

## Paddington Trio II

*Paddington Trio:*

**Tuulia Hero** violin

**Patrick Moriarty** cello

**Stephanie Tang** piano

**Philip Setzer** violin

**Martin Moriarty** viola

**Sam Perkin** (b.1994)

Piano Trio No.1 'Freakshow' (2016) 10'

- i. Rat Circus
- ii. The Two-Headed Nightingale
- iii. The Living Skeleton
- iv. The Gentle Giant
- v. The Angel of Death
- vi. Pandora's Basket
- vii. The Armless Fiddler

**Dmitry Shostakovich** (1906–1975)

Piano Quintet in G minor, Op.57 (1940) 40'

- i. Prelude: Lento — Poco più mosso — Lento –
- ii. Fugue: Adagio
- iii. Scherzo: Allegretto
- iv. Intermezzo: Lento –
- v. Finale: Allegretto

**Paddington Trio** is a Britten Pears Young Artist for 2025/26, here for a two-week residency on the Chamber Music in Residence course.

Paddington Trio is celebrated for its energetic communication, imaginative programming and highly refined ensemble playing. Much like the famous bear, Finnish violinist Tuulia Hero, Irish cellist Patrick Moriarty and American pianist Stephanie Tang came together at Paddington Station and made London their home.

From the start, the Trio's rise was swift, winning first prize at the 70th Royal Over-Seas League Competition, the 2024 Storioni Concours and the 2023 Parkhouse Award at Wigmore Hall.

In 2023, the Trio made its concerto debut in Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the Jyväskylä Symphony Orchestra in Finland conducted by Jan Söderblom.

Highlight engagements for the 2026/27 season include debuts at Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Lucerne Chamber Music Society, and the Helsinki Seriös, West Wicklow and Newbury Spring festivals.

Their debut album, *Freakshow*, will be released by Pentatone in 2027. Tuulia Hero performs on a 1740 Goffriller violin, generously on loan from the Beare's International Violin Society.

## Sam Perkin: Piano Trio No.1 'Freakshow'

Sam Perkin's First Piano Trio was commissioned by the Gwyl Gregynog Festival to mark the centenary of the Dublin Easter Rising of 1916. In the aftermath of the rebellion almost 2,000 activists were deported from Ireland by the British government and interned in the Frongoch prison camp in North Wales from June to December that year. The camp was notorious for its harsh conditions, and it was stories told by prisoners about their life there that provided the inspiration for Perkin's piece.

One anecdote involved a prisoner who spent his days catching vermin, in order to put on a show for his fellow-inmates: a so-called 'Circus of Rats'. This put Perkin in mind of the human 'freakshows' common in sideshows of the late 19th century and early 20th centuries: 'I decided to write a set of miniatures dedicated to its stars,' he said.

Building on themes of captivity and spectacle, each movement explores a different story:

1. *The Rat Circus*: the viciously squeaking rats in the prisoner's circus at Frongoch.
2. *The Two-Headed Nightingale*: Millie and Christine McCoy, the African-American conjoined twins who were sold to a circus and became world-famous for their waltzes and vocal duets.
3. *The Living Skeleton*: Isaac W. Sprague, whom P.T. Barnum showcased in the 1860s as 'The Original Thin Man'. At age 44, Sprague was 5 feet and 6 inches tall but weighed only 43 pounds.
4. *The Gentle Giant*: Robert Wadlow, the tallest person in recorded history – at the time of his death in 1940 he was 8 feet, 11.1 inches tall.
5. *The Angel of Death*: an ominously lyrical sketch of the malicious Josef Mengele, the fearsome Nazi doctor who performed genetic experiments on captives at Auschwitz. Among his subjects were the seven members of the Ovitz Family, an imprisoned family of Jewish-Hungarian dwarves who made their living as entertainers. Mengele kept them alive as subjects for his pseudoscientific experiments on heredity.
6. *Pandora's Basket*: Li Yeng, a famous Chinese contortionist of the early 20th century, born without arms or legs, she was small enough to sit in a basket only several inches deep.
7. *The Armless Fiddler*: a celebration of Carl Herman Unthan, an armless, Prussian-born violinist and actor

who learned to play the violin with his feet by strapping the instrument to a stool. He appeared as a soloist with many European orchestras and lectured to injured German World War I veterans about how to retrain their legs and feet to take over for missing upper limbs.

## Shostakovich: Piano Quintet

In 1938, Shostakovich was dining with the Soviet Union's most celebrated chamber group, the Beethoven Quartet, and between them, they came up with the idea for his only piano quintet. It was originally to have been a string quartet but the composer was keen to add a piano part so that he could play it with them. His reasons were purely practical: the players had a busy international performing schedule and Shostakovich had a strong desire to travel: 'The Beethoven Quartet who get to go everywhere, will now have to take me with them and I will get my chance to see the world!'

At the time, Shostakovich was enjoying a lull in his volatile relationship with the Soviet authorities. Two years earlier, he had been publicly denounced by Stalin for writing music that was 'unharmonious, muddled and bourgeois' but he had redeemed himself with his Fifth Symphony, and was now judged to have become a true Soviet artist. So complete was his rehabilitation that even before its premiere, the Quintet was nominated for – and won – the inaugural Stalin Prize. This came with a monetary award of 100,000 roubles which, for the average Soviet worker, equated to about 20 years' income.

The Quintet deliberately echoes earlier times, with movements such as Prelude and Fugue, which pay clear homage to Bach. These are followed by a Scherzo in the form of a wild, rustic dance. The ponderous Intermezzo then leads seamlessly into a finale which would have amused its first audience with a theme traditionally used to accompany the clowns in a Russian circus.

The work was an instant success and soon attracted such regular encores – particularly of the Scherzo and the Finale – that it became known as a 'piece in five movements of which there are seven'. Shostakovich himself was so overwhelmed by the premiere that he could not bring himself to go home: 'Instead, I have been wandering the streets of Moscow — my soul filled with bliss.'

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