

# WIGMORE HALL

## **Wigmore Hall marks the centenary of Mieczysław Weinberg with a major focus day on 26 October, and a complete cycle of Weinberg's 17 string quartets from Quatuor Danel over two seasons starting on 24 October**

Shostakovich called him “One of the most outstanding composers of today”. Polish-Jewish-Russian composer Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996), has also been called ‘the greatest composer you’ve never heard of’. From October 2019, Wigmore Hall highlights this strikingly prolific composer’s contribution to instrumental music and song with an ambitious Weinberg strand programmed by the Hall’s Artistic & Executive Director John Gilhooly over two seasons.

John Gilhooly says:

*“I am very pleased that Wigmore Hall will lead the way in the rediscovery of Weinberg’s chamber works, this season and next. Weinberg is an unjustly neglected composer and we look forward to celebrating his magnificent output through our three-concert Focus Day on 26 October, with Linus Roth, Ilona Domnich, José Gallardo and others. It is also a great joy to bring Quatuor Danel to the Hall to perform a complete cycle of Weinberg’s string quartets, following their exceptional recordings of these works. We could not have done this without the support of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.”*

Along with Shostakovich, Mieczysław Weinberg’s music was championed during his lifetime by performers such as David Oistrakh, Mstislav Rostropovich, Emil Gilels, the Borodin Quartet, and Kirill Kondrashin. The centenary year of Weinberg’s birth in 2019 has seen the composer’s profile raised in the UK and beyond, triggering a reappraisal and rediscovery which has until now focused on his symphonies.

Weinberg’s chamber music holds a significant place in his impressive canon of works, and as the anniversary of the composer’s birth (8 December) approaches, Wigmore Hall embarks on its ambitious Weinberg series with a major Weinberg Focus Day on Saturday 26 October. Led by violinist Linus Roth, a passionate advocate of the composer’s work, with Soviet-era music expert Daniel Elphick introducing each event, the day will feature three concerts highlighting the composer’s sonatas, along with song and works by Weinberg’s contemporary, friend and admirer Shostakovich. In addition to introducing the concerts, Daniel Elphick will give an in-depth talk on Weinberg ahead of the evening concert, centred around his new book *Music behind the Iron Curtain: Weinberg and his Polish Contemporaries*.

The day opens with Weinberg’s *Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano* performed with José Gallardo, along with *Sonata No 1 for violin solo* and his *Largo for violin and piano*. Roth also performs Shostakovich’s *Unfinished Violin Sonata* from 1964. Roth and Gallardo are joined by soprano Ilona Domnich for the afternoon all-Weinberg concert, performing *Jewish Songs*, his settings of the Soviet Yiddish poet Shmuel Halkin. Roth also performs *Sonata No. 2 for violin solo* and is joined by Janusz Wawrowski for *Sonata for two violins*. Roth’s focus on Weinberg concludes with the third and final concert of the day, which opens with *Sonata No. 4 for violin and piano* performed with Gallardo. Ilona Domnich returns for Shostakovich’s *7 Romances on poems by Alexander Blok*, for which Weinberg played piano in the 1967 premiere. The kinship between the two composers is also reflected in the final piece of the day – Weinberg’s *Piano Trio*, featuring cellist Danjulo Ishizaka.

From 24 October, French ensemble Quatuor Danel begins a milestone complete cycle of Weinberg's 17 string quartets, along with works by Shostakovich. Quatuor Danel is renowned for its ambitious recordings of the complete string quartets on disc, and now audiences have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness this quartet perform them in the unmatched surroundings of Wigmore Hall. The cycle begins on 24 October 2019 and comprises 11 concerts over two seasons. The second concert of the cycle is on 10 December 2019, with both concerts now open for general booking. The cycle continues on 25 March 2020, for which priority booking is now open. Two further concerts will take place in the 2019-20 season, on 16 May 2020 and 9 July 2020, for which booking will open in the new year.

This major Weinberg focus is supported through a new partnership between Wigmore Hall and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute as part of its Polska Music programme and POLSKA 100, the international cultural programme celebrating the centenary of Poland regaining independence, which is financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland as part of the multi-annual programme NIEPODLEGŁA 2017–2022.

All concerts in the Quatuor Danel cycle will have discounted tickets available for younger audience members through Wigmore Hall's Under 35s Scheme, in partnership with Classic FM.

Ahead of Quatuor Danel's two-season survey of Weinberg's string quartets, founder / leader Marc Danel and musicologist Daniel Elphick talk about the life of Weinberg and the Weinberg/Shostakovich Cycle in a 2-part podcast available [here](#)

Full information and booking information at [wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk)

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