

Brooklyn College Master's Degree Recital

Yantong Zhou, Piano

Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Don Buchwald Theater

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Toccatà in D Major, BWV 912

*Duration: 12 minutes*

The seven toccatas BWV910-916 are the late Baroque period keyboard works attributed to J.S. Bach, which were mostly composed during his employment years in Weimar. Toccata in D major embodies typical features of North German with a mix of multiple individual form—a improvised, brilliant toccata opening followed by a dialogue-like Allegro and a recitative Adagio, which was considered as a fugal section, closed with a three-part dance gigue. Although Bach's toccatas are commonly played on the piano, an early version showed it was attempted to be composed for the organ. Practically, Toccata in D Major has notable similarities with organ work Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 532, in respect of structure, motifs and organ-like texture.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No.26 in E-flat Major, 'Les adieux', Op. 81a

Les adieux

L' Absence

Le Retour

*Duration: 17 minutes*

During the Battle of Wagram in May 1809, French army attacked Austrian Empire, surrounded and occupied the capital Vienna under the command of Napoleon I. Archduke Rudolph, Beethoven's friend and great patron, was forced to leave Vienna during the war. In the inscription of *Les Adieux* (farewell) Sonata Beethoven wrote: "On the departure of his Imperial Highness, for the Archduke Rudolph in admiration", which indicated this sonata was written for Archduke Rudolph explicitly. The first three intervals in the Adagio introduction part of the first movement with the syllables Beethoven written: "*Le-be wohl*" throughout the whole movement as a leitmotif. It was an imitation of two-part horns, expressing a sense of departure.

Take a look at all the works Beethoven had composed, some of the most famous masterpieces were dedicated to Rudolph, including Beethoven Piano Concerto No.4, Archduke Piano Trio and Piano Sonata Op. 106 "Hammerklavier". Les Adieux Sonata, the only program music among Beethoven's 32 piano sonata, was composed during years 1809 and 1810 – The first movement of Op.81a - Les Adieux

(Das Lebewohl) was composed on 4<sup>th</sup>, May, 1809, before Rudolph left; the third movement wasn't composed until he returned Vienna in 1810.

Franz Liszt(1811-1886)

Transcendental Etude No.8 in C minor, "Wilde Jagd"

*Duration: 6 minutes*

"...studies in storm and dread for, at the most, ten or twelve players in the world." — from Robert Schumann's review on Liszt 12 Transcendental Etude S.139. As early as 1826, Liszt composed 12 etudes based on his experience of nature and life during his travels in France, England and Germany at the age of 16. He intended to write as a cycle of 24 etude in each keys like Bach Well-Tempered Clavier collection, but eventually only 12 of them were completed and published — *Etude en douze exercices*, which has the basic idea and structure of later version. The final version (1852) *Etude d'exécution transcendante* was revised and simplified. Liszt mainly reduced the dazzling technique, such as intervals or chords more than tenth on single hand; and added program titles for most of etudes.

Wile Jadg remained the typical 6/8 meter of hunting songs with a furious rhythmic theme in the opening led by left hand in a low register. The powerful big jumps rapidly spanned two or three octaves can be seen anywhere through the whole piece. Liszt skilfully took advantage of wide register and challenging chordal technique on the piano to make huge sonorities and the effect of orchestra.

Francis Poulenc(1899-1963)

Improvisation No.15 in C minor, "Hommage à Edith Piaf"

*Duration: 4 minutes*

Poulenc's neoclassicism with modern French music language was reflected on his short and delicate 15 improvisation for piano. Each individual work is no more than 4 minutes but has strong emotional contrasts, unpredictable musical effect and exuberance characteristic. Poulenc never stopped writing piano works. The last one of this series- No.15 in was composed in 1959, 4 years before his death, with a subtitle — *Hommage à Edith Piaf*— a mysterious dedication to the French singer Edith Piaf. Beginning with melancholy serenity in C minor, a wide range of dynamic changed continually within two measures or three.

Nicolai Kapustin(b.1937)

Concert Etude Op.40 No.2 in A-flat Major, "Reverie"

*Duration: 4 minutes*

Nicolai Kapustin is a jazz pianist, composer and arranger from Ukraine. Since 2000, his music impressed people with its rich layer, fancy improvisation phrases and irregular rhythm, began to be popular on the international piano competitions. His music style is a integration of western classical, post classical art and modern pop music, rock and jazz elements. He has said: "...All my improvisation is written, of course, and they became much better, it improved them." Kapustin was influenced by traditional Russian music, which makes him spontaneously showed his respect and inspiration for classical composers. Indeed, the genres he composed, such as sonata, nocturne, prelude and fugue are all in classical category. *Eight Concer Etude Op. 40* was composed in 1984, a representative piano etude among late 20<sup>th</sup> century modern works. He blended the passionate jazz music into an classic etude form. The infinite forward movement is frequently appeared in his etudes- he used sixteen notes, characterized by an agitated and rhythmic movement, to demonstrate the technical agility and fluency as a pianist.

Frédéric Chopin(1810-1849)

Scherzo No.1 in B minor, Op. 20

*Duration: 9 minutes*

Chopin's scherzo is no longer limited to the "joke" that traditional scherzo implied. It preserved the customary triple beat, but the musical image is more vivid with profound contents and dramatic lines; the form is more complicate, ends with a characteristic coda. Chopin scherzo No.1 was composed under the influences of Poland uprising during 1830-1831. The patriotic fervor aroused by wars and the yearning for homeland interweave together, conveying the impassioned emotion, making up a majestic tone poem.