

BIOGRAPHY

Johan de Cock was born in 1975 in Namibia. He studied Classical Piano Performing with Catharina Struthers and Harpsichord/Organ with Boudewijn Scholten at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa from 1994 - 1996. He made his concerto debut at the City Hall in Cape Town in 1996, playing Liszt's *Totentanz* with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Géhrard Korsten. Johan moved to the UK in October 2000.

His own compositions have been recorded by the *Afrimusiék* record label in South Africa, and his music has also been featured on the British television series, *Free Spirit*, broadcast on Channel 4 and iTV. In 2005 he was commissioned by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace to compose a new Christmas work, *Stargazing*, for Soprano, Piano, Electronics and Video. It was premiered on 13 December 2005, and excerpts were also broadcast on BBC London Radio.

He has performed at UK venues including Chichester Cathedral and the Brighton Fringe Festival in Sussex, and in London at St-Sepulchre-without-Newgate, St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, St Martin-within-Ludgate, Steinway Hall, the Burgh House and Hampstead Museum, Pizza on the Park, the London Arena, the Richmond Concert Society, Bartok in Camden (where he held a three-year residency), the Battersea Barge, the Soho Actors' Centre, and the Leytonstone Festival.

Johan currently lives in Saltdean, Brighton in East Sussex with his wife and their cat. He teaches piano and music theory from his home studio, and also composes, makes audio recordings, and organises a variety of music concerts and events.

FUTURE CONCERTS IN SUSSEX

Sunday, 23 November 2014, 4:00pm
A Christmas Piano Recital
The Under Ground Theatre, Eastbourne
1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TL
Tickets: £10 / £8
www.undergroundtheatre.co.uk

Saturday, 20 December 2014, 4:00pm
A Christmas Piano Recital
Brighton Friends' Meeting House
Ship Street, Brighton, BN1 1AF
Tickets: £10 / £8
www.brightonquakers.co.uk

Saturdays, 16, 23 & 30 May 2015, 4:00pm
Brighton Fringe Festival
Bossa Tango - Music from South America
Brighton Friends' Meeting House
Ship Street, Brighton, BN1 1AF
www.brightonfringe.org

For more information, up-to-date concert listings and ticket sales, please see
www.johandecock.com

Brighton Unitarian Church

New Road, Brighton, BN1 1UF
Friday, 17 October 2014, 12:30pm



Music by Mendelssohn, Liszt and De Cock

PROGRAMME

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886)

- Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este I: Thrénodie, from *Années de pèlerinage - Troisième année*, S.163 [1877]

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

- Venetianisches Gondellied, from *Lieder ohne Worte*, Op.30 No.6 [1835]
- Gondellied in A major, U.136 [1837]
- Venetianisches Gondellied, from *Lieder ohne Worte*, Op.62 No.5 [1841]

Franz Liszt

- Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este II: Thrénodie, from *Années de pèlerinage - Troisième année*, S.163 [1877]

Felix Mendelssohn

6 *Kinderstücke*, Op.72 [1842]

- Allegro non troppo
- Andante sostenuto
- Allegretto
- Andante con moto
- Allegro assai
- Vivace

Franz Liszt

From *Weihnachtsbaum*, S.186 [1874 - 1876]

- No.7 - Schlummerlied (Slumber Song)
- No.11 - Ungarisch (Hungarian)
- No.12 - Polnisch (Polish)

Johan de Cock (b.1975)

Variations on 'Veni, veni Emmanuel' [2005]

- Theme
- Pastorale
- Scherzino
- March

A note to the audience: please feel free to remain silent or applaud whenever and however you please (or not)!

Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809, son of the banker, Abraham Mendelssohn, and grandson of the great Jewish thinker, Moses Mendelssohn. In 1812, after the French occupation, the family moved to Berlin, and in 1816 the young Felix was baptised a Christian. His father did the same six years later, considering the move a 'ticket of admission' into European culture.

During his distinguished career as a pianist and conductor, Mendelssohn travelled extensively throughout Europe, as far north as

Scotland and as far south as Naples. His trip to watery Venice in 1830 - 1831 made a deep impression on the young composer, especially as he first arrived in the city by gondola. Between 1830 and 1841 he wrote a total of four Venetian gondola songs as album leaves. Three of these pieces were included in his collections of *Songs Without Words*, with one - the only one in a major key - published separately in 1841. In 1842, the 33-year old Mendelssohn brought his wife to England for the first time (it was his own seventh visit). They stayed for six weeks in Denmark Hill in South London, and during this time, Mendelssohn wrote eight piano pieces as Christmas presents for various members of the Benecke family. He later revised six of them to form his Opus 72, which were first published shortly after his tragic, early death in November 1847.

Franz Liszt was a Hungarian composer, pianist, conductor and teacher, who was renowned in Europe during the nineteenth century. He is considered by many to be the greatest pianist that ever lived, and was also the first person to present solo piano recitals.

Please be warned, the Liszt that I am going to play today is not the melodic and familiar Liszt that you may expect! These are pieces from Liszt's late period: they are dark, macabre, cynical, aggressive at times, and extremely revolutionary with their chromatic harmonies, abrupt key changes, and sparse, disjunct unison lines. Works that certainly moved music into the chaos of the Twentieth Century!

The first two volumes of Liszt's *Years of Pilgrimage* were published by Schott of Mainz in 1855 and 1858 respectively. It was not until 1883, three years before Liszt's death, that the final volume was published. These pieces were no longer travel impressions, but served rather as a religious pilgrimage. The Villa d'Este is a villa in Tivoli, near Rome, Italy where Liszt lived occasionally between 1865 and 1886. It was here that he was inspired to write the pieces inspired by the tall, majestic Cypresses and bubbling fountains.

Liszt composed his *Weihnachtsbaum* (Christmas Tree) suite between 1874 and 1876, dedicating the twelve pieces to his grandchild, Daniela von Bülow. It was published in 1882 in two versions, one for piano solo and one for piano duet. The seventh piece, *Schlummerlied*, is a flowing, dreamlike lullaby that is marked softly and delicately throughout.

The last two pieces are portraits of Liszt himself and his long-term lover, the Polish princess, Jeanne Carolyn von Sayn-Wittgenstein. The princess met Liszt in 1848 and left her husband (along with her eleven-year-old daughter), moving with Liszt to Weimar for twelve years. She tirelessly campaigned to get a divorce from her husband - to no avail - and finally retired to Rome in 1860. After two papal audiences, she was finally granted permission to marry Liszt, but the marriage never took place. She devoted the rest of her life to theological studies, and to smoking vast amounts of extremely strong cigars!