

20.9.

WEDNESDAY SERIES 2

Helsinki Music Centre at 19.00

**Andrew Manze**, conductor  
**Francesco Piemontesi**, piano

*Hubert Parry: Elegy for Brahms, fp in Finland* 13 min

*W. A. Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 27 in B Flat, K 595* 32 min  
*I Allegro*  
*II Larghetto*  
*III Allegro*

INTERVAL 20 min

*Johannes Brahms (arr. Arnold Schönberg):* 40 min  
*Piano Quartet in G Minor*  
*I Allegro*  
*II Intermezzo (Allegro ma non troppo)*  
*III Andante con moto*  
*IV Rondo alla zingarese (Presto)*

Interval at about 20.00.

The concert ends at about 21.10.

Broadcast live on Yle radio 1 and online at [yle.fi/areena](http://yle.fi/areena).

## HUBERT PARRY (1848–1918): ELEGY FOR BRAHMS

The works of Hubert Parry are little known outside the UK, despite the fact that he was a prolific composer of five symphonies and other orchestral repertoire, music for the stage, large works for choir and orchestra, a wide selection of chamber music, scores for piano and organ, and solo songs. As such he paved the way for the renaissance of English music that erupted in the late 19th and early 20th century with Edward Elgar.

For his stylistic models Parry looked to Central Europe. Brahms, in particular, was an important composer for him, and in the late 1870s he even tried – in vain – to become his pupil. The death of Brahms in 1897 grieved Parry deeply, and he composed his *Elegy for Brahms* in the same year, as a spontaneous reaction. It was nevertheless a very personal work, composed above all for himself, and he never edited it for performance or publication. Not until after his death in October 1891 was it edited by his composer colleague Charles Stanford, who conducted it at a Parry memorial concert in November 1918. The tribute of an English composer to a German master may be thought to have both personal and broader significance, for the First World War ended only three days later.

The *Elegy for Brahms* begins in sentimental mood, the opening falling lines being matched by passionate, rising sighs. The ear may detect snatches of motifs familiar from works by Brahms, and the connection is also strong at

more general stylistic and expressive level. But not only is the work elegiac: it also presents a wealth of feeling and at the end a sense of enlightened melancholy, as if grief at the loss of a great composer has been replaced by gratitude for the many masterpieces that composer created.

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791): PIANO CONCERTO NO. 27 IN B FLAT, K 595

Mozart's B-flat piano concerto has often been regarded as a sort of complement to his G-minor symphony, as a kindred spirit but one adopting a different angle in the relative major key. Its expression is simpler yet at the same time more animated than in many of the piano concertos he composed in the 1780s, and in places its harmonies are bolder. Mozart is clearly more interested in the music's coherence and soul than in outward virtuosity designed to dazzle the audience.

The very opening, gentle, differs from the mainstream contemporary concerto: first it creates a soft background texture on which to trace the main-theme melody, and when the piano enters after the orchestral exposition, it presents not an idea of its own but a variation on the orchestra's main theme. All in all, the music has both the flowing melodies and march-like rhythms familiar from many of Mozart's opening movements. The harmonies are particularly bold in the development section, and the many dips into minor keys add extra depth.

The slow movement begins with a tender piano theme of flawless beauty, simple yet charged with meaning in a way only a great master could achieve. Piano and orchestra engage in dialogue in the main theme but unite in the second. Despite its overall serenity, the movement is not without a touch of anguish.

The last movement lilts along, more elegantly than the “hunting finales” in 6/8 time of certain other piano concertos. A few days after the concerto was completed, the charming main theme popped up in a new guise in the song *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling* (Longing for Spring), with the words “Komm, lieber Mai, und mache die Bäume wieder grün” (Come, dear May, and make the trees green again). Something of this longing seems to have found its way into the concerto.

## JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897): PIANO QUARTET IN G MINOR, OP. 25 (ORCH. ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG)

Arnold Schönberg had a life-long admiration for Johannes Brahms. His greatest tribute to his idol was the orchestral transcription he made in 1937 of Brahms’s Piano Quartet in G Minor. In it, he added orchestral brilliance and weight to what was originally an intimate work – so much so that he jokingly called it “Brahms’s Fifth Symphony”.

The Brahms G-minor piano quartet (1859–1861) is quite justifiably one of the most popular works in the chamber repertoire. It precedes the “Sturm

und Drang” period of his youth and the pianist at its premiere performance in Vienna in November 1862 was Brahms himself. The first violinist, Josef Hellmesberger, went into ecstasies over it and is reputed to have exclaimed, “This is the heir of Beethoven”, probably alluding to its strong emotional charge.

Despite building up to foaming torrents, Brahms remains in full command of the forces he has unleashed. There is already evidence of this in the first movement of symphonic proportions: a dense, watertight construction in its use of motifs, as was typical of Brahms. This movement has both stormy and calmer dimensions.

The movement corresponding to a Scherzo differs from the normal symphony format in that Brahms places it second. He did in fact originally call it a Scherzo, before abandoning this heading in favour of *Intermezzo*. The third, slow movement is warm and melodic but nevertheless has a contrasting march-like section in the middle.

The finale is one of Brahms’s most effervescent compositions, and it is precisely here that Schönberg’s transcription is most colourful. The very title – *Rondo alla zingarese* – hints at the spirited gypsy temperament about to follow. Contrasting with the rollicking, energetic main theme are light, nimble passages and glowing, singing sentiment. In the coda, the music works itself up to a frenzy in wild whirls before arriving at a striking conclusion.

Programme notes by **Kimmo Korhonen**  
translated (abridged) by Susan Sinisalo

## ANDREW MANZE

Andrew Manze is widely celebrated for his extensive and scholarly knowledge of repertoire, his skill as a communicator and his boundless energy.

After reading Classics at Cambridge University, Manze studied the violin and has since released a variety of violin CDs, many of them award-winning. He is nowadays a leading expert on historical performance practice.

From the 2014/15 season, Manze has been Principal Conductor of the NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hanover, leading it on a tour to China and South Korea in addition to a busy concert schedule within Germany and Austria. From 2006 to 2014 he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra.

Maestro Manze has guest conducted a host of great orchestras, among them the Los Angeles, Munich and Oslo Philharmonics, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony and the Camerata Salzburg. Forthcoming engagements include appearances with the Bamberg and Melbourne Symphonies and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra.

## FRANCESCO PIEMONTESE

A pianist of exceptional refinement of expression allied to a consummate technical skill, Francesco Piemontesi is widely renowned for his interpretations of Mozart and the early Romantic repertoire, but he has also won great acclaim

for his readings of Brahms, Liszt, Ravel, Bartók and beyond.

Born in Locarno, Switzerland, Francesco Piemontesi studied with Arie Vardi, Alfred Brendel, Murray Perahia, Cécile Ousset and Alexis Weissenberg. He rose to international prominence with prizes at several major competitions, including the 2007 Queen Elisabeth. For the period 2009–2011 he was chosen as a BBC New Generation Artist.

Francesco Piemontesi appears with major ensembles worldwide: the London, Los Angeles and Munich Philharmonics, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Symphonies, the London Philharmonia and many others. He has also performed at the New York Mostly Mozart festival, the Chopin International Music Festival in Warsaw, the Swiss Lucerne and other festivals. A keen chamber musician, he plays with a variety of partners, such as the Emerson Quartet, Antoine Tamestit, Jörg Widmann and Angelika Kirchschrager, and he has given solo recitals at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall New York and the Wigmore Hall in London.

Piemontesi has released discs of the Debussy *Préludes*, works for piano by Mozart, and the Schumann and Dvořák piano concertos on the Decca, Warner and Naïve/Classique labels.

# THE FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle). Its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture and its Chief Conductor as of autumn 2013 has been Hannu Lintu. His predecessors as Chief Conductor were Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo.

The FRSO celebrates its 90th anniversary in the 2017/2018 season, for the Radio Orchestra of ten players made its first appearance on September 1, 1927, at the Aleksanterinkatu 46 studio in Helsinki. It began giving public concerts a few years later and grew to symphony orchestra strength in the 1960s, during Paavo Berglund's term as Chief Conductor.

In addition to the great Classical-Romantic masterpieces, the latest contemporary music is a major item in the repertoire of the FRSO, which each year premieres a number of Yle commissions. Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the Yle archive. During the 2017/2018 season, the FRSO will premiere six Finnish works commissioned by Yle. The programme will also include concert performances of three operas, the FRSO's first festival of its own and major 20th-century violin concertos.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Ligeti, Sibelius, Hakola, Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others, and the debut disc of the opera *Aslak Hetta* by Armas Launis. Its discs have reaped some prestigious distinctions, such as the BBC Music Magazine Award, the Académie Charles Cros Award and a MIDEM Classical Award. Its disc of Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen and Pohjola's Daughter* was Gramophone magazine's *Critic's Choice* in December 2015 and brought the FRSO and Hannu Lintu a Finnish Emma award in the Classical Album category. Music by Sibelius, Prokofiev, Lindberg, Bartók and others will be recorded during the 2017/2018 season.

The FRSO regularly tours to all parts of the world. During the 2017/2018 season its schedule will include a European tour under Hannu Lintu. The home channel of the FRSO is Yle Radio 1, which broadcasts all the FRSO concerts, usually live, both in Finland and abroad. Its concerts can also be heard and watched with excellent live stream quality in the web ([yle.fi/areena](http://yle.fi/areena)).