



Sunday 16 July 2023, 7.30pm  
St Mary's Church, Petworth

**Jeneba Kanneh-Mason (piano)**

<b>Shostakovich</b>	<b>Prelude and Fugue in D Major</b>
<b>Prokofiev</b>	<b>10 Pieces from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i></b>
interval	
<b>Beethoven</b>	<b>Piano Sonata No 7 in D Major</b>
<b>Debussy</b>	<b><i>Estampes</i></b>

**Prelude and Fugue in D major, Op. 87**

**Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)**

Assembled between October 1951 and February 1952, Shostakovich's Op. 87 Preludes and Fugues were inspired by the inaugural 1950 Bach Competition in Leipzig where he had been invited as an adjudicator. Here, he heard the talented twenty-six-year-old Russian pianist Tatiana Nikolayeva perform Bach's celebrated '48'. So impressed was he that he decided to produce his own set on his return to Moscow. He ignored J.S. Bach's rising harmonic pattern and followed the example of ascending fifths employed by Chopin for his Twenty-Four Preludes. The spirit of Bach can be discerned in both the wintry smiles of the 'Prelude' and the buoyant rhythms of the three-voice 'Fugue'.

**10 Pieces from *Romeo and Juliet* Op. 75**

**Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)**

1 Folk Dance	6 Montagues and Capulets
2 Scene (The Street Awakens)	7 Friar Laurence
3 Minuet (Arrival of the Guests)	8 Mercutio
4 Juliet as a Young Girl	9 Dance of the Girls with Lilies
5 Masks	10 Romeo and Juliet Before Parting

While Shostakovich suffered from official Soviet castigation more than once, Sergei Prokofiev was no less immune from authoritarian posturing following his return to Russia in 1935 after varied successes in America and Europe the previous decade. The orchestral score for *Romeo and Juliet* (his fifth ballet) was composed at lightning speed in a rural retreat for Bolshoi staff some 75 miles south of Moscow. Although the orchestral version was initially deemed too complex for the Bolshoi Ballet, the resulting piano version of 1937 won favour with pianists who could enjoy its richness of thematic invention.

A strong rhythmic impetus propels both the tarantella-like 'Folk Dance' and the strutting 'Scene', while the archaic 'Minuet' marks the appearance of guests at the Capulet's Ball. The impetuosity of 'Juliet as a young girl' suggests her youthful exuberance, but the mood darkens for the satirical 'Masks', its percussive manner abruptly abandoned for the swagger of the 'Montagues and Capulets'. An affable portrait of 'Friar Laurence' leads to the brilliance of 'Mercutio' and on to the sad, limping 'Dance of the Girls with Lilies'. Numbed emotions suffuse the final 'Romeo and Juliet Before Parting', the suite's longest number in which all the main love themes are incorporated within some of Prokofiev's most desolate music.

## Sonata in D, Op. 10, No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

1 Presto      2 Largo e mesto      3 Menuetto and Trio      4 Rondo

Soon after Beethoven arrived in Vienna in 1792, less than a year after Mozart's untimely death, it was as a keyboard player, rather than a composer that he drew local acclaim. Some years earlier he had made a preparatory visit to Vienna, where he had hoped to receive 'Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands'. Despite frustrations with Haydn's teaching, Beethoven dedicated the first three of his 32 piano sonatas to the older composer in 1795. A year later he began the three Op. 10 sonatas, dedicating them on their completion in 1798 to the Countess Anne Margarete von Browne. The intervening period saw a sustained development of his technique and with the third of the Op. 10 sonatas, now grander than its companions, Beethoven reveals the full power of his genius.

Cast in four movements, the first is economical in means and rich in substance, notable for its abrupt changes of dynamic, key and mood. The first four notes are used like a calling card whether heard in contra-motion or systematically repeated in the movement's coda. Drama gives way to despair for the expansive slow movement, 'Largo e mesto', where weighty emotions unfold with immense dignity. Dense textures anchor its grief-stricken melody to reach a tragic climax before subsiding in quiet acquiescence. Something of the slow movement's restraint pervades the affable 'Menuetto', its unsmiling mood lifting for the arrival of the unbuttoned 'Trio', a breath of fresh air that reminds us of the composer's impish humour. But an enigmatic manner marks the closing 'Rondo', where Beethoven teases with further abrupt mood swings, inserting expressive pauses between the opening rising note figure on which the entire movement is constructed.

## Estampes

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

1 Pagodes      2 la Soirée dans Grenade      3 Jardins sous la pluie

Between the years separating his Arabesques (1888) and the advanced language of the Études (1915), Debussy created a unique and distinctive sound-world that redefined piano technique, notably in terms of pedalling, tonal palette and harmonic vocabulary. No less distinctive is Estampes of 1903, written shortly after the successful premiere of *Péleas et Mélisande* in Paris.

Estampes is in three movements: a dream-like quality pervades 'Pagodes' – its title and harmonic language clearly inspired by Javanese gamelan music which Debussy had heard at a recent exhibition. Its main theme is built on a five-note scale and towards the end a bell-like effect emerges from the glittering textures. By contrast the rhythms of Spain colour the second movement, marked *Mouvement de Habanera*, in which chains of parallel unresolved chords and strumming guitars create a sense of nocturnal languor. The witty 'Jardins sous la pluie' is a sort of *mouvement perpétuelle*, and as far from the heat and torpor of neighbouring Spain as can be. Images of sunshine and showers are imaginatively created in Debussy's ever resourceful language.

David Truslove, 2023

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