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A “virtual” Coffee Concert recorded at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford

Sunday February 21, 2021 at 11:15

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Virtual Coffee Concerts are pre-recorded at the Holywell Music Room in Oxford and are
streamed from our YouTube channel at 11:15 on Sunday mornings. (These recordings are
available for a limited time after release but, of course, there will be more to come.)

Timothy Ridout (viola) and Chiao-Ying Chang (piano)

- **Sitt: Albumblätter for Viola and Piano, op 39**
- **Rubinstein: Viola Sonata in F minor, op 49**
- **Schumann: Adagio and Allegro in A flat major, op 70**

Timothy Ridout (viola)

Born in London in 1995, Timothy Ridout studied at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with the Queen’s Commendation for Excellence. He completed his Masters at the Kronberg Academy with Nobuko Imai in 2019 and in 2018 took part in Kronberg Academy’s “Chamber Music Connects the World”. A BBC New Generation Artist since 2019, Timothy is now one of the most sought-after violists of his generation. Having won first prize at the 2014 Cecil Aronowitz Competition, he went on to win the Lionel Tertis Competition in 2016 – the first ever British winner – and was selected by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT). Later awards include the inaugural Sir Jeffrey Tate Prize in Hamburg, the 2019 Thierry Scherz Award at the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, confirming

his position at the forefront of young European soloists.

Timothy has worked with some of the world’s leading conductors, including Christoph Eschenbach, David Zinman, Gabor Takács-Nagy, Sylvain Cambreling and Sir Andras Schiff, and has had concerto engagements with the Deutsches Sinfonie-Orchester, Berlin; Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine; Orchestre National de Lille; the Chamber Orchestra of Europe; Camerata Salzburg; the BBC Symphony; Hamburger Symphoniker; Sinfonieorchester Aachen; the Philharmonia Orchestra; Luzerner Sinfonieorchester; and the Tapiola Sinfonietta and Siberian State Symphony Orchestra. Equally in demand as a recitalist and chamber musician, Timothy’s engagements include several appearances per season at the Wigmore Hall as well as throughout the

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UK, Europe and Japan. Festivals invitations encompass Lucerne, Lockenhaus, Heimbach, Bergen, Evian, Boswil Sommer, Heidelberger-Frühling, Montpellier, Aspen, the Enescu Festival and the Marlboro Academy; whilst his chamber music collaborators include Joshua Bell, Isabelle Faust, Janine Jansen, Christian Tetzlaff, Nicolas Altstaedt, Steven Isserlis, Kian Soltani, Benjamin Grosvenor, Lars Vogt and Christian Gerhaher, among many others. He also maintains a regular relationship with the Nash Ensemble.

Timothy released his debut album – Henri Vieuxtemps: Complete works for Viola – with pianist Ke Ma on Champs Hill Records in spring 2017. His second album – Music for Viola and Chamber Orchestra: Vaughan Williams, Martinu, Hindemith & Britten with Jamie Phillips and l'Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne – was released to general acclaim in February 2020 on Claves Records..

More information:
<http://www.timothyridout.com/>

Chiao-Ying Chang (piano)

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Chiao-Ying Chang began her piano studies at the age of five and gave her debut recital at twelve. She continued her studies with Prof Yu-Chiou Tchen at the Affiliated High School of National Taiwan Normal University before winning a full scholarship to London's Royal Academy of Music where she studied with Christopher Elton and the late Maria Curcio. Later she was awarded the Hodgson fellowship and completed the MMus course with Distinction & a DipRAM, the Academy's

highest award. She was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in 2015 and was selected for representation by the Young Concert Artists Trust.

A top prize-winner at the Leeds, ARD Munich, AXA Dublin and Taiwan International Piano Competitions, Chiao-Ying has appeared as soloist with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Halle, Royal Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Bavarian Radio Symphony, National Irish Symphony and Munich Chamber Orchestra. She has given recitals at prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Jacqueline Du Pre Hall, St. George's Bristol, Carnegie Hall in New York, National Concert Hall in Dublin, Konzerthaus in Berlin, and major festivals throughout the UK and continental Europe. Equally at home as a chamber musician, she has collaborated with renowned artists including James Buswell, Lawrence Power, Alison Balsom, So-Ock Kim and the Ysaye Quartet.

Chiao-Ying is a founding member of the Fournier Piano Trio, winner of the 2013 Parkhouse Award and 2nd prize of the 2011 Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition. Her duo collaboration with cellist Pei-Jee Ng won the Libero Lana Prize at the 2011 Trieste International Chamber Music Competition. Her CD recordings include the complete Schubert Impromptus for German label Audite, a collection of 29 works by Chopin for Musica Indo, inc in Japan, and piano trios by Mendelssohn, Fauré and Ravel with Resonus Classics and USK Recordings.

More information: <https://chiaoyingchang.com>

Albumblätter, op 39 by Hans Sitt (1850-1922)

1. Moderato; 2. Andante sostenuto; 3. Allegro; 4. Allegro; 5. Lento; 6. Allegro, molto vivace.

Born in Prague, Hans Sitt was a leading violin teacher. As a young man, Frederick Delius had lessons from him. Sitt later became professor of violin at the Vienna Conservatoire, where he also taught conducting. He was a principal conductor of the Leipzig Bach Society, and played viola in one of the leading string quartets of the time. His compositions include six violin concertos, but he is probably best known for his orchestration of Grieg's Norwegian Dances.

The term Albumblätter (German for 'Album-leaves') originally indicated short simple pieces of music for solo piano, written in the albums of a composer's friends or patrons and often dedicated to them. The name stuck, long after the idea has outgrown its origins, and was used by composers such as Robert Schumann and Tchaikovsky as the title for collections of short pieces.

Sitt's Albumblätter were published in 1891. After the gently flowing, lyrical opening piece, No 2 is slightly quicker, becoming more agitated for a time, but ending with a few bars of gentle dialogue between the two instruments. The third piece is quicker still, easy-going but, like No 2, with a somewhat darker, more restless middle section. It is followed by a bubbly scherzo with some teasing syncopations in the viola part. No 5 is slow and wistful, verging on melancholy, exploring the lower part of the viola's range. When the opening music is repeated at the end, the piano adds a new counter melody. The whirlwind finale is similar to the tarantella in rhythm, but with an unexpectedly enigmatic ending.

Viola Sonata in F minor, op 49 by Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894)

1. Moderato; 2. Andante; 3. Moderato con moto; 4. Allegro assai.

As a pianist, conductor and teacher as well as composer, Anton Rubinstein was one of the most prominent figures in Russian music in the middle and later years of the nineteenth century.

He first made his mark as a pianist, giving a public recital in 1839, and going on to make a three-year concert tour of Europe with his teacher, taking in Paris, London, and various centres in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Germany. He began his adult professional career with a second European

tour in 1854, and a few years later he became involved in plans for a major reform of musical education in Russia. He was one of the founders of the St Petersburg Conservatoire in 1862, serving as Director for its first five years, and returning to the post in 1887; Tchaikovsky was one of the Conservatoire's first students, and Rubinstein was his main teacher.

Rubinstein's outlook was the opposite of the determinedly nationalistic stance of Balakirev and the composers who gathered round him.

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In fact, he antagonised the Balakirev circle and their great predecessor, Glinka, by publishing an article attacking the Russian folk music elements in Glinka's operas. All the same, both Balakirev and Borodin admired Rubinstein's orchestral work *Ivan the Terrible*. His enormous outlook includes operas (*The Demon* was at one time one of the most popular operas in the repertory), symphonies, concertos, songs and piano pieces, which range from four large-scale sonatas to shorter pieces such as the once-familiar *Melody in F*.

Dating from 1855, Rubinstein's *Sonata* is one of only a handful of nineteenth-century sonatas originally for viola and piano (Brahms's two are adaptations of his clarinet sonatas). It was also published with the viola part transcribed for violin by Ferdinand David (for whom Mendelssohn wrote his *E minor Concerto*). The first movement begins in a forcefully energetic mood, but this soon gives way to a quicker episode in which the viola sets up a lightly dancing figure as backdrop to a broad, lyrical theme for the piano; the two instruments then exchange roles. The music of the start returns, from which the central part of the movement develops. The writing for the piano becomes increasingly showy, before being brought to an abrupt halt, a moment of silence, and the return of the quicker episode. The opening music takes over again, moving from *F minor* to *F major* for a triumphant-sounding climax, but the quicker music comes back once more, and the movement peters out mysteriously.

The second movement begins with a passage of dialogue between the two instruments, before settling into a broad, song-like theme for the viola. The tempo twice becomes faster, and the music increasingly restless, until an unaccompanied phrase for the viola leads back to the song-like theme, this time with both instruments joining in. This reaches a tumultuous climax, but the dialogue with which the movement began returns to round it off quietly.

A galloping rhythmic drive propels the outer sections of the third movement. The middle section is more relaxed in feel, though no less demanding for the players, with its torrent of fast notes for, first, the piano, then the viola. The opening section is then repeated, exactly as before.

The toccata-like pattern with which the piano launches the finale is not just a accompanying figure but forms an essential part of the movement's material. Over it the viola plays an expansive theme, which is followed by a new idea for the piano – a theme in rich chords, to which the viola adds undulating figures full of strange, buzzing trills, a passage striking for its sheer sonority. The viola then takes up the piano's theme, over racing piano arpeggios. The piano, joined by the viola, returns to its opening material, generating the next large span of music, which culminates in a brief unaccompanied cadenza for the viola. After this short breathing space, the energy levels start to pick up again, and the music goes out in an exuberant blaze.

**Adagio and Allegro in A flat major, op 70
by Robert Schumann (1810-1856)**

In 1849 the upsurge of revolution which began in Germany the previous year reached Dresden, where Schumann and his wife, Clara, had been living since 1845. In spite of his republican sympathies, he felt no wish to become actively involved (unlike Wagner, who eventually had to escape to Switzerland to avoid being arrested). On the contrary, the upheavals of public life only seemed to drive him further into his private world. As Clara noted in her diary, "It seems to me extraordinary how the terrible events without have awakened his poetic feeling in so entirely contrary a manner."

Schumann turned to the intimate, domestic field of chamber music, and for the first time began exploring the combination of a single

melody instrument and piano. Besides the Adagio and Allegro for horn, he produced the *Fantasiestücke* for clarinet, the Three Romances for oboe, and the Five Pieces in Folk-style for cello. In all four cases he indicated alternatives to the stated instrument; for the Adagio and Allegro violin or cello are also suggested. As today's concert demonstrates, it has also been taken into the viola repertoire.

The opening section, marked 'slow, with inward expression', is based on a warmly expressive theme, which is recalled in the quieter episodes in the exuberant rondo ('quick and fiery') which follows.

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