

Niel du Preez

piano



Sunday 3rd October 2021

St Thomas' Church
Winchelsea



NIEL DU PREEZ has inspired live and radio and television audiences in the UK, continental Europe, the Far East, North America and his native South Africa with his expressive and poetic solo playing, performances with leading orchestras and collaborations with chamber musicians from all around the world. His most recent collaboration comes in the form of a duo with Paris-based clarinetist Myriam Carrier. He is also the Artistic Director and Founder of the newly established ArtePiano Masterclass Series and the International ArtePiano E-competition.

Niel was awarded *DAAD & SAMRO* scholarships for overseas studies and has won numerous prizes at various national and international competitions, including the *Oude Meester* and *FORTE* music competitions in South Africa and the International Silvio Bengali Piano Competition in Italy. After his years as a music scholar at the junior department of the now-called Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth South Africa, he continued his studies at the Stellenbosch Conservatoire of Music, the *Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover* and the *Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe* in Germany.

Former teachers include Kaya Han, Christopher Oakden, Peter Nelson, Simone Kirsch and Barbara Van Wyk, and over time he has engaged with various acclaimed pianists and teachers such as Ari Vardi, Karl-Heinz Kämmerling, Peter Feuchtwanger, Andzrej Jasinsky, Peter Eicher, Martino Tirimo, Anton Nel, Nelly-Ben Or, Melvyn Tan and Graham Fitch.

Performances for 2021-22 are scheduled for England, South Africa, Germany, Japan and for the ArtePiano Masterclasses in both Germany and Italy. Recent solo appearances include a live-streamed recital for the University of Stellenbosch South Africa, online recitals



for CityMusic Live in London, solo and duo recitals in Perth Australia, Beijing China, Frankfurt Germany, St Martin-in-the-Fields in London and St John's Smith Square. Other performances include recitals for the London based Blüthner Piano Concert Series, the Schubert Society, a concert tour in South Africa, as well as a performances of Saint Saëns' Piano Concerto no.5 and Shostakovich's Piano Concerto no.2 in central London.

Today Niel is a member of the music department at the St. Paul's Cathedral School and King's College School in London where he teaches piano and works as an accompanist. Recently he has been appointed as a faculty member and artist of TIPA (Tokyo International Piano Association).

"The music reached a state of profound intimacy through his strongly expressive playing"
Badische Neueste Nachrichten

FERRUCCIO BUSONI 1866-1924

Ich ruf' zu Dir, Herr (1898, after J S Bach)

Busoni was an Italian virtuoso pianist, composer and writer, steeped in the works of JS Bach from his childhood. Busoni helped further the Bach revival started by Felix Mendelssohn. The original organ chorale was written in Bach's Weimar years (1708-1717). It was based on Agricola's 16th century hymn, which depicts a doubting man who clings to Christ, questioning his ability to live in accordance with Christ's word. Busoni transcribed the chorale for piano in a chamber music style, presenting a considerable challenge to the performer. The transcription is in part Busoni's interpretation but it reflects Bach's original.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770-1827

Sonata Opus 31, No 2 in D Minor (1801-02) 'The Tempest'

- i. *Largo - allegro*
- ii. *Adagio*
- iii. *Allegretto*

This is Beethoven's only Piano sonata in D Minor. As with some other of Beethoven's works, the title was not given by him. It is supposed to refer to an allusion Beethoven made to Shakespeare's play when asked to explain the first movement of this sonata. The Austrian composer Carl Czerny (1791 -1857) described the sonata as "perfect". It is an intensely romantic piece, seen by some scholars as marking the start of Beethoven's second period leading to even grander works.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN 1810 - 1849

Barcarolle Opus 60 in F# Major (1845-1846)

One of Chopin's last major works, the barcarolle's form echoes the gently rocking rhythms of a traditional Venetian gondolier's folksong. The piece is romantic and wistful, demanding to play because of the long reaches above an octave. The soaring climax might depict a storm on a Venetian canal. Maurice Ravel wrote: "Chopin was not content merely to revolutionise piano technique. His figuratives are inspired. Through his brilliant passages one perceives profound, enchanting harmonies. Always there is a hidden meaning which is translated into poetry of intense despair... The Barcarolle is the synthesis of the expressive and sumptuous art of this great Slav."
(See the Chopin Project website)

INTERVAL

ALEXANDER Scriabin 1872-1915

Etude op.2 no.1 in C# Minor - *Andante*

Etude op.11 no.1 in C Major - *Vivace*

Etude op.11 no.10 in C# Minor - *Andante*

Etude op.11 no.6 in B Major - *Allegro*

Etude op.11 no.21 in B Flat Major - *Andante*

Etude op.8 no.12 in D# Minor - *Patetico*

Scriabin was a complex figure, dabbling in theosophy as was fashionable at the time, and interested in synaesthesia, in his case colours seen in or through music. As well as his orchestral masterpieces, he wrote extensively for the piano throughout his career, producing works of great emotional power as well as of considerable difficulty for the performer. Opus 2 no.1 was written when he was just 15. This selection from his 26 Etudes for Piano shows his development and range as a composer.

FRANZ LISZT 1811-1886

Vallée d'Obermann (from *Années de Pèlerinage* - 1842)

The Abbé Liszt (to give him his correct clerical title) is another towering composer and supreme piano virtuoso of the 19th Century, whose works remain demanding. This piece was inspired in part by de Sélincourt's novel - then very popular - about a young man enthralled by the splendour and power of nature, and in part by Liszt's own travels in Switzerland. The principal theme is a descending scale figure which undergoes harmonic and chromatic transformation paralleling the emotional turmoil of de Sélincourt's hero.

The first part in its chromatic meandering evokes the listlessness and ennui of the hero. The middle section begins angelically, recalling how naively and simply his travels began. Then trouble appears, with the turmoil of octaves flying everywhere. In the final section Liszt's descending scale motive emerges harmonised as a melody of warmth and consolation, leading to an exalting climax, with hints of the intensity of the emotion experienced. (*Drawn in part from notes by Zheng Zuo*)



Programme notes by John Manuell

dp 2021

Saturday 13th November at 7.30pm

HASTINGS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Marcio da Silva *conductor*

Stéphanie Gurga *piano*



Saturday 18th December at 4pm

WASSAIL - A FESTIVE CONCERT BY CANDLELIGHT

Pegasus Chamber Choir

Ann Rachlin *commère*



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