

Programme Notes

Duo in A minor for Violin and Viola, Op.70, No.1

L. Jansa
(1795-1875)

- I. Moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Rondo (Vivace)

Jansa is another lesser-known composer on tonight's program. Born in Wilderschwert, then in Bohemia, he moved to Vienna in 1817 to study law. But he abandoned his studies and took composition lessons, and eventually established himself as a famous violinist and teacher. In 1834 he was appointed Professor of violin at the University of Vienna. He was a much sought-after violin teacher and had taught students including composer Karl Goldmark. He was a contemporary and friend of Schubert, and had premiered some of Schubert's symphonic works as a conductor. After Schuppanzigh's death, Jansa succeeded him as the first violinist in the Schuppanzigh's Quartet. He was also once the head of the violin department of the London Academy of Music. Though he had composed a large number of chamber works including sonatas, duos, trios and quartets, Jansa's works are rarely performed or recorded nowadays.

The first movement begins with a melancholic theme followed by a tuneful second theme. The triplets in the closing theme provide a contrasting lively mood in the exposition, which also carries into the development section. In the recapitulation, both the second and closing themes reappear in A major before a short coda with accelerando takes the movement to a frenzied ending. In the second movement, the violin sings the melodious lines while the viola complements with sonorous harmonic support. The finale is a classical Rondo in which both instruments are given equal chance to display technical flares.