

Undergraduate Student Recital

Siyuan Zhang, Piano

Thursday, June 4, 2020 | 7:30 pm | UC Santa Barbara

program

Sonata in D Major, K. 576

Allegro
Adagio
Allegretto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Phantasie in F-sharp minor, Op. 28

Con moto agitato – Andante
Allegro commodo
Presto

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Etudes, Op. 25

No. 6 in E minor
No.11 in A minor

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Années de Pèlerinage: 1ère Année - Suisse

2. *Au lac de Wallenstadt*
6. *Vallée d'Obermann*

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Siyuan Zhang is a student of UC Santa Barbara Professor Paul Berkowitz

PROGRAM NOTES

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) **Piano Sonata No.18 in D Major, K.576**

Composed in 1789, this 18th piano sonata is the last piano sonata composed by Mozart and probably the most virtuosic one. Historical records of Mozart's letters revealed that this was to be a part of his plan to compose six piano sonatas for Princess Friederike of Prussia: eventually only this piece was completed and published. Counter-intuitively, he intended them to be easy to perform. This sonata has the nickname "Hunt Sonata", which is derived pretty obviously from the first movement's vivid and joyful character in 6/8 time.

The sonata has three movements. The primary theme, in climbing arpeggiated eighth notes, of the first movement Allegro, is a key element appearing throughout the movement. It is presented in the beginning with both hands in unison, while later on Mozart uses phase shifts between the hands to create variation and tension. The second Adagio movement explores the dominant key A major, with a liberal application of suspension and dissonance particularly in an affecting middle section in F sharp minor. The third movement Allegretto, in the form of a rondo, takes us back to the tonic key D major, with a playful theme and joyful character aided by the vivid and quick triplets in the counterpoint.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) **Phantasie in F-sharp minor, Op. 28**

As a post-Beethoven early 19th-century composer, Felix Mendelssohn was especially influenced by Beethoven and also by Baroque composers like J.S Bach, whose revival he led. In his works, there were clear clues that he incorporated some early romantic features from Beethoven's works. Also, he developed an interest in Scotland and its folk music during his trip to Scotland in 1820s, leading to many of his works referencing Scotland in late 1820s and 1830s, including the Symphony No.3 nicknamed the Scottish Symphony, the *Hebrides Overture*, and this *Phantasie* Op.28, which is also called Scottish Sonata, or "Sonata ecossaise" in his letter to his sister, completed and published in 1833.

This piece is often compared to Beethoven's *Moonlight* sonata. Both of them are characterized as Fantasy-sonata, as they intended to challenge the boundaries between sonata and fantasy. The third movement of Mendelssohn's *Phantasie*, like Beethoven's, is strictly in sonata form, with a proper repeated exposition, development, and recapitulation. Besides, both pieces have a gradual build-up in tempo and emotion: starting with a slow movement, then a moderato second movement, and ending with a fast and passionate final movement.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) **Etude Op.25, No.5 in E minor & No. 11 in A minor**

Chopin's etudes are published in two sets: Op.10 from 1833 which is dedicated to Franz Liszt who had been a close friend of Chopin, and Op.25 from 1837 dedicated to Franz Liszt's mistress, Marie d'Agoult. Both sets are highly valued for their revolutionary compositional style. Even though they are composed as etudes at a high level of virtuosity, they simultaneously possess profound musical value. Thus both sets remained popular after publication until today, both as concert repertoire pieces and as pieces to display and examine the pianist's technical skill. Many of the pieces have nicknames for their different characters, but none of those names was given by Chopin himself.

Op.25 No.6 in E minor, "Wrong Notes", is in rounded binary form. The first section A has some Scherzo features. The nickname is derived from the accompanying, middle, voice of the right hand whose repeated pattern consists of a "wrong note" that creates dissonance with the top melody note by a minor second,

that is immediately “corrected” by the following note to resolve to a consonance. The B section is more expressive with the melody coming to the left hand, and then returns to the Scherzo section at the end. Op.25 No.11 in A minor, the “Winter Wind”, is one of the lengthiest etudes among either set, starting with a slow introductory theme going into dramatic and passionate passages. The main theme is always in the left hand, while the fast sextuplets contain an underlying melody, which is the first note of every group of two notes, or the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes for each group of sextuplets. In this way, for example, there is a descending chromatic line each time the main theme appeared in the left hand.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Années de Pèlerinage: 1ère Année – Suisse: Au lac de Wallenstadt & Vallée d’Obermann

Années de Pèlerinage, meaning Years of Pilgrimage, consists of three sets of pieces, recording his three years of travel, which are valued among the masterpieces of his romantic composition. The first two years are for Switzerland and Italy. Liszt also combined his music with the literature of his time by citing passages from writers like Schiller, Byron, and Senancour as prefaces to most of the pieces in these sets.

The first year, devoted to travel in Switzerland, was composed between 1848 and 1854 and published in 1855. There are nine pieces in the set. *Au lac de Wallenstadt* is the second piece. Liszt quotes from Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold* as the preface: “Thy contrasted lake, With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing, Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake Earth’s troubled waters for a purer spring.” The entire piece is calm and quiet, depicting the stillness of the lake, with left hand constantly doing a swelling motion resembling a quiet small wave. *The Vallée d’Obermann* is the sixth piece in the set and is one of the most substantial. It is inspired by French writer Etienne Pivert de Senancour’s novel, of a hero is puzzled by nature’s bigness, suffering from melancholy, and finally returning with the truth about himself. In the preface, Liszt cites three central questions from Senancour: “What do I want? Who am I? What do I ask of nature?” The piece starts slowly and melancholically, gradually builds to rage and storms in the middle section, and ends with a passionate, powerful and spectacular passage at the end, coherent with the hero’s internal activities.

Notes by Siyuan Zhang