

Benjamin Frith & Heidi Rolfe

Friday May 24th

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Palmers Hall, Ludlow College

John Field

Duet on a Favourite Russian Air

Brahms

3 Hungarian Dances from Book 4

Debussy

Pour l'Égyptienne from Épigraphe Antiques

Rimsky-Korsakov

Scheherazade Op. 35

Programme shown may be changed without notice



Benjamin Frith began taking piano lessons with Dame Fanny Waterman at the age of ten and embarked on his career by winning the Dudley National Concerto Competition, aged fourteen. Many engagements with world renowned orchestras followed, such as the Halle and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

A debut recording of the Diabelli Variations (ASV) led to an ongoing Naxos collaboration for whom he made a best-selling John Field Concerto Cycle with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, recently reissued with the complete Nocturnes and Sonatas. His solo recording of Schumann's highly personal Davidsbündler op. 6 received the top recommendation on Radio Three's programme, "CD Review".

During the latter half of his career Benjamin has concentrated on the chamber repertoire as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio. He has also formed the enterprising Frith Piano Quartet

Heidi Rolfe spent time riding racehorses before returning to her musical studies, Graduating with a Masters degree in Piano Performance.

Her varied repertoire includes works by female composers and much contemporary music; an interest in combining music and drama has led to award-winning performances, broadcast by the BBC.

For many years, Heidi has enjoyed exploring the wonderful piano duo repertoire with her husband, Benjamin Frith, in recitals throughout the UK.

In addition to teaching at Sheffield University, Heidi is a Main Panel Examiner for ABRSM, a composer of many educational works and counts amongst her pupils competition prize-winners who have gone on to enjoy a musical career.

Concert information

Programme notes

John Field (1782 – 1837) was an Irish pianist, composer, and teacher who spent most of his adult life in Russia. Not to have heard Field play his own compositions was described as 'a sin against good taste'. *Duet on a Favourite Russian Air* is based on a Russian folk song.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) completed a collection of 21 lively *Hungarian Dances* for piano duet, based on folk melodies and rhythms from Hungary and neighbouring regions.

Pour l'Égyptienne is the fifth piece in the collection of six piano pieces called *Épigraphes Antiques* by **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**. The title means "For the Egyptian woman" and it is inspired by an ancient Greek poem that praises the beauty and grace of an Egyptian dancer and reflects Debussy's fascination with non-Western cultures.

Nikola Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) wrote *Scheherazade Op. 35* as a symphonic suite based on the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights*. He adapted the orchestral work for piano duet in 1889, and it has since become a popular choice for pianists who want to explore the rich and colourful musical themes of the original. The four movements depict different episodes from the tales of Scheherazade, the clever heroine who saves her life by telling stories to the sultan every night. The piano duet version preserves the expressive melodies, the exotic harmonies, and the dramatic contrasts of the orchestral score, while also showcasing the virtuosity and coordination of the two performers.

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