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2004

Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia

Piano Concertos Nos. 2 & 3

Daniel Hill • Ayano Shimada

PROKOFIEV



SERGEI PROKOFIEV 1891-1953

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 16

[35'30]

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Andantino – Allegretto – Andantino | 11'44 |
| 2 | II. Scherzo: Vivace | 2'50 |
| 3 | III. Intermezzo: Allegro moderato | 7'48 |
| 4 | IV. Allegro tempestoso | 13'08 |

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26

[27'56]

- | | | |
|----------|---|------|
| 5 | I. Andante – Allegro | 9'23 |
| 6 | II. Tema: Andantino – Variation I: L'istesso tempo – Variation II: Allegro – Variation III: Allegro moderato (poco meno mosso) – Variation IV: Andante meditativo – Variation V: Allegro giusto – Tema: L'istesso tempo | 9'10 |
| 7 | III. Allegro ma non troppo | 9'23 |

Total Playing Time 63'30

Daniel Hill piano **1-4**
Ayano Shimada piano **5-7**
Sydney Symphony
János Fürst conductor

His fingers are steel, his wrists, steel, his biceps and triceps, steel, and scapula, steel. He is a tonal steel truss. It is for Prokofiev the mere breaking of a butterfly on a wheel to play other men's music. But the gracious butterfly of Scriabin was metamorphosed into a gigantic, prehistoric pterodactyl with horrid snout and crocodile wings, which ominously whirred as they flew over the pianist. Ah! a jabberwock it was, not a butterfly.

Critic Richard Aldrich's description in *The New York Times* of a 1920 recital by Prokofiev in some way mirrors the reception of the first performance of the composer's **Piano Concerto No. 2** (5 September 1913), where the audience was startled and scandalised. It is reported that some left, but that those who stayed remained only to hiss. The greater the hisses, the more the 22-year-old Prokofiev, maintaining his composure, bowed. And he topped it off by offering an encore.

The opening of the second concerto in some senses belies this *enfant terrible* image, its angular lyricism suggesting to Edward Downes 'a leisurely, bardic style'. The tempo increases and the emotional temperature of the movement pulsates upwards with a massive cadenza-like passage which is extended to include both development and recapitulation.

Both the second and third movements are examples of sardonic Prokofiev, though in very

different styles. The Scherzo is strongly driven yet whimsically delicate, and the Intermezzo is introduced with discreet *martellato* notes from the piano against raucous shouts of approval from the brass. Flashes of tranquillity during the Intermezzo recall, briefly, the comparative ease and coolness of the first movement.

All bravura is unleashed for the finale, which despite its contrasting sections (and particularly a long, undulating passage for the soloist) abounds in giant skips and a barnstorming cadenza, which perhaps makes Richard Aldridge's prehistoric pterodactyl visions 'with horrid snout and crocodile wings' amusingly appropriate.

Cyrus Meher-Homji

In 1918 Prokofiev decided to leave Russia. The Soviet Commissar for Education was perplexed: 'You are a revolutionary in music, we are revolutionaries in life. We ought to work together.' Prokofiev's friends were even more discouraging: 'You are running away from history, and history will never forgive you.' They predicted a difficult time for him in the United States – and they were right. Audiences in New York were disappointed. But Prokofiev had more luck in Chicago and was commissioned to write an opera – *The Love for Three Oranges*. It was during a delay in staging *Oranges* that Prokofiev moved to Europe for the summer. There, in Brittany, he brought together themes that had

been in his mind for years for a highly virtuosic piano concerto.

The first performance of **Piano Concerto No. 3** took place in Chicago on 21 December 1921, with Prokofiev as soloist. The man who had passed up the promise of a Bolshevik paradise now attracted publicity for refusing the 'generous support of American capitalism', having turned down both California Sunkist oranges and the inventor of the Florida blood orange as potential sponsors of his new opera. The public turned up in force to see the man with such a purist approach to art. Elated by the Chicago audience's response, Prokofiev performed the work five weeks later in New York, but there received a lukewarm reaction.

The work begins with a lyrical melody which is hardly given a chance to develop before the piano leaps in with its impish *allegro* theme. The dramatic contrasts in mood help to disguise the essential sonata form of this movement. The second movement is a theme, reminiscent of a Russian opera air, and five variations. The finale is fast with slow sections, maintaining the contrasts of mood and character that are such a feature of this work.

Daniel Hill

Daniel Hill was born in Melbourne in 1981, beginning piano lessons with his mother at the age of six. He has since studied at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest and at the St Petersburg Conservatory, where he has just completed his undergraduate degree with honours. His teachers include Ezsto Zsuzsa, Mira Jevtic and Nina Seryogina. He has given concerts in many Russian and European cities, and has taken part in various festivals and masterclasses.

Daniel was also Keyboard Finalist in the ABC Young Performers Awards and Winner of a Queen's Trust Scholarship for Overseas Study in 1997, as well as winner of the John Allison Piano Scholarship, Sydney, in 1999. He won Second Prize at the Chopin Competition held between students of the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1999, and Third Prize at the Artur Rubinstein in Memoriam Piano Competition, Bydgoszcz, Poland, in 2000. In 2001, he won Third Prize at the Second Tbilisi International Piano Competition, as well as the prizes for Artistic Aptitude and for Best Solo Performance. Daniel won Third Prize and the award for Best Australian Pianist at the 2004 Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia.

Ayano Shimada

Ayano Shimada was born in Kanagawa, Japan, in 1978, and has studied with Sachiko Fukuoka, Mamiko Suda, Jean-François Heisser and Aquiles Delle-Vigne. Currently she is a student at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. She has participated in a number of international piano competitions and has received several awards, including Fifth Prize at the Vianna da Motta International Music Competition, Macao in 1997, First Prize at the Jean Françaix International Piano Competition, France in 2001, and First Prize at the Trani International Piano Competition, Italy in 2003. She won Fourth Prize in the 2004 Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia, as well as Best Performance of a Virtuoso Study in Stage One.

Almost 250 applicants from 42 countries applied to take part in this year's Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia. From this number, 36 competitors were selected to participate following worldwide auditions.

The University of Sydney's Seymour Centre was home to the first four stages of the Competition, which took place from 1 to 9 July. It then moved to the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House for the Concerto concerts with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, culminating in the presentation of prizes and finalists' recitals. The 2004 Competition was presented under the auspices of the Cladan Cultural Exchange Institute of Australia, in association with the University of Sydney, and with the co-operation of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The Competition was broadcast live by ABC Classic FM throughout Australia and in New Zealand. In addition to the enthusiastic audiences who attended the live performances or listened on the radio, the ABC also broadcast the Competition live on the internet, making it available complete for the first time to audiences all over the world.

Prizes in 2004 – all of which were donated – amounted to over \$128,000, and included recording contracts. In addition, concert engagements have been arranged for

prizewinners in Korea, Germany, France, Italy and China, and others are being negotiated for England and the USA. As well as an extensive tour of 50 concerts to all the mainland states and territories of Australia by the first three prizewinners, there are plans for a return visit to Australia in 2006 by the First Prizewinner, John Chen.

This year's jury comprised Warren Thomson – Chairman (Australia), Nancy Bricard (USA), Aquiles Delle-Vigne (Argentina), Alexander Jenner (Austria), Xiang-Dong Kong (China), Piers Lane (Australia), William Lyne (UK), John O'Conor (Ireland) and Arie Vardi (Israel). Observers included Gustav Alink (The Netherlands), Marc Castelain (Belgium) and Klaus Geitel (Germany).

Performances on the CDs from this year's Competition include five of the finalists playing concertos by Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov, as well as an album of solo highlights by these and other contestants. There were so many outstanding performances this year that selecting which works to include was very difficult indeed.

The piano manufacturers Kawai, Steinway and Yamaha provided an array of fine concert grands, along with technicians to keep them in prime condition. They also generously supplied practice pianos for the competitors.

From our beginnings in 1975, when we started planning the first Competition, we can look back at almost 30 years of wonderful support from people in Australia and overseas. The combined efforts of so many people have undoubtedly placed the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia among the front ranks of piano competitions in the world today.

My sincere thanks go to the Board of the Cladan Cultural Exchange Institute of Australia, the Advisory Committees, the Friends of the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia, the NSW Ministry for the Arts, the Sydney City Council and our numerous sponsors and donors for their outstanding contributions and support.

I am confident that these discs will introduce newcomers to some outstanding music-making, as well as help members of the Competition's audience (either in the concert hall, or via live radio or internet broadcasts) relive some of their most exciting memories.

Claire Dan, AM, OBE
Life President and Founder, Sydney
International Piano Competition of Australia

Sydney Symphony

The Sydney Symphony is the nation's largest and busiest orchestra with a season of some 100 concerts in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, regular performances at the City Recital Hall, Angel Place and frequent appearances in the regional centres of New South Wales.

Established in 1932, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's greatest cities. Many of the world's finest artists have appeared with the Sydney Symphony including such legendary figures as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer, Igor Stravinsky, Lorin Maazel and Charles Dutoit.

As Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony from 1993 to 2003, Edo de Waart took the Orchestra to a new level of excellence. In 2004 the baton was passed to Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti.

Integral to the Sydney Symphony's annual program of activity is a strong commitment to music education at all levels. Under the inspiring directorship of Richard Gill, the Education Program reaches all ages and all regions of New South Wales.

With Gianluigi Gelmetti's reputation for profound musical insight and mastery of orchestra colour combined with his passionate and spontaneous performance style, the Sydney Symphony is set for an exciting new phase in its history.

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Artistic Administrator Francesco Bottone
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Recorded live on 16 July 2004 at the Sydney Opera House.

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