

Cello Concerto No. 1 in C Major

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Moderato

Adagio

Allegro molto

Haydn's appointment as music director at the court of the Esterhazy family in 1761 provided him with both an orchestra of first-rate musicians and the opportunity to write music displaying their individual abilities. The *Cello Concerto in C Major* was almost certainly written for Joseph Weigl, the principal (or possibly the only) cellist in the small palace orchestra, incorporating hallmarks of his playing style. The 'thumb position' was a relatively new technique, with the left thumb placed on top of the fingerboard. This enabled the player to reach high notes, impossible with the thumb tucked behind the instrument, and Weigl had obviously mastered this to great effect. He also apparently enjoyed playing a long note quietly below the rest of the orchestra, gradually getting louder until breaking through as the soloist – this happens in both the second and third movements, and in music written for him by other composers.

Stylistically, this early concerto still uses the Baroque method of a repeated theme interwoven with passages of different material, but Haydn was composing at the dawn of experimentation with contrasting themes as well as making better use of the players supporting the soloist. The first movement starts at a steady march-like pace, with a pair of horns and oboes adding a military edge to the string section. After the orchestral introduction, the solo cello repeats the opening theme, elaborating on it before offering fresh ideas. Haydn occasionally introduces a lively dialogue between soloist and orchestra in addition to the traditional discreet accompaniment, a step towards the innovations found in his later compositions.

The second movement is a gentle *Adagio*, supported by strings alone, a contemplative relaxation between a movement showing the cellist's agility in reaching the depths and heights of the instrument's extended range, and the relentless drive of the lively and light-hearted *Allegro* that concludes the piece.

We are lucky to have this concerto at all: although Haydn had noted its composition in his own list of works, the actual manuscript had disappeared. It was only in 1961 that a copy, not in his own handwriting, turned up in the Prague National Museum among papers found in a castle with no immediate connection to the composer. The music matched Haydn's personal catalogue entry, and joined his later *Cello Concerto in D major* as an audience favourite.

The soloist

Cellist **Jamal Aliyev** is much in demand as a soloist of exceptional talent. In 2021 he was featured by Classic FM among the thirty most brilliant young classical musicians playing today.

Born in Azerbaijan, Jamal studied in Moscow, then at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Royal College of Music. He made his solo debut at the BBC Proms in 2017. He has performed widely internationally. Highlights include playing with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (broadcast by Radio 3), the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, the Presidential Symphony Orchestra in Turkey, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra in Venezuela and the Tomsk Philharmonia at the Trans-Siberian Festival.

Jamal Aliyev performed Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto No. 1* with the SSO in November 2016. He plays on a 1700 Giuseppe Guarneri 'filius Andreae' cello.

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra

Jacques Ibert (1890–1962)

Allegro
Andante
Allegro scherzando

As a composer, Ibert ploughed his own furrow. It is said that he only wrote music he knew he would enjoy listening to, and smiled as he listened to a radio broadcast of this concerto's first performance in 1934, given in Paris by the flautist Marcel Moyse, for whom it had been written. As with Haydn and his cellist Weigl, the *Flute Concerto* was built around Moyse's mastery of the clarity and flexibility of 'French School' flute technique. Flautists in France had adopted the lighter-toned metal flute, while the wooden instrument was still preferred in other countries – the result was an increase in agility and articulation comparable to singing. (Moyse himself was of the opinion that only native French speakers had the correct natural mouth and tongue position that enabled perfect tone and phrasing to bring the best out of the flute!)

The opening orchestral chord of the first movement serves as a starting gun for the soloist, who is in almost constant motion throughout. The flute flows through the orchestral texture, exchanging conversational phrases with the other instruments, all swept along by the momentum until the final *fortissimo* chord calls a halt.

The second movement has the gentle rocking quality of a barcarolle or lullaby, with a liquid melody over a harmonically shifting accompaniment that periodically gathers itself up into brief moments of stillness left hanging in the air. An unexpectedly intense central section eventually plays itself out and the calm rocking returns.

The final movement is busy, but without the restlessness of the first movement. Three strong syncopated chords followed by a bubble of sound evoke a celebration: fireworks, or champagne corks? There are hints of dance music, a tarantella, a jazz band. The convivial atmosphere suddenly breaks off into a short cadenza leading to a languid nocturne-like passage that works its way back to the hubbub of the earlier music. A second cadenza and a final celebratory orchestral flourish bring the concerto to a close.

The soloist

Emma Halnan first came to prominence as the woodwind category winner of BBC Young Musician 2010. Other competition successes include the Sussex Prize for Woodwind in the Royal Overseas League Competition 2019 and first prize in the Sir Karl Jenkins/Arts Club Classical Music Award 2016.

Emma studied at the Royal Academy of Music and previously at the Purcell School. She was principal flute of the European Union Youth Orchestra for 2014–16. She has appeared at major venues worldwide and performed with orchestras including the London Mozart Players, the European Union Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Emma Halnan played Mozart's *Flute Concerto No. 1* with SSO in May 2019.

Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837)

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Rondo

The trumpet is an ancient instrument, essentially a very long tube. At some point in its early development as a military signal-giver, it was coiled up to a convenient size, but musically its peacetime orchestral role was mainly confined to fanfares, as melodies were only possible on its highest notes. This clarion range is used to great effect in Bach's second *Brandenburg Concerto* and Handel's *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, but eventually the 'keyed trumpet' was developed in the late 18th century by piercing the tube and covering the holes, at first with leather sliders then with metal keys, offering the player a wider selection of notes.

Anton Weidinger, a Viennese imperial court trumpeter, experimented further with his keyed instrument, producing what he called an 'organized trumpet'. He required virtuoso music to match its potential; first Haydn then Hummel wrote concertos for him, incorporating traditional fanfares as well as the newly available chromatic runs, trills and diatonic melodies now possible throughout its entire range. The modern trumpet, from the 19th century, has valves instead of keys, and because of its greater reliability soon replaced the keyed trumpet.

The premiere of Hummel's concerto coincided with the composer's appointment as Haydn's successor at the Esterhazy court, and took place on New Year's Day, 1804. If the audience were expecting an immediate demonstration of Weidinger's famed facility after the substantial orchestral introduction to the opening *Allegro con spirito*, they may have been initially disappointed by the conventional opening *arpeggio* and fanfare – possibly a Haydnesque joke by Hummel – but not for long. The trumpet is put through its paces with changes of register, changes of key and the famed flexibility provided by the improved keys.

The *Andante* that follows shows off a gentle melodic quality previously associated with wind instruments, and moves seamlessly via a hunting-horn call to a vigorous *Rondo* that is not quite a rondo, as it substitutes the return of the theme towards the end with a march by Hummel's contemporary, Cherubini. Vienna had recently been treated to performances of Cherubini's opera *Les Deux Journées* and the music had become very well-known. However, the score had not included a part for trumpet. By including the march within the concerto, Hummel was able to fulfil the dual function of delighting his audience with a currently popular melody, and giving Weidinger the chance to show what he could do with it!

The soloist

Zoë Perkins is a classical trumpeter, and has played at leading venues in the UK including the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall.

Zoë is now a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, where she also studied the natural trumpet. Zoë became principal trumpet in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in 2016, and in the same year was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year, where she was praised for her challenging repertoire choices and sensitive playing.

Performance highlights include the Haydn *Trumpet Concerto* with the LSE Orchestra in the Church of St Clement Danes and the Vivaldi *Concerto for Two Trumpets* at St James Piccadilly. Zoë is due to perform the Neruda Trumpet Concerto with the Keld Ensemble in 2021.

Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Andante malinconico
Allegro ma non troppo

In 1859, the fifteen-year-old Spanish violinist Pablo Sarasate asked Camille Saint-Saëns to write a piece of music for him. Both had been musical prodigies: the composer's debut concert at the age of ten had included piano concertos by both Mozart and Beethoven, and by this time Sarasate was a seasoned performer with an astonishing technique. Saint-Saëns composed a violin concerto for him the same year, and originally intended the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* to be its final movement, but realised it could better stand alone as a showpiece for the young virtuoso.

The *Andante malinconico* opening sets the scene with its heart on its sleeve, gentle and sighing with a hint of passion, but soon moves to the main theme of the *Rondo* itself. This is restrained at first with a steady drumbeat of an accompaniment, but gradually the music becomes more flamboyant with ever more violinistic tricks on display from the soloist.

The quieter episodes keep the audience in suspense, waiting to hear what will happen next. The quicksilver ending does not disappoint; Saint-Saëns, not a string player himself, took advice from Sarasate on making the best use of his immense talent, and produced a work that is both delightful to hear and great fun to watch!

The soloist

Violinist **Ionel Manciu** was born in Moldova and began winning international competitions from the age of eleven. He performs across Europe and is currently at the Guildhall School of Music on an Artist Junior Fellowship.

Ionel has performed in many prestigious venues across Europe, including the Casa de Musica in Porto, the Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall and Milton Court in London, the Mozarteum Concert Hall in Salzburg, the Romanian Atheneum in Bucharest and the Carnegie Hall in New York.

As part of the Mithras Piano Trio, he is the winner of the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition, the Royal Over-Seas League Competition and the Cavatina Trust Chamber Music Competition. He plays on a Gagliano violin.

Programme notes by Gill Paterson