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CHOPIN
SOCIETY

2021-2022 **SEASON**

MUSIC GIVES SOUL TO
THE UNIVERSE

TYMOTEUSZ BIES

Tuesday, Sep 21, 2021

7:30 PM Vancouver Playhouse

FEDERICO COLLI

Sunday, Nov 21, 2021

3 PM Vancouver Playhouse

MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

We begin our season with the Vancouver debut of young Polish pianist, **Tymoteusz Bies**, and **Federico Colli**, whose Vancouver debut had to be cancelled in 2020.

As always, we strive to present performances by seasoned concert artists as well as outstanding musicians who are at the outset of their artistic journey and musical career. We are confident that you will be moved by the musicianship and pianism of our two artists in November.

The VCS aims to promote cultural interaction among the people of Vancouver, who come from a rich variety of ethnic backgrounds, and to emphasize the importance of music in our lives. We have chosen to name our Society after the Polish composer Frederic Chopin because of the universal appeal of his music and his world-wide reputation as one of the greatest composers for the keyboard.

The VCS is a member of the International Federation of Chopin Societies, based in Vienna. This connection puts us in touch with some fifty other Chopin Societies worldwide, creating exciting possibilities for inviting international musicians to Vancouver.

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TYMOTEUSZ BIES

Lento con gran espressione in C-sharp minor WN 47

CHOPIN

4 Mazurkas Op. 17:

Mazurka in B-flat major Op. 17 No. 1

Mazurka in E minor Op. 17 No. 2

Mazurka A-flat major Op. 17 No. 3

Mazurka in A minor Op. 17 No. 4

Preludes Op. 28 (1-10):

Prelude in C major No. 1

Prelude in A minor No. 2

Prelude in G major No. 3

Prelude in E minor No. 4

Prelude in D major No. 5

Prelude in B minor No. 6

Prelude in A major No. 7

Prelude in F-sharp minor No. 8

Prelude in E major No. 9

Prelude in C-sharp minor No. 10

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat major Op. 61

Intermission

Two Mazurkas Op. 62:

Allegretto grazioso

Moderato

Masques Op. 34:

Scheherazade

Tantris the Buffoon

Don Juan's Serenade

SZYMANOWSKI

*We acknowledge the financial support of:
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NOTES

Chopin: *Lento con gran espressione in C-sharp minor, WN 47*

This haunting Lento comes from the time when the 21-year-old Chopin was alone in Vienna, hearing reports of battles with Russia coming from his Polish homeland. He mailed a copy to his sister Ludwika, who described it as a “Lento with the character of a nocturne.” She would have recognized the quotations Chopin worked in from other compositions he had not yet published, including three from his F minor Piano Concerto.

Chopin: *Four Mazurkas, Op. 17*

Mazurkas as music of the peasant folk of the Polish countryside were a part of Chopin’s childhood experiences, as were the stylized mazurkas popular in the salons and theatres of Warsaw. This set, written far away in his new home of Paris, maintains links with the rhythms and gestures of the original folk dance but goes far beyond the norm in richness of harmony, texture, and variety of expression. The B-flat major Mazurka contrasts its resolute A section with a flirtatious middle section played over an E-flat pedal. The E minor Mazurka begins passionately but playful moments often intervene; the B part has the droning open fifths of folk music. The third Mazurka in A-flat major has the snapping rhythms and harmonic pedals typical of folk mazurkas, while sophisticated harmony moves to distant E major for the central trio. The A minor Mazurka begins and ends in Lydian mode, enhanced with melodic arabesques to create a wistful mood; the ending seems to drift off without being complete.

Chopin: *Preludes, Op. 28 (1-10)*

Today we will hear the first ten of the twenty-four preludes published as Chopin’s Opus 28. Chopin’s decision to call these pieces “preludes” is at least partly in homage to Bach, and some of them show Bach’s influence with respect to figuration and counterpoint. Chopin developed a new concept of exquisite miniatures which influenced later prelude composers such as Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Shostakovich. Most of his preludes are based on a single idea, establishing one mood, and are brought to a close with a striking cadence. We will begin with the agitated first Prelude in C major and move around the circle of fifths to end with the brilliant descending runs of the tenth Prelude in C-sharp minor.

Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat major, Op. 61*

This piece was published in 1846, as Chopin’s relationship with Aurore Dudevant (better known by her pen name George Sand) was disintegrating and his tuberculosis worsened. The longest, freest and last of his polonaises, it is a kind of fantasy on the idea of a polonaise, a dance of the Polish nobility which Chopin used throughout his career, usually for brilliant pieces with heroic and nationalistic sentiment.

The introduction opens with the motive of a falling fourth in dotted rhythm, and four slow arpeggios rise up the keyboard, like the story-teller’s harp setting the stage for an epic tale. The rhythm of the dance is established in the left hand, while the right hand introduces the main theme. Rather than using the typical dance procedure of predictable phrase lengths and repeated sections, there is continuous variation with complex harmony and the interplay of many voices. A free ternary form is created by having a slow middle section, lyrical and eloquent, resolving into a cadenza with double trills in both hands. In the return of the first section, all is transformed as galloping octaves build to a grand climax. A pianissimo left-hand trill keeps us on edge up to the final chords.

Szymanowski: *Two Mazurkas, Op. 62*

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) is considered one of Poland’s greatest composers, second only to Chopin; like Chopin, he died prematurely of tuberculosis. Beginning in the 1920s, he was interested in creating a national style and studied the indigenous music of the Tatra Mountains in the south of Poland. He said that these studies acted as a “fertilizing agent” which in 1925 led to the publication of a set of twenty mazurkas for piano. The two we hear today are the last works he wrote (1933-34), by now far abstracted from the folk models, austere and improvisatory. Echoes of the dance rhythms, the open fifths and the repeated pedal harmonies are still there.

Szymanowski : *Masques, Op. 34*

Scheherazade | Tantris the Buffoon | Don Juan's Serenade

This Szymanowski wrote Masques in the war years 1915-16, giving us a glimpse of the exotic world of the imagination to which he found escape in that terrible time (a bad leg made him exempt from military service). Showing late romantic and impressionistic influences, each piece describes a fictional character of days long past: Scheherazade, the young woman who saves her life by telling the king a new story each night; Tristan the Jester, based on a German play by Hardt parodying the old legend of Tristan and Isolde; and Don Juan, the mythical womanizer.

BIOGRAPHY



TYMOTEUSZ BIES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021
7:30 pm, Vancouver Playhouse

Each character gets a complex portrayal suggesting some of the reality behind the mask s/he wears. Thus, "Scheherazade's stories are colorful, but one notices her unmistakable tactics of stalling for time; Tristan pretends to be a buffoon, but his grotesque hilarity alternates with a tragic inner core; Don Juan tries to seem sincere in his multiple serenades, but his true intentions are humorously displayed to the audience, and his demeanor also betrays a certain hollowness and desperation at times" (Cesetti).

Scheherazade starts with character motives for the Arabian girl—a repeating A in the bass creates suspense as the girl begins a story to save her life. A sinuous chromatic motive up above suggests the beguiling appeal of her storytelling while in mid-range a third line is perhaps her intellect at work. Narrative episodes of flashing brilliance, languid repose, and ratcheting suspense ensue, and at the end the character motives for the girl return— is this enough to give me another day?

In the expressionist play *Tantris the Buffoon*, after a ten-year absence Tristan returns to the court of King Mark disguised as a jester and is not recognized by Isolde or anyone else except his old dog. His distorted buffoonery and the savage reception he receives are suggested in the scherzo passages such as the opening. This energetic music of the daytime alternates with the more Wagnerian "night" sections depicting Tristan pleading with Isolde or remembering their passion of the old days, music of unfulfilled longing and sadness.

Don Juan's Serenade does not seem to be modelled on any one version of the oft-told tale of the womanizer. It presents a sequence of serenades that grow in intensity without sinking into tragedy. Szymanowski suggests the self-interest behind the seducer's mask, as well as the comedy of the situations that arise in his bold pursuits. Spanish colour emerges in the repeated guitar-like chords and flamenco-inspired ornaments, and it ends with a virtuosic flourish.

Ruth Enns,

Vancouver Academy of Music
August 2021

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Born on June 9th, 1995, Tymoteusz Bies is a graduate of the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, where he studied under the guidance of Professor Zbigniew Raubo; he currently is teaching in the Piano Department of his Alma Mater.

He is a laureate of a number of prestigious piano competitions, including the National Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, Friuli Venezia Giulia Piano Competition and the Inaugural Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition. He has performed with numerous orchestras, including the Polish Radio Orchestra, the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and most of the Polish philharmonic orchestras. He has collaborated with some of today's distinguished conductors, including Maestro Juozas Domarkas, Maestro Lawrence Foster, Maestro Lionel Bringuier and others.

He has performed solo recitals at the Chopin Festival in Duszniki-Zdrój, Chopin and His Europe Festival, as well as in Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

He has already released two studio albums, containing piano works of Mozart, Schubert, Chopin and Szymanowski. He is currently working on his newest album, which will contain works of Karol Szymanowski and Witold Lutosławski; on this latter album he will be accompanied by Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra.

In 2019 he received the prestigious „Primus inter pares" title for best graduate of the year, from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice.

In the artistic season of 2020/2021, Tymoteusz Bies is artist-in-residence at the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice.

Tymoteusz Bies is represented by the Ludwig van Beethoven Association.

Federico Colli
Piano

FEDERICO COLLI

7 Sonatas

K19 in F minor
K63 in G major
K144 in G major
K430 in D major
K32 in D minor
K431 in G major
K1 in D minor

SCARLATTI

Sonata K333

Intermission

Fantasy in F minor

(transcribed for solo piano by Maria Gringber)

MOZART

SCHUBERT

Chaconne

BACH-BUSONI

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NOTES

Scarlatti: Seven Sonatas

K.19 in F minor | K.63 in G major | K.144 in G major | K.430 in D major
K.32 in D minor | K.431 in G major | K.1 in D minor

For the first thirty-seven years of his life, Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757), the son of opera composer Alessandro Scarlatti, lived in Italy and developed a reputation for being an incredible harpsichord player. It was only after he made the move to Portugal and then Spain as the teacher of the talented Princess Maria Barbara (who became the Queen of Spain) that his imagination as a composer took flight. He is known primarily for 555 one-movement harpsichord sonatas, which thankfully were preserved in handwritten copies under the direction of Maria Barbara in the 1740s and 50s. We will hear seven of these short sonatas by the resourceful harpsichordist. The F minor Sonata K.19 is in moderate tempo and shows classical grace and clarity, closer to Mozart than to Bach and Handel, who were born the same year as he was. Two sonatas in G major follow: the first, called Capriccio (K.63), is bright and clearly phrased, with an interesting veer into the minor as it approaches the cadences at the end of each section, while K.144 is like an expressive operatic aria. In the next pair, an energetic D major movement in triple time with the direction “not fast but in the tempo of a dance” contrasts with the simplicity of the little Aria in D minor (K.430 and K.32). The G major Sonata K.431 has cascading triplet figuration in the right hand, while the final Sonata in D minor (K.1) shows Spanish effects of thrumming guitar and rattling castanets.

Mozart: Sonata in B-flat major, K.333

In July of 1783, Mozart took his wife Constanze to Salzburg to introduce her to his family, an event that seems not to have been a total success. On their way home, the couple stopped in Linz, where Mozart found himself writing a new symphony for a concert opportunity that came up at the last moment. On the basis of paper studies, it is thought that this sonata was probably also written there. The first movement, a model of classical balance and grace, has cheerful, song-like themes contrasting with exciting passagework. The development references the first theme beginning in the dominant key before moving off into Sturm und Drang minor-key explorations. The recapitulation is a more emphatic version of the exposition, ending elegantly without the need for a coda.

A heart-felt Andante cantabile in E-flat major is also in sonata form. Aria-like, with a surprisingly chromatic development, the recapitulation is varied with new ornaments. The final movement, Allegretto grazioso, is a sparkling rondo with the effect of alternating solo and orchestral passages, like a concerto, and builds to an impressive full-scale cadenza in the final pages.

Schubert: Fantasy in F minor, D.840 (transcribed by Maria Grinberg)

Today This Fantasy is one of a number of great works Schubert wrote in the last year of his life, 1828. Designed as a piece for two pianos, there is a report of a performance by the ailing Schubert and his young friend Franz Lachner in May of that year. Today we will hear a transcription for solo piano made by Russian virtuoso Maria Grinberg which she recorded in 1963.

There are four connected movements, as in his *Wanderer Fantasy* of 1822: Allegro, Largo, Scherzo, and Allegro with fugue. It begins simply with a song-like theme in melancholy F minor. The melody is briefly heard in dream-like F major before the tragic second theme intrudes, rising ominously from the bass, back in minor mode. The recapitulation begins with the song theme, followed by a transformed version of Theme 2, now hopeful in F major.

The optimism is short-lived, as the Largo interrupts with great drama, leaping and trilling with octave doublings in the key of F-sharp minor. Again, we get a short reprieve as there is a lovely major key episode, either revisiting pleasant memories or imagining some ideal world to come, but soon inexorable fate returns, even more severe than the first time.

The Scherzo is also in F-sharp minor, but with dance-like rhythms and catchy melodies, the mood is bright and lively. The Trio section is marked “with delicacy.” The Scherzo returns and leads via an imaginative transition into the Finale.

The last movement begins just like the first movement—we hear the melancholy theme with its tripping rhythm and rising fourth gently accompanied by a rocking left hand. The dark second theme is developed into a massive fugue which builds up into a passionate outburst before suddenly breaking off into silence. In the final measures a reconciliation occurs: we once more hear the first theme, but it is now fragmented and mixed up with aspects of the somber second theme.

Bach-Busoni: Chaconne in D minor

Italian pianist and composer Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) wrote this revision of the monumental Chaconne from Bach's D minor Partita for solo violin while on a tour of the U.S. in 1892. The music of J.S. Bach was a life-long interest for Busoni, starting with his father's encouragement when he was a boy. He went on to publish eight volumes of material inspired

by the music of Bach, including editions and transcriptions as well as new compositions.

A chaconne is a piece based on the continuous variation of a short theme, in this case four measures long. The original version is a tour-de-force of solo violin writing; Busoni arranged Bach's music to suit the modern grand piano, while retaining the violin version's sense of proportion and grandeur.

Ruth Enns,

Vancouver Academy of Music

August 2021

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BIOGRAPHY



FEDERICO COLLI

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2021

3 pm, Vancouver Playhouse

Undisputed winner of the 2012 Leeds Piano Competition, this young artist has already been praised for his brilliant technique, the colours he brings to his piano playing, and his vibrant and original interpretations. Of a recent performance of Rachmaninoff's 3rd piano concerto, International Piano calls Colli "a maverick genius."

A deeply serious musician and musical thinker, Colli sees his music making as a mission coming from a divine gift. He says, "I want to serve the music, expressing the truth, paying tribute to the beauty."

He records exclusively for Chandos Records, with whom he released his first disc of Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti in May 2018, awarded as Recording of the Year by Presto Classical. This was followed by a disc of Bach and Bach-Busoni in 2019. His third Chandos album, the Second Volume of Scarlatti's Sonatas, was acclaimed "Recording of the Month" by both BBC Music Magazine and International Piano Magazine (April 2020) and it has been chosen by BBC Music Magazine as one of the best classical albums released in 2020.

For Colli, the art of music "is a never-ending creative process, and for this reason it will always be ahead of us, moving infinitely." It is not surprising that his artistry and pianism have often been compared to masters like Lipatti, Michelangeli and Pollini.

Born in Brescia in 1988, he has been studying at the Milan Conservatory, Imola International Piano Academy and Salzburg Mozarteum, under the guidance of Sergio Marengoni, Konstantin Bogino, Boris Petrushansky and Pavel Gililov.

He received the "Grosso d'argento" as a prize for the international prestige given to his hometown, the Music Section of the UK Critics' Circle included him among the recipients of its 2018 Awards and the International Piano magazine selected him as one of the '30 pianists under 30 who are likely to dominate the world stage in years to come'.

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