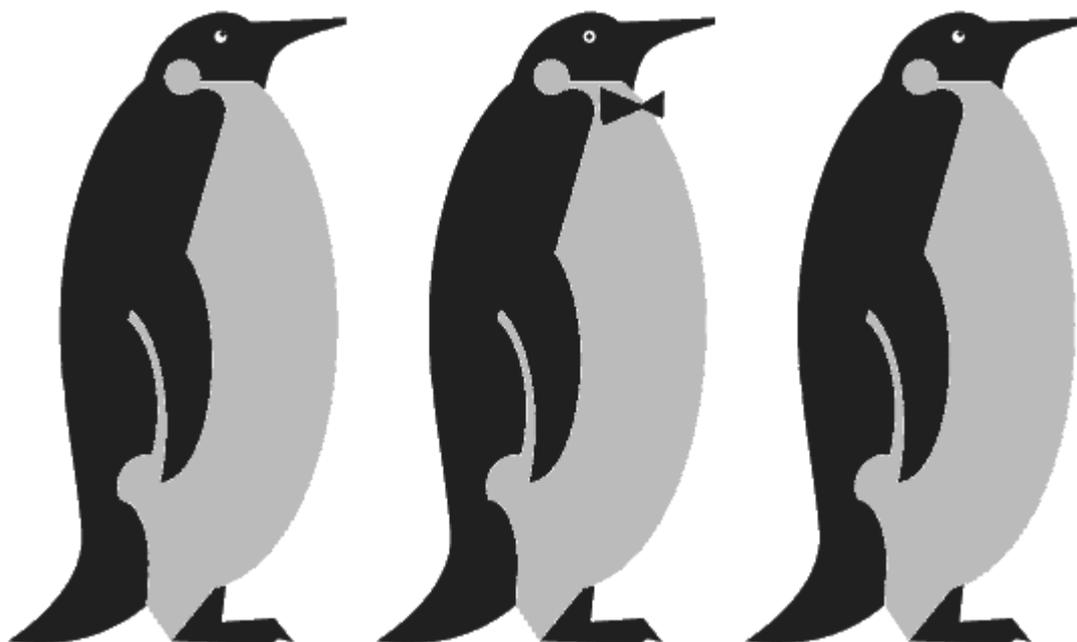


A piano recital by
Alexander Hanysz



Pilgrim Church
Sunday 14th June, 2015

Programme

Children's Corner

Debussy

1. Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum
2. Jimbo's Lullaby
3. Serenade of the Doll
4. The snow is dancing
5. The little Shepherd
6. Golliwogg's cake walk

Métopes, opus 29

Szymanowski

1. Isle of sirens
2. Calypso
3. Nausicaa

--- interval (approx 15 minutes) ---

Images, book 1

Debussy

1. Reflections in the water
2. Homage to Rameau
3. Movement

Three Fantasies (premiere performance)

John Polglase

- I *Allegretto inquieto*
- II *Andante con moto*
for Alexander Hanysz
- III *Con moto scherzando*

The old new and the new new

When classically trained musicians talk about contemporary music, we're usually not referring to Beyoncé's latest hits or the Eurovision Song Contest. The “new music” in a piano recital is more likely to be something by Schoenberg or Stockhausen, music that sounded shockingly different when it was first written, and is still perceived as a little bit scary some decades later (because we haven't heard much of it in the intervening years!) Everything was new when it was first thought of, but some things seem to stay “new” for longer than others...

Debussy, as a student in the 1870s, consciously set out to break with tradition, and annoyed his teachers with his wild improvisations on the piano and blatant disregard for the rules in his harmony textbooks. The *Children's Corner* suite was composed in 1908, after he had settled down a little bit; the chaos has mellowed into a sort of quirky charm, but there are some subtle digs at his predecessors. The title of the first piece refers to a book of studies by Clementi that had been standard training material for pianists of an earlier generation (and also to a much older counterpoint textbook by Fux). Debussy's piece is meant to depict a child practising this music, first conscientiously, then daydreaming, then finishing in a rush and banging the piano lid shut at the end. The names of the other pieces

are easier to make sense of, but keen opera fans might be surprised to find a Wagner melody parodied in the middle section of “Golliwogg's cake walk”.

Szymanowski is a composer who still sounds “modern”, even though some of his music is now more than a century old. The *Métopes* were written in 1917, inspired by his travels through the Mediterranean. A métope is part of a Doric frieze, a decoration that you might find on a Greek temple. Szymanowski's pieces depict Odysseus's journey home in Homer's *Odyssey*; each movement is named after a female character from the story. The Sirens are the mythical creatures whose song would lure sailors to their death; Odysseus made a cunning plan to hear them by ordering his crew to stop their ears with beeswax and tie Odysseus to the ship's mast to keep him away from temptation. Calypso was a sea nymph who wanted to marry Odysseus, and kept him prisoner on an island for seven years. Nausicaa was a princess who finally helped Odysseus to get home; the end of the piece depicts him speeding on his journey, and then reminiscing.

Opening the second half of this concert, Debussy's *Images* were written in 1905, before *Children's Corner*, but are more openly experimental in terms of drawing different sonorities out of the piano. The three pieces are quite different from each other in style. *Reflections in the water* is the sort of “watery” music that is now almost a cliché, but was radical for its time.

Homage to Rameau is one of Debussy's rare references to the past, while *Movement* looks to the future. In the words of Constant Lambert, “The trouble with music inspired by movement is that music by its very nature consists of movement. This makes it the most difficult medium in which to describe external movement. For example, Debussy's piano piece *Mouvement* (inspired by machinery) is the most static piece and also the worst piece he ever wrote.” (Critics didn't always get these things right!)

John Polglase continues to write new music faster than I can learn to play it (and I wouldn't have it any other way). The Three Fantasies were written during the first half of 2014, and their existence owes a lot to miracles of modern technology. After drafting the first piece, John was diagnosed with a serious illness. Not to be deterred, he took his laptop into the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and over the coming months, updated drafts continued to arrive in my email inbox. I am very glad that the technology existed, not just to deliver the music, but more importantly to return John to good health.

If you would like to be included on the mailing list to receive details of future concerts, please email your details to concerts@hanysz.net. Next year's concert may include some music from the 19th Century. Let me know if you're keen to find out!

Alexander Hanysz enjoys a diverse career embracing many facets of the pianist's art—soloist, accompanist for singers and instrumentalists, chamber musician, repetiteur and orchestral pianist. He has performed throughout Australia, and recorded for ABC Classic FM and for MBS radio in several states. He has also appeared as soloist and chamber musician in the UK.

In Adelaide, Alexander has collaborated in concert with artists such as Thomas Edmonds, Elizabeth Campbell and Nicholas Milton, and was a repetiteur for Wagner's *Ring* cycle in 2004. He has a keen interest in contemporary music: he gave the South Australian premiere of John Adams' piano concerto with the Adelaide Art Orchestra, and has given world premieres of new works by Australian composers. His two piano arrangement of Carl Vine's piano concerto was published by Faber Music. Alexander is also one of the few Australian pianists to have performed Bach's complete *Well-Tempered Clavier*.

Alexander graduated with honours from the Flinders Street School of Music, and has participated in masterclasses with Jeremy Menuhin, Roy Howat, Michael Kieran Harvey and Leslie Howard. An Adelaide University medallist, his numerous prizes also include the Edith Leigh Piano Prize (Cambridge), the Geoffrey Parsons Award at the Barossa International Festival, and the Adelaide Eisteddfod concerto prize. He has twice appeared as a finalist in the Australian National Piano Award.

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