A piano recital performed by Amir Farid

WELCOME
Welcome to St Paul’s Cathedral, the home for worshippers from more than two dozen nations, the seat of the Anglican Primate of Australia and the home church for Anglicans in Melbourne and Victoria.

We meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin nation and we acknowledge and pay our respect to their elders past and present and to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders with us today.

Please ensure that mobile phones and other devices are switched off. No recording or videography is permitted during the recital.

Donations
Whilst St Paul’s Cathedral is able to provide a venue, concert management, administrative support and advertising for our series of lunchtime concerts, we are not in a position to provide fees for artists – your donations provide these small gifts. If we cannot provide artists with at least a token of our appreciation, we will not be able to attract artists to perform for us. Rather than charge set prices for admission, we have decided to admit people by donation, so that those who could not otherwise afford to come are able to do so. We suggest a minimum donation of $10 per person and thank you for your generosity in helping to keep our lunchtime recitals running.
Program

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849 Poland)
*Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23* (1835)

Anne Cawrse (1981- Australia)
*Time’s Long Ruin* (2012)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791 Austria)
*Adagio in B minor, K.540* (1788)

Stuart Greenbaum (1966- Australia)
*Ice Man* (1993)

Movement I
i Lost
ii The Moon
iii Don’t Leave Me Here

Movement II
i Picture of an Anorexic
ii Dignity
iii The Dream

Movement III
i I Thought They Must Have Seen Me
ii Faint Voices
iii Affinity

Program notes

Isolation has played a significant part in many of our lives in the past year. It brings with it a complex array of feelings, mindsets and challenges such as loneliness, powerlessness, loss, anxiety and fear. This program will explore works written over a span of 250 years exploring how music can be used to portray and express such feelings.

Seemingly infinite depths of passion and tragedy are mined in the much loved Ballades of Frederic Chopin. A musical reflection of the French literary ballad, Chopin pioneered this as a musical form which, through the absence of a traditional structure, takes on a narrative-like style appropriate to the individual subject. The essence and inspiration of the composition may be seen as a combination of the literary parallels; key elements of literary ballads include an impartial narrator, characters and their struggle, conflict and defiance, avoidance of retribution, and a pre-destined world. These are
portrayed in the music, together with Chopin’s personal experiences of exile and immigration, including themes of alienation, homelessness, morbid anxiety, powerlessness, and nostalgia. Also to be considered is Chopin’s connection with the poet Adam Mickiewicz. While most links between the music and specific literature are disputed, there is no question of the profound influence the poet had on the composer, with Chopin writing lines of Mickiewicz’s poetry in his personal diary. The individually conceived, single-movement Ballades were composed between 1835-1842, and epitomise the romantic ideal of composition for the piano. Characterising each Ballade are two melodies, which appear and develop atop a rich harmonic language and narrative-like rhythmic figures. Musicologist Edward T. Cone remarked that ‘in most of these works Chopin uses an important device that I somewhat extravagantly refer to as apotheosis: a special kind of recapitulation that reveals unexpected harmonic richness and textural excitement in a theme he previously presented with a deliberately restricted harmonisation and a relatively drab accompaniment.’ Critical acclaim sees the works described as “Chopin at the supreme summit of his art” (Huneken 1900) and “the crown of Chopin’s work” (Abraham 1939). The Ballade No.1 in G minor, Op.23 was composed in 1835, the year Chopin attained his French passport and citizenship. The work is said to be inspired by a protest poem of Mickiewicz, entitled Konrad Wallenrod, which avoided censorship and contributed to the Polish November 1830 uprising against Russian rule. Mickiewicz was in exile in St. Petersburg at the time he wrote this poem, isolated from his home country. The first Ballade is dedicated to Monsieur le Baron de Stockhausen, the Hanoverian ambassador to France. There was immense praise in response to the premier performance of the G minor Ballade. Schumann wrote: "I have a new Ballade of Chopin’s. I think it is his most genius-inspired work; and I told him this, that it’s my favourite among all. After a long, thoughtful pause, he said with great emphasis, ‘That pleases me; it is my favourite too.’" Perhaps the work’s most striking feature is the way it opens – in a Neapolitan harmony of Ab major. Eventually the music settles into its opening lilting theme, which develops in an outburst of passion. The nocturne-like 2nd theme is introduced, and both main themes return in various guises before a fiery coda brings the work to its breathtaking conclusion.

Change, loss, memories and hope are themes explored in Time’s Long Ruin, a fantasy for piano composed in 2012 by Adelaide-based composer Anne Cawrse. The work was written as a preparatory exercise to flesh out some themes to be used in a larger work, an opera titled Innocence. The piece bares the same title as the book upon which the Opera is based. This novel by Adelaide author Stephen Orr investigates childhood in suburban Adelaide in the 1950s. Cawrse also drew inspiration from the following poem by Edwin Muir:

That all should change to ghost and glance and gleam,
And so transmuted stand beyond all change,
And we be poised between the unmoving dream
And the sole moving moment – this is strange.
Past all contrivance, word, or image, or sound,
Or silence, to express, that we who fall
Through time’s long ruin should weave this phantom ground
And in its ghostly borders gather all.
There incorruptible the child plays still,
The lover waits beside the trysting tree,
The good hour spans its heaven, and the ill,
Rapt in their silent immortality,
As in commemoration of a day
That having been can never pass away.

In the mid 1780s, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s financial situation was steadily deteriorating. Interest in music amongst the Viennese was waning, due to the constraints of war with the Turks. Concerts and commissions for compositions were not taking place. However, this did not stop Mozart from
writing altogether - born out of this period were some significant compositions, including the Coronation Concerto, 3 symphonies, several piano trios, and the tender *Adagio in B minor, K.540*. Minor keys in Mozart’s music are an infrequent occurrence. Particularly rare is the use of B minor, with Mozart’s only other use of this key being in 1777 for the *Adagio* movement of his Quartet for flute, violin, viola and cello (K.285). So significant is this tonality for Mozart, he alludes to it in words *(h-moll)* next to its entry in his own personal works catalogue – the only time he does so. What Mozart brings to the work through the use of this particular key is truly arresting. An overwhelming sense of anguish is established immediately, with the first instance of harmony being a diminished 7th chord. This tension is maintained throughout the sonata-form structure, with highly chromatic passages, suspensions, and sudden *forte* outbursts giving the work a sense of unease and drama. Perhaps the only repose comes at the very end, when the key of B major is reached. This brief glimmer of hope, however poignant, does little to erase the turmoil that has unfolded previously.

Melbourne-based composer *Stuart Greenbaum* composed *Ice Man* in 1993, a programmatic work in nine sections (divided into 3 larger movements) taking its theme from the plight of an Australian student, *James Scott*, who was lost in the Himalayan mountains for 43 days before being rescued. On this epic psychological journey portrayed through music, Greenbaum further explains: “When I first read about him in a newspaper article it moved me greatly, but after much initial trouble, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible for me to write a piece of music which reflected Scott’s feelings. *Ice Man* is actually about my feelings - how I feel about the idea of being in this predicament...the acceptance of misfortune, the wait in hope, the possibility of death and the change of expectation...the piece is not only about Scott, but rather reflects on the idea of courage in general...When a person is dying, it is said that their life flashes before their eyes. It seems to me that Scott went through this process in slow motion. However, there were also weeks that passed almost without incident (at least to his memory), and it is the idea of the extremes of fast and slow motion which are at the core of my piece...manifest in the contrast between dense activity and spaciousness.”

**Biography**

Winner of the 2006 Australian National Piano Award, US born Iranian-Australian pianist *Amir Farid* has been described as “a highly creative musician – a pianist of great intelligence and integrity. He brings strong musical substance to all that he does, imbuing it with his own particular experience and understanding”, and who “in a well-populated field...distinguishes himself for all the right reasons”.

As one of the most versatile and loved musicians in Australia, the Melbourne and New York-based pianist has performed concerti with major orchestras, collaborating with conductors such as Christopher Hogwood, Oleg Caetani, Johannes Fritzsch, Alexander Briger, Marko Letonja and Benjamin Northey. Highlights include Rachmaninoff’s 2nd piano concerto with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in front of a 13,000-strong crowd at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Mozart’s concerto No.14 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and “The Mozart Dances” with the Mark Morris Dance Group and West Australian Symphony Orchestra as part of the 2015 Perth Festival.
Since graduating with distinction from the Royal College of Music London in 2009 with Andrew Ball, he has performed as a solo recitalist and collaborative artist in concert halls and festivals internationally, including Carnegie Hall New York, St. Martin in the Fields London, Al-Hashemi-II Kuwait, MONA FOMA Festival Hobart, Coriole Festival SA, Huntington Festival NSW, as well as other venues in USA, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, New Zealand and China.

Recital collaborations include tenor Ian Bostridge, saxophonist Claude Delangle, violinists Arabella Steinbacher and Nikki Chooi, violists Mats Lidström, Alexander Baillie and Martin Loveday, sopranos Greta Bradman and Siobhan Stagg, baritone Wolfgang Holzmair, flautist Michel Bellavance and clarinetist Philippe Cuper. As a chamber musician, Amir is pianist of the Benaud Trio (www.benaudtrio.com), winning the Piano Trio prize at the 2005 Australian Chamber Music Competition.

His numerous highly acclaimed recordings (primarily with Move Records) are heard frequently on radio stations throughout Australia and internationally, including a solo CD of works by Persian composer Javad Maroufi, multiple albums with cellist Zoe Knighton and soprano Siobhan Stagg, and numerous releases on ABC Classics and Melba Recordings with the Benaud Trio. Several of his albums have been nominated for an Australian Independent Music Award. Amir is also a recorded artist on the Steinway & Sons Spirio catalogue, as part of the piano manufacturer’s revolutionary player-piano system.

Amir has studied under the guidance of Ronald Farren-Price, Geoffrey Tozer, Rita Reichman and Timothy Young while at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM) and the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). He continues to work with Farren-Price since beginning studies with him in the mid 90’s. As well as his concert career, Amir has worked as a collaborative pianist at MCM, ANAM, the Australian Children’s Choir, and the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust. He was the Melba Trust’s inaugural répétiteur scholar in 2013, working under the guidance of Sharolyn Kimmorley. As of 2017, Amir is a staff pianist at the Vocal Arts department of the Juilliard School, New York City, and in 2019 was rehearsal pianist with the New York Philharmonic for the world premiere production of David Lang’s opera Prisoner of the State.
Forthcoming 1pm Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts at St Paul’s Cathedral

3 February: Sarvenaz Monfaredi, soprano & Berta Brozgul, piano
Perform works by Lotti, Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti and more!

10 February: Katherine Norman & Kristy Biber, soprano duo
Sopranos of the Consort of Melbourne, accompanied by Michael Fulcher, perform stunning duets from Purcell, Bach, and Monteverdi.

17 February: Alex Meikle-Briggs, violin & Berta Brozgul, piano
Featuring Edward Elgar’s great violin sonata as well as a premier of Alex’s latest composition.

24 February: no concert

3 March: Timothy Chiang, piano

10 March: Adam Simmons, shakuhachi, flute and saxophones

17 March: Deon Entwistle, harp

24 March: Elissa Goodrich, vibraphone

This series of lunchtime concerts was launched in 2013 to encourage city workers and others to come into and enjoy the beautiful surroundings of the Cathedral during the day. They provide fine music and space for contemplation in the midst of a busy week.

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