

Concerts at The University

Tuesday 4 October 2011

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Tomáš Klement · piano

Programme of works by KLEMENT SLAVICKY,
JANÁČEK and SMETANA.



With the support of Czech Tourism

Sonata 'Contemplation of Life'

Klement Slavicky (1910-1999)

- (i) Grave. Molto allegro impetuoso
- (ii) Largo misterioso
- (iii) Molto vivo deciso

The Piano Sonata *Contemplation of Life* (1958) was one of the first pieces written by Klement Slavicky that was not censored by the Communist regime. In the years just after World War II, many of his works were deemed 'formalistic', and many of his scores were thus destroyed. During the 1950s, however, there was an easing of cultural control by the Communists, and, taking advantage of this, Slavicky composed several works that were serious in nature. This sonata offers a broad range of emotions and thoughts: some that move quite hurriedly from one to the next, and others that saturate the moment in depression, nostalgia, or angst.

The first movement displays sharp contrasts: it begins with loud, dramatic chords and syncopated rhythms, but an abrupt change introduces soft, meandering notes, which increase in intensity, as more and more accented notes are added. A calm section follows that is similar in sentiment to the last movement from Holst's *The Planets*. Perhaps this is Slavicky's contemplation of life on Earth, but in the context of something greater, such as outer space.

The dark and mysterious second movement might lack a clearly-defined architecture, but it is the most powerful of the three movements. It begins and ends quietly, but starts to culminate at the middle in a funeral march.

The third movement is mostly quick and exciting, with its pounding, rhythmic energy. All three movements feature frequent changes in the number of beats per bar, but it is most apparent in this last movement, which feels slightly more off-kilter than the others.

In the Mists

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

- (i) Andante
- (ii) Molto adagio
- (iii) Andantino
- (iv) Presto

Much of the music we know of Janáček was drawn largely from Moravian and Slavic folk tunes, as well as the sound of the Czech language. His piano cycle *In the Mists* is an autobiographical work that loosely describes his sense of being lost as he grew old. It was written in the winter of 1912-1913, a few years after the death of his daughter Olga, and simultaneous with his opera *Jenufa*. It was a time of frustration from an unhappy life at home, filled with what he describes as being lost in the mists of time. It is the last of his more substantial solo works for the instrument. All four movements, anchored in "misty" keys with five or six flats, demonstrate the impressionistic influence of Debussy. There is often a wandering sense of melody and a frequent change of meter.

The composer and pianist Thomas Adès writes:

In Janáček, not a note, not a gesture is rhetorical, is inertly for its own sake; every detail is to play for; every slightest instrumental or harmonic colour fires its particular charge into the structure. [...] The greatness of *In the Mists* lies in its very claustrophobia, an austerity of means affecting every aspect of the music. The solo piano becomes a narrow space with four solid walls.

Hulán and Furiant from *Czech Dances*

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

Smetana's affinity for Czech folk music and his knowledge of Czech dance rhythms and harmony are evident in his two books of *Czech Dances* for piano.

Hulán (Lancer) and *Furiant* (Peasant Dance), are both from the second book, which was inspired by Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* and poems by Karel Jaromír Erben.

Hulán is a tender women's dance, portraying a girl longing for her lover - a soldier who is away, in service to his country.

Furiant, one of the most famous Czech dances, is an exciting stamping dance that is full of energy, and is presented with Lisztian grandeur. Both dances showcase light, catchy melodies, vivacious rhythms, and elaborate counterpoint.

Tomáš Klement started playing the piano at the age of four, and is now one of the finest Czech pianists of his generation. His playing has been broadcast on Czech television and national Czech Radio, and he has been recognised for his musical communication, his depth of sound, and his wide range of colours. He has performed across the Czech Republic as well as in Italy, Sweden, Poland, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

As a soloist, he has appeared with orchestras in the Czech Republic as well as England. In 2009, he gave the UK premiere of Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Partita for Piano and String Orchestra*. He is a prize winner in national and international piano competitions including the Oxford Music Festival Piano Competition, the National Intercollegiate Competition of Czech Conservatories, the International Beethoven Piano Competition (Czech Republic), the International Smetana Piano Competition (Czech Republic), and the Concours International de Piano (France).

Tomáš is also an accomplished chamber musician and accompanist. As pianist in the Lanark Piano Trio, he has performed in several London venues.

He is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he is a recipient of a scholarship to study with Ian Fountain.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 7 October

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Henry Lebedinsky · organ

ILKKA KUUSISTO Praeludium

LOUIS LEWANDOWSKI Prelude on 'Kol Nidre' Op. 37, No. 2

TANEYEV Choral Variations in A major

MORITZ BROSIG Fantasia No. 3 in D minor

ADMISSION FREE

Wednesday 12 October (*note day*)

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

James Johnstone · organ

J.S. BACH Movements from *Clavierübung III*

including Prelude and Fugue in E flat BWV 552

ADMISSION FREE

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