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A “virtual” Music in Adderbury Concert recorded at the Parish Church of Ss Peter and Paul, Deddington

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This virtual concert will be available for a limited time after release.

Petr Limonov (piano)

- Bach: Prelude in C major, BWV 846 (from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1)
- Chopin: 24 Preludes, op 28

Winner of Nikolai Rubinstein International Piano Competition, Russian-British pianist and conductor Petr Limonov frequently appears in the UK and Europe as a soloist or in collaboration with, among others, Nicola Benedetti, Laura van der Heijden, Jennifer Pike, the Van Kujik Quartet, Leonard Elschenbroich and Liana Isakadze. He has recorded for Decca, Onyx, Deutschlandfunk and Champs Hill, and has made notable appearances at La Roque d'Anthéron Festival (Boris Berezovsky's Carte Blanche, broadcast by Radio France Musique); Wigmore Hall; iTunes Festival; Cadogan Hall; St Martin-in-the-Fields; Southbank Centre; the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory; and the Duke's Hall (for HRH Prince Charles).

Petr has made television appearances for BBC Proms Extra and Russia's "Culture" channel, and broadcasts regularly for BBC Radio 3. In 2017, his arrangement of Auld Lang Syne (issued on Decca in 2014 as a part of Nicola Benedetti's best-selling "Homecoming" album) was performed in the

Albert Hall at the BBC Proms. His repertoire stretches from Orlando Gibbons to Arvo Pärt.

Born in Moscow, Petr started playing the piano at the age of five. He entered the prestigious Central Music School in Moscow a year later to study under the guidance of Siavush Gadjiev, Valery Piatetsky and Andrei Pisarev. After winning first prize at the 1998 Nikolai Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Paris, he began giving concerts throughout Europe and Russia, supported by the Vladimir Spivakov International Charity Foundation. Petr went on to study with Hamish Milne and Alexander Satz at the Royal Academy of Music in London on a full scholarship, followed by a year at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris Alfred Cortot, where his teachers were Ramzi Yassa and Wolfram Schmitt-Leonard. In 2010 Petr returned to London to commence postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music with Dmitry Alexeev, obtaining his Masters degree in 2012. During his studies, Petr participated in masterclasses

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with Alfred Brendel, Stephen Hough, Vitaly Margulis and Stephen Kovacevich. He also studied conducting under Peter Stark. In November 2013, Petr made his conducting

debut at Cadogan Hall with the London International Chamber Orchestra performing works by Glazunov and Rachmaninov.

More information:
<https://www.petrlimonov.com/>.

Prelude in C major, BWV 846 (from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

See below notes on Chopin's 24 Preludes.

24 Preludes, op 28 by Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

No 1 in C major – Agitato

No 2 in A minor – Lento

No 3 in G major – Vivace

No 4 in E minor – Largo

No 5 in D major – Allegro molto

No 6 in B minor – Lento assai

No 7 in A major – Andantino

No 8 in F sharp minor – Molto agitato

No 9 in E major – Largo

No 10 in C sharp minor – Allegro molto

No 11 in B major – Vivace

No 12 in G sharp minor – Presto

No 13 in F sharp major – Lento

No 14 in E flat minor – Allegro

No 15 in D flat major – Sostenuto

No 16 in B flat minor – Presto con fuoco

No 17 in A flat major – Allegretto

No 18 in F minor – Allegro molto

No 19 in E flat major – Vivace

No 20 in C minor – Largo

No 21 in B flat major – Cantabile

No 22 in G minor – Molto agitato

No 23 in F major – Moderato

No 24 in D minor – Allegro appassionato

Chopin's set of 24 Preludes is one of his most innovative works. The disparity between the expectations aroused by the title and the reality of the music itself prompted some bewildered reactions among his contemporaries. To Robert Schumann they were "sketches, beginnings of Etudes, or, so to speak, ruins, individual eagle pinions, all disorder and wild confusion". Even such a sympathetic observer as Liszt, reviewing a recital by Chopin in 1841, suggested that he felt a discrepancy between title and music. And as late as the 1940s, the French novelist André Gide could admit "I do not really understand the title that Chopin liked

to give to these short pieces: Preludes.

Preludes to what?"

To earlier generations of musicians, the word 'prelude' meant, usually in the field of keyboard music, an introductory piece, often with an element of improvisation; the pairing of prelude and fugue we meet so often in JS Bach's work is perhaps the most familiar example. To illustrate the point, Petr Limonov begins with the Prelude in C from Book 1 of Bach's The Well-Tempered Clavier.

By Chopin's time it was common for pianists to introduce a performance with a short

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improvisation, trying out the instrument and establishing the key and mood of the piece to follow. But though composer-pianists of the generation before Chopin published sets of preludes – a set of twenty-four by Hummel appeared in 1815 – Chopin's Preludes opened up radical new possibilities. As self-contained pieces, not introductions to something else, they demand to be heard as substantial works in their own right, in spite of their brevity, or maybe even because of it. With one exception, none is longer than three minutes, some only about half a minute. And being fully written-out they decisively break with the element of improvisation. All of this adds up to what the Chopin scholar Jeffrey Kallberg has described as the Preludes' challenge to “the conservative notion that small forms were artistically suspect or negligible.”

Chopin began them in 1838 and all but finished them during his disastrous holiday in Majorca with George Sand in the winter of 1838-9. He took with him a copy of JS Bach's Well-tempered Clavier, and like Bach's, Chopin's Preludes move through all the major

and minor keys, though in a different sequence. Where Bach paired each major key with its minor equivalent, and moved up by semitones (C major and minor followed by C sharp major and minor, D, E flat, E, F, and so on), Chopin paired each major key with its relative minor and moved up by fifths – C major and A minor, G major and E minor, D major and B minor, etc. Each prelude focuses on a distinct mood and/or type of keyboard figuration, occasionally referring to genres that Chopin explores in depth elsewhere – No 7 in A, probably the most familiar of the set, is a mazurka, while No 13, in F sharp, has affinities with his Nocturnes.

Where Chopin led, later composers followed, including Skryabin – whose 24 Preludes, Op 11, adopt Chopin's sequence of keys – Rachmaninov (who also composed a set of variations on No 20 in C minor from Chopin's set), Fauré, Szymanowski and Debussy, whose two books of Preludes make more explicit the programmatic possibilities of Chopin's original (in both senses) conception.

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