

Trio Brontë I

Chiara Sannicandro violin
Annie Jacobs-Perkins cello
Lili Bogdanova piano

Lili Boulanger (1893–1918)
D'un matin de printemps (1917) 5'

Wolfgang Rihm (1952–2024)
Fremde Szenen III (1982) 11'

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
'Notturmo' for Piano Trio, D.897 (1827) 10'

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
Piano Trio No.2 in C minor, Op.66 (1845) 29'

- i. Allegro energico e con fuoco*
- ii. Andante espressivo*
- iii. Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto*
- iv. Finale: Allegro appassionato*

Trio Brontë is a Britten Pears Young Artist for 2024/25, here for a two-week residency on the Chamber Music in Residence course.

Trio Brontë is named after the Brontë sisters and is inspired by their passion, intelligence and companionship. It champions works by lesser-known and female composers as well as works from the traditional canon. Based in Berlin, the Trio met at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler and currently studies with pianist Jonathan Aner; it has received additional coaching from Kolja Blacher, Troels Svane and Eldar Nebolsin.

Last season Trio Brontë appeared as soloist for Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the Jyväskylä Sinfonia under the baton of Jan Söderblom, and won first prize in the 2023 Ilmari Hannikainen International Piano Chamber Music Competition in Finland. It also gave the world premiere of Tuomas Turriago's *Panta Rhei*, and presented its interdisciplinary programme 'Un Jour', which focuses on works by Germaine Tailleferre, Mel Bonis and Lili Boulanger, and was sponsored by the Bulgarian Culture Perspectives Foundation.

Additional concerts this season take Trio Brontë to Germany, Netherlands and the United States.

Lili Boulanger: D'un matin de printemps

Lili Boulanger was born into an intensely musical family: her older sister Nadia became one of the 20th century's most influential teachers; but as a composer, it was Lili who was the more talented. She was just two years old when Fauré discovered she had perfect pitch; at five, she was observing classes at the Paris Conservatoire and she was the first female composer to win the prestigious Prix de Rome – a prize that had always eluded Nadia. Lili's career, however, was short-lived: having suffered chronic illness from the age of two, she died just a few months short of her 25th birthday. *D'un matin de printemps* ('On a spring morning') appeared the same year and was one of the last pieces to be written in her own hand: her final works were dictated to her sister. This short trio, however, gives no hint of her failing health. As the title suggests, it's an optimistic piece with more than a faint echo of Debussy. His music had made a great impression on her and he in turn admired hers, which he described as 'undulating with grace'.

Wolfgang Rihm: Fremde Szenen III

Wolfgang Rihm, who died last August, composed in all musical genres and in 2003 was described as 'one of the most prolific and versatile composers of our time'. His three *Fremde Szenen* date from the early 1980s and have become classics of new chamber music repertoire, presenting the unexpected mix of a fierce, avant-garde soundworld with a homage to Schumann – a composer to whom Rihm felt particularly close. Schumann himself often used the title *szenen* or 'scenes', while *fremde* translates variously as 'distant', 'strange' and 'alien'. In this third scene, the Schumann references are somewhere between a song and a funeral march and appear as snatches. 'I have attempted', said Rihm 'to invent my own personal portrait of Schumann and his musical "handwriting" – hence the subtitle 'attempts for piano trio'.

Franz Schubert: 'Notturmo' for Piano Trio

In 1827, the year before he died, Schubert produced two masterly piano trios, one of which – the Trio in B flat, D.898 – is thought to have been the original home of this single-movement Adagio. Nobody knows why he replaced it and when the untitled manuscript first came to light, it was dismissed as a mere reject. It was decades before the work appeared in print, the gentle, mesmeric music reflected in the publisher's title 'Notturmo'. Subsequently, however, it has gained greater significance thanks to its close affinity with the Adagio of Schubert's great C major string quintet. It is now widely thought that the 'Notturmo' acted as something of a trial run for the later movement, which he composed the following autumn.

Felix Mendelssohn: Piano Trio No.2 in C minor

When he wrote this trio in 1845, Mendelssohn was at the peak of a hectic career as composer, pianist and conductor and was in demand all over Europe for performances of his own work. His first Trio had already found a permanent place at the heart of the chamber music repertoire and had been described by Schumann as 'the master-trio of our time'. This second one, however, can justifiably be called its equal.

Mendelssohn chooses the 'ambivalent' key of C minor, a key Beethoven thought perfect for conveying 'serene tragedy'. This is an intensely emotional work – its passion is clear from the start – the opening movement deliberately marked to be played 'with fire'. Calm is restored in the subsequent Andante, evoking one of his trade-mark Songs without Words and then comes a frantic Scherzo with echoes of his incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The best-known movement is the grand, climactic finale, at the heart of which Mendelssohn quotes a Lutheran chorale: a hymn imploring God not to abandon the dying sinner.

He dedicated the trio to the violinist Louis Spohr but the actual manuscript was to be a birthday present for his sister Fanny: it was completed shortly before she turned 41. This was the last chamber-work Mendelssohn lived to see published. He was only 36 but his energy and health were already failing and two years later, both he and Fanny were dead.

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