

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

Dynasty Battles, piano

Friday, December 16 – 7:30 PM

Benjamin Franklin Hall, American Philosophical Society

**PREVIEW
NOTES**

PROGRAM

Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1821

Duration: 20 minutes

Beethoven's last piano sonatas, like all the best of his later compositions, have long been as much a source of puzzlement as of joy. There is no doubt—for it is documented in biographies and critical studies—that Beethoven's creative powers continued to increase throughout his lifetime and that however great the works of his middle period may be, they are surpassed by those of his late period. The three movements in Beethoven's second-last piano sonata pass from human sympathy to rough country humor, then finally from operatic despair to the safe harbor of consolation, resolve and triumph.

The Well-Tempered Clavier (Sel.)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born: March 31, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died: July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Germany

Published: 1722, 1742

The two books of preludes and fugues in alternately major and minor keys – twenty-four in each – were not written in sequence or as a single concerted effort. They occupied Bach across most of his creative life, from his late twenties to about sixty. He completed Book I in 1722 and Book II a generation later in 1742. Bach regarded the study of fugue as the highest form of musical study. The title page of Book I sets out his thoroughly practical aim: "For the use and instruction of the musical youth desirous of learning, and for the pastime of those already skilled in this study."

Ludus Tonalis

Paul Hindemith

Born: November 16, 1895, Hanau, Germany

Died: December 28, 1963, Frankfurt, Germany

Composed: 1942

Ludus tonalis, which contains "interludes" and fugues in all 24 keys, is one of the twentieth century's principal responses to

Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier. Ludus Tonalis* is a composite work consisting of three-voice fugues linked by interludes of a contrasting or modulatory nature. The work is introduced by a Praeludium and closes with a Postludium that is the retrograde inversion of the Praeludium. Each fugue is based on a different tonal center, and the sequence of tonal centers follows Hindemith's theories of tonal relationships.

Bauble

George T. Walker

Born: June 27, 1922, Washington, D.C.

Died: August 23, 2018, Montclair, NJ

Published: 1979

"Bauble" (1979) was written as a contest piece for the Maryland International Piano Competition to serve the purpose of providing a contemporary work for the contestants. "'Bauble' was not intended to be a highly involved musical projection," says Walker, with a touch of dry humor. It is built from a series of contrasting ideas: a slow introduction is followed by erupting passagework, then a cantabile middle section leads into patterns of alternating hands and wide arpeggiations, with a ferocious finale that builds to a tripleforte cadence. In its brief duration it surveys an enormous range of moods and textures.

Piano Sonata No. 1

George T. Walker

Published: 1964, rev. 1991

Walker's first Sonata has three movements ('Allegro Energico' – 'Theme and Six Variations' – 'Allegro con brio'). One can hear quartally-based harmonies (harmonies based on fourths rather than the more conventionally tonal thirds) in the fluent yet abrasive First Sonata's first movement. The second movement is a theme with six variations, based on the Kentucky folk melody "O Bury Me Beneath The Willow". Walker's imagination is brilliant: as soon as the first variation, the music is miraculously transformed. The third movement, which opens with delightful playfulness, reuses some material from the opening movement.