

# Alicja Fiderkiewicz

a celebrity recital performed at

# the Fourth Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists\* given in the

# Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester on Monday, August 24th, 2004

César Franck (1822-1890)	
[1] Prélude, choral et fugue (1884)	19:20
Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)	
[2] Impromptu No. 2 in F sharp, Op. 36	5:31
[3] Impromptu No. 3 in G flat, Op. 51	5:35
[4] Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60 (1846)	7:56
Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)	
Sonata No. 3 in B flat (1936)	
[5] 1. Ruhig bewegt	4:40
[6] 2. Sehr lebhaft	2:57
[7] 3. Maßig. Schnell	4:51
[8] 4. Fuge. Lebhaft	4:41
Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)	
[9] Nocturne No. 7 in C sharp minor, Op. 27/1	4:56

Total time: 60:27

This recording was made at a public performance. Whilst the latest digital recording technology has been used to capture the effect and atmosphere of the occasion, some compromises have had to be made to accommodate certain constraints on microphone placements. In addition, the listener may be aware of the presence of some ambient noise, as well as that from the audience.

<sup>\*</sup>As a guest member of the Teaching Faculty at the School, Miss Fiderkiewicz not only taught the students on a daily basis, but also gave two Chopin Masterclasses.

#### **Programme Notes**

#### César Franck

Prélude, choral et fugue

The thematic material forming the basis of this work written "à Mademoiselle Marie Poitevin" is the symphonic phrase, a compound paradox of rhetorical and passive elements. In 1916 Jean-Aubry described it as 'serene anxiety'.

Characteristically, Franck used a kind of "mosaic variants of one or two germinal motifs", a technique which underlines his indebtedness to Liszt. This late work — together with the *Prélude, aria et fugue* — demonstrate this technique in its most developed and refined state.

#### Fryderyk Chopin

Impromptus No. 2 in F sharp, Op. 36 and No. 3 in G flat, Op. 51

The nationalistic Polish composer, Chopin, combined a gift for melody with an adventurous harmonic sense and an entrepreneurial understanding of formal design. These attributes, with the synergistic addition of a brilliant piano technique, led to the composition of a phenomenal amount of piano music representing the quintessence of the Romantic piano tradition.

Impromptu, a composition for a solo instrument, could – as the name suggests – imply a measure of improvisation by the composer/performer but it's more likely meaning is to describe the way in which the ideas came to the composer.

Impromptus are usually written in ternary form, in which the middle section may be of a violent nature. The similar nature of the figuration and the material used for his four celebrated impromptus suggest that he intended them to be performed as a "linked" group, each one – after the first – to be derived from its predecessor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Comprising the three of 1837 to 1849, together with Op. 66, given the prefix 'Fantasie' by its editor.

Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60

The Barcarolle - a work of Chopin's maturity and a favourite of both Brahms and Ravel is dedicated to Mme. la Baronne de Stockhausen.

The title 'boat song' gives the clue to the technique used which draws from that of singing a vocal line. The introduction resembles the Fantasie-Impromptu and a guitar-like thrumming forms the accompaniment to the very opening of the first theme.

There are some repetitions of this material before the very popular second theme evidences itself as a series of rising chords like a vocal cadence.

At Tempo I – the recapitulation – we hear even more ornamentation, and recognise phrases and rhythmic ideas already presented. The coda uses very chromatic material the ending starting pianissimo then gradually becomes faster and increases in volume which culminates with two brayura flourishes.

#### **Paul Hindemith**

Sonata No.3 in B flat

In 1930s Russia, Dmitri Shostakovich fell foul of Stalin's political views on his music – particularly the opera *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. After 1933, in Germany, Paul Hindemith suffered similarly at the hands of the Nazi Party – from Adolf Hitler in particular – over his opera *News of the Day* even though Hindemith had shown no resistance to the Nazi regime. The fact that Hindemith's wife was Jewish added to the threat both to his personal life and his music. So between 1935 and 1937 he spent a considerable time abroad firstly in Turkey and then in Italy. In 1937 the threat was such that he resigned his teaching post in Berlin and left for Switzerland the following year. He finally settled in America in 1940.

In this tense situation – his music was outlawed and he had no performing or teaching engagements – he concentrated on composition and studies in musical theory. In 1935

he began to compose a series of sonatas for almost every orchestral instrument – a project which resulted in 25 works. In every case the music "fits" the character of the solo instrument so that the sonatas become portraits of the instruments themselves, the music being generated by the unique timbre of each. This sonata comes from that period.

## Profile: Alicja Fiderkiewicz

"Alicja Fiderkiewicz ... a pianist of rare quality ... she plays with the kind of oldfashioned simplicity associated with the playing of her two great compatriots – Mieczyslaw Horszowski and Artur Rubinstein ... " – Piano Magazine

- "...masterly and beautiful music making ..." Daily Telegraph
- "... gave a performance of Grieg's Concerto in which she showed a masculine strength of attack and a feminine delicacy in the lyrical passages ..." Daily Telegraph
- "... Hindemith's 3rd Sonata was the performance of the afternoon ..." Financial Times reporting a Wigmore Hall recital

Born in Warsaw, Poland, the young Alicja Fiderkiewicz's outstanding musical talent was recognised at the tender age of three by her elder sister's piano teacher, who, upon hearing her play immediately spotted Alicja's tremendous potential. She saw in Alicja a passion for music, and recognised her perfect pitch and astonishing sense of rhythm, whereupon Alicja began studying the piano in earnest and entered Karol Szymanowski's School of Music in Warsaw at the age of seven, attending the classes of Professor Krystyna Bocianowska. Two years later, on Alicja's father being posted to Russia as the Moscow Polish Embassy's Naval Attaché, Alicja was accepted into the Central School of Music attached to the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatoire. She was taught by Professor Tatjana Kestner, who was herself a pupil of Alexander

Goldenweisser. Tatjana Kestner taught a number of prominent Russian pianists, including Andrey Gavrilow and Tatjana Shebanowa among others.

During her years in Moscow, Alicja played in front of Emil Gilels, Sviatoslav Richter, and participated in Bach masterclasses with Tatjana Nikolayeva. In addition to her diligent musical studies, Alicja found time to give recitals at the Moscow Conservatoire, as well as to perform in many parts of Russia and the Ukraine.

Upon returning to her native Poland, Alicja continued her musical education in Karol Szymanowski's Lyceum of Music under the expert guidance of Professor Wanda Losakiewicz and, notably, Professor Zbigniew Drzewiecki, who taught so many outstanding Polish and overseas Chopin Competition Prize-winners. During the subsequent four years in Warsaw, Alicja won the Polish National Bach and Beethoven Competitions. She won the Chopin Scholarship four years in succession, the success of which gave her a number of engagements throughout Poland, including the birthplace of Chopin in Zelazowa Wola, plus the famous Royal Lazienki Park and Ostrogski Palace in Warsaw. Having graduated from Warsaw with distinction and being awarded the prestigious gold medal, Alicja decided to leave her native country and continue her studies abroad. Despite being offered a place in the Julliard School of Music in New York, she chose instead to study under Professor Ryszard Bakst at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. Alicja admired his performances immensely, especially Chopin's *Mazurkas*.

Within three months of entering the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), Alicja was offered a scholarship for the rest of her five years' undergraduate and postgraduate period.

Professor Bakst, himself a student of Professor Heinrich Neihaus in Moscow and a prizewinner of the Chopin International Piano Competition, was to have vast influence on Alicja's further development especially that of developing her sound, which has been described by some critics in her Chopin recital CD as, "a sound of exquisite beauty". During her studies at the RNCM, Alicja won a number of college awards and concerto competitions. She participated in various masterclasses, including performing Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* for Professor Vlado Perlemutter and represented her college in many concert venues throughout the UK. She graduated with distinction in both performance and teaching.

Alicja has appeared with number of major orchestras, including the Hallé, Da Camera, Manchester Camerata, La Scala in Milan, Warsaw National Philharmonic, Polish Radio & TV Orchestra, and many others. She has also given recitals for BBC Radio 3 and BBC TV.

Alicja has participated in International Competitions, becoming a winner and Prize winner of Dudley International Piano Competition and Premio Dino Ciani in Milan, where her performances were given high praise by Martha Argerich and Fou Ts'ong. Additionally, she was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Music Fellowship.

Alicja has performed widely throughout Great Britain in major venues, including a number of Wigmore Hall recitals, St. John's, Smith Square, St-Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, as well as performing internationally in Israel, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Cyprus, Poland, Russia, Japan and Ukraine.

For a number of years, Alicja took some time-out from stage and regular performances, but continued her work as a member of the keyboard department at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Since returning to the stage, Alicja's performances in Japan, Cyprus, Spain and the UK have been received with great acclaim. She is a frequent faculty member and performer at the International Summer School of Music at Chetham's in Manchester, where she exercises considerable teaching skills.

She gives a number of master classes in England and internationally, for example in Japan, Cyprus and Spain. Moreover, Alicja records for Divine Art Recordings Group, with whom she has released four highly acclaimed albums.

Charitable performances and commitments to worthwhile causes form part of Miss Fiderkiewicz's career, notably Macmillan Cancer Relief, Macmillan Nurses, Cancer Research, The Heart Foundation, Eden Animal Refuge, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Save The Children: Japan Tsunami Relief, and in addition, raising funds to support various churches and historical buildings in the UK, Spain and Poland.

Miss Fiderkiewicz is represented by HH Promotions London Ltd: http://hhpromotionslondon.com/alicja-fiderkiewicz/

She can be contacted through her management agency: hhpromotionslondon@gmail.com

### Acknowledgement

The music on this album was recorded during the Fourth Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists, 2004, in the Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester, by kind permission of the Director of Music.

Cover photograph:

Budapest: The Roman site Aquincum: Peristyle house: This colonnaded courtyard stood at the centre of a house. Photograph: Jim Pattison

#### Reviews of recitals

"... quite delightful and was well worthy of the several curtain calls she received at the end of her performance. Listening to her, one could well appreciate why she is already gaining an international reputation.

Her programme reflected her international background, not the least Poland. The first half consisted entirely of Schubert's 'Sonata in B flat major, D.960'. The second part consisted of four shorter pieces. The 'Sonata, Opus 1' by Berg and, to conclude, three of Chopin's works: two Nocturnes and the 'Fantasie in F minor, Opus 49'.

The whole recital was performed by a pianist engrossed in her music."

#### **Inverness Courier**

"... masterly and beautiful music making".

#### **Daily Telegraph**

"Pianist Alicja Fiderkiewicz gave a superb recital...demonstrating all this brilliant musician's wide range of musical sympathy and expressive power."

#### **Manchester Evening News**

"...the quality of imagination is given to a rare few (pianists). It was evident throughout the whole of Miss Fiderkiewicz's recital ... (to each work played) she brought her own individuality and intensity of expression."

#### **Liverpool Daily Post**

"... Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin was a tour de force of subtle colouring and flexible – yet disciplined – rhythm."

### **Daily Telegraph**

"Her flair for communication showed throughout Mozart's Concerto K467, in the tonal beauty of the slow movement, and even more in her imaginative shaping of passage work in the outer ones."

#### Guardian

#### ALICIA FIDERKIEWICZ ON DIVERSIONS



# Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays Chopin Diversions ddy 24129

"Free-spirited to the last, she leaves a fashionably nonchalant or disengaged Chopin to others ..." —Gramophone

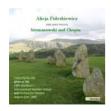
"In short she is a perceptive if sometimes willful guide to the music and has constructed a balanced recital. Fiderkiewicz proves her credentials with this recital." – MusicWeb



# Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays piano music by Schumann Diversions ddy 24158

"Alicja is in full command of her technique, enabling her to respond wonderfully to Schumann's remarkable world of intense feelings ..." – Ian Milnes

"The performance is full of drama, thrust and character." – Philip L. Scowcroft



Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays piano music by Szymanowski and Chopin

### Diversions ddv 24160

"Alicja Fiederkiewicz is an outstanding pianist ... In full command of technique, she is able to project vivid interpretations especially in music from her own Country, Poland. (Here are) lovely poetic interpretations ... a delightfully, well-contrasted recital." – MusicWeb

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