

Graduate recital for Shai Zohar-Natanel, Piano

Pre-recorded due to Covid-19, November 2020

"It is easy to play any musical instrument: all one has to do is touch the right key, at the right time, and the instrument will play itself". J.S Bach.

Program notes:

Alban Berg (1885-1935)

Piano sonata No.1 in B minor, Op.1

Duration: 12 minutes

Alban Berg is an unusual composer from the 20th Century, Second Viennese School. He was, in fact, a bridge between tonality and atonality in music history and as an Austrian composer from that school (founded by Arnold Schoenberg in early 1900), Berg questioned the composition process. As a result, Berg, together with Schoenberg, established the Twelve-Tone technique: a composition process which is chromatic, mathematical, and very atonal.

Berg's Piano Sonata is known to be a special piece- it was written in 1909, published a year later, and consists with one movement alone. A single-movement work was not originally planned by berg: sources tell that Berg intended to compose a multi-movement work, yet for a long period of time he found himself without any musical ideas, and with big frustration. Berg looked for Arnold Schoenberg's advice and Schoenberg in reply said the famous words- "*you said all there was to say*".

Following Schoenberg's advice, Berg published the movement as a single movement work, under his Opus 1.

Johann Sebastian Bach(1685-1750)

Partita no. 1 in B flat major, BWV 825

Duration: 18 minutes

Johann Sebastian Bach is perhaps the most well-known composer, having an incredible amount of musical output that part of every musician's life to this day.

The First Partita in Bb major described by the pianist Murray Perahia as “*a true pearl*” and include six dances. It is a part of a six-Partita set, composed during 1725 and 1730. A story from those years proves just how incredible Bach was: it was 1723 when Bach began his position at Leipzig's Saint Thomas Church. The church known to be highly prolific in its musical activities, and as the musical director, Bach's labor was exceptionally large -to say the least; it required him to compose a new Cantata every week. The Partitas (and many other non-church related works) were composed in this outstanding stream of Cantatas.

Each Partita from the set is unique from many different points of view- from style through texture, each Partita is a different world. In this world- Bach opens with a Prelude, followed by Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande and Minute. The Partita concludes with a lively Gigue.

Intermission

Avner Dorman (b.1975)

Three Etudes

Duration: 6 minutes

Avner Dorman is a well-known Israeli American composer. Dorman was born in Tel Aviv and his musical heritage is rich and diverse; Ze'ev Dorman, his father, was a Bassoonist in the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra and his grandfather was a well-known composer. Dorman studied composition under Josef Bardanashvili, John Corigliano, and Amnon Wolman- a former Professor at Brooklyn College. Dorman compositional style is varied and include inspirations from both Baroque Era and Post Romantic Era.

The Three Etudes for piano (you will now hear second and third) named "Snakes and Ladders", "Funeral March" and "Sundrops Over Windy Water" and have some unique piano technique writing. **Funeral March** is a slow musical walk which circles around the theme of Dies Ire. The etude uses up to ten-part chords clusters. **Sundrops Over Windy Water** is an atmospheric work filled with waves, mystery and charm.

Ludwig Van Beethoven(1770-1827)

Piano sonata No.21 in C major "Waldstein", Op.53

Duration: 24 minutes

The Waldstein Piano Sonata, no. 21 in C major was composed in Vienna in 1804. In that year, Beethoven completed a series of massive works that will become immediate success such as Symphony no. 3 "Eroica" and "Rasumovsky" String Quartets. The Waldstein Sonata was dedicated to his friend and patron- Count Gabriel Von Waldstein.

The first movement starts twice- one time with a steady chordal texture and one time with a flickering texture- creating a compositional contrast between two, almost identical themes. The second theme is a warm choral that creates, again, a complete contrast between the two opening themes. This compositional technique of contrasts will become a characteristic of this sonata and in general, characteristic of Beethoven's middle period. **The second movement** have a deep tone; creating a personal monologue-like atmosphere, and climaxing with the third, huge in scale, third movement. Unusually for the classical era- the third movement begins attacca. **The third movement** is a bright rondo, circling around a deep and optimistic melody (which gave the sonata its Italian name "L'Aurora- The Dawn). It contains three contrasting sections and ends with a prestissimo coda- concluding a special journey with many sudden changes of dynamics and character.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to my Professor, Ursula Oppens, for the knowledge, care, love, passion and wisdom that was present in every lesson. It is the greatest gift I could have ever received. I am forever grateful.

Please enjoy the performance,

Shai