

ERIC CREES

Eric Crees is Section Principal trombone with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London. Previously he was co-principal trombone of the London Symphony Orchestra for twenty-seven years. Eric is Professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, and is one of the most distinguished conductors and arrangers of brass music. He has been Musical Director of London Symphony Orchestra Brass and has worked with some of the finest brass ensembles and brass bands. He is now Artistic Director of his own group "The Symphonic Brass of London" which has performed in the UK and abroad to great acclaim. Eric is in great demand internationally, both as a conductor and coach, and has worked with major professional and youth orchestras in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, France, Switzerland, USA and Japan. As an educationalist he was strongly involved in the LSO's Education Department as well as the Performance and Communication Dept. at the Guildhall School; Eric Crees has directed many educational projects, including one based in London, Paris and Vienna alongside Pierre Boulez. In 2014 he was awarded the International Trombone Association's Neill Humfeld Award for Teaching Excellence

INTRODUCTION

In a letter from May 1893 to his close friend Clara Schumann, Brahms wrote about the first piece in his last piano work, the Op. 119:

"I am tempted to copy out a small piano piece for you, because I would like to know how you find it. It is teeming with dissonances! These are correct and can be explained - but maybe they won't please your palate, in which case I wish they were less 'appropriate', and more agreeable to your taste. The little piece is exceptionally melancholic and 'to be played very slowly' is no understatement. Every bar and note must sound like a *ritardando*, as if one wanted to suck melancholy with abandon and pleasure out of each and every one of these dissonances! Good Lord, this description will surely whet your appetite!"

Clara Schumann was enthusiastic and referred to it as 'a grey pearl' asking him to send the remaining pieces of his new work, (also available from Alaw Publishing).

While these haunting dissonances will not sound excessively harsh to the modern listener, Brahms' comments tell us that in performance a special intensity and warmth is required from every player in order to make this brass version at least, if not more, expressive and moving as the original.

Eric Crees, October 2017

RECOMMENDED SEATING PLAN

