

Program

Helmut Brauss, pianist

**Wednesday, August 12, 1992
8 p.m.**

**Convocation Hall
Arts Building**

**Summer Piano
Master Class**



PROGRAM

Sonata op. 2 #1, F-minor

Allegro

Adagio

MENUETTO - Allegretto

Prestissimo

L.V. Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Four Impromptus op. 90

Allegro molto moderato

Allegro

Andante

Allegretto

F. Schubert

(1797-1828)

INTERMISSION

Four Selected Preludes (Vol. 2)

Brouillards

Les fees sont d'exquises danseuses

La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune

General Lavine - eccentric

C. Debussy

(1862-1918)

Funerailles

Au bord d'une source

Paganini Etude No. 6 in A-minor

F. Liszt

(1811-1886)

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven completed his first three Sonatas op.2 in 1796. The fact that he dedicated them to Joseph Haydn indicates the importance he allotted to these works. Already the first **Sonata op. 2 #1** reveals the creative forces of a young genius. The Divertimento-style still dominant in many Sonatas of Haydn was discarded and a new concise concept of an overall unified form developed. We also find the characteristic thematic dualism combined with an obvious economy of means of expression (first mvmt.), the superior mastery of the melodic substance (second mvmt.), the beginning of the transformation of the Menuet movement into the later so important Scherzo (third mvmt.), and finally a powerful musical self-presentation - the "Sturm und Drang" of the young Beethoven (fourth mvmt.). It is astonishing how the "fiery spirit" submits his emotional outbursts to a strict formal discipline.

Although his contemporary Vorisek had already composed several Impromptus in the A-B-A form of the romantic character piece and thus is credited with the "invention" of this genre, it was Schubert's genius that created permanent manifestations of this musical form, that have easily survived to this day the merciless scrutiny of history. In op.90 - as in many compositions by Schubert - the melodic substance, the "cantilena", constitutes the essence of the music, not withstanding any virtuosic figuration that might occur. Formally the most interesting piece is the first in C-minor. With its two themes, it is a wonderful example of Schubert's use of the major-minor duality as a constructive principle. The nearly effortless gliding from the lyrical to the dramatic and back is truly amazing. The Impromptus #2 and #4 are brimming with glittering figurations and show clearly contrasting sections within the formal scheme A-B-A. #2 also follows basically that formal scheme, but retains a unified textural continuum which gives the impression of a never ending eternal song. The natural flow of Schubert's immortal melodies, which not only contain some of the proverbial "viennese charme", but also seem to reflect a sad awareness of imminent death, cannot have originated in a speculative mind, but must have poured out from the innocent, naive heart of the composer. Only a genius could create such an

differentiated emotional palette and communicate it with such a striking immediacy.

The two volumes of Debussy's Preludes can be considered a compendium of his "impressionistic language", complemented only later by his final work for piano, the sophisticated Etudes. It is of importance that Debussy placed the so-called titles in quasi parentheses at the end of each piece thus indicating rather vague associations than definite pictures. However, these titles are important in that they stimulate the imagination of the performer thus enhancing his understanding of the pieces. (...**Brouillards**) is characterized by a static tranquility of intermixing sound patterns only occasionally interrupted only by sudden dynamic outbursts evoking the image of objects appearing and disappearing within the mist. (...**Les Fees sont d'exquises danseuses**) flows with airy lightness in fast pulsation, interrupted by seemingly erratic, equilibristic changes of figurations that easily can be associated with the realm of fairy tales. (...**La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune**) was supposedly inspired by the vision of a moonlit night in India permeated by oppressive sultry heat. Notable are a number of parallel chord sequences so characteristic in Debussy's treatment of the tonal spectrum. (...**General Lavine - eccentric**) is inspired by a real person, a clownish American tramp performing at that time in one of the numerous Vaudeville shows in Paris seen by Debussy and strikingly depicted in the style of an American Cake Walk.

Liszt reportedly wrote **Funerailles** under the impression of Chopin's death (October 17, 1849) noting the date October 18, 1849 as composition date. All the feelings of desperation, anguish, sorrow and resignation that man is capable of experiencing are poured by Liszt into this music. In Chopin's own Funeral March in his Sonata op.35, mourning is elevated towards a noble objectivity, while Liszt's "Totenklage" is somewhat raw, archaic and by comparison not so refined. However, that type of directness is very powerful and can overwhelm even the sophisticated listener. Liszt preceded the piece **Au bord d'une source** with a quotation by Schiller: "In Sauselnder Kuhle beginnen die Spiele der jungen Natur." Always sensitive to stimulation by poetry Liszt uses his idiosyncratic metamorphosis technique to create a delicate

pastoral sound picture commensurate with the association evoked by the above mentioned quotation. The **Sixth Paganini Etude** consists of Variations on the famous theme by Paganini which has been used by many other composers including Brahms and Rachmaninoff. The simplicity of the harmonic scheme allows for endless possibilities in figurative elaboration. Paraphrased the Paganini of the Piano, Liszt does not hesitate to take advantage of this reputation and collates a variety of variations combining a unifying harmonic scheme with boldly virtuosic, strongly contrasting figuration and sound patterns. A typical final virtuoso variation reflects the legendary pianistic prowess of Liszt.

Coming Events:

Lecture: Monday, 17 August, 1992 at 3:30 pm

Professor David Gramit

**"Accomplishment, Immorality, and Immortality:
Women at the Piano in the Nineteenth Century"**

Free admission

Piano Recital: Wednesday, 19 August, 1992 at 8 pm

Stéphane Lemelin

playing **Fauré, Franck and Schubert**

*Admission: \$7 adults
\$5 students & seniors*

Tickets are available at the door.

Student Recital: Saturday, 22 August, 1992 at 8 pm

**Featuring performances by masterclass
participants.**

Free admission

Presented by the Faculty of Extension and the Department of Music.
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