



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Joshua Stanczak, piano

April 27, 2024

4:30 P.M.

Ed Landreth Auditorium

Program

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

Frédéric Chopin
(1810 - 1849)

I. *Allegro Maestoso*

II. *Romanze – Larghetto*

III. *Rondo – Vivace*

Aleksandra Czerniecka, second piano

Intermission

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840 - 1893)

I. *Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso*

II. *Andantino semplice*

III. *Allegro con fuoco*

Mikhail Berestnev, second piano

This is a nonrequired recital by Joshua Stanczak who is a Sophomore Student in Piano Performance. Joshua Stanczak is a student of Dr. Tamás Ungár.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.
Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

Program Notes

Frédéric Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

The first of Chopin's two piano concertos was written in 1830 when Chopin was twenty years old, just before he fled to Paris. It premiered in October of that same year in Warsaw, Poland, with Chopin as the soloist. It was a major success in both premiere performances in Warsaw and Paris.

In the first movement (*Allegro Maestoso*), Chopin introduces the main theme with the orchestra, from where the piano then takes over by playing the same theme. This same pattern occurs three times in the first movement. The piano also has a second theme lyrical theme that is introduced in the beginning and comes back at the end in a different key. Chopin also uses several unusual modulations throughout this movement but brings it all back to the original key of E minor by the time it reaches the recapitulation.

The second movement (*Romanze – Larghetto*) is not strictly in sonata form but does follow the popular and predictable model of modulating to the dominant key and later returning to the mediant key. Chopin wrote to a friend concerning this movement saying, "It is not meant to create a powerful effect; it is rather a romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot that calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening."

The third movement (*Rondo – Vivace*) features Krakowiak rhythms, a syncopated, duple-time popular dance in Kraków. Known for its intense speed and difficulty, this was one of the last pieces Chopin completed before the political turmoil in Poland erupted and forced him to move to France.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

The first of Tchaikovsky's three piano concertos was written between November 1874 and February 1875. It was performed in October 1875 in Boston, Massachusetts, by pianist Hans von Bülow. The concerto became an enormous success and is widely considered one of the greatest of all piano concerti.

The first movement (*Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso*) opens with the iconic orchestra theme followed by the large fortissimo chords on the piano joining in and creating a bell-like harmonization with the grand orchestra theme. A unique aspect of this movement is that there are two cadenzas. One in the beginning immediately following the introductory theme and another right before the end of the recapitulation. The exposition proper begins again with the orchestra setting the tone with a theme based on a melody from a Ukrainian folk tune that Tchaikovsky heard in a town near Kyiv. This theme is designed in a much smoother and consoling fashion, before another more turbulent buildup that thrusts the music into the next climax.

After the development section which includes several interesting modulations, the recapitulation begins with a repeat of the exposition theme, although this time in the key of B-flat major. This follows nearly the same sequential patterns as the exposition until it takes a sudden turn that builds to another stormy climax which in turn is brought back down by the opening of a lengthy piano cadenza preceding the triumphant conclusion of the movement.

The second movement (*Andante semplice*) begins in stark contrast to the enormity of the first movement's ending. It begins with pizzicato strings and a solo flute that introduces the new theme in the andante semplice tempo. The piano joins in and continues passing along the beautiful melody with the orchestra in a very soft and delicate manner. The B section then appears almost out of nowhere, with a new, contrasting tempo of prestissimo and a virtuosic piano introduction. The piano then assumes an accompanying role as the orchestra leads with a new melody in D major. After the piano re-enters with another virtuosic solo passage, the music reaches a climax and gradually comes back down to the original tempo and volume of pianissimo. The piano then plays a more ornamented re-statement of the original theme, before settling into the coda with a very gentle and peaceful ending.

The third movement (*Allegro con fuoco*) is written in rondo form and begins with a very brief and fast introduction. The piano plays the main theme in a march-like and upbeat style, followed by the orchestra's variation of the theme in fortissimo which also serves as a bridge to the B section/theme. This theme follows a similar structure as the second theme in the first movement. The orchestra begins in D-flat major followed by the piano repeating the melody. This same sequence is repeated in E-flat major before it takes a sharp turn into a long and gradual passage that finally reaches its peak at the finale climax of the whole concerto. This beautiful climax features both piano and orchestra in full force with the main theme of the third movement, and it finishes with a quick transition into the coda. This last exclamation provides an exhilarating finish for both the performers and the audience.

Program Notes by Joshua Stanczak