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**YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS WINNER:
NATHAN LEE, PIANO**

Sunday, November 5, 2017, at 3pm
Foellinger Great Hall, salon-style

PROGRAM

YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS WINNER: NATHAN LEE, PIANO

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828

Overture
Allemande
Courante
Aria
Sarabande
Menuet
Gigue

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Adagio for Piano in B Minor, K. 540

Nikolai Kapustin
(b. 1937)

Variations for Piano, Op. 41

20-minute intermission

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58

Allegro Maestoso
Scherzo. Molto vivace
Largo
Finale. Presto, non tanto—Agitato

Alfred Grünfeld
(1852-1924)

Soiree de Vienne, Op. 56
(from Concert Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*)

Nathan Lee appears by arrangement with:
Young Concert Artists, Inc.
1776 Broadway
Suite 1500
New York, NY 10019
www.yca.org

Audience and rising young performers share the stage of the Foellinger Great Hall in these events, fostering a close mutual connection. The stage ticket price includes light refreshments; balcony seating, which does not include refreshments, is available at a reduced price. The 2017-18 series includes Young Concert Artists Winner: Nathan Lee, piano (November 5), Concert Artists Guild Winner: Jiji, guitar (January 28), M-Prize Winner: Calidore String Quartet (March 4), Krannert Center Debut Artist (April 22). For more information about these events, please visit KrannertCenter.com/calendar.

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PROGRAM NOTES

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Born March 31, 1685, in Eisenach, Germany
Died July 28, 1750, in Leipzig, Germany
Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828

Although they collectively bear the title *Clavier Übung I (Keyboard Practice I)*, Bach's six partitas transcend the pedagogical. They remain, however, some of his most technically challenging works for keyboard. To play them is every pianist's ultimate lesson. Even Chopin himself never abandoned his study of Bach. Composed between 1725 and 1731, they are the last of Bach's keyboard suites and the most comprehensive in structure.

The opening Overture, some six minutes in length, is cheerful and inviting but at the same time contemplative and complex, especially in the fugue that follows the opening section. The beautiful Allemande, longest of the seven sections, is associated with a German dance form but in Bach's hands also takes on the quality of song. Complexity continues to rule even if it is a lyrical one we might associate with opera. Often in the movement the melody is given to the left hand while the right offers exquisite elaborations. The third movement Courante, loosely defined as an old French dance form, offers a change of mood. Here the country dance becomes sophisticated and moves well beyond the label of its inspiration. The brief fourth movement Aria brings again a sense of the operatic with its many highly developed elaborations. The following Sarabande serves well its definition as a stately dance. Beauty seems almost redefined in its full development with repeated themes. The sixth movement Menuet springs from the early French

dance form but reaches well beyond that, even though it brings to mind a courtly 18th-century Baroque dance scene. Its unusual harmonies, however, suggest music well beyond that period. The lively Gigue, again a French dance form, lends an exciting conclusion to this great *Partita No. 4*.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, in Getreidegasse, Salzburg, Austria
Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria
Adagio in B Minor, K. 540

Interestingly, Mozart composed his *Adagio in B Minor, K. 540*, in 1788 between the premieres of his opera *Don Giovanni* in Prague and Vienna. We could point to this as an explanation for its operatic quality, but one can hardly speak of any Mozart work without thinking of opera. Yet other things come to mind in listening to the *Adagio*, namely, a look to the future. While a comparison to Chopin might be somewhat of an overstatement, the intensity of the *Adagio* with its hint of Romanticism cannot help but bring to mind the later composer. Still, it is completely Mozart in its elegance and perfect combination of the minor mode and slow tempo. Within that elegance and strong sense of form, however, creeps in a unique emotionalism.

Strong statements from the left hand, both below and above the right hand, clearly mark the piece. Perhaps it is a dramatic effect such as this that encouraged Vladimir Horowitz to treat Mozart's *Adagio* so lavishly in his recordings.

NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN

Born November 22, 1937, in Horlivka, Ukraine
Variations for Piano, Op. 41

Nikolai Kapustin's studies at the Moscow Conservatory led to his career as a classical pianist and composer, but in the 1950s he was also known as a jazz pianist, composer, and arranger. Kapustin explains his jazz influence only as one that aided his classical composition style which resulted in some 20 piano sonatas, six piano concertos, and sets of piano variations and études. On recordings he has been championed by such notable pianists as Marc-André Hamelin.

The *Variations for Piano, Op. 41*, composed in 1984, clearly smacks of jazz yet with a force we associate with classical pianism. In many ways it combines the best of both worlds and stands as brave crossing between the two. Variation form that demands both variety and continuity is well honored. In essence, the work offers a breathtaking moment in this program.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Born March 1, 1810, in Żelazowa Wola, Poland
Died October 17, 1849, in Paris, France
Sonata in No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58

No other composer represents the Romantic piano tradition as quintessentially as Chopin. Still that does not tell the whole story, for within the exercise of Chopin's Romantic spirit lies a composer as concerned with form as feeling. Indeed he had his detractors in such wags as Oscar Wilde who said about him, "After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had never committed and mourning over tragedies that were not my own." Wagner got

in his licks by calling Chopin "a composer for the right hand." Yet Mendelssohn said of him, "I was glad to be once again with a thorough musician, not one of those half-virtuosos and half-classics who would like to combine in music the honors of virtue and the pleasures of vice." But perhaps the most telling quote in support of Chopin's musicianship comes from the composer himself in a letter to Delphine Potcka: "Bach is like an astronomer who, with the help of ciphers, finds the most wonderful stars . . . Beethoven embraced the universe with the power of his spirit . . . I do not climb so high. A long time ago I decided that my universe will be the soul and heart of man." Within that elusive universe, Chopin respected and practiced the great Baroque and Classical traditions handed down to him but lent to them his own vision and genius which operated in the Romantic spirit.

In his *The Romantic Generation*, Charles Rosen points to "the extreme craft" of Chopin's work which "so disturbed Schumann and other musicians." By this extremity he was referring to certain monophonic or single line passages in the *B Minor Sonata* and earlier in the *Polonaise in F-Sharp Minor, Op. 44*. What probably shocked Schumann and his fellow Romantics was the percussiveness of these works. Rosen cautions us, "It is good to be reminded of how brutal Chopin's music could be . . ." While we seldom associate Chopin with "brutality" as such, it is interesting to contemplate Mr. Rosen's remarks in light of a continuing analysis of Chopin as suggested by the mere title of scholar Jonathan Bellman's essay, *Don't Love Him Because He's Beautiful*, included in the Bard Festival's 2017 treatment of Chopin.

The fierce descending arpeggios that open the Sonata's first movement Allegro maestoso do indeed suggest a certain "brutality" that goes beyond the mere "majestic" tempo marking. But soon the movement turns exquisitely lyrical with beautiful melody weaving between the left and right hands and soaring over accompaniment figures. Virtuoso challenges and the "extreme craft" that Charles Rosen notes are everywhere in the movement.

The breathtaking scale work of the following Scherzo may be brutal, but a slower section of the movement edges on the mysterious before a return to the opening mood. In many ways, this movement suggests Chopin at his most Chopinesque.

The Largo brings not only solemnity but also the graceful and languid music of the nocturnes for which Chopin is so loved. Charles Rosen also sees the movement as an homage to the Italian stage, specifically Bellini. It is especially interesting that the movement compares in length to the powerful opening one.

The Finale is Romantic pianism at its finest. A powerful octave opening leads to the brilliant explorations of the movement. If brutality is not an effect here, the virtuosic challenges of the movement, as any pianist will attest, are fierce indeed. Brutal might describe them.

Despite all the emotionalism and lyricism we hear in the *B Minor Sonata*, it is important to remember that it is a work of great musical craftsmanship meant for the broad public ear, and not simply for fainting ladies of the 19th century salon to whom earlier performers of Chopin may have bowed in a misunderstanding of Chopin's

notions of *rubato* that suggest a certain freedom of interpretation. For Chopin, freedom was not at the expense of form.

The *B Minor Sonata*, the third and last of Chopin's piano sonatas, comes from the summer of 1844 when Chopin's relationship with the novelist George Sand (born Lucile Aurore Dupin) was still relatively happy but would soon be on the way to its end in 1847. An interesting interpretation of that relationship occurs in the 1991 film *Impromptu*.

ALFRED GRÜNFELD

Born July 4, 1852, in Prague, Czech Republic
Died January 4, 1924, in Vienna, Austria
Soirée de Vienne, Op. 56 (Transcriptions and Paraphrases for Solo Piano from Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*)

Austrian pianist and composer Alfred Grünfeld studied at the Prague Conservatory and at the New Academy of Music in Berlin. He was appointed court pianist to Wilhelm I of Germany and served as a professor at the Vienna Conservatory. His fame was enhanced by tours throughout Europe and the United States and the fact that he was the first noted pianist to make commercial recordings.

We are all familiar with many of the themes from Johann Strauss II's operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, but Grünfeld's transcriptions and paraphrases cast them in a new light. With its incredible virtuosic demands, Grünfeld's work offers a thrilling conclusion to Nathan Lee's recital.

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PROFILES

NATHAN LEE (piano) won First Prize in the 2016 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, as well as 14 special prizes, at the age of 15.

Engagements this season include his Kennedy Center debut on the Young Concert Artists Series, recitals at the University of Illinois' Krannert Center, Rockefeller University, on the Harriman-Jewell Series (Missouri), at the Port Washington Library, and as soloist with the Seattle Symphony in Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and with the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle in Beethoven's *Concerto No. 5*. Lee participated in Music Fest Perugia in Italy, and the Verbier Festival Academy in Switzerland.

Lee was heard with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra on NPR's *From the Top*, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, and he shared the stage with Jean-Yves Thibaudet

and Lang Lang on the Seattle Symphony's Gala Evening. Lee has given recitals in Korea, for Radio France, and in Perugia, Italy, with pianists Ilana Vered and Sasha Starceвич in a *Three Generations Concert* to sold-out audiences.

Among the special YCA prizes awarded to Lee are the Korean Concert Society Prize, which provides support for Nathan's Kennedy Center debut; the Paul A. Fish Memorial Prize, providing support for his New York debut; the Embassy Series Prize in Washington, D.C.; the Harriman-Jewell Series Prize; the Saint Vincent College Concert Series Prize; Germany's Usedom Music Festival Prize; and the Washington Performing Arts Prize.

Lee, who lives just outside Seattle, Washington, began playing the piano at the age of six and made his orchestral debut at the age of nine. He studies with Dr. Sasha Starceвич.