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# JAYSON GILLHAM

Thursday 2 November, 7.30pm  
Djanogly Recital Hall

## PROGRAMME

Etudes-Tableaux from Op.39

No. 1 in C minor

No. 2 in A minor

No. 6 in A minor

No. 5 in E-flat minor

**Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)**

Etudes from Op.25

No. 1 in A-flat major

No. 6 in G-sharp minor

No. 7 in C-sharp minor

No. 8 in D-flat major

No. 9 in G-flat major

No. 10 in B minor

No. 11 in A minor

No. 12 in C minor

**Fryderyk Chopin (1810-49)**

### Interval

Lilacs, Op.21 No.5

**Rachmaninov  
arr. Rachmaninov**

Vocalise, Op.34 No.14

**Rachmaninov  
arr. Zoltán Kocsis (1952-2016)**

Partita No.3 in E, for solo violin, BWV1006

Prelude

Gavotte en rondeau

Gigue

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)  
transcribed by Rachmaninov**

The Flight of the Bumblebee

**Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)  
arr. Rachmaninov**

Six Romances, Op.16

No 1: 'Lullaby'

**Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840-93)  
arr. Rachmaninov**

Liebesleid (Love's sorrow)

**Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)**  
**arr. Rachmaninov**

Scherzo, from A Midsummer Night's  
Dream

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47)**  
**arr. Rachmaninov**

Etude-Tableau in D major, Op.39 No.9

**Rachmaninov**

There is a Sennheiser Infrared enhanced hearing system in the Djanogly Recital Hall, please ask for a headset from our front-of-house staff.

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off. Photography and video of the performance are not permitted.

## **PROGRAMME NOTES**

Jayson Gillham's programme celebrates Rachmaninov the composer, the transcriber (mostly of other composers' music, plus one instance of his own), and the performer, acknowledging a composer whom he played regularly. We also hear an instance of his music being transcribed by someone else.

The programme begins and ends with a selection of Rachmaninov's Etudes-Tableaux. Rachmaninov rarely revealed any non-musical stimulus behind his music, but calling them 'Study-pictures' seems to suggest that they are both studies in playing technique and illustrative in some way. The nine pieces that make up Op 39 were his last compositions before leaving Russia in 1918. According to his biographer Oscar von Riesemann, the dark, stormy No 1 was prompted by Play of the Waves by the Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin, another of whose pictures inspired Rachmaninov's symphonic poem The Isle of the Dead. No 2 begins and ends in a kind of melancholy calm, with hints of the 'Dies Irae' chant, that so haunted Rachmaninov's imagination, in the left hand. The middle section is more restless. No 6 is a blisteringly virtuosic scherzo launched by two upward rushes from the depths of the piano. After slowing down briefly, the music accelerates into an even faster middle section. The upward rushes return to provide a blunt ending. No 5 starts in a mood of quiet agitation, building to a torrential climax before gradually subsiding. No 9, which ends tonight's programme, is not just a march but an oriental one, according to the composer's comments to Ottorino Respighi, who orchestrated four of the pieces, plus one from the earlier Op 33 set, in 1930. The opening bell-sounds return just before the quieter middle section, from which the music moves seamlessly towards its celebratory ending.

Chopin was central to Rachmaninov's repertoire as a pianist. This evening we hear eight pieces from his second set of Etudes, Op 25. In these, as in his earlier set, Op 10, Chopin achieves a remarkable balance between technical brilliance and expressive power. Op 25 No 1 is a gentle, delicate study in rippling arpeggios, which Robert Schumann compared to an

aeolian harp. In No 6, constant spinning motion in the right-hand complements an extraordinarily wide-ranging left-hand part. The change of mood and tempo in No 7 comes almost as a shock. Slow and darkly coloured, its unusual texture consists of two equally important melodic lines, in the left hand and the right, with the harmonies played in the middle of the keyboard. The playful No 8 is marked by constant, rapid motion, while No 9 combines a light, airy right-hand part over a firmly striding part for the left hand. No 10 is the only Etude, from either set, to include a contrasting middle section. After the wild, stormy opening, the gentle, lyrical central passage might almost be a totally separate piece, except that Chopin shows how they are linked, as it gradually eases into the return of the opening. No 11, which acquired the nickname 'Winter Wind', is also unique, being the only one to have a slow introduction. The melancholy unaccompanied opening theme becomes a sturdy march in the left hand when the music quickens pace, against furiously swirling figures in the right hand. No 12 ends the Op 25 set in a dark, stormy, passionate mood. The C major ending suggests not so much resolution as defiance.

Rachmaninov wrote a large number of songs, the first in 1890, the last in 1916, the year before he left Russia. His chosen authors include many of the great names in Russian literature, such as Pushkin, Tolstoy and Chekhov, as well as western poets in translation, including Goethe and Victor Hugo. His twelve songs, Op 21, date mostly from 1902. The softly shimmering 'Lilacs', one of two of his own songs he transcribed for solo piano, is one of his finest and best-known songs.

A vocalise is, literally, a song without words. Rachmaninov's, the last of his fourteen songs, Op 34, was originally for soprano and piano. It has been transcribed for a large number of different instrumental combinations, including Rachmaninov's own versions for orchestra, with, and without, voice, though he never made one for solo piano. Hungarian pianist Zoltán Kocsis was one of many to fill that particular gap.

## Transcriptions

Rachmaninov made several transcriptions of other composer's music. The majority are for solo piano, written as additions to his recital repertoire. With one exception, they all date from after he settled in the USA in 1918, when his performing commitments began eating into the time he had available for his own compositions.

JS Bach's six Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin are central to the baroque violin repertoire. Rachmaninov transcribed the Prelude from Partita No 3 early in 1933, adding two of the dance movements later the same year. He is thought to have made his version of the well-known intermezzo from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* in about 1929. Tchaikovsky made his own solo piano transcription of his song 'Lullaby' in 1873. Rachmaninov's version was his last transcription, dating from the final year of his life. His transcription of the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, dating from 1933, is remarkably successful in capturing the delicacy of Mendelssohn's orchestral scoring.

Rachmaninov and the Viennese violinist Fritz Kreisler were friends and duet partners for many years, giving joint recitals, and making celebrated recordings of violin sonatas by Beethoven, Schubert and Grieg. Kreisler transcribed for violin and piano six of Rachmaninov's pieces. Rachmaninov, for his part, made solo piano transcriptions of Kreisler's Liebesleid in 1921, and its companion-piece, Liebesfreud (Love's Joy), four years later.

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## **JAYSON GILLHAM**

Internationally praised for his compelling performances, Australian-British pianist Jayson Gillham is recognised as one of the finest pianists of his generation. After receiving numerous prizes from the leading piano competitions including the Leeds and Van Cliburn, it was Jayson's win at the 2014 Montreal International Music Competition that brought him to international attention. His outstanding performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 was praised in the Canadian press as being played 'with absorbing and relentless elegance.'

In May 2015 Jayson signed a recording contract with ABC Classic. His debut recital album featuring works by Bach, Schubert and Chopin was released in October 2016 and immediately reached the No.1 spot in both the Core Classical and Classical Crossover ARIA charts. This first release was soon followed by highly acclaimed live recording of Beethoven Piano Concerto No 4 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy. Jayson's next CD album recorded in 2017 of works by Medtner and Rachmaninoff with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Benjamin Northey received unanimous praise and was Recording of the Month at the Limelight Magazine. His solo album Romantic Bach, featuring original works and virtuoso piano transcriptions, was released internationally in January 2019. The most recent live recording of the complete Beethoven Concerti with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Nicholas Carter received international recognition and was hailed by the Gramophone Magazine among "uncovered gems of Beethoven Piano Concertos releases".

Highlights of Jayson Gillham's orchestral engagements include concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Alexander Shelley, Bournemouth Symphony with Victor Aviat, Sydney Symphony with Vladimir Ashkenazy at Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Symphony and Joshua Weilerstein, Adelaide Symphony with the late Sir Jeffrey Tate, West Australian Symphony with Asher Fisch, Auckland Philharmonic with Giordano Bellincampi, Christchurch Symphony with Benjamin Northey as well as the London Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Nashville Symphony and Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal.

In recital, Jayson Gillham appeared at some of the world's most prestigious venues including the Wigmore Hall, Birmingham Town Hall, Saffron Hall, St Martin in the Fields, Royal Nottingham Concert Hall, Barbican as well as Louvre Auditorium, Montreal Pollack

Hall, Steinway Hall New York, Sydney City Recital Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. His festival highlights include performances at the Verbier Festival, Edinburgh Fringe, Brighton Festival and Two Moors Festival among others.

Chamber music forms an important part of Jayson Gillham's career. He collaborated with the Jerusalem, Carducci, Brentano, Ruysdael, Flinders String Quartets and the innovative Manchester Collective. Jayson toured Australia with the renowned Australian soprano Nicole Car and baritone Etienne Dupuis with concerts in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane.

Recent and future engagements include a return to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Adelaide, Tasmanian, Queensland and Melbourne symphony orchestras, debuts with the KwaZulu Natal, Johannesburg and Cape Town philharmonic orchestras, the CBSO in Birmingham and solo recitals at Hay Music, St Martin in the Fields, Lakeside Arts University of Nottingham and Oxford Piano Festival.