



Wednesday 2 June 2021

Duncan Honeybourne piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Sonata in A minor, D784

I. Allegro giusto

II. Andante

III. Allegro vivace

Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in A minor, D 784, is one of Schubert's major compositions for the piano. Schubert composed the work in February 1823, perhaps as a response to his illness the year before, but it was not published until 1839, eleven years after his death. It was given the opus number 143 and a dedication to Felix Mendelssohn by its publishers. This was Schubert's last to be written in three movements, and is regarded by many as the herald to a new era in Schubert's writing for the piano. It is a profound, sometimes almost obsessively tragic work. Its first movement has a sparse texture, with many bare octaves which contribute to the music's sense of bleakness and solemnity. By contrast, the second movement, in F major, is intimate and tender, but tinged with poignancy. The finale is a whirling sequence of triplet scale figures relieved by more lyrical passages.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op 100

I. Moderato cantabile molto espressivo

II. Allegro molto

III. Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro ma non troppo

This sonata is the middle of Beethoven's final three piano sonatas, composed in 1821-22. Its first movement is calm and moderately-paced, and even its central section, in the minor key, does little to disturb the relaxed atmosphere. The second movement, by contrast, is robust, though with a gentler middle section, and is said to be based on two folksongs - *We Are All Dissolute* and *Our Cat Had Kittens*. The third movement combines several elements - a haunting recitative-like section where the music appears to die back almost to nothing, followed by a fugue which emerges from the (almost) silence to build to an impressive climax before falling back into an even more anguished version of the recitative marked '*exhausted, lamenting*'. The music gradually revives and the fugue re-emerges into one of the most glorious uplifting finales in all of Beethoven's piano music.

Duncan Honeybourne, commended by International Piano magazine for his "*glittering performances*", is best known for his interpretations of 20th and 21st century British piano music.

He was a prizewinner at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, graduating with First Class Honours and also studying with John York, Fanny Waterman and for three years with the Russian pianist Mikhail Kazakevich on a Sheepdrove Trust Scholarship. Following concerto debuts at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and the National Concert Hall, Dublin, his recital debuts included London, Dublin, Paris and international festivals in Belgium and Switzerland. His debut recital disc was described by Gramophone magazine as "not to be missed by all lovers of English music", while BBC Music Magazine remarked: "*There are gorgeous things here. Hard to imagine better performances.*"

Duncan has played extensively throughout the UK, Ireland and in Europe as solo and lecture recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician, appearing at leading concert halls and festivals. His solo performances have been frequently broadcast on more than 20 radio networks worldwide, including Radio France, Radio Suisse Romande, Austrian, Belgian and Portuguese Radio, ABC (Australia) and Radio New Zealand. Many appearances on BBC Radio 3 as soloist and chamber musician have included the complete piano music of Ruth Gipps for the composer's centenary, and first broadcasts of several contemporary piano works. Duncan has premiered over 70 new piano works, including John Joubert's Third Piano Sonata, John Casken's Tempus Plangendi, three piano cycles by Sadie Harrison, Adam Gorb's After the Darkness and the Andrew Downes Piano Concerto at Birmingham Town Hall.

Duncan's many recordings have been awarded 5 stars in Musical Opinion and International Piano magazines, have been selected as Recommended Recordings of the Year by MusicWeb in 2014 and 2020, and featured as CD of the Week on FMR Radio in South Africa and Recommended CD on Austrian Radio. Duncan is a Tutor in Piano at the University of Southampton and Sherborne School.