

KI Music Arts Committee Presents
the Community Virtuosi Concert Series, our 23rd Season...
Haochen Zhang, world renowned pianist
Saturday, February 26th, 2022 ~ 3:00 p.m.
 Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Rd. Elkins Park, PA 19027



Debussy **Images pour piano - Book 2**
 No. 1. Cloches a travers les feuilles
 No. 2. Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut
 No. 3. Poissons d'or

Franz Liszt **Études d'exécution transcendante**
 Etude No. 1 in C major "Preludio"
 Etude No. 2 in A minor "Molto vivace"
 Etude No. 3 in F major "Paysage"
 Etude No. 4 in D minor "Mazeppa"
 Etude No. 5 in B flat major "Feux follets"
 Etude No. 6 in G minor "Vision"
 Etude No. 7 in E flat major "Eroica"
 Etude No. 8 in C minor "Wilde Jagd"
 Etude No. 9 in A flat major "Ricordanza"
 Etude No. 10 in F minor "Allegro agitato molto"
 Etude No. 11 in D flat major "Harmonies du soir"
 Etude No. 12 in B flat minor "Chasse-neige"

Haochen Zhang appears by arrangement with Kanzen Arts.

This concert is sponsored by Fredda Segal in loving memory of Adele & Bert Kornfeld.

***Major support for this afternoon's performance was graciously provided by
 Cunningham Piano Company and Factory.***

Since his gold medal win at the Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009, **Haochen Zhang** has captivated audiences in the United States, Europe, and Asia with a unique combination of deep musical sensitivity, fearless imagination, and spectacular virtuosity. In 2017, Haochen received the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, which recognizes talented musicians with the potential for a major career in music. Mr. Zhang has already appeared with many of the world's leading festivals and orchestras including: BBC Proms; China Philharmonic; Munich Philharmonic with the late Lorin Maazel in a sold-out tour in Munich and China (where he has super star status); the Easter Festival in Moscow by special invitation of Maestro Valery Gergiev; Sydney Symphony and David Robertson in a China tour; NDR Hamburg and Thomas Hengelbrock in a tour of Tokyo, Beijing, and Shanghai. Haochen Zhang has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, WDR Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio, San Francisco Symphony, LA Philharmonic, Pacific Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony, Japan Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Mariinsky Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Taiwan Philharmonic, and Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestras. In recital, he has performed at Spivey Hall, La Jolla Music Society, Celebrity Series of Boston, CU Artist Series, Cliburn Concerts, Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap Discovery Series, Lied Center of Kansas and UVM Lane Series, among others. He gave extensive recital and concerto tours in Asia with performances in China, Hong Kong, and Japan. In October 2017, Haochen gave a concerto performance at Carnegie Hall with the NCPA Orchestra, which was followed by his recital debut at Carnegie's Zankel Hall. Haochen is also an avid chamber musician, collaborating with colleagues such as the Shanghai Quartet, Tokyo Quartet, Brentano Quartet, and active, young soloists such as violinist Benjamin Beilman and cellist Aurélien Pascal. He is frequently invited by chamber music festivals in the United States including the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and La Jolla Summerfest Highlights of the 2018-19 season included his debut with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, an Asian tour with The Philadelphia Orchestra; and performances with the National Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, San Angelo Symphony, Guangzhou Symphony, China Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, and Spokane Symphony, in addition to recitals in Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Lucerne, and Brussels, among others. Haochen's 2021-22 season was completely booked in Asia, Europe, and the U.S. with performances of Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, Brahms, Beethoven Piano concertos. In early 2022, Haochen will perform the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Tugan Sokhiev at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall, New York City. In recent seasons, Haochen recorded a recital CD, released by BIS Records in February 2017, which includes works by Schumann, Brahms, Janacek, and Liszt. His performances at the Cliburn Competition were released to critical acclaim by Harmonia Mundi in 2009. Mr. Zhang is featured in Peter Rosen's award-winning documentary chronicling the 2009 Cliburn Competition, *A Surprise in Texas*. Born in 1990, Haochen is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he studied under Gary Graffman. He has also been studying periodically with Andreas Haefliger in Vienna. He was previously trained at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Shenzhen Arts School, where he was admitted in 2001 at the age of 11 to study with Professor Dan Zhaoyi. 2017 review in New York Arts of Zankel Hall Carnegie Recital, "A musician of extraordinary technical mastery and perception." - Michael Miller, New York Arts

Claude Debussy, Images Book 2 (or "2nd series") (L. 111) was composed in 1907. The influence that Debussy had on early 20th century music runs the gamut from post impressionism to jazz. With respect to the first series of Images, Debussy wrote to his publisher, Jacques Durand: "Without false pride, I feel that these three pieces hold together well, and that they will find their place in the literature of the piano .. to the left of Schumann, or to the right of Chopin..." The essence of Debussy's Impressionism suggest a number of parallels with **visual impressionism**: finely graded instrumental colors; static, nonclimactic melodies often circling around a single pitch; harmony conceived as a largely coloristic element; complex textures consisting of elaborate surface figurations often suffusing whatever melodic material they contain; continuously evolving forms without sharp sectional divisions. "**Cloches à travers les feuilles**" (**Bells through the leaves**) **in B whole-tone (the middle section is in E major)** was inspired by the bells in the church steeple in the village of Rahon in Jura, France, and was the hometown of Louis Laloy, a close friend of Debussy and also his first biographer. "**Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut**" (**And the moon descends on the temple that was**) **in E minor** was dedicated to Laloy. The name of the piece, which evokes images of East Asia, was suggested by Laloy, who was also a sinologist. The piece is evocative of Indonesian gamelan music, which influenced Debussy. "**Poissons d'or**" (**Goldfish**) **in F# major** is considered the gem of these three pieces. Debussy is purported to have said that his music was not intended to describe goldfish, but rather to recreate the sensations of the composer in the presence of a beautiful piece of artwork. "**Poissons d'or**" may have been inspired by an image of a golden fish in Chinese lacquer artwork or embroidery, or on a Japanese print. Other sources suggest it may have been inspired by actual goldfish swimming in a bowl.

Liszt's Transcendental Études were designed to be the peak of piano difficulty — and of course everything that has been written by Liszt was of another dimension. This cycle is the quintessence of his artistic vision. **Liszt** tried and succeeded in composing pieces where his spirit, that knew no boundaries, went into spheres where only artistic being is allowed to enter.

The composition of the *Transcendental Études* began in 1826, when 15-year-old Liszt wrote a set of youthful and far less technically demanding exercises called the *Étude en douze exercices* (Study in twelve exercises), S.136. Liszt then elaborated on these pieces considerably, and the far more technically difficult exercises called the *Douze Grandes Études* (Twelve Grand Studies), S.137 were then published in 1837. The Transcendental Études are revisions of his Douze Grandes Études. This third and final version was published in 1852 and dedicated to Carl Czerny, Liszt's piano teacher, and himself a prolific composer of études. The set included simplifications, for the most part: in addition to many other reductions, Liszt removed all stretches of greater than a tenth, making the pieces more suitable for pianists with smaller hands. However, some actually regard the fourth étude of the final set, Mazeppa, more demanding than its 1837 version, since it very frequently alters and crosses the hand to create a "galloping" effect. When revising the 1837 set of études, Liszt added programmatic titles in French and German to all but the Études Nos. 2 and 10. Editor Ferruccio Busoni later gave the names Fusées (Rockets) to the Étude No. 2, and Appassionata to the Étude No. 10.

Études No. 1 in c major "Preludio"

Octaved Cs begin the piece, immediately followed by a downward run made up of an arpeggiated C 7 chord. A furious set of impetuous notes then climb slowly, and it returns to the octaved Cs and the downward run. The furious set of notes climbs even higher and a set of loud chords blare in *fff*. The left hand then plays some loud, low pitched trills in succession. After that, the right hand plays some intense arpeggiated figures, and then a final closing chord. This étude is one of the less difficult to play along with Transcendental Etude No. 3 (Paysage).

Transcendental Étude No. 2 in A minor, "Molto Vivace", or Fusées (French: "Rockets")

This piece is extremely volatile: fierce alternating notes in fortissimo fire away. Soon the notes alternate even more fiercely, followed by a flying right hand arpeggio accompanied by long arpeggiated chords. Then new difficulties are introduced as the right hand jumps high up the keyboard and returns firmly, offsetting a set of same note left hand-right hand alternations. As the climax of the piece approaches, it crescendos and plays even fiercer low pitched notes, and soon the right hand figures explode with erratic chords that climb high up to the keyboard and then back down. The climax then ensues as both hands alternate on the same notes that climb 5 octaves up the keyboard and down again, then fires up again and down again. Then the right hand arpeggios recapitulate and the right hand flies even higher and steeper. After a few more loud chords, the piece finally relents.

Transcendental Étude No. 3 in F major, "Paysage" (Scenery).

It is generally considered to be one of the less difficult studies. The piece suggests a peaceful country scene. It is said that Liszt got the idea of writing this étude while watching the scenery change during a train ride. The first section is played *poco adagio* with a *sempre legato e placido* indication at the start. There are gentle arpeggios and constant dynamic changes and syncopation, and the melody is often played in thirds or octaves.

Transcendental Étude No. 4 in D minor, "Mazeppa" published in 1852, was based on a poem by Victor Hugo which was published in 1829 as a part of a collection *Les Orientales*. Hugo's poem is included in Liszt's original manuscript.

Distinct sections, separated by progressions in double octaves. After a short *ad lib cadenza*, the main theme is presented in octaves accompanied by thirds in the center of the keyboard, with the impression of a horse galloping in a cloud of dust. The theme returns immediately this time with a thinner texture. After a chromatic scale in alternating octaves arrives, the quieter "*Lo stesso tempo*" occurs in which the left hand plays a modified version of the theme while the right hand plays arpeggios in intervals up and down the keyboard. An "*Il canto espressivo ed appassionato assai*" immediately follows in which the main theme reappears, this time accompanied by repeated thirds in both hands in addition to a chromatic scale in the left. The original theme makes a more recognizable return in the "*Animato*" yet this time it is much more discreet and quiet, suggesting the horse's waning physical condition. Yet the horse returns galloping faster than he has ever before in the "*Allegro deciso*," where a variation of the original theme is played at a much quicker tempo. Liszt's interpretation of the last verse of the poem: "*il tombe, et se relève roi!*" (transl. "he falls then rises a king") ends this Etude.

Transcendental etude #5 *Feux follets*

As with the other works in the *Études Feux follets* went through three versions 1826, 1837, and the 1851 revision of the 1837 set. This last version is most often performed. Its rapid double-note passages in the right hand accompanied by wide broken intervals in the left are notoriously difficult to play. In addition, the passages are often asymmetrical and unpredictable. It reaches several climaxes that are technically demanding and ends in pianissimo arpeggios. Despite the mechanical difficulties of the work, its greatest challenge lies in doing justice to its whimsical and mysterious character. *Pianissimo* and *leggierissimo* markings abound in the double-note sections, making it the most technically difficult piece of the whole set.

Transcendental Étude No. 6 in G minor "Vision" is a study of the extensions of the hand, hands moving in opposite directions, arpeggiated double notes, and tremolos. One of the less difficult of these *Études*, though the beginning of the piece can be quite troublesome if it is played as directed: completely with the left hand. The visual image of this piece is a funeral. The middle section's wild octaves and rapidly climbing and descending arpeggios are filled with exaltation (as the original notes Franz Liszt scripted).

Transcendental Etude #7 in E♭, "Eroica" Transcendental Etude #9 in A-flat, "Ricordanza" has wild but gentle cadenzas and demands delicate finger work. There are some areas with syncopation similar to Frédéric Chopin's *Étude* Op. 10, No. 3. This is a good introduction to Liszt's pianistic style. The piece is in Rondo form, with a relatively brief recurring principle theme in between lengthy episodes. Ferruccio Busoni referred to this piece as "a bundle of faded love letters" (especially appropriate for Liszt!)

Transcendental Étude # 8 in C minor "Wilde Jagd" (Wild Hunt)

The 1837 version is in sonata form, with a first subject in C minor, second subject in E♭ major, and a recapitulation of the first subject. It is monothematic (the second subject material is derived from the first subject material). Liszt removed the final recapitulation of the first subject in the 1851 version of the piece, along with an extended bravura passage preceding it.

The piece starts with a furious quick main theme, left hand playing the melody in octaves and the right hand playing the same melody one octave higher alternatively, quickly followed with chords. The furious main theme flows into the playful melody of the secondary subject. Wide jumps in the beginning span about three octaves in the right hand. The lyrical middle section involves some difficult left-hand jumps rapidly spanning over two octaves. The ending involves a difficult section of octave jumps in the right hand spanning three octaves. The piece ends in a flurry of descending chords.

Transcendental Etude # 9 in A-flat, "Ricordanza" has wild but gentle cadenzas and demands delicate finger work. There are some areas with syncopation similar to Frédéric Chopin's *Étude* Op. 10, No. 3. This is a good introduction to Liszt's pianistic style. The piece is in Rondo form, with a relatively brief recurring principle theme in between lengthy episodes. Ferruccio Busoni referred to this piece as "a bundle of faded love letters" (especially appropriate for Liszt!)

Transcendental Étude No. 10 in F minor, "Appassionata",

Passage work for the left hand is rather difficult, while the right hand plays the melody mostly in octaves. There are several portions where the left and right hands alternate to play descending chords reminiscent of the third concert étude, **Un Sospiro**. Other difficulties include cramped spacing (the hands are often close together), left-hand arpeggiated passage work, and the right hand ascending the keyboard in swiftness using only the thumb, the third, and fourth finger. A study in pushing melodic lines to the razor's edge with passion and dramaticism while maintaining the melody. The climax occurs right after the softest part of the piece and is an octave D♭ played 23 times in a row with rhythmic changes and rapid left-hand arpeggios that constantly change theme. This is one of the more popular études of the set. It is in sonata form, with a second group in E♭ minor, and an explosive coda. The 1837 version bears a coda which is modeled after the coda in the finale of Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata*.

Transcendental Étude No. 11 in D♭, "Harmonies du soir" is a study in harmonies, broken chords played in quick succession, full octave jumps, chromatic harmonies, chord variations, interlocking hands, bravura, massive chords, especially proper pedaling, and performance as a whole. This piece is considered one of the most artistic of the études, along with **No. 12 "Chasse-neige"**. The piece begins with an introduction containing slow broken octaves in the left hand and chords in the right hand. After a group of arpeggios, the main theme is introduced in the left hand, a beautiful descent followed by a chromatic ascent with harmonies changing with each note. It is accompanied in the right hand by bass notes (crossing over) and octaves which seem to "sing along" with the left hand. Eventually, after a buildup with large chords in the right hand and octaves deep in the bass in the left hand, this theme is played again this time with harp like arpeggios in both hands. The piece continues in this manner for a while until the second theme, a chordal section marked **Poco più mosso** is introduced. It begins *pianississimo* but then grows to an *appassionato* climax, then fades, but is followed by an entire new section of the piece, **Più lento con intimo sentimento**, a melody like a song. It is accompanied by arpeggiation in both hands. After a recitative passage, the music unexpectedly brings back the second theme **fortissimo trionfante** with chords in both hands. The most technically difficult part of the entire piece consists of multiple pages of chordal jumps and repetition, requiring tremendous stamina. The music eventually dies down, and after an arpeggiated variation of the first theme, the music dies out.

Transcendental Étude No. 12 in B♭ minor "Chasse-neige" (impetuous wind which raises whirls of snow), is a study in *tremolos* but contains many other difficulties like wide jumps and fast chromatic scales, and requires a very gentle, soft touch in the beginning. The piece gradually builds up to a powerful climax. It is one of the most difficult Transcendental Études. Busoni described the work as "a sublime and steady fall of snow which gradually buries landscape and people".

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