

Steinway Society

The Bay Area

Piano Series 2014-2015

Our 20th Year



Agustin Aniévas

September 20, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Mountain View Center
for the Performing Arts



Ann Schein

October 18, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Visual & Performing
Arts Center,
DeAnza College,
Cupertino



Denis Kozhukhin

November 22, 2014

7:30 p.m.

McAfee Performing
Arts Center, Saratoga



Letter from the President



Dear Steinway Society Patron,

We are delighted you have joined us for the start of our 20th Season! We are especially pleased to be launching the season with this rare opportunity to experience the joys of Mr. Agustin Aniévas' masterful pianism.

If you are not already a subscriber, we hope you will think about joining us for this 20th anniversary season, presenting six more world-acclaimed pianists: Ann Schein, known for "elegant artistry;" Denis Kozhukhin, who "had the audience jumping from their seats;" Alexander Korsantia, "an incredible tour de force;" Alexander Ghindin, "a poet and a singer of the piano;" the Lavrova / Primakov Duo, "quite spectacular;" and, Sofya Gulyak "Phenomenal . . . La Grand Dame du piano."

You have a special treat ahead: truly inspiring performances. We hope you will subscribe and enjoy concerts celebrating Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff and other great composers whose music has lifted spirits for centuries.

If you subscribe **tonight**, we will welcome you with a bottle of wine to take home and invitations to join us at special events during the Season, such as the post-concert reception with Mr. Aniévas. Subscribers also receive substantial discounts off single ticket prices, first choice of best seats in the house, and the convenience of exchanging tickets. Simply visit the Ticket Desk tonight!

We look forward to welcoming all of our patrons to delightful musical experiences, as great artists perform some of the world's best-loved piano music.

Sincerely,
Sandra Wales
President

Agustin Aniévas



Born in New York City of Spanish and Mexican descent, Agustin Aniévas enjoys an internationally renowned reputation. He is recognized for effortless style and virtuoso panache, his warm sounds and sensitive musicality always at the service of the composer.

As a 12-year-old, he was presented in recital at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, the youngest artist ever to receive that honor. His studies at The Juilliard School with the renowned Adele Marcus taught him, he recalls, "how to build a musical phrase in a seamless and beautiful way," and to "speak the music to each listener individually."

In 1961, Mr. Aniévas won the First International Dimitri Mitropoulos Music Competition, launching an international concert career. He gave frequent recitals at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, and the orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles.

He recorded works of Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Schubert and all the Rachmaninoff concerti and Preludes in the legendary Abbey Road recording studios of EMI (HMV).

In addition to an acclaimed performing career, Mr. Aniévas was Chairman of the Piano Department and Professor of Piano at Brooklyn College's Conservatory of Music in New York. He also serves on the board of the National Chopin Foundation and Competition.

Program

I

Impromptus, Op. 90 (D. 899)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

No. 1 in C minor

No. 2 in E-flat Major

No. 3 in G-flat Major

No. 4 in A-flat Major

II

Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Presto

Largo e mesto

Menuetto: Allegro

Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

III

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Polonaise in C-sharp minor, Op. 26, No. 1

Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat Major, Op. 29

***Fantaisie-Impromptu* in C-sharp minor, Op. 66**

Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op. Posthumous

Nocturne No. 16 in E-flat Major, Op. 55, No. 2

***Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante*
in E-flat Major, Op. 22**

Sponsored by Steinway and Sons



Program Notes

Impromptus, Op. 90 No. 1-4

Franz Schubert

In 1827, a year before his death, Franz Schubert composed a set of eight Impromptus. The first four were published in his lifetime as Op. 90, the last four posthumously as Op. 142. Like his Six Moments Musicaux, these impromptus are lovely examples of the early 19th-century Romantic genre. Each differs from the next in style and musical traits. The first Impromptu is the longest, a set of variations on two themes. The second Impromptu displays technique with quick scales and offbeat rhythms, while the third Impromptu requires subtlety and expressiveness to do justice to the lyrical melody. A string of cascading arpeggios in the fourth Impromptu glides the set to a close.

Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10 No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven

This Sonata is the third and last in Op. 10. Written in 1798, it is dedicated to Countess Anne Margarete von Browne, Beethoven's wealthy patron and piano student. Because of the strong competition for recognition and patronage in Vienna, Beethoven was eager to compose as much as possible – he wrote violin sonatas, string trios, and violin romances at the same time. Within Sonata No. 7 are elements meant to demonstrate his great skill as a composer, from the piece's inventive details to its distinct style. The first movement is playful and charming, the second much sadder. The third movement hesitates, before a full recovery is made in the fourth. The rondo contains cheerful teasing of the same musical phrase before the music peacefully ends.

Polonaise in C-sharp minor, Op. 26 No. 1

Frédéric Chopin

The two polonaises in Frédéric Chopin's Op. 26 are known for the great technique and energy they require. The first Polonaise begins with a set of descending, forte octaves that leads into a passionate theme in C-sharp minor. The second theme brings a calmer mood and a more fluid texture. But the turmoil returns with the opening theme of the piece's last section.

Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat Major, Op. 29

Frédéric Chopin

Composed in 1837, when Chopin had been in Paris for six years, the Impromptu in A-flat is Chopin's first published. Carefully crafted in ternary A-B-A form, the Impromptu is both complex and difficult. The rippling triplets in both hands have been likened to sunlight sparkling off water. The middle section melody is both pensive and graceful.

Fantaisie-Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66

Frédéric Chopin

The Fantaisie-Impromptu in C-sharp minor is one of Chopin's most famous and most oft-performed pieces. It was inspired by another well-known piece, Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Texture is supplied by the rhythmic contrast between the left hand's triple time and right hand's duple time. The dreamy middle-section melody became the song, "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows." A fantastical set of 16th notes rolls along as the left hand hints at this theme before the piece resolves with a rolled C-sharp Major chord.

Nocturne No. 16 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 No. 2

Frédéric Chopin

Chopin was responsible for popularizing the nocturne form for solo piano and composed 21 nocturnes. His nocturnes are usually characterized by melancholy, with melodies floating over arpeggios or chords. The form is the ternary A-B-A, with the repeated "A" section augmented with embellishments. Nocturne No. 16 is marked *legato*, instructing the pianist to play the theme as smoothly as possible. This touch, along with the slow and sustained tempo, contributes to the piece's mood.

Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante in E-flat Major, Op. 22

Frédéric Chopin

Composed between 1830 and 1834, the Grande Polonaise was initially written for piano and orchestra before Chopin decided to write an Andante Spianato for solo piano to precede it. However, Chopin's emphasis on the piano allows a complete solo piano performance of the Andante Spianato and the Grande Polonaise. The Andante is smooth and melodic, drawing its listeners into a dream-like state before the Polonaise interjects. The Polonaise is marked *forte* and *espressivo*, almost demanding that the pianist deploy every virtuosic talent he or she possesses. It is a show-stopping piece, and the ending coda brings the work to a dazzling close.

Ann Schein



From her first recordings for Kapp Records, and her highly acclaimed Carnegie Hall recital debut, Ann Schein has consistently earned high praise in major American and European cities and in more than 50 countries around the world. She has performed with conductors including George Szell, James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, David Zinman, and Sir Colin Davis, and with major orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Washington National Symphony, the London Philharmonic, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. During the Kennedy administration, she was invited to perform at the White House.

In 1980-81, Ms. Schein extended the legacy of her teachers, Mieczyslaw Munz, Arthur Rubinstein, and Dame Myra Hess, performing six concerts of Chopin's major repertoire in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall to outstanding reviews and sold-out houses.

From 1980 to 2000, she was a member of the piano faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. She has been an artist-faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School since 1984, and is a sought-after judge in major international music competitions. She was chosen to hold the Victoria and Ronald Simms Chair, awarded to a member of the Aspen piano faculty, for two years (2006 and 2007), extended to 2008 in recognition of her teaching excellence.

From 2007 to 2010, she served on the jury of the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, which named Kirill Gerstein as winner of the prestigious 2010 Gilmore Artist Award. She has recorded for Koch International Classics, Sony, Ivory Classics and Phoenix USA.

Program

Polonaise-Fantasie in A-flat Major, Op. 61

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Dauidsbündlertänze, Op. 6

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Intermission

24 Preludes, Op. 28

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Steinway Society thanks an Anonymous Donor for sponsoring this concert.

Program Notes

Polonaise-Fantasie in A-flat Major, Op. 61

Frederic Chopin

Published in 1846, just three years before Chopin's death, this Polonaise-Fantasie embodies a composition style so completely different that it is sometimes referred to as the beginning of "last Chopin." While the earlier sections clearly have the meter, rhythm, and dance-like melodies of a Polonaise, the piece is filled with musical ambiguities that make it seem more like a Fantasy. The overall mood is serious and thoughtful. In the beginning, the composition is marked *maestoso* (stately and dignified), but then a polonaise theme enters in a more lyrical form and, signaled by the intensified chords and the faster pace, builds into something glorious, before fading into silence. With such a different style, this piece was as confusing for first audiences to grasp as for Chopin to name. However, the cohesiveness between the Polonaise and Fantasie eventually attracted pianists to performing it in their recitals.

Dauidsbündlertänze, Op. 6

Robert Schumann

Despite the early opus number, Schumann composed this piece in 1837, after he had composed such famous works as *Carnaval Op. 9*. Clara Wieck, later his wife, was often the inspiration for Schumann's works, and this work, *Dauidsbündlertänze* is an example. Comprised of 18 pieces, the suite expresses the hopes, dreams, ecstasy and sorrows of his love for her. While *Dauidsbündlertänze* is translated as "Dances of the League of David," the music resembles character pieces more than dances. The alternating moods are exchanges between Florestan and Eusebius, Schumann's representations of the active and passive sides of his psyche, and each piece is marked with either or both of the characters' initials, which Schumann removed in later revisions. *Dauidsbund*, or the League of David, refers to the imaginary group of artists who stand for art and innovation and against the shallow aspects of contemporary culture. The suite is widely highly regarded for its myriad of themes, keys, tones and energy. The dialogue ultimately ends with a waltz in C Major and the striking of midnight in the sounding of low Cs.

24 Preludes, Op. 28

Frederic Chopin

From 1835 to 1839, Chopin wrote the 24 Preludes as a set of short piano pieces, one for each key. The ordering of the pieces (and their key signatures) follows the circle of fifths, with each major key preceding its relative minor. Chopin begins with C-Major, whose key signature involves no sharps or flats, then moves to A minor, then G Major, and so on. Because of this relationship and the technical skills required to master the whole series, many performers elect to play all the 24 Preludes in one continuous performance. Although one motif does appear in multiple preludes, no specific theme or formal structure unifies them. Since Chopin wrote these pieces over a period that included his companionship with George Sand (pen name for French novelist and memoirist Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin), and falling ill during their trip to Mallorca, the emotions expressed may reflect his feelings during the time. With each prelude being extremely short, the set has been both criticized for being too informal and praised for its concise representation of a full range of emotions, from joy and ecstasy to melancholy and frustration.



Denis Kozhukhin was launched onto the international scene after winning First Prize in the 2010 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels at age 23. His previous awards included First Prize at the Vendome Prize in Lisbon in 2009, and Third Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2006.

Born in 1986 in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia into a family of musicians, he began his piano studies at the age of four with his mother. As a boy, he attended the Balakirev School of Music, and from 2000 to 2007, studied at the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid. Upon graduating, he received his diploma personally from the Queen of Spain and was named best student in his year and twice, best pianist of chamber group, with his own Cervantes Trio. After his studies in Madrid, Mr. Kozhukhin was invited to study at the Piano Academy at Lake Como. He completed his studies with Kirill Gerstein in Stuttgart.

Mr. Kozhukhin has appeared at many of the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls including the Verbier Festival, where he won the Prix d'Honneur in 2003, Progetto Martha Argerich in Lugano, Klavier-Festival Ruhr, Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival, Carnegie Hall, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Milan, and Auditorium du Louvre Paris. He records on the Onyx label.

Program

Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:24

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro

Adagio

Finale. Presto

7 Fantasien, Op. 116

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Capriccio. Presto energico

Intermezzo. Andante

Capriccio. Allegro passionato

Intermezzo. Adagio

Intermezzo. Andante con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento

Intermezzo. Andantino teneramente

Capriccio. Allegro agitato

Intermission

L'Isle Joyeuse L. 106

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, Op. 84

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Andante dolce

Andante sognando

Vivace

Program Notes

Sonata in D Major, Hob XVI:24

Franz Joseph Haydn

Over the course of his long career as a composer, Haydn experimented with many styles and foci. Around 1773, when he wrote Sonata in D Major, Hob XVI:24, he had become interested in the Baroque art of writing fugues and in composing light and entertaining music. This Sonata's first movement takes a light and entertaining theme with toccata sequences and intensifies it through imitation. For the second, Adagio movement, the music remains free, but the theme sounds remorseful, especially when accented by the left hand's perpetual accompaniment. However, this diversion is short, and Haydn introduces another playful melody for the third movement, this time using syncopation. The theme is modified, and then restated as one would expect, but Haydn interrupts it with some very obvious chords before continuing to a classic ending.

Seven Fantasien, Op. 116

Johannes Brahms

A prolific composer and virtuoso pianist, Brahms adhered to the compositional techniques of Haydn and Bach, but created melodies considered part of the Romantic era. Written in 1892, Seven Fantasien Op. 116 is a later work and exhibits an intricate blend of intimacy and passion. Despite being a set, the seven pieces function as one work, with the first and last Capriccios written in D minor and with consistent use of descending thirds linking consecutive pieces. While Brahms may have relied on these features to create the structure, his understanding of the piano allowed him to express differing moods in the middle Intermezzos. He brings back the D minor key for the finish, along with descending thirds and diminished sevenths.

L'Isle Joyeuse, L. 106

Claude Debussy

L'Isle Joyeuse, or "The Joyful Island" was composed in 1904 while Debussy was on the Isle of Jersey with Emma Bardac, who became his second wife. This piece is based on a famous 18th-century painting by Antoine Watteau called L'embarquement pour Cythère, which shows travelers making a pilgrimage to Cythera, the mythical birthplace of Venus, the goddess of love. The mythic and impressionistic elements

come through from the start; the first theme evokes a dream state, with a wave-like motion throughout the higher register. Here, Debussy utilizes whole tone and Lydian scales to paint the picture. Then, the music becomes choppy as our travelers encounter waves in their voyage to Cythera; but, once that ends in silence, a new dance melody slowly builds, becoming louder and more animated. This signals our travelers' reaching their destination, and Debussy instructs the pianist to maintain the excitement until the very end.

Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, Op. 84

Sergei Prokofiev

Prokofiev composed Piano Sonata No. 8, the last in a cycle of three piano sonatas also referred to as the "War Sonatas," in the summer of 1944, during World War II. Because he was composing this piece simultaneously with others, the themes tend to overlap; the themes and melodies in the first and second movements are taken from The Queen of Spades Op. 70 and Eugene Onegin Op. 71, respectively. The Sonata is serious in character and conceived on a large scale: the 1st movement is longer than the last two combined. Prokofiev employs many different harmonies, and inserts sharps and naturals to modulate the tonalities. Dissonant and chaotic characteristics are interlaced with playful nocturnes. The second movement, marked Andante sognando ("dreamily"), remains subdued. The third movement's waltz-like melody is filled with dissonances. The Sonata's opening theme returns in a different key and is quickly joined by many themes, both new and old.

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Piano Series 2014–2015



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Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts



Ann Schein

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Denis Kozhukhin

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Alexander Korsantia

February 7, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Oshman Family Jewish Community Center, Palo Alto



Alexander Ghindin

March 14, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Smithwick Theatre, Foothill College, Los Altos Hills



Natalia Lavrova / Vassily Primakov

April 18, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Visual & Performing Arts Center, De Anza College, Cupertino



Sofya Gulyak

May 17, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Oshman Family Jewish Community Center, Palo Alto



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