

# contact

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5th February : Barber Institute of Fine Arts.  
(University of Birmingham) lunchtime  
piano recital of music by Prokofiev and  
Debussy, played by Julia Illingworth.

This programme, consisting of Prokofiev's Sixth Piano Sonata and Four Preludes by Debussy, provided a good opportunity to compare the styles of these two composers. Debussy achieves his effect by directness. Every note, phrase and chord is enjoyable, not only as contributing to an overall effect, but as a value in itself. From the very beginning we are at once in the realm of intense musical feeling. Prokofiev, on the other hand, uses indirect methods to achieve his effect. We listen to long sequences, repetitive and often uninteresting in themselves, but which acquire value by relation to other parts of the music or cumulatively with the passage of time.

This contrast between directness and indirectness of style was well displayed in this concert. Miss Illingworth performed the Prokofiev with just the persistent energy and confidence required to bring out the effects of its long and complex movements. The directness of Debussy's style, by contrast, was thus immediately evident when she then played four of his preludes. She conveyed the atmospheres of these pieces very well, most memorably in a brilliant performance of the mysterious and exciting "Fireworks".

CHRIS VILLARS