

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Juho Pohjonen, *piano*
Sunday, October 27 – 3 PM
PA Academy of the Fine Arts

PROGRAM

Nouvelles Suites de pièces de clavecin

Jean-Philippe Rameau

Born: September 25, 1683, in Dijon, France

Died: September 12, 1764, in Paris, France

Composed: 1727

Duration: 26 minutes

Although principally known as a dramatic composer, Jean-Philippe Rameau also made a substantial contribution to the French keyboard repertoire, an important Baroque genre that reached its highest point in the harpsichord works of François Couperin. Like most of the output of the French clavecinistes, Rameau's harpsichord works were gathered into collections generally arranged in books according to key. The *Nouvelles suites de pièces de clavecin* includes 15 pieces. Like all French keyboard works, they are notable for such characteristic devices as the broken chord (*stile brisé*) taken over by French keyboard composers from the influential school of early seventeenth century lutenists

Sonata No. 6, Op. 62

Alexander Scriabin

Born: December 25, 1871, in Moscow, Russia

Died: April 14, 1915, in Moscow, Russia

Composed: 1911-1912

Duration: 13 minutes

Alexander Scriabin completed his Sonata No. 6, Op. 62 for solo piano in 1912. It is a dark, murky, and uneventful sonata, but somehow never boring. The composer described it as "horrible" and "unclean." He refused to perform it in its entirety. This sort of declaration is mere garden-variety eccentricity in comparison to the lunacy he was capable of offering. The work itself does not demonstrate madness. It is highly original. Few composers have written a successful work that is so uneventful.

Sonata No. 8, Op. 66

Alexander Scriabin

Composed: 1912-1913

Duration: 14 minutes

Scriabin colorfully described parts of the eighth sonata as "the most tragic episode of my creative work." Scriabin shares a place with Mahler and early Berg in the epoch during which the late Romantic musical language was pushed to a feverish intensity. The sound world here is much like the early Expressionism of Berg's Opus 1 piano sonata. The Sonata No. 8 sticks out among Scriabin's late sonatas partly for what it lacks: there are no violent climaxes, and the dissonances are comparatively less harsh. What it shares with the others is a lack of a central key and a richly colored but essentially static harmonic language, charged to the breaking point with Scriabin's mystical longings.

Sonata No. 10, Op. 70

Alexander Scriabin

Composed: 1912-1913

Duration: 13 minutes

Alexander Scriabin's Tenth Sonata, occasionally but inaccurately described as being in C major, when compared to the bleak spiritual decay and anguished harmonies of the Ninth Sonata (the so-called "Black Mass" whose complete desolation shocked even the composer), is an essay of brilliant, radiant light. The Tenth Sonata is not among the composer's most frequently played works, lacking either the immediate, lush appeal of his earlier compositions or the pseudo-programmatic appeal of his later ones (which are often either given poetic titles, like the "Black Mass," or are themselves musical poems, as in the case of the last orchestral works), and yet it is one of the composer's best.