

謔曲，夾了一段D大調中段在中央。最後的「急板」樂章篇幅甚長，採用奏鳴曲式寫成。呈示部連奏兩遍，第一樂段充滿戲劇動力，一如預期的有兩個主題素材，也一如所料的把這些素材開展，然後在結束前的再現部以不同的形式重新奏出。

樂曲介紹由基夫·安德遜撰寫
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Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 20

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778 - 1837)

Allegro moderato - Adagio - Allegro agitato

Adagio maestoso

Finale: Presto - Ancor più presto

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was born in 1778 in Pressburg, the modern Slovak capital Bratislava, the son of a musician. At the age of four he could read music, at five play the violin and at six the piano. Two years later he became a pupil of Mozart in Vienna, lodging, as was the custom, in his master's house. On Mozart's suggestion the boy and his father embarked in 1788 on an extended concert tour. For four years they travelled through Germany and Denmark and by the spring of 1790 they were in Edinburgh, where they spent three months. There followed visits to Durham and to Cambridge before they arrived, in the autumn, in London. Plans in 1792 to tour France and Spain seemed inopportune at a time of revolution, so that father and son made their way back through Holland to Vienna. The next ten years of Hummel's career found him occupied in study, in composition and in teaching in Vienna. It was through Haydn, who gave him some organ lessons, that Hummel in 1804 became Konzertmeister to the second Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, effectively doing the work of Kapellmeister, a title that Haydn held nominally until his death in 1809. Hummel retained this position until 1811. He had impressed audiences as a child by his virtuosity as a pianist, and returned to the concert platform in 1814, at the time of the Congress of Vienna, but it was the Grand Duchy of Weimar, home of Goethe, that was able to provide him, in 1818, with a basis for his career. By the terms of his employment he was allowed leave of absence for three months each spring, a period spent in concert tours through which he established himself as a virtuoso, his style of playing continuing the tradition of Mozart rather than venturing into the new styles of composers like Liszt.

Hummel's *Piano Sonata in F Minor, Op. 20*, was written in Vienna in about 1807. Its opening *Allegro moderato* is interrupted by a very brief *Adagio*, proceeding thereafter to an *Allegro agitato* in a sonata-form movement. The A-flat major *Adagio maestoso*, starting with octaves in the left hand, has a slow, march-like theme, and proceeds directly to the final brilliant *Presto*, with its even faster F major conclusion.

Images I

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

Reflets dans l'eau

Hommage à Rameau

Mouvement

Debussy was born in 1862 in St Germain-en-Laye, the son of a shop-keeper who was later to turn his hand to other activities, with varying success. He started piano lessons at the age of seven and in 1872

entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he abandoned the plan of becoming a virtuoso pianist, turning his principal attention to composition. In 1884 he won the Prix de Rome, with obligatory residence at the Villa Medici in Rome, where he met Liszt. By 1887 he was back in Paris, winning his first significant success in 1900 with *Nocturnes* and going on, two years later, to a *succès de scandale* with his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, based on the play by Maurice Maeterlinck, a work that established his position as a composer of importance. Debussy's personal life brought some unhappiness in his first marriage in 1899 to a mannequin, Lily Texier, after an earlier liaison of some seven years with another woman. In 1904 he abandoned his wife, moving into an apartment with Emma Bardac, a competent singer and the wife of a banker, thus alienating a number of his friends. His final years were darkened by the war and by cancer, the cause of his death in March 1918, when he left unfinished a planned series of chamber music works, only three of which had been completed.

In 1905 Debussy published the first of two sets of piano pieces, *Images*. In the first set *Reflets dans l'eau* (Reflections in the Water) is a gently poetic evocation of ripples in the water, for which we might find a precedent in the work of Franz Liszt. *Hommage à Rameau* (Hommage to Rameau), with the instruction 'in the style of a Sarabande, but with some freedom', is a contemporary tribute to the great French composer of the first half of the eighteenth century. It is followed by *Mouvement*, bearing the direction '*avec une légèreté fantasque mais précise*' ('with fantastic lightness but with precision'), a piece of near perpetual motion.

24 Preludes in All Major and Minor Keys, Op. 102

York Bowen (1884 - 1961)

No. 1 in C: Moderato appassionato

No. 6 in D Minor: Andante con moto

No. 7 in E-flat: Andantino amabile

No. 20 in A Minor: Allegro con fuoco

The English pianist and composer York Bowen was a pupil of Tobias Matthay at the Royal Academy of Music in London and had composition lessons with Frederick Corder, in addition to supplementary study of the horn and the viola. He won a number of prizes and medals and joined the teaching staff of the Academy, serving as professor of piano from 1909, a position he held until his retirement in 1959.

His work as a composer has been unfairly neglected, although at one time he enjoyed a considerable reputation both as a composer and as a performer. His compositions include symphonies, concertos, chamber music, piano music and songs.

York Bowen's *24 Preludes in All Major and Minor Keys, Op. 102* was completed and published in 1950, with a dedication to his friend and supporter, the prolific composer and critic Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, whose name reflects his Parsi paternal parentage. *Prelude No. 1 in C* is in 12/8, with some cross-rhythms, and a texture that reminds us that York Bowen was known to some of his contemporaries as an 'English Rachmaninov'. *Prelude No. 6 in D Minor* has the additional direction *cantabile e espressivo*, an indication of its character. *Prelude No. 7 in E-flat* introduces further rhythmic and harmonic complexities with its initial grouping of semiquavers in quintuplets. *Prelude No. 20 in A Minor* allows an element of bravura display.

Two Mazurkas, Op. 40

Alexander Scriabin (1872 - 1915)

Feuillet d'Album, Op. 45, No. 1

Valse, Op. 38

Sonata No. 9, Op. 68, 'Black Mass'

The Russian composer Alexander Scriabin is an isolated figure, eventually separated from the mainstream of Russian music by his own peculiar brand of mysticism, in which he saw himself in a Messianic light. Innovative in his attempt to bring together colour and music and in his harmonic and melodic innovations, he died relatively young, his early death leading to a subsequent undervaluation of his achievement.

Scriabin was born in Moscow in 1872, the son of a lawyer, who later entered the Russian consular service, and of a mother who was a gifted musician, a pupil of Leschetizky. After his mother's death and his father's remarriage and absence abroad, Scriabin spent his childhood in the over-protective care of his paternal grandmother and an unmarried aunt. Following the tradition of his father's family, he joined the Moscow Military Academy, excused, for reasons of health, any participation in more rigorous training. Meanwhile he studied the piano with George Konyus, following this with lessons from Rachmaninov's strict teacher, Zverev, and participation in Safonov's piano class at the Conservatory, theory lessons from Sergey Taneyev and lessons in counterpoint and fugue with Arensky. Completion of his studies at the Military Academy in 1889 allowed him to pay exclusive attention to music, graduating as a pianist at the Conservatory in 1892, when he took second prize to Rachmaninov's first. Impatient with formal instruction in the techniques of composition which he found uncongenial, he was skilled at improvisation, modelling his style here on that of his adored Chopin. Scriabin's earlier compositions were reluctantly published by Jurgenson, but he found more enthusiastic support in Belyayev, who published his work, promoted his concert appearances and exercised a dominant influence over him. In 1898 he found employment on the staff of Moscow Conservatory, from which he resigned five years later, through the help of a rich pupil. He spent much of the rest of his life abroad, devoting his attention to his mystical *Mysterium*, intended as the culmination of his work, towards which his last five piano sonatas now tended. This, however, was to remain unwritten, although texts and musical sketches were made for the introduction to the work. Scriabin died of septicaemia in 1915.

Scriabin wrote 23 Mazurkas, following the pattern established by Chopin that had become, by Scriabin's time, a part of Russian musical idiom. The *Two Mazurkas, Op. 40*, date from 1903 and were published the following year. The *Mazurka in D-flat, Op. 40, No. 1* moves from a delicate opening, the first bar marked *poco accelerando* and the second *poco rit - languido* before a third bar a tempo, as the dance gets under way, moving forward to music of greater intensity. The *Mazurka in F-sharp, Op. 40, No. 2* is marked *Piacevole*, an indication of its character.

Scriabin's very short *Feuillet d'Album, Op. 40, No. 1* (Album-Leaf) is the first of a group of three pieces written in 1905. A wistful little piece, seemingly in *E-flat* major, it contains hints of other worlds.

The *Valse in A-flat, Op. 38* dates, as a number of Scriabin's shorter pieces do, from 1903. Scriabin had come to rely on Belyayev, a rich benefactor and publisher, who was to die as the year came to an end. The waltz, described by the composer as a 'dream-vision' of a waltz, is no straightforward ball-room dance, but from the very beginning seems to contradict, in its right-hand figuration, the expected rhythm. To the direction *Allegro, agevole* (Lively, easy) is added the word '*affabile*' and it moves briefly, in a shift of key, to *Piacevole, carezzando*, characteristic instructions.

Scriabin's *Sonata No. 9, Op. 68, 'Black Mass'* is the diabolic counterpart to *Sonata No. 7, Op. 64, 'White Mass'*. It

was written in the years 1912-1913. The sonata opens with the mystery of a distant legend, leading to a muffled fanfare and music that mounts in intensity until the appearance of the second theme, marked '*avec une langueur naissante*' ('with growing languour'). These elements recur, intermingled with increasing use of single repeated notes, leading to a savage *Alla marcia*, with the material of the opening bars returning only in brief conclusion.

Fantasia (Sonate écossaise) in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809 - 1847)

Con moto agitato - Andante

Allegro con moto

Presto

Born in Hamburg in 1809, eldest son of the banker Abraham Mendelssohn and grandson of the great Jewish thinker Moses Mendelssohn, Felix Mendelssohn, who took the additional name Bartholdy on his baptism as a Christian, was brought up in Berlin, where his family settled in 1812. Here he enjoyed the wide cultural opportunities that his family offered, through their own interests and connections. His early gifts, manifested in a number of directions, included marked musical precocity, both as a player and as a performer, at a remarkably early age. Mendelssohn's early manhood brought the opportunity to travel, as far south as Naples and as far north as The Hebrides, with Italy and Scotland both providing the inspiration for later symphonies. His career involved him in the Lower Rhine Festival in Düsseldorf and a period as city director of music, followed, in 1835, by appointment as conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. Here he was able to continue the work he had started in Berlin six years earlier, when he had conducted in Berlin a revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. Leipzig was to provide a degree of satisfaction that he could not find in Berlin, where he returned at the invitation of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1841. In Leipzig once more, in 1843, he established a new Conservatory, spending his final years there, until his death at the age of 38 on 4th November 1847, six months after the death of his gifted and beloved sister Fanny.

Mendelssohn seems to have written a first version of his *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28*, the so-called *Sonate écossaise* (Scottish Sonata), in 1828, before his first visit to Scotland the following year. In 1830, after his return, he played the Fantasia to Goethe in Weimar, but revised the piece in 1833, when it was published with a dedication to the pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles, who had given him and his sister some lessons in Berlin in 1824 and proved a useful friend during Mendelssohn's visit to London in 1829. In a key that the composer found stimulating, the *Fantasia* opens with a series of arpeggios, followed by the *Andante* principal theme. A more extended passage of cascading arpeggios is followed by the return of the *Andante* theme, leading to a shorter concluding passage of decorative intensity, fading to a wistful close. The second movement, marked *Allegro con moto*, is in the style of a gentle A major *scherzo*, with a D major trio at its heart. The extended final *Presto* is in established sonata-form. The repeated exposition, the first section, replete with dramatic excitement, offers the expected two thematic elements and these are duly developed, to return in varied form in the final recapitulation.

Programme notes by Keith Anderson

Chinese translation provided by KCL Language Consultancy Ltd.