

Maria Stratigou

Thursday 4th December, 5:45pm
Firth Hall

PERFORMANCE
VENUES
CONCERTS

L. V. Beethoven - 32 Variations in C minor

L. Farrenc - Air Russe Varié, Op. 17

S. Bortkiewicz - Esquisses de Crimée, Op. 8 No. 3, Walks in Alupka

I. Oriental Idyll – Allegretto in E minor

II. Chaos – Allegro molto tempestoso in C minor

N. Medtner - Sonata Tragica, From the Second Cycle of Forgotten Melodies, Op. 39,
No. 5

Maria Stratigou

“A pianist who connects with the music; therefore, a musician.” - Norman Beedie

Dr Maria Stratigou studied at the Conservatory of Athens, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), where she completed her PhD Performance Aspects of Louise Farrenc's Piano Études, being a scholar of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit foundation, the North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership and the RNCM. She is currently a teaching associate (Performance) and piano professor at the University of Sheffield and a University Practitioner (Piano) at the University of Huddersfield. Stratigou has given lecture-recitals and paper presentations at numerous international conferences, and in February 2020 she organised the conference 'Musical Women in Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century' at the RNCM.

In 2024 she was awarded the 'Gina Bachauer-N. Dumba Discography Award 2024' (awarded by the Gina Bachauer International Music Association) for her recordings of Louise Farrenc's Complete Piano Works, released under Grand Piano Records, and in 2018 she was awarded the First Student Prize for her paper and presentation Performing Louise Farrenc's Piano Études at the 'Into the Unknown' conference at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. Stratigou is the recipient of numerous prestigious piano awards, including the Eleni Tim Mykoniou Prize for Piano (Academy of Athens, 2013) and First Prizes at the Jock Holden Memorial Mozart Piano Prize Competition at the RCS (2008) and various Panhellenic piano competitions.

Stratigou has performed across the UK, Italy, the Czech Republic and Greece. She has given the world premieres of George N. Gianopoulos's Five Pieces for Solo Piano, Op. 15; Fantasy Nocturne for Solo Piano, Op. 17; Errikos Vaios's 3 and Dimitris Minakakis's Metamorphoses for Piano.

Ludwig Van Beethoven - 32 Variations in C minor

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was one of the most influential composers in history, his work defining the Classical and Romantic periods of Western Classical music. After having been brought up in Bonn, Germany and tutored by his father, Beethoven moved to Vienna, the musical capital of Europe, to pursue a career as a composer. It was here that he was tutored by Joseph Haydn, and that he wrote many of his most famous works (**lvbeethoven**).

Written in 1806, the 32 variations in C minor are based on the Chaconne: a ceremonial triple-time dance over an alternating bassline that was popularized at the court of Louis XIV. It makes use of a wide range of keyboard techniques and textures, such as flourishes and staccato semiquavers, which test the players' virtuosity (**Hyperion Records**).

Louise Farrenc - Air Russe Varié, Op. 17

Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) was a French composer born into a wealthy and artistic family in Paris. Whilst female artists in the 19th century were rare, Farrenc was brought up surrounded by painters, sculptors and artists of all genders. After beginning to learn piano as a young girl, she was recognised as having undeniable talent by musicians such as Clementi and Hummel. She enrolled in the Paris Conservatory at 15 and went on to become a successful concert pianist. Whilst her

compositions were never recognised to the extent of her male counterparts, she was a talented and commanding composer whose work was studied by other artists, including Hector Berlioz (**Royal Scottish National Orchestra**).

Air Russe Varié (Variation on a Russian Air) was composed in 1835 and was Farrenc's first work to gain widespread popularity, receiving positive feedback from Robert Schumann. The piece contains a contrast between complex passages and more serene sections, before ultimately building to a dramatic conclusion (**Music Web International**).

Sergei Bortkiewicz - Esquisses de Crimée, Op. 8 No. 3, Walks in Alupka

I. *Oriental Idyll – Allegretto in E minor*

II. *Chaos – Allegro molto tempestoso in C minor*

Sergei Bortkiewicz (1877-1952) was a pianist and composer born in Ukraine to a noble Polish family. He began studying music theory and piano at the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1898, before continuing his studies in Leipzig. Whilst working as a touring pianist and lecturer at the Klindworth-Szarwenka Conservatoire, he began to compose professionally. Following the first World War, he settled in Vienna, and his contributions there led to the establishment of a music society honouring his work. Whilst many of his compositions were destroyed in WWII, much of his musical achievement is still recognised as exemplary music of the Romantic style (**Orphée Classics**).

Esquisses de Crimée was composed in 1908 and is a piece of programme music that captures different views of the city of Alupka. Often described as 'a multifaceted symphonic poem for piano solo', the four movements are entitled 'The High Rocks', 'The Play of the Sea', 'Oriental Idyll' and 'Chaos' (**Music Web International**).

Nikolai Medtner - Sonata Tragica, From the Second Cycle of Forgotten Melodies, Op. 39, No. 5

Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951) was a Russian composer and pianist born into a wealthy Muscovite family. His mother, a trained pianist and vocalist, began to teach Medtner to play piano, and at the age of 12, he enrolled into the Moscow Conservatory as a pianist. Despite not having been trained in composition, after graduating with a gold medal in piano performance, Medtner decided to devote his career to composing. During the Russian Civil War, Medtner and his wife emigrated to Berlin in 1921, and lived in Germany, France and England for a large period of his life. He struggled to find success in Western Europe, and whilst there were few advocates of his music, he maintained a close friendship with famous Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff (**Internationalen Nikolaj Medtner Gesellschaft**).

The second cycle of *Forgotten Melodies* consists of five pieces, the first and final pairs thematically linked. *Sonata Tragica* is the final piece in the cycle and makes use of a dramatic and intense first theme in contrast with a more emotional, sombre second. The piece returns to the tragic opening with a "devastating final blow" (**Hyperion Records**).

Coming Soon:

We've got loads of great events coming up, you can visit our website for full details - www.performancevenues.group.shef.ac.uk

Sheffield University Symphony Orchestra

Sunday 7th December - 3pm

£10-£17

Firth Hall

Sheffield University Symphony Orchestra brings together the best talent from across the whole of Sheffield University under the baton of Jack Grime in a concert dedicated to the incredible musicianship Sheffield has to offer.

Students in SUSO have performed across the world and are current or former members of prestigious orchestras such as the British Police Symphony Orchestra, World Doctors' Orchestra, Singapore National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Wales, and English Schools' Orchestra.

A Winter Union

Thursday 11th December- 7:30pm

£16-£20

Firth Hall

“Wonderful, a perfect seasonal gift” - Laurel Canyon Music

Five leading lights of the British folk/roots scene join forces to create a festive folk band like no other, a true folk supergroup. Originally formed in 2015 for a one off Yuletide concert, A Winter Union have gone from strength to strength and are now thought of by many as THE Christmas celebration folk/roots band. Featuring two well-established duo's, Katriona Gilmore and Jamie Roberts (5* Maverick), Ben Savage and Hannah Sanders (5* R2), and superb singer Rhiannon Jade from The Willows (5* The Telegraph), expect soaring harmonies and exquisite musicianship as this 5 piece presents an evening of fresh arrangements of traditional carols: both well loved and little known, seasonal classics and brand new, specially written songs.

Free Concerts on campus

Throughout term time we run free informal recitals and events in Firth Hall, including visiting guests and the performances from the talented students from the Department of Music.

These events are free to attend and are performed at lunch time and rush hour, which we believe make the events accessible for everyone to enjoy. To find out more about these events and to reserve your ticket, head to our website.

Monday 8th December	Lunchtime Concert - Historically Informed Performances	Firth Hall	13:10
Wednesday 10th December	Rush Hour Concert - Undergraduate Ensembles	Firth Hall	17:45
Monday 15th December	Lunchtime Concert - Historically Informed Performances	Firth Hall	13:10