



PRESS RELEASE

BRAHMS AT THE RED HEDGEHOG

our first *Re:Past* weekend

26-27 April 2025

at Bunyan Meeting and the Quarry Theatre

Bedford Music Club is proud to present a weekend festival of Hungarian music and culture: 'Brahms at The Red Hedgehog'. Join us for a deep immersion into the cultural melting pot that was C19 Vienna!



Brahms is our focus but why 'The Red Hedgehog'?

The Red Hedgehog, a popular tavern in Vienna, was a regular watering hole for many famous composers including Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn. And an elderly bachelor, one Johannes Brahms, who in later years hardly ate or drank anywhere else! This weekend's events explore the kinds of Hungarian music that Brahms would have heard at the tavern and how popular idioms found their way into his greatest works, not least his sublime Clarinet Quintet.

Over the weekend we will be immersing ourselves in Brahms's sound world and exploring how cultures and musics mix, re-thinking what originality means in today's world of artificial intelligence and mash ups.

Brahms at The Red Hedgehog is the first outing for **Re:Past** a new festival experience from Bedford Music Club that will explore how cultures and musics influence each other. **Re:Past** will run twice a year in the Autumn and Spring. Each weekend will explore a particular theme in depth through talks, concerts, film, food and drink and other cultural experiences.

Brahms at The Red Hedgehog is supported by The Gale Family Charity Trust

BRAHMS AT THE RED HEDGEHOG PROGRAMME

Saturday 26 April, Bunyan Meeting, 6.00pm

Brahms at the Tavern talk

Free admission

Dr Jon Banks, musical director at the Globe Theatre and a leading academic expert kicks off the weekend with a talk on how Brahms was influenced by popular Hungarian musics. His insights are illustrated with rare archival recordings of Hungarian folk bands from the early C20 - as close as we can get to Brahms' own time.

Saturday 26 April, Bunyan Meeting, 7.30pm

The Hungarian Connection concert

Adults £20, Full time students £10, 18 or younger free

Next up on is a hugely exciting team, the **Alkyona Quartet** with clarinettist **Magdalenna Krstevska** both of whom are much sought at UK and international festivals. Their programme highlights Brahms' Clarinet Quintet which, as we will discover, was greatly influenced by popular Hungarian music and its spirit of improvisation. We will also hear folk-inspired masterpieces by Hungarians Dohnányi and Bartók.

"A concert guaranteed to gladden the heart of all nostalgic, romantic spirits, this had the vital ingredients of attractive and intelligent programming, warm and convincing presentation and, above all, that sense of relaxed and balanced musicality which all chamber groups strive for" (Strathearn Music Society)

Sunday 27 April, The Quarry Theatre, 2.00pm

Brahms and the Gypsy concert

Adults £25, Full time students £10, 18 or younger free

On Day Two we present a fascinating experiment - you will hear Brahms' Clarinet Quintet once again, but this time rescored for earthy folk instruments - the kind that Brahms would have been entertained by at The Red Hedgehog. The performance by the **ZRI** ensemble ('Zum Rotel Igel' is German for a red hedgehog) will further re-imagine the piece by including extensive improvisations that really dig into and explore its Hungarian roots.

ZRI accordionist Jon Banks says "we started life with Brahms and his Clarinet Quintet. I wanted to play that repertoire, but in a way that would evoke the time Brahms was living in, a sound world more visceral than just string quartet and clarinet."

*"This was a typically pioneering, stimulating project from ZRI and the Lammermuir Festival ... vivid, vibrant and provocative" ***** (The Scotsman)*

Sunday 27 April, The Quarry Theatre, 4.15pm

The Klezmer Project film (2023)

Spanish, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Romanian, English, and German with English subtitles
Adults £10, Full time students £5, 18 or younger free

Winner of best First Feature at the 2023 Berlin International Film Festival. A Jewish camera operator invents a film project about klezmer music to pursue a love interest. The couple journey through Eastern Europe, seeking melodies and romance.

The grandchildren of Jewish immigrants who fled Europe during World War II, filmmakers **Leandro Koch** and **Paloma Schachmann** have made a brilliant, multilayered film.

“The Klezmer Project is not just a documentary about the most important klezmer musicians of today. What we have before us is a hybrid, multifaceted and extremely vibrant and colourful film. A feature film in which art and culture are constantly highlighted and which, in turn, is enriched by the many testimonies, concerts and scenes of weddings and festivities” (Cinema Austiaco).

Sunday 27 April, The Quarry Theatre, 6.30pm

Café Danube Cellar Sessions concert (cabaret-style seating in the bar area)

Adults £25, Full time students £10, 18 or younger free

ZRI re-creates the atmosphere of the Red Hedgehog tavern - prepare to laugh, yell and maybe shed a tear with music from Bach and Johann Strauss to Donna Summer and Taylor Swift. This event is inspired by the cellar at the Red Hedgehog where musicians from all scenes met after hours. Here boundaries between genres become blurry as people are immersed in each other's sound worlds. Here, as wine glasses set their own rhythms, the night invites distortions of time, and composers from the past meet composers from the future.

“A clever and inventive combination of classical, folk, cabaret and popular influences with a Viennese flavour” (Classical Notes). “...skill, polish, and accuracy... Harlan spearheads his all-star group with an infectious extroverted personality... accuracy with the energy and excitement of a bucolic dance band” (American Record Guide).

Tickets, student discounts and weekend passes are available online

ticketsource.co.uk/bedfordmusic

18 and younger are free at all events!

For more information contact

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