

## MUSIC ON SUNDAYS

CHRIST CHURCH, CHICHESTER, 29 MAY 2011

**SERGEI PODOBEDOV (piano)**

***Chopin 24 Preludes, Op.28***

***Chopin Mazurkas & Waltzes***

***Scherzo No.3 in C sharp minor***

***Prokofiev Sonata No.7***

Do you have to go to the South Bank or Carnegie Hall to hear a virtuoso pianist? Not when, for the second time this year, a player fully deserving of that title has performed in a Chichester church!

Russia has produced a remarkable stream of keyboard lions down the years. A list of legendary names springs more readily to mind than with just about any other nation - Rachmaninov, Horowitz, Richter, Gilels, etc, etc. Its pianists always seem to possess extraordinarily fleet and powerful fingers, and Sergei Podobedov proved to be no exception. In Chopin's Op.28, that power was put to good use in the turbulent 8th and 14th preludes: indeed, despite the drawback of occasionally hard tone, the more rhetorical numbers were exceptionally impactful. Sergei was also most sensitive to Chopin's unpredictable mood swings, and introspective passages were played with poetry and imagination. Particularly striking were the sepulchral tread of no.2, and his pacing of the build-up to no.15's menacing centre.

After the interval, Sergei excelled in the two Chopin mazurkas, fully realising their variety of rhythm and atmosphere. But the highlight of the recital was his playing of Prokofiev's astonishing seventh sonata. It was not hard to guess that this was written during World War 2. Coming after a couple of waltzes by Chopin, the nightmarishness of Prokofiev's vision - now terrifying, now desolate - was all the more striking in the hands of such a gifted pianist. In the headlong finale, Sergei's playing was exceptionally dexterous, enabling the music to chase away the previous movements' vision of hell.

Phil Jenkins