

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

Kit Armstrong, piano

Thursday, October 21 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

**PREVIEW
NOTES**

PROGRAM (selection of notes)

The Bells

William Byrd

Born: 1543, Lincoln, United Kingdom

Died: July 4, 1623, Stondon Massey, United Kingdom

Composed: 1590

Duration: 6 minutes

The Bells is a ground for keyboard by the renaissance English composer William Byrd (1543-1523). It utilizes one of the smallest grounds found in the genre, an alternating semibreve C and minim D, similar, supposedly, to the tolling of bells. Byrd adheres to the ground usually strictly, (although sometimes substituting an F for the D). Imitative contrapuntal lines above this minimal ground are in two or three parts and are like the peals of a carillon. The complex counterpoint (necessitated by the demands of keeping the listener's attention over a very short ground) is handled very skillfully, and leads scholars to assign a relatively late date to this work. Damage to part of the only surviving copy between bars 68 and 78 has necessitated recreation by scholars. Resulting problems unfortunately throw the overall rhythmic scheme out, and the recreation is, thus, imperfect.

Après une Lecture du Dante – Fantasia quasi Sonata

Franz Liszt

Born: October 22, 1811, Raiding, Austria

Died: July 31, 1886, Bayreuth, Germany

Composed: 1839

Duration: 17 minutes

While under the spell of Dante's "Divine Comedy", Liszt had begun work on a "fragment dantesque". He later incorporated the work in revised form into the volume "Italy" of his "Années de Pèlerinage". The single-movement sonata is based on the Canto "Inferno" in Dante's poem. It describes the wild ride of the soul into hell in an effective manner, finally closing with several forgiving chords in a kind of transfiguration – one of

the best examples of Liszt's technical ingenuity, and sound artistry.

Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2, Moonlight Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1801

Duration: 16 minutes

Beethoven billed each of the two works published under Op. 27 as a "sonata quasi una fantasia," presumably a hint that he was trying to meld the formal conventions of the eighteenth century sonata with a newer, freer, more Romantic style. Many musicians consider the first of this pair, the Piano Sonata No. 13 in E flat major (1800-1801), to be the superior work, but the Piano Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor (1801) is by far more popular; in fact, it is one of Beethoven's most beloved works, and its first movement takes a place among the most widely and instantly recognizable music the composer ever penned. The familiar appellation "Moonlight" is not the composer's own, but the invention of German music critic Ludwig Rellstab, who compared the first movement's rippling texture to the moonlight shimmering on Lake Lucerne.