



All-Round Vision

Pavel Kolesnikov's 2018-19 season spans the pianist's characteristic breadth of work, including International Piano Series debut recital at Southbank Centre, Brahms sonatas with Lawrence Power, Hallé Orchestra concerto debut and chamber music dates at Wigmore Hall

'The world seems to be awash in brilliant young Russian pianists just now, but Pavel Kolesnikov stands apart,'
BBC Music Magazine

Beethoven's perplexing humour, fresh perspectives on Brahms and points of comparison and contrast between Chopin and Chausson are among the artistic strands running through Pavel Kolesnikov's 2018-19 season. The London-based pianist's schedule includes his debut recital in the Southbank Centre's prestigious International Piano Series, concerto dates with the City of Birmingham Symphony, the BBC Symphony and the Hallé orchestras, and chamber music recitals at Wigmore Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall. It also contains room for performances with his new Trio Aventure, two outings as part of the London Piano Festival at Kings Place, and a solo recital at the Salle Gaveau in Paris.

Pavel Kolesnikov's forthcoming schedule underlines the breadth of his work as concerto soloist, solo recitalist and chamber musician. Above all, it reflects his innate curiosity and determination to bring fresh ideas to the art of programming. "I'm doing what I want to do, which I believe is the way to go," he comments. "I follow this all-round approach not because I feel obliged to; rather, it's natural for me to do things across the range of disciplines. At the moment I have a hunger for such variety and I like how one discipline informs another. I find it's a very harmonious way of working."

Versatility and variety are clearly present in Kolesnikov's solo and chamber programmes over the coming months. His first recital in the International Piano Series, set for the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Thursday 15 January 2019, offers subtle combinations of the three Intermezzi Op.117 by Brahms with Beethoven's early Sonata in E flat Op.7; keyboard miniatures by Tchaikovsky; and the Suite in A and Pavane in F sharp minor by Louis Couperin. "If someone had asked me about Brahms eighteen months ago, I would have said he was not a composer whose music I really connected with, although I'd played many of his pieces and liked them," recalls Pavel Kolesnikov. The pianist's perspective changed during the course of an afternoon walk. "It usually takes me a long time to build a programme and get everything in the right place," he notes. "But the idea for the Queen Elizabeth Hall programme came out of the blue. Brahms's Op.117 Intermezzi, which I've always loved, suddenly sprang to mind. I decided that they could be split in performance and paired with pieces by other composers."

Kolesnikov had already begun thinking about Brahms before, while working on the music of the French baroque composer Louis Couperin. He noticed surprising points of comparison and similarities in their artistic personalities, not least the rare combination of robust earthiness, high refinement and fatalistic melancholy conveyed by the two composers' music. "Brahms's Intermezzi are among his most extraordinary pieces," he says. "They're so concentrated, with very intense and very suppressed emotion. They contain so many compositional intricacies yet are so effortless and also so ambiguous. It always felt too much to play them one after another, even though they share features in common. Hearing them in sequence, for me, diminishes their effect. I wanted to pair them with pieces that bring out their character. This programme is about trying to extract the nature of the music. If we talk in photographic terms, it has some unusual angles, but it is not deliberately shocking or controversial."

Brahms fills the bill of Pavel Kolesnikov's first collaboration with Lawrence Power on Sunday 12 May. Their Queen Elizabeth Hall programme comprises the composer's complete sonatas for violin and viola, played by Power on two instruments. "I've been fascinated by Lawrence Power's work for many years and felt it was the right moment to take on what for me is a big and important project with him."

Pavel performed the 1871 version of Brahms's *A German Requiem* for chorus, soloists and two pianos last March, explored his *Four Serious Songs* with Benjamin Appl at the Kilkenny Arts Festival in August, and is set to deliver a programme of Brahms's piano music for four hands with Samson Tsoy at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris on Sunday 14 October. Kolesnikov has also selected the composer's three Intermezzi Op.117 as part of

his International Piano Series debut at Queen Elizabeth Hall and his recital at the Salle Gaveau in Paris on Wednesday 6 February. Brahms will also feature in a series of concerts with his new Trio Aventure.

The latter, he explains, evolved from his long-term duo partnership with Latvian violinist Elīna Bukša. They met as students at the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth in Belgium and have since found the ideal trio partner in the young French cellist Aurélien Pascal. Trio Aventure made its debut in 2017 and continued with performances earlier this year. It opens its 2018-19 season on Friday 21 September with a recital of Haydn's Trio No.44 in E major Hob.XV:28, Brahms's Piano Trio No.1 and Schubert's Piano Trio No.2 in E flat major D929 at the Festival du Vexin and will reconvene for further performances in the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland in December. "We see the trio as a flexible project that can involve other people," notes Pavel Kolesnikov. "We're playing in trio formation this season but are exploring the possibilities of building programmes involving different duo permutations and solos from the trio and, in future, other musicians."

Elīna Bukša joins Kolesnikov for a captivating programme at Wigmore Hall on Sunday 6 January, given in company with the Quatuor Hèrmes. The programme combines Chopin's Piano Concerto No.2, presented in the version for piano and string quintet made during the composer's lifetime, with Chausson's monumental Concerto for piano, violin and string quartet in D major Op.21.

Other highlights of Pavel Kolesnikov's season include Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Thursday 27 September); his Hallé Orchestra debut in Mozart's Piano Concerto No.22 in E flat major K.482 (Thursday 21 March); and a return to the BBC Symphony Orchestra to perform the original version of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1. He will also join cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan for an all-Russian programme, including cello sonatas by Myaskovsky and Shostakovich, at Wigmore Hall on Tuesday 2 October, and partner Samson Tsoy in music for two pianos by Schumann/Debussy and Stravinsky at Kings Place on Saturday 6 October.

"I think K.482 is one of Mozart's most extraordinary concerti, not one of the most played but certainly one of the most inspired," he observes. "It's inspired in the same way that *Così fan tutte* is inspired: a work written by a composer filled with so many fresh and harmonious ideas, who was absolutely delighted by the creative process. There's something about its emotional content that really speaks to me. I'm very happy about making my debut with the Hallé with this piece."

Pavel Kolesnikov's date with the BBC Symphony at the Barbican Centre on Thursday 15 November marks his first collaboration with the orchestra's chief conductor, Sakari Oramo. "I've established a wonderful relationship with the BBC Symphony and am looking forward to working with Sakari," he says. "I'm delighted that we're playing the original version of the Tchaikovsky. Although it's not hugely different from the version everybody knows, it's a much more coherent composition. I was astonished when I first heard the original a few years ago to discover how my interpretation of the familiar second version was intuitively moving towards the first version's lyricism."

Hyperion Records recently issued Pavel Kolesnikov's fourth recording for the label. His all-Beethoven album, supported by the Philip Loubser Foundation, was released on Friday 31 August, shortly before the launch of his new season. It offers a mix of early miniatures, the 'Moonlight' Sonata and the Piano Sonata in G major Op.14 No.2, the Seven Bagatelles Op.33 and the 32 Variations on an Original Theme in C minor WoO 80. "The idea was to explore how Beethoven uses very similar technical means to express humour and terror," he reflects. "I built the programme around these big contrasts of light and shade, laughter and fury. A good laugh is not so readily associated with Beethoven, although his sense of humour is a world on its own - elegant or wild, earthy or sophisticated, gentle or confusing...I think he's one of those very rare composers who can communicate humour in the sphere of music with formidable ease. I wanted the effect to be very immediate and searched for the way to make piano speak - rather than sing! - in a very expressive way. I'd be glad to bring out some corners of Beethoven that are rarely in the limelight, and also repertoire-wise - there are some fabulous smaller pieces on this recording, which will be very unfamiliar to the audiences."

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Thursday 27 September 2018

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 7.30pm

Alpesh Chauhan conductor | **Pavel Kolesnikov** piano | **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra**

Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op.43

Saturday 6 October 2018

Kings Place, 4pm

LONDON PIANO FESTIVAL

Couperin Keyboard Suite in G minor

Schumann Fantasie in C major, Op.17

Saturday 6 October 2018

Kings Place, 7pm

LONDON PIANO FESTIVAL

Pavel Kolesnikov piano | **Samson Tsoy** piano

Schumann/Debussy Six etudes in canon form

Stravinsky Concerto for two pianos

Thursday 15 November 2018

Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Pavel Kolesnikov** piano | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, Op.23

Sunday 6 January 2019

Wigmore Hall, 7.30pm

Pavel Kolesnikov piano | **Elina Bukša** violin | **Quatuor Hèrmes**

Chopin Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21

Chausson Concerto for Piano, Violin and String Quartet in D, Op.21

Tuesday 15 January 2019
Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm
INTERNATIONAL PIANO SERIES

Brahms Intermezzo in E flat, Op.117 No.1
Beethoven Sonata in E flat, Op.7
Tchaikovsky *Natha-valse*, Op.51 No.4; *Polka peu dansante*, Op.51 No.2; *Passé lointain*, Op.72 No.17
Brahms Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op.117 No.2
Couperin Suite in A for harpsichord
Brahms Intermezzo in C sharp minor, Op.117 No.3
Couperin Pavanne in F sharp minor, G.120

Wednesday 6 February 2019
Salle Gaveau, Paris, 8.30pm

Brahms Intermezzo in E flat, Op.117 No.1
Beethoven Sonata in E flat, Op.7
Tchaikovsky *Natha-valse*, Op.51 No.4; *Polka peu dansante*, Op.51 No.2; *Passé lointain*, Op.72 No.17
Brahms Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op.117 No.2
Couperin Suite in A for harpsichord
Brahms Intermezzo in C sharp minor, Op.117 No.3
Couperin Pavanne in F sharp minor, G.120

Thursday 21 March 2019 (The Bridgewater Hall)
Friday 22 March 2019 (Sheffield City Hall)
Saturday 23 March 2019 (Leeds Town Hall)

Johannes Debus conductor | **Pavel Kolesnikov** piano | **Hallé**

Mozart Piano Concerto No.22 in E flat major, K.482

Hyperion Records (CDA68237, UK release 31 August 2018)

Beethoven
Andante in C major, WoO211
Presto in C minor, WoO52
Allegretto in C major, WoO56
Allegretto in C minor, WoO53
Piano Sonata in C sharp minor 'Moonlight', Op.27, No.2
Seven Bagatelles, Op.33
Piano Sonata in G major, Op.14, No.2
32 Variations on an original theme in C minor, WoO80

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