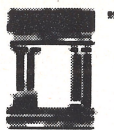




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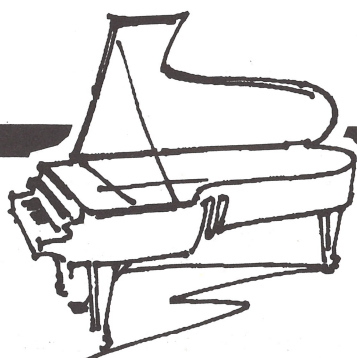
• PIANO •

Sunday, February 24, 1991
Vancouver Playhouse

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Program

***Variations Brillants, Op.14*..... Carl Czerny
(1791-1857)**

Tonight's program begins with a work by a composer who is not especially well-represented in the modern concert repertoire. Despite the fact that he composed well over 1,000 pieces, Czerny's modern reputation rests almost solely on his many rigorous, if rather uninspired, technical studies for the keyboard. While these works are important for what they tell us about contemporary piano technique, they do not reflect the entirety of Czerny's impact on the history of nineteenth-century pianism; Czerny's activities as a teacher were perhaps even more far-reaching. He had been taught by Beethoven, so naturally he developed quite a reputation for his interpretations of the master's music, and quickly became one of the most sought-after teachers in Europe. Franz Liszt and Theodor Leschetitzky were among his many pupils and they, in turn, according to Harold Schonberg, eventually taught "everybody". Thus Czerny holds a rather special position in music history for serving as a direct link between two great masters, and for being at the source of the most distinguished strain of nineteenth-century pianism. As a mature artist, Liszt (whose Transcendental Etudes are dedicated to Czerny) frequently acknowledged that he owed his success as a virtuoso to his teacher.

***Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este, I* Franz Liszt
Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este, II (1811-1886)
Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este
(from *Années de Pèlerinage: Troisième Année*)**

The supreme virtuoso of the nineteenth century since his early teens, Liszt took considerably more time to develop as a composer; his earlier works tend to be showy display pieces, but poetic content steadily increased over time. By the last twenty years of his life, his style had changed radically from his earlier days, being marked by ever-increasing introversion and mysticism. Book III of the *Years of Pilgrimage* shows signs of this trend. Composed between 1867 and 1877, Book III concludes a series of musical sketches reflecting the composer's travels over the years. Whenever in Rome, Liszt stayed at the Villa d'Este, a close friend's family home, renowned for the magnificence of its beautiful gardens. Liszt's fascination with the cypress trees and fountains in particular is said to have resulted directly in the descriptive pieces heard tonight. *Jeux d'eau* is especially avant-garde in its impressionistic atmosphere, but the following verse quoted half-way through the score lends a touch of mysticism to the musical imagery: "But whosoever

drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

***Valse de l'opéra Faust* Charles Gounod
(1818-1893)
transcr. Liszt**

Transcriptions (arrangements for piano of other types of music such as symphonies, operatic overtures, whole operas, etc) form a significant portion of Liszt's output, whether they be transcriptions of his own or of other composers' works. With the advent of the travelling virtuoso, piano transcriptions enabled a good deal of otherwise inaccessible music to be disseminated to a much wider public than ever before. It has been the tendency to criticize these types of works as mere vehicles for empty virtuosic display, as indeed they so often were with many of the composer/pianists of the early nineteenth century. While some of Liszt's compositions fall into this category, his best certainly transcend the medium. The operatic transcriptions in particular seem to have inspired Liszt to overcome the physical limitations of the piano in his search for a technique that could envelope the entire sound world of the original composition. The resulting innovations in keyboard writing are nothing short of brilliant.

INTERMISSION

***Gargoyles, Op.29* Lowell Liebermann
(1961-)**

Presto
Adagio semplice, ma con moto rubato
Allegro moderato
Presto feroce

Lowell Liebermann was born in 1961 in New York City. He attended the Juilliard School, where he received a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree, studying composition with David Diamond and Vincent Persichetti and piano with Jacob Lateiner. He studied conducting with Laszlo Halasz and served as Principal Assistant Conductor of the Nassau Lyric Opera Company. The recipient of many awards, honours, and commissions, his compositions are frequently performed by internationally acclaimed performers such as Stephen Hough and Joshua Bell.

Program

The set of four pieces entitled "Gargoyles" was commissioned by the Tcherepnin Society for pianist Eric Himy. According to the composer, the title "Gargoyles" is meant "not in any programmatic way, but to indicate sharply drawn character sketches of a somewhat grotesque or morbid nature. The four pieces are actually highly contrasting etudes: the first, a devilishly difficult study in double notes; the second, legato octaves above an ostinato; the third, legato melody with inner figurations divided between the two hands; and lastly, another fiendishly difficult study, an endurance test in double notes, octaves and leaps."

Three Mazurkas Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Ballade No. 4 in f minor, Op.52

Unlike the polonaise, which had been established long before Chopin's time both as a national dance and a stylized dance piece, the mazurka only came into its own in the early nineteenth century, and really only through the compositions of Chopin. Interestingly enough, it was the form that perhaps most consistently occupied the composer throughout his creative life. Highly stylized pieces definitely not intended for dancing (distorting rhythmic ambiguities abound), Chopin's mazurkas nonetheless made much use of the basic elements of the Polish dance, and thereby influenced later nineteenth-century nationalistic approaches to music. But the real distinguishing feature of Chopin's mazurkas lies not so much in the fact that the composer merely incorporated elements of folk music, but that he fused these folklike materials with the boldest, most ad-

vanced harmonic techniques of his time. Some of Chopin's most original music is found in the mazurkas, along with some of his most deeply felt moments.

The distinguishing feature of the ballades, on the other hand, is not so much their innovative harmonic language as their novel approach to form. The title "ballade" does not carry with it any formal expectations; while each of the four composed by Chopin are varied in their individual designs, they all tend to favour through-composed structures, almost sounding as if they were improvised. Indeed, some listeners likened Chopin's style of playing to the improvisation of a poem, and this sense of narrative flow is especially prevalent in the fourth ballade, where exquisite gradations of tension compel the listener inevitably to the brilliant climax of the piece.

Ungarische Zigeunerweisen Carl Tausig
(1841-1871)

This evening's concluding piece, Hungarian Gypsy Melodies, was written by another once-famous pianist/composer who has fallen out of the modern concert repertoire. Carl Tausig was the most famous and perhaps the greatest of Liszt's many pupils. Liszt himself had recognized Tausig as the finest talent to have come his way, and he is said to have carried virtuosity to even greater heights than his esteemed teacher, though without the latter's flamboyance. Tausig's peers praised him not only for his amazing virtuosity, but also for his discipline, intellectualism and musicality. He died of typhoid at an early age.

Program notes by B. Martineau

The Vancouver Recital Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture; the City of Vancouver; the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation; the Hamber Foundation, the McLean Foundation, and the Cherniavsky Junior Club for the Performing Arts.

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Ticket recycling anyone?

We are delighted that three of our concerts this season have been sold out and we have consequently had to turn away single ticket buyers. We would very much appreciate hearing in advance from subscribers who are unable to use or dispose of their tickets for any performance, so that we may re-sell the tickets and issue tax receipts. In that way we can all benefit.

Meet the Artist

Stephen Hough

British pianist Stephen Hough (pronounced Huff) made his Canadian debut on this series during the 1984/85 season, the year following his "arrival" on the North American musical scene when he won the prestigious Walter W. Naumburg International Piano Competition. Since then he has emerged as one of the busiest young performers on the international concert scene, appearing with many of the world's most prestigious orchestras and conductors.

Stephen was born in Heswall, Cheshire in England and attended Chetham's School of Music where he studied with Gordon Green. He continued his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating in 1981 with a first-class honours degree, a distinction in the Professional Performer's Diploma, and the Dayas Gold Medal. As the recipient of a Julius Isserlis Scholarship awarded by the Royal Philharmonic Society, Stephen studied with Adele Marcus at the Juilliard School in New York. There were further awards and scholarships including the first Terence Judd Award which resulted in his London debut at the Wigmore Hall.

In his native England Stephen is a frequent guest of the London Symphony and all the other major London orchestras, as well as the City of Birmingham Orchestra and the BBC Philharmonic. He performs extensively in Europe where he has toured with Claudio Abbado and the London Symphony, and with Sir Yehudi Menuhin and the English Chamber Orchestra. A frequent guest of festivals worldwide, including Ravinia,

Mostly Mozart, Aldeburgh and the Proms, Stephen is equally active on the recital and chamber music stage, and this season will be making guest appearances with the Juilliard and Cleveland string quartets.

US orchestral engagements have included Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Detroit among others, and in Canada he has appeared with all the major orchestras. Conductors with whom he has worked include Claudio Abbado, James Levine, Charles Dutoit, Michael Tilson Thomas, Neemi Jarvi and Simon Rattle.

Stephen Hough's discography is highlighted by the "Concerto Recording of the Year" awarded by Gramophone Magazine for his recording of Hummel piano concertos with the English Chamber Orchestra. He has also recorded the complete Beethoven violin sonatas with Robert Mann. An exclusive recording artist for Virgin Classics, Stephen's most recent releases include a solo album of Schumann, Brahms concertos, a solo album of Liszt (awarded a Deutscher Schallplattenpreis), and a disc entitled "The Piano Album", featuring encore music. Three of Stephen's Virgin recordings have been awarded a Choc, the highest accolade from Le Monde de la Musique.

Tonight's performance is being recorded for broadcast at a later date by CBC Stereo's "Arts National" (105.7 FM).

Mr. Hough appears through the courtesy of IMG Artists, 22 East 71st Street, New York, NY 10021.

Next Concert: Sunday, March 24, 8:00 pm

MICHALA PETRI, Recorder
CAROLE TERRY, Harpsichord

Sonata in a minor	Handel
Sonata in C major	Heberle
<i>La Follia</i>	Corelli
Introduction, theme and variations, Op.32	Krehmer
Sonata in d minor	Telemann
<i>The Blackbird</i>	Thommessen
Sonata in G major	Albinoni

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Whilst ticket sales are a vital source of income, they do not cover the entire cost of operation. We must raise money each year through contributions in order to meet our obligations. We operate on a very careful budget and your contribution of any size will make a difference.

Please help us to continue bringing the very best — the cream of young musical talent from around the world, with your **tax deductible** contribution. Donations payable to the Vancouver Recital Society may be mailed to:

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