



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

CONCERT SERIES

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

Unanimously described as one of the leading pianists of his generation, his career spans six decades during which he has given more than 4,000 performances. Always a favourite, John Lill needs no further introduction to our concert series audience.

"Watching a true master at work is an inspirational experience," wrote Philip Dukes, referring to Lill's last performance here in 2014. "And this concert was a master class in consummate artistry both in a technical and musical capacity."

The recital will feature the **Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major (Op.82) by Sergei Prokofiev**; the first of three sonatas for solo piano composed during the war years. Work began on the piece in 1939, but was set aside to complete a separate commission, *Zdravitsa*, a cantata, in recognition of Stalin's 60th birthday.

The sonata begins with a somewhat discordant temperament, described by one observer as an expression of electric fury alternating with flowing lyricism.

Also on the programme is **Kinder-szenen "Scenes from Childhood" (Op.15) by Robert Schumann**. It is a collection of 13 miniatures which, among other works, the composer completed in the Spring of 1838. This was during a period of separation from his fiancée, Clara Wieck, who was on tour as a pianist.

In March of that year, Schumann wrote to Clara: "... You once said to me that I often seemed like a child, and I suddenly got inspired and knocked off around 30 quaint little pieces. I selected several and titled them *Kinderszenen*.

"You will enjoy them, though you will need to forget that you are a virtuoso when you play them."

Kinderszenen reflects the universal

memories of childhood viewed from a nostalgic adult perspective.

The picturesque subtitles were an after-thought, Schumann once claimed - subtle suggestions to influence the performer.

We will also hear John Lill perform the **Polonaise in F-sharp minor (Op.44) by Frédéric Chopin**. Dedicated to Princess



An Eclectic Mix of Energy and Calm

Ludmilla de Beauveau, a prominent figure of the Polish community in mid 19th century Paris, the piece is often referred to as the *tragic polonaise*.

Though titled a *polonaise*, it is actually a composite work in *ternary* form with a central *mazurka*. A ternary is a three part musical form in which the first part repeats after the second (as an A-B-A sequence). The origins of *mazurka* is from a Polish folk dance, heavily accented and played in a fast tempo.

It was completed towards the end of August, 1841. Writing at the time, to his friend Jules Fontana, the multi-talented Polish composer and pianist, lawyer and publicist, Chopin confesses:

"The weather here (in Nohant, Indre, France) has been exceedingly lovely for several days, but as for my music, it is ugly."

While in separate correspondence to

Mechetti, his Viennese publisher, he writes:

"I have a manuscript for your disposal. It is a kind of fantasy in polonaise form. But I call it a *Polonaise*."

Make a date with us for Sunday, 7th October, at 7:30pm, and judge for yourself! ■

Review:

**BBC Big Band
Sunday, 16th September 2018
Memorial Hall**

This past year has been a significant event in the life of the Memorial Hall and the Concert Series was thrilled to return to its regular home following the hall's spectacular £6.5m refurbishment.

Audiences are now greeted by a fresh, new, sophisticated and state of the art interior, which in the process of its renovation has not lost any of the Memorial Hall's elegance and charm. To herald the new season it was important to make a splash, and what better way than to invite the legendary BBC Big Band with conductor, Barry Forgie and Elaine Delmar as soloist. In short, it was sensational and the near capacity audience was treated to some astonishingly virtuosic and expert ensemble playing, which was utterly thrilling.

The acoustics have been very much at the forefront of the hall's refurbishment and with carefully managed amplification applied to an absolute minimum, the natural resonance of the hall coped admirably with the complex, and at times significant, volume of sound.

With further major performances in the pipeline, such as the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in November (for broadcast on BBC Radio 3), this was precious knowledge gained, and the coming season will continue to teach us a huge amount concerning the versatility and capability of the new acoustics. The BBC Big Band will live long in the memory – truly world class musicians performing in a truly world class venue.

Philip Dukes (Artistic Director)