

Total performance time: approximately 60', with no interval

## Trio Cordiera

**Antoine Pr at** piano

**Hatty Haynes** violin

**Eliza Millett** cello

**Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach** (1714–1788)  
Piano Trio in D, Wq.89 No.6 (pub'd 1776) 9'

- i. Allegro*
- ii. Andantino*
- iii. Allegro*

**Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897)  
Piano Trio No.2 in C, Op.87 (1882) 29'

- i. Allegro*
- ii. Andante con moto*  
*(Tema con variazioni)*
- iii. Scherzo: Presto –*  
*Trio: Poco meno presto*
- iv. Finale: Allegro giocoso*

**Jennifer Higdon** (b.1962)  
Piano Trio (2003) 14'

- i. Pale Yellow*
- ii. Fiery Red*

**Trio Cordiera** are Britten Pears Young Artists for 2022–23 and are participants on Chamber Music in Residence at Snape Maltings.

The trio was established in 2016 and takes its name from the Italian term for the part of the piano that hosts the strings. Its members are scholars from the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where they have all been taught by world-renowned artists including So-Ock Kim, Krysia Osostowicz, Christopher Elton, Tatiana Sarkissova, Jo Cole and Christoph Richter. The trio is currently mentored by Catherine Manson as part of the Chamberstudio programme. They have previously had extensive coaching with Amandine Savary and Jack Liebeck, James Sleight, Michael Dussek and Bengt Forsberg. They were recently semi-finalists in the 2022 Royal Overseas League Annual Music Competition.

Trio Cordiera has a keen interest in historical performance and the members regularly perform on period instruments. Their approach to learning repertoire is aimed towards a fresh and authentic interpretation, driven by a deep and methodical understanding of the score and the historical context.

### **C.P.E. Bach: Piano Trio**

The mid-18th century saw the rise of a new kind of music-making in Europe: gatherings in private homes centred around the newly-affordable piano. In response, composers began to expand their domestic offerings from solo piano pieces to more social chamber works by including violin and cello. At this stage, however, the strings merely provided accompaniment: typically, the householder would star at the keyboard, with a couple of servants on violin and cello – duties that would have featured prominently in their job descriptions.

C.P.E. Bach was well aware of the new trend: his brother, Johann Christian, was actively promoting it in London and he himself was a first-class pianist. Mindful of market forces, he published his first set of trios in 1776, despite having doubts as to their validity: he once referred to them as ‘non- or half-entities’, being neither solo sonatas nor genuine trios. Nonetheless, the publication was hugely successful and was soon followed by two more, Bach having unwittingly stumbled across a lucrative side-line to the production of religious choral works that constituted his day job. ‘I am having more luck than I have the right to expect,’ he said. ‘People are crazy about my modest concoction, from which one may profit.’

### **Johannes Brahms: Piano Trio No.2**

Brahms was just 21 when he wrote his first piano trio, but the second was a product of his middle age and found him in very different circumstances. He had at last emerged from the shadow of Beethoven and had published two highly successful symphonies, after which his international reputation was assured. He had also achieved financial security and was now settling into the role of established composer, rather than that of piano virtuoso which had previously supplied his bread and butter. He still knew how to write for the instrument, however, and in the summer of 1880 he began work on a four-movement trio, with a Hungarian gypsy theme forming the basis for the second-movement variations. Brahms was famously self-critical so it comes as something of a surprise to find him not only calling the trio the most beautiful he had yet written, but also telling his publisher, rather smugly, that he was ‘unlikely to have published its equal in the last ten years’.

We are now a world away from the domestic trios created by C.P.E. Bach just a century earlier. Subsequent composers, particularly Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, had gradually developed the genre and the instruments were now considered equal partners. Brahms being a pianist, the keyboard might be expected to dominate, but there are many occasions throughout the work when a theme is introduced by violin or cello long before it reaches the piano. It was the keyboard part, incidentally, that almost scuppered the trio’s success. Brahms himself played at the premiere but his lack of practice was obvious: according to Clara Schumann, his playing was ‘nothing but bump, bang and scramble’. The work as a whole, however, impressed her: it was, she said, ‘a great musical treat’.

### **Jennifer Higdon: Piano Trio**

For Jennifer Higdon, music is a reflection of life, and should be enjoyed as such. Her aim as a composer, she says, is simply to ensure that her music communicates to the widest possible audience, from the first-time concert goer to the most sophisticated classical connoisseur. Higdon’s father was a painter: he was keen to expose his children to all types of art but provided no introduction to music, and it was only when his daughter reached her late teens that she began to explore it for herself. She immediately felt a strong connection between music and painting, and began to work on the idea that colour might somehow be reflected in music and could thereby convey atmosphere. She says that during the course of a composition she often imagines colours, as though she were spreading them on a canvas using melodies, harmonies and the instruments themselves, rather than paints. In her 2003 Piano Trio, Higdon deliberately sets out to use colours to convey two sharply-contrasting moods, as conjured up by the titles of the movements: Pale Yellow and Fiery Red.

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