

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

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PREVIEW
NOTES

Einav Yarden, *piano*

Friday, October 25 – 7:30 PM

Benjamin Franklin Hall, American Philosophical Society

PROGRAM

Variations in F Major, Wq. 118/4

C.P.E. Bach

Born: March 8, 1714

Died: December 14, 1788

Composed: 1778

Duration: Approx. 10 minutes

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the second surviving son of Johann Sebastian Bach, was a pivotal figure in the transition between the Baroque and Classical periods. Known for his expressive and often unpredictable musical style, C.P.E. Bach played a significant role in shaping the *empfindsamer Stil* (sensitive style), which emphasized emotional expression and nuance. The primary theme is simple and elegant, reflecting the gallant style that was popular at the time. However, as the variations unfold, Bach introduces increasingly intricate ornamentation, rhythmic complexity, and surprising harmonic shifts. Each variation offers a unique perspective on the theme, ranging from delicate and lyrical passages to more robust and virtuosic displays.

Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII:6

Joseph Haydn

Born: March 31, 1732

Died: May 31, 1809

Composed: 1793

Duration: 13 minutes

The piece is a set of double variations, with the first theme in melancholy F minor and the second in warm F major. Two variations of each theme and an extended coda follow. While the music may look forward to Schubert's lyricism and expressivity in its minor key episodes, it is also replete with Haydn's characteristic wit, achieved through articulation, dramatic pauses, and embellishments. His mastery of structure, harmonic innovation, and thematic

development is evident throughout. The variations were written at a time when the pianoforte was developing rapidly—Haydn would have encountered the new Broadwood piano, with its more sonorous bass, on his visits to London—and this piece fully capitalizes on the range and sonority of these bigger, stronger instruments.

Sonata in C Minor, Wq. 65/31

C.P.E. Bach

Born: March 8, 1714

Died: December 14, 1788

Composed: 1757

Duration: 10 minutes

C.P.E. Bach is the perfect embodiment of the rebellious son. His dark C Minor sonata sparkles with the brilliant counterpoint learned from his father, Johann Sebastian, but is punctuated with passages that are decidedly his own. He creates a dialogue through the continuous dynamic oscillation, that is particularly poignant in the slow middle movement, marked *Andantino pathetico*. This sonata, with its emotional depth and innovative contrasts, exemplifies C.P.E. Bach's unique voice and his role in shaping the expressive language of the Classical era.

Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:24

Joseph Haydn

Born: March 31, 1732

Died: May 31, 1809

Composed: 1774

Duration: 18 minutes

The first movement of Haydn's D major sonata, No. 24, in 3/4 time, is an athletic, tautly developed piece, alternating wiry, two-part writing with brilliant toccata sequences. The D minor *Adagio* opens with a dolefully hesitant theme over a Baroque-style repeated-note accompaniment—a peculiarly Haydnesque blend of pathos and austerity—

before growing more floridly expressive. Following the example of many of C.P.E. Bach's slow movements, Haydn then lets the music dissolve into the mercurial *Presto* finale.

Játékok

György Kurtág

Born: February 19, 1926, Lugoj, Romania

Composed: 1973

Duration: Approx. 13 minutes

Játékok (Hungarian for *Games*) is an ongoing collection of "pedagogical performance pieces" by György Kurtág. He began writing them in 1973 and completed the tenth and final volume in 2021. The idea for *Játékok* was inspired by children playing spontaneously, for whom the piano is still a toy. They experiment with it, caress it, attack it, and run their fingers over it. They pile up seemingly disconnected sounds, and if this happens to arouse their musical instincts, they consciously seek out some of the harmonies they find by chance and keep repeating them. All these rather vague ideas were at the outset of the creation of this collection.

***Kreisleriana*, Op. 16**

Robert Schumann

Born: June 8, 1810

Died: July 29, 1856

Composed: 1838

Duration: Approx. 30 minutes

Composed in 1838, *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16 is one of Robert Schumann's most enigmatic and intense piano works. Inspired by the eccentric character Johannes Kreisler, created by the writer E.T.A. Hoffmann, the piece is a musical portrayal of madness, passion, and fantasy. The work is structured in eight contrasting sections, alternating between wild, fiery passages and lyrical, reflective moments. Schumann himself described *Kreisleriana* as a representation of his two contrasting personalities, the impetuous Florestan and the dreamy Eusebius, which he often used to embody different aspects of his character in his music. Schumann dedicated *Kreisleriana* to Frédéric Chopin, although Chopin, known for his more refined and lyrical style, reportedly found the piece too wild and intense for his taste.