

## Concert on 24 May

### Programme

- ♪ **Mendelssohn:** *Overture The Fair Melusina*
- ♪ **Beethoven:** *Piano Concerto No.4*
- ♪ **Beethoven:** *Symphony No.7*

City of London Sinfonia

Conductor:

- ♪ **Andreas Delfs**  
(music director of the  
Milwaukee Symphony  
Orchestra)



### Piano soloist: John Lill OBE

- ♪ Made his professional debut at the Royal Festival Hall in 1963
- ♪ Won the most coveted piano prize in the world, the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, in 1970
- ♪ Particularly known for his performances of works by Beethoven
- ♪ He has recorded the complete piano solo and concerto works of Beethoven and Rachmaninov, and all the Prokofiev piano sonatas.



## Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- German composer and pianist
- A crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic eras in Western classical music
- Born in Bonn, he moved to Vienna in his early twenties, studied with Haydn and gained a reputation as a virtuoso pianist
- Beethoven's hearing gradually deteriorated, yet he continued to compose, and to conduct and perform, even after he was completely deaf
- He remains one of the most acclaimed and influential composers of all time

One of the most momentous concerts in history was given in December 1808

All Beethoven, over 4 hours long, including:

- Premiere of Symphony 5
- Premiere of Symphony 6
- Premiere of Piano Concerto 4, with Beethoven as soloist
- Premiere of Choral Fantasia (for piano, chorus and orchestra)



- ♪ This was the period in which Beethoven was extending the boundaries of the classical concerto and symphony in new directions
- ♪ Also, piano design was continuing to develop from the early Zumpe version that we discussed recently
- ♪ Beethoven's 4<sup>th</sup> piano concerto was initially played mostly on Viennese pianos, which had several pedals

- ♪ John Broadwood made his first square piano in 1771. He enlarged Zumpe's design, giving the instrument greater resonance
- ♪ His alterations to the soundboard layout enabled him to expand the compass to six octaves by 1794
- ♪ In 1783 he introduced a sustaining pedal, replacing the previous knee-lever, to hold the dampers aloft from the strings
- ♪ These improvements enabled Broadwood to produce the most sonorous pianos anywhere at the time

- ♪ Thomas Broadwood visited Vienna in 1817, after which he wrote to Beethoven, offering him a piano. Beethoven wrote back: *"I shall regard it as an altar upon which I will place the choicest offerings of my mind to the Divine Apollo"*.
- ♪ Beethoven was very appreciative of the six-octave grands, preferring the bigger tone of the English piano. The piano still exists today.

## *Beethoven: Piano Concerto 4 in G*



1. *Allegro moderato* (19')
2. *Andante con moto* (5½')
3. *Rondo (Vivace)* (10')

## Beethoven: *Piano Concerto 4 in G*

- Composed in 1806 concurrently with the 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony
- Reichardt gave an account of one of the first performances: “A new Fortepiano concerto (the Fourth) of enormous difficulty, which Beethoven performed astonishingly well in the fastest possible tempos. The Adagio (*sic – it’s an Andante!*), a masterpiece of beautifully developed melody, he truly sang on this instrument with profound melancholy”

## Beethoven: *Piano Concerto 4 in G*

- Concerto – two connotations:
  1. Performing together
  2. Fighting or struggling
- The first movement is marked *Allegro moderato*
  - *Allegro* - In a quick, lively tempo, but slower than *presto*
  - *Allegro moderato* - a little slower than *Allegro*

## Beethoven: *Piano Concerto 4 in G*

- ♪ Like the 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony, a 4-note motif is prominent in the first movement
- ♪ It appears at the outset, quietly on the **piano**, after an initial chord

Allegro moderato.  
SOLO. *p dolce*

- ♪ The piano ends its opening remark in D major
- ♪ The **strings'** reply uses the same rhythmic motif, but sounds strangely remote in B major

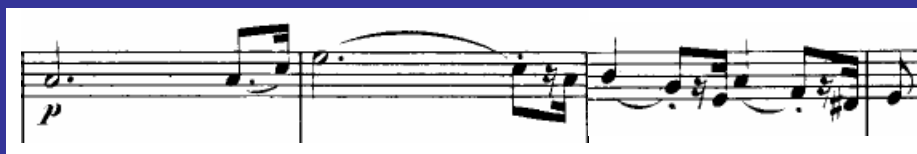
TUTTI.  
*pp*

- ♪ TUTTI indicates a passage in which the orchestra plays without the soloist

- The four-note theme continues in the orchestra



- Eventually a new theme appears in another strange key, A minor



- This would have been very unexpected for listeners who were used to the sonata conventions of Mozart and Haydn

- ♪ The music blossoms into a climax in the major key



- ♪ The exposition (first statements of the various themes) ends with the return of the four-note motif and the entry of the **piano**, which develops and varies the four-note theme
- ♪ Contrast the sound of a piano from Beethoven's day with a modern piano



♪ A new idea emerges on the piano

A musical score for piano and strings. The piano part is in the upper staves, featuring a complex melodic line with many slurs and ornaments. The strings are in the lower staves, playing a simple accompaniment of crotchets. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *espressivo*, and *cresc.*, and the instruction *arco* for the strings.

♪ accompanied by a ½ speed version of the 4-note motif (crotchets rather than quavers)

♪ Incidentally the term *arco* in the score tells the strings to resume playing with the bow after a passage of plucked notes

A close-up of the string accompaniment from the score. It shows two staves with the instruction *arco* at the top. The notes are marked *pp* and are connected by a slur, indicating a sustained passage of plucked notes.

♪ And yet another theme emerges in the orchestra, led by the strings



♪ About halfway through the movement another entry of the piano with the 4-note motif is particularly jarring

♪ the orchestra finishes in D major

♪ but the piano starts on F natural!



- 🎵 In the dramatic section that follows, the bassoons, oboes and flutes take it in turns to play the 4-note theme in rising passages



- 🎵 This theme is not always on the same four notes: here, in the recapitulation, the theme falls on the fourth note



♪ Towards the end of the first movement comes the first *Cadenza*

- ♪ Not written out in this score
- ♪ However, we know that Beethoven preferred “composed” cadenzas rather than virtuosic versions improvised by the soloist
- ♪ He rewrote his cadenza much later for the 6-octave pianos that had become available



## Second movement: *Andante con moto*

- ♪ Strings and piano only – woodwind and brass are silent
- ♪ The strings utter a rather strident theme in E minor

*Andante con moto.*

Violino I. *f* *sempre stacc.*

Violino II. *f* *sempre stacc.*

Viola. *f* *sempre stacc.*

Bassi. *f* *sempre stacc.*

A musical score for the second movement, 'Andante con moto'. It shows the string parts: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Bassi. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto.' and the dynamics are marked 'f' (forte). The articulation is marked 'sempre stacc.' (sempre staccato). The score is in E minor and 4/4 time.

- ♪ The piano's reply is calmly subdued, delicate, beautiful and rather melancholy by comparison, as if from a different world



- ♪ or it's as if the piano is not listening to the strings, and vice versa

There is an unusual instruction to the pianist at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement

- ♪ During the entire Andante the pianist must use the soft pedal (*una corda*) uninterruptedly (there are also occasional Ped. marks for the use of the sustaining pedal)
- ♪ As the Italian instruction suggests, this means that the hammer of the piano is only hitting one or two strings instead of two or three

♪ In due course, at a series of trills and runs, Beethoven asks the soloist to increase to two and then three strings



♪ and then to revert to two and then back to one string



♪ By the end of the movement, the strident theme is more subdued. Has the conversation between strings and piano been resolved?

♪ The end of the movement is a springboard from which the finale launches immediately – *Segue il Rondo* – Beethoven does not allow us a cough break here!



### Third movement: *Rondo (Vivace)*

- ♪ *Rondo*: An instrumental piece or movement in which a theme heard at the beginning recurs between contrasting episodes and again at the end: for example A-B-A-C-A-D-A
- ♪ Beethoven relies mainly on a main theme, on which he provides many variations, and a subsidiary theme, which also returns a couple of times
- ♪ The timpani and trumpets join in, having been silent so far

- ♪ The main theme starts in C major



Violino I.

Violino II.

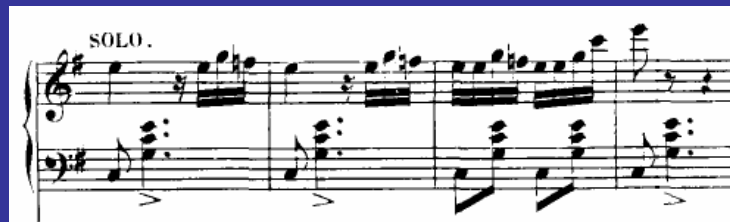
Viola.

Bassi.

*Vivace.*

*pp*

- ♪ The piano immediately comes up with a variation



*SOLO.*

## Third movement: Second Theme



- One of the variations on the main theme uses the rhythm to suggest the theme rather than the original notes



- ♪ And when the second theme returns, it is interrupted by the oboes and bassoons

The image shows a musical score snippet with three staves. The top staff is for Oboe (Ob.) and the middle staff is for Bassoon (Fag.). Both woodwind parts enter with a melodic line marked *pp* (pianissimo). The bottom staff is for piano, showing a melodic line marked *p dolce* (piano dolce) and a bass line marked *pizz.* (pizzicato). The piano part has a *\*.* marking above it. The woodwinds interrupt the piano's melodic flow.

- ♪ This happens again
- ♪ Then the second theme passes to the cellos, then the violins
- ♪ and eventually the woodwind section joins in without interrupting
- ♪ leading to a climax which introduces the final *cadenza*
- ♪ After the *cadenza*, Beethoven changes tempo to a *Presto* conclusion, and we end up in G major