

flagey piano days

streaming
edition

david kadouch

denis kozhukhin

alexandre kantorow

anthony romaniuk

eve beuvs

Saturday
27.02.21 - 19:00

Welcome

For the first time in its history, the Flagey Piano Days will take place as a special streaming edition featuring five pianists: **David Kadouch**, the young virtuoso **Alexandre Kantorow**, the artist in residence **Denis Kozhukhin**, the versatile **Anthony Romaniuk**, and, finally, the Belgian jazz pianist **Eve Beuvers**.

Inspired by the 200th anniversary of the birth of Gustave Flaubert, author of the iconic novel Madame Bovary, the Flagey Piano Days explore the theme of dreams. Each artist will draw you through his or her programming, compositions and improvisations into another world, far removed from the rather disconcerting new normal we are currently experiencing.

Your evening

You can access the online platform of the festival via the access link in the email with your ticket. You can stream the concerts live or watch them again until Monday 1 March (midnight).

Do you have any problems or questions about the live streaming while watching the concerts on 27 February? Please contact us at stream@flagey.be.

Do you have questions about your ticket(s)? Please contact us at ticket@flagey.be.

Besides the five concerts in high video and audio quality, you will also find on the online platform:

Live chat : a discussion forum for all spectators

Meet the artist : interviews with the artists by Katelijne Boon & Cécile Poss

Inside the piano : video about the mechanics and the maintenance of a piano by one of the piano tuners of Piano's Maene

Content

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19:00 – Studio 4

David Kadouch piano

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19:55 – Studio 4

Alexandre Kantorow piano

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20:50 – Studio 4

Denis Kozhukhin piano ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

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21:45 – Studio 1

Anthony Romaniuk piano, klavecimbel, Fender Rhodes

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22:40 – Studio 1

Eve Beuvers piano BEST OF BELGIAN JAZZ

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In collaboration with



Audio recordings in Studio 1 by



Audio recordings in Studio 4 by



Programme

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

from *Das Jahr. 12 Charakterstücke : Mai*, H.385

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Trois Nocturnes, op. 9

I. Nocturne in B-flat minor

II. Nocturne in E-flat major

III. Nocturne in B major

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

from *Das Jahr. 12 Charakterstücke : September*, H.385

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Variationen über ein Thema Robert Schumanns, op. 20

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

from *Das Jahr. 12 Charakterstücke : Juni*, H.385

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor, S. 397

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)

from *Das Jahr. 12 Charakterstücke : März*, H.385

Notturmo, op. 337

Programme note

The 19th century saw many talented female composers and pianists destined for oblivion, due to the spirit of the times. A woman from a wealthy, distinguished family could only dream of a life as an independent artist. Pianist David Kadouch highlights some of these gifted women in his recital. He gives a musical expression to their desires and their dreams through the tragic tale of Emma Bovary, the main character from Gustave Flaubert's famous 1856 novel *Madame Bovary*. Kadouch asks the question: "Perhaps the novel would have had a different ending if these heroines, these female composers, had not been so ignored"

Madame Bovary is the story of Emma Bovary, the unhappy wife of a doctor who sees her dreams of a life of happiness, passionate love and adventure ultimately come to nothing. To escape loneliness and the drudgery of everyday life, she commits adultery and lives above her means. Her refusal to reconcile herself to the demands and traditions imposed by society makes Emma even more unhappy. When her financial excesses plunge her deep into debt, she sees only one escape: she takes arsenic and dies. Flaubert did not shrink from tackling issues that were extremely sensitive at the time. The novel sent shockwaves through 19th century France, and Flaubert even faced trial for the alleged obscenity of the book.

Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann were also confronted with the dilemmas and prejudices that Emma faced. In her youth, Fanny Mendelssohn received lessons from the same teachers as her famous brother and was "Felix's equally gifted sister". But at the age of 15 she was obliged by her father to accept the life of wife and homemaker. Although she resigned herself to her fate, Fanny's correspondence reveals how hard it was for her to abandon her dreams. She continued to compose and to play the piano, however, and a trip to Italy in 1839 and 1840 marked an important moment in her life. The trip inspired her to write *Das Jahr*, a cycle in which each part evokes a month of the year and draws on Fanny's impressions during her travels in Italy.

The pieces from *Das Jahr* performed by David Kadouch in the course of his recital are those he associates with moments in the life of Emma Bovary. The recital opens with the lively *May*, which evokes Emma's marriage to the doctor Charles Bovary. This is followed by *Nocturnes* (Op. 9) by Frédéric Chopin, which, while highlighting the romance of the betrothal, at the same time suggests, in the nostalgic undercurrent, that Emma is still stirred by a desire for more. With these nocturnes, Kadouch also pays homage to Maria Pleyel, the wife of Camille Pleyel. It was to this virtuoso but little-known pianist that Chopin dedicated his *Opus 9*.

The month of *September* represents the ball to which Emma was invited. This reawakened her dreams of a life of luxury and excitement. The virtuoso music of Fanny Mendelssohn brings to mind the music of Franz Liszt and is followed by *Variations on a theme (Op.20)* by Robert Schumann, composed by Clara Schumann, one of the few 19th century women to succeed in forging a career as a concert pianist. Her seven variations date from 1853 and are based on the theme from the fourth movement of the collection of piano pieces *Bunte Blätter (Op. 99)* written by her husband Robert Schumann. Johannes Brahms was so impressed by her variations that shortly afterwards he composed his own series of variations on the same theme. The music reflects not only Clara's talent as a pianist but also as a composer with her use of counterpoint techniques and daring and subtle harmonies.

June symbolises the time Emma attended a performance of Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Rouen. On listening to the opera, Emma was quick to identify with Lucia who, like herself, was trapped in a marriage of convenience while harbouring passionate feelings for a lover. Kadouch expresses this inner conflict with Franz Liszt's virtuoso operatic paraphrase *Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor*, in which the composer reworks a number of the famous melodies from the opera. The funeral march following the death of Lucia in the opera is of symbolic value, a reference to Emma's suicide in the novel. This act of desperation is expressed by Kadouch in *Das Jahr* through the month of *March*, after which the recital closes with the dreamlike and hypnotic *Notturmo*, composed by Fanny Mendelssohn in 1838.

WALDO GEUNS

Biography

Born in Nice in 1985, Kadouch began his studies at the Nice Conservatoire with Odile Poisson. At the age of 14 he entered the Paris Conservatoire in the classes of Jacques Rouvier. After receiving First Prize with Honors from the Paris Conservatoire, he moved to the Reina Sofia School in Madrid, where he studied with the legendary Dmitri Bashkirov. He has been perfecting as well with Murray Perahia, Mauricio Pollini, Maria-Joao Pires, Daniel Barenboim, Vitaly Margulis, Itzak Perlman... He is quickly becoming one of the most acclaimed pianists of his generation. A prize winner at the Beethoven Bonn Competition in 2005 and Leeds International Piano Competition in 2009, Kadouch has become a regular guest of some of the most important orchestras, recital series and international festivals. At the age of 13, Kadouch was invited by Itzhak Perlman to play under his baton at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2008, Perlman invited him again to perform the Schumann Piano Quintet, this time at Carnegie Hall. In 2010, David Kadouch is nominated “Young Talent of the Year” by French Victoires de la Musique and in 2011 he is the winner of the International Classical Music Awards in the category “Young Artist of the Year”. In 2011 he made his New York debut recital at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

He performs at major festivals: Contemporary Music Festival in Lucerne under Pierre Boulez, Klavier-Festival Ruhr, Gstaad Festival, Verbier Festival (where he was awarded the Verbier Festival Prix d'Honneur in 2009), Montreux Festival, Schwetzingen Festival, Jerusalem Festival, La Roque d'Anthéron Festival, Les Flâneries Musicales de Reims, “Folles Journées” in Ekaterinburg, Nîmes, Nantes, and in Japan, Piano aux Jacobins in Toulouse and China, Tonhalle in Zürich. He is playing chamber music with Renaud Capuçon, Gautier Capuçon, Edgar Moreau, Antoine Tamestit, Michel Dalberto, Nikolaj Znaider, Radovan Vlatkovic, Frans Helmerson, as well as the Quartets Quiroga, Ebène and Ardeo.

Kadouch's recordings include a live recording of the Beethoven Concerto No. 5 with the Cologne Philharmonic (Naxos), Shostakovich's Preludes (TransArt Live), Schumann Concerto without orchestra and Piano Quintet (Decca/Universal), a CD of Russian music including Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, Medtner Sonata and Taneïev Prelude and Fugue, a solo recital CD Bach, Janacek, Schumann, Bartok for Mirare, A duo recital with Edgar Moreau around Franck, Strohl, Poulenc, de la Tombelle. His latest album, *Revolution*, with music by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Janáček, Dussek and Rzewski, was awarded the Choc Classica of the Year 2019.

Programme

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

from 4 *Ballades*, Op. 10 :

- I. Ballade in D minor: Andante
- II. Ballade in D major: Andante

Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Andante espressivo
- III. Scherzo. Allegro energico
- IV. Intermezzo : Andante molto
- V. Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato

Programme note

The music of Johannes Brahms is one of the great passions of the French pianist Alexandre Kantorow. For this occasion, he has chosen piano works that, by virtue of their underlying literary sources of inspiration, provide a unique insight into the inner life of the composer. Kantorow opens his recital with the first of two *Ballades* from Brahms' *Opus 10*. Brahms wrote his collection of four ballades in 1854. He was 21 years old at the time. In September 1853, he had met Robert and Clara Schumann during a tour, and a close friendship soon developed. This happy period was to be short lived. In February 1854, Robert attempted suicide, putting an end to all their dreams and plans. With Robert subsequently confined to an institution, Brahms took care of Clara and their children.

The events within the Schumann family are therefore closely connected to the creation of these ballades, which can be seen as a homage to Robert. The choice of the old Scottish ballad *Edward* – Brahms was familiar with the poem in the German translation by the poet Johann Gottfried Herder – as the source of inspiration for the *First Ballade* can be seen as a reference to Robert Schumann's own unpublished choral ballade *Vom Pagen und der Königstochter*, composed in the spring of 1854. In this ballade, the king confronts and kills his servant, who has formed a relationship with his daughter. A similar questioning is central in *Edward*: in this tale of patricide, a mother confronts her son Edward, who reluctantly admits to the murder of his father. The ballade ends with the shocking revelation that his own mother had instructed him to do it: "the curse of hell fraie me sall ye bare... sic counsels ye gave to me, O!" Following the example of Schumann's four-part ballade, Brahms in turn wrote a series of four ballades, ballades 3 and 4 being influenced by the comic novel *The Life and opinions of the Tomcat Murr* by E.T.A. Hoffmann, which relates the adventures of a bragging tomtcat and a romantic composer. We read in Brahms' letters that he recommended the book to Clara Schumann to cheer her up during this difficult period. It is the reason why Julius Otto Grimm, to whom Brahms dedicated the ballades, was careful to avoid any possible misunderstanding: "You must know how happy I am and how grateful I am to you. But has Mrs Schumann approved this? Because in fact the Ballades belong to her – given their particular origin." This sheds particular light on the deep and serious undertone of the ballades, in which lyrical passages alternate with extremely dark and intense passages or culminate in relentless "fatal" motifs constructed of triplets.

The *Third Piano Sonata* also dates from 1854, although Brahms did much of the work on it in the autumn of 1853. In September 1853, he played the piece for the first time to Robert and Clara, together with parts of his first two piano sonatas. At that time the second movement

Andante and the fourth movement *Intermezzo* of the *Third Piano Sonata* were finished. Schumann was enthusiastic and shortly afterwards published an article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the journal he had himself founded, in which he described Brahms as a total genius, “like Minerva, who would spring fully armed from the head of Jupiter”, and wrote of how Brahms, in his sonatas, “transforms the piano into an orchestra of wailing and loudly jubilant voices. These are indeed sonatas, but at the same time also symphonies in disguise.” This description is particularly pertinent when applied to the *Third Piano Sonata*. With no fewer than five movements, this is Brahms’ greatest and most masterful work for solo piano. Like the *Ballades* (Op. 10), this sonata is a work of homage. Here, he pays tribute to his heroes, as a result of which the music becomes an expression of his dreams of a career as a musician. In the opening movement that is so rich in contrasts, he includes a motif with a short-short-long-long rhythm that is a reference to the “fate motif” of the *Fifth Symphony* (Op. 67) of his idol Ludwig van Beethoven. The motif appears again in the third movement (*Scherzo*) and the fourth movement (*Intermezzo*). In the second movement (*Andante espressivo*), Brahms was inspired by the poem *Junge Liebe* by the German poet C. O. Sternau:

*Der Abend dämmert, das Mondlicht scheint
Da sind zwei Herzen in Liebe vereint
Und halten sich selig umfassen*

The dreamlike music gives expression to the text by means of the intimate melody and the atmospheric ‘ben cantando’ passage that follows. This serene movement also has its passionate and intense moments that have been associated with the second and third stanzas of Sternau’s poem about “moments of a thousand kisses” and “insane bliss that lasts until dawn”. The musical centre of the sonata is the tempestuous and virtuoso scherzo that opens with a musical reference to Felix Mendelssohn’s *Second Piano Trio* (Op. 66). At one point, the scherzo is broken by a more lyrical trio, in which the bass line is again a reference to Beethoven’s “fate motif”. In the fourth movement, titled “Rückblick”, motifs from the second movement return together with the Beethoven-based motif. This movement is a moment of rest before the virtuoso and triumphant final movement. In this rondo, Brahms pays homage to one of the great musicians of his time, his good friend and violinist Joseph Joachim. In the first contrasting passage after the main theme, he introduces the fa, la and mi motif, in which the notes F-A-E stand for “Frei Aber Einsam”, the violinist’s personal musical motto. As befits a closing movement, Brahms pulls out all the stops: the joyful main theme now alternates with swirling lyrical melodies, solemn marches and moments of pianistic bravura.

WALDO GEUNS

Biography

At 22 years old, Alexandre Kantorow is the first French pianist to win the gold medal at the Tchaikovsky Competition as well as the Grand Prix, awarded only three times before in the competition's history. Already hailed by critics as the "young tsar of the piano" (*Classica*) and "Liszt reincarnate" (*Fanfare*), he has received numerous other awards and is already being invited at the highest level worldwide.

Even before the competition, Kantorow had already been attracting attention. He began his career at an early stage and at 16 made his debut at La Folle Journée festival in Nantes. Since then he has played with many of the world's major orchestras, including regularly the Mariinsky Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, and highlights in this and future seasons include the Orchestre de Paris, Staatskapelle Berlin, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and tours with the Orchestre National de Toulouse, Budapest Festival Orchestra and the Munich Philharmonic.

In recital he appears at major concert halls such as the Concertgebouw Amsterdam in their Master Pianists series, Konzerthaus Berlin, Philharmonie de Paris, BOZAR in Brussels, Stockholm Konserthus and at the most prestigious festivals including La Roque d'Anthéron, Piano aux Jacobins, Verbier Festival and Klavierfest Ruhr. In March 2020 Kantorow was invited to step in for Murray Perahia with a recital at Carnegie Hall (Stern Auditorium).

Kantorow records exclusively with BIS, to great critical acclaim. His two most recent recordings (Saint-Saëns concerti 3-5 and solo works by Brahms, Bartók and Liszt) both received the Diapason d'Or and Choc Classica of the year in 2019 and 2020 respectively, with Gramophone magazine choosing the solo disc as Editor's Choice and describing his performance as "a further remarkable example of his virtuosity and artistry, showing both skill and sensitivity throughout". His à la Russe recital recording also won numerous awards and distinctions in 2017, including Choc de l'Année (Classica), Diapason découverte (Diapason), Supersonic (Pizzicato) and CD des Doppelmonats (PianoNews).

Alexandre Kantorow is a laureate of the Safran Foundation and Banque Populaire, and in 2019 was named 'Musical Revelation of the Year' by the Professional Critics Association. In 2020 he won the Victoires de la Musique Classique in two categories: Recording of the Year and Instrumental Soloist of the Year. Born in France and of French-British heritage, he has studied with Pierre-Alain Volondat, Igor Lazko, Franck Braley and Rena Shereshevskaya.

Programme

Alexey Shor (°1970)

Childhood Memories

- I. Chasing fireflies
- II. Blooming May
- III. First Dance
- IV. Sandbox
- V. Marionette's Waltz
- VI. Last Days of Summer
- VII. Hidden message
- VIII. Hourglass
- IX. Air
- X. Raindrops on the roof
- XI. Naiveté
- XII. Coming of Age
- XIII. Melancholy
- XIV. First Love

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Kinderszenen, Op. 15

- I. Von fremden Ländern und Menschen
- II. Kuriose Geschichte
- III. Hasche-Mann
- IV. Bittendes Kind
- V. Glückes genug
- VI. Wichtige Begebenheit
- VII. Träumerei
- VIII. Am Kamin
- IX. Ritter vom Steckenpferd
- X. Fast zu ernst
- XI. Fürchtenmachen
- XII. Kind im Einschlummern
- XIII. Der Dichter spricht

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Sonatine, M. 40

- I. Modéré
- II. Mouvement de menuet
- III. Animé

Programme note

How vividly we often remember certain moments and events from our childhood. Memories that give rise to nostalgic dreams of a time when we playfully explored our world with a sense of wonder at all we discovered. This is the feeling that is central to *Childhood Memories*, the suite of 14 short works for piano composed by Alexey Shor (°1970) in 2015. This Maltese-American composer holds a PhD in mathematics and only recently devoted himself full time to composing. When asked what his happiest moments are, he replies that it is the time he spends with his children. This suite exudes such happiness, as it follows a child growing into adulthood. The opening sections look back to moments when we chased fireflies and played in the sandpit, while by the end of the suite, the child has turned 18 and experiences first love. The suite is very diverse and relaxing but, as the pianist Sergei Edelmann (laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition 1983 and teacher at the Antwerp Conservatory) explains, “at the same time, one cannot escape the sense that there is a much deeper philosophical meaning behind the work”. It is striking how few instructions Shor gives for the performer in the score itself. It is for the pianist to draw on his or her own fantasy as much as possible and to delve deeply into childhood memories to give a very personal interpretation of the music.

With his *Childhood Memories*, Shor also pays tribute to the famous piano cycle *Kinderszenen* composed by Robert Schumann in 1838. Schumann wrote the music on his 28th birthday as a musical gift to his fiancée Clara Wieck: “It is perhaps because you once told me that I am just like a child. In any event, it inspired me to write 30 short and playful pieces, from which I selected 12 that I named *Kinderszenen*. You will enjoy playing them although they are not so very virtuoso works...” He finally chose 13 of the pieces for *Kinderszenen* (Op. 15). He later published the remaining works as the *Bunte Blätter* (Op. 99) and *Albumblätter*, (Op. 124). Despite the title, the *Kinderszenen* collection is not intended for children. It is rather, as Schumann described it, a dreamy look back at childhood by “a big child”. Each of the pieces is ingenious in its simplicity and very poetic, while the characters are extremely diverse: ranging from the very exuberant (*Ritter vom Steckenpferd*) or cheerful (*Hasche-Mann*), to the pleading (*Bittendes Kind*) or acquiescent (*Kind im Einschlummern*). The central piece, *Träumerei*, is the best-known work from the collection, and expresses perfectly Schumann’s desire to write “a memento for people who have become adults”.

Just as playful, but more virtuoso, is Maurice Ravel’s *Sonatine*, the piece with which Denis Kozhukhin closes his recital. It was in 1903 that the 28-year-old Ravel set to work feverishly composing the first movement *Modéré* for a composition competition organised by the Franco-British journal *Weekly Critical Review*. The journal’s intentions were laudable. Since the end of the 19th century, the sonata had been at an impasse, and with this competition – to produce a

one-piece work in the sonata form – the *Weekly Critical Review* wanted to breathe new life into the genre. Unfortunately, financial problems put an end to the journal’s plans. Ravel was not to be discouraged, however, and in 1905 he completed the second movement, *Menuet*, and the energetic toccata closing movement, *Animé*, that was inspired by the music of his baroque predecessors François Couperin (1668-1733) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). He lends colour to his extremely fluid and melodious piano work through the prominent presence of fourths and fifths that musically bring out the child in Ravel: the descending fourth in the melody with which *Sonatine* opens is always in Ravel’s music a reference to his Basque mother Marie Delouart (1840–1917). The most famous example of this is the way in which he associates the interval in his opera *L’enfant et les sortilèges* (1925) with the character and the word “Maman” or mother – a fitting end to a recital by Kozhukhin that celebrates the child in us.

WALDO GEUNS

Biography

Winner of the First Prize in the 2010 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels at the age of 23, Denis Kozhukhin has established himself as one of the greatest pianists of his generation.

Kozhukhin's performances have been praised by critics as "spellbinding", "imperious" and "mesmerizing". Technically flawless, Kozhukhin combines wisely the brilliance and power of his playing with a masterful sense of form, maturity, and a very unique approach.

Kozhukhin frequently appears with many of the leading international orchestras, such as Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony, Staatskapelle Berlin, Israel Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Vienna Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. In 2018 he debuted at the BBC Proms, performing Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.2 with the Aurora Orchestra.

His most recent recording featuring C. Franck's *Symphonic Variations* with the Luxembourg Philharmonic under Gustavo Gimeno was released by Pentatone in June 2020, obtaining rave reviews. His last solo album, including Mendelssohn's *Songs without words* and Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, was picked by Gramophone as "album of the month" as well as nominated to the 2020 Opus Klassik Awards in the categories of *Solo recording* and *Instrumentalist of the year*.

An avid chamber musician, Kozhukhin is frequently invited to the most renowned festivals and collaborates with such artists as Janine Jansen, Jörg Widmann, Julian Rachlin, Vadim Repin, Leonidas Kavakos, Michael Barenboim, Vilde Frang, Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, the Jerusalem Quartet, the Pavel Haas Quartet, Elena Bashkistrova, Radovan Vlatkovic, Emmanuel Pahud, Alisa Weilerstein, Nicolas Alstaedt, Julian Steckel, and Pablo Ferrández, among others.

Born in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, in 1986 into a family of musicians, Denis Kozhukhin began his piano studies at the age of five with his mother. As a boy, he attended the Balakirev School of Music where he studied under Natalia Fish. From 2000 to 2007, Kozhukhin studied at the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid with Dimitri Bashkirov and Claudio Martinez-Mehner. Kozhukhin completed his studies at the Piano Academy at Lake Como where he received advice from Fou Ts'ong, Stanislav Yudenitch, Peter Frankl, Boris Berman, Charles Rosen and Andreas Staier, and with Kirill Gerstein in Stuttgart. In recent years he has been mentored by maestro Daniel Barenboim.

Programme

on piano:

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

from *Mikrokosmos*, Sz. 107: Vol. V/138. Bagpipe music

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Adagio in B minor, KV 540

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

from *Bagatelles*, Op. 126: IV. Presto

on harpsichord*:

William Byrd (1543-1623)

The Bells, T. 442

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

from *English Suite in A minor*, BWV 807: VI. Bourrée

Anthony Romaniuk (°1978)

Kora (improvisation)

on Fender Rhodes:

Chick Corea (°1941)

Children's Song nr. 1

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

from *English Suite in A minor*, BWV 807: I. Prelude

Anonymous (+/- 1400)

from *Het Gruuthuse-Handschrift II*: CVIII. Orlof Vrouwe, Ende Ic Moet Gaen

* Italian harpsichord by Detmar Hungerberg (2006) after an anonymous Florentine instrument in the Musikinstrumentenmuseum Leipzig (catalogue #89)

Anthony Romaniuk piano, harpsichord, Fender Rhodes

on piano:

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

From English Suite in A minor, BWV 807: I. Prelude

Federico Mompou (1893-1987)

from Musica Callada: XIII. Tranquillo

György Ligeti (1923-2006)

from Musica Ricercata : VII. Cantabile, molto legato

George Crumb (°1929)

from Makrokosmos : Vol. II/4. Twin Suns

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

from 24 Preludes and Fugues: I. Fugue in C major (with improvised prelude)

Programme note

“The dream is not comparable to the irregular sounds of a musical instrument which, instead of being played by the hand of a musician, is struck by some external force. The dream is not meaningless, not absurd... It is the fulfilment of a wish.” Dreams, explains Sigmund Freud in his groundbreaking work *The Interpretation of Dreams*, reflect our desires, wishes, ambitions... and confront us with an accumulation of images, sounds, thoughts and sensations. This extremely unpredictable dream world is reflected in *Bells*, the very first solo album by the pianist Anthony Romaniuk. During this recital, he presents a selection from his album without abandoning his original wish: namely to create a whole that “not only transcends periods of time but also genres and geographical borders”. The only constant he provides is the use of two musical ideas that are closely connected to musical traditions across the globe: the bourdon and the pedal point. Pedal points are notes sustained in one part, often in the bass, over which or around which very foreign harmonies can be sounded. They already appear in the songs and poems of the Middle Ages, such as *Orlof*, *Vrauwe* and *Ende Ic Moet Gaen* from the Bruges *Gruuthuse Manuscript*. Romaniuk departs from the melody to arrange new textures and harmonies around it, in the manner of a jazz musician. Bourdons, as Romaniuk explains, “are intended to emphasise the lowest overtone of a given note (the root and the fifth...)”. The fifth over the bass certainly sounds very familiar to our ears because it resonates every day with the ringing of church bells (it’s not for nothing that the heaviest bell in a carillon is called the “bourdon”). *The Bells* by William Byrd is the beating heart of this programme, in which, “despite the absence of genuine harmonic leaps, there is nevertheless an enormous variety of rhythms and textures”.

In Romaniuk’s unique dream world, the folk music of Eastern Europe (*Doedelzakmuziek* from Béla Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*) and a kora improvisation (a kora is a king of West African harp) are combined with sections from Johann Sebastian Bach’s *English Suite no.2*. This music by Bach also uses the idea of the bell (the *Prelude* theme which consists of a descending fifth and rising octave) and pedal tones (in the *Bourrée*). At the same time, he makes forays into the *Cantabile, molto legato* from the *Musica Ricercata* by György Ligeti, with its “total independence of the left and right hands”, and *Twin Suns* from the *Makrokosmos* by George Crumb, with the many “raw bass chords in full fifths”.

Romaniuk continues to surprise with new experiences, and easily combines Federico Mompou's unique carpet of sound (*Largo metallico & Tranquillo*) and the "melodious innocence" of the *Children's Song* by jazz pianist Chick Corea, with piano works by Beethoven, Mozart and Jean-Philippe Rameau. In these bagatelles, adagios, etc., he also recognises the idea of bells and pedal tones. But Romaniuk's dream goes much further than simply combining different styles within one programme. By performing, arranging or improvising these works of music on the Flagey Steinway grand piano, on his own replica of a Florentine harpsichord, and on the electromechanical Fender Rhodes, he turns our traditional listening experience on its head. The choice for a fugue by Dmitri Shostakovich and the preceding improvised prelude to end his recital is symbolic: as in a dream in which we are confronted with our past and our longings, "there resounds in this music the echoes of many centuries and musical cultures".

WALDO GEUNS

Biography

Keyboardist Anthony Romaniuk's singular artistic voice stems from his relentless exploration of a vast range of musical styles. A natural musical polyglot, his classical training is complemented by his improvising prowess, allowing him to traverse the borders between genres.

Jazz-obsessed in his youth in Australia, he studied classical piano in New York (Manhattan School of Music), spent several years specialising in early music (harpsichord and fortepiano in the Netherlands) and, post-studies, has continued his development across the realms of improvisation, indie rock and ambient/electronic music.

As a classical recitalist, his repertoire includes music from Byrd to Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Brahms (often on historical instruments), to Ligeti, Crumb and contemporary music. He works regularly with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and tenor Reinoud Van Mechelen and is also a core member of Vox Luminis. Other noteworthy collaborations include working with cellists Peter Wispelwey and Nadège Rochat, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra and Danish rock group Efterklang.

He has played at many important concert venues in Europe, including Wigmore Hall (London), Salle Gaveau (Paris), Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Berliner Konzerthaus, Bozar (Brussels) and at the Menuhin Festival (Gstaad), as well as frequent engagements in the US and Australia.

His debut solo recording *Bells*, released on Alpha Classics in 2020, showcases his approach to combining repertoire and improvisation, employing the timbres of four keyboard instruments, consciously pushing the boundaries of classical orthodoxy.

Biography

Eve Beuvens started off wanting to play the double bass, but at 13 she switched to the piano because it seemed to require less effort! She was drawn to jazz straight away, and started taking lessons with Nathalie Loriers. After a philosophy degree, Eve entered the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, studying with Diederik Wissels, John Ruocco, Kris Defoort, Garrett List, and John Taylor (the last while on an Erasmus exchange in Cologne). She graduated in 2005.

Her first CD, *Noordzee* (North Sea), released by Igloo in 2009, featured Eve in a quartet with Joachim Badenhorst, Yannick Peeters et Lionel Beuvens. This debut recording showcased her strengths as a and composer untroubled by clichés and a versatile, multifaceted pianist. Critics were pleased and surprised by the freshness and fluidity of her performance style, which audiences appreciate for its poetic intensity. She has travelled with the quartet in Belgium (2009; Jazz Tour / Lundis d'Hortense), Norway (2010; 12 Points Festival) and Germany (2011; Jazz Lab and Jazz Ahead). Building on the success of her trio and quartet performances, Eve has gone on to be part of projects in a wide variety of styles (including the Cezariusz Gudzina Quartet, Sidewinders, and Alex Beaurain Quintet), all of which have helped her move from strength to strength, blossoming as a rounded pianist of remarkable conviction.

In 2013, having been given free creative rein ahead of the Gaume Jazz Festival, Eve founded the Heptatomic septet, playing with Laurent Blondiau, Grégoire Tirtiaux, Sylvain Debaisieux, Benjamin Sauzereau, Manolo Cabras, and Lionel Beuvens. The group was set up to perform original pieces composed specially for it; its debut album, *Heptatomic*, appeared in September 2015, again released by Igloo. Since then, Heptatomic has performed at Belgium's leading music venues, including Bijloke Gent; Concertgebouw Brugge, and Flagey in Brussels, as well as several international festivals, both at home (Jazz à Liège; Tournai Jazz Festival) and abroad in France (AJMI Avignon; Jazz sous les Bigaradiers, Cannes). A French CD release in 2017 was met with critical acclaim.

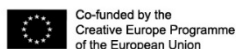
Eve has collaborated with the Swedish saxophonist Mikael Godée since 2010, first as a duo, then in a quartet. The group has an impressive list of performances in Sweden and Belgium under its belt, as well as a CD, *MEQ*, released on the Spookhuis label in 2013. Their second quartet recording, *Looking Forward* (Igloo, February 2019), was born from a Jazz Tour / Lundis d'Hortense performance. The group has also taken part in the Belgian Jazz Meeting, which has opened doors further afield – in Morocco, Italy, France, and beyond.

In August 2018, the Gaume Jazz Festival expressed the wish – nay, command – that Eve give a solo performance the following year. She triple-double-checked her piano, and the verdict was: challenge accepted! First Eve threw herself into the solo albums which have had the greatest influence on her from her teenage years on: not just Herbie Hancock's *The Piano*, Thelonious Monk's *Solo Monk* or Keith Jarrett's *Live in Rio*, but also recordings by Myra Melford, Paul Bley, Masabumi Kikuchi and Dollar Brand. Then she started writing. Eve has been composing ever since she started playing the piano – first for trio, then for quartet, then for septet – but never, until now, for her alone! She has been enjoying a voyage of delight and discovery, exploring the richness of the tonal possibilities that are open to an instrument as orchestral as the piano. In her music, Eve seeks out the harmony of contrasts: clashes of vivid colour alongside melodies that warm you from the inside out. Occasionally, of course, she throws in a nod and a wink to her idols, be they Thelonious Monk or... Dolly Parton.

Eve teaches jazz at music schools in Wemmel and Willebroek, as well as at the Gaume Jazz Festival summer course.

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