

Concerts at the University

Spring-Summer 2024

Tuesday 26 March 2024

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Chris Baxter • piano

Programme of works by Alasdair Nicolson,
Beethoven, Thomas Tomkins and Graham Fitkin.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

42nd Street Stomp

Alasdair Nicolson (b.1961)

This energetic paraphrase dates from 1991, and in it Nicolson has taken a well-known melody from Harry Warren's *42nd Street*, and subjected it to inventive textures and figurations. The essential dancing vigour of the original musical is central to the drive of this piece and is further emphasised by the inclusion of a bold quote from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op.26

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- i. Andante con Variazione
- ii. Scherzo et Trio
- iii. Macia funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe
- iv. Allegro

Despite its humble opening and the gentle dissipation of energy in the final bars of the piece, Beethoven's Op.26 is rich in expressive depth and character. Dating from 1801, this Sonata marks an important turning point in Beethoven's compositional journey through his Sonatas, and from here onwards he began to explore and develop the use of form and structure in more innovative ways. In the words of the German pianist, Edwin Fischer, Op.26 is the first of the "psychological compositions", in which the structural design of the music forms an integral part of its expressive impact, and in which apparent spontaneity is underpinned by rigorous coherence and integrity. The Funeral March from this Sonata was later orchestrated by Beethoven and was performed during his own funeral procession.

A Sad Pavan for These Distracted Times

Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)

This introspective and melancholic Pavan was composed in 1649 in response to the execution of Charles I. Tomkins was regarded as being somewhat of a conservative in terms of musical style during his lifetime, however the frequent modulations and striking chromaticism in this piece are quite arresting, even to our modern ears.

Relent

Graham Fitkin (b.1963)

Commissioned by the pianist Kathryn Stott and composed in 1998, *Relent* is an energetic toccata, rich in rhythmic invention and textural exploration. The stimulus behind the piece is the concept of time and its inevitability, and the perception of its various manifestations. Apart from a few brief moments of repose, there are continuous semiquavers throughout, but with the rhythmic impulse changing in almost every bar and with persistently unpredictable and shifting accents, there is no shortage of variety and vitality.

Christopher Baxter is the Staff Pianist at the University of Edinburgh. He is frequently in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and educator, and has given numerous performances and masterclasses across the UK and internationally. Christopher also works as a grade and diploma examiner for the ABRSM. www.ChristopherBaxterPiano.com

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