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King's Hall

Wednesday 11th October 2017



FRANÇOIS-FRÉDÉRIC GUY



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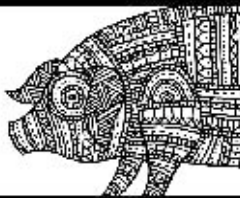
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TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

Beethoven

Piano Sonata no. 14 in C sharp minor op 27, no. 2
'Moonlight'
(Last performance at ICC 06/10/2004)

Beethoven

Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor op 13
'Pathétique'
(Last performance at ICC 06/10/2004)

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

Brahms

Piano Sonata no. 3 in F minor op 5
(First performance at ICC)

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PROGRAMME NOTES

**BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)**

**Piano Sonata no. 14 in C sharp minor
op 27, no. 2 'Moonlight'**

(Sonata quasi una Fantasia)

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto

Presto agitato

'It is a vision of a boat on Lake Lucerne by moonlight,' wrote the poet and critic Ludwig Rellstab of the first movement of Beethoven's opus 27 piano sonata. The nickname stuck, although the composer himself never saw Lake Lucerne and died five years before Rellstab coined his famous comment. Scholars now believe that mood of the opening *Adagio* was influenced by the composer's lengthy vigil at the bedside of a dying friend – more solemn funeral hymn than moonlit reverie. Beethoven wrote the sonata in 1801 whilst staying in Hungary and dedicated it to Giulietta Gucciardi, a 17 year old countess for whom the 30 year old composer had an unrequited passion. Its popularity came to irritate Beethoven. 'Everybody is talking about it. Surely I have written better things!' he exclaimed to a friend.

Unusually, all three movements are based in the tonality of C sharp; minor for the outer movements, major for the central *Allegretto* (technically, it is in D flat major – the enharmonic equivalent of C sharp – thereby avoiding a difficult key signature with seven sharps). The sonata marks a significant new approach to form, with the use of an unusual key (Mozart never composed a single work in C sharp minor, Haydn once only), an irregular form and an unorthodox ordering of the movements. This freer, more improvisatory style led Beethoven to designate both opus 27 sonatas '*quasi una fantasia*' ('almost a fantasy'). Marked to be played 'with great delicacy', the first movement opens with an ascending arpeggiated motif which is used ambiguously, both as a true theme and as a gentle ostinato accompaniment. The *Allegretto* is light in mood, a short interlude before the tempest of the longest movement, the *Presto agitato* finale which, like the opening *Adagio*, shows Beethoven's mastery in conjuring up an intense, powerful musical statement from simple arpeggios and repeated notes.

(Duration: 16 minutes)

BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor
op 13 'Pathétique'
Grave — Allegro di molto e con brio
Adagio cantabile
Rondo: Allegro

Published on 18 December 1799 (two days after his 29th birthday), the Opus 13 sonata is unusual, not least because its nickname (Pathétique – in the sense of intense or emotionally wrought rather than its modern English meaning of pitiful) comes from Beethoven himself. It is the composer's first great excursion into the dark, dramatic depths of C minor, which would become the key of the Fifth Symphony, the Coriolan Overture and the funeral march of the Eroica. It is one of those rare pieces of classical music which has not only inspired other classical composers but has also penetrated popular culture. Elgar told a friend that the famous theme of the slow movement lay beneath Nimrod, the ninth of his Enigma Variations. The same theme has been turned into a love song by Billy Joel whilst the finale has been sampled by BanYa, described on their website as a 'South Korean game music composer group.'

The sonata's form is the mirror image of the Moonlight, written two years later. Whilst that work concentrates the musical argument into the finale, in the Pathétique the opening movement is twice as long as the finale. After a slow introduction, Beethoven's first in a piano sonata, the music soon rushes forward with a tremendous energy. At the moment one would expect the development to begin, the music comes to a stop and the imposing chords of the *Grave* introduction return. Only then does the development start, climaxing with some remarkable harmonic progressions before a coda brings the movement to a storming conclusion.

The main cantabile theme of the *Adagio* closely resembles the slow movement of Mozart's sonata K457. The theme returns three times (always in A flat major) separated by two modulating episodes; it is a simple rondo rather than the sonata form more commonly used at the time for statements of such seriousness.

The finale (also a rondo) returns to C minor, but the mood here is very different from the darkness of the opening movement, its delicacy

perhaps explained by the fact that Beethoven had originally intended to use it in a violin sonata.

The pianist Ignaz Moscheles recalled, ‘It was about this time [1804 – Moscheles was 10 years old] that I learnt from some school-fellows that a young composer had appeared at Vienna, who wrote the oddest stuff possible – such as no one could either play or understand; crazy music, in opposition to all rule; and that this composer’s name was Beethoven. On repairing to the library to satisfy my curiosity as to this so-called genius, I found there Beethoven’s Sonata Pathetique. My pocket-money would not suffice for the purchase of it, so I secretly copied it. The novelty of its style was so attractive to me, and I became so enthusiastic in my admiration of it, that I forgot myself so far as to mention my new acquisition to my master, who reminded me of his injunction, and warned me not to play or study any eccentric production until I had based my style upon more solid models. Without, however, minding his injunctions, I seized upon the pianoforte works of Beethoven as they successively appeared, and in them found a solace and a delight such as no other composer afforded me.’

(Duration: 19 minutes)

INTERVAL

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

Piano Sonata no. 3 in F minor op 5
Allegro maestoso
Andante espressivo – Andante molto
Scherzo
Intermezzo (Rückblick)
Finale. Allegro moderato ma rubato

The late summer and autumn of 1853 was an extraordinary period in the career of the 20 year old Johannes Brahms. He wrote this great five-movement sonata (his third and last statement in the form) and, in the course of a few months, meetings with four men and one woman would transform him from a shy, if gifted, young pianist into a budding superstar of composition. First, he was introduced to the violinist

Joachim, who would remain a lifelong friend and mentor. In August, he met Liszt, but refrained from joining his band of acolytes, choosing instead to continue the classical tradition of his idol, Beethoven. In late September, armed with an introduction from Joachim, Brahms travelled to Düsseldorf to meet Robert Schumann, then the most influential music critic in Germany. In October, Schumann (never one for shunning hyperbole) wrote, ‘sooner or later someone would and must appear [who would] spring fully armed like Minerva from the head of Jove. And he has come, a young blood at whose cradle graces and heroes mounted guard. His name is Johannes Brahms.’ In November, Brahms met Berlioz, who, in turn, told Joachim, ‘[Brahms] has taken it into his head to make a new music. He will suffer greatly.’ And, of course, Brahms also met Clara Schumann, forming an intense (but probably platonic) attachment which would last for the rest of their lives.

The third sonata is Brahms’s largest single composition for solo piano. It is bursting with musical ideas and unusually requires a fifth movement to work out the diverse material from the first four. The second and fifth movements conclude with codas of almost overwhelming weight. The first movement is a tight, intense sonata form which prominently features the ‘fate’ rhythm of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and concludes in the major key. The slow movement is headed by a verse from a poem by Sternau (*‘The evening dims, The moonlight shines, There are two hearts that join in love, And embrace in rapture’*). Perhaps symbolising the ‘two hearts’, there is a pair of principal themes, one in A flat major, the other in D flat major, which alternate throughout the movement. A shorter, lighter *Scherzo and trio* leads to the fourth movement, an *Intermezzo* entitled ‘*Rückblick*’ (‘looking back’ or ‘remembrance’ – a precocious sentiment, perhaps, for so young a man). As in the opening and third movements, the ‘fate’ motif figures prominently. The finale is a rondo in the home key of F Minor. The first diversion from the rondo theme opens with a musical cryptogram, F-A-E (*Frei aber einsam* – free but lonely), the motto of Brahms’s new friend, Joachim. Brahms then bids farewell to the piano sonata in a bravura finale, which incorporates a broad lyrical melody, a stately march and a wildly extended coda.

(Duration: 35 minutes)

Programme notes © C.N. Lane

FRANÇOIS-FRÉDÉRIC GUY

It is a real thrill for me to be able to introduce you to tonight's pianist, **François-Frédéric Guy**, a renowned specialist in German Romantic music, and above all that of Beethoven. Since his debut performances with the Orchestre de Paris in 1999 and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, under Bernard Haitink at the Lucerne Festival in 2000, Guy has established himself as one of the most fascinating pianists of his generation.

In 2008 Guy embarked on a major Beethoven project that has included recording and performing all of Beethoven's sonatas and piano concertos. In October 2013 the box set of the live recordings of the complete piano sonatas was released to critical acclaim on the French label Zig-Zag Territoires. More recently he has recorded the complete cello sonatas with cellist Xavier Phillips and recordings of the violin sonatas and piano trios with Xavier and violinist Tedi Papavrami will soon be available. His discography is extensive and wide-ranging; for further information see his excellent website, www.ffguy.net/en/

François-Frédéric Guy has performed the complete Beethoven piano sonatas in Washington, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Monte Carlo and Metz and is part way through the cycle in Seoul. (He also performed them for the Norfolk and Norwich Chamber Music Society, so successfully that he has been invited back there on several occasions).

In addition to his admiration for the music of Beethoven and Brahms, Guy has a special affinity with the works of Bartok, Liszt and Prokofiev. He is also strongly committed to contemporary music with close links to composers such as Ivan Fedele, Marc Monnet, Gerard Pesson, Hugues Dufourt and Bruno Mantovani. (We heard Mantovani's

Le Livre de Job performed by its dedicatee, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, at his recital here in December 2014).

As a concerto performer Guy is a regular guest with such world class orchestras as the Philharmonia, the London Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris, the Vienna Symphony, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich, the Munich Philharmonic and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. He has collaborated with world famous conductors including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Philippe Jordon, Daniel Harding, Neeme Järvi and Kent Nagano. In recital, he has performed in major concert halls in London, Milan, Berlin, Munich, Moscow, Paris, Vienna and Washington DC. He has appeared at prestigious festivals, such as the Piano Festival at La Roque d'Anthéron, the Chopin Festival in Warsaw, Beethovenfest Bonn, Printemps des Arts de Monte Carlo and, last but not least, the Cheltenham Festival!

Following his successful debut in the dual role of soloist and conductor with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège and the Orchestre d'Avignon, Guy has led several performances of the complete Beethoven piano concertos from the piano and is adding symphonic works to his conducting repertoire. This season he is Artist in Residence for the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. His many concert appearances this year have taken him as far afield as Japan and Canada. Ilkley Concert Club is fortunate because he appears for 'one night only' in the North of England.

(Biographical notes supplied by karstenwittmusikmanagement and edited by Sarah Warnes)

CLUB NOTES

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

With a wonderful 72nd Season to look forward to, we welcome forty new members. Everyone who has a Season Ticket automatically becomes a member of Ilkley Concert Club. The number of New Members is quite large because, sadly, we had an unusually large number of resignations this year. Many were from loyal long-standing members who are feeling the effects of age — one had been a Member for over 40 years. One result is that our waiting list is the smallest since your current Chairman joined the committee. Do tell your friends and acquaintances that the 73rd Season (2018-2019) should give them a good chance of a Season Ticket if they apply as soon as possible after receiving their Season Brochure in June 2018.

AGM

Our AGM will be held in the King's Hall at 7pm on 8 November before our next concert. All Members are welcome.

REFUNDS FOR THE MAY CONCERT

If we were able to sell your seat for the May concert of the last Season, you can collect the refund in the interval or at the end of this concert at the counter by the Winter Garden stairs.

INTERVAL COFFEE

Thank you to the good number of Members who volunteered for the rota to serve Tea and Coffee in the intervals. Most of them were asked to do it for just one of the concerts, but some have agreed to do a couple. It underlines how important volunteers are for the Club. Much of the work for the Club is done by volunteers, one of whom is Pip Cowling, who now organises the coffee services.

KING'S HALL STAFF

The very helpful King's Hall Staff are principally here for your safety so please make sure that you follow their instructions when asked. The musical matters are the responsibility of ICC — contact any committee member if you have concerns or comments. The Club has agreed that the platform lighting should be set up to satisfy the Artists, with the help of the King's Hall technical staff.

Dr HEATHER BEAUMONT

Heather Beaumont died in 2016 having been a Member for 32 Seasons. She very kindly acknowledged the great pleasure she had experienced at Ilkley Concert Club concerts by leaving us a legacy in her will.

David Wharmby (Chairman of ICC)

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Beethoven: The choice here is enormous, with many superb recordings of the piano sonatas. I am suggesting two favourites of mine which include both sonatas. Warner Classics have just re-issued the digital recording of all the Sonatas and bagatelles played by Stephen Kovacevich. These are sturdy, exciting, yet sensitive performances with very good recording quality, and are available in a 9 disc set for around the price of one full price CD (0190295869229). As an alternative, a firm favourite of mine for many years, Wilhelm Kempff performs Sonatas nos. 8, 14, 21 & 23 on DGG 4474042 (medium price).

François-Frédéric Guy's interesting performances are available on a 3 CD set from Zig Zag Territoires ZZT 111101 (medium price).

Brahms: Unfortunately, the superb recording by Clifford Curzon is only available as part of a large set, but some copies may be available via the internet. Stephen Hough provides a superbly performed modern recording, coupled with the Ballades op 10, on Hyperion CDA67237 (full price). As a budget alternative, a favourite pianist of mine, Idil Biret performs the same programme on Naxos 8.550352.

M. Guy's recordings of the three Brahms piano sonatas are on Evidence Classics EVCD 022 (two discs at medium price).

Raymond Waud. raywaud@gmail.com

NEXT CONCERT – WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2017 AT 8PM

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Debussy	Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor
Brahms	Sonata for Violin and Piano in G, Op.78
César Franck	Sonata for Violin and Piano in A
Ravel	<i>Tzigane</i>

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