

Programme Note by Chris Darwin: please use freely for non-commercial purposes

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) Visions Fugitives (arr. Samsonov) Op 22 (1915-17)

Lentamente; Allegretto; Con eleganza; Dolente; Ridicolosamente; Poetico; Feroce

Visions fugitives are a series of 20 short (each lasting 1 or 2 minutes) piano pieces that Prokofiev wrote as whimsical vignettes of specific friends. The title comes from a phrase in the sonnet that the poet Konstantin Balmont composed on the spot when Prokofiev first played them to him. As a young teenager, Prokofiev had been encouraged by his teacher Glière to school himself by writing short pieces and arranging them into a larger structure, advice which led to '*Little Songs*', five series each of 12 piano pieces. In 1912 and 1913 he travelled to England, France and Switzerland where he heard works by Ravel and Stravinsky. By the time he wrote *Visions fugitives* Prokofiev had earned an established reputation in St Petersburg as an instrumental and operatic composer, and had had a resounding success for his first and, at least among progressives, his second piano concertos. Prokofiev was in the habit of working on a number of works in different styles at the same time. Around the time that he was composing *Visions fugitives* he was also writing his well-known *Classical Symphony*, which pre-dated Stravinsky's neo-classical *Pulcinella* by a couple of years.