

Concert information

Peter Donohoe plays Chopin

Thursday May 22nd

7.30 pm

St Laurence's Church, Ludlow

Grieg

Ballade in G minor Op 24

Chopin

24 Preludes Op 28

Interval

Busoni

Variations on a theme of Chopin Op 22

Chopin

Barcarolle Op 60

Two Nocturnes Op 62

Polonaise-Fantasia Op 61

Programme shown may be changed without notice



Peter Donohoe, (born in Manchester in 1953) studied at Chetham's School of Music, Leeds University, and the Royal Northern College of Music, followed by studies in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod.

Widely regarded as one of the foremost pianists of today, he is known for his versatility and technical command. Donohoe has performed with all the major London orchestras as well as several other renowned orchestras worldwide, including the Royal Concertgebouw, Berliner Philharmoniker, Dresden Philharmonic and the Belarusian State Symphony Orchestra. He has toured the UK with the Russian State Philharmonic and performed in South America, Europe, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Russia, and the USA.

As a sought-after jury member, Peter Donohoe has served on international competition panels, including the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow (2011 and 2015), and the Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2022).

Donohoe's most recent discs include Taneyev & Schumann: Piano Quintets with Signum, Granados & Albeniz (Chandos), and a selection of waltzes by Ravel, Schumann, Debussy & Chopin (SOMM). Other recordings include six volumes of Mozart Piano Sonatas (SOMM), Haydn Keyboard Works, Volume 1 (Signum) and 'Busoni: Elegies and Toccata' (Chandos), which was nominated for a BBC Music Magazine Award. He made his 22nd appearance at the BBC Proms in 2012.

The 23/24 season kicked off with Peter performing with the London Symphony Orchestra and Simon Rattle with four performances of Messiaen's Turangalîla-Symphonie in London, Edinburgh, and Bucharest. Highlights of the 2024/25 season include performances with the Symphony Orchestra of India, George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra in Bucharest and Vox Ama Deus in Philadelphia, US.

Programme notes

Ballade in G minor, Op. 24 Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

This powerful and emotional set of variations on a Norwegian folk song reflects Grieg's deep connection to his Norwegian heritage. The Ballade is known for its dramatic contrasts, ranging from tender passages to intense, virtuosic sections.

Grieg described it as having been 'written with my life's blood in days of sorrow and despair' after the death of his parents - a period of depression also linked to problems in his marriage.

The 24 Preludes, Op 28 Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Written in a variety of musical styles and moods, Chopin's preludes are considered to be some of the most important and influential works in the piano repertoire. They are renowned for their technical demands, lyrical beauty, and emotional depth. Some of the preludes - such as the famous "Raindrop" - are instantly recognisable.

Overall, Chopin's 24 Preludes, provide a fascinating glimpse into the mind of one of the greatest composers of all time.

Variations on a Theme of Chopin, Op. 22 Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)

Busoni was an Italian composer, pianist, conductor, editor, and teacher. He was a child prodigy, performing and composing from a very young age.

His "Variations" is based on Chopin's Prelude in C minor (which was also used by Barry Manilow as the basis for 'Could it Be Magic' !)

Some variations are lyrical and expressive, while others are virtuosic and demanding but the work is structured to maintain a cohesive flow.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Barcarolle in F-sharp major, Op. 60

Often considered one of the finest examples of Chopin's mature style, the Barcarolle is modelled on the traditional Venetian gondolier songs characterised by a rocking rhythm which imitates the motion of a boat on the water.

Two Nocturnes Op 62

Chopin wrote 21 nocturnes for solo piano between 1827 and 1846. They are generally considered among the finest short solo works for the instrument.

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A flat major Op 61

Chopin's last extended work, (written three years before his death) is an exploratory, original work in which the distinctive rhythm of the polonaise is present in the opening theme but elsewhere it is often absent altogether. The fantasy' part of the title suggests a feeling of improvisation.