



LANG LANG, PIANO

Thursday, September 29, 2016, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

LANG LANG, PIANO

Claude Debussy *Ballade, L. 70*
(1862-1918)

Franz Liszt *Piano Sonata in B Minor, S. 178*
(1811-1886) Lento assai; Allegro energico
Grandioso; Recitativo
Andante sostenuto; Quasi adagio
Allegro energico; Stretta quasi presto; Prestissimo; Andante sostenuto;
Allegro moderato; Lento assai

20-minute intermission

Isaac Albéniz *From Suite Española, Op. 47*
(1860-1909) 1. Granada (Serenata)
2. Cataluña (Courante)
3. Sevilla (Sevillanas)
4. Cádiz (Saeta)
5. Asturias (Leyenda)
6. Cuba (Capricho)

Enrique Granados *From Goyescas, Op. 11*
(1867-1916) 4. Quejas, o La Maja y el ruiseñor
3. El fandango de candil

Manuel De Falla *Danza ritual del fuego*
(1876-1946)

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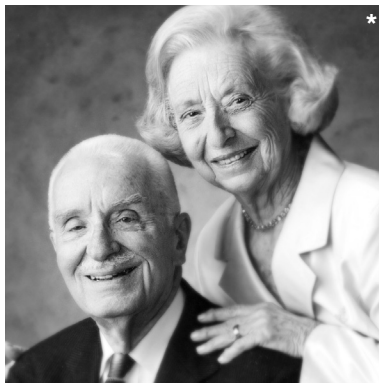
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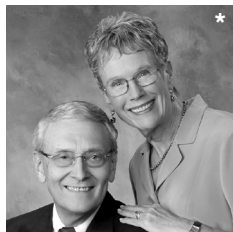
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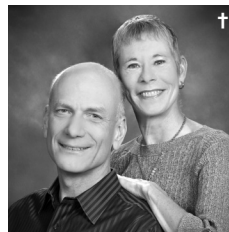
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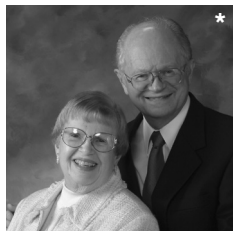
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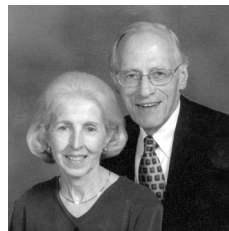
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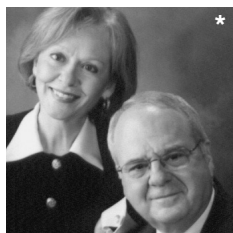
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PROGRAM NOTES

Despite the diversity of Lang Lang's challenging program, it also bears interesting unifying factors in the relationship among the four different composers. Even though their music differs in style, Albéniz, Granados, and de Falla were all born in Spain but sought studies in Paris where they were deeply influenced by French composers, namely, Debussy. On the other hand, Debussy was influenced by Spanish music and treated it lavishly in such works as his "La soirée dans Grenade" (Evening in Granada) from his suite *Estampe* and his "La puerta del vino" (The Gate of Wine) from Book II of his *Preludes*. Liszt is brought into the picture with his unsurpassed virtuosic display that inspired most piano composition and performance in the 19th and early 20th centuries. And so it is that we have special links among the composers of this remarkable program.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Born August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died March 25, 1918, in Paris, France

Ballade, L. 70

Claude Debussy established a new direction in music which put Impressionism on the musical map. Despite that association with the famous movement in painting, it is important to note that Debussy saw himself more as Symbolist than Impressionist and was as much influenced by the Symbolist poets as Impressionist painters. The significant point remains, however, that Debussy represents a daring departure. "Any sounds in any combination and in any succession are henceforth free to be used in a musical continuity," he ruled. Yet this statement should not lead us to think that Debussy lacked form in his composi-

tion. Quite to the contrary, his music reflects a thorough understanding of Classical form even if its actual sound suggests new concepts.

Although Debussy, like Ravel, was drawn to the music of Spain, his *Ballade* of 1890 has a distinctly Russian character. This probably stemmed from his relationship with Tchaikovsky's champion, Nadeshda von Meck, for whom he served occasionally as house pianist. Interestingly, the original title of the work was *Ballade Slave* (the word "slave" indicating the branch of Indo-European languages that includes Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, and Serbo-Croatian). When the work was published in 1903, Debussy removed the word "slave" from the title. We know it now simply as *Ballade*, indicating a song-like work for solo instrument sometimes, as it does in Debussy's piece, using variation form. Debussy's original version was for piano four hands, but Lang Lang undertakes the 1903 version for one piano.

If comparisons are helpful in understanding a work, the *Ballade* has been compared to the music of Gabriel Fauré with its lyrical dream-like quality but still having power of its own. It has also been viewed as a predecessor to Debussy's famous *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faun*.

FRANZ LISZT

Born October 22, 1811, in Raiding, Hungary

Died July 31, 1886, in Bayreuth, Germany

Piano Sonata in B Minor, S. 178

Lento assai; Allegro energico

Grandioso; Recitativo

Andante sostenuto; Quasi adagio

Allegro energico; Stretta quasi presto;

Prestissimo; Andante sostenuto;

Allegro moderato; Lento assai

While Liszt sought to be the “Paganini of the piano,” he abruptly relinquished his performing career in 1848 to become Kapellmeister of the Weimar court. There he promoted the music of others, in particular, Richard Wagner. Together, Wagner and Liszt championed the “Music of the Future,” an effort that would lead directly to Mahler and ultimately to Arnold Schoenberg. Wagner and Liszt remained friends despite such personal complications as Wagner stealing Hans von Bülow’s wife, Cosima, the illegitimate daughter of Liszt and the infamous Countess d’Agoult, who wrote novels under the masculine pen name Daniel Stern. Such intricacies, however, were common in Liszt’s life, since he himself, when abandoned by Countess d’Agoult, took up with Princess Carolyn Sayn-Wittgenstein, the cigar-smoking author of *The Inner Causes of the Outer Weaknesses of the Church*. The *Piano Sonata in B Minor*, composed between 1851 and 1853 and published in 1854, came about through the influence of Princess Wittgenstein who convinced Liszt that he should focus more on composing and less on performing.

While we list four movement markings above, it should be understood that the entire Sonata is played without interruption. This may seem in defiance of strict sonata form, but Liszt still managed to honor that in his thematic developments which relate closely to the opening one—even if treated with great variety in terms of intensity and lyricism. The Sonata represents the pinnacle of Liszt’s compositional achievements, and its virtuosic demands are nothing less than astounding. It has been compared to Franz Schubert’s *Wanderer Fantasy*, a comparison which is interesting in light of not only its difficulty but also its free-wheeling structure.

An analysis of the work can be difficult, frustrating, and even misleading. Better to think of it as an explosion of Liszt’s genius. That said, experts

have identified five motivic elements within the four continuous movements that serve to unite the work. The ominous first one in the opening section, for example, is easily traceable throughout the Sonata. All the motifs, however, are subject to Liszt’s transformation of them. If you insist on order, simply following the tempo markings can be helpful although it should be noted that the first *Allegro energico* is quite different from the last one which takes on the challenges of a fugue. The final “movement” or section, if you will, is beset with no less than six contrasting tempo markings. We are wisely left at peace in the conclusion of this thrilling work.

Liszt dedicated the *B Minor Sonata* to Robert Schumann who, in turn, had dedicated his famous *Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17* to Liszt. Clara Schumann was unable to play it, but Hans von Bülow managed to do so for its premiere on January 27, 1857 in Berlin.

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ

Born May 29, 1860, in Camprodón, Spain
Died May 18, 1909, in Cambô-les-Bains, France
Six Selections from *Suite Española, Op. 47*

Granada
Cataluña
Sevilla
Cádiz
Asturias
Cuba

Born in Camprodón, Lérida, Albéniz is one of Spain’s most important musical figures in terms of both national identity and music that transcends that idiom. He also created an indigenous school of piano technique based on Liszt but endowed with his own personal gifts. After a considerable career as a child prodigy, he ran away from home at the age of 12 to South America and to San Francisco. He returned to Spain, as he always

would, in 1873. A year later he went to England and Germany but returned once again to Spain in 1877. In 1879 he began studies at the Brussels Conservatory that were interrupted by trips to Cuba and the United States. After winning first prize at the Conservatory, he set off for Weimar, Prague, Vienna, and Budapest on the tracks of Liszt with whom he would perfect his piano technique. In 1885 he moved to Madrid and in 1890 to London after studying composition with Dukas and d'Indy in Paris. At that point, he gave up his performing career for composing. In 1893 he moved to Paris where he added Fauré and Debussy to his list of musical colleagues and influenced their music. In 1903 he moved to Nice where he spent his final years on his masterpiece, *Suite Iberia*.

The earlier *Suite Española* of 1886 already bears Albéniz's trademark of music related to specific geographical locations as clearly indicated in the titles of the set. That, however, does not tell the whole story since the music goes well beyond mere geographical or national identification. As noted below, the individual pieces each bear subtitles more closely related to musical form than to the geographical locations suggested by their titles. The fame of the *Suite Española* has been spread by its many arrangements for classical guitar and an orchestral version by Rafael Frübeck de Burgos.

The opening "Granada" (Serenata) is, as its subtitle implies, a serenade suggesting a lover beneath his lady's window. The left hand sings under a rippling right hand that imitates the strumming of a guitar. The music takes a dark turn but never loses the sense of a serenade.

"Cataluña" (Courante) is a Spanish version of the old French dance, the courante, in 3/2 time. Here it takes on a new feeling of strength with Albéniz's pianistic treatment of it.

"Sevilla" (Sevillanas) is one of the treasured moments in the Suite with its sense of the flamenco, the colorful dance form initiated by Andalusian gypsies but carried on worldwide. In this piano version, one can almost hear the heel stamping and the clicking of fingers.

"Cádiz" (Canción [Song]) invites us into a lyrical and gentle song inspired by Andalusian religious music sung during Lent.

"Asturias" (Leyenda [Legend]), the longest piece in the set, is in three sections. The first is an intense moment of repeated notes that build to a climax. The second evokes dramatic Spanish-style storytelling. The third suggests sonata form with its return to the first section and a lovely brief coda added at the end.

"Cuba" (Capricho) brings a style suggested by its subtitle that indicates the form we might know better as a *capriccio* or, literally, a *caprice* in which the music moves freely without strict form. Here it is an especially effective ending to the selections from the *Suite Española*.

ENRIQUE GRANADOS

Born July 27, 1867, in Lérida, Spain

Died March 24, 1916, English Channel

Two Selections from *Goyescas*, Op. 11

Quejas, o La Maja y el ruiseñor

El fandango de candil

While nationalism in music is always a questionable idea, Spanish-born Enrique Granados' music has often been categorized as such. One of the reasons for this may be his most famous work, *Goyescas*, a piano suite based on the paintings of Spanish painter Francisco Goya. Granados premiered the suite in 1911 and later wrote an opera based on the work which was premiered to acclaim in New York in 1916. Sadly, Granados and his wife died on the way home from New York when their boat was torpedoed by a German U-boat.

"Quejas, o La Maja y el ruiseñor" (Complaint, or The Girl and the Nightingale) is the best-known piece of the suite and is just as alluring as the fandango but with a touch of sadness and longing. Complex trills and turns mark the challenging work along with its many references to Spanish folk songs. If you hear a familiar melody, it is the one which Mexican songwriter Consuelo Velázquez took for her famous 1940 song "Bésame Mucho."

"El fandango de candil," the third in the collection of the suite's seven pieces, is based on the fandango, the lively Spanish dance, in triple time, for two dancers who accompany themselves with castanets. While the castanets are not employed in the piano work, the idea of them can be easily imagined as well as the eroticism with which the fandango is touched.

MANUEL DE FALLA

Born November 23, 1876, in Cádiz, Spain
Died November 14, 1946, in Alta Gracia, Argentina
Danza ritual del fuego

Although we associate Falla with Spain's most noted composers of the first half of the 20th century, Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados, he spent a considerable part of his life in Paris and moved to Argentina in 1939 after Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. He died in Argentina but was buried in Spain at the cathedral in Cádiz.

The "Danza ritual del fuego" (Ritual Fire Dance) comes from Falla's 1915 ballet *El amor brujo* (*The Bewitched Love*). Although Falla made arrangements of the ballet for sextet and for orchestra, it is the celebrated piano version of the Ritual Fire Dance we hear on this program that has most probably lent the work its universal fame. It is the concluding movement of Falla's four movement piano suite of 1925.

From the extended opening trill to the final dramatic descending glissando and through its pulsing rhythms and beautiful melodies, the brief work is five minutes of pure excitement.

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PROFILE

LANG LANG, PIANO

If one word applies to Lang Lang, to the musician, to the man, to his worldview, to those who come into contact with him, it is “inspiration.” It resounds like a musical motif through his life and career. He inspires millions with his open-hearted, emotive playing, whether it be in intimate recitals or on the grandest of stages—such as the 2014 World Cup concert in Rio, with Plácido Domingo, to celebrate the final game; the 56th and 57th Grammy Award two years in a row, where he performed with Metallica and Pharrell Williams; the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where more than four billion people around the world viewed his performance; the Last Night of the Proms at London’s Royal Albert Hall; or the Liszt 200th birthday concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Charles Dutoit which was broadcast live in more than 300 movie theatres around the United States and 200 cinemas across Europe (the first classical music cinema cast to be headlined by a solo artist). He forms enduring musical partnerships with the world’s greatest artists, from conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Gustavo Dudamel, and Sir Simon Rattle, to artists from outside of classical music—among them dubstep dancer Marquese “nonstop” Scott, king of the crooners Julio Iglesias, and jazz titan Herbie Hancock. He even builds relationships with corporations who will help him get classical music to ever more people, and he builds cultural bridges between East and West, frequently introducing Chinese music to Western audiences, and vice versa.

Yet he never forgets what first inspired, and continues to inspire him. Great artists, above all the great composers—Liszt, Chopin, and the others—whose music he now delights in bringing to others. Even that famous old *Tom and Jerry*

cartoon “The Cat Concerto” which introduced him, as a child, to the music of Liszt—and that childlike excitement at the discovery of music now surely stays with him and propels him to what he calls “his second career,” bringing music into the lives of children around the world, both through his work for the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace focusing on global education and through his own Lang Lang International Music Foundation.

Lang Lang started playing piano at age three, won the Shenyang Competition and gave his first public recital by five, entered Beijing’s Central Music Conservatory at age nine, won first prize at the Tchaikovsky International Young Musicians’ Competition, and played the complete Chopin Etudes at the Beijing Concert Hall at 13. He left for Philadelphia’s Curtis Institute and the great piano teacher Gary Graffman and when his moment came—a dramatic last-minute substitution to perform in the “Gala Of The Century” with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—he was ready.

Today, his resume reads like a bestseller (and indeed his autobiography, *Journey of a Thousand Miles*, has been published in 11 languages—with a version released for younger readers). Heralded as the “hottest artist on the classical music planet” by the *New York Times*, he has played sold-out concerts in every major city in the world and is the first Chinese pianist to be engaged by the Vienna, Berlin, and New York Philharmonic orchestras.

Time magazine named Lang Lang in the “Time 100,” citing him as a symbol of the youth of China, and its future. Lang Lang is cultural ambassador for Shenzhen and Shenyang. And if the Chinese passion for piano isn’t solely due

to him, he has played no small part as a role model—a phenomenon coined by *The Today Show* as “the Lang Lang effect.” Steinway Pianos for the first time named a model after a single artist when they introduced “The Lang Lang Piano” to China, specially designed for education.

And the child Lang Lang was and who, perhaps, is always with him, would surely have approved of the way he gives back to youth. He mentors prodigies, convenes 100 piano students at a time in concert, and dedicated his Lang Lang International Music Foundation to cultivating tomorrow’s top pianists, music education at the forefront of technology, and building a young audience.

Lang Lang’s ambassadorship of the YouTube Symphony Orchestra combined two of his great loves, music and outreach through technology. More traditionally, tens of thousands of people have enjoyed Lang Lang’s performances in open-air concerts around the globe. Lang Lang participated in the opening concert of the World Cup at Munich’s Olympic Stadium, and at the closing concert for Euro 2008.

Lang Lang has been featured on every major TV network and in magazines worldwide. He has performed for international dignitaries including the Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon, President Xi Jin-Ping of China, four United States presidents, former President Koehler of Germany, former French President Sarkozy and President Francois Hollande. Of many landmark events, he was honored to perform for President Obama and former President Hu Jin-Tao of China at the White House State Dinner, the Diamond Jubilee celebratory concert for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace, the 70th Anniversary celebration of the United Nations, and the 500th Anniversary of the founding of the City of Havana in Cuba.

Honors include being added as one of the World Economic Forum’s 250 Young Global Leaders;

Honorary Doctorates from the Royal College of Music, Manhattan School of Music, New York University, Birmingham City University, and China Central Conservatory (first in the school’s 75 year history); the highest prize awarded by China’s Ministry of Culture, Germany’s Order of Merit, and France’s Medal of the Order of Arts and Letters; and the first ever Ambassador of the Château de Versailles in Paris.

Lang Lang is one of the world’s most prolific and highest-profile recording artists. Various films include the Golden Globe-winning score for *The Painted Veil* (Alexandre Desplat). All of his albums have entered the top classical charts as well as many pop charts. In 2007, he was nominated for a Grammy Award, becoming the first Chinese artist to be nominated for Best Instrumental Soloist. Other recordings include the movie soundtrack for the Japanese blockbuster *Nodame Cantabile*, and of course, that opening sequence for Gran Turismo, the most successful videogame to date.

In February 2010, Lang Lang joined Sony Music Entertainment as an exclusive recording artist. His first album with Sony featured a live recording of his 2010 recital at Vienna’s legendary Musikverein (including a segment filmed in 3D). His next CD, *Liszt, My Piano Hero* and DVD *Liszt, Now!* celebrated the 200th anniversary of the great composer, while 2012 saw the release of *The Chopin Album* and 2013 a recording with Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker of two masterpiece piano concertos of the 20th century, Prokofiev No. 3 and Bartók No. 2. Lang Lang’s 2014 album was devoted to Mozart, and his recently released album entitled *Lang Lang in Paris* features Tchaikovsky’s *Seasons* and four Chopin Scherzos.

For further information visit www.langlang.com and www.langlangfoundation.org.



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- Lang Lang



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