

Birmingham Conservatoire

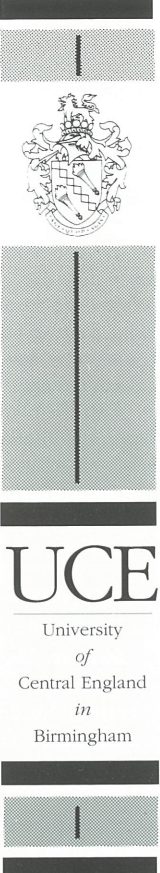
ORGAN STUDIES

Modern mechanical-action organs in purpose built practice rooms

- tutors - David Saint (Head), David Bruce-Payne and Marcus Huxley
- regular study weeks abroad (Paris 1996, Holland 1997, Hamburg 1998)
- regular classes and workshops with visiting tutors (recent tutors include Gillian Weir, Douglas Hollick and James Parsons)
- teaching on the new Walker in St Chad's Cathedral
- organ scholarships at both cathedrals and other city churches
- undergraduate and postgraduate courses

Further details available from:

The Registrar, Birmingham Conservatoire, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HG. Tel: 0121 331 5901/5902.



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Peter Williams

Clare College Chapel, Cambridge - 1.15pm

1685 and all that

The Programme

Suite in F G F Handel (1685-1759)
Prelude (HWV567); Adagio; Allegro; Adagio; Allegro-fugue (HWV 427); Gigue (HWV 492)

The three great composers featured in today's concert were all born within seven months of each other but, during their lifetimes, Handel was the most celebrated of the trio. He wrote a considerable amount of keyboard music during the early part of his career. Many of his harpsichord pieces were written for Princess Anne, and in 1720 Handel gathered some of these together in a set of eight 'Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin'.

The scores were indeed well received, and a reprint quickly appeared in Amsterdam. Today's performance of the second suite from the 1720 publication is framed by a Prelude and a Gigue which probably date from about the same time.

Three sonatas: D major, K33; Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)
A major, K24; D minor, K18

During a visit to Venice in 1710, the Irish organist Thomas Roseingrave, went to a party at which he was invited to play. Then, "A grave young man, dressed in black and in a black wig, who had stood in one corner of the room very quiet and attentive" was asked to perform. According to Burney, "Rosy thought ten thousand d--ls had been at the instrument; he never had heard such passages of execution and effect before. The performance so far surpassed his own, that if he had been in sight of any instrument with which to have done the deed, he should have cut off his own fingers." The extraordinarily gifted young harpsichordist was Domenico Scarlatti. The 555 Sonatas which Scarlatti composed survive today in two beautifully bound manuscript volumes. Other copies were widely available, however, and K18 and K24 were published in London in 1739, where his music was considered the height of fashion.

Partita no 5 in G, BWV 829 J S Bach (1685-1750)
Praelambulum; Allemande; Courante; Sarabande; Tempo di Minuetto; Passepied; Gigue

When Bach took up the post of Kantor at Leipzig's Thomaskirche in 1723, he effectively became the most important musician in the city, for the church had a distinguished musical tradition. At first he took his responsibilities seriously, composing a breathtaking number of choral works for its musicians to perform, but a series of disputes in the early 1730s left him demotivated and first of all he turned his attentions to writing instrumental music for the concerts given by the city's Collegium Musicum. He then embarked on an extraordinary series of compositions such as 'The Art of Fugue', in which he challenged himself to solve complex cerebral puzzles.

Even while he was concentrating on choral music, however, he had spread his wings by publishing a series of six keyboard partitas which he had originally written for performance by his wife, Anna Magdalena. According to the title page of the 1731 edition, they comprised "Preludes, Allemandes, Courantes, Sarabandes, Giges, Minuets and other galanteries".

Please turn to page 23 for biographical notes on Peter Williams

Nikolai Demidenko



Celebrity Piano Recital Nikolai Demidenko

St Peter's Church, Oundle - 8pm
(the Parish Church)

The Programme

Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565 Bach-Busoni
Chorale Prelude in F minor, "Ich ruf zu dir Herr Jesu Christ", BWV 639
Chorale Prelude in G major, "Nun freut euch", BWV 734

After making his London debut in 1900, Italian pianist Ferruccio Busoni was a frequent visitor to the UK, performing in a variety of venues and taking every opportunity to enjoy himself. "I could generally manage Busoni when I had him to myself," wrote Henry Wood, "but my heart was always in my mouth if he met Sibelius. They would forget the time of the concert at which they were to appear; they hardly knew the day of the week. One year when I directed the Birmingham Festival, I had to commission a friend never to let them out of his sight. They were like irresponsible schoolboys." Despite his off-duty forays, Busoni was a serious and highly intellectual musician, and passionate about the music of J S Bach.

In the arrangement of the famous 'Toccata and Fugue' which dates from 1900, Busoni sticks faithfully to the spirit of Bach's music, but revises the voices of the original harmony with fascinating insight into the capabilities of the piano. 'Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ', one of ten chorale preludes transcribed by Busoni, is given a rather subdued treatment, but 'Nun freut euch' becomes a brilliant, flamboyantly virtuosic tour-de-force.

Polonaise-Fantasie in A flat, Op 61 F Chopin (1810-1849)

The Polonaise-Fantasie heralds a new, harmonically richer style in Chopin's output. To Liszt it was a work of 'deep melancholy, ever broken by startled movements, by sudden alarms and by stifled sighs,' which for the first time ousted from his music "the loud tramp of cavalry accustomed to victory." It was, however, to be one of his final masterpieces.

Interval

Pictures at an Exhibition Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Promenade; The Gnome; Promenade; The Old Castle; Promenade; Tuileries; Bydlo; Promenade; Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks; Two Jews: One Rich, the Other Poor; Promenade; The Market Place at Limoges; Catacombs - Cum mortuis in lingua mortua; The Hut of Baba Yaga; The Great Gate of Kiev
The sudden death of the painter and architect Victor Hartmann at the age of 39 in 1873 came as a great blow to his friend, Modest Mussorgsky. Wishing to compose a memorial, he decided that he would portray himself visiting a commemorative exhibition of Hartmann's paintings, "roving now leisurely, now briskly, and at times sadly, thinking of the departed friend". The score was to comprise musical interpretations of the various exhibits and a linking 'Promenade'.

Mussorgsky worked quickly on the score, writing that "Hartmann is seething. Sounds and ideas float in the air and my scribbles can hardly keep pace with them". He finished the work in July 1874. Although it is well known in Ravel's orchestration, it was originally written as a suite for solo piano, and as a series of evocative vignettes it was immensely successful. Listen, for example, to 'The Gnome', with its vivid portrayal of a mis-shapen dwarf scuttling along in erratic bursts, or to the depiction of merry children's voices in the Tuileries Gardens. By contrast, 'Bydlo' represents an ox-drawn cart lumbering through the Polish countryside, while in 'Two Jews', Mussorgsky makes a brilliant comparison between the one, rich and powerful and the other, a trembling beggar. 'Catacombs' is an eerie, mysterious, piece headed 'cum mortuis in lingua mortua', as if he is trying to speak to his dead friend. Equally 'The hut of Baba Yaga' captures Hartmann's grotesque image of the Russian witch, Baba Yaga, who lived in a hut which ran around on chickens' legs.

The Performer

Nikolai Demidenko studied at the Moscow Conservatoire with Dmitri Bashkurov. Medallist in the 1976 Concours International de Montreal and in the 1978 Tchaikovsky International Competition, he made his British debut in 1985 with the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra. He appears regularly with orchestras throughout Europe and gives frequent recitals in London. Nikolai Demidenko is a prolific recording artist, and broadcasts regularly for the BBC.

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