

Southwell u3a Music Lovers Group – 18 November 2020

YouTube links are provided for each item or the playlist for all the pieces is at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5pzzr5655yw&list=PLQHiO9b3DnlvM1rIFlzGNfKRGIA8qp2CQ>

Or Search YouTube for “John Tebbs Channel” and find my channel and this programme is under the Playlists tab as Southwell u3a Music 201118 along with other u3a Music Lovers programmes from January 2020.

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) Academic Festival Overture, Op 80 **10:18**
Orchestre de Paris, Conductor Paavo Järvi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5pzzr5655yw>

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) Violin Concerto in D Major Op 77 **45:36**
Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada
Sergey Khachatryan Violin (12 March 2020)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM8Cq861P_E&t=2293s

Joshua Bell was supposed to play in this concert, but he could not because of the virus, and Sergey happily accepted the offer, and this happened. Wow.

When the talk turned to violins, Joachim knew it all. In fact, it had been his championship of the Beethoven Violin Concerto that convinced listeners of its merit. He was a virtuoso, and a composer who had already written two violin concertos of his own. The first Joachim heard of a Brahms concerto came in a letter posted from Pörttschach, an Austrian lakeside resort that delighted the composer with its serenity and natural beauty, and where, in his first stay there the previous summer, he had composed his Second Symphony so quickly. Brahms claimed the place was overrun with melodies. You had to take care, he said, not to step on them.

In violin matters, Brahms expected to lean on his friend, and Joachim expected to be leaned on. They managed some of their collaboration in person but conducted most of their consultation by mail. We can only imagine the pace at which they conferred, and as draft pages rolled back and forth by rail and coach, the frustrations must have been as profuse as Pörttschach's melodies. Regularly, Brahms would thank Joachim for suggesting revisions, then ignore Joachim's advice. But Brahms was smart enough to accept many of his friend's suggestions. Much of what you hear in the concerto is thanks to Joseph Joachim.

If Brahms the symphonist is apparent in the concerto's solid architecture, so is Brahms the song writer. Lyricism dominates the Violin Concerto.

The long first movement features sequences of turbulent emotion, sometimes interwoven and sometimes quick cut with dreamy lyricism. The full ensemble builds a stormy rendition of the opening theme, cadences in a decisive exclamation mark, then suddenly yields to the strings, which luxuriate in the elegant third subject, a graceful ballad of moonlit romance.

The Adagio is justly famous for the great oboe melody at its foundation. As you listen to the oboe sing, listen also to the winds around it, forming the harmonies that create the magically serene atmosphere. When the soloist enters with a variant of the oboe tune, violin and orchestra entwine, giving the lie to the conductor Josef Hellmesberger, who led the Vienna premiere and harrumphed that Brahms had written a concerto not for the violin but against it!

In the finale, Brahms succumbs to the Gypsy spirit. Of course, there is more to it, for amid the dance comes a poignant songlike interlude, just after the first reprise of the great theme that opens the movement. But in the end, this is not Brahms the serious composer. It's Brahms the lover of talk, Tokay, and Turkish cigarettes, the man who honed his thoughts while playing with tin soldiers, the man who liked to sit on a bench in the Prater, watching the world go by.

Sergey and Lusine Khachatryan plays Mozart, Prokofiev, and Franck 1:46:11
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDUM8In7bVI&t=8s>

The Rencontres Musicales d'Évian (Evian Musical Encounters) were back for their 2020 edition—slightly modified, but as unmissable as ever! This year the audience was largely virtual, and you're invited to be part of it: just pull up a chair and listen to this concert (one of six) which were streamed live and free of charge on medici.tv and Radio.

The violinist Sergey Khachatryan and his sister Lusine are from a musical Armenian family and regularly perform together. In this programme they play Sonatas by Mozart, Prokofiev and Franck, a long programme but it is surely worth starting with the Mozart, around 22 Mins and before you know where you are its 1½ hours on and tea time. Such a sweet violin.

W. A MOZART (1756 – 1791) Violin sonata n° 32 in B flat major, K.454. Starts 0:00

The sonata was written for a violin virtuoso Regina Strinasacchi of Mantua to be performed by them together at a concert in the Kärntnerthor Theater in Vienna on April 29, 1784. Although Mozart had the piano part securely in his head, he did not give himself enough time to write it out, and thus it was performed with a sheet of blank music paper in front of him in order to fool the audience. According to a story told by his widow Constanze Mozart, the Emperor Joseph II saw the empty sheet music through his opera glasses and sent for the composer with his manuscript, at which time Mozart had to confess the truth, although that is likely to have amused the monarch rather than cause his irritation.

The work consists of three movements:

Largo – Allegro
Andante
Allegretto

The sonata opens with an exceptionally slow introduction, in which emphasis is put on the equality of the two instruments, kept throughout the entire work. The opening theme was later echoed by Haydn Op. 50 No. 1 String Quartet and Beethoven's String Quartet No. 1. The second movement has a melodic feeling of adagio, which was the tempo written down by Mozart at first, but then crossed out and marked Andante. In the development section there are bold chromatic modulations. The final movement returns to the playful mood of the first, but even so happens to be a very sophisticated Rondo

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891 – 1953) - Violin sonata n° 2 in D major, op. 94a. Starts 24:00

Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Sonata No. 2 in D Major, Op. 94a (sometimes written as Op. 94bis), was based on the composer's own Flute Sonata in D, Op. 94, written in 1942 but arranged for violin in 1943 when Prokofiev was living in Perm in the Ural Mountains, a remote shelter for Soviet artists during the Second World War. Prokofiev transformed the work into a violin sonata at the prompting of his close friend, the violinist David Oistrakh. It was premiered on 17 June 1944 by David Oistrakh and Lev Oborin.

The work is about 23 minutes long and consists of four movements:

Moderato

Presto - Poco piu mosso del - Tempo I

Andante

Allegro con brio - Poco meno mosso - Tempo I - Poco meno mosso - Allegro con brio

The work is highly classical in design as it opens with a sonata movement which is followed by a scherzo, a slow movement, and a great finale. The violin part is replete with virtuosic display but is also highly lyrical and elegant, evidence of the work's inception as a sonata for flute

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822 – 1890) – Sonata in A major. Starts 50:00 and ends at 1:22

The Violin Sonata in A was written in 1886, when César Franck was 63, as a wedding present for the 28-year-old violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. Franck was not present when Ysaÿe married, but on the morning of the wedding, on 26 September 1886 in Arlon, their mutual friend Charles Bordes presented the work as Franck's gift to Ysaÿe and his bride Louise Bourdeau de Courtrai. After a hurried rehearsal, Ysaÿe and Bordes' sister-in-law, the pianist Marie-Léontine Bordes-Pène, played the Sonata to the other wedding guests.

I. Allegretto ben moderato

This gentle and sweetly reflective rocking theme, introduced by the violin after a short introduction by the piano, is the thematic core of the entire work.

II. Allegro

This turbulent movement is sometimes considered the real opening movement, with the Allegretto ben moderato serving as a long introduction.

III. Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia

This is improvisatory in nature, and free in both structure and expression.

IV. Allegretto poco mosso

The main melody is heard in canonic imitation between the instruments and recurs in a rondo-like manner to a triumphant and soaring conclusion.

ENCORES by an Armenian Composer Edvard Mirzoyan - Introduction et Perpetuum Mobile - starts at around 1:24:00. This is followed by haunting Café 1930 from Histoire du Tango by Piazzola – starts at 1:36:00.