

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2011

Concerts at The University

Friday 4 February 2011

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall

**Programme of music performed by current
music students from the University of Edinburgh.**



James Telford · piano

Sonata No. 9, Op. 68 : Black Mass (1913)

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

Scriabin stands out as a striking anomaly in the musical history of the early twentieth century. His late music, of which this sonata is an archetypal example, is at once distinctively Russian, ethereal, Romantic, mystical, complex and profoundly unusual. It has been argued that Scriabin arrived at atonality separately from - and perhaps even before - Schoenberg and his followers, further developing the musical language of Chopin rather than that of the German masters. While the validity of this claim still inspires heated academic debate it is beyond question that his harmony, whether considered extended tonality or true atonality, is astonishingly unique amongst his contemporaries.

The driving force behind Scriabin's development of harmonic language was an earnest pursuit of the ecstatic experience. He believed that art had a transformative power, capable of allowing humans to transcend earthly bonds and achieve 'union with the divine'. When he died, he was still attempting to organize a colossal event named *Mysterium* which was intended to bring about the end of existence. It was to be staged in the Himalayas and incorporate a colossal orchestra and chorus, dance, lights and perfume (he was a self-professed synesthete), all augmented by 'bells suspended from the clouds'. Whilst these ideas seem truly bizarre to modern minds, they were not inconsistent with the artistic and philosophical thinking prevalent in Russia at the time - namely symbolism, mysticism and theosophy - and are useful in acquainting ourselves with the transcendent aspirations in Scriabin's music. To this end much of his mature work is wildly ecstatic in tone, yet two of the late sonatas embody something quite different. The ninth sonata, along with the sixth (which Scriabin refused to perform as he believed it to be evil), is much more sinister in tone, with Scriabin's favourite motivic symbols for the erotic, mystic and spiritual consistently smothered by darkness, only occasionally pierced with shafts of light. It is what Scriabin described as the 'necessary presence of evil at the gates of knowledge'.

J. S. Telford

Eric Thomas · guitar

Homenaje Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

After the death of Debussy in 1918, Falla was asked to contribute an article to the planned memorial issue of *Revue Musicale*. Rather than writing an article, Falla preferred to respond with a piece of music. The piece is in the rhythm of a slow habanera, which is restrained yet gives the impression intense emotional depth. At the end of the piece Falla quotes Debussy's piano work *Soiree dans Grenade*, paying direct tribute to Debussy, and also the Spanish city of Grenada, the city in which the work was composed in.

Prelude from Lute Suite No. 4 BWV 1006a

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Many of the works that Bach wrote for the lute were not in fact written for the lute, but for an instrument called the Lautenwerk (the lute-harpsichord), a keyboard instrument with gut strings that could imitate the sounds of the lute. This particular piece was a favourite of Bach's, with it being transcribed for solo organ, oboes, trumpets and strings in the opening sinfonia of the cantata *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir, BWV 29* in D major, and was as well used as an introduction to the second part of the cantata *Herr Gott, Beherrscher aller Dinge, BWV 120a*.

Etude No. 7

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)

Villa-Lobos was an extremely able guitar player and in his youth played guitar in "choro" groups, the popular music at the turn of the century in Rio de Janeiro. When he met the guitarist Andres Segovia in 1924, this planted the seed for the composition of the *12 Etudes* completed in 1929. The particular study is a scale study, however, the middle section expanded the technique of the guitar to include piano like sonorities, a challenge for any guitarist.

E. Thomas

Naomi Black · soprano
Gina Duncan · piano

Das Verlassene Mägdlein

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

This short setting of a poem by Eduard Mörike, set in 1888 by Wolf, is drenched in sorrow and melancholy. It tells the tale of a young girl, who is going about her work in the early morning with a heavy weight on her heart of a dream she had the night before but cannot remember. Halfway through the song her memory returns to her and she delves deeper into regret and grief as she recalls that her dream concerned an unfaithful lover to whom she is still deeply attached. The vocal line is simple, but set against an aching spare accompaniment from the piano it conveys a profound emotion.

Das verlassene Mägdlein

Früh, wann die Hähne krähn,
Eh die Sternlein schwinden,
Muß ich am Herde stehn,
Muß Feuer zünden

Schön ist der Flammen Schein,
Es springen die Funken;
Ich schaue so darein,
In Leid versunken.

Plötzlich, da kommt es mir,
Treuloser Knabe,
Daß ich die Nacht von dir
Geträumet habe.

Träne auf Träne dann
Stürzet hernieder;
So kommt der Tag heran -
O ging er wieder!

The forsaken servant-girl

Early when the cocks crow,
Before the tiny stars recede,
I must be at the hearth
I must light the fire.

The flames are beautiful,
The sparks fly;
I gaze at them,
Sunk in sorrow.

Suddenly I realize,
Faithless boy,
That in the night
I dreamt of you.

Tear after tear
Then tumbles down;
So the day dawns -
O would it were gone again!

Daphne

William Walton (1902-1983)

'Daphne' is the first song from Walton's set of Three Songs written between 1931-32. The text is by Edith Sitwell. Walton was very connected with the Sitwell family and set many of Edith Sitwell's poems to music. The lilting accompaniment of this song and the sense of 'rise' and 'fall' that is prevalent throughout, both in the piano and in the vocal line, seems comparable to the characteristics of an English folk song. Sitwell's poem is based around the story from Greek mythology of the nymph Daphne being chased by Apollo, who is infatuated with her. Daphne prays for help to the river god and she is turned into a tree. The delicate accompaniment at the end brings out the hopelessness that Apollo feels from his loss.

Les Roses d'Ispahan

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Fauré's setting of Leconte de Lisle's poem is an enchanting depiction of a land of jasmine, orange trees, roses and the eternal feminine charm of a beloved - Leïlah. This beautiful picture unfolds over a gently rocking accompaniment from the piano, which is decorated by a recurring dotted rising figure. The speaker conveys with great earnestness that the beauty of this land of Ispahan fades in comparison to the beauty of Leïlah. This piece is sweet and charming and is laced with a hint of elation at the speaker's adoration of his loved one.

Les Roses d'Ispahan

Les roses d'Ispahan dans leur gaine de
mousse, Le jasmins de Mossoul, les
fleurs de l'oranger, Ont un parfum
moins frais, ont une odeur moins
douce, Ô blanche Leïlah! que ton souffle
léger.

Ta lèvre est de corail et ton rire léger
Sonne mieux que l'eau vive et d'une voix
plus douce. Mieux que le vent joyeux qui
berce l'oranger, Mieux que l'oiseau qui
chante au bord d'un nid de mousse.

The Roses of Ispahan

The Roses of Ispahan in their sheath of
moss, the jasmines of Mosul, the
flowers of the orange-tree, have a
fragrance less fresh, a scent less
sweet, O pale Leilah! Than your light
breath.

Your lips are coral, and your lilting
laugh has a better sound than running
water, and a sweeter voice. Better than
the joyous noise that rocks the orange-
tree, better than the bird that sings on
the edge of its mossy nest.

Ô Leïlah! depuis que de leur vol léger
Tous les baisers ont fui de ta lèvre si
douce Il n'est plus de parfum dans le
pâle oranger, Ni de céleste arôme aux
roses dans leur mousse.

Oh! que ton jeune amour ce papillon
léger Revienne vers mon cœur d'une
aile prompte et douce. Et qu'il parfume
encor la fleur de l'oranger, Les roses
d'Ispahan dans leur gaine de mousse.

O Leilah! Since on light wing all the
kisses are flown from your sweet lips,
there is no longer any fragrance in the
pale orange-tree, no divine aroma from
the roses in their moss.

Oh! That your young love, this airy
butterfly, my return to my heart on
quick, sweet wing, and once again give
fragrance to the flower of the orange-
tree, to the roses of Ispahan in their
sheath of moss.

James Telford is a fourth year BMus student at the University of Edinburgh. A keen composer and performer, he studies composition with Professor Nigel Osborne, Professor Peter Nelson and Dr. Yati Durant whilst undertaking studies in piano with Peter Evans. His work *The Present* for two sopranos has frequently been performed by Christina Hall and Deborah Miller, and *Next, Please* for spoken voice and piano performed by Sascha Timeaus and Gina Duncan. James regularly gives recitals as a pianist, having reached the final of the Tovey Memorial prize for performance and composition in 2009 and achieved 2nd and 3rd place in performance classes in the Edinburgh festival. Throughout his life, he has demonstrated interest in a wide variety of music and can be seen playing guitar in rock band *Panel 2* at various venues around Edinburgh, having also worked as a session guitarist in a number of musicals and the University of Edinburgh Jazz Orchestra. After graduation from the BMus course, James intends to undertake further study for a Masters in composition.

Eric Thomas is a classical guitarist who is currently studying for a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Edinburgh and is in his third year. His musical education started early at the age of seven on the violin, however, by the age of thirteen Eric had also started playing the guitar under the tutelage John Gray, and now studies under Andrew Stowell and Matthew McAllister. His interest in early music has led him to start playing the lute, studying with Gordon Ferries. He has played in various venues throughout Edinburgh such as the Reid Concert Hall, St Cecilia's Hall, and The Lot, and played guitar in a sell-out production of *The Last Five Years* in last year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Naomi Black is a fourth year music student at the University of Edinburgh studying Composition and Performance. She has studied singing with Margaret Aronson for the past three years and was a finalist in the Margaret Fletcher Lieder Prize 2010. She is also a soloist with the Edinburgh University Chamber Choir under the direction of Eric von Ibler and through this has had the chance to tour to Spain and the Czech Republic. Throughout 2010, Naomi had the chance to perform premières of several compositions both as a soloist and also as part of an ensemble, which she greatly enjoyed.

Gina Duncan was born and brought up in Torphichen in West Lothian. She is currently in her final year of her BMus (Hons) Music degree at Edinburgh University, studying piano with Peter Evans. Her main focus is performing, along with all other aspects of accompanying and keyboard playing on harpsichord and organ. A regular competitor in local competitions and finalist in the 2008 Tovey competition, Gina is known both as a soloist and as a much sought-after accompanist in the University Music Department. She has performed in a number of major venues in Scotland and abroad, including the Usher Hall and Salzburg Cathedral. She has also played in a number of musicals and has been repetiteur for the University Music Society Chorus for the past two years. Gina has recently benefited from masterclasses and private tutoring from well-known pianists including Steven Osborne and Charles Owen. She intends to continue studying after graduating from Edinburgh, having already received several offers to undertake a Masters in Performance at some of the leading conservatoires in Britain and abroad.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Tuesday 8 February

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Mhairi Lawson · soprano

Jan Waterfield · piano

Song Journey : Venice to Glasgow

Programme includes songs by ROSSINI, FAURE, RAVEL,
SCHUBERT, FRANCIS GEORGE SCOTT, WILLIAM SWEENEY
and BEETHOVEN

ADMISSION FREE

Friday 11 February

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street

Michael Tsalka · harpsichord

Five hundred years of "Early Keyboard Music":

A Journey through different times and countries

Including music by CABEZÓN, SCARLATTI, SEIXAS, J.S. BACH, MOZART, BARTÓK,
FREDERICO IBARRA GROTH and LEONARDO CORAL.

ADMISSION FREE

Tuesday 15 February

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Reid Memorial Concert

Robin Michael · cello

Peter Evans · piano

GINASTERA Pampeana No.2 for cello and piano

GENERAL REID Solos

CHOPIN Sonata for cello and piano Op.65

ADMISSION FREE

Wednesday 16 February

2.00pm

Reid Concert Hall

Tovey Memorial Prize Competition Final

The Tovey Memorial Prize is awarded annually to the Music student
who shows the greatest promise in composition or performance.

ADMISSION FREE