

**Howard
Assembly
Room**



Distilled: All Beethoven

Sun 29 March
3.00pm

Programme

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Duo No. 1 in C major, WoO 27/1
(arranged for Violin and Cello)

I Allegro comodo

II Larghetto sostenuto

III Rondo

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97 'Archduke'

I Allegro moderato

II Scherzo: Allegro

III Andante cantabile ma però con moto

IV Allegretto moderato

Artists

Oliver Baily Violin

Richard Jenkinson Cello

David Cowan Piano

Brief notes

Beethoven Duo No. 1 in C major (arranged for Violin and Cello)

The three Duos WoO 27 are early compositions usually dated to Beethoven's latter years in his native Bonn before he moved to Vienna in 1792. The Duos didn't appear in print until some 20 years after the probable date of their composition, and were catalogued among Beethoven's many *Werke ohne Opuszahl* (works without opus numbers) in the 1950s. Doubts have been cast over Beethoven's authorship of these pieces, but whatever the question marks over their provenance, what is certain is that they were originally written for the combination of clarinet and bassoon, though often arranged – as in this performance – for violin and cello.

Brief notes (continued)

Beethoven Piano Trio in B flat major 'Archduke'

Beethoven's official Opus 1 consisted of three Trios for Piano, Violin and Cello, published in 1795. His last major composition for this combination of instruments is the 'Archduke' Trio, completed in March 1811. The Archduke of the title was Rudolph of Austria (1788-1831), to whom the work was dedicated. A keen musician, Rudolph studied both piano and composition with Beethoven; in turn, he supported Beethoven financially. The composer dedicated several other major works to his patron, including his Fifth Piano Concerto, the *Hammerklavier* Sonata and the mighty *Missa Solemnis*.

The 'Archduke' Trio was written towards the end of what is generally known as the middle, or 'heroic', period of Beethoven's career, which began in the wake of the great personal crisis he suffered in 1802 brought on by his encroaching deafness. It was played in public for the first time in Vienna on 11 April 1814, with Beethoven at the piano accompanied by his friends and colleagues Ignaz Schuppanzigh (Violin) and Josef Linke (Cello). His fellow composer Louis Spohr attended a rehearsal and gave a painful description of Beethoven's plight: '... there was scarcely anything left of the virtuosity of the artist which had once been so admired. In *forte* passages the poor deaf man pounded so hard that the strings jangled, and in *piano* he played so softly that whole groups of notes were absent, so that one lost the thread unless one was able to look at the piano part at the same time'. Beethoven's deafness had by this stage made public performance almost impossible, and this was to be one of his final appearances as a performer. For all that, the 'Archduke' is a work neither of despair nor of heroic striving but of lyrical repose for the most part, announced by the poise and nobility of the opening melody. There is playfulness too, the finale in particular shot through with flashes of eccentric humour.

Artists' biographies



Oliver Baily

Violin

Oliver Baily has held the position of Sub-Principal Second Violin in the Orchestra of Opera North since September 2024. Alongside his orchestral career, he is a founding member and first violinist of the award-winning Treske String Quartet, with whom he has performed extensively across the UK and Ireland, as well as in the USA and Canada. In addition to the core quartet repertoire, the group is deeply committed to performing contemporary music, actively championing new works and working closely with emerging composers. Oliver is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, where he was the recipient of several awards, including the Helen Porthouse Paganini Prize and the Emmanuel Prize.



Richard Jenkinson Cello

Richard Jenkinson has played cello from a young age, studying with Florence Hooton, William Pleeth and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Raphael Wallfisch. He won the Guildhall's Gold Medal, Vittorio Gui Competition in Italy and was part of the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme. He has held the principal cello position with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and CBSO. He has recorded solo discs for Koch and Em Records, and after becoming cellist of the Dante String Quartet in 2012 performed *Beethoven Quartet Journey* for BBC Radio 4. With the Dante Quartet he has recorded for Hyperion, Naxos and Somm, and performed at Wigmore Hall, King's Place and tours of France, Japan, South Africa and the USA. Richard is Music Director of the British Police Symphony and the Orchestra of St John's. In 2019 he conducted the BPSO at the Royal Albert Hall and successfully defended his Ph.D. on the music of Zoltán Kodály at the University of Birmingham. During the 2020 lockdown, he gained a diploma in singing. In 2026, he will tour France and Holland and perform concertos by Dvořák, Tchaikovsky and Walton. He will also perform the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven with Benjamin Frith.



David Cowan

Piano

David Cowan has been Head of Music at Opera North since 2015. Previously he was Head of Music and Head of the Opera Studio Operavenir for Theater Basel. He studied at Cambridge University, at the Guildhall in London and in Winterthur. He then worked for nine years as vocal coach at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. He was Head of Music Studies at the State Opera House in Karlsruhe, then Musical Director of the Opera Studio of the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg. He also worked as répétiteur at the Salzburg International Music Festival with singers such as Sir Bryn Terfel, Dimitri Hvorostovsky, Susan Graham and Dame Ann Murray, under conductors such as Holliger, Kuhn and Harnoncourt. He has conducted a large repertoire of opera, operetta and musicals, and as a collaborative pianist he has worked and performed with singers including Sir Simon Keenlyside and Dame Kiri te Kanawa and string players including French cellist Maurice Gendron. He recorded *Winterreise* with the Austrian baritone Andreas Lebeda on the 1836 Conrad Graf fortepiano at the Landesmuseum in Innsbruck.

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Notes by **Stuart Leeks**

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