



FRYDERYK CHOPIN: THE POET OF THE PIANO

Thursday, March 4, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.

A Lecture by Pianist Alan Walker

Alan Walker pays an anniversary tribute to Fryderyk Chopin, whom he places in the Pantheon alongside Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. He describes Chopin as “the voice of the piano”. His discussion will be illustrated with recordings made by some of Chopin’s best interpreters, both past and present.



ALAN WALKER

Alan Walker is Professor Emeritus of Music at McMaster University, Canada. Before settling in North America he was on the staff of the Music Division of the British Broadcasting Corporation in London. He has broadcast for the BBC, for the CBC, and for CJRT-FM (Toronto), and gives regular public lectures on the music of the Romantic Era, a period in which he specializes. His thirteen published books include *A Study in Musical Analysis*, *An Anatomy of Musical Criticism*, and symposia on Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt.

Dr. Walker recently finished a three-volume, prize winning biography of Franz Liszt, published by Alfred A. Knopf (New York), and Faber & Faber (London), a project which took him twenty-five years to complete, and for which the President of Hungary bestowed on him the medal *Pro Cultura Hungarica*. The biography also received the Royal Philharmonic Society Prize, presented by HRH The Duke of Kent in London.

Time Magazine hailed the biography as “a textured portrait of Liszt and his times without rival”. *The Wall Street Journal* called it “The definitive work to which all subsequent Liszt biographies will aspire”. *The Washington Post* selected it as a Book of the Year.

Two other books have meanwhile followed. The first is called *The Death of Franz Liszt* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY). It describes the last ten days of the composer’s life in Bayreuth. Based on eye-witness accounts, and the unpublished diary of a pupil, it tells a harrowing story of the final illness, medical malpractice, family neglect, and a callous disregard of Liszt’s final wishes. Walker’s latest book, *Reflections on Liszt* (Cornell University Press) is a sequel to the 3-volume biography, and deals with certain topics in greater depth than the biography itself could accommodate. These include Liszt’s myriad connections with Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann; his work as a teacher and editor of the music of others; and his published writings. The book ends with *An Open Letter to Franz Liszt*, which the *Times Literary Supplement* called “an affectionate and stylized farewell from a biographer to a great subject.”