



The German Society of Pennsylvania

presents

Claire Huangci, piano



Sunday, January 5, 2014 at 3:00pm

The German Society of Pennsylvania
www.germansociety.org

611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Calendar of Events

January 2014

- Fri. Jan 17 **Friday FilmFest “Marlene”, 6.30pm**
Thurs. Jan 23 Lecture: Dr. Friederike Baer – **“German-Americans, Nativism, and Murder: The Trials of Paul Schoeppe, 1869-1872”, 6pm**
Fri. Jan 24 **Women’s Auxiliary of the German Society: “An Evening in the Black Forest”, City Tavern, 6pm**
Wed. Jan 29 *Konversationsabend, Jahresplanung, Ratskeller, 7pm*

February 2014

- Sat. Feb 1 Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting in the Ratskeller, 10am
Fri. Feb 14 **Friday FilmFest, “Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin”, 6.30pm**
Wed. Feb 19 Lecture: Dr. Randall Donaldson – "The German Societies of Pennsylvania and Maryland: Two Perspectives on German-language Immigrants to North America", 6pm
Sat. Feb 22 Third Annual Bierfest, 1.30pm-5.30pm

March 2014

- Sat. Mar 1 Women's Auxiliary Monthly Meeting in the Ratskeller, 10am
Fri. Mar 14 **Friday FilmFest, “Die Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull”, 6.30pm**
Thurs. Mar 20 Lecture: Dr. Jürgen Overhoff – **“William Penn’s Travels in Germany, 1677”, 6pm**
Fri. Mar 28 Colonial Cooking Event with Walter Staib at Harriton House in Bryn Mawr, 6pm

Save the Dates for our Next of “Wister and More!” Concerts...

- Sun. Feb 2 Davyd Booth and Michael Stairs, 3:00pm
This four-handed concert is a joint presentation with the Delius Society. Selections will include Schubert, Delius, C.W. Orr, Bach, Cyril Scott, Norman O’Neill, and Edward German.
- Sun. Mar 2 The Bach Choir of Bethlehem 3:00pm
The Bach Choir of Bethlehem and Bach Festival Orchestra, under the direction of maestro **Greg Funfgeld**, will perform **“Young Meister Bach”, a new opera composed by Chuck Holde-**man with libretto by Bill Bly, and the Coffee Cantata by J.S. Bach.
- Sun. Mar 23 The Wister Quartet, 3:00pm
Selection will include Rachmaninov’s String Quartet, Schubert’s String Quartet in B flat Major, D. 18 and Dvorak’s String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106.

Claire Huangci, piano

PROGRAM

- I. Chaconne, Transcription for piano in D minor
(after J. S. Bach, BWV 1004), KIV B24 Ferruccio Busoni
(1685 - 1759)
- II. Op 57 Appassionata Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)
1. Allegro, Assai
 2. Andante con Moto
 3. Allegro ma non troppo, Presto

::INTERMISSION::

- III. 10 Pieces Op.75 (Romeo And Juliet) Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)
- IV. *Réminiscences de Don Juan* (S.228, a fantasy on
Mozart's themes from *Don Giovanni*, K. 527) Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

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

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924), Chaconne, Transcription for piano in D minor (after J. S. Bach, BWV 1004), KIV B24

On a day in May 1888, hearing the organist of the Leipzig *Thomaskirche* play Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D, *Frau* Kathi Petri, mother of the great pianist and future Busoni "disciple," Egon Petri, suggested to the young Busoni that he arrange it for piano; a week later, and without writing it down, he played it for her. Thus began the series of Bach-Busoni transcriptions, recensions, editions, and Bach-based compositions which would occupy the composer to the end of his life. Exploring the difficulties and opportunities of accommodating Bach to the heavily strung, more powerfully resonant pianos, equipped with Steinway's new *sostenuto* pedal, Busoni fashioned a superhuman technique which would make him perhaps the most titanic pianist after Liszt. "Bach is the foundation of pianoforte playing," he wrote, "Liszt the summit. The two make Beethoven possible"....

It was inevitable, therefore, that Busoni should have seized upon the great D minor Chaconne from Bach's Partita No. 2, BWV. 1004, which stands apart from the preludes, dances, and fugues of the partitas and sonatas for solo violin in sustained richness of invention and sheer magnificence. Schumann, Mendelssohn, Raff, Siloti, and Brahms, among others, left arrangements of the Chaconne, Brahms' being a useful study for the left hand alone. Busoni's transcription was written in Boston in 1892, during a brief tenure as professor of piano at the New England Conservatory.

-Adrian Corleonis

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Op 57 Appassionata

Both the opening movement of the “Appassionata” Sonata in F minor, Op. 57, composed 1804-05, and its finale are in sonata form, and that tonal opposition is the principal dualism of the work. But Beethoven also plays powerfully with severe contrasts of dynamics, range, and articulation, and he is a master of expressive silences.

All of this is immediately apparent in the opening bars of the “Appassionata.” (The nickname is not the composer’s, but it accurately suggests the defining character of the piece.) It begins in ominous mystery, with a hushed traversal of the notes of the F-minor triad, full of latent energy and developmental potential while defining the tonic key as starkly as possible. There are suggestive silences, unexpected harmonic bumps, great sonic holes between the widely spread right and left hands, and a kinetic explosion at the end. You will recognize the recapitulation when all of this returns, but now over a throbbing bass line that fills in the expectant silences with audible urgency.

The central movement is a contemplative theme in D-flat major – a key much alluded to in the first movement – and increasingly agitated variations. It ends with an enriched reprise of the theme, leading directly into the whirlwind finale, a physically grueling dramatic challenge that raises the violence ante to bank-breaking levels in a furiously accelerated coda.

“If Beethoven, who was so fond of portraying scenes from nature, was perhaps thinking of ocean waves on a stormy night when from the distance a cry for help is heard, then such a picture will give the pianist a guide to the correct playing of this great tonal painting,” wrote Beethoven’s virtuoso pupil Carl Czerny about the finale of Op. 57. “There is no doubt that in many of his most beautiful works Beethoven was inspired by similar visions or pictures from his reading or from his own lively imagination. It is equally certain that if it were always possible to know the idea behind the composition, we would have the key to the music and its performance.”

-John Henken, Director of Publications, Los Angeles Philharmonic Association.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), 10 Pieces Op.75 (Romeo And Juliet)

A recollection by musician Vernon Duke of a 1916 Kiev concert by Prokofiev playing his own music: **“He had very long, dangling arms, terminating in a bruiser’s powerful hands...After sitting down and adjusting his stool with an abrupt jerk, Prokofiev let go with an unrelenting muscular**

exhibition of a completely new style of piano playing.... There was no sentiment, no sweetness there—nothing but unrelenting energy and athletic joy of living.... There was frenetic applause... He bowed clumsily, dropping his head almost to his knees and recovering with a jerk.

“Thirty years younger than Debussy, Prokofiev was carefully studying the older man’s piano compositions (and those of Chopin, Bartok and Ravel) while writing his own 20-piece Fugitive Visions in 1915, exactly when Debussy was writing his Etudes. He left Russia during the Revolution and lived in Paris until his return to Russia after 15 years. Cultured, urbane, and well versed in literature, Prokofiev rewrote Romeo and Juliet as a ballet, depicting in music and pantomime Shakespeare’s relentless tale of love and death.”

When both the Kirov and Bolshoi ballet troupes declared it “undanceable,” the redoubtable composer rearranged the score into three orchestral suites. He chose ten pieces from the ballet, transcribed them for piano, and played the premier in Moscow in 1937. The whole ballet with the original orchestral score was premiered in Brno in 1938 and was found to be “danceable.” Seventy-five years later, all five versions are accepted as masterpieces.

Today we hear Prokofiev’s piano transcription—technically brilliant, suffused with emotions aroused by the terrible events of the tragedy, introducing new elements into the music on this program. Compare the subtitles of the individual pieces with those of the Debussy Etudes, and consider how they relate to the music.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) *Réminiscences de Don Juan* (S.228, a fantasy on Mozart’s themes from Don Giovanni, K. 527)

“Variations or fantasies on themes from familiar operas were common concert fare in the nineteenth century. They combined tunes well known to the audience with virtuoso writing that allowed the pianist’s abilities to shine. Sometimes called the Don Juan Fantasy, Liszt’s *Réminiscences de Don Juan* employs several themes from Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni. It is not heard as often as several of Liszt’s other operatic fantasies, in part due to its sheer difficulty.

“As great a pianist as Ferruccio Busoni wrote that the *Réminiscences* have “an almost symbolic significance as the highest point of pianism.” The piece opens dramatically by combining the Commendatore’s threats to Don Giovanni in the Act II graveyard scene, and the opera’s final scene in which the “stone guest” takes Don Giovanni to hell. The themes are recognizably Mozart’s, but the treatment is in Liszt’s most flamboyant manner. Then comes perhaps the opera’s most famous tune, Don Giovanni’s and Zerlina’s love duet, *Là ci darem la mano*, providing a charming contrast to what came before. Liszt introduces a couple of new episodes varying that theme, with virtuoso piano writing and a recalling of the opening music. The brilliant conclusion adds Don Giovanni’s Act I aria, *Fin ch’han del vino*, with pianistic fireworks that remind us why Liszt was the most famous pianist of his day.”

-Chris Morrison, Nevada Chamber Music Festival

Claire Huangci — Biography



Born in New York, 23 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 Herkulesaal, 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, Duszniaki 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, Brandenburgisches 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.

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We also wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous support received from
The Arcadia Foundation & The Albert & Hete Barthelmes Foundation, The Philadelphia Cultural
Fund and Styron LLC for this season of our music program.

