



Keyboard Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born (March 31, 1685 in Eisenach)

Died (July 28, 1750 in Leipzig)

J.S. Bach was a composer, violinist, harpsichordist, and organist of the Baroque period. Throughout his sixty-five years lifetime, Bach composed an incredible 1128 pieces of music. Among them, 223 pieces are written for the keyboard; this includes Bach's most well-known keyboard repertoire, "The Well-Tempered Clavier," as well as his Keyboard Partitas.

Bach wrote six Partitas for the keyboard, being the last set of keyboard suites he had composed. Bach's Keyboard Partitas were originally written for the harpsichord instrument, first published individually in 1726, and, as a set, titled "Clavier-Übung I" in 1731 - BWV 825-830.

The Keyboard Partita No.2 in C Minor, BWV 826 has six movements, each movement representing a unique Baroque dance style. The piece starts with a grand French Ouverture style titled, Sinfonia, and evolves into a fugue. The Sinfonia is followed by the Allemande - the first entrance dance in moderately slow, serious dance in quadruple meter; the Courante is a fast pace gallop style dance in triple meter, with fire and passion; the Sarabande - a moderately slow dance in triple meter with the emphasis on the second beat; the Rondeau - a fast paced dance in triple meter, but count one beat per measure; and lastly, the Capriccio - another fast paced dance with the emphasis on the second half of the measure.



Piano Sonata No.30 in E Major, Op.109

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born (December 1770, Bonn, Germany)

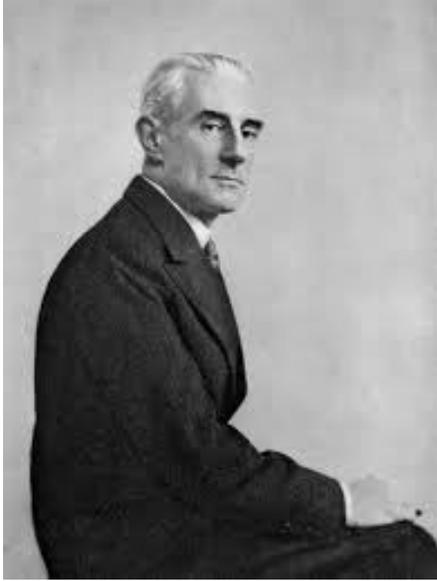
Died (March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria)

Beethoven's popularity remains exceptionally high two and a half centuries since his lifetime, and he is one of the most significant and influential classical composers in the history of Western music.

Beethoven's compositional career can be divided into three periods, the early "Vienna style," the middle "Heroic style," and the late "New" style." Following the success of his phenomenal Hammerklavier Sonata Op.106, Beethoven returned to smaller-scale sonatas. The Piano Sonata No.30 in E Major, Op.109, dedicated to Maximillane Brentano, the daughter of Beethoven's long-standing friend Antonie Brentano, is one of the last three sonatas Beethoven composed. It contains three movements: I. Vivace ma non troppo - Adagio espressivo, II. Prestissimo, and III. Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung. Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo.

The first movement starts in E major, with a sweet tone which creates a feeling of hope. Suddenly, the music is interrupted by a B-sharp diminished seventh chord. When Beethoven was writing this sonata, his hearing had worsened. This B-sharp diminished seventh chord represents his pain and anger.

After the first movement, the music proceeds into the second movement without stopping. The second movement is in E minor, with intensive feeling. The third movement returns to E major, and is composed in variations form; a theme and six short variations based on the theme. The last movement is also the most technically challenging of this sonata.



Jeux d'eau

Maurice Ravel

Born (March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France)

Died (December 28, 1937, Paris, France)

Ravel is an iconic figure of French Impressionism, although he rejected the term “Impressionism” since it has nothing to associate with his music. In 1889, Ravel was admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris, and studied in the preparatory piano class taught by Eugène Anthiome. Eight years later in 1897, Ravel

was re-admitted to the Conservatoire and studied music composition with Gabriel Fauré, and lessons in counterpoint writing with André Gedalge.

In 1901, Ravel wrote one of his most popular piano solo pieces, ‘Jeux d’eau’. The words, ‘Jeux d’eau’ can be translated as “Fountains,” “Playing Water,” or “Water Games,” which is the most known name for this piece. This piece is dedicated to Ravel’s music composition teacher, Gabriel Fauré, and its first public performance was in 1902, by the pianist Ricardo Viñes.

On the manuscript of the Jeux d’eau, Ravel wrote a short text “Dieu fluvial riant de l’eau qui le chatouille...”, it is a quote from Henri de Régner’s Cité des eaux, and the translation of this text is “River god laughing as the water tickles him...”



“La Campanella” from the Six Grandes études de Paganini S.141, No.3, and Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 in C-Sharp Minor, S244/2

Franz Liszt

Born (October 22, 1811, Raiding, Austria)

Died (July 31, 1886, Bayreuth, Germany)

Franz Liszt, is known as the ‘father of the piano recital’ and praised as “The King of Piano”, hosted a piano recital in Milan in 1839. He was a showman of the piano, impressing audiences with programs performed without using the composer’s scores.

Among Liszt's piano solo repertoire, "La Campanella", from the Six Grandes études de Paganini S.141, and, the Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C-sharp Minor S244/2 are two of his most popular classical gems. During Liszt's performance career, he wrote the Études d'exécution transcendente d'après Paganini, S. 140 in 1838. This set of etudes are based on the melody of the last movement of Niccolò Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 2 in B minor. The S.140 set of etudes are much more technically demanding. After Liszt's retirement in 1851, Liszt revised most of his piano solo repertoire, including the Études d'exécution transcendente d'après Paganini S.140, which become better known as the Six Grandes études de Paganini S.141.

As a Hungarian composer and pianist, Liszt was influenced by the music he heard during his childhood, Hungarian folk melodies with its unique gypsy scales and rhythms. Liszt wrote 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies, and, the second Hungarian Rhapsody is perhaps the most famous. The cartoon team of ‘Tom and Jerry’ have played it in the “Cat’s Concerto” episode, and, used in a ‘Bugs Bunny’ cartoon as well.

Fantasy Variations (dedicated to Zifeng Michael Zheng)

Eduardo Palacios

Born (1994, Mexico City, Mexico)

Mr. Palacios is a Mexican composer living in New York. In 2017, Mr. Palacios was admitted to the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College, studying music composition and piano performance.

In July 2020, Mr. Palacios began to compose a new solo piano piece for Zifeng Michael Zheng's Master's Degree Recital. He ingeniously combines elements from the second halves of the program - Ravel's *Jeux d'eau*, Liszt's "La Campanella" and Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, to the "Fantasy Variations." One can hear the Chinese traditional music scale (pentatonic scale), as well as sounds like the Chinese bell, gong, cymbals, drums, and Pipa.