

MARGARET FINGERHUT

Margaret Fingerhut was born in London of Ukrainian and Polish ancestry. Described by *Gramophone* as a pianist of “consummate skill and thrilling conviction”, her distinguished career has taken her to many countries. She is particularly known for her innovative recital programmes in which she explores the highways and byways of the piano repertoire. As a concerto soloist she has appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the London Mozart Players, in major venues such as the Royal Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican. She is often heard on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM and many radio stations worldwide.

Her extensive discography on the Chandos label has received much critical acclaim and won many accolades. Her recordings reflect her long-standing fascination with exploring lesser-known repertoire, including works by Bax, Berkeley, Bloch, Dukas, Falla, Finzi, Grieg, Howells, Leighton, Novák, Stanford and Suk as well as several pioneering collections of 19th century Russian and early 20th century French piano music. She was the soloist in the première recording of Elgar's sketches for his Piano Concerto slow movement, arranged by Percy Young. Other première recordings of British repertoire include Edgar Bainton's Concerto Fantasia, Bax's Octet and works by Howells, Leighton, Malcolm Arnold, Lennox Berkeley and Michael Berkeley. “Margaret Fingerhut deserves our most heartfelt admiration for her championship of the byways of the British repertoire twentieth century piano repertory.” (*MusicWeb International*). Margaret also made the first recording of a rediscovered student piece by Rachmaninoff, as well as two solo piano pieces by Sergey Taneyev.

Two of her Bax recordings - the Octet with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble and the Concertante for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra with Vernon Handley and the BBC Philharmonic - were short-listed for *Gramophone* awards. Her disc of solo piano music by the Polish/French composer Alexandre Tansman was awarded the accolade of “Diapason d’Or” in France and received high praise: “A triumph of piano playing” (*Pianist*). Her CD of encores "Endless Song" was Featured Album of the Week on Classic FM and was selected as “Editor's Choice” in *Pianist* as well as being awarded an "Outstanding" accolade in *International Record Review*.

Margaret maintains a keen interest in working with contemporary composers and she has given first performances of works by Tony Bridgewater, James Francis Brown, Peter Copley, Clive Jenkins, Roxanna Panufnik, Farhad Poupel and Paul Spicer in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Sage Gateshead, Three Choirs Festival and Ryedale Festival.

Teaching has always been an important part of Margaret's life, and she holds a visiting post at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in 2015. She has given masterclasses in the USA, Canada, China and Japan, and she is a regular guest at international summer schools such as Chetham's, Jackdaws and Dartington. Her teaching at Dartington was described by *The Spectator* as demonstrating “enormous skill and sympathy”.

In 2019 Margaret undertook a major recital tour, performing a programme called “Far from the Home I Love” at 32 venues across the UK to raise money for refugees and asylum seekers. Her specially created programme of words and music gave a cultural context to what it means to be a migrant. A gala livestream concert during lockdown in 2020 saw her reach her goal of raising £88,000, which is £1,000 for every piano key. She was presented with a ‘Champion of Sanctuary’ award by City of Sanctuary UK in recognition of her work.

In 2022 Margaret collaborated with a young Ukrainian filmmaker to make a powerful video in support of Ukraine. Set to her performance of *Les Rochers d’Outche-Coche* by the Ukrainian composer Sergei Bortkiewicz, the video raised over £20,000 for British-Ukrainian Aid.