythms that they seemed

to permeate his entire musical personality, emerging in his music as an inseparable part of his language. There are no authentic folk melodies, for example, in the Four Transylvanian Dances that he wrote between 1943 and 1949, even if the music sounds suffused with the distinctive melodic shapes and sometimes unpredictable rhythms of Eastern European traditional music.

The piece was commissioned by the influential Swiss conductor and philanthropist Paul Sacher, who also arranged for Veress to relocate to Bern after the Soviet takeover of Hungary in the wake of World War II. And the piece's four brief dances fall into two pairs, each with a slow introductory dance giving way to one of wilder abandon. The relaxed opening 'Lassú' unfolds with great freedom in its rhapsodic melodies, contrasting passion with moments of touching intimacy. The sprightly 'Ugrós' that follows – traditionally a dance for couples full of athletic leaps into the air – is full of crushed-note melodic



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

He clearly invested a lot of energy and creativity in the work. And when you consider the circumstances of its premiere, you can understand why.

decorations, and Veress subjects his tunes to some very Bachian contrapuntal workouts. A brooding cello duet launches the 'Lejtős' before a violin soars with a tender melody, though the dance ends with far brighter music, glittering with pizzicato sounds. There's no mistaking the influence of rustic folk fiddling in the closing 'Dobbantús', which brings the work as a whole to a whirling, exciting close – complete with some unusual percussive effects.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – by reputation, and indeed by quite a bit of evidence – was able to produce music with remarkable ease, fluency and speed. His 'Prague' Symphony, however, is one of the few pieces for which sketches survive showing the composer working closely on his musical themes, tweaking and adjusting them so that they'd combine together, or could be transformed effectively across a movement. He clearly invested a lot of energy and creativity in the work. And when you

consider the circumstances of its premiere, you can understand why.

Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* opened at Vienna's Burgtheater on 1 May 1786 to great critical acclaim, but it received a rather lukewarm reaction from the general public. It marked the start of the Imperial capital, once besotted with the composer's boundless genius, falling a bit out of love with Mozart. At its Prague staging in December that year, however, *Figaro* was an immediate and triumphant success, and the city's musical bigwigs begged the composer to visit in person, to experience the acclaim himself, and even direct some of his own music. He duly obliged in January 1787, and by all accounts, Mozart's trip was a non-stop round of banquets, parties and balls.

Prague loved Mozart, and the feelings were reciprocated. In honour of the occasion, Mozart unveiled one of his richest, most complex works in a concert on 19 January.

Prague loved Mozart, and the feelings were reciprocated. In honour of the occasion, Mozart unveiled one of his richest, most complex works in a concert on 19 January. The 'Prague' Symphony contains some of the grandest, most sophisticated music written up to that time, and it went down a storm with Prague listeners.

The 'Prague' Symphony contains some of the grandest, most sophisticated music written up to that time, and it went down a storm with Prague listeners. So successful was Mozart's visit, in fact, that off its back he received another Prague commission: for an opera on the exploits of Don Juan, which became a certain *Don Giovanni*.

It's somewhat ironic, then, that the 'Prague' Symphony can't possibly have been written specifically for this overwhelmingly successful trip. In fact, Mozart had completed the work before he'd even been invited to the city. His letters show that he was planning a visit to England at the time he was composing his Symphony No 38, a journey that never happened when his father Leopold refused to look after the composer's two children. Had Leopold been happy to babysit, what we now know as the 'Prague' Symphony might well have been dubbed the 'London' Symphony instead, stealing the thunder from Haydn's set of 12 'London' symphonies by several years.

But whatever its intended destination, there's no mistaking the Symphony's grandeur – even in the far-reaching harmonies through which Mozart pushes the expectant slow introduction to his first movement. When the movement's faster music finally arrives, it's with an urgent, almost heartbeat-like figure in the violins, before a surprisingly slithering, chromatic theme that begins in the lower strings, later jumping to the oboe.

There's more of that chromatic slithering in the main theme of Mozart's dance-like second movement, whose good-natured, somewhat homespun rusticity undercuts the courtly elegance of its form. Mozart's finale is a dazzling, quicksilver movement that blazes into energetic life as the full orchestra enters noisily after a somewhat hushed opening. Its second main theme might be calmer and more elegant, but it can't stop the good-natured high jinks for long.

© David Kettle

Director/Cello

NICOLAS ALTSTAEDT



German-French cellist Nicolas Altstaedt is one of the most sought-after and versatile artists today. As a soloist, conductor, and artistic director, he performs repertoire spanning from early music to contemporary, playing on period and modern instruments.

Season 2023/24 includes tours with Australian Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées with Philippe Herreweghe and Arcangelo with Jonathan Cohen. Altstaedt makes his debut with Bamberger Symphoniker, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and NAC Orchestra, Ottawa, while re-invitations include London Philharmonic Orchestra with Ed Gardner, amongst others.

Since his highly acclaimed debut with Wiener Philharmoniker and Gustavo Dudamel at the Lucerne Festival, recent notable residencies and collaborations include Budapest Festival Orchestra with Iván Fischer, SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg with Teodor Currentzis, Helsinki Festival with Esa-Pekka Salonen, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin with Robin Ticciati, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra with Lahav Shani, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra with Philippe Herreweghe, Münchner Philharmoniker with Krzysztof Urbanski, European Union Youth Orchestra with Vasily Petrenko, all the BBC orchestras including with John Storgårds, Orchestre National de France with Cristian Măcelaru, NHK and Yomiuri Nippon (with Kazuki Yamada) symphony orchestras, Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney and New Zealand symphony orchestras.

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Biography

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The Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies and has been a galvanizing force in Scotland's music scene since its inception in 1974. The SCO believes that access to world-class music is not a luxury but something that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in, helping individuals and communities everywhere to thrive. Funded by the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and a community of philanthropic supporters, the SCO has an international reputation for exceptional, idiomatic performances: from mainstream classical music to newly commissioned works, each year its wide-ranging programme of work is presented across the length and breadth of Scotland, overseas and increasingly online.

Equally at home on and off the concert stage, each one of the SCO's highly talented and creative musicians and staff is passionate about transforming and enhancing lives through the power of music. The SCO's Creative Learning programme engages people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse range of projects, concerts, participatory workshops and resources. The SCO's current five-year Residency in Edinburgh's Craigmillar builds on the area's extraordinary history of Community Arts, connecting the local community with a national cultural resource.

An exciting new chapter for the SCO began in September 2019 with the arrival of dynamic young conductor Maxim Emelyanychev as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor. His tenure has recently been extended until 2028. The SCO and Emelyanychev released their first album together (Linn Records) in November 2019 to widespread critical acclaim. Their second recording together, of Mendelssohn symphonies, is due for release in November 2023.

The SCO also has long-standing associations with many eminent guest conductors and directors including Andrew Manze, Pekka Kuusisto, François Leleux, Nicola Benedetti, Isabelle van Keulen, Anthony Marwood, Richard Egarr, Mark Wigglesworth, John Storgårds and Conductor Emeritus Joseph Swensen.

The Orchestra's current Associate Composer is Jay Capperauld. The SCO enjoys close relationships with numerous leading composers and has commissioned around 200 new works, including pieces by the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sir James MacMillan, Anna Clyne, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karin Rehnqvist, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Nico Muhly.

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