



This concert is presented in association with  
Chamber Music New Zealand

## **RICHARD MAPP** **piano**

### **Prelude and Fugue in C-sharp Minor, Book 1, BWV 849** **J S BACH (1685 - 1750)**

Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues have been a landmark in the keyboard repertoire for almost three centuries. In the early 1700s the tuning of the harpsichord was a matter of taste as there were several different systems of tuning in vogue. Bach preferred to tune his own harpsichord and clavichord as he didn't like other people's tunings. Generally, keys with few sharps or flats were quite in tune, and keys with more sharps or flats were quite out of tune. By writing a Prelude and Fugue in each of the 24 keys, Bach was making the point that every key should be equally in tune, albeit that no key would be perfectly in tune.

The C sharp minor Prelude is particularly expressive while the Fugue, formed from a subject of only five notes, develops into a work of majestic proportions. Czerny is recorded as having heard Beethoven perform this Prelude and Fugue and he commented in particular on the way Beethoven shaped the final section of the Fugue and brought it down to a pianissimo ending. Oh for a time machine!

### ***Catharsis* (from Five Pieces for Piano)** **KENNETH YOUNG (1955 - )**

This is the last in a set of five pieces written in 2002 for Michael Houston. The composer writes (these pieces) "represent a rather difficult time for me. I found myself at an artistic crossroads and feeling somewhat barren. However, concentrating on such an extended work helped me develop new skills that formed the basis of a new artistic and aesthetic direction."

*Catharsis* is framed at either end by a sonorous and deeply felt chorale, while the agitated middle section is characterised by strong dynamic contrasts and sudden changes of mood which call for the performer to play angrily, "molto furioso".

**Three Piano Pieces D.946**  
**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828)**

*Allegro assai*  
*Allegretto*  
*Allegro*

The final year of Schubert's life, 1828, saw an astonishing outburst of creativity which included some of his greatest works, not least the last three piano sonatas, the String Quintet in C Major ('Cello Quintet'), and the song cycle *Schwanengesang*. In the previous year the composer had had some success with his two sets of four *Impromptus*, and it is likely that these three pieces were intended to be part of a further set of four. They remained unpublished at Schubert's death, and indeed were not published until 1868 when Brahms edited them.

The first two of this set are musical club sandwiches, which is to say they are in the form ABACA, in which a theme occurs three times with contrasting music in between. The way the main theme seems to take on variations of character at each re-appearance is astonishing. The third piece is in a more simple ABA form, and is the most light-hearted of the three.

### Interval

**Nocturne in C Minor, op. 48, no. 1**  
**FREDERICK CHOPIN (1810 - 49)**

Chopin wrote 21 Nocturnes for the piano covering the period 1830 to 1846. During this time he took over the form from John Field as a simple melody and accompaniment and developed it into a complex and sophisticated work, somewhere between an aria and a fantasy-tableau.

The Nocturne heard today was written in 1841 and is undoubtedly the most powerful and dramatic of them all. It begins by evoking the world of a tragic aria by Chopin's beloved Bellini, and then develops into a virtuosic rhapsody in which the first theme is restated *agitato*, with lush chordal writing.

**Première communion de la vierge**  
**OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908 - 92)**

This work is the eleventh of the composer's great cycle of twenty meditations on aspects of the infant Jesus, the *Vingt Regards de l'enfant Jesus*. They were written in 1943 and dedicated to the pianist Yvonne Loriod, who became Messiaen's second wife.

In this *Regard* we see the Virgin Mary after the Annunciation at her first communion. The opening mood is contemplative and peaceful, but this leads to a joyous Magnificat, "with breathless enthusiasm" and what can only be an exuberant dance. Towards the end fast repeated notes in the bass depict the heartbeat of the baby in the womb. He seems to be excited by the preceding dance!

**Seven Fantasies, op. 116**  
**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 - 97)**

*Capriccio - Intermezzo - Capriccio - Intermezzo - Intermezzo - Intermezzo -  
Capriccio*

Towards the end of his life, Brahms returned to a genre with which he had begun composing, works for solo piano. But whereas the early works include three large, ambitious and at times overblown Sonatas, the sets of pieces Opus 116-119 show a distillation of the composer's musical thinking down to heartfelt melodies which explore beautiful and subtle nuances of feeling.

The Opus 116 set appeared in 1892 and were thus being written at almost the same time as my very old beloved Steinway was being created in Hamburg. The piano's warm and dark timbres suit the music to perfection.

*Programme notes by Richard Mapp, July 2018.*

**Richard Mapp** is a well-known pianist who has toured many times for Chamber Music NZ, performed with the major orchestras and appeared as Chamber Music partner with the NZ String Quartet and other leading musicians in this country. He has recorded six CDs and is frequently heard on RNZ Concert.

After study at Canterbury and Otago Universities with Maurice Till, Richard became a student of Gordon Green at the Royal Academy of Music, London, where he later held a teaching fellowship. While based in London and Italy, Richard performed widely in Europe, and gave six recitals at the Wigmore Hall and recorded for BBC Radio 3.

In 1991 he returned to NZ to live, initially in the Far North where he co-founded the Bay of Islands Arts Festival. From 2000 - 2010 he was Senior Lecturer at the Massey Conservatorium in Wellington and is now an Artist Teacher at the NZ School of Music. Richard has enjoyed deputising at the Universities of Canterbury and Waikato and is an experienced adjudicator and dedicated teacher.