

United by Music

Paul Lewis's Haydn-Beethoven-Brahms project enters second season with two compelling new programmes

North American engagements in 2018-19 include dates with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Haitink, Mozart in Montreal, and song recitals with regular duo partner Mark Padmore



Music's power to touch deep emotions, open minds and cultivate compassion fuels the artistry of Paul Lewis. The British pianist's concerts in North America during the 2018-19 season are richly stocked with works that speak to the joys and sorrows, the contradictions and complexities of being human. He is set to give recitals of compositions by Haydn, Beethoven and Brahms in Montreal, Vancouver, Washington D.C. and New York City, explore early Mozart piano concertos in company with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, present his latest thoughts on Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and join tenor Mark Padmore for a six-concert US tour of songs by Brahms, Mahler and Schumann.

The solo keyboard compositions of Haydn, Beethoven and Brahms held Paul Lewis's attention last season and remain at the heart of his forthcoming schedule. His 2018-19 itinerary includes multiple performances of two programmes that place Haydn's piano sonatas in company with later masterworks by Beethoven and Brahms. "For many years I had wanted to play Haydn sonatas and looked for a context for his music," he observes. "Brahms, with his very serious, deeply felt way of expressing himself, appeared at first to be the opposite of Haydn. Of course that seriousness is there in Haydn, too, but in a completely different manner. And with Haydn there's also the wit and humour. I thought that Beethoven would bind these two opposites together, especially his Bagatelles and Diabelli Variations. After playing two programmes last season, I see now that, like Haydn, Brahms is a classical composer. That's something I did not expect to feel with such clarity before I began playing this project."

Having opened the new season with performances at the Mostly Mozart and Tanglewood festivals, Paul Lewis brings a taster of his Haydn-Beethoven-Brahms project to Montreal Symphony Orchestra's Virée Classique Festival on 31 August 2018. He is set to unveil the third programme in the series in New York City on 3 November, as part of the People's Symphony Concerts at Washington Irving High School, and repeat it at the Vancouver Playhouse on 9 December. The bill comprises the compelling combination of Brahms's Seven Fantasies Op.116 and Haydn's Piano Sonata in C minor Hob.XVI/20 in the concert's first half, and Beethoven's Seven Bagatelles Op.33 and Haydn's Piano Sonata in E flat major Hob.XVI/52 in its second.

Lewis's fourth and final Haydn-Beethoven-Brahms offering begins by pairing Haydn's Piano Sonata in E minor Hob XVI/34 with Brahms's Three Intermezzi Op.117, a collection of works marked by their haunting introspection. The concert's second half is devoted exclusively to Beethoven's 33 Variations in C on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli Op.120. He will perform the programme at the Vancouver Playhouse on 3 March 2019 before taking it to Washington D.C. for the Concerts from the Library of Congress series five days later.

"The way in which music can bring people together is so important," comments Paul Lewis. "I don't think people can fail to be touched by the experience of listening to a programme of Haydn, Beethoven and Brahms. It keeps us in touch with something invaluable. Haydn, for instance, is totally honest and direct in everything he says. Looking back from the midway point of this series, the audience response to his music has been so enthusiastic. People have often been surprised by just how consistently engaging and creative he is. Although it's difficult to judge how your relationship with the music changes when you're immersed in these programmes over many months, I feel that I could play nothing other than these pieces for two years and never tire of them. There's always something to be learned from each concert, which comes partly from the audience and the energy of concentration you sense from them. That arises in the moment of performance; it's not something you can create in the practice studio."

Brahms launches Lewis's work in the new year, present in each of six recitals with Mark Padmore. Their tour includes dates at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, Newman Center for the Performing Arts in Denver, and Philadelphia's Perelman Theater (13, 16 & 22 January 2019). The programme features Brahms's three Heine settings from his majestic Op.96 songs, Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. Reviewing their Alice Tully Hall recital in April, *The New York Times* wrote: 'When musical soloists at the top of their respective fields join forces, it can make for a formidable meeting of sensibilities, a fascinating friction, or both. With the British tenor Mark Padmore and his compatriot pianist Paul Lewis [...] it was mostly a meeting of minds, and fine ones.' 'It's impossible to overstate the value of strong artistic partnerships,' Paul Lewis notes. 'It's healthy for a pianist, who could opt for the apparent safety of solo recitals, to develop in company with other musicians. To be musically sociable, in the right context, is incredibly important. It's such a privilege to perform *Dichterliebe* with Mark, for example, and to return to it with him. Some of the play-outs, especially in the last song, are so challenging, with so many things going on that are incredibly subtle and not the least bit obvious. That will always keep the music fresh, no matter how many times you come back to it.'

The pianist offers another mainstay of his season's repertoire, Mozart's Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat major K595, on 1 September with Virée Classique Festival's Ensemble de la Virée, hand-picked by the Montreal Symphony's Music Director Kent Nagano. He returns to Chicago the following month for three performances of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat major Op.19 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Haitink (25, 27 & 30 October). 'The energy and intensity of Bernard's performances, his concentration and presence at the age of 89, are simply incredible,' he notes. 'We worked together last April on Mozart's Piano Concerto No.25 in C major. Everything about it felt so right. I'm looking forward to our concerts together. It's a privilege to work with him at this stage in his life.'

In March and April, Paul Lewis will also join the Australian Chamber Orchestra for a short tour of the United States, performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No.12 in A major K.414 in Stanford, Costa Mesa, Princeton and Boston (31 March, 4, 11 & 13 April 2019).

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HAYDN-BRAHMS-BEETHOVEN RECITAL CYCLE

Programme 3

Brahms Seven Fantasies Op.116

Haydn Piano Sonata in C minor Hob.XVI/20

Beethoven Seven Bagatelles, Op.33

Haydn Piano Sonata in E flat major Hob XVI/52

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

VIRÉE CLASSIQUE

Friday 31 August 2018

Cinquième Salle, Montreal, 7pm

Haydn Piano Sonata in E flat major Hob XVI/49

Brahms 4 Klavierstücke op.119

Saturday 1 September 2018

Maison symphonique de Montréal, 2pm

Paul Lewis piano | Kent Nagano conductor | Ensemble de la Virée

Mozart Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat major K595

Saturday 1 September 2018

Cinquième Salle, Montreal, 8.30pm

Paul Lewis piano | Yolanda Bruno violin | Nikki Chooi violin | Lambert Chen viola | Cameron Crozman cello

Mozart Piano Concerto No.12 in A major K414

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Thursday 25, Saturday 27 & Tuesday 30 October 2018

Symphony Center, Chicago, 8pm

Paul Lewis piano | Bernard Haitink conductor | Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Beethoven Concerto for piano and orchestra No.2 in B flat, Op.19

Saturday 3 November 2018

Washington Irving High School, New York City, 7.30pm

PEOPLES' SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 3

Sunday 9 December 2018

Vancouver Playhouse, 3pm

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 3

Sunday 3 March 2019

Vancouver Playhouse, 3pm

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 4

Friday 8 March 2019

Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Haydn-Brahms-Beethoven recital – Programme 4

Sunday 31 March 2019, Bing Concert Hall, Stanford, 2.30pm

Thursday 4 April 2019, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Costa Mesa, 8pm

Thursday 11 April 2019, Alexander Hall, Princeton, 8pm

Saturday 13 April 2019, Jordan Hall, Boston, 8pm

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA US TOUR

Paul Lewis piano | Australian Chamber Orchestra

Mozart Piano Concerto No.12 in A Major K414

TANGLEWOOD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Friday 26 July 2019

Koussevitzky Music Shed, 8pm

Paul Lewis piano | Andris Nelsons conductor | Boston Symphony Orchestra

Mozart Piano Concerto No.12 in A Major K414

Tuesday 30 July 2019

Seiji Ozawa Hall, 8pm

Haydn Piano Sonata in E minor Hob XVI/34

Brahms Three Intermezzi Op.117

Beethoven Seven Bagatelles, Op.33

Haydn Piano Sonata in E flat major Hob XVI/52