

## Julius REUBKE (1834-1858)

### Piano Sonata in B flat minor (30')

Allegro maestoso – Andante sostenuto – Allegro agitato

### Organ Sonata in C minor “The 94<sup>th</sup> Psalm” (24')

**Grave – Larghetto:** O Lord, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth; render a reward unto the proud.

**Allegro con fuoco:** Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph? They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say: The Lord shall not see it, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

**Adagio:** Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.

**Allegro:** But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness.

One of the great “what ifs” of musical history, Julius REUBKE was Franz Liszt’s most outstanding pupil, both as composer and executant. When he died of consumption at the age of 24 he left behind only these two major compositions which combine an exceptional degree of formal and technical assurance with a passionate and intense musical expression.

The piano sonata is clearly modelled on Liszt’s own sonata in B minor of 1850. It shares the same continuous structure which subdivides into three traditional movements, but is if anything even more ambitious in form. The outer ‘movements’ are based on the rising dotted rhythm heard at the outset, and the lyrical second subject which in various forms comes to dominate the whole work. (Just before this appears Reubke shows his indebtedness to his teacher - the work’s dedicatee - with a quiet but unmistakable quotation from the Liszt sonata). The central slow movement shares no direct thematic link with the rest of the piece. Towards its end there are two noteworthy passages – an extraordinarily passionate slow Wagnerian crescendo, preceded by an ethereal octave tune accompanied by arpeggios in bare fifths. The last movement returns to sonata form, with a cadenza passage – mostly in octaves – taking the place of the development section. The second subject - the same as that of the first movement – appears in a few more guises here, eventually forming the final triumphant peroration.

The Organ Sonata is a darker work, in keeping with the character of the Psalm it dramatises. This piece is superior to anything Liszt wrote for the instrument: it has a much more developed pedal part and the writing is clearly ‘organ’ rather than ‘piano’ writing. It is almost entirely monothematic, yet never seems to be stretching its material. The dark and dramatic character is never completely relieved; even the central Adagio has a harmonic restlessness which is not resolved. The final fugato seems to gather in energy and intensity with a headlong rush towards the end – there is no triumphant peroration here; rather, the passionate anger of the whole piece seems to be summarised in the terse final chords.

