	FOUR CIRCUS PIECES (1922) Ernest Bloch	
1	The Two "Burlingham" Brothers	2′51
2	The Clown	2′39
3	The Homeliest Woman	2′10
4	Dialogue and Dance of the Heavyweight and the Dwarf	3′02
	Claude Debussy	
5	MASQUES (1904)	4'54
6	LA CATHEDRALE ENGLOUTIE (from Preludes, Book I) (1910)	6'27
7	FEUX D'ARTIFICE (from Preludes, Book II) (1913)	4'36
	FLOX DANTIFICE (Jioin Fletaues, Book 11) (1915)	4 30
	THREE PIECES FROM "CINDERELLA" OP.95 (1942) Sergei Prokot	iev
8	Intermezzo	3′02
9	Gavotte	2'44
0	Slow Waltz	5′16
1	DER ZAUBERLEHRLING (NO.10 FROM ETUDES) (1994) GYORGY LIGETI	2'32
	THREE MOVEMENTS FROM "PETRUSHKA" (1911) Igor Stravinsky	ш
2	Russian Dance	2'43
3	In Petrushka's Cell	4'49
4	The Shrovetide Fair	8′55
		56′50



CIRCUS & MAGIC Reinis Zarins piano





FOREWORD

I am constantly surprised by the way my mind reaches perfectly rational conclusions from seemingly random and distant concepts. When Joanna MacGregor gave me a list of potential themes for her last Bath MusicFest season, the "circus" option jumped out at me. Not because I am particularly interested in this entertainment, or indeed have even seen a live show, but because of a single scene from a movie that has been immovably lodged in my head since I first saw it. In Big Fish, there is a moment where the hero enters a circus tent and catches his first glimpse of the love of his life. Time freezes, and he walks up the stage among the inanimate clowns and animals, jugglers' flying torches and rings and even popcorn suspended in mid-air, just to look into her eyes.

There and then, my mind linked the circus inextricably with the romance and the magic of fairy tales.

First, I discovered the little-known *Circus Pieces* by Bloch, which even today, 90 years after their birth, have not been published. After hearing what light-hearted fun they are, I had to have them in my programme. Similarly, Petrushka's tale and Debussy's *Masques*, if only for the title.

Fairy tales and all things magical, however, had to have equal prominence in my programme. *Cinderella* came next, having been read and acted out countless times for my daughter; then the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* (*Der Zauberlehrling*) with his uncontrollable broom, and the majority of the Debussy Preludes, especially *The Sunken Cathedral* (*La Cathédrale Engloutie*) and *Fireworks* (*Feux D'Artifice*), invoke wondrous amazement in me.

There is also a darker thought woven into the idea of circus and masquerade that challenges my heart. Ernest Bloch dedicated one of his *Circus Pieces* 'to the sad and ever-comprehending Charlie Chaplin'. Now I, for one, would not have thought of Chaplin as sad. But Bloch here reveals his insight that behind the ever-smiling mask of the clowns and of comedians hides, well, something else altogether. I hate this moment of truth, especially when my own masks must fall. I'd love to strip them all off and be myself, but who can do this without Christ?

Reinis Zarins iaa. August 2012

Ernest Bloch was born in Switzerland but settled in America during the First World War and took US citizenship in 1924. He was one of many essentially romantic composers who became torn between their natural instincts and modernist trends. His piece Schelomo for cello and orchestra is occasionally performed but there are other major works which deserve to be heard. Bloch, whose main instrument was the violin, wrote all his piano music between 1914 and 1936, including a sonata, various evocative tone-poems and some pieces for children. Bloch quickly composed the Four Circus Pieces during a relaxing period in Cleveland in the summer of 1922. They were originally written merely as an amusing diversion, but his friend Irving Broude, joint-founder of Broude Brothers, persuaded Bloch to have them published. Apparently the composer would read little commentaries during his own performances, but the pieces are so boldly characterised that words are redundant. The Two Burlingham Brothers (marked "Vivo") is based on a music-hall act which Bloch must have seen on his travels. This characterful piece incorporates many changes of mood, the grotesque preliminaries leading to a rather Bartókian main theme. Other influences evident throughout this group include Debussy and Stravinsky's piano-writing in Petrushka. The second piece ("Poco animato") is dedicated to "the sad and ever-comprehending Charlie Chaplin". Bloch was always moved by Chaplin's acting and here above all he evokes his melancholy – the underlying sadness of the clown. He sent the music to Chaplin, himself a skilful composer, but received no reply. The Homeliest Woman ("Allegro deciso") is sub-titled "L'Invitation à la valse". This large lady exercises her charms upon a gentleman and, with brief allusions to Chopin, an ungainly waltz develops. The Dialogue and Dance of the Heavyweight and the Dwarf ("Pesante molto") evokes with monstrous force the burly heavyweight, then the

tiny voice of the dwarf. This bizarre encounter, a pianistic tour de force, ends with the dwarf's contribution being drowned out by the onlookers' jubilant applause. Of the few composers who have found inspiration in the world of the circus, Stravinsky stands out. His *Circus Polka* of 1942 ("For a Young Elephant") and the second of his *Three Pieces for String Quartet* from 1914 (an uncanny portrait of the English clown Little Tich) are both inimitable in their humour and buoyancy. Bloch's character-sketches are more heavily drawn but scarcely less memorable.

Debussy's two books of *Préludes*, twelve pieces in each, date from 1909-10 and 1912-13 respectively. They amount to the most innovative and influential body of 20th-century piano music, a landmark comparable with Chopin's *Préludes*. Feux d'Artifice (marked "Modérément animé") is the final piece in Book Two. Here, in a piece which retains its contemporary feeling, Debussy miraculously conjures up a public firework display on Bastille Day in a fantastic display of inventive pianowriting. Contrasting aspects of fireworks are suggested - dazzling sprays of sparks, gyration, smoke, spluttering and the humour of unpredictability. The subdued ending includes snatches of La Marseillaise heard in the distance. Stravinsky's early orchestral piece Fireworks (1908) is much less imaginative. La Cathédrale Engloutie - marked "Profondément calme (Dans une brume doucement sonore)" - is easily the longest of the 24 Préludes. Debussy was inspired by an ancient Breton legend of a submerged cathedral off the island of Ys - sunk supposedly as a punishment for the sins of its inhabitants but allowed to temporarily rise from the sea on certain mornings at daybreak. From across the water we hear bells tolling, priests chanting and the deep pedal notes of the organ. Lalo's opera Le Roi d'Ys is loosely derived from the same legend. Masques

is an outstanding piece, oddly neglected by some of the greatest Debussy interpreters of the past. Debussy considered including *Masques* and *L'Isle Joyeuse*, both composed in 1904, in his *Suite Bergamasque* of 1890 (published 1905). Marked "Très vif et fantasque", *Masques* is inspired by the Commedia dell'arte as painted by Watteau – a blend of joy and pathos. Marguerite Long, who studied with Debussy, wrote: "I hear Masques – a tragedy for piano one might call it – as a sort of transparency of Debussy's character … He was torn with poignant feelings which he preferred to mask with irony."

Prokofiev composed his ballet music for Cinderella between 1940 and 1944 and the premiere was staged at the Bolshoi on 21st November 1945. This lavish score, among his finest works, provided him with rich pickings - three orchestral suites, an Adagio for cello and piano, and three groups of pieces for piano: Three Pieces, Opus 95; Ten Pieces, Opus 97; and Six Pieces, Opus 102. Prokofiev compiled the Opus 95 group in 1942 - even before the ballet had been completed in its definitive form. In addition to these groups, three movements out of the six comprising the Waltz Suite, Opus 110 are taken from Cinderella. The dignified Intermezzo ("Andante grazioso"), taken from the beginning of Act Two, is a dance for the guests at the ball. This is a captivating example of Prokofiev's characteristic elegance spiced with some harmonic gaucheness. The delightful Gavotte ("Allegretto") recurs several times during Act One, including the scene in which Cinderella takes a broom as her dancing partner. The languorous Slow Waltz ("Adagio"), the penultimate number in the full ballet, is played as the Prince and Cinderella dance together in an enchanted garden. Even when divorced from their orchestral colour, these pieces possess two unmistakeable qualities shared by all the great composers of ballet music: a strong tactile feeling and a sense of wonderment.

Gyorgy Ligeti's eighteen Études have become modern classics. This status is remarkable in view of the dearth of solo keyboard music among his previous works. The six studies comprising Book One date from 1985, the eight of Book Two from 1988-94, and the four of Book Three 1995-2001. Étude No.10 (Der Zauberlehrling) dates from 1994 and is named after the celebrated Goethe poem which inspired Dukas to write his symphonic poem/scherzo The Sorcerer's Apprentice. Marked "Prestissimo, staccatissimo, leggierissimo", this is a moto perpetuo study with irregular accents and a wrong-note ending. In common with several other pieces from Book Two, it shows Debussy's influence, but Ligeti was extraordinarily receptive to influences of many diverse kinds. These include the

compose two books of Études – with only six pieces in each – but found the project addictive. As Richard Steinitz has written: "... the Études make a splendidly varied sequence: breathtakingly virtuoso, tender, playful, sorrowful, ingenious, monumental in turn – or all at once." Ligeti attached the title of No.10 – and many of the others – only after completion (just as Debussy had done with his *Préludes*). It was actually Malawian music played on the balafon (a kind of xylophone) which provided Ligeti with his starting-point for this study. *Petrushka*, one of the most seminal of 20th-century works, dates from 1911. Stravinsky arranged his *Three Pieces from Petrushka* in 1921, dedicating them to Arthur Rubinstein. Earlier that year he had promised him "a sonata made of the material of Petrushka". The two men did not see eye to eye regarding the essential nature of the piano. Rubinstein had complained to Stravinsky that his

Piano Rag Music was "written for percussion rather than my kind of piano".

music of Stravinsky, Bartók, Conlon Nancarrow, gamelan, jazz, and ethnic music

ranging from sub-Saharan African to Caribbean. Ligeti originally intended to

Stravinsky annoyed Rubinstein by remarking that "the piano is nothing but a utility instrument and it sounds right only as percussion". Nevertheless Rubinstein visited Stravinsky in France to collaborate on the transcriptions – and ultimately paid him 5,000 francs for them. This was the first time the composer had worked with a virtuoso performer and the result was of such technical difficulty that it would remain the only music he wrote which proved beyond his own ability. The first piece, the vigorous Russian Dance, is taken from the music in Tableau One to which Petrushka and the other puppets dance after being brought to life. In Petrushka's Cell (from Tableau Two), was actually the first music Stravinsky composed in his original conception of a concert-piece for piano and orchestra before Diaghilev proposed the idea of a ballet. As the composer wrote apropos the original version, the puppet tries the patience of the orchestra with "diabolical cascades of arpeggios". The Shrovetide Fair, with its evocation of a teeming crowd, completes the set. Here especially one should remember Stravinsky's stated intention of writing something essentially pianistic - in no way an imitation of the sound of the orchestral score.

Philip Borg-Wheeler

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REINIS ZARINS

Reinis Zarins was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1985. At the piano since seven, Reinis has studied music and piano performance in J. Medinš and E. Darzinš music colleges (Latvia), J. Vitols Latvian Music Academy, and at the Yale University School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, London. As a student, Reinis has garnered the first class honours and a "Student of the Year" title; as a competitor, he has won top prizes in eleven international competitions, including first prizes in B. Smetana International Competition (Czech Republic), Jaques Samuel Piano Competition (UK), and "Brother and Sister" piano-duo competition in St. Petersburg (Russia). His main tutors have been Boris Berman, Christopher Elton, Raffi Kharajanyan and Rene Salaks; other formative influences are Claude Frank, Pascal Devoyon, Pierre Boulez, Peter Frankl, Richard Goode, Jesse Levine and the Tokyo and Vermeer string quartets.

In Latvia, Reinis performs regularly with all the leading orchestras and as a soloist and chamber musician. His performances are broadcast live on national radio and TV, and in 2012 he was awarded the Great Music Award. He was also chosen as the Interpreter of the Year by Latvian national radio.

As an international artist, Reinis performs on both sides of the Atlantic, and recently also in South Africa. Exhilerated audiences have heard him as a recitalist, chamber musician and soloist with orchestras in the Baltic States, the Netherlands,



United Kingdom, Germany, Ukraine, Finland, Russia, and the United States, in such venues as Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and Steinway Hall in New York, London's Wigmore Hall and St. Petersburg's Glazunov Hall. Reinis has been invited to perform at the Lucerne Festival, Bath MusicFest, Yale-Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. Norfolk and Norwich Festival (UK), MasterWorks, Kremerata Baltica festival, and Holland Music Sessions. Collaborations with P. Boulez. P. Fötvös and Ensemble Intercontemporain have strengthened Reinis' interest in the contemporary repertoire and its relationship with the classics.

Reinis Zarins is the recipient of M. Dole, M & D Whyte, E.B. Storrs, B. Simonds, G.W. Miles, Adams', H. Day and J. Burgess scholarships. He lives in London with his wife and two children.

www.reiniszarins.com