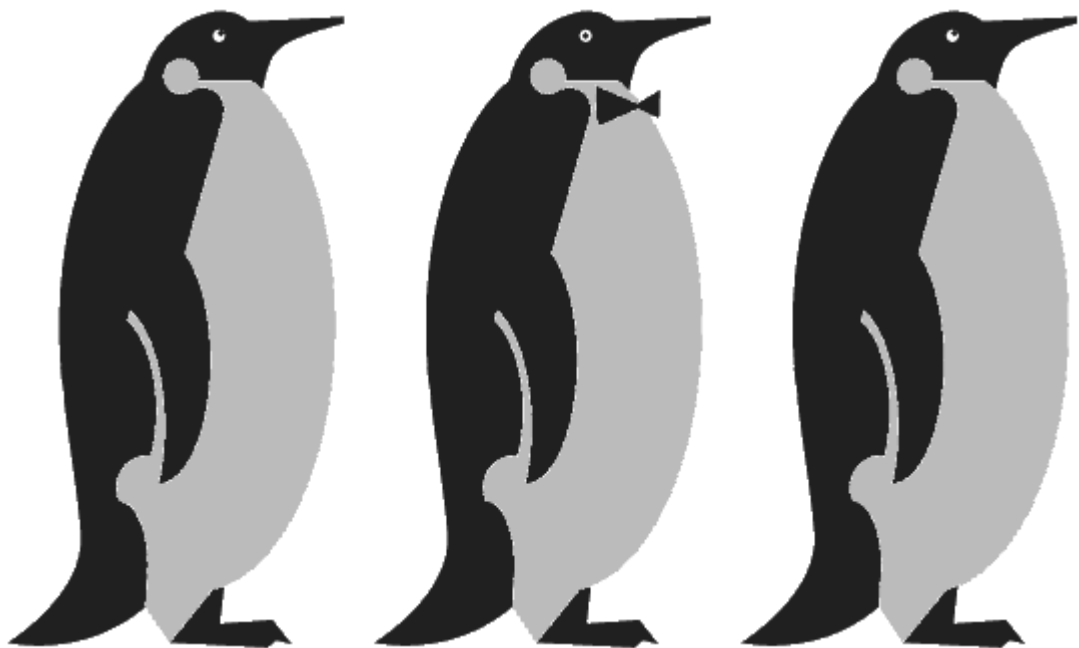


A piano recital by
Alexander Hanysz



Elder Hall
Wednesday 3rd August, 2010

Programme

Preludes and fugues from J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*
Mazurkas by Szymanowski from *Twenty Mazurkas opus 50*

Prelude and fugue in C, book 2

Mazurka no. 1

Prelude and fugue in A, book 2

Prelude and fugue in E minor, book 2

Mazurka no. 5

Prelude and fugue in A flat, book 1

Prelude and fugue in F minor, book 1

Mazurka no. 10

Prelude and fugue in C sharp minor, book 1

--- interval (approx 20 minutes) ---

Prelude and fugue in F sharp minor, book 1

Mazurka no. 3

Prelude and fugue in B flat minor, book 2

Prelude and fugue in F, book 1

Mazurka no. 15

Prelude and fugue in G, book 1

Prelude and fugue in E, book 2

Mazurka no. 13

Prelude and fugue in D, book 2

Each half of this concert is presented as a continuous performance with no break.

A song and dance about Bach

Pianists need to be masters of illusion. You press a piano key, a hammer strikes a string, a sound is produced. For as long as you hold the key down, the sound will gradually decay. You have no further control over what happens to that note. It will never get louder again. It can't change colour in the manner of a good singer or violinist. A single note played on the piano is meaningless: it doesn't matter who presses the key down, it will never express a personality or reveal an emotion all by itself.

For some people, this makes the piano the least expressive of all musical instruments. But for others it is a source of magic and mystery. How is it possible for two different pianists to perform on the same instrument and make it sound so different? How can these mechanically produced sounds combine to produce so many varied colours?

Pianists often resort to metaphors to evoke these effects. Most of these metaphors are vocal. Countless piano teachers have asked their students to "make the piano sing". We ask for warmer sounds, or a whisper, and somehow the instrument responds. Melodies must breathe, and phrases must be articulated. Even before the invention of the piano, Bach was writing of the need for students to cultivate a "cantabile" (singing) style of playing on the harpsichord.

The other essential metaphor for pianists, less often spoken of but implicit in the work of so many composers, is dance. We know that a great deal of Bach's instrumental music was directly inspired by the dance forms of his time. He wrote numerous minuets, a predecessor of the modern waltz. Many of the livelier fugues are in the style of a jig (for example, the fugues in the keys of F and G from tonight's concert). And there are hints of less well remembered dance forms from the eighteenth century and earlier: courante, allemande, and much more. Much of this enters Bach's music in a stylised form: sometimes it's hard to imagine actually getting up and dancing to a fugue, but the rhythm and the spirit of the dance are still there. And there are some pieces where song and dance seem to be combined in equal measure.

In this connection, it's interesting to put Bach's dance-inspired preludes and fugues next to the Polish dance rhythms of Szymanowski's mazurkas. These pieces have a curious history: Szymanowski was widely seen as the spiritual heir of Chopin, so it was natural for him to follow Chopin's lead in writing mazurkas for the piano. He retained the basic rhythm of Chopin's mazurkas (in particular, often accenting the second or third beat of the bar rather than the first), but, working in the 1920s, looked for a different approach to harmony. This he found in the Tatra mountains of Poland, where he went to listen to the local folk music. But there was a problem: although the Tatra folk music was full of unfamiliar and interesting colours, it was

mainly in 2/4 time, while the mazurka is in 3/4. So Symanowksi's piano pieces are a hybrid, with the rhythm of one dance and the harmony of another. And, as in the Bach, there are moments where the dance pauses and song takes over.

This concert is the third in a four part series exploring Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier in different contexts. 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

Coming up on October 23rd:

A 200th birthday celebration for Franz Liszt

Alexander Hanysz performs Liszt's transcriptions of music by Paganini, Beethoven, Schubert, Verdi and Wagner, as well as the "Dante" sonata

Pilgrim Church, 12 Flinders Street, Adelaide

Sunday 23rd October, 3 p.m.

Tickets \$25/\$10 concession

Presented by the Richard Wagner Society of S.A.

Alexander Hanysz enjoys a diverse career embracing many facets of the pianist's art—soloist, accompanist for singers and instrumentalists, chamber musician, répétiteur 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 répétiteur 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 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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