

CAMERON ROBERTS

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR PIANO



C A M E R O N R O B E R T S - P I A N O



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1-3 VIVALDI – Summer (from The Four Seasons)

Allegro non molto, Adagio-Presto, Presto 11'36

4-6 RACHMANINOFF – How Beautiful it is Here!

The Morn of Life, Sleep 8'43

7 GERSHWIN – Rhapsody in Blue 15'03

8 BACH – Largo, ma non tanto

(from Concerto for Two Violins) 6'55

9 TCHAIKOVSKY – 1812 Festival Overture 17'00

10 FAURE – In Paradisum (from Requiem) 3'58

Total playing time 63'00

Transcribed and performed by:

Cameron Roberts, Piano

Original transcriptions for piano by Cameron Roberts

Vivaldi (1678-1741) wrote more than 500 concertos for various solo instruments and orchestra. The Four Seasons were published in a set of twelve for violin and string orchestra in 1725 under the title, *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (the combination of form and fantasy). Each Season is prefaced with a sonnet which Vivaldi puts to music both literally and metaphorically. Summer is characterised by languid heat, bird songs, shepherd's fears and threatening winds (1st movement); fear and buzzing insects (2nd movement); and violent storms (3rd movement). The transcription for piano is deliberately colouristic and dramatic, exploiting a vast range of piano sonorities.

Rachmaninoff's (1873-1943) music is noted for its heart-felt lyricism and sumptuous harmonies. His melody writing is particularly memorable for its sense of longing, natural development, and expansive contours; and although

Rachmaninoff's fame comes from his more well-known piano works, some of his finest music is written for voice and piano. Rachmaninoff himself transcribed several of his songs for solo piano and in these new transcriptions, like Rachmaninoff's, the original piano part is often maintained, changing only to give clarity to the voice parts or for textural support.

Gershwin (1898-1937) premiered his Rhapsody in Blue in New York in 1924 with himself at the piano and with Whiteman's 23 piece jazz-band accompanying. The Rhapsody was an immediate success with the public, celebrated for its catchy tunes, addictive rhythms and ability to fuse elements of American-African Jazz with Western Art styles. Since its creation the Rhapsody has been rearranged in various ways with various ensembles and although it has been revised here for solo piano, Gershwin's highly idiosyncratic piano solos found in the Rhapsody are preserved.

Bach (1685-1750) composed his Concerto for 2 Violins and String

Orchestra in Leipzig in 1730. The second movement, *Largo ma non tanto* (broadly, but not too much) is a fine example of Symbolism in Baroque art, namely here the depiction of love by the weaving and intertwining of the two violin melodies. In this version for piano the form of the work is unchanged, though the registers of the melodies and accompanying figures are constantly varied and the sonorities expanded with the additional use of the sustain pedal.

Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was commissioned in 1880 to compose music for the 25th anniversary of the coronation of Alexander the Second of Russia. His 'Festival Overture for the year 1812', as it is correctly titled, refers to the battle of Napoleon's army against the Russians in the year 1812. The work is highly programmatic and uses musical themes which relate to both sides: a Russian orthodox hymn 'God save thy people', battle scenes, fragments of *La Marseillaise*, Russian folk tunes and later 'God save the Tsar'. The work is also scored for bells and canons, making

it a spectacular *tour-de-force* in its arranged form for piano solo.

Faure (1845-1924) composed his *Requiem* for choir, organ and orchestra between the years 1887 and 1890, and reworked his final version again in 1900. Unlike the heavy and highly dramatic Requiems of other 19th Century composers, Faure's *Requiem* is one of restraint and peace. The final movement *In Paradisum* reflects well what Faure himself remarked about the work: death as happy deliverance - an aspiration towards happiness above.

Cameron Roberts 2009

Cameron Roberts

Australia-born pianist Cameron Roberts is recognised as an artist of great distinction and originality. He performs in Australia, England and Spain as soloist and chamber musician whilst gaining growing success as a composer and arranger. Completing studies in both music and medicine at The University of Melbourne, he furthered his musical training at the Australian National Academy, the Tanglewood Institute, USA, and privately at the Moscow Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music and Royal Academy, London.

His debut CD recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations and Original Transcriptions* (MOVE Records, 2006) is praised as 'thought-provoking' and 'a disc of rare and valuable insight', and has been used in the Australian film, *Lucky Miles* (2007). His performing repertoire also includes other original transcriptions and major works such as *Iberia* by Albeniz, and The 24 Preludes by Rachmaninoff.

In his home country he won first prizes in The Mozart Concerto Competition (Melbourne

University, 1997), The Grainger Competition (Melbourne, 1998), and was finalist in the National Piano Award (2004). He has performed as soloist in London, Madrid, York, Gante, Bangkok, Singapore, Sydney and Melbourne, in ensembles in The Royal Albert Hall, London, The Konzerthgebauw, Netherlands, and The Sydney Opera House, and he has collaborated with such conductors as Lawrence Foster and John Hopkins, performing concertos by Brahms and Rachmaninoff, amongst others. He maintains a strong interest in contemporary music, jazz and composition, and with the recent support of the Ian Potter Trust and the Michael Kieran Harvey Piano Scholarship, is currently writing works for solo piano, chamber ensemble and a book on 'Piano Technique Optimisation'.

www.cameronroberts.com.au

Other recordings by Cameron Roberts:

Bach: The Goldberg Variations and other Original Transcriptions – Move Records (2006) MCD 309

Transcriptions for solo piano by Cameron Roberts

VIVALDI

Summer (from The Four Seasons, Op. 8, No. 2)

- 1 i. Allegro non molto 6'08
- 2 ii. Adagio-Presto 2'34
- 3 iii. Presto 2'48

RACHMANINOFF

- 4 How Beautiful it is Here! (Op.21, No.7) 2'16
- 5 The Morn of Life (Op.34, No.10) 1'47
- 6 Sleep (Op.38, No.5) 4'20

GERSHWIN

- 7 Rhapsody in Blue 14'57

BACH

- 8 Largo, ma non tanto (from Concerto for Two Violins, BWV 1043) 6'49

TCHAIKOVSKY

- 9 1812 Festival Overture 16'57

FAURE

- 10 In Paradisum (from Requiem) 3'58

Cameron Roberts – Piano

Recorded in Move Records studio, 27 and 29 November 2008

Recording and editing: Martin Wright and Vaughan McAlley

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