



# LEFT-HAND PIANO MUSIC:

a story of triumph over adversity

Composers have written music for the left hand for a number of reasons, but the most common is in response to injury or disability. This hour-long programme presents the most popular pieces of left-hand piano music with spoken introductions which relate the stories behind them.

## SCRIABIN

*Prelude and Nocturne, Op. 9 for the left hand alone, (9')*

On going to study piano at the Moscow Conservatoire when he was 19, Scriabin was faced with stiff competition. Fellow students included Sergei Rachmaninov and Josef Hofmann, two of the greatest pianists of all time! Scriabin began to practise intensely and injured his right hand, which was incapacitated for months. He composed these pieces, which are in a similar style to Chopin's music, so that he would have something to play while he recovered.

## SAINT-SAËNS

*Etudes for left hand (19')*

(Prélude, Alla Fuga, Moto Perpetuo, Bourée, Elégie, Gigue)

In 1911 the pianist Caroline de Serres had an operation on her right hand and requested her duet partner, Camille Saint-Saëns, to write something to keep her occupied while she was recuperating. He came up with six studies, all written in a neoclassical vein, which have become some of the best loved pieces of the left-hand repertoire.

## LIPATTI

*Sonatine (9')*

(Allegro, Andante espressivo, Allegro)

Dinu Lipatti is one of the legendary figures in the canon of piano history. The recordings that we have of his performances are practically flawless and the renowned music critic Harold Schonberg praised "piano playing of a stature that few artists of his generation could have come near approaching". Here we see another side of him as composer. The *Sonatine* is a characterful and lively work which takes us on a journey through the various possibilities open to the left-handed pianist.

## BACH-BRAHMS

Transcription of Bach's *Chaconne* in D minor for left-hand piano (15')

Brahms was captivated by Bach's *Chaconne* in D minor for the violin and desperately wanted to play it himself. Not being a violinist, he decided to transcribe it for piano but thought it worked better if he just used his left hand. In 1877 he sent the piece as a gift to Clara Schumann who, completely by chance, had injured her right hand opening a drawer the day before his letter arrived. She adored the piece and said that it provided a 'glorious refuge' for her.



Acclaimed by The Daily Telegraph as a performer of "amazing power and panache", concert pianist **Clare Hammond** has performed across Europe, Russia and Canada and has appeared recently at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and the Barbican and Wigmore Hall in London. Her recital in April at the Wigmore Hall was broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 and chosen as one of their 'Classical Highlights' for the month.

Clare has just completed a Doctorate in left-hand piano music at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and is an experienced speaker. She enjoys giving pre and post-concert talks and her easy rapport with audiences makes her a natural for media work.

"Crisp precision and unflashy intelligence" **The Guardian**  
"... the precipitous drive through to a hair-raising close fairly brought the house down" **Classical Source**