



A Charity (HMRC)

PASSION, PRELUDES, and PIANOS

AN ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTED AT HOUGHTON HALL AT 4.00 PM ON NOVEMBER 14TH 2015, TELLING THE STORY OF CHOPIN AND GEORGE SAND'S VISIT TO MAJORCA IN 1838; PERFORMED WITH BOTH NARRATIVE AND MUSIC, AND ON A PLEYEL PIANO WHICH AT ONE TIME BELONGED TO THE GREAT PIANIST, ALFRED CORTOT.

ARTISTS: ROSE CHOLMONDELEY, PIANO & CHARLES GRANT, NARRATOR.



PROGRAMME

FREE with ticket

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Polonaise in A Op.40 No.1

Prelude in C minor Op.28 No.20

Mazurka in E minor Op.41 No.2

Preludes from Op.28:

No.1 in C; No.2 in A minor; No.3 in G; No.4 in E minor; No.5 in D; No.6 in B minor.

Polonaise in C minor Op.40 No.2

INTERVAL

Prelude in Db ('Raindrop') from Op.28

Preludes from Op.28:

No.21 in Bb; No.22 in G minor; No.23 in F; No.24 in D minor.

Ballade in F Op. 38

Scherzo in C# minor Op.39

FRYDERYK CHOPIN (1810-1849) AND GEORGE SAND (1804-1876):

In November 1838 Chopin and George Sand, and her two children, Maurice and Solange, travelled to Majorca so as to seek a warmer climate. Chopin was unwell, as was Maurice, but instead of balmy and healing weather they found inhospitality coupled with bitter north winds and prolonged rain. They all left Majorca in February 1839, travelling to Barcelona, and then Marseille, where they remained until Chopin was well enough to travel to George Sand's estate of Nohant where they spent the summer. Despite the problems they had, the visit to Majorca was highly productive for both of them. For some of the visit Chopin and Sand stayed in the former Carthusian monastery, the Charterhouse of Valldemossa.

George Sand was six years older than Chopin, and a highly regarded French writer, who also had a very colourful private life. Born Amantine-Lucille-Aurore Dupin, her father, a descendent of the Maréchal de Saxe, died when she was 4. Her mother, a bird-seller's daughter, was sent packing by the grandmother, Mme. Dupin, who brought George up. Upon her grandmother's death George, aged 16, inherited the estate of Nohant and other property and at 18 married Casimir Dudevant. In 1831 Sand left her husband and took her two young children, aged 3 (Solange) and 8 (Maurice) with her. In 1835 she obtained a legal separation and from then on led a bohemian life with many lovers.

However, she longed for a more regular way of life for the sake of her children. It is likely that it was Liszt who suggested Chopin to her as a possible partner. The young Polish genius was very much her type, small, pale and in need of looking after.

The very correct Chopin did not care for Sand when she first met her in 1836 in the flat of Liszt's mistress, Marie d'Agoult. He was initially repelled by her cigar smoking and occasional male attire. He was also unofficially engaged at the time to a fellow Pole, Maria Wodzinska. When this fell through at the end of 1837 his attitude to Sand began to change.



THE PLEYEL PIANO:

The Pleyel Concert Grand that is being played tonight, has a distinguished history. Its present owner is Lt Colonel Dato Paul Supramaniam, who has graciously loaned the piano to Houghton Hall, following a complete restoration by Fergus Hoey, who is based in Reepham, Norfolk.

The Pleyel was built in 1913, a very excellent period in the Pleyel factory, but was then caught up in the onset of World War I. It remained in the factory, and fortunately the master craftsman who had started the work on the piano survived, and in 1919 was able to finish it off. It eventually became the 'house' piano for Pleyel, used for concerts at the Salle Pleyel, which is where it was first played by Cortot. This was in the early 1920's. By all accounts Cortot then became the owner of the piano, and used it frequently, both in Paris and in London.

Cortot (1877-1962) was a marvellous Swiss-French pianist who is generally regarded as one of the greatest musicians of the 20th century. He is justly celebrated for his Chopin, and his personal and subjective style. He made at least three recordings of the Op. 28 preludes, and many of his recordings are still in print, and have been remastered and re-issued on major record labels.



Cortot at the Abbey Wood studios while recording the Chopin Preludes.

THE ARTISTS:

Rose Cholmondeley, Piano:



Rose Cholmondeley first studied piano at the Royal College of Music with Phyllis Sellick; and then later with Angus Morrison, Louis Kentner, and Sulamita Aronovsky, in London; and also Constantin Schmaeling in Paris. She has given recitals in the Purcell Room and at the Wigmore Hall, and at the Polish Embassy, Polish Institute, French Institute and Leighton House. She has toured India, and given recitals in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany.

Rose's interest in the life and music of Chopin often takes her to Poland, and she has given recitals there at Chopin's birthplace in Zelazowa Wola, and at the Ostrogski Castle, home to the Chopin Museum in Warsaw. She has also played at the Sandomierz Festival and at the prestigious Antonin Chopin Festival. Rose has also performed the Chopin F minor piano concerto in Krakow with the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra under Jerzy Maksymiuk.

In 2010, the bicentenary of Chopin's birth, Rose performed for the Chopin Society in London; at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw; and on the Chopin Pleyel of 1847 at Hatchlands Park. In the autumn of 2010 she also gave concerts in the USA with Charles Grant reading Chopin's letters. The English Speaking Union presented Rose Cholmondeley and Charles Grant in Chicago; Memphis; New Orleans; and Orlando.

More recently, Rose opened the Malpas Festival in Cheshire; performed at a Chopin Festival in Tunbridge wells, and has given recitals in the Conservatoire Rachmaninoff in Paris, and the Biblioteka Slaska in Katowice. She has also performed at the Polish Embassy in London, and in Westminster Cathedral Hall, as well as at the Nohant Festival in France,

and at Valldemossa, Majorca. The last was a concert given to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Chopin and George Sand's visit.

Rose Cholmondeley is President of the Chopin Society UK, and is a Steinway artist. In 1999 the President of the Republic of Poland awarded her the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit, and in 2011 she was awarded the Gold 'Gloria Artis' medal, received from the Polish Minister of Culture. Rose is also a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, and a Freeman of the City of London.

Charles Grant, Narrator:



Charles Grant trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and has appeared in the theatre in a wide variety of plays and musicals ranging from Restoration comedy, through Noel Coward to Andrew Lloyd Webber. He has also done a great deal of radio work and has made many recordings.

Charles is a Trustee of Iris Theatre, and is the Concert Director at the 'Actors Church' St Paul's Covent Garden.

With Rose Cholmondeley he has appeared in *Le Bestiaire I and II*, their recitals of classical animal music – and the 'Chopin's visit to Britain' series of lecture recitals, which they have performed at the Edinburgh Fringe, Guildford, King's Lynn and Broxbourne Festival; at the Whitney, Finchcocks Piano Museum and Hatchlands Park: in Chester, Cheshire; Guernsey and Yorkshire.

Parting Word:

As 2015 draws to a close so once again we present our final concert at Houghton Hall, at the invitation of Lord Cholmondeley. We are grateful for his continued interest in Norfolk Concerts.

In 2016 we hope to present Agnes Langer, violin, who goes from strength to strength, and Amelie Huang, violin, who some may remember from the Scott violin concerto concert in Binham. They will be accompanied by their pianist, Giacomo Battarino.

Wishing everyone the Season's Greetings,

Best Wishes to All,

Douglas Gowan, CEO Norfolk Concerts.

October 26th 2015. (c) Norfolk Concerts.

www.norfolkconcerts.org

Tel: 01603 810298.

Mobile and texts: 07761303120.