



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Iren Pilikyan, piano

Monday, April 24

7 p.m.

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

32 Variations on an Original Theme in C minor, WoO 80 Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

“Images”, Book 1 Claude Debussy
Reflets dans l'eau (1862-1918)
Hommage à Rameau
Mouvement

Sonata no. 9, “Black Mass” Alexander Scriabin
(1872-1915)

Rhapsodie Espagnole, S.254 Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Intermission

Piano Concerto No. 1

Second piano - Andrew Vargas

Iren Pilikyan is a student of Dr. Tamas Ungar.
The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.
Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

Beethoven:

The «32 Variations» (1806-1807) on his own theme are among Beethoven's most outstanding piano works. The content of this cycle is largely determined by its remarkable theme, Beethoven in its powerful and stern tragedy and at the same time deeply rooted in history. It absorbed some of the most characteristic expressive means that had developed since the seventeenth century to depict tragic images, such as the chromatic descending basso lamento, typical of the passacaglia, the chaconne or aria lamento, the rhythm of the sarabande, etc. In the process of variation, the theme undergoes substantial changes. In the composition of the entire cycle there is no trace of a mechanical alternation of episodes. It reveals dramatic conflict within the sonata allegro form, pressure, and even the outlines of sonata form. It is a truly outstanding work, filled with pain and tormenting thoughts that Beethoven wanted to convey through each variation.

Debussy:

The first series of Images for piano was completed in 1905. It included three pieces: "Reflections in the Water", "Dedication to Rameau" and "Movement". The word "Images" can be translated as "Pictures". In the first piece, Reflections in the Water, there are quiet splashes, the charming murmuring of water currents, and toward the end, some distant bell-like echoes. This lyrical landscape is one of Debussy's most elegant. In the second piece, Dedication to Rameau, Debussy creates a very integral mood, akin to the glimpses into the past in the frescoes of Puvis de Chavannes. The last piece of the cycle, Movement, is one of the countless interpretations of the genre of "perpetual movement" in history. The music here is not free from contrivance. At times one hears echoes of the old, at times one senses the future, but neither the echoes nor the "sensations" reach a particular vividness. The piece is essentially a typical sketch, a record of what is remembered or seen again in the realm of cursory aural observations, without a clear figurative concept.

Scriabin:

Piano Sonata No. 9, Op. 68, known as the Black Mass, is a piano sonata composed by Alexander Scriabin. The work was written around 1912-1913. Although the subtitle was not given by Scriabin himself (unlike the title of the seventh sonata, the White Mass), it was approved personally by the author. Like Scriabin's other later works, this sonata is very chromatic and atonal. "The Black Mass is dissonant in part because many of its themes are built on the interval of the minor ninth, one of the most unstable sound combinations. The Ninth Sonata is considered a masterpiece. The author's inscription under the tempo "légendaire" accurately conveys the spirit of a distant mystical howl that grows menacingly toward the end of the work. The work concludes with the restoration of the first theme. There is even a mythology around the last chord, the enlarged quart, the tritone, the symbol of the Devil in music (diabolus in musica). In the "Black Mass," the fragile, crystal-clear theme of the side part turns into an infernal march in the reprise. The demonic line of Scriabin's music reaches its climax in this act of "desecration of the sacred" and rampant devilry.

Liszt:

Rhapsodie Espagnole (Spanish Rhapsody), S.254 , R.90, a work for piano solo written by Franz Liszt in 1858. Reminiscent of traditional Spanish music and was inspired by Liszt's tour of Spain and Portugal in 1845. The Spanish Rhapsody was originally an improvisation by Liszt, which was later written down. This work contains many extreme technical challenges for a pianist, including fast chords and octaves. Unlike the Hungarian Rhapsodies, Liszt's Spanish Rhapsody is more like a series of brilliant variations on two exposed themes: a powerful introduction, aggravated by the tremolo of the left hand, then a solemn statement of the first theme — la Folia (Folies d'Espagne). The second part of the Allegro introduces the second theme, a melody from the popular Aragonese dance — la Jota.

Liszt's first concerto for piano and orchestra, E flat Major, was completed in 1856. The soloist's virtuoso passages further underscore the temperamental, volitional activity of the initial bellicose fanfare. It is underscored by a group of connected lyrical themes - now dreamy, now ecstatic. The lyrical beginning also dominates in the second movement, where there are improvisational changes of variations, while towards the end the piano serves as material for a dramatic dialogue with the orchestra. The third movement - a fantastical scherzo - forms, in Liszt's words, "a connecting contrast" to the finale where the themes of the entire concerto are drawn together in one knot: the opening march reproduces the main theme of the second movement, reminiscences of the recitative dialogue from the same movement and fantastic visions of the scherzo appear (the high register of the piano combined with the woodwind parts gives these episodes a festive sound), while in the conclusion the mighty pace of the main theme is confirmed.