



barbican

Classical Music

Concert programme

Piotr Anderszewski

Thu 3 Oct 7.30pm

Hall

Important information



When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.30pm, with a 20-minute interval.



I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Please ...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



Please don't ...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance, or during the interval.



Looking for refreshments?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1.



Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels G, 1 and 2.



Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

Piotr Anderszewski

Thu 3 Oct 7.30pm, Hall

Piotr Anderszewski piano

Ludwig van Beethoven Bagatelles, Op 126

- 1 Andante con moto, cantabile e compiacevole
- 2 Allegro
- 3 Andante, cantabile e grazioso
- 4 Presto
- 5 Quasi allegretto
- 6 Presto – Andante amabile e con moto

Johannes Brahms Four Pieces for Piano, Op 119

- No 1 Intermezzo in B minor
- No 3 Intermezzo in C major

Six Pieces for Piano, Op 118

- No 1 Intermezzo in A minor
- No 2 Intermezzo in A major

Three Intermezzi for Piano, Op 117

- No 2 Intermezzo in B flat minor

Six Pieces for Piano, Op 118

- No 6 Intermezzo in E flat minor

Interval 20 minutes

Béla Bartók Bagatelles

- 1 Molto sostenuto
- 2 Allegro giocoso
- 3 Andante
- 4 Grave
- 5 Vivo
- 6 Lento
- 7 Allegretto molto capriccioso
- 8 Andante sostenuto
- 9 Allegretto grazioso
- 10 Allegro
- 11 Allegretto molto rubato
- 12 Rubato
- 13 Elle est morte. Lento funebre
- 14 Valse: Ma mie qui danse. Presto

Johann Sebastian Bach Partita No 1 in B flat major, BWV825

- 1 Praeludium
- 2 Allemande
- 3 Corrente
- 4 Sarabande
- 5 Menuet I & II
- 6 Gigue

Produced by the Barbican

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The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre

Piotr Anderszewski makes an eagerly anticipated return to the Barbican for an evening full of contrasts, from early Bartók to late Brahms.

Polish pianist Piotr Anderszewski pairs two compelling sets of inventive miniatures by Beethoven and Bartók, written almost 100 years apart, to prove that there's no such thing as a 'mere bagatelle'. These are contrasted with the intimacy and introspection of late Brahms and the profundity and playfulness of Bach.

Composed in 1824, Beethoven's *Bagatelles*, Op 126, are a set of six short pieces for piano that reflect his genius in miniature form. Although the term 'bagatelle' may suggest something light or trivial, Beethoven's Op 126 utterly transcends the label, compressing the narrative and emotional depth of an entire sonata into the span of a few minutes with great refinement, sophistication and extremes of expression.

The *Bagatelles* are some of Beethoven's final compositions for solo piano, written when his music was becoming ever more introspective and complex. Each miniature encapsulates a unique mood – from the lyrical and serene to the playful and dramatic. Beethoven described them as his 'most finished' piano pieces, indicating the care with which he crafted these seemingly simple forms. Despite their brevity, the *Bagatelles* offer fascinating insights into Beethoven's late style, a period marked by experimentation with harmony and form, and a sense of searching beyond traditional musical boundaries.

Johannes Brahms's four sets of piano pieces, Opp 116–119 (from which Anderszewski plays extracts from the last three) are among his final works, and, like Beethoven's *Bagatelles*, are exquisitely crafted miniatures of contrasting moods and textures.

'The little piece is exceptionally melancholy' Brahms told Clara Schumann, describing the first of his Op 119, a delicate and mournful *Intermezzo* in B minor. The third piece of this set is another *Intermezzo*, this



time in C major, is the most lighthearted of all Brahms's late piano pieces, its staccato opening bars providing the melodic shape for the rest of the piece.

The Op 118 Piano Pieces were dedicated to Clara Schumann and each piece is marked by the composer's characteristic richness of harmony, rhythmic subtlety and melodic warmth, qualities perhaps most perfectly demonstrated in the second piece, the most famous and beloved of the set, in A major. The first unfolds in a seemingly spontaneous arc, while the final piece of the set (which Piotr Anderszewski plays after Op 117), in dark E flat minor, opens with a plaintive melody punctuated by harp-like, diminished seventh arpeggios.

Brahms told a friend that the three Intermezzi, Op 117, were 'three lullabies of my grief'. They bring the listener to a quiet, introspective space, offering a window into Brahms's late-period melancholy and reflection. With its falling arpeggios, No 2 is rhapsodic, dark and brooding, with a contrasting second subject in more consoling D flat major.

Composed in 1908, Bartók's 14 Bagatelles, Op 6, showcase his evolving compositional voice, blending Hungarian folk influences with elements of modernism. These pieces reflect a search for new means of expression and a break from Romantic tradition, highlighting the composer's developing interest in rhythm, dissonance, and folk music.

The influence of eastern European folk music is particularly evident in the rhythmic vitality and modal harmonies that permeate the set. In many of the pieces, Bartók captures the essence of folk melodies without directly quoting them, using simple motifs and infusing them with modern harmonic and rhythmic elements. The music alternates between delicate, lyrical moments and vigorous, percussive sections, creating stark contrasts in mood and texture. And, like

Beethoven and Brahms, Bartók employs great economy of means: each piece is concise and tightly constructed, often focusing on a single idea or gesture.

Ferruccio Busoni hailed the Bagatelles as 'At last, something really new', and they stand out among Bartók's early output for being unashamedly experimental and forward-looking, and displaying many of the qualities associated with his later style.

Bach's Partita No 1 in B flat major, BWV825, is the first of six partitas that form his *Clavierübung* ('Keyboard exercise'), a collection of keyboard works published in 1731. These partitas represent some of Bach's most sophisticated writing for solo keyboard, combining technical mastery with expressive depth. His first biographer, Forkel described them as 'brilliant, well-sounding, expressive and always new'.

The First Partita complements the Bagatelles of Beethoven and Bartók and the miniatures by Brahms in that it, too, is a collection of short individual movements, each with a distinct character. It follows the traditional Baroque suite form, consisting of a sequence of dance movements: Praeludium [Prelude], Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Menuet and Gigue.

The beautifully proportioned opening movement sets an uplifting, graceful tone. The movements which follow are largely built around a B flat broken chord. The Allemande has an unbroken line of semiquavers, the Courante sprightly, dancing triplets embellished with trills, while the stately Sarabande offers an almost meditative contrast. Then comes a delightful interlude with two brief Menuets, the first with its cheerful 'tick-tock' walking bass line, the second soothing and sustained, before the final Gigue – a spirited, energetic dance replete with dazzling hand-crossings and brilliant counterpoint.

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Piotr Anderszewski

Piotr Anderszewski is regarded as one of the outstanding musicians of his generation.

Throughout his career he has concentrated mostly on the classic German/Viennese repertoire encompassing Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann and Webern. He is also drawn to 20th-century central European music, particularly that of Szymanowski and Janáček.

He has appeared with many of the world's leading symphony orchestras, though in recent years he has focused on playing and directing, particularly in the case of Mozart piano concertos. To this end he has recorded Mozart with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Sinfonia Varsovia, as well as Beethoven's First Piano Concerto with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Piotr Anderszewski's discography has grown slowly but steadily and he releases a recording every few years. Since 2000 he has been an exclusive artist with Warner Classics (previously

Virgin Classics). His first recording for the label was Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, which went on to receive a number of prizes. He has also recorded Grammy-nominated discs of Bach's Partitas Nos 1, 3 and 6 and Szymanowski's solo piano works, the latter receiving a *Gramophone Award* in 2006. His recording devoted to works by Robert Schumann received the *BBC Music Magazine's* Recording of the Year Award in 2012. Other *Gramophone* awards have followed – in 2015 for Bach English Suites Nos 1, 3 and 5 and in 2021 for his specially selected set of 12 Preludes and Fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* Book 2. A live performance of the Preludes and Fugues from Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie has since been released on DVD. His latest CD is dedicated to piano works by Janáček, Szymanowski and Bartók.

He has collaborated with various instrumentalists, including Viktoria Mullova, Frank Peter Zimmermann, Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider and the Belcea Quartet. He also performs with his sister, the violinist Dorota Anderszewska and has occasionally appeared with writers and actors in special projects. As a lieder partner he has worked with Matthias Goerne and is preparing future recitals with Ian Bostridge.

His artistic life has been the subject of several documentaries by the film maker Bruno Monsiegeon: *Piotr Anderszewski plays the Diabelli Variations* (2001) explores his particular relationship with Beethoven's iconic work; *Unquiet Traveller* (2008) is an unusual artist portrait, capturing Anderszewski's reflections on music, the composers with whom he has a particular affinity and his Polish-Hungarian roots. In 2016 he found himself behind the camera directing *Warsaw is My Name*, a film dedicated to the city of his birth.

Piotr Anderszewski takes regular breaks from performing to learn new works and to recharge. He is currently writing a book reflecting on his experience as a musician and performer.

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