

STEINWAY LAUNCH WEEKEND: Peter Hill & Benjamin Frith

Piano Recital

Sunday 14 November 2021, 7.30pm, Firth Hall

- Fantasie in F minor, D 940 (1829) **Schubert**
(20')
1. *Allegro molto moderato*
 2. *Largo*
 3. *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*
 4. *Finale. Allegro molto moderato*

- Six Morceaux, Op.11 (1894) **Rachmaninov**
(26')
1. *Barcarolle / Баркарола (Barkarola)*
Moderato (G minor)
 2. *Scherzo / Скерцо (Skertso)*
Allegro (D major)
 3. *Thème russe / Русская песня (Russkaya pesnya)*
Andantino cantabile (B minor)
 4. *Valse / Вальс (Val's)*
Tempo di Valse (A major)
 5. *Romance / Романс (Romans)*
Andante con anima (C minor)
 6. *Glory / Слава (Slava)*
Allegro moderato (C major)

Interval

- The Rite of Spring, K 15 (1913) **Stravinsky**
(33')
- Part I. *L'Adoration de la Terre (Adoration of the Earth)*
1. *Introduction*
 2. *Les Augures printaniers (Augurs of Spring)*
 3. *Jeu du rapt (Ritual of Abduction)*
 4. *Rondes printanières (Spring Rounds)*
 5. *Jeux des cités rivales (Ritual of the Rival Tribes)*
 6. *Cortège du sage: Le Sage (Procession of the Sage: The Sage)*
 7. *Embrasse de la terre (Kiss of the Earth)*
 8. *Danse de la terre (Dance of the Earth)*
- Part II. *Le Sacrifice (The Sacrifice)*
9. *Introduction*
 10. *Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes (Mystic Circles of the Young Girls)*
 11. *Glorification de l'élue (Glorification of the Chosen One)*
 12. *Evocation des ancêtres (Evocation of the Ancestors)*
 13. *Action rituelle des ancêtres (Ritual Action of the Ancestors)*
 14. *Danse sacrée (L'Élue) (Sacrificial Dance)*



Steinway Launch Weekend

We are delighted to be celebrating the arrival of a fleet of Steinway pianos, and the awarding of 'All-Steinway School Status' to the institution. This weekend is a celebration of our commitment to musical excellence here at The University of Sheffield.

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Bennett, a cherished former colleague of the Department of Music, 1980 -2009.

Schubert (1797-1828)

Fantasia in F minor, D 940 (1829)

The Fantasia in F minor for piano four-hands, is one of Schubert's most important works for more than one pianist and one of his most important piano works altogether. He composed it in 1828, the last year of his life, and dedicated it to his pupil Caroline Esterházy.

Like the earlier *Wanderer Fantasy*, the *Fantasy in F minor* follows the same basic sonata-like four movement plan: allegro, slow movement, scherzo and fugal finale.

The work opens with a lyrical melody, with predominant dotted rhythms, over a gently rocking broken chord accompaniment. After moving briefly to F Major, the piece transitions to a second, March like theme and ends in F-Sharp Minor.

The Largo movement, inspired by Paganini's Second Violin Concerto, presents a marked theme reminiscent of the first movement's dotted rhythms. The turbulence of this soon gives way to a more lyrical melody in the middle section. Returning to the opening theme, we end on the dominant to prepare for the following Scherzo.

The Scherzo sits in contrast to the Largo with a lively and energetic tone. After wavering between F-sharp minor and F minor, the Finale is announced with octave C-sharps.

The Finale begins with two restatements of the first movement's principal theme—first in F minor and then in F major. Following the final statement in the major key, a fugue based on the first movement's second subject begins. Unlike the *Wanderer Fantasy*, the fugal texture is maintained throughout the movement. After an abrupt half cadence in F minor, the first theme once again returns followed by chords which eloquently veil the second theme and close the work.

Following Schubert's death in November 1828, his friends and family went about to have some of his works published. The *Fantasia in F minor* was one of these compositions. It has remained a prominent work for piano four-hands and later inspired the work of Franz Liszt, who transcribed many of Schubert's compositions.

(Notes taken from Classical Connect)

Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Six Morceaux, Op.11 (1894)

The *Six Morceaux* are among the earliest of Rachmaninoff's mature works. Rachmaninov had graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1892, and-only two years later-had already made a reputation for himself as a pianist and as a composer.

These little pieces reflect themes of yearning and display some of Rachmaninov's famous intricate passagework. The *Morceaux* are often considered as the forerunners of his later 13 Preludes, Op. 32, from 1910.

The opening Barcarolle in G minor is dark and mysterious, its gently rocking rhythms depicting a gondolier navigating the Venetian canals beneath a moonlit sky. The piece builds to a dazzling climax with rapid figurations atop the rich and powerful chords so typical of Rachmaninov's piano music. These same figurations return to close the piece in a much brighter mood than it began. The following Scherzo in D major is a sprightly and brilliant composition with a relentless rhythmic drive. There is no actual Trio section, but instead a coquettish secondary theme that momentarily holds the Scherzo's impetuosity at bay.

Occupying the third position in the set is the Chanson Russe, a set of variations on an unknown folk song. The piece begins quietly but builds quickly into a majestic variation in which the theme is heard against a rushing counterpoint of sixteenth notes. From this climax, the music recedes through a quiet variation only to be roused again at the final cadence. Next, the Valse is reminiscent of Chopin in its amalgamation of different waltz tunes. However, the style is certainly that of Rachmaninov and possesses a power that is at odds with both the graceful Viennese dance and the ruminations of Chopin. Yet, the Valse is not wholly without elegance.

Fifth in the set is the Romance. In C minor, it is a passionate piece with a particularly poignant principal theme that seems to anguish over some grief. Brief moments of light shine across the otherwise dismal canvas of the Romance, but never break the otherwise gloomy air. Lastly, Slava! (Glory) closes the set. A set of variations based on the Russian chant used by Mussorgsky in Boris Godunov, it provides the opus 11 with a majestic and towering conclusion.

(Notes from Joseph DuBose and Michael Cansfield, Classical Connect)

Stravinsky (1882-1971)

The Rite of Spring, K 15 (1913)

The Rite of Spring is a ballet and orchestral concert work. It was written for the 1913 Paris season of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes company. Although designed as a work for the stage, with specific passages accompanying characters and action, the music achieved equal if not greater recognition as a concert piece. Its original performance caused controversy, with some critics thinking the music "barbarous". Critical opinion, however, changed quickly. Now, *The Rite of Spring* is acknowledged as one of the most influential pieces of music of the 20th century, a masterpiece that influenced generations of composers.

Stravinsky was a young, virtually unknown composer when Diaghilev recruited him to create works for the Ballets Russes. *Le Sacre du printemps* was the third such major project, after the acclaimed *Firebird* (1910) and *Petrushka* (1911) - by which point the composer was becoming relatively successful. The concept behind *The Rite of Spring*, developed by Roerich from Stravinsky's outline idea, is suggested by its subtitle, "Pictures of Pagan Russia in Two Parts"; the scenario depicts various primitive rituals celebrating the advent of spring, after which a young girl is chosen as a sacrificial victim and dances herself to death.

Stravinsky's score contains many novel features for its time, including experiments in tonality, metre, rhythm, stress and dissonance. Analysts have noted in the score a significant grounding in Russian folk music, a relationship Stravinsky tended to deny. Regarded as among the first modernist works, the music influenced many of the 20th-century's leading composers and is one of the most recorded works in the classical repertoire.

(Notes taken from Classical Connect)

Peter Hill (Piano)

Peter Hill's career as a pianist was launched when he won the performance prize at Darmstadt for his playing of Cage and Stockhausen. He records for Delphian, with a Bach cycle in progress that has so far seen the release of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *French Suites* and the *Goldberg Variations*. Peter has been shortlisted for the Gramophone Award and awarded the Diapason d'Or. In 2008 Peter was awarded the annual prize for musicology by the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He gives recitals, lectures and masterclasses around the world, and holds honorary professorships at the Royal Northern College of Music and at the University of Sheffield where he worked in the Music Department from 1976 to 2009.

Benjamin Frith (Piano)

Benjamin Frith is one of the leading British pianists of his generation. He was first prize winner in the Rubinstein Piano Masters Competition, where he was also awarded the special prize for chamber music, and won top prize in the Busoni International Piano Competition.

Frith has given recitals and concerto performances throughout Europe, North America, India and the Far East. He has appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras, including the Berlin Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, Hallé, the BBC orchestras, CBSO, Northern Sinfonia, Royal Philharmonic.

His repertoire ranges from Scarlatti to James Macmillan and includes over fifty concertos. Ben's enjoyment of chamber music has been fulfilled through his performances and recordings as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio, in his duo with Peter Hill, and in the formation of his own Piano Quartet. His interest in the English repertoire has led to many highly regarded recordings; recently he was partnered by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in a forthcoming disc of Charles Villiers Stanford's Second Piano Concerto, and he has also recorded Moeran's Third Rhapsody with the Ulster Orchestra.

The duo have recently released *Beethoven: Works For Piano Four Hands* on Delphian.

COMING UP NEXT...

Rakhi Singh (Live & Streamed)

Thursday 18 November, 7.30pm

Firth Hall

Tickets: £15 Full / £12.50 Concessions / £6.50 Student & Under 30. Stream tickets £5-£15 pay what you feel.

Classics Uncovered/Sound Lab

One of the leading lights in the UK's contemporary instrumental scene, Singh is known for taking audiences on a journey through the incredible breadth and range of emotions summoned by a single, solo violin.

Programme:

Fantasia – Matteis

O Mirium – Ruta Vitkauskaitė

Tinge – Michael Gordon

Fugue in G Minor – J.S. Bach

Caprice no 2 – Sciarrino

Dark Sky Community – Oliver Coates

In Beautiful May – Andrew Hamilton

Fournier Trio

Thursday 2 December, 7.30pm

Firth Hall

Tickets: £16 Full / £13 Concessions / £8.50 Student & Under 30

Classics Uncovered

Formed in 2009, the internationally award-winning Fournier Trio has rapidly established itself as one of the leading young chamber ensembles in the UK.

Programme

Haydn Piano Trio in G major 'Gypsy Rondo', Hob.XV:25

Mendelssohn Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49

Brahms Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8 (revised version)

Sheffield University Symphony Orchestra

Sunday 5 December, 7.30pm

Firth Hall

£11.50 Full / £9 Concessions / £6 Student & Under 30

We are extremely excited to be programming a new concert from SUSO with their new conductor, Cayenna Ponchione-Bailey, an award winning conductor and composer who specialises in exploring social and environmental issues. The varied programme will include Dvorak, and Florence Price's rhythmic Symphony No.1 in E Minor.

This concert has been very kindly supported by University of Sheffield Alumni and the Department of Music.

