



A BBT HAT TRICK

BBT ALUMNI FEATURE IN CONCERTO WORLD PREMIERE

Timothy Ridout viola • **Mark Simpson** composer • **Robin Ticciati** conductor
15 December 2024

As a passionate advocate of an instrument that is steadily emerging from the orchestral shadows, it comes as no surprise that British violist **Timothy Ridout** has chosen to use funds from his 2020 **BBT** Fellowship Award to place the viola firmly in the spotlight by commissioning a new concerto. With the boldly intriguing title of ***Hold Your Heart in Your Teeth***, this new work is composed by 2014 **BBT** Fellowship winner **Mark Simpson** and the world premiere will be given on 15 December this year in Berlin by **Deutsches Symphonie Orchester-Berlin** (a co-commissioner) conducted by 2005 **BBT** Fellowship winner **Robin Ticciati**.

One of the leading lights of today's generation of viola players, Timothy Ridout first encountered the music of composer and clarinettist Mark Simpson in 2019 as a member of the ensemble that premiered his Oboe Quartet dedicated to Nicholas Daniel; "I was immediately impressed by Mark's unique voice and the complexity of his music, along with his burning passion and romanticism. Not only that, but I also loved the way he gave so much of his time to intensively work on the piece with us all. And then, when I heard the broadcast of his violin concerto for Nicola Benedetti, I was blown away, moved and inspired – so there was no question that he would be my first choice to write a concerto for viola."

The title of the work comes from the Romanian proverb *A-ți lua inima în dinți*, meaning 'to go forwards in life with courage and faith, despite fear and trepidation'.

"I was drawn to this beautiful Romanian proverb because of its powerful, savage imagery, as well as its meaning," comments Mark Simpson. *"At different times and in different ways we all will have had to adopt this mode of thinking. It is a characteristic that is universally understood."*

"In a concerto it is expected that a soloist exhibits an immense amount of courage and self-belief as they are pushed to their very limits. And so it seemed like a perfect format to try and encapsulate the philosophy of this great proverb showcasing the incredible artistry of Timothy Ridout on the viola. I feel truly honoured to be asked to compose a new work by such a fantastic musician whose artistry I deeply respect."

"The first movement starts with an explosion of sorts, from which the viola rises through a cadenza-like passage, on the C string, up to the absolute highest range of the instrument. The second is relentless, fast and powerful, leading to a wild cadenza which brings us to the third, searingly elegiac in nature."

Robin Ticciati is stepping down as Music Director and Chief Conductor of DSO-Berlin at the end of this year, following a nine-year tenure. Although his official farewell concerts are 15 & 16 November, it is this world premiere that will actually be his final concert as head of the orchestra.

BBT, which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year, is proud to add this new concerto to its commissioning portfolio of more than 50 new works.

<https://www.bbtrust.com/commissions/bbt-commissioning/>

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Notes to Editors

World Premiere

15 December 2024 at The Philharmonie Berlin

Mark Simpson (1988 -) 'Hold Your Heart in Your Teeth' Viola Concerto

Deutsches Symphonie Orchester-Berlin / Robin Ticciati

Timothy Ridout viola

<https://www.dso-berlin.de/de/konzert/ticciati-philharmonie-berlin-15-12-2024/>

Timothy Ridout <https://www.timothyridout.com>

Mark Simpson <https://marksimpsonmusic.com>

Robin Ticciati <https://askonasholt.com/artist/robin-ticciati>