

Benjamin Baker
Violinist
and Daniel Lehardt
Pianist

Playing at Writhlington School on Tuesday 28th January 2019



“The performances I’ve heard with violinist Baker....have had a supernaturally beautiful atmosphere, the fruit of serious readiness combined with cultured musicianship and flawless intonation.” The Arts Desk

Benjamin and Daniel have put together a programme of gentle beauty, which nonetheless calls for great skill and musicianship.

They begin with the last violin sonata that Ludwig van Beethoven wrote – one that Beethoven himself never heard because he was deaf by then – the **Sonata for Violin in G major, No. 10**, Op.96. Like many sonatas, this is a piece of music in four parts, so we usually clap when all four parts have been played, although if you really like one part, no one will mind if you clap.

The first movement is the *Allegro moderato*, which means “fairly fast”. All the movements are named in Italian by their speed. This movement contains three themes, which you may be able to pick out. The next movement is the slow movement – *Adagio espressivo*, which one famous violinist said was “as close to paradise as one can approach in this world”. This is followed by a *Scherzo* in G minor, which is a lighter, more playful movement. The final movement is *Poco Allegretto* meaning “a little faster”. This movement plays with themes by taking them through different tempos and with different harmonies, as if Beethoven was bidding a long farewell to his last violin sonata.



We are then treated to a very different piece of music written by a living composer, Tonia Ko, called **Plush Earth in Four Pieces**. It is inspired by a phrase written by author Vladimir Nabokov in his book *The Vane Sisters*;

“The day, a compunctious Sunday after a week of blizzards, had been part jewel, part mud.”

The four short movements are called Part, Jewel, Part and Mud. The idea is that they reflect the textures that you might find in such a mixture.



Finally, another sonata, this time by the French composer Gabriel Fauré who was born almost twenty years after Beethoven had died and lived well into the 20th century. This is the **Sonata for Violin in A Major No.1**, Op.13.

You will hear that this sonata is much more passionate and lyrical than the previous pieces, an early contributor to a very productive period in French music. Fauré composed two great violin sonatas forty years apart, and this first one is one of the most well loved sonatas of this period.

Each movement has a series of gorgeous themes. In the first movement the piano and violin share the theme equally, while in the second, gentler and more haunting movement the violin takes the melody while the piano accompanies and harmonises. The Scherzo skips along lightly, even joyfully, but still has the flow and beauty we have come to expect. Finally we have a fast and furious Allegro movement full of passion once more, alternating with calmer, softer themes that can still break your heart.

