The German Society of Pennsylvania

presents

Claire Huangci, piano

Sunday, January 3, 2016 at 3:00 pm

The German Society of Pennsylvania
www.germansociety.org

611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
Calendar of Events

January 2016
Sat. Jan. 9  Women’s Auxiliary Appreciation Party, 11.00am
Sat. Jan. 9  Buchclub: Joseph Roth’s “Radetzkymarsch/Radetzky March”, 1.30pm
Fri. Jan. 15 Friday FilmFest: Der Prozess (German with German subtitles), 6.30pm

February 2016
Sat. Feb. 6  Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am
Fri. Feb 19  Friday FilmFest: Die Andere Heimat, 6.30pm
Sat. Feb. 27 5th Annual Bierfest

March 2016
Sat. Mar. 5  Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am
Fri. Mar. 18 Friday FilmFest: Die geliebten Schwestern, 6.30pm

April 2016
Sat. Apr. 2  Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10.00am
Sat. Apr. 2  Hamburger Abend, 7.00pm
Fri. Apr. 14 Friday FilmFest: Elser (13 Minuten), 6.30pm

...Save the dates for our next “Wister and More!” concerts:

Sun. Feb 7  Elissa Koljonen, viola, and Natalie Zhu, piano
“Romances and Fantasies.” Selections include works by Edvard Grieg, Jean Sibelius, and Henri Vieuxtemps

Sun. Mar. 6  Amit Peled, cello, and Elizabeth Borowsky, piano
“The Journey with my Jewishness.” Selections include works by Max Bruch, Ernest Bloch, and David Popper

Sun. Mar. 20 The Wister Quartet
Selections include works by Joseph Haydn, Franz Schubert, and Samuel Barber

Sun. Apr. 24 The Delius Society presents: The Conwell Woodwind Quintet
Transcriptions of works by Frederick Delius, including “Appalachia,” “North Country Sketches,” “Fantastic Dance,” and more

Sun. May. 15 The Wister Quartet
Selections include works by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and more.
Program

The Goldberg Variations, BWV 988  
J.S. Bach  
(1685 - 1750)

Impromptus, Op. 142 No. 1 and 4  
Franz Schubert  
(1797 - 1828)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35  
Frederic Chopin  
(1810 - 1849)

There will be one 15-minute intermission. We offer refreshments from our bar during that time.

Your ticket to our concert also invites you to a complimentary reception with the artist in the Ratskeller (downstairs) following the performance.

Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach
The Goldberg Variations, BWV 988

On November 19, 1736 the Elector of Saxony conferred the title of "Composer to the Royal Court Chapel" on Johann Sebastian Bach. When Carl von Keyserling, Russian ambassador to the Dresden court, came to Leipzig (where Bach was Kantor of St. Thomas Church) in 1741 he invited Bach to write a set of variations for his youthful chamber harpsichordist Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. The ambassador commissioned the work "in order to be cheered up a little." He wanted the work to be "soothing and cheerful in character." Upon hearing the variations the count said he "could not hear enough of them" and he rewarded Bach with a gold goblet and a hundred louis d'or. The score that Bach actually wrote is not a light weight series of variations but one of the monumental works of western musical culture.

The thematic material for the "Goldberg Variations" (the opening aria) is the bass line of a Sarabande from Bach's "Anna Magdalena Notebook" (1725). The aria is followed by 30 variations after which the aria is repeated altered. The variations can be divided into three groups: character (dance) types, playful and figurative variations, and canonic. The final quodibet (Variation 30) is a combination of all three types. The quodibet quotes two existing themes - "I've known you for so long" (a Saxon tune) and "Cabbage and turnips have driven me away," an Italian bergamasca used by Girolamo Frescobaldi in his "Fiori Musicali" (1635), the score of which Bach owned. The 30 variations are by turns dance like, austere, and eloquent.

Bach was one of music's great innovators in keyboard composition. He turned 8th century court
dances into high art. (The dance movements of the "Goldberg Variations" are evidence of simple dance forms becoming profound musical visions.) Bach wrote highly complex, contrapuntal music that expanded the range of the keyboard instrument. He also made intricate use of the left hand. While many composers wrote a left hand part that merely filled in a rhythmic line, Bach's left hand writing is more complex. While Bach was indeed a Baroque composer, the deep range of emotions and tonal colors in the "Goldberg Variations" look forward to a new Romantic era. The formal rigor, density, and complexity of this music are awesome. It is hard to view the history of keyboard composition without the influence of Johann Sebastian Bach.

While Bach composed most of his keyboard works for the harpsichord, there is a long tradition of performing them on the modern piano. Such vastly different artists as Glenn Gould, Rosalyn Tureck, Murray Perahia, and Andras Schiff have brought new artistic dimensions to the performance of Bach's music on modern concert grands….

--Lawrence Budmen

Franz Schubert

Impromptus (B27)
Impromptu in F minor, Op. 142 No. 1 (D935)
Impromptu in A flat major, Op. 90 No. 4 (D899)

Schubert wrote two sets of Impromptus (D899 and D935). Composed in B27, his post-'Winterreise' annus mirabilis, a year of fervent creativity, the Impromptus remain some of his most popular piano works….

The word “Impromptu” is misleading, suggesting a small-scale extemporaneous salon piece. In fact, all of Schubert’s Impromptus are tightly-knit and highly cohesive works, and the longest lasts over ten minutes. Schubert did not invent the term “impromptu”: Jan Vöříšek, the Bohemian composer living in Vienna, published the first impromptus in B22, and the term was assigned to Schubert’s works by his Viennese publisher. When he sent out his second set of Impromptus, Schubert numbered them five through to eight. Schumann posited that Schubert may have had something much larger in mind when he composed the D935 set, and even suggested that the key sequence of the four pieces formed a piano sonata in all but name. Certainly the F minor Impromptu (the first of the D935 — the set ends with another F minor impromptu) has the grandeur and scale one expects from a piano sonata from this period but all four works also stand alone, each distinct in their own right….

The Opus 90 Impromptus are often performed as a set, though sometimes a single one will be offered in a program, or as an encore (Schubert himself told his publishers that the works could be issued singly or in a set), and the four pieces do present a kind of journey (‘Reise’),
both musical and metaphorical, when considered together....

And so to my favorite, the No. 4, in A-flat, and here at last all the uncertain tonalities of the preceding movements find a home. This is not prefigured at the outset, rather the protagonist, the meandering *Fremdling* of these four pieces, must strive for eventual and gradual disclosure: the piece opens in A-flat minor, though it is written in the major, with accidentals, and the harmonic ambiguity lingers until bar 31 when the graceful, cascading semiquaver figure is at last heard in A-flat major, beneath which the left hand has a fragile, ‘cello-like melody. At the center of the piece is a lyrical trio reminiscent of Schubert’s *‘Wanderer*’ fantasy, after which the sense of alienation and tension from the earlier pieces is swept aside by the gradual acceleration of all the elements and the home key, A-flat, becomes fully dominant, while a life-affirming dance-like figure takes over in the bass. The final cadence is an emphatic A-flat major descent and two forceful closing chords. Home at last.

--Frances Wilson

**Frédéric Chopin**

*Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35, “Funeral March”*

By the time Chopin composed the Sonata in B-flat minor, he was renowned particularly for his short dance-inspired works (mazurkas, waltzes, polonaises); his only multi-movement compositions known to the public were the two piano concertos and the piano trio written in 1828-1830. The First Piano Sonata, composed in 1828 was published posthumously in 1851.

The Second Sonata was written between 1837 and 1839 and published a year later. Characteristically, its genesis was as a single-movement piece; the Funeral March, now the Sonata’s third movement, was originally composed to stand alone. How and why it became incorporated into a larger structure is not known. The great pianist Anton Rubinstein posited a program for the entire work, “the span of life,” with the Funeral March representing “humanity’s mourning for the dead” and the Finale as “the winds of night sweeping over churchyard graves.” Unfortunately, such interpretations have stuck and diverted the attention of the listener from perceiving what a fascinatingly innovative musical adventure the Sonata actually is.

-- Beatrice Rana
Claire Huangci — Biography

Born in New York, 24 year old pianist Claire Huangci is widely renowned for spellbinding performances that integrate a ‘technical superiority second to none’ and a keen narrative psyche. Upon first listen, legendary pianist Vladimir Krainev dubbed her as having “the fastest fingers in the world.”

In 2003, Claire was accepted by the Curtis Institute with a full scholarship and continued her piano studies there for four years. During that time, she had her debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Wolfgang Sawallisch. 2007 marked her first appearances in Europe with solo performances in the Herkulessaal, die Residenz, in Munich, Ludwigshafen, and in the Salle Cortot Hall of Paris as well as concerto appearances with National Philharmonique du Maroc, China Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Suedwestdeutsche Philharmonie Orchester of Konstanz.

During the 2008-2009 season, Claire appeared in numerous solo and concerto performances at various venues and festivals, such as Vienna Konzerthaus with the Wiener Kammerorchester and Ariel Zuckermann, St. Petersburg Hermitage Theater with St. Petersburg Symphony, Bonn Beethovenhaus, Salzburg Mozarteum, Israel Rubinstein Foundation series, Hyogo Performing Arts Center, Osaka Symphony Hall, NYC Carnegie Hall, Kissinger Sommer Festspiele, Schwetzingen Festspiele, and Mainz Musiksommer.

The following season began with her debut in Zurich Tonhalle with the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Fedosseyev under the auspices of the Orpheum Foundation and included concerts at Karlsruhe Konzerthaus, Frankfurt Sendesaal in cooperation with Hessischer Rundfunk, Duszniki Chopin Festival, Bregenz Festspielhaus, Antibes Generation Virtuoses Festival, Verbier Festival, and return visits to Bonn Beethovenhaus, Carnegie Hall and Paris Salle Cortot. She was given the honor of performing the opening concert at the Shanghai EXPO with Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra and Sir Roger Norrington in May 2010, as part of the orchestra’s Asian tour, with additional concerts in Macao, and Shenzhen.

In February of 2010, she was awarded the 1st prize and all special prizes in the US National Chopin Competition in Miami. As a laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition, Claire made her Belgium debut at the Brussels Palais des Beaux Arts with the National Orchestra of Belgium and Maestro Marin Alsop.

Highlights from the 2010-2011 season included concerts with the Cannes Orchestre, Bran-
denburgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt, Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, Umea Sinfonieorchester, a tour of Europe with Maestro Howard Griffiths and the Animato Stiftung Orchestra, and recitals in the Lodz Rubinstein Festival, Ravinia Festival, Gstaad Sommets Musicaux, Menuhin Festival Gstaad, Paris Solistes Serres Auteil Festival, Flanders Festival Ghent, Munich Gasteig Winners and Masters Series, Copenhagen Tivoli Hall, Tokyo Oji Hall, Berlin Konzerthaus, IKIF Festival, Caramoor Festival, and tours in China, Japan and USA.

Her 2011-2012 season included appearances with the Munich Chamber Orchestra at the Herkulesaal, Munich Rundfunkorchester at the Prinzregententheater, Boca Raton Symphony and Maestro Philippe Entremont, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Boulder Chamber Orchestra, Rubinstein Philharmonic Orchestra Lodz, Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, Collegium Musicum Basel, and a New Year’s Eve Concert with the Santa Fe Symphony, as well as recitals in Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Turkey, China, America, Japan and a return to the Schwetzingen Festspiele and Festspiele Mecklenburg Vorpommern. She was also a resident artist for the 2012 Newport Festival and 2012 Festival Miami.

In the 2011 ARD Music Competition, Claire was awarded the 2nd prize and prize for the youngest finalist from BR Klassik. In the finals, she performed the Chopin Concerto 1 with the Symphonieorchester Bayerischen Rundfunks at the Munich Gasteig to critical acclaim. As a frequent guest on TV and radio air, Claire has appeared in profiles for Deutsche Welle, FranceTV2, TVP (Poland), CCTV (China), NHK (Japan), RTBF (Belgium), FOX news and PBS (US), and has been heard in numerous radio broadcasts around the world.

Claire Huangci has been studying at the Hannover Musikhochschule with Prof. Vardi since October 2007. She has received scholarships from Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, DAAD, Chopin Gesellschaft Hannover, and Yamaha Music Foundation, and was awarded the 2010 SONY career grant from NYC Salon de Virtuosi, Promusicis Award, and the Orpheum Music Prize from Zurich.

In the summer of 2013, her solo debut recording of works by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev was released by Berlin Classics, presenting Claire Huangci as an independent and impressive artist.
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