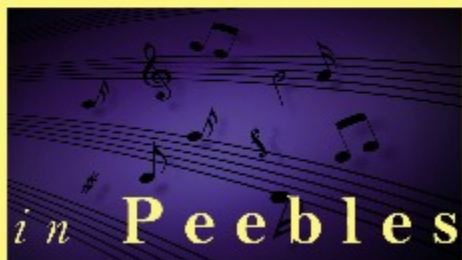


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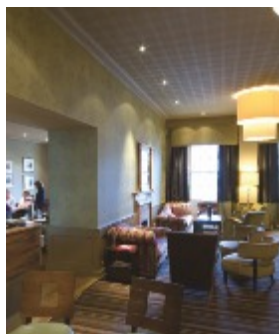
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MUSIC in PEEBLES presents

a piano recital by

FLORIAN MITREA



2019/20 SEASON
Eastgate Theatre & Arts Centre, Peebles
Tuesday 3 March 2020 at 7.30 pm



PROGRAMME

Approx.
duration
(minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No.8 in C minor, Op.13 ('Pathétique') (1798) 20

- i. Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio
- ii. Adagio cantabile
- iii. Rondo. Allegro

Sonata No.21 in C, Op.53 ('Waldstein') (1804) 25

- i. Allegro con brio
- ii. Introduzione. Adagio molto -
- iii. Rondo. Allegretto moderato - Prestissimo

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Ballade for Piano No.2 in B minor, S.171 (1854) 15

- i. Allegro moderato
- ii. Allegro deciso
- iii. Poco a poco animando
- iv. Allegro moderato

Piano Sonata in B minor, S. 178 (1854) 30

- i. Lento assai - Allegro energico
- ii. Grandioso - Recitativo
- iii. Andante sostenuto - Quasi adagio
- iv. Allegro energico - Stretta quasi presto - Presto - Prestissimo -
Andante sostenuto - Allegro moderato - Lento assai

PROGRAMME NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No.8 in C minor, Op.13 ('Pathétique') (1798)



At the Beethoven bicentenary in 1970 he was convincingly presented as singularly relevant to our own strange time, to those with ears to hear. So it is at the 250th anniversary, now. His creative life (and in its muddled way, his amorous, political, social, contingent life) seems to us a model of dynamic evolution, always responding to the emergence of something from nothing, so, for those with ears to hear, he seems the very voice of urgent becoming. A centenary article in a 1927 Radio Times said much the same thing.

Why did Beethoven title his opus 13 in French - 'Grande Sonate Pathétique'? The magnetism of revolutionary turbulence there? The introduction marked Grave with its slow dotted rhythm suggests the French *ouverture* style, a gesture which with Haydn or Mozart would have invoked the world of aristocratic autocracy, the stilted gait to which the king and court make regal ingress. By 1798 the idea of kingship and nobility was in ferment: the hero is Beethoven himself who said, pointing to his head and heart "My nobility is here.... and here". That germinal seed, a mere three steps on the minor scale, explodes into the *allegro* which sweeps all before it.

The *Adagio* is in the related key of A flat, rich in black notes over which the fingers stretch and caress, as opposed to the athletic crouch over white keys. The 'pathétique' is developed here, full of tender pathos - flipside to the howl - as the heart of the whole sonata. The noble tune resembles a cello melody singing in the tenor register, and the central episode might be heard as a duet for clarinet and bassoon.

The *Rondo* finale seems to revert to the gracious old-world manner of Haydn, clearly directed right hand melody and smooth accompanying left hand. Wilfrid Mellers suggests the whole work equivocates, renouncing the grand gestures it started from, reinstates and hesitates, yet the final *coda* commits to the new century, impelled by a knowledge that we cannot go back.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No.21 in C, Op.53 ('Waldstein') (1804)

Counterfactual: If, besides Beethoven's famous 31 sonatas, one more, this, had early on got lost and disappeared; but to reappear now, how would its first bars strike us? An expectant but bewildered audience hearing the astonishing drumbeat like the heart of a small vicious animal? Or a dark device, a Wellsian time machine revving its preliminary powers?

Beethoven's music is conveniently divided into early, middle and late periods. The 'Waldstein' breaks into the middle period of full maturity and power, but it is distinctly reminiscent of the earlier 'Pathétique', each a large integrated system germinating from similar close-packed rising three note motifs.



Count Ferdinand von Waldstein
(1762-1823)

The grave expectancy at the start of the 'Pathétique', its ceremonious dotted (Da...da-da) rhythm, is here again in the heart of the 'Waldstein'. But the Adagio molto middle movement holds our attention because it sustains the feeling of an introduction right through, leaving us in suspense....and from subliminal preparations the last movement emerges, left hand to the high C major white notes, an untrammelled sky-like effect, bells from on high, melodically innocent as a folksong, and harmonised in those tonics and dominant sevenths which obsessed the first allegro.

Everything works out. The weird and wonderful coda swoops down from the very top of Beethoven's six octave piano, a reprise of the carillon bells at double speed, racing to an overwhelmingly assertive fulfilment.

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Ballade for Piano No.2 in B minor, S.171 (1854)



A painting by Joseph Danhauser (1840) depicts the salon in Weimar: all eyes are on Liszt at the piano, and Liszt's eyes are on the bust of the departed Beethoven, his inspiration and mentor, who, in the quasi-religious manner of 19th century high aestheticism confirming the apostolic succession of great artists, was said to have blessed the 9 year old prodigy. From Beethoven, Liszt learned the transformation of tiny motifs to great themes.

The Ballade is of the species created by Liszt out of romantic poetry, the tone poem with a literary theme, in this case a gothic-horror fantasy that Beethoven would have disdained. The shenanigans of Scott and Byron narratives had their German counterpart in Gottfried Burger's '*Lenore*', whose eponymous heroine gallops through the night with her new-slain but undead lover to the cemetery where...stuff happens.

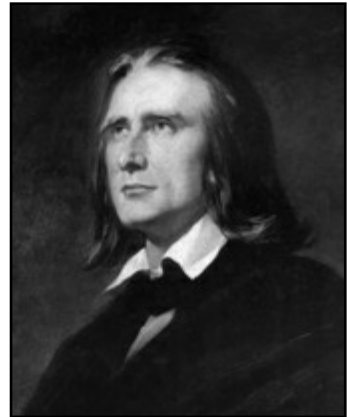
The mood is represented in two themes, a broad opening melody underpinned by menacing rumbles, and a hymnlike chordal meditation. Themes descend a semitone, and marching triplets unleash a whirlwind of octave-hammering virtuosity. The opening theme is transformed into a rocking major-key cantabile, worked up to a state of exaltation. Luminous chords provide a contemplative close.

Liszt could use tosh effectively, which gave full rein to the element of showy vulgarity, which in maturity was subsumed into the grander music and generous personality of later years. Beethoven's Brotherhood of Man was refocused as Liszt's Brotherhood of Artists, including musician-artists, to whom he gave much inspiration, unpaid teaching and practical assistance.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Piano Sonata in B minor, S.178 (1854)

Composer Humphrey Searle acknowledges this, Liszt's only so-titled sonata, as one of the masterpieces of 19th century piano literature. "It is a work of great dramatic power and lyrical expression, with frequent changes of mood; but it does not attempt to tell a story, and its construction is logical on purely musical grounds. It carries the principle of transformation of themes to its limits and does so successfully. Its formal structure is so complex that no single analytical interpretation has achieved widespread acceptance. Theories of its design include an extended one-movement sonata, a three-movement cycle, a four-movement cycle and general programmatic treatments."



Between them, Danhauser's painting and Searle's writing suggest a progress from "ripping yarns" to something like particle physics, and the double life of great music, living on in magical performance and in the intellectual gratification of score-scholars. The third agency, of course is audiences, whether in Weimar's select salon or our public hall, necessary to the theatre of music making.

Programme notes by Philip Hutton

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Florian Mitrea

British/Romanian pianist Florian Mitrea was born in Bucharest but has been based in the UK since 2008 when his early passion for the piano led him to a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Florian's piano studies started in Bucharest, ultimately at George Enescu Music High School. While studying at RAM with Diana Ketler he obtained his BMus with First Class Honours and the Regency Award for notable achievement.

In the summer of 2014, he obtained his Master of Arts degree with Distinction and a DipRAM for his final recital, and received the Alumni Development Award for distinguished studentship. He held the Hodgson Memorial post-studentship Fellowship at RAM in 2014-2015 and continues to teach there within the piano department. Florian is currently studying with Boris Petrushansky at the Accademia Pianistica Internazionale "Incontri col Maestro" in Imola, Italy.



Florian has benefited from participation in master-classes given by Leif Ove Andsnes, Angela Brownridge, Epifanio Comis, Imogen Cooper, Pascal Devoyon, Akiko Ebi, Stephen Hough, Stephen Kovacevich, John Lill, Joanna MacGregor, Boris Petrushansky, Michael Roll, and Dina Yofe. After studying with Boris Berman at the International Holland Music Sessions in summer 2013, Florian was granted a fellowship at Yale University – Norfolk Music Festival for summer 2014, and enjoyed intensive coaching from Peter Frankl, Boris Berman, Wey-Yi Yang and Melvin Chen.

Florian is a Kirckman Concert Society Artist for 2018-19 and holds a Making Music Philip and Dorothy Green Young Artist Award for 2017-19. In March 2018 the Royal Academy announced that Florian had been appointed Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM): an honour awarded to former students who have made a significant contribution to the music profession. In January 2018 he was a finalist in China at the inaugural International Music Competition Harbin, and in June had double success at the New York Piano Festival and Competition where he was the winner (officially second prize, no first prize being awarded) and also received the Special Prize for Virtuoso Performance. In 2017 Florian was a double laureate at the Scottish International Piano Competition, awarded second prize overall and the Glasgow UNESCO City of Music Prize for the best performance of the commissioned piece. In the previous year Florian was joint winner of the Verona International Piano Competition and was awarded second prize in the major biennial James Mottram International Piano Competition at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. This followed success in 2015 when he was a finalist (fourth

prize and chamber music award) at the Hamamatsu Piano Competition and earlier was awarded second prizes at both the Santa Cecilia Competition in Porto, and the Premio Città di Imola at the Imola Academy. In 2014 Florian won third prize and the Classical Concerto Prize at the ARD International Competition in Munich, and first prize at Lagny-sur-Marne. Previous prizes include first prizes at the Panmusica 2010 Vienna International Piano Competition, the Beethoven 2010, and Sheepdrove 2011 Intercollegiate Competitions in the United Kingdom. Earlier prizes include several first prizes in the Romanian Music Olympics and the Ada Ulubeanu Piano Competition, and third prize in the Jeunesses Musicales International Competition.

Florian has performed at Carnegie Hall in New York, at venues across Romania, and in Austria, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and South Korea. In the UK, Florian has performed at venues including Glasgow Royal Concert Hall; Usher Hall in Edinburgh; St John's Smith Square, King's Place, St. Martin-in-the Fields, St. James' Piccadilly, Steinway Hall, and Draper's Hall in London; Colston Hall in Bristol, and Dartington Hall and Bath Abbey. He has performed with the RSNO in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Philharmonia in London, George Enescu Philharmonic and the Romanian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Bucharest, and Collegium Musicum Basel, among other leading orchestras.

Florian remains an active chamber musician. His duo with cellist Alex Rolton won the Brahms RAM Competition and they were invited to perform at Colston Hall, Bristol and Academy Festivals. His Trio Cardinale won the Cavatina Intercollegiate Piano Trio Competition in 2013. As a SoNoRo Chamber Music Festival scholar, Florian has performed alongside Alexander Sitkovetsky, David Cohen, Jan-Erik Gustaffson and Nabil Shehata, among others.

Florian has been generously supported by the Ra?iu Family Foundation and held the 2010/2011 Enescu Scholarship awarded by the Romanian Cultural Institute in London and the 2012/2013 Roy King Scholarship at the Academy. His postgraduate studies were supported by the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund and the Tillett Trust and he was awarded the Silver Medal by the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Performances by Florian have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM in the UK, on Romanian radio and television (SRR and TVR), France Musique, and Südwestrundfunk (SWR2) and Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR-Klassik) in Germany.

Florian's first solo CD, 'Following the River: music along the Danube', was released on 5th January 2018 on the Acousence Classics label (ACO-CD 13317).

MUSIC IN PEEBLES - 2019/20 SEASON

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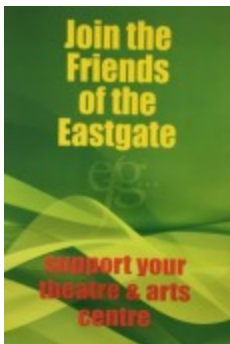
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