



GREETINGS from Simon Fryer, Artistic Director

Welcome to the 119th season of *Music in the Afternoon*. The WMCT proudly presents the most sought-after musicians on the world stage as well as introducing performers who will surely be in that position before very long.

Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch comprises three of the finest international instrumentalists performing today. Since forming in 2009 the Trio has performed, broadcast, and recorded widely throughout Europe and Israel. For the 2017 season, besides their performance for *Music in the Afternoon* the trio will perform at the Wigmore Hall, and will follow concerts in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Poland with further performances at the Concertgebouw and a return to the Wigmore Hall. Today, Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch performs a fascinating program of Russian and German works demonstrating 100 years of development of this popular combination.

The Aizuri Quartet has garnered critical acclaim for its explosive combination of depth, refinement and vigour. These dynamic young women are passionate about creating diverse points of entry for audiences into the string quartet repertoire and the Aizuri is renowned for its engaging and thought-provoking programs. Today's program is no exception, juxtaposing youthful works by major composers and a new work by Caroline Shaw.

Pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin was awarded the prestigious Career Development Award offered by the Women's Musical Club of Toronto in 2015. Also Silver Medalist and Laureate of the Krystian Zimerman award for the best sonata at the International Chopin Piano Competition in the same year, we are proud to support M. Richard-Hamelin in his rapid ascent towards becoming one of the most important pianists of his generation. His program of Mozart, Chopin, Babadjanian, and Schumann promises the depth of thought and limitless virtuosity for which he has been repeatedly praised.

Thank you for subscribing to the 119th season of the WMCT – the heart of artistry, the essence of chamber music.

March 9, 2017, concert is sponsored by

Betty & Joe Gray

The McLean Foundation

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for assistance in presenting
Music in the Afternoon.**



PROGRAMME

Trio Élégiac No.1 in G minor

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873 - 1943)

Piano Trio Op.63 in D minor
Mit Energie und Leidenschaft
Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch
Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung
Mit Feuer

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

INTERMISSION

Piano Trio No.2 in E minor
Andante - Moderato
Allegro non troppo
Largo
Allegretto

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906 - 1975)

Visit the artist's website at <http://www.trioshamerewallfisch.com>

Complimentary refreshments will be available at intermission.
Please come and meet the artists in the lobby following the concert.

NOTES

Rachmaninov's *Trio Élégiac* is an early work, completed in 1892 when the composer was nineteen and still a student at the Moscow Conservatory. It thus predates the founding of the WMCT by six years, but has never been performed in one of our concerts; this is not as remarkable as it seems, however, since the work remained in manuscript until 1947 when it was eventually published posthumously. In 1891, the year before its composition, Rachmaninov, who was enrolled as both a pianist and as a composer, had taken his final piano exams a year early and had passed with honours. That summer he completed his first Piano Concerto and in the fall began work on his first symphonic poem, *Prince Rostislav*. The following summer he was to take his final exams in composition, with a one act opera based on a Pushkin poem as his principal offering. The composition of the *Trio Élégiac* in G minor was apparently slipped in during this hectic activity since the manuscript is dated 18-21 January 1892. Rachmaninov's sister-in-law Sofia Satina maintained that the work had been in existence some time before that and Barrie Martyn has suggested that perhaps the date represents simply a final polish before the work's first performance. There seems to have been no particular person for whom this trio was an elegy. More likely it was Rachmaninov's attempt to follow the example of Tchaikovsky, who in 1881 had written a Piano Trio dedicated to the memory of the pianist and composer Nikolai Rubinstein – that too ends with a funeral march. The composer gave the first performance of the trio on January 30th with the concertmaster of the Bolshoi orchestra, David Kreyn and the cellist Anatole Brandukov; possibly Rachmaninov's first public concert outside the Conservatory. Writing later to his cousin, Natalia Skalon, he said, "You can't imagine what it means to give a concert of your own. It's a matter of begging at doors of houses where you would otherwise never wish to go...and [is] extremely disagreeable, boring, and time-consuming ...The concert was given to help my poor financial situation. And in this respect, the concert was not a success. I didn't even cover my expenses."

Schumann's D minor Trio, along with a companion piece in F major, was written in 1847, the year after the Second Symphony and two years after the first performance of the well-known Piano Concerto. The composer was living in Dresden at the time and, although he had settled into a comfortable domestic routine, he and his wife found the musical life of the city dead compared to the one they had left behind in Leipzig -- as Schumann complained in a letter to the violinist Ferdinand David – "there is so little music to hear." There were thoughts of moving and at the end of 1846 the composer and his wife made a trip to Vienna. Their audiences were disappointingly small and Schumann then turned his eyes to Berlin as a possible centre for future activities. On their return to Dresden, the composer settled down to a number of different projects, not least work on his opera *Genoveva*,

for perhaps a whole week and complete a vast quantity of music. He was a prodigiously fast composer and professed to find this a bad thing. "One shouldn't compose as quickly as I do...It is exhausting, rather unpleasant, and at the end of the day you lack any confidence in the result."

In his first visit to Ivanovo, in the summer of 1943, Shostakovich wrote most of his Eighth Symphony. The following year he completed the trio on today's programme. He had begun the work in December 1943, as we learn from a letter he sent to his friend Ivan Glikman. He continued working on it at the beginning of the new year and had almost completed the first movement when he heard of the unexpected death of his great friend, the polymath Ivan Sollertinsky. He was devastated. In a letter to Sollertinsky's widow he said, "It is impossible to express in words all the grief that engulfed me on hearing the news ... [He] was my very closest and dearest friend. I am indebted to him for all my growth. To live without him will be unbearable difficult." He was to dedicate the trio on which he was working to his friend's memory, but for the moment he was unable to compose anything and suffered bouts of depression and ill health throughout the spring. In July he moved to Ivanovo and in these surroundings he was able to resume composition, again at his usual hectic pace. By 13th August he had completed the work. For Sollertinsky's sister the second movement was an amazingly exact portrait of her brother ... "his temper, his polemics, his manner of speech, his habit of returning to one and the same thought, developing it." The third movement is a passacaglia, a baroque form often associated with mourning, while the last movement has been described as a *Dance of Death*, which according to Patrick McCreless "carries us from a private world to a public one." This contains the composer's first use of a 'Jewish theme,' a melody using "the scales and rhythms of Jewish folk music as Shostakovich knew it." Whatever the theme's particular meaning here, and there have been many different interpretations, it was important enough for him to quote again in 1960 in his famously autobiographical Eighth String Quartet. The public premiere of the work, which was well received, took place in Leningrad on 14 November 1944 with the composer at the piano and two members of the Beethoven Quartet playing violin and cello.

John Mayo

*** Notes for the upcoming April 6 and May 4 concerts will be available online and printed at the concerts.

TODAY'S ARTISTS

Hagai Shaham, violin
Arnon Erez, piano
Raphael Wallfisch, cello

Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch was founded in 2009 and comprises three of the finest international instrumentalists performing today. Playing chamber music together at the Pablo Casals Prades Festival Hagai Shaham and Raphael Wallfisch recognised an immediate musical synergy. Arnon Erez joined them for trio concerts in Lucerne and the Netherlands later that year and the Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch was established.

Since 2009 the Trio have performed, broadcast and recorded widely throughout Europe and Israel. For the 2016 season, the trio will perform at the Wigmore Hall; and follow concerts in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Poland and Canada with further performances at the Concertgebouw and a return to the Wigmore Hall. Trio Shaham Erez Wallfisch enjoys a longstanding relationship with Nimbus Records with whom to date they have recorded the Mendelssohn piano trios, a disc of French repertoire and a disc of Russian repertoire. In January 2016 they released an all-Brahms CD, which includes the piano trios and the Double Concerto.

"... utterly moving, as a result of a truly great modesty which cannot be replaced by simplicity or unpretentiousness; a modesty without any sentimentality. The musicians know, with minute precision, how to guard the boundary between the intimacy of chamber music and the sweeping grandeur of a large-scale concert, only achievable by artists whose capacities and experience are on an equally high level."

Fonoforum

"The deeper the music, the finer the vividly-recorded performance of these distinguished players... the smiles are palpable and the Allegro molto is full of delight. There's lovely introspection in the bittersweet Elegia too... the players have a firm but never under-emotional grip on Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio... uninhibitedly brilliant..."

BBC Music Magazine