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BEETHOVEN & LISZT: A MUSICAL AFFINITY

Olga Pashchenko fortepiano

APRIL 8 2022 at 7:30pm

CHRIST CHURCH CHATHEDRAL

— This concert is generously supported by donations in memory of John Grace. —



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EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

1254 West 7th Avenue,
Vancouver BC, V6H 1B6

TEL: 604.732.1610

FAX: 604.732.1602

staff@earlymusic.bc.ca

earlymusic.bc.ca



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EMV's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Early Music Vancouver's mission is to engage, enrich, and educate through music. In alignment with this mission, the Board of Directors, management and staff of Early Music Vancouver are committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This extends to the consideration of who is in the audience, whose music is heard, who performs that music, and how we operate as a leading performing arts organization. We make these commitments in recognition that discrimination and exclusion in all their forms are realities in our society, and we endeavour to use the power of music to promote understanding and change.

Early Music Vancouver acknowledges that it operates and performs on the unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful for this privilege.

THE ARTISTS

Olga Pashchenko

FORTEPIANO
AFTER AN 1819 INSTRUMENT
BY CONRAD GRAF, BUILT BY
PAUL McNULTY, 2021

GRAND PIANO BY
BROADWOOD & SONS,
LONDON, 1870.

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED
BY DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF

John Grace



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BEETHOVEN & LISZT: A MUSICAL AFFINITY

PROGRAMME

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Hammerklavier

(Piano Sonata No. 29 in B flat major, Op. 106)

Allegro

Scherzo: Assai vivace

Adagio sostenuto

Introduzione: Largo - Fuga: Allegro risoluto

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886)

Funerailles n7, S.173

from 'Poetic and Religious Harmonies' (1849)

Miserere, d'après Palestrina n8, S.173

from "Poetic and Religious Harmonies"

Consolations nn1,2 S.172 (1849-1850)

La Lugubre Gondola No. 2 S. 200 (1882)

Franz Liszt - after Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

"Auf dem Wasser zu Singen" (1837)

A FUNDRAISER FOR UKRAINE

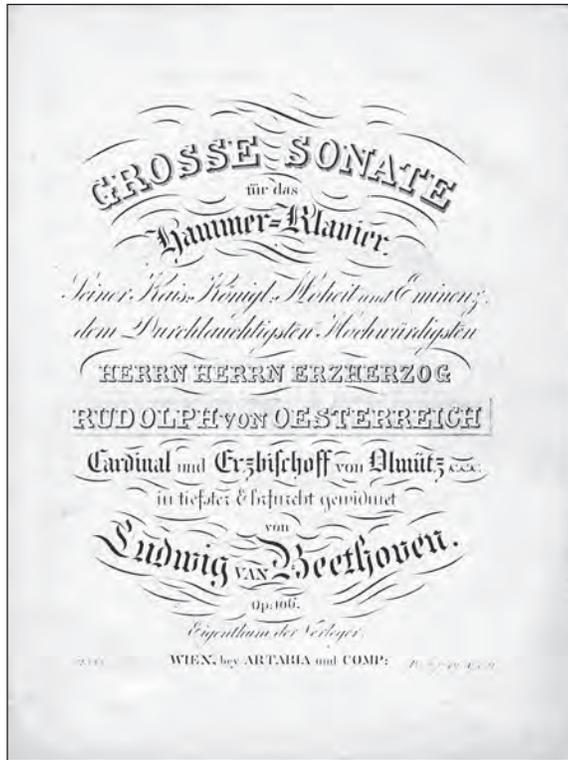
The concert will be a fundraiser for Ukraine with 50 per cent of ticket sales going to the Maple Hope Foundation's 'Defence for Ukraine' fund. The Foundation will also have an information table set up at the concert.

PROGRAMME NOTES

BY CHRISTINA HUTTEN

Beethoven completed the **Hammerklavier Sonata** in 1818 during one of the most difficult periods of his life. Having become completely deaf by 1816, he also suffered frequent illness and the loss of several important patrons, was embroiled in a bitter custody battle over his nephew, and experienced a prolonged compositional drought. This sonata triumphantly proved that he was still capable of composing and retained a strong kinaesthetic sense of the piano despite his deafness. More than that, it transcended the keyboard writing of previous generations, both the sonata writing of his teacher Franz Joseph Haydn and the contrapuntal writing of Johann Sebastian Bach (with the monumental fugal finale). The piece is marked by struggle throughout, exemplified in the unusual conflict between two keys a semitone apart: B-flat Major and B minor. In one of his sketchbooks, Beethoven scribbled “h moll schwarze Tonart” (B Minor black key). Other nineteenth-century composers chose this key to set opera scenes dealing with demons and the underworld. B-flat Major, by contrast, was a cheerful and hopeful key for Beethoven, the key of his Symphony No. 4 and of the “Archduke Trio”, which like the Hammerklavier Sonata was dedicated to Beethoven’s most loyal and supportive patron and friend, Archduke Rudolph of Austria.

Franz Liszt is credited with giving the first public performance of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 29, Op. 106 in 1836 at the Salle



First edition of the “Hammerklavier”, by Artaria (Vienna, 1819)

Érard in Paris. It was also the last sonata he ever performed, and one he so admired that he published an edition of it, transcribed its third movement for string ensemble, and taught it to his students. Like Beethoven, Liszt famously challenged the boundaries of piano technique, colouristic texture, and expressivity. Robert Schumann called his Transcendental Etudes “studies in storm and dread... fit for ten or twelve players in the world.” The selection of pieces on this program, however, show a more introspective side of Liszt, reflecting on suffering and the nature of life and love. Most were inspired by the poetry of Alphonse de Lamartine, a French poet known for his melancholic lyricism and his love of religious themes. “Funerailles” is a heroic elegy for the victims of the Hungarian War

of Independence and features pictorial effects including the ringing of mourning bells, trumpet calls, and daring, galloping octave figures. “Miserere, d’après Palestrina” opens with a stark, chant-like theme (not in fact by Palestrina) setting the text of Psalm 51, “Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness: according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences.” Liszt then accompanies this them with a shimmering texture of tremolos and rapid arpeggios that grows in passion and intensity. Consolations is a set of six deeply tender and reflective pieces, perhaps inspired by his love of the Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, with



This concert is sponsored in loving memory of Dr. John R. Grace, OC (1943-2021). Educated at the University of Western Ontario and Cambridge University, he taught at McGill before joining UBC in 1979. John was a distinguished scientist, a Professor of Chemical Engineering, a Department Head, and a Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of British Columbia. He won many awards for his research, notably in fluidization and clean energy, and for his teaching. Over the years he mentored and supervised many graduate students who remember him with great respect and affection. Among his interests were canoeing and the visual arts, but he especially loved opera and classical music, which were constant joys in his life. Beethoven was a favourite, and among the CDs he kept close at hand in his study are piano sonatas played by Glenn Gould and the late string quartets played by the Takács Quartet. John’s ashes rest at family cottages in Ontario;

at Lake of Bays they are scattered around a young birch tree that was planted in his honour. Sponsors for this concert are his sisters, Dr. Noelle Grace and Mary Finley, his daughter Elizabeth Grace, and his wife Dr. Sherrill Grace.

whom he lived for many years, receiving inspiration from her fervent spirituality. The two selections on this program are in E Major, a key signifying love and religious devotion to Liszt. Following the death of his son Daniel in 1859 and his daughter Blandine in 1862, Liszt turned his attention to compositions pondering death and memorializing loved ones. *La lugubre gondola* paints a Venetian funeral procession traveling by gondola, complete with the rocking rhythm of the barcarole, the gondolier's rowing song. The unusual harmonic language conveys a sense of utter desolation. Apparently, Liszt

composed this piece in response to a premonition of the death of his son-in-law, Richard Wagner, that he felt while visiting Wagner in Venice. *La lugubre gondola* shares the barcarole rhythm with the final piece on the program, Franz Liszt's youthful transcription of Schubert's song "Auf dem Wasser zu Singen". This song's text, which also appears printed in Liszt's transcription, reflects on the passage of time and concludes with the narrator's wish to escape time, much in the way that Beethoven and Liszt have, upon the towering, radiant wings of their music.

Ach, es entschwindet mit tauigem Flügel
Mir auf den wiegenden Wellen die Zeit
Morgen entschwinde mit schimmerndem Flügel
Wieder wie gestern und heute die Zeit
Bis ich auf höherem strahlendem Flügel
Selber entschwinde der wechselnden Zeit

Ah, with dewy wings
On the rocking waves, time escapes from me
Tomorrow with shimmering wings
Like yesterday and today may time again escape from me,
Until I on towering, radiant wings
Myself escape from changing time.

(The final verse of Schubert's "Auf dem Wasser zu singen". Text by Graf Friedrich Leopold zu Stolberg-Stolberg.)

OLGA PASHCHENKO



Photo credit: Yat-Ho-Tsang

Olga Pashchenko, one of today's most versatile keyboard performers on the international stage, is equally at home on fortepiano, harpsichord, organ, and contemporary piano.

From Bach and Beethoven on historical instruments to Ligeti on contemporary piano, Olga enjoys a busy and eclectic concert career as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. She is a regular guest at early and contemporary music festivals

alike, including: the Utrecht Early Music Festival; the Radio France Festival in Montpellier; the Festival Musiq3 in Brussels; the fortepiano festivals of Amsterdam; the Maggio Musicale Florence; the fortepiano series of Milan and Padua; AMUZ Antwerpen; Concertgebouw Bruges, and the Cité de la Musique in Paris.

As a concerto soloist, Olga has performed with the Orchestra of the 18th Century; musicAeterna with Teodor Currentzis; Meininger Hofkapelle; the Amsterdam Sinfonietta with Alexei Lubimov; the Collegium 1704 under Vaclav Luks at the Chopin Festival Warsaw; and with the Finnish Baroque Orchestra at the RSO Festival Helsinki. Her chamber music partners include Alexander Melnikov, Evgeny Sviridov, Dmitry Sinkovsky, and Erik Bosgraaf. Most recently, Olga made her debut at the Salzburg & Berlin Festivals in recital with Georg Nigl. *Pianoctambule*, the Concertgebouw and the Muziekgebouw aan t'IJ (Amsterdam), and a recorded recital for WDR at Schloss Hohenlimburg. She will also perform duo recitals at Cité de la Musique and the Beethoven Haus with Georg Nigl. In Autumn this year, Olga will embark on a decade-long project to record and tour all the Mozart Concerti with Il Gardellino, completing two discs this season with performances in Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels), amongst others.

ABOUT THE GRAF FORTEPIANO

To celebrate EMV's 50th anniversary in 2020, and to embark on presenting a whole new repertoire of period performance practices, EMV commissioned Paul McNulty to build a copy of an instrument originally designed by the Viennese builder Conrad Graf in 1819. This is the instrument that the late classical and early romantic composers would have known, and for which they were writing.



An instrument by Paul McNulty after Conrad Graf Op. 318, 1819.

Range: CC-f₄; moderator, double moderator, sustaining and una corda pedals, with a case made of walnut.

(The instrument measures about 240 x 122cm x 35 cm).

Conrad Graf, (1782–1851), who from 1824 held the title of "Imperial Royal Court Fortepiano Maker" ("k.k. Hofpiano und Claviermacher"), was born in Riedlingen (Württemberg) and came to Vienna in 1799 as a joiner. He became a piano builder and opened his own workshop in 1807. By 1820 his instruments were considered "the greatest and most renowned in Vienna and throughout the empire". Graf not only supplied instruments to all the apartments of the imperial court but also provided a pianoforte for Ludwig van Beethoven in 1825. Chopin, Robert and Clara Schumann, Liszt and Mendelssohn held Graf pianos in the highest esteem.

The McNulty instrument is a copy of Graf opus 318 (ca. 1819) from Castle Kozel near Plzeň (Pilsen) in the Czech Republic. In this period the pianos of Graf still retained the thin soundboard and light hammers of the Viennese classical era, with somewhat thicker strings. The fuller tone is nonetheless clear and projecting, which, coupled with the various expression tops, provides a convincing Schubertian palette.

Paul McNulty
FORTEPIANOS

www.fortepiano.eu

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT AND THE MAKER:

During Beethoven's time (and partly thanks to his influence and his demands on contemporary builders), fortepiano construction underwent a substantial development. One of the most influential builders of the time was Conrad Graf. He created an instrument for Beethoven in the last years of his life, offering a 6-octave range rather than the 5-octave, designed especially to fulfil the demands for larger instruments by Beethoven and contemporaries. Paul McNulty is an American living in the Czech Republic and is considered the most experienced living builder of copies of 19th-century fortepianos. Since 1985, he has made more than 220 historical pianos. His customers have included Kristian Bezuidenhout, Malcolm Bilson, Nicolaus Harnoncourt, the Chopin Institute in Warsaw, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Amsterdam Conservatory, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Royal College of Music and many more.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS INSTRUMENT NOW?

For years, EMV has maintained and made available to the broader community an outstanding historical instrument collection. Though we own a "stable" of keyboard instruments that trace almost the whole basic history of the keyboard from the late Renaissance to the present, we were sadly still missing a vital piece of the puzzle. This early romantic piano is that missing piece. Hearing the music of late Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt and others, on the instrument for which it was written is utterly transformative and at the heart of what we value as an organization.

"The Graf possesses all of the advantages of a romantic era piano; shallower key dip, lighter touch, lightness of frame and variations of colour between registers. Playing late Beethoven and the early romantics on this instrument fundamentally transforms the overall texture and contours of the music. What might sound heavy and sentimental on an industrial-era modern piano becomes vocal and ethereal, and instead of labouring the hands, intricate passagework reveals a colourful tapestry, achieved with minimal strain."

- Abigail Karr, historical violin performer who, with fortepianist Yi-heng Yang were the first duo to record Mendelssohn's complete works for violin and piano on period instruments.

The fact that we now have such an instrument in our collection will have a significant and long-term impact on the early music scene in and around Vancouver, and on the musical community in general.

POTENTIAL OTHER PARTNERS:

Although EMV is the sole owner of the instrument, it will be available to the UBC School of Music for teaching purposes and for performances. It will also be made available for partnerships with valued arts organizations in and around the city including the Vancouver Recital Society, the Vancouver Chopin Society, the Friends of Chamber Music, the Vancouver Symphony, the Vancouver Opera and others.

EXPENSES:

The cost for the McNulty 6 1/2-octave fortepiano after Conrad Graf, including a padded cover, shipping crate, and shipping costs & insurance was approximately Cdn \$105,000.



Photo credit:
Paul McNulty fortepianos

Thank You!

As a special gift in honour of the late Dr. Ralph Spitzer, a long-time supporter of EMV, an anonymous donor matched all donations up to \$50,000 to help us with the purchase of this instrument. We were able to raise the full funds for this acquisition in less than one year!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this campaign, particularly also to those who donated after the unfortunate Covid-related cancellation of EMV's 50th Anniversary Fundraising Dinner.

We are thrilled, and grateful to the following individuals who made this acquisition possible:

\$50,000

A donation in memory of Ralph Spitzer

\$2,500-\$5,000

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Considering making a tax-deductible donation towards EMV's important collection of historical instruments?
Please contact Michelle Herrewynen, Resource Development Manager, at michelle@earlymusic.bc.ca

ABOUT THE BROADWOOD FORTEPIANO

This pianoforte in EMV's important collection of historical instruments was a generous gift by Dr. Patricia M. Lee and Dr. Nicholas H. Lee in 2016. This is an original 19th-century instrument by Broadwood, one of the oldest and most renowned piano makers in the world. Established in the mid-1700s, Broadwood has built pianos in England for over two centuries and continues to make some of Europe's finest pianos today.

This small grand piano of 1874, built in a beautiful walnut burl, was typical for the time; these instruments in the Empire Revival style were quite popular in late 19th-century parlours and country house boudoirs.

A decal inside the casing reads "Consigned to Balmoral" which prompted EMV to further investigate its provenance. EMV engaged the services of Broadwood Archives Services in 2021 to confirm the address Broadwoods were asked to deliver the piano to when it was first despatched, and the method of delivery. We learned that it was sold to Messrs Marr and Co. in Aberdeen, Scotland. The piano had a retail



Photo credit: Jan Gates

price of 160 guineas (£168). The piano was taken by horse and wagon to Aberdeen Wharf, Wapping, London, which was operated by the Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company, and therefore this piano would have been taken to Aberdeen by sea. John Marr was a piano maker and dealer who established a business in Aberdeen in the late 1820s. In 1849, the firm was granted the royal warrant (a distinction shared with Broadwood's). In an Aberdeen directory of 1873, we find that Marr & Co has the following listing: "Music sellers and pianoforte makers to the Queen, 218 Union Street." Hence, we speculate that given the decal and the documentation, EMV's Broadwood may have possibly been in royal hands for a period. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert purchased Balmoral Castle in 1852. Both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were keen pianists. Over the years they either purchased, or were given, a range of square, upright and grand pianos. They kept at least one keyboard at every royal residence, including on the royal yacht.

Unfortunately, we have very little written documentation about its arrival in Canada except a verbal confirmation that it «had come round the Horn to Canada" when the piano was purchased from an auction house in Vancouver in the late 1970s. This suggests that the piano could have arrived by boat to the West Coast before 1914 when the Panama Canal was completed. We suspect this instrument has more intriguing stories to tell but have yet to be discovered.



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