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2018-02-21

Faculty Recital: Konstantinos Papadakis, piano, February 21, 2018

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Faculty Recital: Roberto Plano, piano
Tsai Performance Center

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Boston Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Avenue
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Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music



Faculty Recital: Konstantinos Papadakis, piano

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 8pm

Tsai Performance Center

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Boston University's College of Fine Arts is a forward-thinking community of artists, educators, and students engaged in creative discourse about the essential role of the fine arts in the 21st century. Students in the School of Music receive intensive training in their individual disciplines, and are inspired to think beyond traditional classical music roles as they prepare for careers as musicians.

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Together with the School of Theatre and the School of Visual Arts, the School of Music is committed to providing concentrated instruction for artists-in-training, as well as opportunities for undergraduates from across the Boston University campus, to explore and interact with the arts. The value of education provided by the College of Fine Arts is enriched by internships, creative partnerships, and rich exchanges with cultural, artistic, intellectual, and humanistic organizations across the city of Boston.

Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Music

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Bayla Keyes *violin* *
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SAB Sabbatical

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LOA Leave of Absence
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Music

February 21, 2018
Tsai Performance Center

Piano Sonata in C-Sharp Minor, Opus 27, No. 2
Quasi una fantasia ("Moonlight")

Adagio sostenuto
Allegretto - Trio
Presto agitato

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Opus 35 (1839)
Grave; Doppio movimento
Scherzo
Marche funèbre: Lento
Finale: Presto

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Intermission

love♥bird (2005)

Robert Maggio
(b. 1964)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Opus 36
(1913, rev. 1931)

Allegro agitato
Non allegro - L'istesso tempo
Allegro molto

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata in C-Sharp Minor, Opus 27, No. 2, *Quasi una fantasia* ("Moonlight")

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto – Trio

Presto agitato

Beethoven's monumental 32 sonatas for piano epitomize the extraordinary changes that surrounded piano construction at the time. They span his entire oeuvre and are present in each of his three creative periods. The two Sonatas of Opus 27, written in 1800-1801, bear the unconventional subtitle *Quasi una fantasia* ("in the manner of a fantasy"). The title "Moonlight" was given to this Sonata early on, possibly by the poet and critic Ludwig Rellstab (1799-1860) who compared the unprecedented sound of the *Adagio sostenuto* to a boat ride on a moonlit night on the lake. There is no doubt that the movement casts a dreamy atmosphere, also enhanced by the description Beethoven provides under the tempo indication: "Si deve suonare tutto questo pezzo delicatissimamente e senza sordini" ("This whole piece ought to be played with the utmost delicacy and without dampers"). That final direction, "without dampers," aimed to instruct the pianist to use the pedal throughout the entire movement. This was standard indication for the pianos of the time, but highly original at the same time: using the pedal throughout the movement created a novel sonority and unusual effect on the early fortepiano, a blurring of sonorities that sounded atmospheric but not muddy.

The vast modifications of each subsequent generation of pianos incrementally afforded Beethoven even more imaginative sonorities, never before attempted in the genre. Beethoven came to regard the genre of the piano sonata as equal to a string quartet or a symphony, two of the most challenging instrumental genres. For that reason he added a fourth movement to some of his sonatas, a scherzo, that modified the balance and added gravity. Supplemented with a novel treatment of musical material, the piano sonata was thus elevated to unprecedented standards of musical complexity. The first of the diptych of Opus 27, Sonata in E-flat major, indeed includes a four-movement scheme with a scherzo taking the second place and the slow movement moving to the third place. For the Sonata in C-sharp minor, Beethoven adhered to the traditional three-movement outline, but he made startling choices in different areas of the music.

This Sonata is replete with improvisatory-like passages, explosive accents, contrapuntal textures, extreme dynamics, and other characteristics that disrupt classical conventions. As in many of his compositions, Beethoven here eschews traditional formal boundaries and procedures, and imbues the music with extreme emotion and dramatic intensity. The work begins with one of the most celebrated themes—a dignified arpeggiated motive that sounds constrained in its repetitive nature and that seems to begin the work in *medias res*, with an Adagio, as if the preceding Allegro had already happened. The formal organization resembles a very loosely organized sonata form; rather, Beethoven offers us a realization that befits the work's subtitle, that of a fantasy. Although the term *fantasia* is difficult to categorize, one overwhelming element of the genre (as well as the style) involves the malleable formal borders and loose sectional expectations. A fantasia is supposed to have improvisatory-like elements, for sure, but it also signals the re-conception of the entire work as one unit rather than three distinct movements. Beethoven's Sonata sounds as if it wants to break free from its formal confines and offer a rumination rather than an affirmation.

The rhapsodic expression of the opening contrasts vastly with the agile Scherzo that follows *attacca*, without any break. The displaced accents and repetitive nature of this short interlude form an otherwise unbreakable unit: the middle movement is in the key of D-flat major, the enharmonic major of the opening movement (and a much preferred choice to the rather unconventional key of C-sharp major). The main tonality returns in the *Presto agitato*, which

Born in Heraklion, Crete, Greece, **Konstantinos Papadakis** consistently earns critical acclaim as a solo and collaborative pianist. He has performed recitals and has collaborated with chamber ensembles and orchestras in the world's major concert halls and famous artistic centers, such as London's Wigmore Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, the Athens Megaron Concert Hall, New York's Carnegie Hall, and St. Petersburg's Grand Concert Hall, where he gave world premieres of works by Greek and Russian contemporary composers.

A versatile performer, Papadakis has recorded several works especially written for him by contemporary composers, many of which have been broadcast on radio and television. He has made repeat solo appearances with Boston's Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, where he also holds the prestigious Motoko and Gordon Deane Principal Chair as the Orchestra's pianist. Other distinctions include the prestigious Yannis Vardinoyannis Award, as well as awards at international piano competitions. He is a pianist of exceptional technical ability whose playing has been described as "stunning ... [Papadakis] displayed great variety of attack, poetic lyricism, and wrists of carbon steel" (*The Boston Globe*).

Equally at home performing Bach's English Suites or Ligeti's Etudes, Papadakis possesses an unusually broad repertory, including some 70 concertos and over 300 works for solo piano, in addition to numerous chamber works. Commemorating the bicentennial year of Franz Liszt's birth, in 2011 Papadakis embarked on an ambitious cycle of recitals of some of Liszt's shorter and less known works. In the spring of 2011 he recorded a new and unique CD of 16 miniature Liszt pieces entitled *The Short Liszt* (D.S.H., 2012).

Papadakis is an alumnus of Boston University's College of Fine Arts, where he studied with Anthony di Bonaventura. He graduated in 2000 with an Artist Diploma in Piano Performance and he also received that year's Esther & Albert Kahn Career Entry Award. Soon thereafter he was invited to join Boston University's piano faculty where he taught for several years. Between 2006 and 2011 Papadakis was the "Samuel Barber Artist-in-Residence" at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. Currently he is on the piano faculties of the New England Conservatory's Pre-College and Continuing Education Division and Boston University's College of Fine Arts. He also directs the Summer Piano Academy in Athens, Greece.

www.kpapadakis.com

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Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Opus 36 (1913, rev. 1931)

Allegro agitato

Non allegro - L'istesso tempo

Allegro molto

Rachmaninoff wrote only two sonatas for piano, a genre that by the beginning of the twentieth century had started to become increasingly obsolete. He was a pianist of immeasurable pianistic abilities himself, and the Second Piano Sonata constitutes one of the most breathtakingly difficult works in the piano sonata repertory. As in his piano concertos (the famous Second Piano Concerto had premiered in 1901), here too the composer demands a bold technique and an almost demonic pianistic power on the part of the performer, coupled with a profusion of emotional vigor. The 1913 version of this work highlights Rachmaninoff's unbridled creativity in its expansiveness, large proportions, and titanic pianistic demands. By 1931, however, he had decided that he needed to make certain changes. The second version is substantially shorter (by at least eight minutes) and incorporates numerous other changes in all three movements. The Sonata's key pays direct homage to another work heard on tonight's program, Chopin's Second Piano Sonata, also in B-flat minor. Rachmaninoff's interpretation of Chopin's Sonata in concerts was described as nothing less than brilliant and the 1931 version is in direct response to Chopin's work.

What both versions retained, however, remained the work's powerful technical and emotional power. From the opening dramatic plunge of the *Allegro agitato* to the contrasting quiet refinement of the second theme, the first movement is structured as a loosely organized sonata form. Its cataclysmic power alternates with moments of intense lyricism, all punctuated by extreme dynamics, bold harmonies and bravura passages of massive proportions.

The enigmatically titled *Non allegro* possibly reflects the composer's desire to prevent the pianist from extending in this movement the opening's unrelenting fervor. The main theme's reserved lyricism leaves no doubt that the mood is meditative and restrained. Unexpectedly, a series of chromatic surges develop into a brilliantly fiery section, just as fragments from the previous movement make a fleeting appearance. The opening slow tempo returns together with a brief repeat of the opening measures, now a whole step down (*L'istesso tempo*), forming a seamless bridge to the last movement.

The *Allegro molto* begins *attacca* and the music immediately launches into a propulsive series of tumultuous arpeggios and fiery bravura passages. The unrelenting energy is sustained until the end, where the attentive listener will again hear echoes of the music from the first movement. In fact, all three movements share motivic material, a compositional approach that harkens back to the cyclical nature of Liszt's Piano Sonata. A cascade of chords brings the music to a tempestuous and frenzied climax—another reminder of the unprecedented virtuosity Rachmaninoff's piano scores demand of the performer.

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erupts with exuberance and forms a finale that bristles with excitement. Echoes of the first movement are in evidence (such as the broken-chord arpeggios), but this time it is not the piano's extraordinary sonorities at display, but the pianist's command of keyboard technique. The final fantasia-like passages bring the work to an electrifying peroration.

The work is dedicated to Giulietta Guicciardi, Beethoven's seventeen-year-old piano student for whom he had developed romantic feelings. Although she might have reciprocated, two years later she married a count (a man of her own class, as Beethoven had predicted in a letter) and moved to Italy.

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Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Opus 35 (1839)

Grave; Doppio movimento
Scherzo
Marche funèbre: Lento
Finale: Presto

Chopin completed this piano Sonata at George Sand's chateau in Nohant in the summer of 1839, after a famously infelicitous trip to Majorca where his symptoms of tuberculosis were aggravated by poor living conditions. While at work to complete other shorter works, Chopin decided to revisit the genre that had only occupied him as a student before. His Second Sonata, however, is only a sonata in name. His fellow composer and friend Robert Schumann even went so far as to state that, "The idea of calling it a sonata is a caprice, if not a jest, for [Chopin] has simply bound together four of his most unruly children, thus under this name smuggling them into a place they could not have penetrated any other way." In Schumann's view, this Sonata exhibits stylistic traits associated with other pieces, such as nocturnes, études, mazurkas, polonaises, and preludes. In fact, Schumann's criticism is praise in disguise: this Sonata seems to ideally encapsulate and summarize the diverse and eclectic musical worlds of Chopin's more appropriately-titled compositions, while at the same time paying homage to the great German classical tradition (as evident outwardly in its four-movement form).

In spite of its ostensibly classical sonata-allegro, the opening *agitato* movement only superficially resembles the design and content associated with the classical form. In this unconventional movement, the motivically-constructed opening B-flat minor theme gives way to a lyrical section that resembles Chopin's preludes in style. A restless central episode leads to a reprise of the lyrical section, without a restatement of the opening theme; instead, the movement concludes in a brilliant B-flat major (with only echoes of the theme's agitated rhythm in the lower register of the piano), that also serves as a dominant introduction to the Scherzo's unusual key of E-flat minor. Chopin scholar Jim Sampson has described the frenzied Scherzo, which also encloses a nocturne-like central episode, as possessing elements reminiscent of polonaises and independent scherzos. When the Scherzo section returns, all Chopin can do to alleviate the tension is to finish with a final flourish of the *più lento* nocturnal music, while *dolcissimo* (sweetly) fading out into a cathartic G-flat major.

The celebrated *Marche funèbre*, a movement of unrelenting gravity and despondency, retains its somber aura even during the central cantabile section, a nocturne-like echo of longing and consolation. When the *marche funèbre* returns, the formerly elegiac quality of the music gives way to a state of almost threnodic gravity. The *finale*, a relentless cascade of triplets in *moto perpetuo* fashion, is of unprecedented ferocity. In its tarantella-like intensity it almost serves as a futile musical exorcism of the previous movement. Or, in Schumann's colorful description, "the Sonata closes as it began, emphatically, like a Sphinx with an ironic smile."

Robert Maggio (b. 1964)
love♥bird (Hippogryph) (2005)

A graduate of Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, Robert Maggio lives in Lambertville, New Jersey with his partner, the artist Tony LaSalle, and their daughter Annamaria. He is a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Music Theory and Composition in the School of Music at West Chester University. Maggio has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Pew Fellowships in the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and Meet the Composer. Hailed as a composer of music that is "smart, vital, and inventive" (Philadelphia Inquirer), Robert Maggio has created a substantial body of works in nearly every genre, each creating a unique connection between the composer's "wondrously eclectic vocabulary" (New York Times) and the demands of a diverse body of commissions. His music has been called "lyrical, passionate, melodic, and rhythmically charged" (American Record Guide).

The hippogryph is a creature found in Greek mythology with the body of a horse and the head, wings, and front legs of a griffin. It is a symbol of love, and is the steed of the muses who rode him into the realm of romance. love♥bird (Hippogryph) was inspired by this mythical creature and is one of four variations by different composers on Papageno's "Bird Catcher" Aria from THE MAGIC FLUTE commissioned by the Kimmel Center for their "Mozart: Reloaded" program in 2006. Drs. Barbara and Leonard Frank sponsored the commissioning of the piece, which was composed in Lambertville, NJ, June-September 2005. Charles Abramovic gave the premiere performance, and since then the work has been played by Carl Cranmer and Matthew Bengtson.