



# **Imogen Cooper in Recital**

INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS PIANO SERVICES Monday 21 August, 7pm







#### CLASSICAL



Beethoven & Bruckner Simone Young Conducts **BEETHOVEN** Piano Concerto No.2 **BRUCKNER** Symphony No.5 Simone Young conductor Imogen Cooper piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 17 Aug. 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series

Fri 18 Aug, 8pm

Great Classics

Sat 19 Aug, 2pm Sydney Opera House

International Pianists in Recital

Mon 21 Aug, 7pm City Recital Hall



## Imogen Cooper in Recital

BEETHOVEN 7 Bagatelles, Op.33 HAYDN Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20 BEETHOVEN Variations on 'La stessa, la stessissima' ADÈS Darknesse Visible BEETHOVEN Sonata in A flat, Op.110

#### **New World Memories**

Robertson conducts Dvořák 9 MENDELSSOHN The Hebrides MACKEY Mnemosyne's Pool Australian Premiere DVOŘÁK Symphony No.9, New World David Robertson conductor

APT Master Series

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SSO Fellows **ROTA** Nonet BERIO Seguenza V for solo trombone EISLER Septet No.2, Circus POULENC The Misunderstood Gendarme: Suite 2017 Fellows • Roger Benedict artistic director Sat 26 Aug. 6pm Utzon Room



The 'Rach 2' ADAMS The Chairman Dances RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.2 PROKOFIEV Symphony No.5 David Robertson conductor George Li piano

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Fri 1 Sep. 8pm Special Event

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#### Dear Music Lovers,

It is our great pleasure to present the SSO's International Pianists in Recital series for another year. It's a special series in any concert diary, and we hope you will be inspired, enchanted and transported by the level of piano mastery presented on stage this year.

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I am constantly astounded by the beauty that can emerge from a piano in the hands of a great pianist. I look forward to sharing this experience with you and congratulate the Sydney Symphony Orchestra once again for bringing together such fine, inspirational artists.

Ara Vartoukian OAM
Director, Theme & Variations
Piano Services
Concert Technician



## INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS



Chief Conductor and Artistic Director



## **IMOGEN COOPER IN RECITAL**

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Seven Bagatelles, Op.33

- Andante grazioso quasi allegretto (E flat major)
- 2. Scherzo (C major)
- 3. Allegretto (F major)
- 4. Andante (A major)
- 5. Allegro ma non troppo (C major)
- 6. Allegretto quasi andante (D major)
- 7. Presto (A flat major)

## JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809) Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20

Allegro moderato Andante con moto Finale (Allegro)

INTERVAL

#### **BEETHOVEN**

Ten Variations on 'La stessa, la stessissima' from Salieri's opera Falstaff

THOMAS ADÈS (born 1971)

Darknesse Visible (after John Dowland)

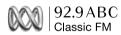
#### **BEETHOVEN**

Sonata No.31 in A flat major, Op.110

Moderato cantabile molto espressivo Allegro molto Adagio ma non troppo – Fuga (Allegro ma non troppo)

PRESENTING PARTNER





This recital will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Sunday 27 August at noon.

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett at 6.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room. Visit sydneysymphony.com/talk-bios

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Estimated durations: 20 minutes, 25 minutes, 20-minute interval, 9 minutes, 7 minutes, 18 minutes The recital will conclude at

approximately 8.55pm.

for speaker biographies.





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## THE ARTIST



Imogen Cooper

Regarded as one of the finest interpreters of Classical and Romantic repertoire, Imogen Cooper is renowned for her virtuosity and lyricism. Current season highlights include concertos with the Berlin Philharmonic (Simon Rattle) and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Thomas Dausgaard). She will also perform lieder recitals with Mark Padmore, and solo recitals at Wigmore Hall in London, focussing on Haydn and Beethoven.

Imogen Cooper has appeared with the New York Philharmonic; the Philadelphia, Cleveland, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Budapest Festival and Royal Concertaebouw orchestras: Boston Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, and the NHK and London symphony orchestras. She has also toured with Camerata Salzburg, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She has played at the BBC Proms and performed with all the major British orchestras, including close relationships with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Britten Sinfonia, directing from the keyboard. Her recital appearances have included Tokyo, Hong Kong, New York, Singapore, Paris, Vienna, Prague and the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg.

As a supporter of new music, she has premiered two works at the Cheltenham International Festival, including *Traced Overhead* by Thomas Adès, and in 1996, with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, she premiered *Voices for Angels*, a piano quintet by Brett Dean.

As a chamber musician, she performs regularly with Henning Kraggerud and Adrian Brendel, and as a lieder recitalist, she has enjoyed a long collaboration with Wolfgang Holzmair. Her discography includes Mozart concertos, a solo recital recorded at Wigmore Hall, and solo works by Schubert, as well as music by Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Robert and Clara Schumann.

Imogen Cooper received a CBE in the 2007 Queen's New Year Honours and in 2008 an award from the Royal Philharmonic Society. She is also an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and in 1999 she was made a Doctor of Music at Exeter University. She was the Humanitas Visiting Professor in Classical Music and Music Education at Oxford University for 2012–13. The Imogen Cooper Music Trust was founded in 2015, to support young pianists at the cusp of their careers, and give them time in an environment of peace and beauty.

Imogen Cooper's most recent recital for the SSO was an all-Schubert program in 2009. Last week she performed Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.2 with the SSO and Simone Young.

Imogen Cooper's performances for the SSO are generously supported by Tony Strachan.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

## Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Seven Bagatelles, Op.33

- 1. Andante grazioso quasi allegretto (E flat major)
- 2. Scherzo (C major)
- 3. Allegretto (F major)
- 4. Andante (A major)
- 5. Allegro ma non troppo (C major)
- 6. Allegretto quasi andante (D major)
- 7. Presto (A flat major)

Of all the music Beethoven composed for solo piano, one of the very best-known pieces – more famous even than, say, the *Moonlight* Sonata – is *Für Elise*. Where is the piano student who has not attempted at least its opening bars? More often than not, the reaction from the piano teacher is one of mild dismay. This is trifling music, after all, literally a bagatelle.

And yet it would be wrong to dismiss Beethoven's bagatelles – or *Kleinigkeiten* (little things) – as mere trifles. As with his piano sonatas and variations, his output of bagatelles follows him through his career and reflects his developing style. The first published set (0p.33), was compiled in 1802, making it roughly contemporaneous with his sonatas 0pp. 26–28 and 31, as well as his Second Symphony and Third Piano Concerto. Another set (0p.119) was assembled in 1822, about a year after he composed tonight's sonata, and his final and most challenging set of bagatelles (0p.126) was composed in 1824, following the premiere of his Ninth Symphony. (In addition there are several without opus number, unpublished during Beethoven's lifetime.)

Beethoven had inherited the title from the French. It first turns up in François Couperin's harpsichord music, where it's used for a rondeau, *Les Bagatelles* (1717). But in Beethoven's hands, the bagatelle became a genre: a perfectly observed miniature, charged with meaning despite its brevity.

On the surface, Beethoven's bagatelles seem light and inconsequential. Indeed, the Op.119 set was returned by one publisher with the admonishment that such minor and deliberately populist pieces were beneath the dignity of an artist of Beethoven's stature. (When they were published, the preface stressed their underlying seriousness and artistic value.) But the Op.33 set displays a far-ranging imagination that is to be expected given the innovations of Beethoven's sonatas from the period – for example, the marrying of sonata and fantasia in the Moonlight Sonata, Op.27 No.2.

The Op.33 bagatelles are remarkable not only for their economy but for the sheer diversity of character they display. The set was



assembled, and revised, from existing pieces, at least some of which may date from his years in Bonn. Unsurprisingly, a variety of forms are represented, including rondo form with its recurring theme, scherzo and trio, and simple three-part forms. Similarly, the keys are seemingly random – Beethoven's vision for a cycle of *Kleinigkeiten* will emerge later with 0p.126. Instead, the organising force is one of contrast and variety.

The first bagatelle (*Andante grazioso quasi allegretto*) is a lively and graceful rondo with fleeting, improvisatory runs. A shift to E flat minor brings sweetness rather than drama. The second offers an early example of a Beethoven *scherzo*: its playfulness evident in the offbeat rhythms, dramatic accents and rhetorical silences. Again there's a shift to the minor, this time with a grumbling bass. The trio section arrives with scales in thirds before a return to the opening material with an even quirkier treatment of its syncopated rhythms.

The F major bagatelle (Allegretto) and the following Andante restore a feeling of elegance and grace. These could be 'songs without words' and the Andante, in particular, delights with its quietly lyrical character and the unusual texture of its central section.

The fifth bagatelle (*Allegro ma non troppo*) returns to the key and the comic spirit of the earlier *Scherzo*. It scoots around the keyboard like a pinball machine or, less anachronistically, the game of billiards known as bagatelle. Towards the end, Beethoven writes out a kind of accelerating drumroll as a prelude to the dashing conclusion.

With the D major bagatelle (Allegretto quasi andante)
Beethoven offers an additional instruction for the performer:
'Con una certa espressione parlante' (with a certain speaking expression). Without losing anything of the set's intimate character, there is now a dramatic element and heightened eloquence.

The final bagatelle is marked *Presto* (as fast as possible) and returns to the scherzo-like mood of the second and fifth bagatelles. It's also an early example, in miniature, of Beethoven's expanded symphonic scherzo structure in which the trio is heard twice, between three appearances of the scherzo. Virtuosity combines with eccentric, unexpected gestures to bring the set to a close in a kind of grand private joke.

YVONNE FRINDLE
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2017

...in Beethoven's hands, the bagatelle became a genre: a perfectly observed miniature...

## Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20

Allegro moderato Andante con moto Finale (Allegro)

In 1771 Haydn used the title 'sonata' for the first time. His earlier keyboard works had been labelled 'partita' or 'divertimento'. Now, with music that was more ambitious in scope, the balance tipped from the diverting to the profound.

Among the distinctive aspects of the sonata was the key: C minor. Only eight of Haydn's 62 keyboard sonatas are in 'unnatural', minor keys, and none other adopts this particular key, associated with tender, languishing emotions and 'fit to express grand misadventures'. This sets the scene for heightened emotional expression in the same vein as Haydn's Sturm und Drang (storm and stress) symphonies of the period.

In 1780 Haydn made his first collaboration with the publisher Artaria. The C minor sonata from 1771 formed part of that set – Six Sonatas 'Opus 30' – which helped to establish Haydn as a celebrated composer for the keyboard. The set was dedicated to the Auenbrugger sisters, Katharina and Marianna – supremely gifted daughters of a leading physician. (The dedication was the publisher's idea, not Haydn's, although he subsequently said he wished he'd thought of it himself.) Leopold Mozart had praised both women as 'thoroughly musical', and in 1796 Katharina was described as 'one of the foremost artists on the fortepiano, which she plays not only with accomplishment but also with taste'. Haydn himself wrote to Artaria: 'their manner of playing and their genuine insight into music matches that of the great masters.'

When Haydn sent the C minor sonata to Artaria he described it as 'the longest and the most difficult'. It is remarkable for its intellectual sophistication as well as its rhetorical power, and its inclusion, writes Geoffrey Lancaster, 'reflects not only the reputation of the Auenbrugger sisters, but also the esteem in which Haydn held the two women'.

Haydn was closely involved in the preparation of the sonata for publication, and among the changes he made to the autograph was the addition of detailed instructions for loud and soft playing. Although the set was published as being suitable for harpsichord or the newly popular fortepiano, Haydn is clearly moving towards an overtly pianistic style, while also revealing the influence of the North German clavichord tradition, with its intensity of expression and fondness for capricious gestures. Early in the first movement, for example, Haydn marks



Detail from an engraved portrait of Haydn by Johann Ernst Mansfeld, published in Vienna in 1781.

quick alternations between soft and loud, with the loud notes on the offbeat.

The first movement begins with a sighing motif in keeping with the 'lamenting' choice of key, and by setting it in parallel thirds and sixths, Haydn imparts a singing sweetness to the sound. Elsewhere the music becomes more speech-like and declamatory, or it will shift into an eccentric fantasia style, but it never loses its air of poignancy. At the climax, Haydn marks his loudest dynamic (fortissimo) and builds a wash of sound with powerful rippling arpeggios.

Charles Rosen described the second movement as 'a still centre for the storm of the two outer movements'. At first the 'walking' accompaniment underpins ornate and flowing melodic lines, then it becomes the point of stability for written-out rubato in which the right hand plays always behind the beat. Towards the end, in a gesture that is both aurally and visually striking, the right hand mounts to what would have been the very top note of the fortepiano keyboard, while the left hand makes an inexorable descent, creating a gap of nearly four octaves.

In the turbulent finale, Haydn again exploits the geography of the fortepiano, sending the left hand between the extremes of the keyboard while the right plays relentless semiquavers. The textures may seem clear and delicate, and the rhythms may have their origins in the minuet, but there is a fiery intensity and violence to this impassioned movement.

Given its dramatic character and wealth of musical ideas, it's no surprise the C minor sonata was one of the earliest Haydn sonatas to establish itself in the repertoire; today it is among the most frequently recorded, keeping company with the late English sonatas. For Haydn it represented a stylistic breakthrough in his keyboard writing, although it was some years before he again wrote anything quite as challenging. And it's no exaggeration to say that this pivotal work assured the sonata its ultimate place as the principal genre of the piano recital.

YVONNE FRINDLE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2017

## The Haydn Piano Sonatas

As a complete set, Havdn's kevboard sonatas exhibit a startlingly broad range of forms and styles: in some ways they impress us more than Mozart's in their desire for experimentation and harmonic daring. And yet, in the rich field of Classical keyboard literature, the sonatas of Havdn have often been curiously neglected in favour of those of Mozart and, of course, Beethoven, Certainly this was very much the case in the latter half of the 19th century and well into the 20th. The first serious edition of the sonatas was published by Breitkopf & Härtel iust after World War I, when 52 sonatas appeared in chronological order. This edition, by Karl Päsler, was adopted by Hoboken in his thematic catalogue of Haydn's works, in which form the sonatas were listed in Group XVI and have since become better known. Subsequent research has resulted in other scholarly editions, notably the Wiener Urtext Ausgabe, edited by Christa Landon and issued by Universal Edition, and the G. Henle Verlag, edited by George Feder. These editions contain additional sonatas (including formerly unknown youthful works) and fragments, with a revised chronological order. Tonight's sonata, for example, is numbered 33 in the Landon edition.

#### **Beethoven**

## Ten Variations on 'La stessa, la stessissima' from Salieri's opera *Falstaff*

If you make the mistake of sending identical love letters to two clever women, there's a very good chance they will compare notes and discover – 'La stessa, la stessissima, infino ad una virgola' – that they are the same, word for word, to the last comma! (And their revenge, when it takes shape, could be as humiliating as it is imaginative.) From this letter scene in Salieri's Falstaff, based on Shakespeare, came an amusing duettino, one of the genuine hits of the opera.

Whatever myths might have emerged around the name Antonio Salieri (Pushkin, Rimsky-Korsakov... Shaffer, Forman...), he was a musical force to be reckoned with in 18th-century Vienna and he was justly famous for his operas. According to one contemporary, Salieri could 'bind all the power of German music to the sweet Italian style'. He had settled in Vienna as a teenager, composed his first opera in 1770 at the age of 20, and was soon enjoying success, not least because of his astute understanding of the theatre. He composed more than 40 operas and Singspiels, of which Falstaff, from 1799, was one of the last.

The 29-year-old Beethoven – himself an adopted Viennese – immediately turned the Act I duettino into a set of variations, dedicated to his student Countess Babette von Keglevics. The original theme features a distinctive but simple chord progression that lends itself to variation form, and its charming, speech-like melody, heard in the opera with flippant interjections from the oboe, already suggests possibilities for counterpoint.

As with his other early variation sets (all of them unpublished), Beethoven focuses on melodic variation and decoration, while exploiting the characteristic rhythms of the theme. Setting off with rising chromatic scales in the first variation – right hand then left – he hints that these will not be 'easy' variations, and the sheer variety of invention provides some idea of Beethoven's prowess as an improvising pianist. Listen in particular for the eloquent shift into the minor key with the songlike Variation 5. The set concludes with an extended variation in the form of a rustic waltz 'alla Austriaca' and a miniature cadenza for a final, witty show of virtuosity. 'We should be irate,' declare Mrs Ford and Mrs Slender, 'but 'tis better to laugh!'

YVONNE FRINDLE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2017



An early portrait of Beethoven from 1800.

# Thomas Adès (born 1971) Darknesse Visible (after John Dowland)

Imogen Cooper first heard of Thomas Adès (pronounced AH-diss) at a concert in London when the then 21-year-old composer played a selection of contemporary piano pieces, including one of his own: *Still Sorrowing*. 'I was immensely struck,' she writes, 'not only by his pianism and sense of performance but also by his fertile imagination in creating genuinely original sounds for the modern concert grand piano – no mean achievement.'

At that point, Adès had yet to write his early orchestral works *These Premises are Alarmed* (1996) or *Asyla*, which won him the Grawemeyer Award in 2000, but he was already drawing attention. He'd won a prize in the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition and the BBC Philharmonic had performed his Chamber Symphony while he was a student at Cambridge.

The title – and aching mood – of *Still Sorrowing* alluded to a punning title of English lutenist John Dowland: 'Semper Dowland semper dolens' (Always Dowland, always sorrowful). Composed at around the same time as *Still Sorrowing*, in 1992, *Darknesse Visible* draws even more directly on Dowland.

As Adès describes it, *Darknesse Visible* is 'an explosion' of the song 'In darknesse let me dwell'. 'No notes have been added,' he writes, 'indeed, some have been removed. Patterns latent in the original have been isolated and regrouped, with the aim of illuminating the song from within, as if during the course of the performance.

The tempo is Assai lento (very slow). This is an explosion that happens in slow motion as Dowland's melody is stretched out, suspended and caressed in a distinctive piano sound that combines bell-like tones ringing out over soft, fluttering tremolandos on single notes.

In darknesse let mee dwell,
the ground shall sorry be,
The roofe Dispaire to barre
all cheerfull light from mee,
The wals of marble blacke
that moistned still shall weepe,
My musicke, hellish, jarring sounds
to banish friendly sleepe.
Thus wedded to my woes,
and bedded to my Tombe,
O let me living die,

till death doe come.

YVONNE FRINDLE, SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2017

Read more about the composer: thomasades.com/bio



Thomas Adès

## John Dowland (1563-1626)

A lutenist, singer and composer who lived and worked during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, John Dowland is most famous for his deliciously gloomy lute songs (or ayres), with titles such as 'Go Cristall teares', 'Come again', 'I saw my Lady weepe' and 'Flow my teares'. 'In darknesse let me dwell' comes from A Musicall Banquet (1611).

Dowland's music enjoyed an enthusiastic revival with the rise of the early music movement in the 1950s, but even before then Australian composer Percy Grainger had arranged one of his pieces. In 1963 Benjamin Britten used one of Dowland's songs as the basis for a 'Nocturnal' for guitar. More recently, in 2006, Sting released an album of Dowland's music, Songs from the Labyrinth, including the song on which tonight's piece is based.

## Beethoven Sonata No.31 in A flat, Op.110

Moderato cantabile molto espressivo Allegro molto

Adagio ma non troppo – Fuga (Allegro ma non troppo)

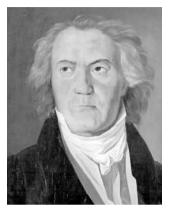
This sonata (begun during the summer of 1821 and published in early 1822) seems at odds with the popular image of Beethoven. While generally known to be irascible, and increasingly so in his later years, Beethoven in this work reveals little of the angst and capriciousness for which he was famed. Perhaps poor health (much of 1821 was lost to illness) created a sense of mortality and a need for a re-appraisal of his affairs. At times it is as if this often subtle sonata exhibits an attempt to ameliorate his outward lack of grace through genial composition.

What is evident, however, is Beethoven's interest in technical and musical disciplines, as well as his continuing development of the sonata away from a four-movement fast – slow – fast – fast structure. Thus, instead of a rondo finale we encounter an old-fashioned 'scholarly' fugue appended to a slow introduction in a way that brings to mind the prelude-and-fugue pairings of Bach. It is well documented that Beethoven often used preludes and fugues of J.S. Bach as a teaching guide, and the elaborate weavings of the fugal form played an increasingly important role in the compositions of the last decade of his life, as if, having mastered the Classical style, he was now attempting the role of master contrapuntalist.

The beginning of the sonata is almost understated – gentle and lyrical in a way that suggests a Mozart aria. From the very first phrase, the development of the theme seems related more to emotional intensity than physical or formal brilliance, though the latter two are also in evidence.

The brief scherzo-like second movement is distinctive in its use of contrasting dynamics, unexpected slackening of the tempo and measured silence. It sets out with a foursquare theme (in duple rather than triple time) but is driven by syncopated rhythms in the bass and glittering quavers in the right hand. An emphatic coda enters with dramatic chords demanding notice; just as suddenly, a tranquil arpeggiated figure brings the dance to a serene close.

The third movement is harmonically and emotionally complex. Its first section is characterised by recitative – the piano 'speaking' over a variety of chords, some strikingly distant from the sonata's tonal domain. The melancholy theme that follows, *Arioso dolente*, is remarkable in its resemblance to the Bach aria 'Es ist vollbracht' (It is fulfilled) from the *John Passion*.



Portrait of Beethoven by Ferdinand Waldmüller (1823)

The guiet segue into the fugue finale comes as something of a surprise. The fugue as a genre is an epitome of strictness, its techniques include inversion, augmentation, diminution and stretto (in which multiple entries of the theme follow in close succession). Beethoven had once said that making a fugue is 'not art' - he'd made dozens as a student - but the introduction of a poetic element into this academic form was where true artistry was to be found. In this sonata, certainly, he achieved poetry, setting out with a fugue theme that is derived from the beautiful opening melody of the first movement. Beethoven interrupts the flow of the exercise with a variation of the earlier doleful melody but the energy of the fugue will not be denied and it returns (with the theme now inverted) after a series of ponderous chords. Almost as if giving a series of stage directions, Beethoven adds continual subtle changes in tempo and expression as the movement builds to its triumphant climax.

Whether this sonata gives us a new insight into Beethoven 'the man' is debatable but, in musical terms, it consolidates the role that his late piano sonatas play in extending sonata form as a vehicle for musical and emotional expression.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY DAVID VIVIAN RUSSELL SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2000

'To make a fugue is not art: I made dozens of them during my student days. But imagination, too, claims its right, and today another, really poetic element must be introduced into the old traditional form.'
BEETHOVEN



David Robertson

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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17

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