



PCMS
CONCERTS.ORG

PREVIEW
NOTES

Pierre-Laurent Aimard, piano
Friday, December 3 • 8:00 PM • Perelman Theater

Background

Widely acclaimed both as a key figure in the new music world and a uniquely significant musical voice in repertoire of the past, French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard enjoys an internationally celebrated career that transcends traditional boundaries. His recent recordings include *Bach: Art of Fugue* and *Hommage à Messiaen*, a recording of solo piano pieces that was released in October 2008.

Program

Preludes

Olivier Messiaen

Born: December 10, 1908 in Avignon, France

Died: April 27, 1992 in Clichy, France

Composed: 1928-29

Last PCMS performance: PCMS premiere

Duration: 36 minutes

The eight movements of this early composition have a mystical outlook -- bearing titles such as "Impalpable sounds of a dream" and "Reflection on the wind." Unusually for this period in Messiaen's life there is no religious content to the music. It is beautiful, almost otherworldly music of an often meditative nature, and Debussy is clearly used as a point of departure.

Miroirs

Maurice Ravel

Born: March 7, 1875 in Ciboure, France

Died: December 28, 1937 in Paris, France

Composed: 1904-05

Last PCMS performance: Marcantonio Barone in 2004

Duration: 28 minutes

In this five-part suite Ravel offers a group of "reflections" on various isolated glimpses of reality. They include "Noctuelles" (Nocturnes or Night-Moths), a piece of great rhythmic flexibility, and "Oiseaux tristes" (Sad Birds) in which Ravel said that he was trying to evoke "birds lost in the torpor of a dark forest during the hottest summer hours."

Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60

Frédéric Chopin

Born: March 1, 1810 in Zelazowa Wola, Poland

Died: October 17, 1849 in Paris, France

Composed: 1845-46

Last PCMS performance: Jonathan Biss in 2009

Duration: 9 minutes

This Barcarolle came in the latter part of Chopin's career, when his health was deteriorating from tuberculosis and his relationship with George Sand was crumbling. But he remained fairly productive during this period and produced, among other compositions, this quite upbeat Barcarolle, a piece that is lushly Romantic throughout, in both musical style and emotional temperament.

Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 31

Frédéric Chopin

Composed: 1837

Last PCMS performance: Cecile Licad in 2009

Duration: 10 minutes

The most popular of Chopin's scherzos is full of great moments, perhaps none better than the vast contrasts in the first theme, with its wide leaps and pregnant pauses in the first half and rising and falling scales in the second.