



## French Impressions

### **Stephen Waarts makes Wigmore Hall solo recital debut (17 September 2019) with compelling programme of works by Fauré, Szymanowski and Bartók**

'Waarts's tone is just gorgeous – rich and singing, its sweetness balanced by a dark lustre,' *Gramophone*, February 2019

*Gramophone* hit the target earlier this year in its review of Stephen Waarts's debut album for Rubicon Classics. "I'm convinced he's the real deal," it concluded. A five-star review in the *Daily Telegraph* and critical plaudits from the *Sunday Times* and *BBC Music Magazine* underlined the violinist's rising-star status. There's sure to be keen interest when he makes his solo recital debut at Wigmore Hall on Tuesday 17 September 2019, the latest in a series of high-profile performances across Europe and North America. He will be joined by regular duo partner Gabriele Carcano. Their programme offers a typically bold combination of repertoire, pairing Fauré's vivacious Violin Sonata No 1 in A major Op.13 with Szymanowski's *Mythes* in the concert's first half and closing with Bartók's Rhapsody No.2 and Violin Sonata No.2.

Stephen Waarts, winner of the 2019 Orchestra Award at the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA), has drawn acclaim for the tonal variety and poetic shading of his playing. "I'm greatly looking forward to playing this programme at Wigmore Hall," he says. "I performed there two years ago for the Jacqueline du Pré Charity Concert. It was a special experience and gave me the chance to work in those wonderful acoustics. It's a fantastic place to play."

Waarts wove his Wigmore programme around a thread of French influence. Bartók and Szymanowski, he explains, were inspired by the Impressionists and particularly by Debussy. Fauré's early violin sonata, meanwhile, first performed in 1877, offers glimpses of later developments in French music. Although the French connection is not always obvious in these pieces, the influence of Debussy is crystal clear in *Mythes*. The Fauré, which was written while Debussy was studying at the Paris Conservatoire, points towards Impressionism. "I think Fauré's sonata will work well with the other compositions," Waarts observes. "I chose two works by Bartók, as I did for my Rubicon recording, to show different sides of the composer. The Second Rhapsody is based on Hungarian folk melodies and rhythms and is lighter than the Second Sonata, but they share strong connections."

Before returning to Wigmore Hall Stephen Waarts is set to perform Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy* on Friday 10 May with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and Lawrence Foster at KKL Luzern as part of ICMA's gala concert. He will join conductor Christoph Eschenbach in July to record Hindemith's Violin Concerto for the Ondine label, and give his first performance of Mozart's Sinfonia concertante with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Timothy Ridout conducted by András Schiff on 30th September 2019. This will be part of the Kronberg Academy Festival.

"This is a busy year for me," he notes. "There's a lot of repertoire to explore, which I find really exciting. The Hindemith Concerto is one among many great works from the 1930s that deserves to be much better known. I have been inspired by Gidon Kremer, who has done so much to restore really fine pieces to the repertoire. He arranged Weinberg's 24 Preludes for Cello for violin, and I will play some of them in Lucerne this May. It's so important to be open to new music and listen to recommendations from friends, composers and others who really know the repertoire. I love the thrill of discovering something new, just as I love returning to pieces that I know well and becoming obsessed with them all over again."

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**Tuesday 17 September 2019**

**Wigmore Hall**

**Stephen Waarts** violin | **Gabriele Carcano** piano

**Fauré** Violin Sonata No.1 in A major, Op.13

**Szymanowski** *Mythes*, Op.30

**Bartók** Violin Sonata No.2, Sz.76

**Bartók** Rhapsody No.2, Sz.90