

Steinway Society

The Bay Area

Piano Series 2014-2015

Our 20th Year



Alexander Korsantia

Saturday, February 7, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Oshman Family Jewish
Community Center, Palo Alto



**Natalia Lavrova
Vassily Primakov**

Saturday, April 18, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Visual & Performing Arts Center,
De Anza College, Cupertino



Alexander Ghindin

Saturday, March 14, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Smithwick Theatre, Foothill College,
Los Altos Hills



Sofya Gulyak

Sunday, May 17, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

Oshman Family Jewish
Community Center, Palo Alto



Letter from the President



Dear Steinway Society Patron,

We are delighted you have joined us! If you are not already a subscriber, we invite you to obtain subscriber prices by subscribing at Alexander Korsantia's February 7th recital to a Season 4-Pack – counting his recital and purchasing tickets for the season's three remaining concerts by equally world-acclaimed pianists: 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.” They will present truly inspiring performances, celebrating Beethoven, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Chopin, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff and other great composers whose music has lifted spirits for centuries.

The subscriber price is 15%-20% off single ticket prices, depending on the seating section you chose. Subscribers also receive first choice of best seats in the house, \$150 in San Jose restaurant coupons, and the ability to exchange tickets for different dates. Simply visit the Ticket Desk at Mr. Korsantia's recital.

Steinway Society needs your help to continue bringing classical music programs to our community. Your tax-deductible contribution will help support musical arts in South Bay Area schools, in community programs and in our international artists concert series. It will truly make a difference.

Remember those special programs and field trips when growing up, and those opportunities to experience the Arts? Those programs, trips and opportunities are at risk in the Bay Area. In Steinway Society's 20th season, we've created something new - **SSBA Presents The Arts**. With our partners, Music in the Schools (serving East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park) and the Progressions program of San Jose Jazz (serving East San Jose), we're promoting local musical arts. **SSBA Presents the Arts** brings professional musicians and talented up-and-comers to school assembly performances. We also provide students, their families, school faculty and staff with free admission and pre-performance education at Steinway Society concerts. And, we're planning teach-in days, to inspire students through music elective classes, collaborations, and by seeing that people want them to succeed.

With best wishes and appreciation,

Sandra Wales
President

Alexander Korsantia



Dubbed “a major artist” by the *Miami Herald* and a “quiet maverick” by the *Daily Telegraph*, pianist **Alexander Korsantia** has been praised for the “clarity of his technique, richly varied tone and dynamic phrasing” (*Baltimore Sun*), and a “piano technique where difficulties simply do not exist” (*Calgary Sun*). The *Boston Globe* found his interpretation of *Pictures at an Exhibition* to be “a performance that could annihilate all others one has heard.”

Since winning the First Prize and Gold Medal of the Arthur Rubinstein Piano Master Competition and the First Prize at the Sidney International Piano Competition, Mr. Korsantia's career has taken him to many of the world's major concert halls, collaborating with renowned conductors such as Valery Gergiev, Christoph Eschenbach, and Paavo Järvi, and orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Kirov Orchestra and Israel Philharmonic. He has performed at numerous festivals including the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg and the Newport, Tanglewood, Vancouver, and Gilmore Festivals. In 1999, he received the Georgian government's National Honor Medal. He has recorded works of Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Schubert and all the Rachmaninoff concerti and Preludes in the legendary Abbey Road recording studios of EMI (HMV).

Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, Mr. Korsantia immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1992. He currently resides in Boston and is a member of the piano faculty at Boston's New England Conservatory. He has recorded for Piano Classics, MCA, Bel Air Music and OEHMS Classics.

Program

Fifteen Variations with the Fugue in E-flat Major, Op 35, “Eroica”

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No. 4, in E-flat major, Op. 7

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro molto e con brio

Largo, con gran espressione

Allegro

Rondo: Poco allegretto e grazioso

Intermission

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Promenade	No. 6 “Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle”
No. 1 “The Gnome”	Promenade
Promenade	No. 7 “The Market Place at Limoges”
No. 2 “The Old Castle”	No. 8 “Catacombs”
Promenade	No. 9 “The Hut of Baba Yaga”
No. 3 “Tuileries”	No. 10 “The Great Gate of Kiev”
No. 4 “Bydlo”	
Promenade	
No. 5 “The Ballet of Unhatched Chicks”	

Program Notes

Fifteen Variations with the Fugue in E-flat major, Op 35, “Eroica”

Ludwig van Beethoven

This set of fifteen variations is often called the “Eroica” variations, as it is based upon the theme of the finale of the *Symphony No. 3*, or “Eroica” *Symphony*. But, in fact, this work predates the *Symphony*, as do the *Creatures of Prometheus* ballet and the *Contredanse No. 7*, WoO 14, which also use the theme. It clearly was a favorite of Beethoven, and may be based on material in the piano sonatas of Muzio Clementi. The piano variations begin with main theme’s bass line, followed by three variations before the main theme actually appears. In the ballet, this represents Prometheus’ gradual creation of life forms. The work concludes with a virtuosic fugue. It surely influenced Brahms, whose *Handel Variations* closely following Beethoven’s form.

Piano Sonata No. 4, in E-flat major, Op. 7

Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven wrote his fourth piano sonata while visiting Bratislava in 1796. It is sometimes subtitled “Grand Sonata,” and Beethoven often chose the key of E-flat major for works he wished to sound especially grand, such as the *Symphony No. 3* (“Eroica”), and *Piano Concerto No. 5* (“Emperor”). In four movements, it is one of his longest piano sonatas; only the “Hammerklavier” is longer. While clearly from Beethoven’s classical period, heavily influenced by Haydn, some of Beethoven’s tendencies to innovate are readily apparent. For example, the first movement is in 6/8 time, which was traditionally used only for last movement rondos in the Classical Period, whereas the last movement is actually a rondo, but opens with a lyrical and gently-paced theme rather than typical running passagework.

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky

Mussorgsky composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* in 1873, following the sudden death of his good friend, the Russian artist Viktor Hartmann. This suite is comprised of ten movements, each illustrating a Hartmann painting depicting his travels abroad: the gnome's sneaky and abrupt mannerism in Mvmt. 1, the playful scampering of children in Paris' *Jardin des Tuileries* in Mvmt. 3, and the commotion in the market in Mvmt. 7. Many musical elements aim at recreating the setting, e.g., in Mvmt. 8, the fortissimo chords echo from the piano as if it were in the catacombs. The most notable theme is the Promenade. We hear it at the beginning, played powerfully in the right hand, and then between every one or two movements, except the last four. The five Promenades are distinct, showing Mussorgsky's emotions changing across the exhibition. It is decisive, then slow and leisurely, then excited, then sad, especially when Mussorgsky starts to remember his deceased friend. Despite the changing moods, Mussorgsky chooses to end the suite majestically by invoking the image of the Great Gate of Kiev. Although the piece was not discovered until after Mussorgsky's death, it is remarkably popular today, often played by virtuoso pianists and transcribed for orchestra (most notably by Maurice Ravel). The piece's challenge lies not only the technique required, like the 16th-note triplet tremolo in the Mvmt. 9 *andante*, but also in the mannerisms and emotions.

Alexander Ghindin



A native of Moscow, Russian pianist **Alexander Ghindin** has established himself as a major force on the international piano scene. In 1994, at age 17, he became the youngest ever winner of the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition, later gaining Second Prize at Brussels' Queen Elisabeth Competition. Mr. Ghindin has performed throughout Russia, Europe and Japan. He graduated in 2001 from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory. In 2006, he was named an "Honored Artist of Russia." In 2007, he won the First Prize of the Cleveland International Piano Competition and in 2010 First Prize of the International Piano Competition of Santa Catarina in Brazil. Since 2006, Mr. Ghindin has been Artistic Director of his own concert series at one of Russia's most distinguished concert venues, Moscow's Svetlanov Hall.

In addition to a 2010 tour of the U. S. with The Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, Mr. Ghindin has appeared with a host of distinguished orchestras, including the London and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre de Paris, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Orchestre National de Belgique, Swedish Royal Festival Orchestra, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, and with conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Paavo Järvi, and Leonard Slatkin. An avid chamber musician, Mr. Ghindin has collaborated with Vladimir Spivakov and the late Nikolai Petrov for many concerts and recordings.

Mr. Ghindin has recorded on the labels of Capriccio, CD Accord, Decca, DML Classics, Naxos, Piano Classics, Tri-M Classics, Russian Season, and Ondine (2001).

Program

Dumka: Russian Rustic Scene, Op. 59

Piotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

“The Lark” from A Farewell to Saint Petersburg

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857)

transcribed by Mily Balakirev (1837-1910)

Barcarolle, Op. 44

Anatoly Liadov (1855-1914)

12 Preludes from 24 Preludes, Op. 11

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

“Funeral March” (E minor) from Three Morceaux, Op. 31

Allegro cantabile e legiero (E minor) - from Four Fairy Tales, Op. 34

“March of the Paladin” (E minor) - from Two Fairy Tales, Op. 14

“Campanella” (B minor) - from Two Fairy Tales, Op. 20

Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951)

Intermission

Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

transcribed by Tatiana Nikolayeva (1924-1993)

Hopak from (from Sorochinsky Fair)

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

The Flight of the Bumblebee (from The Tale of Tsar Saltan)

Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov (1844-1908)

Lullaby

Piotr Tchaikovsky

(transcriptions by Sergei Rachmaninoff)

Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 36 (1931 revision)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Allegro agitato

Non allegro

L'istesso tempo; Allegro molto

Program Notes

Dumka: Russian Rustic Scene, Op. 59

Piotr Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's works for solo piano are few in number, and other than *The Seasons* cycle, *Dumka*, sub-titled “*Russian Rustic Scene*,” is perhaps the best known. Written just six months before his death in 1893, *Dumka* was commissioned by Tchaikovsky's Parisian music publisher. It starts with a gloomy but tender theme, but later gives way to joyous and rhythmic revelry.

“The Lark” from A Farewell to Saint Petersburg

Mikhail Glinka

transcribed by Mily Balakirev

The subtitle of this beautiful and bittersweet work, “Farewell to St. Petersburg,” reflects that in 1840, when it was written, Glinka, newly divorced, was in the process of leaving the city. Balakirev transcribed the song into a pianistic showpiece with contrapuntal flourishes and clear evocation of the lark in the introduction, interludes, and postlude. It has been a favorite work of Russian pianists for generations.

Barcarolle, Op. 44

Anatoly Liadov

Anatoly Liadov was a contemporary of Tchaikovsky and is perhaps best known as the teacher of Sergei Prokofiev, and for garnering sponsorship and publication for Russian musicians such as Glazunov, Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov. He composed a large number of piano miniatures, including this lovely Barcarolle.

12 Preludes from 24 Preludes, Op. 11

Alexander Scriabin

Alexander Scriabin wrote the *24 Preludes* early in his career, from 1888 to 1896. Like Chopin's *24 Preludes*, there is one for each major and minor key, and the order follows the circle of fifths, with each major key followed by its relative minor. We hear intriguing mixtures of dissonance and lyrical melodies. Scriabin was heavily influenced by various philosophies and ideologies, leading to the preludes' differing personalities. They begin with lyricism and romantic sounds, recalling

Chopin and Liszt, but become more effusive and tumultuous. Some are mysterious and subdued, others passionate and anguished. In the last prelude, the music builds tension with a powerful Rachmaninoff-like theme, big chords stuttering over one another until they ultimately resolve.

“Funeral March,” #2 from Three Morceaux, Op. 31
Allegro cantabile e legiero, #2 from Four Fairy Tales, Op. 34
“March of the Paladin,” #2 from Two Fairy Tales, Op. 14
“Campanella,” #2 from Two Fairy Tales, Op. 20

Nikolai Medtner

Medtner was the first to introduce skazka, or fairy tales, to solo piano music, and composed 38 of them. While each skazka can be a picture, image or story, many have no specific reference, leaving interpretation to the pianist and audience. The fairy tales exhibit many techniques Medtner liked to employ, from the use of major and minor tonal systems to unique forms and harmonies. The “Allegro cantabile” from Op. 34 focuses on a simple tranquil melody, while the “March of the Paladin” in Op. 14 contains heroic motifs over complex rhythms. The “Campanella” of Op. 20 relies on the juxtaposition of a chromatic and a whole tone scale to depict bells ringing, while the imagery of the “Funeral March” in Op. 31 is evoked through the use of counterpoint.

Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67

Sergei Prokofiev–Tatyana Nikolayeva

Prokofiev wrote the musical symphony, *Peter and the Wolf*, in just a few days to introduce children to orchestral instruments. Tatyana Nikolayeva converted it into a piano suite. Prokofiev gave each character a theme and an instrument: Peter (strings), The Bird (flute), The Duck (oboe), The Cat (clarinet), The Grandfather (bassoon), and The Wolf (French horn). In this piano suite, the tones imitate the instruments. Literal depictions are present, for instance: the light flutter of The Bird’s wings, the Duck’s nasal sounds, the treed Cat’s pitiful meows, and The Grandfather’s grumpiness. In The Wolf’s episode, the theme enters the major mode once Peter has caught him. In the Triumphal March, we hear each character in the victory parade, with the Wolf on display; we can even hear the muted oboe sounds of the Duck, who had been eaten by the Wolf, emerging from the Wolf’s stomach.

Hopak (from Sorochinsky Fair)

Modest Mussorgsky

Lullaby

Piotr Tchaikovsky

The Flight of the Bumblebee (from The Tale of Tsar Saltan)

Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov

(transcriptions by Sergei Rachmaninoff)

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a consummate all-around musician, achieving remarkable success as a composer, pianist and conductor. He often transcribed music for piano with particular effectiveness, and in addition to the works on this program, transcribed works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Bizet, and Kreisler, all of which are now regularly performed by pianists.

Rimsky-Korsakov’s famous *Flight of the Bumblebee* needs little introduction and has been turned into a pianistic tour-de-force by Rachmaninoff. Also from an opera, albeit unfinished, the *Hopak* from *Sorochinsky Fair* is a rowdy and rollicking folk-song exhibiting great energy and fun. Tchaikovsky’s Lullaby shows the more tender side of Rachmaninoff’s prowess as a transcriber.

Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 36

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Rachmaninoff composed his *Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor* in 1913, but revised it in 1931, cutting 120 measures and modifying the music and textures. Vladimir Horowitz created a hybrid version that mixes elements from both versions. His version and Rachmaninoff’s revised version are the ones usually heard today. In both versions, the piece is one of the most powerful and breathtaking examples of late Romantic piano music. A forte descending arpeggio ending in two stately chords starts the piece and captures the audience’s attention. Then, a wave in the bass line builds to another powerful section. The Sonata as a whole emphasizes instinctive feelings and intuition, especially during the second movement, when an overwhelming sense of nostalgia comes bubbling forth unexpectedly. Rachmaninoff manages to transition seamlessly between lyrical melodies, sudden outbursts and declarations, melancholy and thoughtfulness.

Natalia Lavrova & Vassily Primakov

The **Lavrova/Primakov Duo**, established in 2010, has performed extensively throughout the USA, garnering accolades from audiences and critics alike.

Natalia Lavrova's sincerity of interpretation has won the hearts of audiences around the world. Solo and orchestral performances have taken her throughout Russia and to Canada, France, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom, South Africa and the USA, and include notable venues such as Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and Steinway Hall. She has captured top prizes at many competitions, including the Isabel Scionti, Music Academy of the West, and Silver Lake. Born in Moscow, she entered the Moscow Conservatory at age five. She earned her Bachelor of Music and Masters of Music degrees at Juilliard, under Jerome Lowenthal. Her repertoire includes more than 30 concertos and extensive solo and chamber music programs. She is a Yamaha Artist in Education.



Vassily Primakov has been hailed as a pianist of world importance. His first piano studies were with his mother. He entered Moscow's Central Special Music School at age 11, and at 17 began studies at the Juilliard School with Jerome Lowenthal. At Juilliard, he won the William Petschek Piano Recital Award, and in 2002, the Audience Prize in the Gina Bachauer International Artists Piano Competition, along with First Prize in the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2007, he was named the Classical Recording Foundation's "Young Artist of the Year." Mr. Primakov is a Yamaha Artist. He has released numerous recordings for Bridge Records.

In 2011, Ms. Lavrova and Mr. Primakov established their own record label, LP CLASSICS, an initiative committed to unearthing lost historical gems, presenting never-before released recordings, and enriching the discographies of emerging artistic stars.

Program

Fantasy for Two Pianos in A minor, Op. Posth.

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

Variations on a Theme by Beethoven for Two Pianos, Op. 35

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Concerto Pathétique for Two Pianos, S. 258

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Intermission

Variations on a Theme by Paganini for Two Pianos

Witold Lutoslawski (1913-1994)

Suite for Two Pianos No. 3 in C major, Op. 33 ("Variations")

Anton Arensky (1861-1906)

Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos, Op. 17

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Introduction (Alla marcia)

Valse (Presto)

Romance (Andantino)

Tarantelle (Presto)

Program Notes

Fantasy for Two Pianos in A minor

Alexander Scriabin

Scriabin wrote the *Fantasy for Two Pianos in A minor* in 1889 while a student at the Moscow Conservatory. Early in his career, Chopin was the primary influence, which explains the prevalence of traditional harmonies and dominant chords. The fantastical aspect comes from a main melody that references a dreamy lullaby. The voicing is balanced between the pianos – the pianists alternate playing the melody and overlaying the intricate accompaniment, all the while sharing the technical challenges.

Variations on a Theme by Beethoven for Two Pianos, Op. 35

Camille Saint-Saëns

Written in 1874, Saint-Saëns's *Variations on a Theme by Beethoven* is based on the third movement trio of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata in E-flat Major*, Op. 31 No. 3. As a pianist, organist, composer, and conductor, Saint-Saëns had a great understanding of form, rhythm, and style. In these *Variations*, he walks through different 19th century styles with clarity and distinction and delivers a pure and old-fashioned musical performance, complete with the scales and passages that he himself played with ease.

Concerto Pathétique for Two Pianos, S. 258

Franz Liszt

As a composer, Liszt often revised his works until he was completely satisfied. In 1865, he published a two-piano version of his *Grosses Konzertsolo* that he renamed *Concerto Pathétique*. Some debate exists as to why one is titled a concert-solo, implying a large-scale solo piano piece, while the other is titled a concerto, which entails certain structural expectations. In both the solo and two-piano versions, Liszt maintains the sonata form (exposition, development and recapitulation), paralleling the first, second and third movements of a concerto. In addition, Liszt uses the two pianos to give some of the more monotonous textures more power, divide the challenging trills and figures between the four hands, compose more improvisational passages in lieu of a recitative, and extend the coda for a richer closing.

Variations on a Theme by Paganini for Two Pianos

Witold Lutoslawski

Lutoslawski, along with his friend Andrzej Panufnik, performed for a living at Warsaw cafes during World War II. One piece in their repertoire was Lutoslawski's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*; it is also one of the few compositions that survived when he fled Warsaw right before the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. These variations are based on Paganini's *Caprice No. 24* for solo violin. According to the composer, each variation closely follows the model of the original, and the violin line is translated for the keyboard. Lutoslawski even utilizes counterpoint to emulate the sounds of the violin. On occasion, polyharmony occurs between the two pianos; however, the tonality is always intended to be clear. The *Variations* resembles a piano concerto, from its chord textures and virtuosic displays to the cadence in the final variation.

Suite for Two Pianos No. 3 in C major, Op. 33

Anton Arensky

Published in 1894, Arensky's *Suite for Two Pianos No. 3* is the third in a set of five *Suites*. The *Suites* are among the composer's most famous works and helped increase the popularity of two-piano music. His teacher at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, influenced Arensky in his student years, but Arensky later switched his attentions to Tchaikovsky. Arensky never created a style of his own, distinct from that of Tchaikovsky, thus making him less known today. Regardless, his *Suites for Two Pianos* are charming and fun to play and served as inspiration for two-piano pieces by his students, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin.

Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos, Op. 17

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Composed in 1901, Rachmaninoff's *Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos* is one of the first works he composed following the devastating failure of his *Symphony No. 1* three years earlier. Rachmaninoff returns with a strong sense of passion infused with introspection, reflecting the time spent during his recovery. *Suite No. 2* opens with a decisive and purposeful march that gives way to an ebullient waltz. In the waltz's middle, he introduces a powerfully romantic theme over accompanying bubbling figures. However, not until the third movement does his signature - composing melodies that evoke a flood of emotion - appear and reach an intense climax. The *Suite* ends with an upbeat Italian dance, a tarantella, a dance form designed historically to make the dancers sweat and in this music, meant to make the performers sweat, until the piece's end.



In September 2009 at the 16th Leeds International Piano Competition, **Sofya Gulyak** became (and remains) the only woman awarded the First Prize and the Princess Mary Gold Medal. She has since appeared to great acclaim all over the world. Her resume includes many other prestigious prizes including First Prize of the William Kapell International, Maj Lind Helsinki International, and Tivoli (Copenhagen) competitions, and Second Prize (first not awarded) of the Busoni (Italy) piano competition.

Ms. Gulyak is a native of Kazan (Russia), where she studied in a Special Music College, and the Kazan State Conservatoire. She graduated, with the highest distinction, from École Normale de Musique de Paris and continued her studies at the International Piano Academy “Incontri col Maestro” (Imola, Italy) and the Royal College of Music.

She has appeared as a soloist with many renowned orchestras, such as the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Leipzig Philharmonic, and Orchestre National de France, and with renowned conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy. Her festival appearances include Klavier Ruhr Festival, New York’s International Keyboard Festival, International Strasbourg Festival, Busoni Festival, Cracow Piano Festival, Liszt Festival at Villa d’Este, Ravello Festival, and Festival Chopin in Paris.

She has been a jury member at international piano competitions in Italy, France, Greece, and the USA, and invited to teach master classes in China, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, and Hong Kong. She is a piano faculty professor at the Royal College of Music in London and records for Champs Hill Records.

Program

Pilgrim’s Chorus from Tannhäuser, S.443

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) - Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Isolde’s Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde, S. 447

Richard Wagner - Franz Liszt

Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39

Frédéric Chopin

Intermission

Six Moments Musicaux, Op. 16

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

- 1. Andantino, B-flat minor**
- 2. Allegretto, E-flat minor**
- 3. Andante cantabile, B minor**
- 4. Presto, E minor**
- 5. Adagio sostenuto, D-flat major**
- 6. Maestoso, C major**

Program Notes

Pilgrim's Chorus from Tannhäuser

Richard Wagner - Franz Liszt

Wagner's romantic opera, *Tannhäuser* centers on the struggle between sacred and profane love, and redemption through love [Wikipedia]. Having been enraptured with Venus, the goddess of love, Tannhäuser goes to Rome to seek forgiveness, but the Pope refuses. Tannhäuser returns to find that his former love, Elisabeth, has died. He collapses, dying beside her bier. A pilgrims chorus enters and recounts a miracle: a flower sprouting from the Pope's staff, signifying Tannhäuser's redemption. The melody gradually becomes more energized before returning to its original tonality, with a slight pickup to signal hope. Liszt, whose daughter Cosima married Wagner, transcribed for piano a number of Wagner's works, and had great respect for him as a composer and friend.

Isolde's Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde

Richard Wagner - Franz Liszt

The opera, written in 1859, relates the tragedy of two clandestine lovers, Tristan and Isolde. Tristan is bringing Princess Isolde to Cornwall to marry his uncle, King Marke, but they mistakenly drink a love potion and begin an affair, which is discovered by the knight Melot. Tristan dies in Isolde's arms from wounds suffered in the ensuing fight. The "Tristan chord," heard at the very beginning of the opera is never resolved until Isolde's ending *Liebestod* ("Love-Death") aria. She sings over Tristan's body about his rising again and about their reunion in death. The piece is filled both with passion and resolution and with an overwhelming sense of grief, leaving the listener simultaneously smiling and crying.

Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23

Frédéric Chopin

In 1831, Chopin began composing his *Ballade No. 1 in G minor*, the first ever written for the piano. Although the *Ballade* is similar to sonata form, it is characterized as an open narrative, as demonstrated by its more lyrical themes, and contains a mirror reprise, in which the two exposition themes are recapitulated in reverse order. The piece is technically difficult and highly expressive. This *Ballade* was written while Chopin was still honing this form. Most notably, the time signature

completely deviates from the 6/8 meter of his other three *Ballades*; it opens in 4/4 and moves to 2/2 for its speedy, fiery section before settling on 6/4. In the mirror reprise, the second theme returns in a lower and more solemn tone. Afterwards, the repeated first theme leads to a dramatic climax with glissandos and resounding, descending notes.

Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39

Frédéric Chopin

Chopin wrote his third *Scherzo* in 1839, while visiting Mallorca, Spain. In the seven years between his first and third *Scherzos*, Chopin's composition style had changed drastically. This *Scherzo* is much less repetitive than the first, and more dynamic, similar to the styles of Liszt and Beethoven. The opening begins in such chaos and confusion that the audience cannot quite place the key signature until the main theme erupts with loud chords in C-sharp minor. Then, a new chorale-like subject appears in a much lighter tone, with airy, descending arpeggios sounding in between. When this subject is repeated towards the end, it has changed from D-flat major to E minor and projects more mystery. From this comes the frantic coda that has the pianist racing up and down the piano as rapidly as possible for an explosive and virtuosic ending.

Six Moments Musicaux, Op. 16

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Written in 1896, Rachmaninoff's *Six Moments Musicaux* is a collection of works that pay tribute to the compositional styles of earlier musical eras. The collection's signature features lie in its textural details and virtuosic elements, in which Rachmaninoff displays his pianistic skills. The first piece, *Andantino*, combines elements of a nocturne with a theme and variations. The second, *Allegretto*, is the most famous, with its etude-like characteristics and rapid sextuplet figures. In the third piece, the mood is that of a funeral march, but the *Andante Cantabile* label indicates that it still has the qualities of a song, but one darker than most. The *Presto* occupies the pianist with rapid 16th note figures in the left hand and sometimes in the right. The *Adagio sostenuto* is inspired by the barcarole, an Italian folk song reminiscent of Venetian gondoliers. The concluding *Maestoso* communicates struggle and determination.

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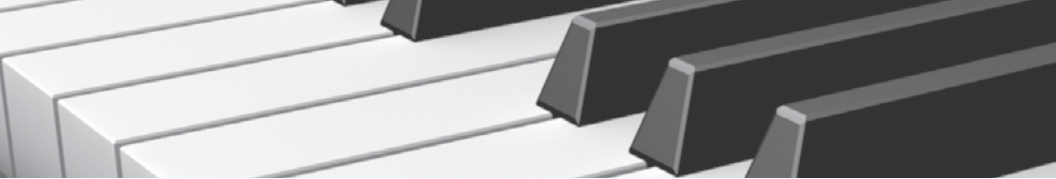
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Community Outreach Activities

- ◆ In partnerships with the Progressions program of San Jose Jazz (providing music lessons in San Jose Schools), Steinway Society is giving a limited number of free tickets to students, parents, faculty and staff to attend Steinway Society recitals.
- ◆ Steinway Society is also providing a limited number of free tickets to college students attending Foothill College and San Jose State University, with special focus on those involved in music programs.
- ◆ Emmy-nominated ZOFO Duet (Eva Maria Zimmermann and Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano four hands) performed for students at a San Jose charter school in October 2014.
- ◆ Steinway Society has arranged with San Jose State University Music Department to present performances by SJSU chamber music, brass, and opera students at San Jose schools, including Prospect and Silver Creek High Schools in Fall 2014. At press time, four additional school recitals are scheduled for early 2015.
- ◆ A Young Artists concert is scheduled for March 2015 at a private home in Saratoga, giving four award-winning local piano students of various ages an additional opportunity to perform and to interact with an appreciative audience in an intimate setting.

**You can help support Outreach Activities like these
with a tax deductible contribution to
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January 10, 2016

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ZOFO Duet

February 14, 2016

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