



Lunchtime Concert on the Campus Square, University of Southern Denmark at Odense



12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. Thursday April 18, 2013. Admission is free.

MORTEN HEIDE

piano



PROGRAM

- **Nocturne nr. 1, opus 22**
- **Troisième recueil de chants, opus 65:**
 1. Vivante
 2. Esprits follets
 3. Canon
 4. Tempo giusto
 5. Horace et Lydie
 6. Barcarolle
- **Toccatina opus 75**
- **From Grande Sonate - les quatre âges (Grand Sonata - The four Ages of Man), opus 33:**
 - 1st movement: 20 ans (20 years old)
 - 4th movement: 50 ans (50 years old)

PROGRAM NOTES*

"The nocturne in B major Op. 22 stands beside the finest examples of a genre created by John Field and consummated by Chopin. If it strikes deeper than Field it remains purer and cooler than Chopin but is no less rewarding to play or beguiling to hear. Henri Blanchard's account of Alkan's playing provides the key to its interpretation: '... beside the gradations of tone which he possesses to the highest degree, there is a fullness and sensitivity - that rare gift on which the art of making this instrument sing and stir the emotions is based'. The scheme could hardly be simpler: a limpid melody framing a persuasive middle section with the ingenious combination of both ideas in its closing bars." - © Ronald Smith

The 6 Chants Op. 65 illuminate the more melodic, flighty, fragile side of Alkan, rather than the vehemently virtuoso side seen in most of his early work.

Alkan wrote five volumes of Chants: Op 38 (two books), 65, 67 and 70. He took as his inspiration and model Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, not merely sharing their harmonic language and length, but following the key sequence of Mendelssohn's first book, Op 19 (E major, A minor, A major, A major, F sharp minor and G minor), even ending with a barcarolle. Mendelssohn's 'songs' appeared in eight collections composed between 1830 and 1845; Alkan's were composed between 1857 and the early 1870s.

No 1 of the Op 65 set has no title beyond its tempo marking, *Vivante*, rippling triplets accompanying its graceful melody for all but five bars.

No 2 *Esprits follets* ('Goblins'), is a near-relation of Mendelssohn's *Spinnerlied*, Op 67 No. 4, a prestissimo fairy-light scherzo.

No 3 is a beautiful canon of octaves surrounded by two brief statements of opening and closing.

No 4, a disguised polonaise slowly builds up to a stately theme and groundwork, leading to a wispy ending.

No 5, a triplet-filled duet, paraphrasing the ninth poem of *The Third Book of Odes* by Horatius, evinced in the striking contrast in treble and bass regions, and the modulation from Dorian to Phrygian.

No 6, Alkan's best-known small piece, quite progressive with its "blue" grace-notes, sports a simple melody over waves of undulating arpeggios. According to Ronald Smith: "A fascinating pre-echo of the 'Twenties". With its flattened sevenths and false relations it might well be described as the piece of Mendelssohn that Gershwin forgot to write!" - © Jeremy Nicholas

"The 'Toccatina' in C minor Op. 75, together with 'Bombardo-Carillon' for four feet (sic) was probably the last of Alkan's compositions to be published in the 1870's. Like so many of his greatest miniatures it all looks too simple on paper, yet the effect in performance is unique and will startle even the most sophisticated twentieth-century ears inured though they are to every latest freak of compositional absurdity. From his earliest creative period an obsessional streak in Alkan seemed to drive him into writing toccatas, or pieces in toccata style; the third study from Op. 76 and 'Le Chemin de Fer' are toccatas in all but name. Now for the last time he spins his relentless semiquavers, but with a difference. Held in sinister, expressionless pianissimo for over a hundred bars they flicker with the eerie potential of a time-bomb ticking over. Astrigent dissonances tease the spare two-part writing as the mercurial figuration collides with biting, staccato counterpoints. An abrupt modulation to A flat major has the right hand weaving more open textures above a timp-like ostinato, in the masterly disregard of harmonic alignment. For twenty-seven bars the tonality remains uneasily poised on the tonic and dominant of A flat until, with the first hint of a foreign note (G flat), stability founders. The ostinato is wrenched out of phase. The soufflé-like textures contract. As the pull of C minor, through its augmented sixth, becomes even more critical, the rhythm tightens and, with matchless timing, the right-hand intervals continue to narrow until they converge into the contours of the reprise. Here, their outline still afflicted by the abrasive G flat (F sharp), the harmony is made explicit by the modest incursion of a third voice. The piece has by now run three-quarters of its course held in a breathtaking pianissimo. Without warning it lashes out as twenty withering bars in contrary motion followed by two slashed chords propel the listener into silence. For seven anxious bars the semiquavers flutter, tentatively, before being finally dismissed by an angry flurry as it devolves with the explosive force of both hands on to the blinding light of middle C. If this 'Toccatina' were Alkan's last completed composition he could scarcely have devised a more appropriate or grotesque way of signing off than by this self-mocking reversal of his all too familiar slap on the outer extremities of the keyboard." - © Ronald Smith

The sonata's title refers to the subtitles given to each movement, portraying a man at the ages of 20, 30, 40, and 50. The work is dedicated to the composer's father, Alkan Morhange (who died eight years later, in 1855), and was published in 1847. The sequence of movements is unlike the typical classical piano sonata, in that they become progressively slower; after the lively 20 ans (years), marked 'très vite' (very fast) and the complex 30 ans, subtitled Quasi-Faust, and marked 'assez vite' (quite fast), 40 ans is more sedate, marked 'lentement' (slowly), and 50 ans, dark and pessimistic in mood, is marked 'extrêmement lent' (extremely slow).

The sonata opens with 20 ans, a quickly played piece based in D major but also with many passages in the relative minor key of B minor. The young man's 'clumsiness' is marked for example by sudden 'wrong chords' - one in B-flat major is marked 'ridente' (Italian: laughing). The tempo and ternary form of this movement are similar to Frédéric Chopin's Scherzo No. 1 (Op. 20). The sonata thus marks itself from the start as different from any previous sonatas, by beginning effectively with a scherzo.

"Inevitably Alkan's conception of the ideal marriage must remain a fantasy - a nostalgic dream shattered by the sinister rattle of chains. His final movement 50 Ans is prefaced by seven lines from Aeschylus's tragic poem Prometheus Bound (verses 750-754, 1051 and 1091):

*'No, you could not endure my suffering.
If only destiny allowed me to die.
To die. That would be my deliverance from my torment.
There will be no limit to my woes while Jupiter's power remains.
I shall live...
Look and see if I deserve these torments which I endure.'*

The whole legend of Prometheus, the bringer of fire, chained to a rock and enduring exclusion and torture for his gift to mankind must have struck a particularly sympathetic chord in Alkan himself, already set on a lonely path which would ultimately lead him to social and artistic isolation." -

© Ronald Smith

* Today's program notes are courtesy of Ronald Smith's *Alkan: The Man, the Music* from program notes by Jeremy Nicholas: <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W4838>. The following biographical note is excerpted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Valentin_Alkan, where an extensive article may be found:

Charles-Valentin Alkan (30 November 1813 – 29 March 1888) was a French composer and one of the greatest pianists of his day. His attachment to his Jewish origins is displayed both in his life and his work. He entered the Conservatoire de Paris at the age of six, earning many awards, and as an adult became a famous virtuoso and teacher. Although early in his life he was socially active and good friends with prominent musicians and artists including Eugène Delacroix, Franz Liszt and Frédéric Chopin, he gradually withdrew from the concert platform after 1848, and he lived a reclusive life in Paris until his death.

Morten Heide

Musikalsk profil: Morten Heides musikalske profil er kendetegnet ved et højt aktivitetsniveau og en alsidig og helstøbt tilgang til musikken. Han deler sit professionelle virke mellem at spille koncerter, dirigere kor og undervise i klaver. Morten Heide er aktiv som pianist i mange forskellige sammenhænge, både som solist, akkompagnatør, repetitør og kammermusiker. Han er fast dirigent for Kolding Kammerkor, Vestsjællands Kammerkor og Jysk Akademisk Kor, og han assisterer lejlighedsvis som dirigent for Alice Granum i Filharmonisk Kor, Odense. Desuden beskæftiger Morten Heide sig lidenskabeligt med undervisning af såvel begyndere som øvede pianister.

Som pianist har Morten Heide givet koncerter i bl.a. Danmark, Norge, Tyskland, Frankrig, Italien, Island og Mexico. Mortens fokus er på "glemte perler" af de store mestre, som fx Bachs "Italienske variationer" og mindre spillede komponister fra før 1900 som fx Alkan, samt musikken fra det 20. og 21. århundrede.

Uddannelse: Morten Heide er cand. musicae og solist. Han tog i 2006 diplomeksamen i klaver fra Musiker-Performerlinien ved Det Fynske Musikonservatorium. Han debuterede i november 2010 som pianist fra solistklassen ved Syddansk Musikonservatorium og Skuespillerskole (SMKS).

I løbet af studietiden har Morten Heide perspektiveret sin pianistuddannelse i Hamborg ved Hochschule für Musik und Theater. Parallelt med sit studie i solistklassen har Morten Heide også studeret en to-årig kandidat i klassisk kor- og ensembleledelse ved SMKS. Dette studie aflagde han eksamen fra i juni 2011.

Morten Heide er netop, som den eneste ansøger, blevet optaget på et 2-årigt masterstudium i kordirektion ved den anerkendte Kungliga Musikhögskolan i Stockholm fra september 2013, hvor han skal studere hos Fredrik Malmberg.

Morten Heide har som den første dansker indspillet Olivier Messiaens enorme og krævende klaverværk "Tyve betragtninger over Jesusbarnet" i 2011.

Det er en fornøjelse for IKV-forskningsprogrammet *The Aesthetics of Music and Sound* og NordForsk-netværket NNIMIPA: *Nordic Network for the Integration of Music Informatics, Performance and Aesthetics*, personalet i Kantine 4 og SDU's Serviceområde at kunne præsentere dagens frokostkoncert med Morten Heide. Det er én af de mange aktiviteter, der har fundet sted gennem årene i samspil mellem udøvende musikere fra konservatoriemi miljøerne i Odense, Esbjerg og København og forskere og studerende fra Syddansk Universitet, hvor begge har kunnet mødes og berige hinandens interesseområder inden for blandt andet NTSMB: *Netværk for Tværvideenskabelige Studier af Musik og Betydning* www.ntsmb.dk; NNIMIPA: *Nordic Network for the Integration of Music Informatics, Performance and Aesthetics* www.nnimipa.org; og forskningsprogrammet på SDU/IKV *The Aesthetics of Music and Sound* www.soundmusicresearch.org.

Vi håber, at I nyder dagens koncert – den 26. siden den første frokostkoncert i april 2010 – og at I vil være opmærksomme på kommende aktiviteter, når frokostkoncertserien fortsætter i løbet af 2013.

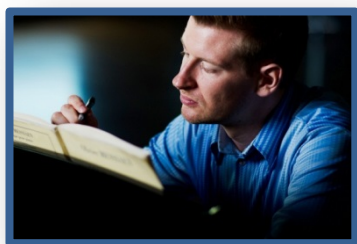
Cynthia M. Grund på vegne af *The Aesthetics of Music and Sound* www.soundmusicresearch.org og NNIMIPA www.nnimipa.org

Jane Bonne og Carsten Sjødahl på vegne af personalet i Kantine 4

Leif Jensen på vegne af SDU's Serviceområde



I dag, den 18. april, kl. 15:15-17 i U73 er I også velkomne til en gæsteforelæsning i serien *Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound*: "**Charles Valentin Alkan: The Pros and Cons of Virtuosity**" med Morten Heide



As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of French composer Ch. V. Alkan (1813-1888), it's worth asking once again why this great and eccentric innovator within the piano repertoire isn't played more often, but is still overshadowed by his friends and contemporaries Liszt and Chopin, as well as by composers such as Schumann and Mendelssohn.

During today's presentation, I will propose some answers to the following questions:

- What qualities are to be found in Alkan's music?
- What can Alkan's piano music offer that is different from that of the other four composers?
- Even though Alkan's piano music is often described as impossible to play, is it all about tremendously difficult, hand-breaking virtuosity?

Throughout the lecture, the musical material under discussion will be exemplified by means of scores, recordings, and live piano performance by Morten Heide.

ALL ARE WELCOME! 

Audience participation in the seminar via Skype is also welcome.