

Beethoven – pianist, prophet and dreamer

Reiko Fujisawa tours the UK throughout 2020 with a unique celebration of Beethoven at the piano, 250 years after his birth in the German city of Bonn.

In an evening of words and music, Reiko introduces audiences to the many sides of a man who still embodies our idea of an artist: who they are, what they do and how they speak to us. Two centuries on from the peak of his career in Vienna, Beethoven the man is still viewed as a rebel, outsider, victim and hero.

First and foremost, Beethoven communicated through the piano. He worked, he taught and he thought at the piano. Deafness darkened and narrowed his world while he was still in his early 30s but in his music we still hear him laughing and loving. Diaries, letters and reminiscences bring to life Beethoven quarrelling with publishers, promoting his cause with patrons and piano-makers and joking with friends and pupils.

One of those pupils was Carl Czerny, familiar to every student of the piano through his studies and exercises. Czerny himself taught Liszt, the Romantic pianist/composer who changed piano-playing for ever and created the culture of the modern virtuoso. Liszt's son-in-law was Richard Wagner, who saw himself as Beethoven's true heir. All these composers and others are featured in Reiko Fujisawa's concert, allowing audiences to hear Beethoven as his successors heard him.

At the climax of the concert, Reiko plays a complete performance of the Piano Sonata Op.110, where we encounter Beethoven stretching the boundaries of musical time and motion within the space of 20 minutes. Long renowned as a specialist in Beethoven and the Romantic repertoire, she recorded the 'Waldstein' Sonata as the centrepiece of her 2012 album on Quartz Records, eliciting critical praise such as this review on theartsdesk.com: 'Fujisawa's boundless energy and lightness of touch provoke grins, and the clarity which she brings to Beethoven's occasionally murky left hand writing is remarkable.' her newly devised anniversary evening will offer a unique and enlightening perspective on one of the world's cultural icons.

Repertoire

Beethoven - 32 Variations in C minor WoO 80

Clementi - Sonata in B flat op 24 no. 2 (1st movement)

Czerny - Etude no. 12 in D minor op.740

Schubert - Impromptu no. 3 in G flat D.899

Liszt - Etude d'Execution Transcendante no. 10

INTERVAL

Beethoven - Bagatelle in A minor no. 25 (Für Elise)

Beethoven - Sonata in A flat op.110

Wagner arr. Liszt - Isolde's Liebestod

ENCORE

Schubert arr. Liszt – Gretchen am Spinnrade