

# Plush 4 ~ Insights I

Friday 14 July 2017, 5.30pm

## Trio for violin, cello & piano

Talk hosted by Michael Berkeley  
with Harrison Birtwistle & Adrian Brendel

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### **Harrison Birtwistle**

Trio for violin, cello and piano (2011 - 16 mins)

Corey Cerovsek, Tim Horton

Adrian Brendel

Rooted in the classical and romantic tradition, the trio is a genre that had long been thought of by contemporary composers as posing limitations on creating new sounds and textures. Till Fellner and I asked Harry to write a trio piece for our tour in 2011 and were delighted and a little surprised when he accepted.

Needless to say, Harry dealt with its challenges in his own inimitable, brilliant way.

It is a sixteen minute work in one movement, cast in three sections. The opening presents dramatic shards of material punctuated by pauses. Gradually the music finds a serene flow but remains amorphous, searching for form. Often the three roles are in different time signatures, like three autonomous spirits creating a strange unity.

Suddenly, rhythmic figures appear, propulsive and lively. This begins the middle section which continues through a succession of exciting sequences that reach a climactic summit before gradually dissipating into a third section coda. Here, the violin and cello have found each other, but the pianist remains shut out of this harmony, doomed to frustrating dialogue.

The final utterance is breathtaking. Three autonomous, repeated ostinato motifs bring to life the Verlaine quote at the end of the work: 'Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne' (the long sighs of the autumnal violins).

Adrian Brendel Music Director