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ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

A French Accent on the Classics
Public Lunchtime Concert

Domonkos Csabay – piano
Connor Wilcox – piano



Thursday 6 September 2018, 1:15 – 2:15pm
Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Birmingham City University



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

BOYDELL & BREWER



ROYAL MUSICAL ASSOCIATION

Recital Programme – 1:15pm

Join us for a special recital given by two of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's advanced pianists, **Domonkos Csabay** and **Connor Wilcox**, as they perform music from Durand's *Édition classique*. This recorded public recital forms part of the AHRC-funded research project 'Accenting the Classics' and its associated three-day international conference, hosted by the French Music Research Hub at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University.

Handel ed. Ropartz (1917)

'Prélude', from Suite in A major, HWV 426 (two versions)

Chopin ed. Debussy (1915)

Étude Op. 10, No. 9

Debussy

Étude VIII (1915), 'Pour les agréments'

Selected pieces from *L'École moderne du piano*:

'De Bizet à Maurice Ravel' (1926), ed. Isidor Philipp

Durand *Murmure* Op. 8 (c. 1890)

Vuillemin 'Sur la route' Op. 23 (1922)

Büsser 'Valse lente' Op. 12 (c. 1898)

Ravel 'Rigaudon', *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1917)

Dukas 'Finale', from *Variations, interlude et finale* (c. 1902)

J. S. Bach, transc. Roger-Ducasse (1918)

Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582

Programme Notes

This programme of keyboard music, performed on piano, offers a representative sample of European music found within an extensive, multi-volume edition of classical repertoire, as edited by French composers, performers and musicologists, and produced by the famous publishing house of Durand in Paris, during and shortly after the First World War. The repertoire of the *Édition classique* Durand comprises a mixture of some very well-known pieces and other relatively obscure ones. Similarly, the particular 'accent' (sometimes literally so within the music notation) created by the roster of French composer-editors ranges widely, dependent on the individual composer and nature of the 'intervention': as edition, arrangement, or transcription.

Among diverse contributions, in 1917 the Breton composer Guy **Ropartz** edited selected keyboard works of **Handel**, including a ‘Prélude’ from the harpsichord Suite No. 1 in A major, HWV 426. As presented in the score, this ‘Prélude’ will be performed in two versions. The first (‘Original’) indicates ornaments, such as inverted mordents and trills, but is generally quite ‘clean’ and sparse in its markings. By contrast, a second version (‘Exécution’) notates a typical performance interpretation, replete with precise dynamic indications, phrasing and broken chords: ‘The arpeggios must be performed without rigidity, with a certain fantasy.’

Debussy’s editorship of the complete piano works of **Chopin**, across 1915–17, results in a fascinating network of associations which invokes Couperin as the master of ornamentation. This interplay is nicely illustrated by the genre of the étude. Both Debussy’s edition of Chopin’s Études and his own highly demanding volume of studies date from 1915. We will hear a comparative performance unified by a pitch-centre of F. Composed in 1829, Chopin’s Étude Op. 10, No. 9, in F minor with lilting 6/8 metre, is animated yet ‘legatissimo’, characterised by its accents and varied ornaments; it is paired with Debussy’s fiendish yet delicately ‘light’ Étude VIII: ‘Pour les agréments’ (‘Lento, rubato e leggiero’).

A four-volume collection entitled *L’École moderne du piano: ‘De Bizet à Maurice Ravel’* was compiled in 1926 by Isidor **Philipp**, Head of Piano at the Conservatoire de Paris. This anthology showcases a range of French pieces, including many miniatures, which suggest that an interest in renewing the past, recreating classicism, extends further back in time than our typical post-war definitions of neoclassicism. Five pieces, dating from 1890 to 1922, have been chosen to illustrate this facet. Beyond **Ravel’s** iconic *Le Tombeau de Couperin* appear a ‘Song without words’ by Jacques **Durand** himself; a waltz by Henri **Büsser**; a quirky march by Louis **Vuillemin**, better known as a critic; and Paul **Dukas’s** ‘Finale’ (Variation XII) from his *Variations, Interlude et Finale* ‘Sur un thème de Rameau’ (1902).

Finally, in a spirit of Busoni-Bach, we have **Bach’s** celebrated organ Passacaglia (without the Fugue) in C minor BWV 582, as transcribed for piano in 1918 by Jean **Roger-Ducasse**. This Roger-Ducasse-Bach is proof of an important, ongoing French engagement with the German, yet universalised, figure of Bach (other works being edited by Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Maurice Emmanuel, Lucien Garban and Debussy). While urging the pianist to sustain the main theme throughout (‘toujours soutenir le thème’), it also demonstrates a notably strong and virtuosic ‘accent’ on this classic, which serves to blur the line between editorship and compositional creativity.

Biographies

Domonkos Csabay

Based in the UK since 2015, the pianist, accompanist, répétiteur and chamber musician Domonkos Csabay performs a wide range of classical repertoire. Besides winning several prizes in the last two years, including first prize in the Brant International Piano Competition, he has also given a successful solo recital at the Lichfield Festival and made concerto appearances with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and London's Kew Sinfonia. He has been on stage in several important concert venues in Birmingham, such as Symphony Hall, the Elgar Concert Hall, CBSO Centre, St Philip's Cathedral and others. In the Town Hall he gave a pre-concert showcase before Paul Lewis's recital in 2016, as well as two solo recitals including Schubert's late piano sonatas.

Domonkos's musical world has its roots in the rich traditions of his hometown Budapest, where he was educated at the Liszt Academy, an institute keenly concentrating on chamber music. A former winner of the Leó Weiner Sonata Competition, he is particularly interested in classical and early romantic chamber literature, playing many duos, trios and quartets, including the complete works of Schubert for violin and piano. During the 2017/18 season, as an Annie Fischer scholar, he has been taking part in a year-long concert series named after this world-famous pianist, so remains active in Hungarian musical life, too. His versatility is well illustrated by diverse competition successes: prizes as a composer in Romania and as a Lied accompanist in Wales.

Having recently finished his piano studies with Pascal Nemirovski and John Thwaites at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Domonkos is currently studying for an Advanced Performance Diploma in répétiteurship, also at RBC, with Paul Wingfield and Robin Bowman.

Connor Wilcox

Connor was born in Kirkcaldy, Fife in 1994. He began studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) in 2012, where he was taught by Daniel Browell, Simon Nicholls and Margaret Fingerhut. He graduated in 2016 with a first-class honours degree and is currently continuing his studies at the RBC.

In 2017 Connor was awarded first prizes in the Delia Hall prize (Rachmaninoff, Cello Sonata Op. 19), the Edward Brooks English Song Accompanist's Prize, as well as being a finalist in the Leamington Music Prize. He made his concerto debut in 2016 with the RBC's symphony orchestra, playing Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

Connor also enjoys playing collaboratively, most recently in a concert with the Thallein Ensemble at the RBC, performing works by Martijn Padding in presence of the composer. In addition, he is regularly engaged as an operatic répétiteur.