Alicja Fiderkiewicz

plays piano music by

Szymanowski and Chopin



Alicja Fiderkiewicz

a celebrity recital performed at the

Fifth Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists given in the

> Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester on Sunday, August 21st, 2005

The recital was dedicated to the memory of Alicia's sister, Elzbieta Fiderkiewicz-Mirska, who died of cancer in 2005.

	Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) Preludes, Op. 1 (1900)		
	[1]	No. 1 Andante ma non troppo	2:26
	[2]	No. 2 Andante con moto	2:53
	[3]	No. 5 Allegro molto, impetuoso	1:19
	[4]	No. 7 Moderato	2:49
	Masques, Op. 34 (1916)		
	[5]	No. 1 Shéhéherazade	9:46
	[6]	No. 2 Tantris, the clown	6:03
	[7]	No. 3 Don Juan's Serenade	5:57
	Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)		
	Nocturnes, Op. 55		
	[8]	No. 15 in F minor, Op. 55/1	5:07
	[9]	No. 16 in E flat, Op. 55/2	5:39
	[10]	Polonaise No. 4 in C sharp minor, Op. 40/2	7:14
	[11]	Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52 (1831-42)	11:1:
	[12]	Encore 1: Chopin: Etude in A flat major, 'Harp Study', Op. 25/1 (1832-36)	2:4:
	[13]	Encore 2: Szymanowski: <i>Krakowiak</i> from '4 Polish Dances', Op. 47 (1926)	1:13
Tota	Total time:		

64:18

Programme Notes

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

Karol Szymanowski is the most important Polish composer since Fryderyk Chopin. Describing Szymanowski's style to listeners unfamiliar with it is difficult... (His) music is ultimately too individual to be mistaken for that of any other composer⁽¹⁾.

Karol Szymanowski was born on October 6th, 1882 at Timashovka (Ukraine) and died of tuberculosis on March 29th, 1937, in a sanatorium in Lausanne, Switzerland. His musical education started at home and, from 1896, continued at a music school nearby at Elisavetgrad (now Kirovograd) run by his relatives the Neuhauses.

Szymanowski stands in a similar relation to Polish music as Bartók (his contemporary) does to that of Hungary and, if he is not as significant an innovator, his emotional range can be as compelling in his best works; he deserves to be far more widely appreciated ⁽²⁾.

The early preludes (1900) echo Chopin's romantic yearnings, but already Szymanowski was developing in his own direction. His involvement in the 'Young Poland' group with Karlowitz and Fitelberg merely reinforced nationalism with Wagnerian and Germanic indigestibles⁽³⁾.

In the Spring of 1914, Szymanowski visited Sicily and North Africa and his awareness of modern French and Russian music (Debussy and late Skryabin) grew, the 'exotic' subject matter helping him to shake off German influences, inaugurating his most prolific period as a composer, which included the great piano cycles *Metopes* (1915) and *Masques* (1916) among works for other instruments and voice⁽⁴⁾. There is a story-telling quality in 'Shéhérazade', fantasy and pensive mystery in 'Tantris, the clown', and hints of Debussy's 'Minstrels' in 'Don Juan's Serenade'.

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

The nationalistic Polish composer, Fryderyk 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.

The term 'nocturne' – a 19th century Romantic piano piece of a slow and dreamy nature – was invented by the Irishman John Field and the genre was taken up by Fryderyk Chopin. These two examples are from the 21 unsurpassed nocturnes written by him.

A polonaise is a Polish dance in triple time and of modest speed imbued with a strong martial spirit. Chopin wrote 13 polonaises which provided an outlet for his intensely patriotic feelings as well as his advanced pianism.

'Ballade' was the name given by Chopin to a long, dramatic type of piano piece, the musical equivalent of a poetic ballad of the heroic type. This is the fourth of the four that he composed.

References

- (1) Clarke, R. (1999) in the booklet accompanying the CD ATH CD19.
- (2) Morris, M. (1999), Twentieth Century Composers, Pimlico, London, p.303.
- (3) Lebrecht, N. (1992), The Companion to 20th Century Music, Simon & Schuster, London, p.348.
- (4) Samson, J. (2002), The Oxford Companion to Music, OUP, Oxford, pp.1237 & 1249.

Bibliography

Samson, J. (1980), The Music of Szymanowski, London.

Profile: Alicja Fiderkiewicz

- "Alicja Fiderkiewicz ... a pianist of rare quality ... she plays with the kind of old-fashioned 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 post-graduate period.

Professor Bakst, himself a student of Professor Heinrich Neihaus in Moscow and a prize-winner 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 masterclasses 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 CDs.

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 CD was recorded during the Fifth Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists, 2005, in the Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester, by kind permission of the Director of Music.

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 itself.

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 ddv 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 Franck, Chopin and Hindemith

Diversions ddv 24159

"... an outstanding release ... a pianist of rare quality ... give memorable accounts of this music. Personal but never idiosyncratic, direct but never prosaic, eloquent but never remotely sentimental ..." – Piano

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Cover: The atmospheric, enigmatic Castlerigg Stone Circle near Keswick, Cumbria, offers a breath-taking panoramic view of the surrounding fells.

Above: The Baronial Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester.

[Photographs: Jim Pattison.]

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