

# **ABERDEEN CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERTS**

## **ZEMLINSKY TRIO**

**Fountainhall at the Cross Church (Queen's Cross Church)  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

### **ZEMLINSKY TRIO:**

**Peter Cigleris** Clarinet

**Evva Mizerska** Cello

**Emma Abbate** Piano

### **PROGRAMME:**

#### **Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805 – 1847)**

Fantasia in g minor for cello and piano

Capriccio in A flat for cello and piano

#### **Beethoven (1770 – 1827)**

Trio in B flat Op.11

#### **Cécile Sarah Hartog (1857 – 1940)**

Châteaux en Espagne Nos. 1 and 2

#### **Brahms (1833 – 1897)**

Clarinet Trio in a minor Op.114

### **REVIEW:**

The Zemlinsky Trio, Peter Cigleris clarinet, Evva Mizerska cello and Emma Abbate piano gave us a wonderfully well balanced performance in every way. Each half of the programme had a clarinet trio by a well known composer, first Beethoven, then Brahms preceded by a pair of duos by a woman composer. In the first half, the two pieces by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel were for cello and piano. In the second half, the Trio by Brahms was preceded by two pieces by Cécile Hartog for clarinet and piano.

Fanny Mendelssohn is probably the better known of the two woman composers. She was the older sister of Felix Mendelssohn, a pianist as well as a composer. The first of her pieces we heard today was *Fantasia in g minor for cello and piano*. Before the concert, I had listened to two performances on the internet. I was disappointed by the fact that in both cases, the cello, at least at the beginning, could hardly be heard above the piano. What a delight it was therefore to hear Evva's cello singing out so clearly, and with such a deliciously rich tone. The balance between cello and piano in this performance was pure perfection. The piece begins slowly, then the piano speeds up and the cello sings out with fingers on fingerboard staying firmly near the top. There was a further fast passage and here, Evva's fingers fairly scampered over the fingerboard with leaps too. The piano excelled in complex playing.

In the second of the two pieces, *Capriccio in A flat*, the cello had melodic playing that came across almost like an operatic aria. Once again slow and fast music were contrasted and the gorgeous tone of the cello really made the fine quality of the music ring out.

Beethoven's *Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano in B flat Op.11* is in three movements. In the first, *Allegro con brio*, the very exemplar of trio playing was achieved by all three members of the Zemlinsky Trio. Each had a starring role but they melded together perfectly as well. Beethoven's piano writing absolutely sparkles here with dazzling firework runs. The other players matched this to perfection with lovely rich cello sound and beautifully well-controlled clarinet playing. What an amazing combination of sound!

In the second movement *Adagio*, the piano playing was sumptuous and both rich cello and pure soaring clarinet sang their hearts out. The finale *Allegretto* which is a theme with nine variations was wonderfully light textured with more than a touch of humour especially at the end when the cello goes pizzicato. This movement had two splendid piano solo sections played brilliantly by Emma Abbate.

After the interval it was the turn of clarinetist Peter Cigleris to join with Emma Abbate and to introduce the two pieces by Cécile Hartog whose music was new to most of us. Her two *Châteaux en Espagne* turned out to be absolutely delightful. To begin with Peter's perfectly well-controlled playing was absolutely enchanting. His phrasing and variation in dynamics gave the music its special pictorial quality. The second of the two pieces under the same title had a marvellous dance-like feeling. Both players made it lilt along bewitchingly.

The *Clarinet Trio in a minor Op. 114* by Brahms was every bit as well blended and balanced as the Beethoven. There was a splendid section in the opening movement, *Allegro* where the instruments had scalar passages both up and down. It was as if the cello and clarinet had a conversation and possibly an argument before coming together happily at the end of the movement.

In the *Adagio*, clarinet and cello had autumnal sounding romantic melody supported by strolling piano chords. The word autumnal suggests sadness but also richness. Both sentiments were there in this smoothly blended music.

The third movement has been labelled *Andantino gracioso* by Brahms. That word *gracioso* is exactly what we got from the Zemlinsky Trio. This was sunshiny music with quite an upswing. In the final *Allegro*, did I detect short moments of sadness richly suggested by the cello? However it was that sense of optimism which Brahms has written into the final moments of the Trio that came through so exuberantly in Monday's definitive performance of the work by the Zemlinsky Trio.

ALAN COOPER

