

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2011

Concerts at The University

Tuesday 15 February 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Reid Memorial Concert

Robin Michael · cello

Peter Evans · piano

Programme of works by GINASTERA, GENERAL REID
and CHOPIN.



Pampeana No.2 for cello and piano Op.21 (1950)

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Solo No.1 in F

General John Reid (1721-1807)

Andante Largo

Allegro

Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano Op.65

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Allegro Moderato

Allegro- Scherzo con Brio

Largo

Finale- Allegro

Ginastera wrote three 'Pampeanas' for varied scorings, each intended to evoke the essence of the Argentine plains. He writes: "Whenever I have crossed the pampa, my spirit felt itself inundated by changing impressions, now joyful, now melancholy, produced by its limitless immensity and by the transformation that the countryside undergoes in the course of the day . . . from my first contact, I desired to write a work reflecting these states of my spirit." Throughout *Pampeana No.2* Ginastera exploits characteristic Argentine dance rhythms—the estilo, which moves first in a slow 4/4, then a fast 6/8; and the malambo, the rapid foot-stomping dance of the gauchos.

General John Reid's generous legacy to the University led to the foundation of the Faculty of Music. The Reid Memorial Concert, given annually on a date near his birthday, 13 February, always includes music by the General himself. Reid published two sets of Solos (1756, 1762) for his own instrument, the flute, with continuo accompaniment. Today's Memorial concert includes part of the Solo No.1 in F from the first set, transcribed for cello.

Chopin never composed a work that did not include his own instrument, the piano, which he understood as profoundly as any composer ever has. In addition to his large output of piano solo pieces, he composed a much smaller number of songs, piano concertos, and chamber music. On the strength of his piano trio and the present cello sonata, it seems safe to say that the cello came next after the piano in Chopin's affections, though this fact had as much to do with his friendship with a fine player, Auguste Franchomme, as with the instrument itself. Still, the warm melancholy sound of which the cello is capable surely appealed to Chopin in a purely sensuous way and suited his melodic style, which had been strongly influenced by the bel canto of Bellini.

The Cello Sonata is a very late work; indeed, it shows signs of the direction in which Chopin's style might have developed, had he lived beyond the age of thirty-nine. He found it difficult to compose the work—the process took him two years to bring it to completion. To be sure, he was always a fastidious and careful composer, constantly re-evaluating what he had written, rethinking it in many details. But while working on the sonata, he made a record number of drafts and alterations, probably due to his lack of experience in balancing these two instruments in duet. The final result is a touching piece filled with that grace and refinement that is particularly Chopin's. The composer and his cellist friend played the score through many times in private and probably also among small gatherings, but they only played it once in public, as part of Chopin's last Paris concert in 1848. On that occasion they left out the opening movement, though they did so probably to adapt to the tastes of the Paris audience of the day, which preferred short and easily comprehended compositions and would not have been much interested in a sonata-form movement.

In the first movement, Chopin follows the pattern that he preferred in his piano sonatas, omitting the principal theme at the beginning of the recapitulation so that the return is to the second theme. The scherzo movement has a strong mazurka flavour, while the slow movement is brief but beautifully autumnal in character. The closing movement is a sonata-rondo built around a tarantella with a brooding and melancholic contrasting theme.

Born in 1976, **Robin Michael** studied at the Royal Academy of Music with David Strange and Colin Carr and subsequently with Truls Mork, Steven Isserlis and Ferenc Rados. Following a critically-acclaimed South Bank recital debut in 2003 he has been much in demand as soloist and chamber musician. Robin is principal cello of the Orchestra Revolutionnaire et Romantique and regular guest principal of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, English National Opera and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Michael devotes much of his time to contemporary music and has worked with composers such as Ligeti, Kurtag, Ferneyhough, Maxwell Davies and Birtwistle on their cello works. Recent premiers include Joe Cutler's cello concerto, the U.K premier of Steve Reich's *Cello Counterpoint* as well as concertos by Roxburgh and Finnissy. Recent concert highlights include touring South Africa with both Haydn concertos, complete Bach and Britten suite cycles at Wilton's Hall, London and the Korean premiere of Harvey's *Advaya* for cello and electronics.

Robin is the cellist in the Fidelio Trio with whom he has toured Europe, Asia and South Africa. They have premiered trios by Sciarrino, Nyman, Rolf Hind, Takemitsu and Volans. They recently gave a critically-acclaimed Wigmore Hall debut and make their US debut in New York and Washington in the 2010/11 season. He also appears regularly with chamber groups such as Gemini, Lontano and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. Recent festival appearances include Regello (Italy), Ochrid (Macedonia), Musica Contemporanea (Buenos Aires), Spier (South Africa),

Huddersfield Festival and Library of Congress (Washington). Recent collaborations include projects with musicians such as Ronald Brautigham, Dave Holland and soprano Sarah Leonard. Robin appears regularly with chamber groups such as the Dante Quartet, Eroica Quartet, Lonatano, Gemini and BCMG.

Recordings include the Cutler Concerto with the BBC Concert Orchestra (NMC records), Ginastera complete cello works (Lorelt), Hallgrímsson chamber works (Delphian), 'Bulb' a disc of contemporary Irish piano trios (NMC) and Dorothy Ker's solo cello works (Lorelt). Forthcoming recordings include Ravel and Chausson trios, Nyman trios, Phil Cashian's concerto and the original version of the Mendelssohn Octet. Robin plays a Vincenzo Panormo cello c.1791.

Peter Evans enjoys a varied career as solo pianist, chamber musician, conductor, teacher and performer on early instruments. He studied at Edinburgh University and the Vienna Hochschule. Since returning to live in Scotland in the mid 1970s he has given concerts throughout Britain and Europe as well as the USA, the former USSR, Japan and Kenya. He has also given masterclasses at festivals in both Britain and the USA.

Peter has made over 80 broadcasts for BBC Radio, several appearances on BBC Television and commercial recordings for Hyperion, Unicorn-Kanchana, BMG Classics, Linn, NMC and ASV Records. He is principal conductor of Edinburgh's Meadows Chamber Orchestra, is co-founder and was for twelve years an artistic director of the Hebrides Ensemble, and was for six years a member of the Scottish Arts Council.

In 2010 Peter made a third visit to Kenya where he appeared as both soloist and conductor in concerts with the Nairobi Orchestra. He also gave a solo recital and directed workshops in piano playing and conducting. The Orchestra concerts included the premiere of Hifadhi by Kenyan composer Njane Mugambi, a work which the Meadows Chamber Orchestra will include in their May concert this season. In July 2010 Peter made another return visit: to the Langvad Chamber Music Jamboree in Jutland, Denmark.

In recent years Peter has been particularly involved in the study and teaching of jazz. He teaches both classical piano and jazz at Aberdeen City Music School, where he directs an ensemble entitled Dyce Grooves, with gifted instrumentalists aged between 13 and 17. The group have already made debuts at Aberdeen's Music Hall, Edinburgh's Jazz Bar and the new East Coast Youth Jazz Festival in Dunfermline.

FORTHCOMING CONCERT:

Wednesday 16 February, 2.00pm, Reid Concert Hall

Tovey Memorial Prize Competition Final

ADMISSION FREE