



## Thomas Luke

Winner of the 2020 BBC Young Musician of the Year Keyboard Category and awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 2021 Iris Dyer Piano Prize at the Junior Royal Academy of Music – at only 18 years of age, Thomas is a truly exceptional pianist.

Performing at the Vienna International Music Competition, Thomas was recognised as having “outstanding talent, a remarkable musicality and a very accomplished technique”.

Thomas has a passion for performing, playing in recitals across the UK, on national television and radio.

He has received the Richard Toeman Memorial Award for Young Pianists, the Robert Lewin Scholarship, and has been selected to represent the Junior Royal Academy of Music in the Junior Intercollegiate Piano Competition of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe.

Repeatedly praised for having exceptional musicality and depth of interpretation, Thomas has a mature, natural and poetic style.

His playing is immersive - Thomas gives his whole self to the music and his performance, with warmth and sincerity.

He enchants the audience; capturing and communicating the essence and spirit of every piece he plays.

# Thomas Luke - Programme of Music - Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October Concert

## Miroirs (*Mirrors*)

## Maurice Ravel (1897-1937)

Born to a music-loving family, Ravel attended the Paris Conservatoire and was taught by, and studied composition with, Gabriel Fauré, who regarded him highly and was a key influence on his development as a composer.

Ravel then found his own way, developing a composing style of great clarity, incorporating elements of modernism, baroque and neoclassicism.

In 1900, Ravel joined a group of innovative young musicians, artists, poets and critics, referred to as Les Apaches (*hooligans*), a term coined by French pianist Ricardo Vines to represent their status as 'artistic outcasts'.

To pay tribute to his fellow artists, Ravel composed *Miroirs*, with each movement dedicated to a fellow member of this avant-garde artistic group.

*Miroirs* is a five-movement suite for solo piano, written between 1904-1905 and first performed in 1906.

Ravel said that it "marked a rather considerable change in my harmonic evolution."

- I. **Noctuelles (*Moths*)** – This is a highly chromatic movement; the fast appoggiaturas and sudden spurts of crescendo evoke the flitting and flickering flight of moths in the darkness of night. The middle section is calm, with rich, chordal melodies maintaining a dark, nocturnal mood throughout.
- II. **Oiseaux Tristes (*Sorrowful Birds*)** – This movement was the first to be composed and was Ravel's own favourite. It evokes "birds lost in the torpor of a sombre forest, during the hottest hours of summer". A lone bird whistling a sad tune, after which, others join in. Soft chirps and short-long calls are heard over a syncopated accompaniment, bursting into the wayward panic of a lost bird. The rambunctious middle section is offset by a solemn cadenza which leads into the fading birdcalls and the return of the 'melancholy and remote' mood of the beginning.
- III. **Une Barque sur L'océan (*A Boat on the Ocean*)** – This piece recounts a small, lone boat as it sails upon the waves in the vastness of the ocean, to then encounter a storm. Arpeggiated sections and sweeping melodies imitate the flow of the ocean currents, the rippling waves growing in power and expanse, drifting away to an uncertain end.
- IV. **Alborada del Gracioso (*Morning Song of the Jester*)** – This movement is the most famous and strenuously virtuosic piece. The character of the clown being humorous, but with an edge. Incorporating Spanish musical themes into its complicated melodies; with a framing seguidilla and crisp pianistic suggestions of guitars, it is a technically challenging piece.
- V. **La Vallée des Cloches (*The Valley of Bells*)** – This movement evokes the midday tolling sounds of various bells through its use of sonorous harmonies and regular metrical time. Ravel said that the big closing chords in the bass were the sound of the big bell in the Basilica of Montmartre in Paris.