

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Amy Yang, piano
Sunday, May 10 – 3 PM
PA Academy of the Fine Arts

PROGRAM (Selection of Program Notes)

Drei Intermezzi, Op. 117

Johannes Brahms

Born: May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany

Died: April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1892

Duration: 15 minutes

Occasionally unsure what title, if any, he should give a piece, Brahms came to use the term intermezzo as a rubric under which he could file anything that was not especially whimsical or fiery. The Three Intermezzi, Op. 117, do not require the technical facility necessary to perform many of his earlier works, but an incisive musicality is paramount for a proper understanding of these musical miniatures. The fact that they are all marked Andante also presents a problem for the performer, who must probe the details of each work and stress the contrasting elements. All three Intermezzi of Op. 117 were written in the summer of 1892, the year of their publication.

Valse, from 10 pieces, Op. 24, No. 3

Jean Sibelius

Born: December 8, 1865, in Hämeenlinna, Finland

Died: September 20, 1957, in Ainola, Finland

Composed: 1895-1903

Duration: 2 Minutes

Sibelius wrote over 120 short piano pieces over the course of his career, most published in sets such as the present one. They are mostly light, tuneful pieces in the "salon" manner, comparable to Edvard Grieg's "Lyric Pieces," though by no means of such consistently high quality. The Ten Pieces, Op. 24 were not originally intended to be a set, but were written sporadically over the years 1894 - 1903.

Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G Minor

Johannes Brahms

Composed: 1858-1868

Duration: 3 Minutes

This work contains one of the most famous themes Brahms ever wrote -- or, rather, arranged. It is a vigorous and playful tune whose exotic elements veer close to certain Yiddish styles. After its first notes the melody has a mostly descending contour, though it always remains festive in mood. Its secondary subjects are more celebratory, sometimes in an almost ecstatic manner. This melody has been made famous by many uses in movies, television, and even cartoons. In sum, this is a fine light piece of thoroughly memorable character.

Humoreske, Op. 20

Robert Schumann

Born: June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Germany

Died: July 29, 1856, in Bonn, Germany

Composed: 1839

Duration: 26 Minutes

Originally entitled "Grosse Humoreske," this piece has been regarded by some musicologists as an ill-judged attempt by Schumann to take his formula in Kreisleriana a step further. This assessment is harsh, however, for these pieces, unified by their extremes ("laughing and weeping") and generally in the key of B flat major, are colorful and imaginative, full of energy and depth, and if they do not strike out new territory, they are rife with ideas and never sound tiresome.