

Jinker Ride

pieces from Australia and Europe including JINKER RIDE and NOCTURNE by Dorian Le Gallienne

MURRAY SHARP *piano*



The Pianoforte

While the organ has been justly called “the king of instruments”, with its orchestra-like attributes, the piano is by far the most popular musical instrument with performers and listeners alike. Its repertory is immense, spanning the centuries from the early 18th century to the present and supplemented by the earlier harpsichord and clavicord music of the baroque era, much of which is quite adaptable to the piano, plus the many transcriptions from the orchestra and other repertoires, albeit of variable effectiveness.

The pianoforte, or “fortepiano” (“loud and soft”) as it was then called, arose from a natural desire for a more expressive keyboard instrument that could produce accents, gradations of volume, etc., which the organ and harpsichord lacked, for all their other excellent attributes, yet had always been available to strings and wind instruments, and of course the human voice. (The clavicord also had this facility, but was not sufficiently assertive to be played before large gatherings.)

The piano and the harpsichord existed together for almost a century to about 1800, before the piano came into its own. The alternative of piano and harpsichord was often specified by composers.

The piano as we know it is a far cry from the early fortepiano which served the music of Mozart and his contemporaries admirably, and much pleasure has been gained from the recent revival of that instrument in the performance and recording of early piano music.

In those days of less specialisation, many eminent performers and composers like Clementi, Kalkbrenner and Pleyel were also piano manufacturers, and their combined artistic and technical skills undoubtedly contributed much to the piano’s development as a distinctive keyboard instrument with its unique characteristics.

The modern piano dates from Beethoven, with his demands made on that instrument as the medium of so much of his musical expression, particularly in his late piano sonatas. How inadequate the piano of that time must have been to cope with such utterances!

But this was the early 19th century, the dawn of the new technological age, when knowledge and techniques began to proliferate at an ever increasing rate – a process which continues today. We were also at the start of the new “Romantic” era with its rich interchange of ideas between poets, authors, painters, and musicians.

While romanticism had never been entirely absent, music now received a

new impetus, an emancipation from the predominantly “pure” form of the classical sonata to a greater freedom of poetical expression in descriptive “characteristic” pieces, nocturnes, ballades, rhapsodies etc. The “intermezzo”, “study”, and “prelude” took on new meanings.

That great trio of composers for the piano, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt, were well aware of its potential sonorities, and enthusiastically set about developing and exploiting them to the full. The use of the sustaining pedal became more and more important and refined, with Debussy later creating an entirely new piano technique and sound with its help. The pianist/composer Anton Rubinstein called the pedal “the soul of the piano”.

The large-scale public recitals initiated by Franz Liszt coincided with the piano’s evolution into the instrument very much as it is today. The advanced construction of the iron frame by Steinway of New York in 1855 is a landmark, followed by Steinway’s first grand piano in 1856.

Here then is a musical collection in celebration of this glorious instrument, expressly written for and the fully exploiting the resources of the modern pianoforte.

Giacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

1 **SOUVENIR FOR MY WIFE**

After writing his 36th opera "William Tell", Rossini "officially retired" (at age 37!). For the rest of his long life, no more operas. But he did leave us a charming collection of instrumental works, songs and piano pieces, which he called "sins of my old age".

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

2 **SONATA IN D MAJOR, K29**

The late flowering of Scarlatti's genius is one of the glories of musical history. After half a lifetime of unremarkable composition, Scarlatti took up residence in Portugal and Spain as a Court musician, producing over 500 sonatas for the instruction and enjoyment of Princess Maria Barbara of Portugal (later Queen of Spain) which have far outlived the extravagant court festivities and opera productions of lesser composers, showing a highly individual style and technical innovation more Spanish than Italian.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832)

3 **SONATA IN B flat Op. 47: No. 2**

Allegro con brio

(cadenza by Murray Sharp)

Andante, quasi allegretto

Rondo - allegro assai

Clementi's long life began before Mozart and extended beyond Beethoven, who greatly admired his sonatas and learned much from them. A many-sided man, Clementi began concert giving as a child prodigy at 14. He was a great teacher and later in life a

publisher and piano manufacturer, in which he proved himself an astute businessman as well as a great artist.

He is regarded as the first composer of genuine piano music, exploiting the characteristics of that instrument uninfluenced by the still popular harpsichord.

Dorian Le Gallienne (1915-1963)

4 **JINKER RIDE**

5 **NOCTURNE**

The early death of Dorian Le Gallienne in 1963 at the age of 48 robbed Australia of one of her leading composers. Although more conservative than some, his music displays sound melodic construction and fine craftsmanship.

A jinker is a small horse drawn two wheel cart, or sulky. The jolting rhythm of this little piece captures most effectively the spirit of the Australian bush, where these vehicles were used in earlier days. The reflective mood of the *Nocturne* provides a contrast to the lively *Jinker Ride*.

Raymond Hanson (1913-1976)

SIX PRELUDES, OP. 11

6 *The little forest creatures stirring at daybreak*

7 *Lonely distant mountains, sentinels of time*

8 *Ancient granite hills*

9 *The deep dark river*

10 *A tempest*

11 *Sunset after the rain*

Born in Sydney in 1913, Raymond Hanson's ancestry dates back to the early Australian free settlers arriving in 1792. It is ironic that his compositions of the 1940s were

considered too radical to be popular, which is difficult to believe when we hear this music now. In fact he was later criticised for being too conservative! He simply suffered the fate of many a composer who has failed to keep exactly in step with the times.

These six preludes, written in 1940-41 during a visit to the Burragorang valley in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales (Aust.) admirably depict the grandeur and ruggedness of the Australian scene as well as its contrasting softness and delicacy.

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)

12 **IDYLL**

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

13 **PASTOURELLE**

14 **TOCCATA**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

15 **DUETTO**

16 **SPINNING SONG**

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

17 **THE LOVER AND THE NIGHINGALE**

(from *Goyescos*)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

18 **GONDOLIERA**

19 **SONETTO 104 DEL PETRARCA**

20 **CANZONETTA DEL SALVATOR ROSA**

(from *Years of Travel*)

Murray Sharp

Since graduating as a performer from Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music, Murray Sharp has worked as a freelance artist.

He has travelled extensively overseas, giving many solo recitals, broadcasts and television performances in various Asian countries. He has given a recital at the prestigious Australian High Commission in Singapore and represented Australia at the request of the Australian Government at two international concerts in Malaysia. One of these in Kuala Lumpur was performed in the presence of the Malaysian king and queen. When performing overseas Murray Sharp likes to introduce some Australian works on his programs.

In Australia he has given many solo recitals for cultural organisations, music societies, art galleries, etc. as well as numerous chamber music performances with leading string and woodwind players.



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