

CURTIS AUDITORIUM
CIT CORK SCHOOL OF MUSIC
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Winner of the inaugural OOS Emerging Artist Award

JORDAN BAGOT

piano



Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928 - 2016)
6 Etydit (Études), Op. 42

George Gershwin (1898 - 1937) / Earl Wild (1915 - 2010)
'Embraceable you' from Seven Virtuoso Études

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886)
Tre Sonetti del Petrarca, S.270

1. Sonnet 47 "Blessed be the day" 2. Sonnet 104 "Peace not found" 3. Sonnet 123 "I beheld on earth"

Olivier Messiaen (1908 - 1992)
Préludes pour piano no. 6 and no. 7

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)
Reflets dans l'eau from "Images" Book 1

C.S.L Parker (b. 1961)
"The Walk to Poolbeg Lighthouse"

Alexander Scriabin (1871 - 1915)
Sonata no. 3 in F-sharp minor, Op. 23 "States of the Soul"
1. Drammatico 2. Allegretto 3. Andante 4. Presto con fuoco



PROGRAMME NOTES

Six Etydit (Études), op. 42 – Einojuhani Rautavaara

Einojuhani Rautavaara is one of the most colourful and diverse figures in Finnish music. He is an artist of exceptionally broad scope, at once Romantic and intellectual, mysticist and constructivist. He has gone through a great many stages in his stylistic development, yet he has combined different stylistic elements in post-modernist fashion within individual works. Rautavaara began his career under the influence of post-war Neo-Classicism; in the 1950s, he began to apply twelve-tone procedures and progressed in some works to quite a modernist idiom. On the other hand, even works written close to each other in time could differ widely in their approach; for instance, in his Third Symphony, written in the middle of his twelve-tone period, he gave free rein to the luscious romantic emotion that came to dominate his music from the late 1960s onwards. Since the late 1970s, he has been creating a synthesis of various stylistic influences. Rautavaara's extensive and versatile output contains several operas, seven symphonies, other orchestral works, concertos, chamber music, piano music and vocal music. Rautavaara has been a major Finnish composer since the 1950s, and has been steadily gaining in international esteem, especially in the 1990s.

Etydit ('Etudes'), written in 1969, dates from a time when a sparse, aphoristic style was the mainstream approach in writing piano music. I therefore wanted to reintroduce a sonorous, broad piano style using the entire compass of the keyboard, presenting this wonderful instrument in its full abundance. Each étude focuses on a particular interval. Brilliant thirds, restless sevenths, anguished tritons, natural fourths, expressive seconds and airy fifths have a sketch each to themselves.

Programme notes by Einojuhani Rautavaara

'Embraceable you', No.4 from *Seven Virtuoso Études* – George Gershwin/Earl Wild

This delightful piece in some way challenges the usual meaning of the word "etude." Major technical demands but they are also musical challenges in how to expand the melodies and harmonies of George Gershwin into vibrant and colorful piano pieces—some wistful, some rhythmic—that exude all the vigor and dash of New York's jazz age. A stylistically inventive and technically challenging etude in the late nineteenth-century virtuoso manner of Liszt and Rachmaninoff but incorporating mid twentieth-century jazz harmonies.

'*Embraceable You*' is one of several hit songs from the 1930 Gershwin show *Girl Crazy* which introduced Ethel Merman and Ginger Rogers to Broadway. Cascades of arpeggios evoke a warm, harp-like sound in Wild's romantic and sensual version.

Tre Sonetti del Petrarca – Franz Liszt

The Tre Sonetti di Petrarca are settings of three sonnets by Petrarch in which the fourteenth-century poet describes his love for the unattainable Laura. Liszt originally wrote them as songs for tenor, but soon wrote early piano versions that were in fact published first. He later revised them both for piano (as included in this cycle), and more radically for baritone. The piano settings are unabashedly lyrical, infused with elements of Italian bel canto operatic writing. The texts to the sonnets are printed below.

Programme notes by Olivia Sham

Sonnet no. 47 "Blessed be the day"

Blessed be the day, the month, the year,
The season, the time, the hour, the
moment,
The lovely scene, the spot where I was put
in thrall By two lovely eyes which have
bound me fast.

And blessed be the first sweet pang
I suffered when love overwhelmed me,
The bow and arrows which stung me,
And the wounds which finally pierced my
heart.

Blessed be the many voices which have
echoed
When I have called Laura's name,
The sighs and tears, the longing;

And blessed be all those writings
In which I have spread her fame, and my
thoughts,
Which stem from her and centre on her
alone.

Sonnet no. 104 "Peace not found"

I find no peace, but for war am not
inclined;
I fear, yet hope; I burn, yet am turned to
ice;
I soar in the heavens, but lie upon the
ground;
I hold nothing, though I embrace the whole
world.

Love has me in a prison that he neither
opens nor shuts fast;
He neither claims me for his own nor
loosens my halter;
He neither slays nor unshackles me;
He would not have me live, yet does not
relieve me from my torment.

Eyeless I gaze, and tongueless I cry out;
I long to perish, yet plead for succour;
I hate myself, but love another.

I feed on grief, yet weeping, laugh;
Death and life alike repel me;
And to this state I am come, my lady,
because of you.

Sonnet no. 123 "I beheld on earth"

I beheld on earth angelic grace,
And heavenly beauties unmatched in this
world,
Such that to recall them rejoices and pains
me,
And whatever I gaze on seems but dreams,
shadows, mists.

And I beheld tears spring from those lovely
eyes, Which many a time have put the sun
to shame, And heard words uttered with
such sighs
As to move the mountains and stay the
rivers.

Love, wisdom, valour, pity and grief
Made in that plaint a sweeter concert
Than any other to be heard on earth.

And heaven on that harmony was so intent
That not a leaf upon the bough was seen to
stir,
Such sweetness had filled the air and winds.

Préludes pour piano no. 6 and no. 7 – Olivier Messiaen

The music of Olivier Messiaen immediately attracts our attention with its rhythm, variety of colour, technical brilliance, energy, joy, and spirituality. It is incredibly well written for the instrument, even though its difficulties may deter many a player. Audiences are rarely indifferent to it, and for many it has a very powerful effect. The *Préludes pour piano*, were published in 1929, while Messiaen was still a student, at the instance of Paul Dukas. While the titles sometimes suggest Debussy, the music itself shows considerable originality. In prelude no.6 '*Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*' ('Bells of Anguish and Tears of Farewell') a repeated note suggests the sound of a bell, with its overtones above. After an intervening section the bell tolls again, in a higher tonality, rising still further at the next repetition. The material develops to a dynamic climax, followed by a tenderly evocative passage, dominated by a recurrent motif, before the return of the bell, heard intermittently as the piece comes to an end. The seventh prelude, *Plainte calme* ('Calm Complaint') is ternary in form, and its simplicity does not take away from its spiritual gravity and highly poetic gestures.

Programme note by Angela Hewitt

***Reflets dans l'eau* from "Images" Book 1 – Claude Debussy**

Written in 1905, *Reflets dans l'eau* is the first piece of the first volume of Debussy's "Images". The author himself wrote to his publisher about this set of works: 'I think I may say without undue pride, that I believe these three pieces will live and will take [their] place in piano literature...' The pieces use a revolutionary, for the time, and extremely non-traditional harmonic vocabulary, which is combined with relatively standard musical forms. As with much of Debussy's output, *Reflets dans l'eau* is considered to be an impressionistic piece, although titles in Debussy are often hints rather than attempts to precisely define the works.

This has several brief melody statements and climaxes that are more glimpses of music than full ideas, which is typical of Debussy's middle and late piano works. This is one of the many pieces Debussy wrote about water albeit the composer is interested in imitating not just water sounds, but reflections on water, that is, pictures that float, which don't necessarily make noises, so the challenge is greater than mere burbles, trickles, and raindrops. Such sounds in nature conjure up a picture in our mind of falling water, or droplets on ponds, or fountains.

The piece creates an image of water being not quite still, then becoming rapid, then decreasing in motion again. *Reflets dans l'eau* is also an example of the new tone colors Debussy discovered for the piano in this part of his life, and although he later refined this style, this piece is part of the greater achievements Debussy reached with the instrument.

Programme notes by Alvaro Siculiana

“The Walk to Poolbeg Lighthouse” – C.S.L Parker

“The Walk to Poolbeg Lighthouse” originates from the large-scale solo piano work which spans 1986 to the present day titled ‘Lumen’. The orchestral version was premiered by the Moravian Philharmonic in 1998 in the Czech Republic and released on the Vienna Modern Masters label.

This piece also features in the chamber opera “The True Loves of Fairyella” which depicts the great south wall in the port of Dublin. The work was performed by the composer in the Aula Maxima in UCC in 1993. This piece is typical of Parker’s style where free-moving soundscapes incorporate detailed depictions of nature, whilst utilizing a highly individual yet descriptive use of colour and darker tones.

Sonata no. 3 “States of the Soul” – Alexander Scriabin

Alexander Scriabin began composing his Third Piano Sonata in 1897, immediately upon completing his Second. Like that work, the Third shows only vague signs of the remarkable atonal revolution that Scriabin will, quite independently of Schoenberg or any other composer, carry out in his music during the years just prior to World War I. The Sonata No. 3 in F sharp minor, Op. 23 was completed in just a few months (as opposed to the nearly five years it took to finish the Second Sonata). Throughout this 20-minute piece, Scriabin continues to assert his own individuality over the Chopin-Liszt tradition which heavily influenced his earliest works. Although even his earliest compositions contain an ecstatic rapture entirely his own, the Third Sonata is perhaps the first truly Scriabin-esque musical statement, wholly deserving of its special little niche in the repertoires of the world's pianists. Scriabin gave the Sonata several titles at various times, including "Gothic" and, from a much later period, "États d'âme (States of the Soul)," the latter an effort on the composer's part to reconcile the work with his growing interest in mystical and theosophical traditions. Happily, the programmatic outlines Scriabin indicated -- from the suffering of the first movement through the respite of the second and deep feeling of the third to the final plunge into nothingness in the finale -- are sufficiently vague to allow the piece to be heard as a purely musical statement. After the declamatory opening gestures of the Drammatico movement, Scriabin moves us into a sound-world richly adorned with his own unique brand of evanescent figurations and sweeping, ravishing melody. The opening statements also serve to close the movement, suitably transformed into fragments of a more tender variety. The following Allegretto is in the manner of an intermezzo -- here a bass line in octaves moves around in E flat major before a central section which radiates with the gentlest simplicity. The third and fourth movements (Andante and Presto con fuoco) are fused together by a brief connecting passage that recalls the opening movement. Scriabin sings one of the most purely gorgeous melodies he had yet written (or, indeed, would ever write) in the Andante, while the Presto sets fiery chromatic gestures against nostalgic lyric passages. A triumphant restatement of the Andante's melody is made, but Scriabin pulls the rug out from under our feet and throws us back into the tumult of F sharp minor for the finish.

Programme note by Blair Johnston

Jordan Bagot, completed his undergraduate studies as the highest-placed final year student of the Bachelor of Music programme in the CIT Cork School of Music studying with Mary Beattie and Dr Gabriela Mayer. He has received masterclasses from world-renowned pianists such as John O’Conor, Pascal Devoyon, Barry Douglas, John Lill, Philip Martin, Pavel Nersessian, Alexander Kobrin, Pierre Goy, Ewa Poblocka, Sergey Schepkin, Finghin Collins and Jean-Bernard Pommier.

Last year, Jordan took first prize at both the 2017 Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Scholarship Award and the Morris Grant Bursary at Feis Ceoil. He was also awarded the ‘Cork Orchestral Society “Emerging Artist” Award’ as its inaugural recipient. This year, he won the Mabel Swainson Award at the 2018 Feis Ceoil.

Jordan has enjoyed performing around Ireland, both solo and with orchestra, whilst completing his MA in performance in the CSM. He has also maintained an avid interest in collaborative piano and new works, having recently recorded C.S.L Parker’s Three Books of Miniatures for piano duet and playing in concert with the Vanbrugh in the Aula Maxima in UCC this summer.