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Barry Douglas

Piano



In 1986, Barry Douglas became the first non-Russian pianist to win the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow since Van Cliburn's victory thirty years earlier. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Barry studied piano, organ, cello and clarinet at the Methodist College in Belfast from an early age. At the age of sixteen, he became a pupil of the pianist Felicitas LeWinter, who had emigrated from Austria to study with the Liszt student Emil von Sauer - in that regard, Barry can be considered a musical great-grandchild of Franz Liszt. He further studied with John Barstow and Maria Curcio in London. Prior to his spectacular victory in Moscow, Barry was a prizewinner at the Concurso Internacional Palomo O'Shea in 1980 in Santander and at the Van Cliburn Competition in 1985 in Texas.

He works closely with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin and the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast. Barry is also Artistic Director of the Clondeboy Festival in Northern Ireland. In 1999 he founded the chamber orchestra Camerata Ireland to promote the best young musicians from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In addition to striving for musical excellence, one of the orchestra's aims is to advance the peace process in Ireland by promoting dialogue and collaboration through its music education programs. Barry regularly tours the world with Camerata Ireland. Highlights of recent seasons have included Camerata Ireland's debut at the BBC Proms in London and the world premiere of a new cantata commissioned by the venerable Irish Society.

Barry Douglas has performed with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Seattle Symphony, Melbourne and Sydney Symphony, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Moscow State Symphony, Russian National Orchestra, Vancouver and Colorado Symphony Orchestras, The Hallé Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and most recently with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lille, Nuremberg Symphony, Staatskapelle Halle, and many others.

Barry celebrated the 30th anniversary of his victory at the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition by performing complete cycles of the Tchaikovsky piano concertos with the National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin and the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast. He is also known for his promotion of contemporary repertoire, having given the premiere of Kevin Volans' Piano Concerto No. 4 with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the European premiere of the Penderecki Piano Concerto.

A sought-after recitalist and chamber musician, he has performed all over the world, from the Royal Albert Hall, Barbican and Wigmore Hall and the Verbier Festival to the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, the Grand Theatre in Shanghai and other cities in China. In addition to his concert tours in North America and China, Barry performs regularly throughout Europe.

His numerous CD recordings for BMG/RCA and now exclusively for Chandos include the recent complete recording of the solo piano works of Johannes Brahms, of which the International Record Review wrote: "...this cycle is set to be a ground-breaking version." His current recording projects include the solo piano works of Schubert, Tchaikovsky and Liszt. Barry also explores Irish folk music with Chandos through his own arrangements, working with everything from old tunes to pieces by contemporary songwriters.

Barry Douglas is a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).