



John
FIELD

Piano Concerto No. 7
Irish Concerto

Benjamin Frith, Piano

Northern Sinfonia • David Haslam

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Andrew Mogrelia

John Field (1782-1837)

Piano Concerto No. 7 • Irish Concerto • Piano Sonata No. 4

John Field was born in Dublin in 1782, the son of a theatre violinist. He was first taught there by his father and then from the age of nine by the Neapolitan Tommaso Giordani, a prolific composer whose teaching had some effect on Field's later attempts at composition. Field himself made his début as a pianist in Dublin on 24th March 1792 at the Rotunda Assembly Rooms in a Lenten concert organized by Giordani. He was advertised with pardonable understatement as eight years old and played in later Spiritual Concerts in the season, including in one programme a concerto by his teacher.

In 1793 the Fields moved to Bath, hoping, perhaps, to use their connection with the famous castrato Venanzio Rauzzini, who had settled there, but by the autumn of the same year they had moved again, this time to London. Here Field's father played in the Haymarket Theatre orchestra and managed to find a hundred guineas to buy his son an apprenticeship with Muzio Clementi. In London John Field appeared in 1794, at the age of twelve, as the talented ten-year-old pupil of Clementi. Haydn, in a diary entry of 1795, records his impression of "Field a young boy, which plays the pianoforte Extremely well" and in May that year Field played a concerto in a benefit concert that included a Haydn "Overture". Clementi himself combined musical and commercial interests and by the 1790s had established himself as the leading piano teacher in London, investing substantially in piano manufacture and music publishing. Field's apprenticeship brought the advantages of a sound musical training, continued appearances in London concerts and the start of a necessarily concomitant career as a composer. In 1799 he played his *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat major* at a charity concert given on 2nd February. The concerto was repeated three months or so later in a benefit concert for the fourteen-year-old George Frederick Pinto. 1801 saw the end of Field's seven-year apprenticeship.

In 1802 Clementi set out for Paris, taking Field with him. From there they travelled on to Vienna, Clementi intent on his business ventures, but obviously having

Field's interests at heart. In Vienna lessons in counterpoint were arranged with Albrechtsberger, who had once performed the same service for Beethoven. Clementi had intended to leave Field to fend for himself there, while he himself travelled to Russia to further his commercial interests. Field begged to be allowed to accompany him and Clementi agreed, with some reluctance, since this would mean a material addition to his expenses.

Clementi was able to use Field in Russia, as he had done in London, as a demonstrator in his piano sale-rooms, but there were necessary economies, the cause of Field's subsequent resentment. There were later stories of near starvation and of inadequate clothing for the Russian winter, but Field found it possible to establish himself, after Clementi's departure in 1803, in March 1804 giving the first performance in Russia of his *Concerto No. 7*, which was well received. In 1805 he travelled to Mittau, where Louis XVIII was in exile, to Riga and to Moscow, returning to St Petersburg in the summer of 1806 and continuing, in the following years, to divide his time between the two Russian cities. In 1810 he married a French pupil of his in Moscow and opportunely agreed on an exchange of cities with his rival Steibelt, who was in Moscow in time for the events of 1812, while Field pursued his interests in St Petersburg.

In Russia Field won a reputation for himself as a pianist of remarkable ability, known for his poetic use of the keyboard, the production of a singing tone on the instrument and a technique that followed the style of Mozart's former pupil Hummel rather than the more ostentatious style of younger players. As a teacher Field was effective and generally expensive, but tended to dissipate his income in the convivial society of friends. In 1819 his wife and their son Adrien moved to Smolensk, where she taught the piano, while Field enjoyed a liaison with another Frenchwoman. Their son, Leon Charpentier, later won a name for himself as a singer, under the name Leonov.

By 1831 ill health forced Field to seek medical help in London, where he travelled with Leon, still able to give concerts in London and in Manchester. He attended the funeral of Clementi in Westminster Abbey and saw his mother again, and then travelled with Leon to France and Italy, giving concerts. Owing in good part to his own excesses, his health deteriorated during the journey and he spent nine months in hospital in Naples, before his rescue by a Russian noblewoman, Princess Rakhmanova, who took him with her on her slow progress back to Russia, by way of Vienna. There he was well enough to give three concerts and stay for some time with Czerny. In Russia once more, he moved to Moscow, where he had many friends. Leon now settled in St Petersburg to follow his own career and Field was joined by his legitimate son Adrien for the final period of his life. He died on 23rd January 1837.

As a pianist, Field enjoyed a wide reputation. His playing was marked by a particular delicacy of nuance, in marked contrast to the newly popular fashion for technical virtuosity. As a composer he developed that very poetic form of piano music, the nocturne, and added to the concerto repertoire in the popular style of the time. As a teacher he exercised wide influence, with pupils coming to Russia to study with him and other teachers claiming, like Clara Schumann's father, to follow Field's method. Nevertheless his chief influence in this respect must have been as a performer, inspiring by example, while providing the assistance of unusual and innovative fingering patterns. His music enjoyed the greatest popularity and it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that popular fashions began to change, leading to the present relative neglect.

Field's *Piano Concerto No. 7 in C minor* was completed in 1832, when it was first performed in Paris, to

be published in 1834 with a dedication to Mademoiselle d'Albini, and the indication that it might be played with a quartet, rather than the orchestra, or as a work for solo piano, options characteristic of the time. Field had written the first movement in 1822, after which he made various revisions, until the work took its final form, to be heard on Christmas Day 1832 by a Paris audience that included Liszt and Chopin. The work later won the praise of Schumann, suggesting possible influence on his own concerto. Field's concerto is scored for a full orchestra, including timpani, which open the first movement, followed by the first subject, entrusted to clarinet and bassoon. The same subject returns to close the orchestral exposition, after which the piano enters, to remain largely the centre of attention in a movement that includes a slow section that enjoys an independent existence as *Nocturne No. 12 in G major*. The second of the two movements is a rondo, its principal theme suggesting echoes of the ballroom and of Russia. It is, by its very nature, episodic and brings various surprises and contrasts in its course.

The so-called *Irish Concerto* is in fact a reworking of the first movement of Field's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in A flat major*, published in Leipzig in 1816. The work makes an interesting addition to repertoire in its revised form, which includes a central *Nocturne*, providing a measure of contrast.

Field's first three piano sonatas were published in London in 1801 and dedicated to Clementi. His only other published sonata, in B major, was published in St Petersburg in 1813. The opening *Moderato* explores contrasting registers of the keyboard and makes use of hand-crossing in a broadly sonata-form movement. It is followed by a final rondo, a second *Moderato*.

Keith Anderson

Benjamin Frith

Photo: Jake Morley



Benjamin Frith was encouraged by his teacher, Dame Fanny Waterman, to pursue a musical career after winning the Dudley National Concerto Competition aged fourteen. Since then he has been a first prizewinner in the Rubinstein Piano Masters Competition where he was also awarded the special prize for chamber music, and was awarded top prize in the Busoni International Piano Competition. With acclaim for his American and Edinburgh Festival débuts, he established himself as an international concert artist, and has given recitals and concerto performances throughout Europe, Northern America, India, Kazakhstan and the Far East. He has appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras including the Berlin Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, Hallé, the BBC orchestras, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, and the Royal Philharmonic, and with such conductors as Zubin Mehta, Antoni Wit, Tamás Vásáry, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Matthias Bamert, Moshe Atzmon, Gianandrea Noseda and Sir Mark Elder. His diverse repertoire ranges from Scarlatti to James Macmillan and includes over fifty concertos, and much praise has been bestowed on his recordings. Frith's enjoyment of chamber music has been fulfilled through his performances and recordings as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio and the formation of his own Piano Quartet.

Northern Sinfonia

The Northern Sinfonia, acknowledged as one of Europe's finest chamber orchestras, performs major concert series in Newcastle, Carlisle and Teesside. From its base in Newcastle upon Tyne, the orchestra acts as cultural ambassador for the North of England through regular national and international touring. Recent tours have included festivals in France and Spain and, most recently, Bombay and Germany. In 2003 Northern Sinfonia became resident in a newly designed music centre situated in Gateshead, on the south bank of the Tyne. The orchestra is dedicated to chamber music and Northern Sinfonia ensembles perform across the region and elsewhere on a regular basis. Recordings and broadcasts form an integral part of the orchestra's work. Releases for Naxos include a recording of Finzi's *Clarinet Concerto*, which won the *Classic CD* award for the Best Concerto Recording for 2000, and a series devoted to the piano concertos of John Field, with the pianist Benjamin Frith, in addition to award-winning releases for other major companies. The work of the orchestra is complemented by the Sinfonia Chorus, established in 1973, and there is a wide ranging community and education programme, as well as an associated youth orchestra and a new music ensemble, Vaganza, dedicated to the regular performance of major twentieth century classics and contemporary repertoire. Northern Sinfonia's artistic team includes distinguished and creative associations with Heinrich Schiff, Honorary Guest Conductor, Richard Hickox, Conductor Emeritus, John Casken, Composer in Association and Baldur Brünnimann, Young Conductor in Association.

David Haslam



Born in Leicestershire, David Haslam began conducting at school. At the age of seventeen, he won the Walter Stokes scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music where he studied flute, piano and composition. As a student, he was offered the position of principal flute at the Scottish National Orchestra. He accepted and remained there until he joined the Northern Sinfonia, again as principal flute, in 1962. Today he is acknowledged as one of the most admired flautists in the profession. With the Northern Sinfonia, he was also involved in programme planning, composition, orchestration, solo-directing and conducting. After being appointed Associate Conductor in 1966, he conducted numerous concerts at home and abroad, working with artists including Jean Bernard Pommier, John Lill, Ida Haendel, Radu Lupu, Robert Tear, Benjamin Luxon, Thomas Allen, Maurice André, Sheila Armstrong and Cécile Ousset. He also conducted concerts that included solo-directed concertos by Mozart, Nielsen and Ibert, among others. In 1988 he recorded his arrangements of Northumbrian Songs with Sir Thomas Allen, Sheila Armstrong and the Sinfonia orchestra and Chorus. He retired from the Northern Sinfonia in 2006 since when he has been putting on concerts with his partner Annamaria McCool and their orchestra, the English Philharmonic.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Photo: Tom Finnie

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra was formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra and became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950. It was awarded Royal Patronage in 1991. Throughout its history the orchestra has played an integral part in Scotland's musical life, including performing at the opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament building in 2004. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including George Szell, Sir John Barbirolli, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Neeme Järvi, Walter Weller, Alexander Lazarev and Stéphane Denève. In 2012 the RSNO welcomed British-Canadian musician and conductor Peter Oundjian as its latest Music Director and Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård as Principal Guest Conductor. The RSNO

has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving two Diapason d'Or de l'année awards for Symphonic Music (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY® Awards nominations over the last decade. Over 200 releases are available, including the complete symphonies of Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Glazunov (Serebrier), Nielsen and Martinů (Thomson), Roussel (Denève) and the major orchestral works of Debussy (Denève). The RSNO is one of Scotland's National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government. For more information, please see www.rsno.org.uk.

Andrew Mogrelia



Photo: Matthew Washburn

Andrew Mogrelia has had a varied career of concerts, recording and work with major dance companies. He has conducted many ensembles including the BBC orchestras, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Noord Nederlands Orkest, Dutch Radio and Residentie orchestras, the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra and Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony and Empyrean Ensemble (USA), Queensland and West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and the Australian Youth Orchestra's Music Camp. He has worked with the English National, Dutch National, Finnish National, Norwegian National ballets, Netherlands Dance Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Australian Ballet, West Australian Ballet and American Ballet Theater. He has served as Conductor-in-Residence at Birmingham Conservatoire (1992-2002), Co-Music Director at Dutch National Ballet (1992-1994), Music Director and Principal Conductor of San Francisco Ballet (2003-2005), leading the orchestra's thirtieth anniversary concert (2005), Music Director of the Conservatory Orchestra in San Francisco (2005-2012), where he directed a residency for composer John Adams in 2007, conducting *Harmonielehre* in the composer's presence and Music Director of Queensland Ballet (2013-2015). He has an extensive discography for Naxos and Marco Polo, with his complete *Sleeping Beauty* (8.550490-92) acclaimed as a 'clear first choice' by *Gramophone* magazine. He worked with the RTE National Symphony (Dublin, Ireland) in 2012, 2013, 2014 & 2016 and divides his work between Europe and Australia.

Dublin-born prodigy John Field enjoyed a wide reputation and great popularity. He was renowned as a soloist for his delicacy of nuance and as a composer for his cultivation of that most poetic of forms, the *nocturne*. His *Piano Concertos* were eagerly anticipated and the première of the *Concerto No. 7* in Paris on Christmas Day 1832 was attended by both Chopin and Liszt. Ingeniously structured in two movements, its *Rondo* finale evokes the ballroom and Russia in a series of constant contrasts. The *Irish Concerto* is a reworking of the first movement of Field's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in A flat major*. *Piano Concertos No. 1-6* can be heard on 8.553770, 8.553771 and 8.574221.

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	Piano Concerto No. 7 in C major, H.58 (1822-32)*	31:55
❶	I. Allegro moderato	17:49
❷	II. Rondo: Allegro moderato	14:06
❸	Irish Concerto: Allegro moderato (ed. Hans Priegnitz) (1816/1961)†	22:40
	Piano Sonata No. 4 in B major, H.17a (1813)	11:38
❹	I. Moderato	5:06
❺	II. Rondo: Moderato	6:32

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(tracks 1-2), in Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow, Scotland, on 13th August, 2014 (track 3),
and at the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, England, on 22nd June, 2013 (tracks 4-5)
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Michael Ponder (tracks 4-5) • Editors: Andrew Walton (K&A Productions, Ltd.) (track 3),
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