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PREVIEW NOTES

DÉNES VÁRJON, *piano*
Friday, April 5 – 7:30 PM
Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM *(Selection of Program Notes)*

Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 101
Ludwig van Beethoven
***Born**: December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany*
***Died**: March 26, 1827, in Vienna Austria*
***Composed**: 1815-16*
***Duration**: 22 minutes*

Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A Major was published in 1817 and dedicated to his long-time friend, the Baroness Dorothea Ertmann, an extraordinary pianist whom Beethoven admired greatly. Into the manuscript for this sonata, Beethoven wrote not only the traditional tempo markings in Italian, but also German instructions further describing the character of each movement. This sonata marks the beginning of what is generally regarded as Beethoven's final period, where the forms are more complex, ideas more wide-ranging, textures more polyphonic, and the treatment of the themes and motifs even more sophisticated than before. Op. 101 well exemplified this new style, and Beethoven exploits the newly expanded keyboard compass of the day.

Six Piano Pieces, Op. 118
Johannes Brahms
***Born**: May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany*
***Died**: April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria*
***Composed**: 1893*
***Duration**: 23 minutes*

Brahms' late works are often described as "autumnal." They are seen as the products of a musical career approaching its close, combining the serene, often wistful outlook of old age with outbursts of a passion more remembered than spontaneous, more re-lived than urgent. Brahms' *Six Piano Pieces* of 1893 are intensely concentrated representatives of the composer's late period, with all the classic features of his compositional style: motivic density, rippling polyrhythms, an intimate familiarity with the lowest regions of the keyboard, and above all, an ability to create musical textures of heartbreaking lyrical intensity richly marbled with imitative counterpoint.

Études symphoniques, Op. 13
Robert Schumann
***Born**: June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Germany*
***Died**: July 29, 1856, in Bonn, Germany*
***Composed**: 1834*
***Duration**: 35 minutes*

Robert Schumann is a central figure in musical Romanticism; his music is infused with much self-expression, potent lyricism, and extramusical associations—both personal and literary—thus making him one of the quintessential Romantic composers. The *Études Symphoniques*, Op. 13 is not only one of Schumann's greatest works, but a landmark in the history of piano literature. The title of the work underwent several metamorphoses: Schumann had originally intended to call it *12 Davidsbündleretüden* in reference to the *League of David* that he had invented as a symbol of his battle with musical philistines. Later he thought of the more portentous title of *Études in Orchestral Character*, finally settling for the double title of *Études en forme de Variations,* or *Études symphoniques.*