

NAXOS

**Artist Laureate • Piano**



**DongKyu Kim**

**First Prize  
2010 San Marino  
International  
Piano Competition**

**PROKOFIEV**

**Four Etudes, Op. 2  
Four Pieces, Op. 3  
Four Pieces, Op. 32  
Sonatinas, Op. 54  
Sonata No. 5**

**Kim Dong Kyu: Piano Recital**  
**Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953):**  
**Four Etudes, Op. 2 · Four Pieces, Op. 3 · Four Pieces, Op. 32**  
**Sonata No. 10, Op. 137 (fragment) · Two Sonatinas, Op. 54 · Sonata No. 5, Op. 135**

Sergey Prokofiev was born on 15th April 1891 at Sontsovska in Ukraine. His precocious musical talents were fostered by his mother and his first compositions emerged when he was only five. In 1904, on the advice of Glazunov, his parents allowed him to enter the St Petersburg Conservatoire, where he continued his studies until 1914 and quickly left behind the influence of older teachers such as Liadov and Rimsky-Korsakov, arousing enthusiasm and hostility in equal measure. During the First World War he was exempted from military service and after the Russian Revolution was given permission to travel abroad, at first to America, where he took with him several major scores that were to establish his reputation in the West.

Unlike Stravinsky and Rachmaninov, Prokofiev had left Russia with the idea of returning home at some stage. His stay in the United States was at first successful. He often appeared as a concert pianist and fulfilled prestigious commissions for such as the Chicago Opera. By 1920, however, he had begun to find life more difficult and moved to Paris, where he renewed contact with Dyaghilev and for whom he wrote several ballet scores. He spent much of the next sixteen years in France, though he returned periodically to Russia where his music received qualified approval. By 1936 he had decided to settle permanently in his native country, taking up residence in Moscow just in time for the first official onslaught on music that did not accord with the social and political aims of the authorities. Twelve years later, his name was explicitly stated in the notorious 'Zhdanov decree'. Despite a partial rehabilitation, his final years were clouded by poor health and his death – on 5th March 1953, barely an hour before that of Stalin – went largely unnoticed at the time.

For much of his professional life, Prokofiev was a pianist of the front rank and amassed a sizable body of piano music, at the centre of which is his cycle of nine piano sonatas [recorded on Naxos 8.553021, 8.554270 and 8.555030]. The present recital focusses on a number of shorter though

by no means slighter pieces which span the fullest extent of his composing.

The *Four Études* were written in 1909 and three of them were given by the composer in St Petersburg on 6th March the following year. The first étude sets off at a rapid pace, with much energy generated by the combination of brief melodic gestures in the right hand against a motoric accompaniment in the left. The second étude is relatively relaxed in manner, melody and accompaniment for the most part fused such that the texture unfolds in rippling cascades across the whole keyboard. The third étude centres on a restive melodic idea, initially restrained in presentation with a more capricious quality emerging with great insistence to secure an explosive close. The fourth étude is a *perpetuum mobile* with excited exchanges between the hands, building an unstoppable momentum whose greatest surprise is its summary curtailment.

The *Four Pieces, Op. 3*, come from 1907–8 though were revised in 1911 and first performed by the composer in St Petersburg on 28th March that year. *Tale* unfolds with a gentle but equivocal demeanour to its openly expressive climax, then unhurriedly retraces its steps towards the veiled calm of its opening. *Jest* is a further instance of the composer's brazenly energetic pieces, its sardonic manner held in check by the evenness of its figuration as well as by its unexpected brevity. *March* sets out in suitably determined fashion, its trenchant forward motion taking in the briefest of trio sections before the curt recollection of its initial bars. *Phantom* is the most distinctive of the set and not least owing to its brevity, opening in subdued terms before rapidly generating a fearsome impetus which then dissipates almost as quickly as it had emerged.

The *Four Pieces, Op. 32*, were composed in 1918 and first given by the composer in New York on 30th March the following year. *Dance* unfolds as a nonchalant miniature whose loping rhythm complements the acidic poise of its melodic gestures, the latter seeing the piece through to an

almost throwaway conclusion. *Minuet* then makes inventive play on its underlying rhythm, melody and accompaniment pursuing an unaffected course through to a breezily good-natured close. *Gavotte* is more pensive in its overall manner, taking in some typically harmonic sideslips typical of this composer and with a more plaintive middle section prior to its terse ending. *Waltz* begins in an altogether more expressive manner, the easefulness of its melodic ideas enhanced by a subtle degree of motivic repetition and pellucid textures that persist to the twilight close.

The *Tenth Sonata* was one of several pieces left unfinished at Prokofiev's death, its 37-bar sketch being his final music. It commences with a determined if tonally oblique idea that seems intent on unfolding at some length, only to make way for a more equable theme that serves as a 'second subject', but the sketch's petering out leaves any evolution in abeyance.

The *Two Sonatinas*, written during 1931–2 with Prokofiev giving the première of the second of them in London on 17th April 1932, are important instances of the gradual (though by no means logical or straightforward) process of musical simplification on which the composer embarked at the turn of the decade and which continued beyond his return to the Soviet Union. The first movement of the *Sonatina in E minor* opens with a declamatory idea that soon admits of greater lyricism as it leads into the second theme of delicate restraint, after which both are elaborated before the earlier activity resumes to effect a pungent close. The second movement evinces a rapt wistfulness maintained through a central section of greater expressive intensity, before resuming its unhurried discourse on the way to a speculative half-close. The third movement sets off with a lively theme finding contrast in its more pensive successor, both these ideas being elaborated before the first builds to a sizable climax (in the context of the work overall) which makes for an impulsive conclusion.

The first movement of the *Sonatina in G major* begins with a robust idea contrasted with a more reflective theme,

though the initial rhythmic trenchancy is seldom far away and so makes the latter emphasis on the second theme the more telling prior to its muscular conclusion. The second movement is more unpredictable than the corresponding movement of its predecessor, not least in a lively middle section that sets the teasing quality of the music either side in greater relief. The third movement is gently set in motion, its twin melodic ideas clearly emblematic of the intended simplicity of these two pieces yet with an understated purposefulness that carries the music on to its unforced though quietly conclusive close.

First heard in Paris on 9th March 1924, the then coolly neo-classical *Fifth Sonata* met with a lukewarm reception so that Prokofiev determined to revise it, which he managed during 1952–3 just prior to his death (with a posthumous première in Alma-Ata on 2nd February 1954), when it emerged as one of the stylistically most consistent among his later works. The first movement gets going with one of the composer's most winsome melodies, its lapping accompaniment giving way to greater flights of fancy in the second theme before the development makes motivic and harmonic play with both these ideas. This reaches a notable peak of intensity, at the height of which the opening theme returns before subsiding into a varied reprise then an unexpectedly hurried coda. The second movement unfolds over a vamping accompaniment, the secure basis over which its melodic ideas come and go with varying degrees of irony and in a manner redolent of the composer's earliest music. There is a rhythmically freer middle section then a coda in which the activity wryly disperses. The finale opens as if it were intending to be a slow movement, but its manner soon becomes more assertive and a more demonstrative theme emerges, after which both ideas are treated to a development of some fervour. There is a modified reprise reaching a climax of evident emotional power, after which the coda brings about the vividly decisive conclusion.

Richard Whitehouse

### DongKyu Kim

Pianist DongKyu Kim has received recognition at several international competitions, including first prize at the 2010 San Marino International Competition and the highest prize at the 2009 International Jeunesses Musicales Competition in Belgrade. As an active performer he has given numerous solo recitals in Korea, Italy and Germany. His performances with orchestras include Rachmaninov's *Concerto No. 3* with the Republic of San Marino Symphony Orchestra conducted by Philippe Entremont, and his schedule includes engagements in England, Italy, and Brazil. DongKyu Kim was born in 1986 in the Republic of Korea. He graduated with the highest honours at the Korean National University and is currently studying at the Hanover Music, Theatre and Media Hochschule.



Complementing the more familiar piano sonatas, Prokofiev's shorter but by no means slighter piano works span his entire career, from the precociously brilliant *Four Etudes, Op. 2* and *Four Pieces, Op. 3*, via the neo-classical *Four Pieces, Op. 32*, the powerfully trenchant *Sonatinas, Op. 54* and the colourful *Fifth Sonata*, to his final unfinished *Tenth Sonata*. One of the most exciting performers of his generation, DongKyu Kim won first prize at the 2010 San Marino International Competition and the highest award at the 2009 International Jeunesses Musicales Competition Belgrade.

## DONGKYU KIM

### Piano Recital

#### Sergey PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

##### Four Etudes, Op. 2

- |   |                       |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Allegro            | 2:43 |
| 2 | II. Moderato          | 2:48 |
| 3 | III. Andante semplice | 3:49 |
| 4 | IV. Presto energico   | 1:33 |

##### Four Pieces, Op. 3

- |   |                               |      |
|---|-------------------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Tale: Andante              | 2:44 |
| 6 | II. Jest: Vivo                | 0:52 |
| 7 | III. March: Allegro energico  | 0:48 |
| 8 | IV. Phantom: Presto tenebroso | 0:39 |

##### Four Pieces, Op. 32

- |    |                                  |      |
|----|----------------------------------|------|
| 9  | I. Dance: Allegretto             | 2:58 |
| 10 | II. Minuet: Allegro moderato     | 1:19 |
| 11 | III. Gavotte: Allegro non troppo | 1:49 |
| 12 | IV. Waltz: Lento espressivo      | 4:00 |

11:01

2:43

2:48

3:49

1:33

5:10

2:44

0:52

0:48

0:39

10:14

2:58

1:19

1:49

4:00

#### Sonata No. 10 in E minor, Op. 137 – *manuscript fragment*:

13 Allegro moderato 1:08

#### Two Sonatinas, Op. 54:

Sonatina No. 1 in E minor 9:43

14 Allegro moderato 3:11

15 Adagietto 3:28

16 Allegretto 2:57

Sonatina No. 2 in G major 9:51

17 Allegro sostenuto 3:50

18 Andante amabile 2:07

19 Allegro, ma non troppo 3:48

Sonata No. 5 in C major  
(revised edition), Op. 135 15:38

20 Allegro tranquillo 6:43

21 Andantino 3:39

22 Un poco allegretto 5:11

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