



The German Society of Pennsylvania

presents

EStrella Piano Duo



Sunday, December 13, 2015 at 3:00pm

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 "Radetzkmarsch/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. Jan. 3 Claire Huangci, piano, 3pm
Selections include: Bach's Goldberg Variations, two Franz Schubert impromptus, and other piano pieces
- 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

Program

Selections from Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067 Rondeau Sarabande Bourree I and II Polonaise and Double Minuet Badinerie	J. S. Bach
Eight variations on a Theme by Count Waldstein, WoO 67	Ludwig van Beethoven
Bilder aus Osten, Op. 66 Nicht schnell Lebhaft	Robert Schumann
Selections from Waltzes, Op. 39, #1,2,3,4.	Johannes Brahms
Andante at Allegro Brilliante, op. 92	Felix Mendelssohn

::Intermission::

Kinderscenen, Op. 16 Von fremden Ländern und Menschen Curiose Geschichte Hasche - Mann Bittendes Kind Glückes genug Wichtige Begebenheit Träumerei Am Camin Ritter vom Steckenpferd Fast zu ernst Fürchtenmachen Kind im Einschlummern Der Dichter spricht	Robert Schumann
Papageno!	W. A. Mozart (arr. Greg Anderson)
Rhapsody in Blue	George Gershwin/Henry Levine

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

By Svetlana Belsky

J.S. Bach (1685 - 1750) - Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067

J.S. Bach, every musician's favorite composer, is best known for works which explore the depths of his religious fervor and for his contrapuntal masterpieces of enormous complexity. But he was also the composer of hundreds of lighter pieces designed for the pure pleasure of listening. Among these are his four orchestral dance suites composed around 1720. Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067 comprise highly stylized French dances, not suitable for dancing, but bright, virtuosic and lovely. The *Rondeau* cleverly combines the repeating structure which the title denotes with the rhythm of a Gavotte. The stately dignified *Sarabande* is the emotional heart of the Baroque Suite. Both the *Bourree* and the *Polonaise* are Da Capo movements, with a contrasting section in the middle. The *Minuet* provides an island of grace and simplicity before the famous *Badinerie* (joke) with its virtuosic playfulness and delightful figuration.

L. van Beethoven (1770 - 1827) - Eight Variations on a theme of Count Waldstein, WoO 67

Ludwig van Beethoven, as well, is known more for his grand symphonies and sonatas than for his numerous lighter salon compositions. The Eight Variations on a theme of Count von Waldstein, WoO 67 are among only 4 works for piano Four-Hands. **They were written during the composer's early years in Bonn, probably around 1790.** The "Count Waldstein" referred to in the title is the same Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, after whom the Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major is nicknamed. The theme is simple, almost bland, and the listener is endlessly surprised with the wealth of invention and sparkle Beethoven is able to impart as the Variations progress.

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856) - Bilder aus Osten, Op. 66

Bilder aus Osten Op.66, a set of six impromptus for piano four-hands, inspired by the "Maqama" — a genre of Arab rhymed prose — by the medieval poet Hariri in the translation by Friedrich Rückert, was published in 1849. One searches in vain for exotic references in these lovely pieces. Rather, they are in the grand Romantic tradition of exploring the theme of the Hero's Journey.

Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897) - Waltzes of Opus 39

Johannes Brahms spent the 1860 editing and arranging Franz Schubert's dance music.

The Waltzes of Opus 39, originally written for piano duet, are no doubt an homage to Schubert. Their complex and rich harmonic language, however, is pure Brahms. Each of these miniatures is a tiny masterpiece, both irresistibly beautiful and emotionally moving.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847) - Allegro Brillante in A Major, Op. 92

The *Allegro Brillante in A Major* Op. 92 for four-hand piano was Felix Mendelssohn's gift to Clara Schumann, with whom he performed the work one week after its completion in March 1841. Clara Schumann, who had just won the court case allowing her to marry Robert Schumann, after an acrimonious legal battle with her father, was one of the greatest virtuosi of her (or any) day, so this piece has become one of the most challenging in the piano duet repertoire. Besides lightning speed from each of the pianists, the performers are required to breathe, think and move as one.

Robert Schumann - Kinderscenen, Op. 16

The father of 8 children with his beloved Clara, Robert Schumann wrote *Kinderscenen* Op. 16 in 1838, as a single man. These short scenes are reminiscences of his own childhood and perhaps dreams for a family life still cruelly forbidden him by Clara's father. These little gems are certainly not intended to be played by children. While deceptively simple, their emotional maturity and sophistication, as well as harmonic complexity place them among Schumann's greatest masterpieces.

W.A. Mozart (1756 - 1791)/Greg Anderson (b. 1981) - Papageno!

Greg Anderson, b. 1981 is, without a doubt, the most exciting composer of new music for piano duet. His compositions and arrangements for the genre break every taboo, confound all expectations, and bring sheer fun to piano duos and audiences everywhere. We, the *ESTrella Piano Duo*, have become devotees of his works, and freely forgive him for the large number of bruises, hurt fingers, and an occasional concussion caused by rehearsing them. **Papageno!** is a fantasy on various themes from Mozart's opera *Magic Flute*. The piece should be seen, not just heard, for full effect and enjoyment.

George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)/Henry Levine - Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, that most popular of all American compositions, hardly needs an introduction. Composed in 1924, it has won the hearts of millions since. It was a grand success right from its premiere in New York's Aeolian Hall. The critics hated it. Here is one review worth quoting, quite funny in retrospect, "How trite, feeble and conventional the tunes are; how sentimental and vapid the harmonic treatment, under its disguise of fussy and futile counterpoint! ...Weep over the lifelessness of the melody and harmony, so derivative, so stale, so inexpressive". We respectfully disagree.

The **EStrella Piano Duo** burst onto the musical scene in 2011 with a series of concerts celebrating the great Russian masterpieces for piano duet. Elena Doubovitskaya and Svetlana Belsky share both their Russian heritage and training, and their enthusiasm for playing together. Elena and Svetlana are accomplished soloists and chamber musicians. Between the two, they have been heard throughout Europe, Asia and the United States, with numerous orchestras, and on the radio. Their concert credits include Carnegie (Weill) Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakoff Museum, Baptist University of Hong Kong, and Tanglewood Music Festival. Critics **praise them for “marvelous and extraordinary playing” and “confidence and élan”**. Elena and Svetlana are also accomplished teachers, who love sharing their love for music with new generations of pianists.

Their first performance together evoked raves of “technical brilliance” and “infectious joy in music making”. The second drew a standing-room-only crowd. Since then they have presented concerts and masterclasses throughout the United States. The 2013-14 season took them to countless university series, several concerts on the East Coast and all over the Midwest. A highlight of the 2014 season was an exciting collaboration with the **Clinard Dance Company for live performances of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring**. The group will be taking the production to China and Hong Kong in 2016. The busy 2015-2016 concert calendar also includes a repeat performance for the German Society of Pennsylvania, and recitals and masterclasses at Grinnell College, Hunter College, Montclair University, Loyola University and many more. Our Canadian debut is planned for April of 2017.



Svetlana Belsky- Critically acclaimed as "a passionate pianist and scholar", Dr. Svetlana Belsky is an in-demand recitalist and chamber pianist, noted for her remarkable rapport with audiences and stylistic versatility. She has appeared in the Ukraine, Russia, Poland, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and throughout the United States. Her performance credits include Carnegie Recital Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, Dame Myra Hess Series, Music in the Loft, countless university concert series, live recitals on Chicago's WFMT and New York's WQXR and guest appearances with the University of Chicago Symphony, Southern Illinois Symphony, Chicago Chamber Orchestra and the Tutti Orchestra. In addition to her multiple solo and chamber music appearances Dr. Belsky is a member of two Chicago - based groups: EStrella Piano Duo and Pianissimo!, a multi piano group of four pianists. As a coordinator of Piano Studies at the University of Chicago, Dr. Belsky teaches students from four continents, among other academic responsibilities.



Elena Doubovitskaya -- A native of Russia, Elena Doubovitskaya performed her debut piano recital in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York City, as part of the Artists International series, followed by numerous engagements in the United States, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Russia. Her accomplishments include awards from Artists International Presentations, the Seattle International Piano Competition, the IBLA Grand Prize Competition in Italy and appearances in Chicago Symphony Center and Seiji Ozawa Hall in Massachusetts. She is the recipient of scholarships at various institutions, including the Tanglewood Music Festival, Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, the Manhattan School of Music. Dr. Doubovitskaya is a member of three Chicago-based chamber groups: the EStrella Piano Duo, the contemporary music ensemble Lakeshore Rush and a multi-piano group Pianissimo!, comprised of four pianists. In addition, Dr. Doubovitskaya serves as the Chair of the Piano Department at the Merit School of Music in Chicago.



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