



## Beethoven Variations

**Paul Lewis marks Beethoven Year with performances of *Diabelli Variations* in the UK and Europe, complete cycles of the composer's piano concertos and piano sonatas by Beethoven and Schubert. The pianist's celebrations also include release of boxset on Harmonia Mundi featuring the *Diabelli Variations*, the complete Piano Sonatas and the complete Piano Concertos. Lewis's 2019-20 season also includes Grieg's Piano Concerto with New York Philharmonic and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and Mozart's Concerto for two pianos No.10 in E flat major K365 with the Hallé and Montreal Symphony Orchestra.**

'He's a tiger, he's a lamb: he's whatever Beethoven wants, projected with an honesty and clarity that's hard to beat,' *The Times*



Beethoven's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year arrives at the ideal time for Paul Lewis. The British pianist has structured his new season to complement celebrations of the composer's inventive genius with programmes devoted to some of the greatest landmarks in the keyboard repertoire. Lewis's homage to Beethoven begins with the conclusion of his Haydn, Brahms and Beethoven project at Saffron Hall (13 October) and as part of the International Piano Series at London's Royal Festival Hall (15 October). His programme includes Beethoven's 33 Variations on a waltz by Anton Diabelli, the iconic *Diabelli Variations*, a central pillar of the pianist's 2019-20 season.

"At the end of my exploration of these composers over three seasons, we reach possibly the greatest of Beethoven's piano works, the *Diabelli Variations*," Paul Lewis comments. "I decided to place it together with Haydn's early Piano Sonata in E minor Hob. XVI/34, which is not played so often but is a wonderful piece, full of drama but with little of the humour we associate with Haydn. It makes a good companion to Brahms's Op.117 *Intermezzi*, three of the saddest pieces he ever wrote, the 'lullabies to my sorrow', as he called them. The heartfelt anguish is there, but Brahms doesn't scream about it; everything is internalised, which makes these pieces all the more powerful."

Lewis, who first performed Beethoven's monumental *Diabelli Variations* almost twenty years ago, reflects on the gradual evolution of his interpretation and the often imperceptible changes of perspective that come with age and experience. "I remember what an effort it was just to learn the music back then," he recalls. "The *Diabelli* is fifty-five minutes long; whenever I play it, I know that it's going to be a different journey, that there will be diversions along the way that I could never anticipate. You learn something new with each performance, which is one of the many absorbing things about it."

Beethoven was in his late forties when he composed his variations on Viennese publisher Anton Diabelli's waltz theme. The work's extreme contrasts, sense of creative renewal and seemingly limitless invention unfold within the conventional boundaries of variation form. "Its strong structure has to be evident, otherwise the work can be reduced to a sequence of unrelated ballet scenes," Paul Lewis observes. "If you hold the structure in mind, you have more licence. Each variation has its own unique character so I think you have to go as far as possible to get that across, and that's great fun."

Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* and Piano Sonatas Op.27 Nos.1 'Quasi una fantasia' & 2 'Moonlight', stand at the heart of Paul Lewis's recital dates in the UK and Europe throughout 2019-20. The two Op.27 sonatas and Fantasia in G minor Op.77 are on the bill with Schubert's Piano Sonata No.18 for his recital at the Turner Sims Concert Hall in Southampton (28 April 2020). "I've never played the Op.77 Fantasia before, which is so rarely heard these days," he says. "It's such an unusual piece, like a written-down improvisation. I've placed it between the Op.27 sonatas, which are both marked 'quasi una fantasia', to draw out their fantasy-like elements." Lewis's recordings on Harmonia Mundi of the *Diabelli Variations*, together with Beethoven's complete Piano Sonatas and Piano Concertos alongside the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Jiří Bělohlávek, will be re-released in November 2019 as a special boxset to mark the composer's anniversary, while his first ever recording of the complete *Bagatelles* is due to be released in summer 2020.

The *New York Times* praised Paul Lewis for the 'integrity and imagination' of his recording of Beethoven's five piano concertos, while the *Daily Telegraph* described it as 'a superb set'. His vision of the works, which has matured and deepened in the nine years since the album's release, is sure to draw critical attention this season. Lewis will direct Beethoven concertos for the first time from the keyboard in the coming year, starting at Dublin's National Concert Hall with the Wiener Kammerorchester (30 April). The programme pairs Mozart's final concerto, No.27 K595, with Beethoven's first, the Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat Op.19. His schedule also encompasses the Piano Concerto No.4 in G major Op.58 at the Barbican Centre with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo (7 May), and several cycles of all five piano concertos, including with Orquestra Camera Musicae and Tomàs Grau at the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona (25 & 26 May) and at music festivals worldwide.

Paul Lewis starts Beethoven Year with two recitals for the Tiroler Festspiele Erl, opening with a repeat of his Beethoven and Schubert programme (5 January) and continuing the following morning with the *Diabelli Variations*, and goes on to celebrate the composer's anniversary with recitals of Op.27 Nos.1 & 2 and the *Diabelli Variations* at the Conservatorio Verdi in Milan (3 June) and works by Beethoven and Schubert at the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg (27 August).

Amid the demands of the Beethoven anniversary, Lewis has made room for Mozart. He will join Ryan Wigglesworth with the Hallé at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall (31 October) and Angela Hewitt with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Kent Nagano (16 January) to perform the Concerto for two pianos No.10 in E flat major K365. "There's something very friendly about that piece," he says. "It's a work with no big storm clouds, which smiles more or less from beginning to end, something for friends to play together."

Mozart's Concerto No.27 in B flat major K595 is on the cards for Lewis's debut with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Andris Poga in Geneva and Lausanne (27 & 28 November). "There's something physically as well as musically cleansing about playing Mozart" he observes. "I've enjoyed living with K595 last season and look forward to returning to it again this season. I love the purity and honesty of that music – there's not a moment of show in his last piano concerto. It's a miracle."

Other highlights of Paul Lewis's season include Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor in Brisbane with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Alondra de la Parra (15 & 16 November) and at the Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Daniel Harding (9, 10 & 11 January). He will join Harding again later in the year to perform the work at Munich's Philharmonie am Gasteig with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (23 & 24 April). "The Grieg is a wonderful piece, far from an old Romantic warhorse. It's fresh and lyrical, and that's what I love about it." In February 2020, Lewis will also embark on a nine-date UK and North America recital tour in partnership with Steven Osborne, performing at venues including London's Wigmore Hall (11 February), Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. (18 February), and Vancouver Playhouse (23 February).

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## **HAYDN-BEETHOVEN-BRAHMS RECITAL CYCLE**

### **Recital Programme 4**

**Haydn** Piano Sonata in E minor Hob XVI/34

**Brahms** Three Intermezzi Op.117

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Sunday 13 October 2019**

**Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden, 3pm**

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 4

**Tuesday 15 October 2019**

**Royal Festival Hall, London, 7.30pm**

**INTERNATIONAL PIANO SERIES**

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 4

**Thursday 31 October 2019**

**Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 7.30pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Ryan Wigglesworth** conductor | **Hallé**

**Mozart** Concerto for two Pianos No.10 in E flat major, K365

**Sunday 10 November 2019**

**Grand Hall, The University of Hong Kong, 3pm**

**Schubert** Sonata for Piano No.18 in G major D894

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Friday 15, Saturday 16 November 2019**

**QPAC Concert Hall, Brisbane, 11am (Friday) & 7.30pm (Saturday)**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Alondra de la Parra** conductor | **Queensland Symphony Orchestra**

**Grieg** Piano Concerto in A minor Op.16

**Monday 18 November 2019**

**City Recital Hall, Sydney, 7pm**

**Schubert** Sonata for Piano No.18 in G major D894

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Wednesday 27 November 2019 Victoria Hall, Geneva, 8pm**

**Thursday 28 November 2019 Salle Metropole, Lausanne, 8.15pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Andris Poga** conductor | **Orchestre de la Suisse Romande**

**Mozart** Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat major, K595

**Wednesday 18 December 2019**

**International House of Music, Moscow, 7pm**

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.13 in E flat major 'Quasi una fantasia' Op.27 No.1

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.14 in C sharp minor, 'Moonlight', Op.27 No.2

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Sunday 5 January 2020**

**Festspielhaus Erl, 6pm**

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.13 in E flat major 'Quasi una fantasia' Op.27 No.1

**Beethoven** Fantasia in G minor Op.77

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.14 in C sharp minor, 'Moonlight', Op.27 No.2

**Schubert** Sonata for Piano No.18 in G major D894

**Monday 6 January 2020**

**Festspielhaus Erl, 11am**

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Tuesday 11 February 2020**

**Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Steven Osborne** piano

**Fauré** 'Dolly' Suite

**Poulenc** Sonata for Piano four-hands FP8

**Debussy** *Six épigraphes antique*

**Debussy** *Petite Suite*

**Stravinsky** *Trois pièces faciles*

**Ravel** *Ma mère l'Oye*

**Friday 6 March 2020 Cultuurcentrum Hasselt, 8pm**

**Saturday 7 March 2020 Koningin Elisabethzaal, Antwerp, 3pm**

**Sunday 8 March 2020 BOZAR Brussels, 8pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Phillippe Herreweghe** conductor | **Antwerp Symphony Orchestra**

**Mozart** Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat major, K595

**Thursday 23 & Friday 24 April 2020**

**Philharmonie am Gasteig, Munich, 8pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Daniel Harding** conductor | **Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks**

**Grieg** Piano Concerto in A minor Op.16

**Tuesday 28 April 2020**

**Turner Sims Concert Hall, Southampton, 7.30pm**

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.13 in E flat major 'Quasi una fantasia' Op.27 No.1

**Beethoven** Fantasia in G minor Op.77

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.14 in C sharp minor, 'Moonlight', Op.27 No.2

**Schubert** Sonata for Piano No.18 in G major D894

**Thursday 30 April 2020**

**National Concert Hall, Dublin, 7.30pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Wiener Kammerorchester**

**Mozart** Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat major, K595

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, Op.19

**Thursday 7 May 2020**

**Barbican Hall, London, 7.30pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Sakari Oramo** conductor | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.4 in G major, Op.58

**Monday 25 & Tuesday 26 May 2020**

**Palau de la Musica Catalana, Barcelona, 8pm**

**Paul Lewis** piano | **Tomàs Grau** conductor | **Orquestra Camera Musicae**

**Monday 25 May 2020**

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, Op.19

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.4 in G major, Op.58

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor, Op.37

**Tuesday 26 May 2020**

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.1 in C major, Op.15

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat major, Op.73 'Emperor'

**Wednesday 3 June 2020**

**Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, Milano, 9pm**

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.13 in E flat major 'Quasi una fantasia' Op.27 No.1

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.14 in C sharp minor, 'Moonlight', Op.27 No.2

**Beethoven** 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Diabelli Op.120

**Thursday 27 August 2020**

**Angelika-Kaufmann-Saal, Schwarzenberg, 4pm**

**SCHUBERTIADE**

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.13 in E flat major 'Quasi una fantasia' Op.27 No.1

**Beethoven** Fantasia in G minor Op.77

**Beethoven** Piano Sonata No.14 in C sharp minor, 'Moonlight', Op.27 No.2

**Schubert** Sonata for Piano No.18 in G major D894