

ANAM RECITAL: TIMOTHY O'MALLEY (PIANO)

Overexposure: too many pictures!

WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 11AM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918) <i>Études</i> , L. 136 (1915)	8'
v. <i>Étude 5 pour les octaves</i>	
viii. <i>Étude 8 pour les agréments</i>	
György LIGETI (1923-2006) <i>Études</i> , Book I (1985)	4'
v. <i>Arc-en-ciel</i>	
LIGETI <i>Études</i> , Book II (1988-94)	3'
iv. <i>Der Zauberlehrling</i>	
Modest MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881) <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> (1874)	33'
<i>Promenade</i>	
i. <i>The Gnome</i>	
<i>Promenade</i>	
ii. <i>The Old Castle</i>	
<i>Promenade</i>	
iii. <i>Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Games)</i>	
iv. <i>Cattle</i>	
<i>Promenade</i>	
v. <i>Ballet of Unhatched Chicks</i>	
vi. <i>Samuel Goldenberg & Schmuyle</i>	
<i>Promenade</i>	
vii. <i>Limoges, the Market</i>	
viii. <i>Catacombs</i>	
ix. <i>Baba Yaga, the Hut on Hen's Legs</i>	
x. <i>The Bogatyr Gates ('The Great Gates of Kiev')</i>	

Timothy O'Malley (VIC) piano

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

Tim is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Min Jiang, Jeanne McMullin, Elizabeth Nye, Mary Oliver, Marie Rowland, Anonymous.

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PIANORAMA

The cross-pollination of ideas between different forms of expression has existed for as long as humans have been capable of them; from art to music, music to poetry, and of course poetry back to art in one big happy continuous windmill of interdisciplinarianism. And the works I am presenting today are just a small collection that show off this web of inspiration: they are my little exhibit of music that bears the thumbprint of other artforms.

Born out of a strong friendship with artist and architect Viktor Hartmann, **Modest Mussorgsky's** piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* was written after Hartmann's sudden death in 1873 at the age of 39. A retrospective exhibit of Hartmann's sketches and architectural drawings was held at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St Petersburg in 1874. After attending, Mussorgsky was inspired to capture the exhibition's impression as a musical tribute to his friend and produced *Pictures*. The work is in ten movements, each based on a different picture of Hartmann's, with short connecting 'Promenades' representing the viewer walking from one picture to another. According to a letter Mussorgsky sent, the strident character of these promenades is a reflection of his own robust physique as he walked through the gallery.

The fifth movement references a surviving costume design sketch by Hartmann depicting dancers dressed as large eggs. The whimsical flourishes and sprightly rhythm conjure the costumed dancers hopping around the stage in gleeful chaos. The eighth movement comes from a painting of Hartmann's that portrays a visit to the Roman Catacombs in Paris. The eerie atmosphere is captured in the music by slow tolling dissonant chords. The following promenade ('Of the dead...') preserves the same character, and of the constant right hand tremolo Mussorgsky writes: "the skulls begin to softly glow." The final movement is based on an architectural drawing of the Bogatyr Gates or "Hero's Gate," which Hartmann submitted to a design competition for new commemorative gates in Kyiv. Unfortunately, the competition was cancelled, but the majesty of the drawing is brought to life by Mussorgsky with the evocation of peeling bells and serious choruses singing in plagal harmony. In this closing movement, there are echoes of the raw grandeur and huge scale of Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov*, which left a lasting impression on a young tutor working for Russian arts patroness Nadezhda von Meck.

This young tutor was none other than **Claude Debussy**. His twelve etudes are works from later in his career, representing a modernisation of the concert etude genre as pioneered by Chopin. *Pour les octaves* is a joyous waltz with humorous flair, attributed to the legacy of Chabrier. Its many unexpected twists and turns mislead the listener before a forceful ending. *Pour les agréments*, or ornaments, exhibits much more of Debussy's symbolist rhetoric as in the poetry of Baudelaire. It strives for a strange and effusive character that evades description. If I were to ascribe pictures for these etudes, they would be symbolist painter Odilon Redon's *Ophelia* or *The Eye like a Weird Balloon*.

György Ligeti's etudes are a subsequent update to Debussy's reenvisioning of the genre. His obsessions with the optical trickery of M. C. Escher and the fractal art of mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot finds its way into his music. Much like Escher's impossible cube, the harmony of *Arc-en-ciel* ('Rainbow') seems to defy logic with long chains of sideways modulations. *Der Zauberlehrling* ('The Sorcerer's Apprentice') seems to conjure a thread of magic. It buzzes around the keyboard in mischief before ending in a petulant "ker-splat". The gradual transformation of ideas in this etude, despite its quick notes, is akin to the *Metamorphoses* of Escher, where the hard-line geometry gives way to an overall sense of fluidity.

I hope my little exhibition, or *pianorama*, displays some of the wide range of art that makes its way into the notes we love.

Words by Timothy O'Malley