

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

BalletX

Michelle Cann, *piano*

Saturday, January 6 – 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 7 – 3 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (selection of notes)

Songs without Words (Sel.)

Felix Mendelssohn

Born: February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany

Died: November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1829-45

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Mendelssohn's most significant contribution to the solo piano literature rests in the approximately 40 works that are designated as the *Lieder ohne Worte*, or "Songs without words." The composer is credited with codifying a genre in which the lyricism and intimate scale of art song—although without text, as implied by their titles—is reflected in a strictly instrumental medium. Composed between the late 1820s through the 1840s, Mendelssohn likely intended these works for amateur performers. The piano was, by that time, rapidly becoming the preferred instrument among middle class European homes, and the finely-crafted melodies and small scale of the *Lieder ohne Worte* assured their accessibility to new audiences. As a result, these works became highly popular in their day, and continue to represent Mendelssohn's most renowned piano works.

Piano Suite

Michael Leibowitz

Born: 1981

Composed: 2015

Duration: 9 minutes

Michael Leibowitz is a composer and music educator living in Philadelphia. His compositions explore the expressive possibilities of sound and the relationship between the composer, performer, and audience. Chance elements in

many of his works allow the performer great interpretive freedom and expressive potential. Written by the composer for Michelle Cann, this work for solo piano consists of three movements: a prelude, a toccata with a perpetual motion effect, and a postlude, which ends with a series of loosely linked chords blended together using the sustain pedal and creating a moving finale.

Selection of Four Songs

Don Shirley

Born: January 29, 1927, Pensacola, FL

Died: April 6, 2013, New York, NY

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Lovely, a work by BalletX Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts, is set to the music of Don Shirley, the inspiration for the 2018 film *The Green Book*. Best known for "Water Boy," the biggest hit from Shirley's best-selling 1960 LP "Don Shirley Trio," the Jamaican-American pianist achieved renown in the jazz world after being denied the opportunities to perform much classical music because of his skin color. Yet he became a prolific composer of works that fuse the sounds of classical, American Songbook, and gospel repertoire in a way that was uniquely his own. Shirley's works include three symphonies, two piano concerti, a cello concerto, three string quartets, a one-act opera, works for organ, piano and violin, a symphonic tone poem based on "Finnegan's Wake" and a set of "Variations" on the legend of Orpheus in the Underworld.