

# ENSEMBLE 360

Friday 8 October

7.30pm

Emmanuel Church, Barnsley

**TIM HORTON** piano  
**BENJAMIN NABARRO** violin  
**SIMON ROWLAND-JONES** viola  
**GEMMA ROSEFIELD** cello

**BEACH** Piano Trio Op.105  
**MOZART** Piano Quartet in E flat K493  
*interval*  
**BRAHMS** Piano Quartet in G minor

**AMY BEACH (1867–1944)**

**Piano Trio Op.150**

Allegro

Lento espressivo

Allegro con brio

Amy Beach's Piano Trio was completed in 1938 and published the following year. It is her last major work (it was followed by some short vocal pieces and a Pastorale for wind quintet). After a productive composing career, with important chamber works including a Violin Sonata (1896) and a Piano Quintet (1907), the Piano Trio shows Beach writing in a more concise style, though an entry in her diary on 2 June 1938 reveals that not all the ideas were new: "Trying a trio from old material. Great fun". As Beach's biographer, Adrienne Fried Bloch, has noted, the Trio incorporates "French modern, late Romantic and folk elements". It was finished on 18 June 1938 during two weeks of intensive work at the MacDowell Colony. The first theme of the Allegro is introduced by the cello and the second (which is derived from it) is initially heard on the violin. The piano figuration throughout the movement has strong echoes of Debussy. The second movement comprises a lyrical and expressive outer section framing a much livelier scherzo. The slower music was drawn from one of Beach's songs composed in 1897, while the sharply contrasting scherzo is based on an Inuit song, 'The Returning Hunter'. The main theme of the finale almost certainly had an Inuit inspiration too (a similar tune is in the same collection as 'The Returning Hunter'), and this is set effectively against a more tender subsidiary theme. The coda is derived from the Inuit theme and it brings Beach's Trio to an impressive close.

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)**

**Piano Quartet in E flat K493**

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegretto

The second of Mozart's piano quartets was finished by June 1786, a month or so after the first performance of 'Le Nozze di Figaro'. While the first of his piano quartets (K478, in G minor) opens with an austere dramatic gesture, the second immediately announces more lyrical and expansive expressive goals. Such contrasts are not unusual in Mozart's sets of works, so it's our bad luck that the publishing contract for a set of three piano quartets was abandoned. The slow movement is a flowing triple-time, while the finale is a substantial Rondo – one in which Mozart occasionally darkens and enriches the harmonies to powerful effect, just as he was to do in his great piano concertos written at about the same time. Throughout this movement, the strings operate as a single unit, often engaging in a delightful dialogue with the piano.

**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)**

**Piano Quartet No.1 in G minor Op.25**

Allegro

Intermezzo: Allegro ma non troppo – Trio: Animato

Andante con moto

Rondo all Zingarese: Presto

Brahms spent the summer of 1861 in Hamm bei Hamburg, a prosperous suburb at the time. It was a productive holiday and by the end of it Brahms had finished the two piano quartets Op.25 and Op.26,

and started work on several other pieces. The first performance came a couple of months later – in Hamburg on 16 November 1861 – with Clara Schumann as the pianist. The G minor Quartet is conceived on a grand scale. The first movement (in sonata form) opens with a stern statement of the main theme that generates many of the ideas that follow, quickly followed by a gentler melody. But this is a movement with a profusion of melodic ideas, introduced during the exposition in different keys and further explored in the central development section. The recapitulation is ingenious and unusual: the second theme comes back first, in G major, before a turn to the minor and a dramatic reintroduction of the opening idea. The mood at the close is bleak. The second movement is in C minor: a ghostly intermezzo in place of the conventional Scherzo. It opens with a swaying tune on muted violin and viola, over repeated notes in the cello. The central section is closely related rhythmically, but it's in the warmer key of A flat major. The slow movement begins and ends with a song-like melody, but Brahms takes the music in an extremely original direction: at the centre of the movement there's a kind of slow (and splendid) march. The Finale is a thrilling Rondo, in which the opening melody is a kind of wild dance, which is brilliantly developed and contrasted with new ideas in a movement that hurtles to a thrilling conclusion.

Programme notes © Nigel Simeone 2021

## ENSEMBLE 360

Ensemble 360 has gained an enviable reputation across the UK not only for the quality and integrity of its playing, but also for its ability to communicate the music to a range of different audiences. Formed in 2005, 11 musicians of international standing came together to take up residency in Sheffield with Music in the Round, establishing a versatile group of five string players, five wind players and a pianist.

The musicians believe that concerts should be informal, friendly and relaxed occasions, and perform 'in the round' wherever possible.

Outside Ensemble 360 many of the musicians have highly successful careers, performing with groups including the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, English National Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Bern, Manchester Camerata and Nash Ensemble.

## MUSIC IN THE ROUND

Music in the Round is the leading national promoter of chamber music. For over 35 years we have been bringing people and music closer together through our friendly and informative style of 'in the round' performances, touring to numerous venues around the country as well as presenting two concert series and the Sheffield Chamber Music Festival each year at our home venue, the Crucible Studio. Our concerts are characterised by passion, excellence and proximity, and even in these challenging times of a global pandemic we have been striving to connect people through music by presenting socially-distanced live concerts and creating films featuring our musicians to enjoy online.

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MUSIC IN THE ROUND

Your generosity in the last year has made it possible for us to continue with our aim to bring people closer to music, despite all the challenges of the last 18 months. It is thanks to you, our Friends, supporters and audiences, that we are able to bring you such a full programme this season. These programmes are produced by Music in the Round. Your donations towards the cost of the commissioning high quality programme notes are very gratefully received, especially given the challenges of recent times. You can text 'Programme 1' to 70085 to donate £1. \*This costs you £1 plus standard message rate.