





**Ignas Maknickas   
(piano)**



*Ignas is kindly supported by*

*the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme*

**Friday, I2th January 2024**

**Outwood Academy Foxhills**

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**Ignas Maknickas**In July 2021 Ignas Maknickas received “The Queen’s Award for Excellence” as the highest-scoring graduate of the Royal Academy of Music. In June 2023 Ignas became the winner of Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) International Auditions. He has taken First Prize at the XIX Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition for Youth in Szafarnia, First Prize at the XX Piano Competition “Young Virtuoso” in Zagreb, Third Prize at the Aarhus Piano Competition and, in 2021, was the semi-finalist of the Vendome Prize.  
  
Ignas has appeared with the Aarhus Symphony, Alicante Philharmonic, Dartington Festival Orchestra, Lithuanian National Symphony, Lithuanian State Symphony, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players and Royal Academy of Music Chamber Orchestra. 2023-24 highlights include Mozart K. 467 with London Mozart Players in London, Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 with Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in Indiana and solo recital at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Born in California in 1998, Ignas was raised in Lithuania. In 2017, graduating from the National M.K. Čiurlionis School of Art in Vilnius, he was honoured by the President of Lithuania, H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė. With his sister and three brothers the talented Maknickas Family Ensemble has represented Lithuania on National Television and at State Occasions.

Ignas completed his Bachelor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music on full scholarship under Professor Joanna MacGregor. In September 2021 he commenced the Master of Arts Programme with Professor MacGregor, also on full scholarship. He is a Leverhulme Arts Scholar, a recipient of the ABRSM Scholarship Award, the Imogen Cooper Music Trust Scholarship, Munster Trust Mark James Award, Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation Award, Tillett Trust and Colin Keer Trust Award and Hattori Foundation Award. He is an Artist of Munster Trust Recital Scheme.  
  
He has attended masterclasses with Dmitri Bashkirov, Dame Imogen Cooper, Christopher Elton, Stephen Hough, Yoheved Kaplinsky, Marios Papadopoulos, Menahem Pressler, Geoffrey Simon, Tamás Ungár, Arie Vardi and Ilana Vered.   
  
As a soloist he has appeared at the Steinway Hall in London, Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, Charlottenborg Festival Hall in Copenhagen, Ed Landreth Hall in Fort Worth, Lithuanian National Philharmonic in Vilnius and Kinross House in Scotland.

**PROGRAMME AND NOTES**

**Stigmatas – 5 Minatures for Piano Alvidas Remesa (b.1951-)**

Alvidas Remesa is a Lithuanian composer. He has composed over 100 works ranging from songs to symphonies and stage works; however, sacral music occupies the main part of his output. During the last 15 years he has studied theology, the history of ecclesiastical music, liturgy, Gregorian chant, and he has become a Franciscan monk. In 1990-2002 he was an organist at the Franciscan monastery church in Kretinga. Currently he works in music therapy. Among his most popular works are ‘Seven Words of Jesus Christ*’* for solo clarinet and ‘Stigmatas’ for piano.

Stigmatas is dedicated for Saint Francis Assisi’s stigmatisation. Ignas played these short pieces as part of his YCAT Public final audition in 2023. Ignas will be able to give us a greater insight into these short pieces.

**Nocturnes Op. 27 No. 1 and 2 Chopin (1810-1849)**

Nocturnes are fairly short pieces, usually written for piano, that were inspired by the night. The Irish composer John Field is credited with creating the form but it was Chopin who brought them to their Romantic fruition as a single-movement character piece.

The nocturnes are Chopin’s most intimate and personal compositions. Some are wistful, some reflective, some melancholy, some faintly troubled and some serenely joyful. All are sensuously beautiful, pervade with elegance and deeply poetic meaning. During Chopin’s lifetime they were his most popular pieces. Twenty-one survive, the first written when he was seventeen, the last three years before his death. As the title implies, they are suggestive of some aspect of dusk, evening, twilight or the dark night and associative emotions.

The two Nocturnes Op. 27 were composed in 1835 and published the following year. These two nocturnes are enharmonically related, C# and Db are the same note. They are considered by many to be amongst Chopin’s finest works and were dedicated to Countess Thérèse d’Appony, wife of the Austrian Ambassador in Paris. The Countess Thérèse held lavish salons at the Austrian embassy where many of Chopin’s works were performed. Thérèse was also one of Chopin’s pupils.

Op. 27 No. 1 in C# minor is in ternary form (ABA). It is dark, troubled and sombre. The first section (A) is marked larghetto meaning fairly slowly, is in common time (4 beats in a bar) and has a beautiful RH melody over a wide-spread arpeggio LH bass. The second section is in 3 time. It is far more agitated and is marked *pui mosso* meaning *more moved*. A short cadenza introduces the returning A section which is somewhat shorter than the original.

Op. 27 No. 2 in Db major has been called the most voluptuous of the nocturnes. The form of this nocturnes is much more difficult to appreciate. Listen carefully to the opening melody, it is a RH tune over a running arpeggios LH. This melody comes three times at the beginning of each of the three sections. Each of these three sections progresses to a more agitated area where the RH melody is in 2 parts rather like an operatic duet. Each repeat is varied with ever great ingenuity. There is a coda which eventually floats quietly to the end of the keyboard.

**Polonaise-Fantaisie Op. 61**

A polonaise is a polish dance in 3 time and is still very popular in Poland today. Chopin wrote his first polonaise in 1817, when he was 7; his last was the Polonaise-Fantasie of 1846, three years before his death.

As its name suggests, the Polonaise-Fantasy merges the characteristics of the aristocratic polonaise with elements of fantasy, the one fertilising the other in Chopin’s hands to produce a masterpiece of structural unity and emotive power. Its dreamy introduction is improvisatory in mood, as if searching for and growing towards more concrete ideas. Those ideas eventually emerge, at least five of them, all with elements of the polonaise, some holding Chopin’s attention longer than others and being mused upon imaginatively. Only two return later in the piece. Overall it assumes the following pattern: introduction – ABACDE – transition – AD. However, this is only a sketch plan. The beauty, the poetry and the drama are in the music.

**INTERVAL**

**Sonata No. 21 in Bb major, D. 960 Schubert (1797-1828)**

*Molto Moderato; Andante sostenuto; Scherzo:Allegro Vivace con Delicatezza; Allegro ma non troppo.*

Schubert’s piano sonatas were unfavourably compared to Beethoven’s. Schubert’s gifts, as the first Romantic composer, were lyrical and he had to find a different approach to sonata composition from that of his great German contemporary. Find it he did, though no pianist until the great Arthur Schnabel (1882-1951), well into the twentieth century, had the courage to programme the sonatas with any frequency. Maybe this had something to do with the fact that Schubert’s piano writing could be occasionally rather awkward though perfectly playable and often very effective.

Schubert’s cycle of piano sonatas came to its conclusion and climax with three superb works, in C minor, A major and Bb major. These were written just before his tragically early death in 1828. Some scholars regard them as a trilogy and certainly they are complementary to one another. I doubt any pianist has ever played all three in one evening. It would be a brave pianist to try such a marathon and a difficult listen for the audience with nearly two hours of music to go at! Tonight’s concert finishes with the last and probably the greatest of the three sonatas.

The difference between Schubert’s approach and that of Beethoven is apparent from the very opening of the ***first movement,*** no pregnant, terse themes but a rather laid-back melody which is in no hurry to go anywhere. Once this tune is finished it is repeated immediately. Each of these hearings is followed by an ominous rumbling in the bass. Now it’s time to introduce a contrasting dramatic theme you would think. No, instead Schubert treats us to a third hearing of the same theme but in a succulent new and distant key. A fourth and more intense version of the same melody, back in the home key, eventually leads to a new theme in a distant minor key or, indeed, two themes for the price of one since the main melody is in the LH with another in the RH, all over a triplet rhythm. Eventually this begins to move towards a new key and a change of accompanying rhythm to semiquavers in the bass with a variant of the melody just heard, above. A brief reference back to the opening theme leads to another new one in a new key and a triplet rhythm.

As the end of the themes section approaches the music becomes chordal and emphatic thus the exposition ends with the first really dramatic outburst in the piece. That said, this eruption is often missed out because the movement is so long. This outburst should lead back to the beginning of the sonata; the repeat of the exposition is a traditional part of classical sonata form.

At last to the central development section where the opening theme, in a number of mouth-watering key changes is the main focus of attention. Several of the other themes get a look in too. A new theme is developed from an earlier one is introduced and given considerable treatment.

Eventually, after a pause, the opening theme returns in its original key marking the beginning of the end. This is, however, no ordinary recapitulation. Several new keys are visited and the themes undergo more examination. The end of the movement comes some twenty minutes in, or fifteen if there are no repeats, and the music sinks to rest as quietly as it began.

After such a long, relatively slow movement Schubert surprisingly produces his ***slow movement*** next. It is not only slow but of abject despair. Schubert was only months away from death and he knew it. In a dark minor key its rhythm suggests a barcarolle which is very apt since this was the rhythm of the song sung by gondoliers as they conveyed bodies to their final resting place. This movement is in three-part form. The opening returns after a middle section full of the most beautiful key changes. The movement ends in the major key but still full of pathos.

Things brighten up with the ***Scherzo,*** a movement of fairylike delicacy. Much is made of a three-note figure heard at the outset which may have evolved out of the main theme of the first movement. A brief middle section in the minor key casts a momentary shadow but the movement ends with a return to the brilliant scherzo.

The ***Finale*** is only a third of the length of the opening movement. It is a rondo based on three themes and is largely optimistic in mood apart from one single note which mysteriously persist in inserting itself from time to time. There is the occasional dramatic outburst. However, despite this, Schubert manages to psych himself up for the traditional up-beat conclusion and the coda rushes us to an exciting finish.

*Thanks to Stuart Kavanagh for tonight’s notes*

**Did you know?**

**As part of the INCLUDE project, we thought it might be helpful for some audience members if we provide more information related to the music. Tonight we focus on some of the terms you will find in the programme.**

***Cadenza:***

This term comes from the Italian word *cadenza* meaning cadence. Itrefers to an improvised or written-out ornamental passage played or sung by a soloist or soloists, usually in a "free" rhythmic style, and allowing the soloist to display exceptionally skilful techniques. Often, a cadenza comes near the end of a piece, and provides an exciting, powerful climax.

***Arpeggio:***

An arpeggio is a musical pattern created by performing a chord (multiple notes, often three or more, played together) but playing each note rapidly, one at a time, in a progressive rising or descending order. It is sometimes referred to as a ‘broken chord’.

***Coda:***Coda comes from the Latin word *cauda*, which means “tail”. The coda comes at the end of the piece indicating to the audience that the conclusion is near. It is identified by its reintroduction of previous musical themes, with some crucial harmonic and melodic changes, and then ties them together in a cohesive manner allowing the listener to experience it all once as a grand finale.

***Rondo:***

The Italian word *rondo* derives from the French *rondeau* which means “a little round”. A piece written in rondo form, then, takes you on a circular musical journey, where you regularly bump into the main recurring theme, called a refrain. The refrain is interspersed with sections of music called episodes. The refrain is referred to as A, and each episode is labelled B, C, and so forth. A rondo traditionally follows either a 5-part pattern (ABACA) or 7-part pattern (ABACABA).

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Our next concert will be held on will be held on:

**Friday, 2nd February 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Brodsky Quartet**



Bach Violin Sonata No.3 in C major BVW 1005

Debussy String Quartet in G minor , Op. 10  
Schubert String Quartet No.15 in G major, D887, Op. 161



1