

Southwell u3a Music Lovers Group – 18 March 2020

YouTube Playlist

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BszBccYHuAk&list=PLQHiO9b3DnluTtchY_L-M89681NxU_-i

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) Piano Concerto No 2 in B Flat Major Op 53 49:26
Munich Philharmonic Conductor Valery Gergiev, Piano Yuja Wang

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BszBccYHuAk>

Allegro non troppo 18:04 Allegro appassionato 9:34 Andante 12:24 Allegretto grazioso 9:23

Yuja was born in Beijing (1987) and began studying piano there at age six and studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. By the age of 21, she was already an internationally recognized concert pianist. She told the Los Angeles Times: “For me, playing music is about transporting to another way of life, another way of being. An actress does that.

The two piano concertos by Johannes Brahms are works of, respectively, youth and maturity, written 20 years apart. In that time, he himself had changed from a sensitive youth, a clean-shaven stripling of great beauty with flowing blond locks, into a portly and middle-aged figure with the full beard. Between the two concertos Brahms composed the first two symphonies, the violin concerto, the German Requiem and much chamber and choral music. From the start the Concerto was well received, and Brahms performed it in twelve different cities ranging from Hungary to the Baltic during the winter of 1881–82.

Throughout the Concerto Brahms reworks the traditional relationship between soloist and orchestra, so that his “classical” forms are anything but sterile repetitions of past composers. So thoroughly and in so many original ways did piano and orchestra interact that many commentators thought of the work as a “symphony with obbligato piano” rather than a concerto. But Brahms was simply expanding imaginatively on the concertos of Mozart and Beethoven, both of whom found many varied ways to combine the orchestra (or parts of it) with the soloist.

The most unusual feature of the Second Concerto is the presence of a full-scale scherzo movement, making it one of the few four-movement concertos in existence. (Brahms had earlier toyed with, and rejected, the notion of a scherzo for the Violin Concerto.) Brahms explained the addition in a letter to his friend and chamber music partner Billroth by saying that the opening movement—in a rather broad, not very fast, tempo—was “too simple”; he wanted something passionate as a change of pace before moving on to the slow movement, with its ravishing cello solo. He wrote both of the first two movements with endings clearly designed to generate audience applause. (The tradition of not applauding between movements is a very recent one, and one that certainly does not reflect the response demanded of listeners in these two sections.)

The slow movement begins with that wonderful cello solo, which gradually becomes intertwined with other ideas; it is so characteristic of a sustaining instrument like the cello that the piano never attempts it, but offers either to decorate it or to simplify it.

Like the opening, the Finale is “fast but not really fast,” with a touch of light heartedness and an occasional bow to the gypsy music that was so popular a style in the Romantic era.

Johannes Brahms From Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 118 2. Intermezzo in A Major 5:41
Yuja Wang Piano Andreas Ottensamer Clarinet
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mUnsrwZuQ>

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) String Quartet in D Major Op 76 No 2 24:06
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge9DSFJUyxM&t=601s>

Castalian String Quartet

The Castalian Quartet received the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award 2019. Our first violinist, Sini Simonen, is a nomadic Finn, often sighted with a tennis racquet slung over her shoulder as well as a violin case. We found her in Hannover, Germany, where she was completing her solo degree as we were studying for a Masters in Chamber Music. Charlotte Bonneton and Daniel Roberts form our inner parts. She is a vegan violist who can tie herself into baffling yogic knots. He is a steak-loving second violinist with dodgy knees. She is French, brought up high in the Alps. He's Welsh, brought up at the foot of Ben Nevis. She is petite. He is not. Otherwise, they are inseparable. Christopher Graves joined the quartet on his return to London from a postgraduate course in Lugano. Since then he has been whetting our appetites with culinary wizardry.

The six String Quartets, Op. 76 by Joseph Haydn were composed in 1797 or 1798 and dedicated to the Hungarian count Joseph Georg von Erdődy. They form the last complete set of string quartets that Haydn composed. At the time of the commission, Haydn was employed at the court of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy. The Op. 76 quartets are among Haydn's most ambitious chamber works, deviating more than their predecessors from standard sonata form and each emphasizing their thematic continuity through the seamless and near-continual exchange of motifs between instruments. In addition to not using the expected sonata form in some of the string quartet's first movements, Haydn employs uncommon forms in other movements such as a canon, a fantasy and an alternativo. He also plays with tempo markings, key signatures and many sections emphasizing the viola and cello.

The quartet in D minor is known as the Fifths (or, in German, die Quinten) quartet.

Allegro is written in D minor, common time and is in sonata form. The falling fifths motif dominates the exposition section and is featured heavily in the development section using inversion, stretto, and other devices.

Andante o più tosto allegretto, is a ternary variation form in D major and 6/8 time.

Menuetto. Allegro ma non-troppo A D-minor minuet in 3/4 time. It is unusual in that the movement is written like a canon and the trio section is written in the tonic major key as opposed to a relative key (in D major). It has been called the "Witches' Minuet" ("Hexenminuett"). The minuet is actually a two-part canon: the two violins play (in parallel octaves) above the viola and cello (also playing in parallel octaves) who follow one measure behind the violins. Haydn previously used a two-part canon with the lower string trailing the upper strings by a single bar in the minuet of his 44th Symphony.

Vivace assai the last movement, in D minor and 2/4 time, uses sonata form, ends in D major.

Anne Akiko Meyers & Akira Eguchi; Mozart Sonata K.301 in G Major 11.11
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKOF4o7YHo>

Yuja Wang & Mireia Farrés Pièce en forme de Habanera M. Ravel 2:52
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sf0qcQgaA1U>

Yuja Wang Mozart Turkish March 2:57
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGAPTRrAilY>