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IGOR LEVIT
PIANO

JANUARY 10, 2018

**JOHANN
SEBASTIAN BACH**
(1685-1750)

**Chaconne in D minor (from Partita for violin solo),
BWV 1004**
(arr. J. Brahms)
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gigue
Chaconne

**DMITRI
SHOSTAKOVICH**
(1906-1975)

Preludes and Fugues for Piano, Op. 87 (selections)
C Minor
A-flat Major
F Minor
A Major
G-sharp Minor

**ROBERT
SCHUMANN**
(1810-1856)

**Theme and Variations in E-flat Major, WoO 24
(Ghost Variations)**
Theme
Variation I
Variation II
Variation III
Variation IV
Variation V

INTERMISSION

RICHARD WAGNER
(1813-1883)

Solemn March to the Holy Grail from *Parsifal*
(arr. F. Liszt)

FRANZ LISZT
(1811-1886)

**Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale “Ad nos, ad
salutarem undam”**
(arr. F. Busoni)
Fantasy
Adagio
Fugue



IGOR LEVIT

Piano

IGOR LEVIT, PIANO

Winner of *Gramophone's* "Recording of the Year 2016" award, Igor Levit has established himself as "one of the essential artists of his generation" (*The New York Times*).

The 2017-18 season marks highly-anticipated debuts including performances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Jakub Hrůša), the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (Sakari Oramo), the Vienna and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras (both with Manfred Honeck) and reunites him – amongst others – with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich (Lionel Bringuier). Summer 2017 highlights included a performance at the opening night of the prestigious BBC Proms alongside the BBC Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Ed Gardner, Levit's debut at the Salzburg Festival, and a residency at Germany's Rheingau Musik Festival before he embarked on a tour of Asia with the Bavarian State Orchestra under Kirill Petrenko.

Recital performances will see him return to his hometown to play at the Berlin Philharmonie as well as making debuts in Stockholm and Barcelona. After the immense success of his Beethoven sonata cycle at London's Wigmore Hall in 2016-17, he will take the cycle to Munich's Prinzregententheater and continue the cycle started at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels in the previous season.

Highlights of past seasons included orchestral debuts with the Bavarian State Orchestra (Kirill Petrenko), Berliner Philharmoniker (Riccardo Chailly), Staatskapelle Dresden (Christian Thielemann), Cleveland Orchestra (Franz Welser-Möst), and London Symphony Orchestra (Fabio Luisi). Recital appearances of 2016 – 17 saw debuts at Carnegie Hall, Chicago's Symphony Center, Boston's Celebrity Series, at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, with Lisbon's Gulbenkian Foundation, at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, and the Lucerne Piano Festival.

An exclusive recording artist for Sony Classical, Igor Levit's debut disc of the five last Beethoven Sonatas won the *BBC Music Magazine* Newcomer of the Year 2014 Award, the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist Award 2014, and the ECHO Klassik 2014 for Solo Recording of the Year (19th Century Music/Piano). In October 2015, Sony Classical released Igor Levit's third solo album in cooperation with the Festival Heidelberger Frühling featuring Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, and Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, which has been awarded the "Recording of the Year" and "Instrumental Award" at the 2016 Gramophone Classical Music Awards.

Born in Nizhni Novgorod in 1987, Igor Levit moved with his family to Germany at the age of eight. He completed his piano studies at Hannover Academy of Music, Theatre and Media in 2009 with the highest academic and performance scores in the history of the institute. Igor Levit has studied under the tutelage of Karl-Heinz Kämmerling, Matti Raekallio, Bernd Goetze, Lajos Rovatkay, and Hans Leygraf. As the youngest participant in the 2005 Arthur Rubinstein Competition in Tel Aviv, Igor Levit won the Silver Prize, as well as the Prize for Best Performer of Chamber Music, the Audience Favorite Prize, and the Prize for Best Performer of Contemporary Music.

In Berlin, where he makes his home, Igor Levit plays on a Steinway D Grand Piano kindly given to him by the Trustees of Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells.

Igor Levit is an exclusive recording artist of Sony Classical. World Management: IMG Artists, LLC, New York City. Exclusive Manager: Kristin Schuster.

NOTES

Program Notes © Elizabeth Bergman

BACH
(ARR. BRAHMS):
CHACONNE IN
D MINOR (FROM
PARTITA FOR VIOLIN
SOLO), BWV 1004

Johannes Brahms routinely looked back in time to Beethoven, Haydn, and Bach for inspiration. For a brief time early in his career, during the winters from 1857 to 1860, he held a position as a court composer in Detmold, and there imagined himself living in the Enlightenment era, the 18th century, instead of his own, turbulent “Romantic” era.

Later in his career, when he was fashioning his Second Symphony, he came across a little-known but astonishing composition by Bach, a chaconne for solo violin (taken from the Partita No. 2 in D minor), which violinists like Joshua Bell consider to be among the greatest scores in their repertoire. Brahms discovered Bach’s score seemingly by chance, and reacted with wonder: “On one stave, for a small instrument, this person [Bach] writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind.”

He wrote this arrangement of Bach’s Chaconne for left-hand only in 1877. Brahms chose to write only for the left-hand because he could then capture both the sound of the original work for violin and its challenges for the violinist in realizing the melody, stately rhythm, and chords. The chaconne, which evolved from a court dance, moves slowly at a rate of three pulses per measure and features variations woven around a repeated bass figure. This is difficult for a violinist to perform alone, and no less challenging for a pianist using only the left-hand.

It has been speculated that Brahms intended this arrangement to be performed by Clara Schumann, with whom he developed an intense, perhaps romantic relationship before and after the death of her husband, Robert Schumann. Clara loved the piece: “You alone could have accomplished such a thing,” she wrote, “and however you came to think of it, it amazes me.”

*Last performed on our series
March 17, 2010, Arnaldo
Cohen, piano*

Estimated duration: 16 minutes

Dmitri Shostakovich's cycle of 24 Preludes and Fugues dates from 1950-51, and seems to have been composed quickly in honor of the bicentennial of Johann Sebastian Bach. Their dedicatee, pianist Tatiana Nikolayeva, premiered the set in December 1952. Shostakovich's obvious model for the set was Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, but he also derived inspiration from Chopin's 24 Preludes (circa 1839) and his own earlier set of 24 Preludes (1932-33). Each of these works covers all of the major and minor keys, but their allegiance to those keys varies. Bach was strictly tonal; Chopin romantically extended tonality; and Shostakovich modernistically estranged it.

SHOSTAKOVICH:
PRELUDES AND
FUGUES FOR
PIANO, OP. 87
(SELECTIONS)

His Preludes and Fugues are personal, rather than political, bearing the imprint of his eclectic personality. Some of the preludes and fugues evoke jazz, others recall opera arias, and still others change mood from calm and tranquil to bitingly acerbic—permitting dissonance, jaggedness. The opening of the set is a chorale. The final fugue, as the culmination of the set, assumes monumental contours. There is some humor and some harder-to-detect allusions to Beethoven, Liszt, Busoni, and Reger.

Critics have also heard archaic folk song allusions in the Preludes and Fugues, and the intonations of Jewish music. Looking at the music and listening to it can be confounding. Some pages in the score look like old-fashioned counterpoint exercises. But the music leaps off of the page. Lines move out of sync with each other, the tempo accelerates aggressively, and the rough edges are exposed. There is no plot here, though listeners are invited to listen for one; rather, the Preludes and Fugues seem to be engaging with music history, and the ability of abstract, as opposed to narrative music, to express feeling and thought. Bach the divine confronts Shostakovich the all-too-human.

Estimated duration: 25 minutes

Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

R. SCHUMANN:
THEME AND
VARIATIONS IN
E-FLAT MAJOR,
WOO 24 (GHOST
VARIATIONS)

Composer and critic Robert Schumann began his career as a pianist, but his ambitions came to an end in 1832 when he injured his right hand by over-practice with the aid of a mechanical device meant to separate the middle and ring fingers. Such, at least, is the legend, and it inspired no end of horror stories about musicians losing the use of their hands. Another explanation has it that Schumann's weakened fingers stemmed from mercury poisoning (mercury being used in his time as a treatment for syphilis). The poisoning affected his brain and led to, or exacerbated, the illness that brought his life to a premature end in 1857.

The "Ghost Variations" (Theme with Variations in E-flat Major for Piano) was the last work he composed before his hospitalization. Clara Schumann recalls that, at the nadir, "Schumann thought he was surrounded by ghosts who sometimes offered him 'wonderful,' partly 'terrible' music, which promised him 'most glorious revelations,' but also threatened him with 'throwing him to hell'." In the midst of writing the variations Schumann attempted suicide. After his rescue and return to Clara's care he resumed composing, filling the music with emotions, the eloquent pronouncements, of composers of his past. He dedicated the five variations to Clara.

The theme presents lovely, simple chords in the right hand above simple octaves below. Although the texture is nearly transparent, the harmonies are rich. The first four variations repeat this theme nearly unchanged; the variations concern mostly the accompaniment and texture. In the first variation, for example, busy triplets enliven the inner voices; the third variation finds the theme in the left hand with delicate triplets now floating above. The fourth variation is a study in dynamics, with frequent, short crescendos and decrescendos that seem like an attempt to resuscitate the theme, to breathe new life into the melody now accompanied by strangely immovable harmonies. The theme nearly disappears in the final variation—a ghost of its former musical self.

Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

Estimated duration: 11 minutes

Unlike Brahms, Schumann, and Shostakovich, Franz Liszt specialized in appropriating music to his own ends. He composed original works, but the creative act often took the form of re-imagining existing music. He was as much an original composer as a transcriber, creating some 375 arrangements, for two and four hands, of popular opera arias, symphonies, and pieces for solo violin. Why he devoted so much time and energy to this phenomenon has long puzzled even his most devoted fans, but context provides an explanation. With his transcriptions, Liszt expanded the repertoire available for amateur and professional pianists. At the same time, Liszt used transcriptions to enrich and expand piano techniques as new instruments were being introduced to the market.

His “Solemn March to the Holy Grail” from Wagner’s final opera, *Parsifal*, takes on another purpose: that of a musical souvenir. He made it shortly after attending the 1882 Bayreuth premiere of *Parsifal*. The arrangement preserves some of the more striking instrumental moments from Wagner’s monumental score, comprising fragments from the orchestral interlude of Act I, a “bell ostinato,” and music assigned by Wagner to an offstage choir. The source march is expanded from four to eight minutes, a march recalled in a dream.

Estimated duration: 10 minutes

Liszt’s transcriptions are just as virtuosic as were his concert recitals. He challenged other composers to match his feats, and one of them, Ferruccio Busoni, accepted the challenge. In 1850, Liszt composed a Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale “Ad nos, ad salutarem undam,” a summons to repentance taken from Giacomo Meyerbeer’s opera *The Prophet*. The chorale is monumental, the transcription transcendent, and the 1897 re-transcription, by Busoni, has been described as the ultimate in 19th (and 20th) century virtuosity.

Estimated duration: 30 minutes

WAGNER
(ARR. LISZT):
SOLEMN MARCH
TO THE HOLY GRAIL
FROM *PARSIFAL*

Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

LISZT (ARR. BUSONI):
FANTASY AND
FUGUE ON THE
CHORALE “AD NOS,
AD SALUTAREM
UNDAM”

Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.



Ivy Street Ensemble

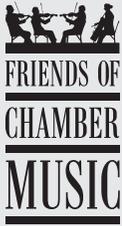
MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES!

For a third year, the Clyfford Still Museum is partnering with Friends of Chamber Music and Swallow Hill Music to offer a new way to encounter the work of Clyfford Still. Music is free with admission to the galleries. FCM patrons can purchase \$5 half price tickets (if purchased in advance) to enter the museum on performance days. Link (with discount code) is available on our website. Note: Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

All concerts will be held on Sundays at the Clyfford Still Museum, 1250 Bannock Street, Denver

JANUARY 14, 2018, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Ivy Street Ensemble



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Comprised of three Colorado Symphony musicians, Cathy Peterson, Erik Peterson, and Phillip Stevens, the ensemble will perform a diverse program, including works by Fritz Kreisler, Henri Vieuxtemps, Lowell Liebermann, and Jan van Gilse.

MARCH 11, 2018, 2:00 - 3:00 PM

Ensemble Fauchaux

Featuring Robyn Julyan (violin), Ben Tomkins (violin), Catherine Beeson (viola), and Heidi Mausbach (cello). Program will include an eclectic mix of highly personal works for string quartet, including works by Ben Tomkins, John Corigliano, Sahba Aminikia and others.

MAY 13, 2018, 2:00 - 3:00 PM

Patterson/Sutton Duo

Featuring Kim Patterson on cello and Patrick Sutton on guitar. The program will feature Hector Villa-Lobos's Aria from Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5, Ricardo Iznaola's Musique de Salon, and a new work by Welsh composer, Stephen Goss.

2017-18

PIANO SERIES



GARRICK OHLSSON

TUES, FEB 20, 2018 | 7:30 PM

Garrick Ohlsson ranks among the towering figures on the American keyboard scene. The first American to win the prestigious International Chopin Piano Competition in 1970, he has gone on to enjoy a brilliant international career.

PROGRAM:

Program includes works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Scriabin.



MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

WED, MAR 14, 2018 | 7:30 PM

Marc-André Hamelin is known for his unrivaled blend of musicianship and virtuosity, whether he is performing masterworks from the past or the present, including overlooked gems from the 19th and 20th centuries.

PROGRAM:

Program includes works by Debussy, Feinberg, and Liszt.

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Woodwind Quintet and
Stephen Hough, piano**
Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Eighth Blackbird
Monday, April 23, 2018

**Jordi Savall
Hespèrion XXI**
Monday, May 7, 2018

PIANO SERIES

Garrick Ohlsson, piano
Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Marc-André Hamelin, piano
Wednesday, March 14, 2018

SPECIAL EVENTS

“Music in the Galleries”
Clyfford Still Museum
1250 Bannock St., Denver
Ivy Street Ensemble
January 14, 2018, 2:00 PM
Ensemble Fauchaux
March 11, 2018, 2:00 PM
Patterson/Sutton Duo
May 13, 2018, 2:00 PM

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