

## **Program notes: Jorge Patricio Apaez Rubio**

**J.S. Bach (1685-1750) - Keyboard Partita No. 2 in C minor, BWV. 826:** Among the various collections of Suites by Johann Sebastian Bach, the Six Keyboard Partitas were the last he completed and are often thought of as his most formidable works. First published in 1726 as individual Suites, then as a whole volume in 1731, the Second Partita in C minor is often considered one of the most popular in the set, as well as being the darkest in terms of mood. The dances are organized as follows:

### **I. Sinfonia**

### **II. Allemande**

### **III. Courante**

### **IV. Sarabande**

### **V. Rondeau**

### **VI. Capriccio.**

As not having been intended for the piano, modern performers of these pieces must first evaluate what is the essence of each dance and explore its possibilities in today's instruments. As with most of Bach's music, the influence of vocal lines and human speech is evident throughout, thus allowing the pianist to consider a wide range of interpretative possibilities in terms of phrasing, articulation and color, while hopefully maintaining the style and character which Bach sought to express. Each of the dances, having a different country of origin, consist of equally different characteristics in terms of meter and mood. The opening Sinfonia is divided into three sections starting with a "Grave" introduction in the French Overture style (which sets the tone for the rest

of the piece), followed with an Andante section of almost speech-like musical lines in the right hand, while the left hand accompanies it with eight-notes resembling string pizzicato, followed by a Fugue in 3/4 time. With the exception of the Sinfonia and Rondeau, each dance is in binary form, with the 'B' section written in the dominant key featuring an inverted form of the material in the 'A' section. Also, short improvisatory fragments help interconnect the movements. For example, the ascending figure at the start of the Andante section in the Sinfonia is heard again at the start of the Sarabande, yet the contrast between the sections is what makes the piece so appealing.

**F. Schubert (1797-1828) - Piano Sonata in A major, D. 664:** Franz Schubert was born in Vienna, and eventually became known as one of the greatest composers of German lieder. However, his chamber, orchestral and solo piano works are equally highly regarded today. The sonata in today's program was composed during the Summer of 1819 and is perhaps one of his most often played by both professional and amateur pianists. During the time of this composition, Schubert was a young man in love, reflecting his feelings throughout this work.

The first movement follows the traditional Sonata-Allegro form. The first theme in the exposition consists of a singing melody over arpeggiated harmonies in the left hand. The mood changes as different harmonies are explored, reaching dark, almost ominous moments, while still maintaining a graceful and flowing feeling. A brief transition appears, consisting of triplets in the accompaniment juxtaposing a new melody above it. For the development section, Schubert explores different tonalities and fragments from previous material until the recapitulation begins,

where the first and second themes are presented again, with slight variation. A brief coda using the opening theme ends the movement in a peaceful and warm feeling.

The second movement marked “Andante”, begins in the subdominant key (D major) and also follows Sonata form. The first theme pattern consists of a quarter note chord followed with repeating eighth-note chords, which is repeated twice followed by an extension into a perfect cadence. The second theme is a soulful single melodic line in the treble clef over a gently rolling sixteenth note accompaniment in the bass clef, evoking a feeling of solitude and simplicity, being highly expressive. A short transition leads into the development section, presenting a new variant of the theme, this time in triplets in the key of G major. In the recapitulation, we hear the same material from the exposition, with slight variation. This time, the left hand echoes the melodic material after it is heard in the right hand, giving it a reflective feeling, which gradually calms toward the end.

The final movement, marked “Allegro”, is structured in the same fashion (Sonata form) written in 6/8 time. The first theme consists of a descending sixteenth-note scale followed with a short response in a theme of eighth notes over a sustained pedal point in the left hand. Schubert contrasts the two ideas by expanding them into dramatic scale and arpeggio passages followed by a gentler, lyrical folksong second theme. The exposition presents these ideas staying mostly within the expected Tonic and Dominant keys, while in the development, the material is re-worked into fragments and moves through various tonalities. In the recapitulation, the material from the exposition is now in D major and the material unfolds in a similar manner as in the exposition as it returns to A major. A brief coda consisting of the first theme extends into the final cadence. Throughout the piece, Schubert’s mastery of employing major and minor

harmonies is evident by how brilliantly he contrasts the two, presenting the same material in both modalities.

### ————— **Intermission** —————

**N. Medtner (1880-1951) - Forgotten Melodies Op. 38 No.3 “Danza Festiva”:** Born in Moscow, Nikolai Medtner had a promising career path during his years at the Conservatory, similarly with his older colleagues, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin. Unfortunately, his destiny was to be almost forgotten soon after his death, until recent times. His output focuses almost exclusively for the piano, and Medtner features the piano in every one of his pieces. He also composed songs, three violin sonatas, and a piano quintet. Several pianists of recent generations have revived his music in concert halls as well as in recording studios, most notably Geoffrey Tozer and Marc-André Hamelin. The collection of piano pieces titled “Forgotten Melodies” span 3 cycles: Op. 38, 39 & 40, and feature some of Medtner’s most accessible pieces in contrast to his large-scale Sonatas or the Concertos.

The piece in this program, “Danza Festiva” is contained in the first volume Op. 38, and, as the title expresses, this piece evokes a festive celebration from beginning to end. The piece is structured in A-B-A form with subsections. A bell-like motif with alternating triads between the hands signals the start and change of sections. A texturally contrasting middle section then features new material. A singing melody floats above a variety of shifting textures and rhythms, which gradually builds tension until a climatic statement of the “Bells” motif lead into the closing section. Throughout the piece, Medtner’s creativity is evident in the way the material

develops and interconnects. His clever use of syncopation and other rhythmic devices, along with traditional yet original harmonies, display his craft and ease both as a pianist and composer.

**F. Chopin (1810-1849) - Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op. 47:** The four Ballades by F.

Chopin have a very special place in the hearts of all pianists. These pieces have earned a status as landmarks of the piano repertoire, still true in our time. Composed between the years of 1831 and 1842, Chopin sought to develop a new form of piano solo music. Until then, no other composer had written a purely instrumental Ballade. This genre as a piano solo work became increasingly popular that other composers followed in Chopin's steps such as Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms.

The third of the Ballades was completed in 1841, and bears a dedication to a pupil of Chopin, the Princess Pauline of Noailles. However, it is also commonly believed that Chopin drew some inspiration from the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz. The piece can be analyzed in various ways structurally but allows the listener to clearly identify changes between sections. Both an introduction and a coda surround the inner sections. Following the introduction, a "Bell-like" idea consisting of repeating broken C octaves signal the start of the main theme which later returns two more times. Also, fragments of new material presented in the inner sections reappears in the coda. For example, a figure of quick ascending arpeggios in the right hand are featured in the middle section, as well as the ending measures of the piece. As in all of his pieces, Chopin makes use of innovative techniques giving his Ballades a natural flow by modulating to different tonalities and presenting the material in different ways. This helps give the pieces a

sense of narrative and emotional attraction for the listener. Once having arrived at a section in C-Sharp minor, Chopin quickly builds tension, most notably repeating G-sharps broken across three octaves in the right hand along with thematic material in the left hand until the climax of the piece is reached. A triumphant melody in octaves in the right hand leads the piece to end in a declamatory manner.

**R. Yedidia (b. 1961) - Grand Etude No. 18 in F minor “Metamorphosis”:** Ronn Yedidia’s compositions have galvanized the attention of performing artists worldwide during the last two decades. His works have been featured in major concert halls and documented on film, radio and television. He has won high critical acclaim from leading newspapers around the world, as both composer and pianist. Born in 1960 in Tel Aviv, Israel, he began his musical career as a child prodigy pianist, winning 1st Prize at the Young Concert Artists ’Competition of Israel at the age of eight. His main teacher and mentor was Israel’s first lady of the piano, Pnina Salzman, a protege of Alfred Cortot. Active as a performer for many years, Ronn decided at the age of 15 to shift his attention toward composition. In 1984, he entered The Juilliard School, from where he has earned a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in composition. During his studies in composition at Juilliard with David Diamond and Milton Babbitt, he received all the major prizes in composition, including the Lincoln Center Scholarship, the Irving Berlin Scholarship, the Henry Mancini Prize, and the Richard Rodgers Scholarship. He also won the Juilliard Composition Competition two times – in 1987 & 1989 – and, as a result, had his works performed at the Juilliard Theater and Alice Tully Hall ([WWW.RonnYedidia.com](http://WWW.RonnYedidia.com) for full biography.)

The 24 *Grand Etudes* were completed in 2020, spanning a composition period of twenty-seven years. Each *Grand Etude* is dedicated to a pianist, no. 18 in F minor was written for Emma

Tahmizian and her mother. This piece brilliantly explores different ways to morph an idea into a myriad of textures, harmonies, rhythms and colors, hence the subtitle, "Metamorphosis". It begins in F minor and eventually leads to D-flat major when it has reached the end, taking the listener through an epic journey of emotions. Completed in October of 2016, this piece has made a deep impression in me. After first listening to the music by Dr. Yedidia for more than ten years, I eventually studied with him at the New York Piano Academy. During my first lessons in August 2016, I would arrive to my lesson and could hear him practicing this piece for an upcoming recording session. I would stand outside and listen to this amazing piece, which had not yet been heard elsewhere. I found out it was a new piece he had just finished composing. Several years after, I took the initiative to ask Dr. Yedidia for a copy of the manuscript and became deeply immersed in the sonic landscape of this piece. Another piece in this recital which explores bell-like sonorities, it creates a mesmerizing and colorful atmosphere throughout the work. As do all other I know by Dr. Yedidia, this piece touches the listener in the sincerest manner, while displaying genuine creativity and master craftsmanship.