

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Richard Goode, piano

Friday, February 2 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (selection of notes)

Partita in C Minor, BWV 826

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born: March 31, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died: July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1726-31

Duration: 20 minutes

This suite opens with a Sinfonia which achieves a depth of expression to rival much of Bach's more profound keyboard music. It is in three sections, the first ponderous and dramatic, the succeeding two having progressively faster tempos. The Allemande that follows is somewhat subdued but features an undercurrent of contrapuntal activity with many delicious details that often come refreshingly to the foreground. The remaining four numbers are much shorter and lighter in expressive content. Best among them may be the ensuing Courante, a sunny, graceful piece whose contrapuntal elements seem to blend rather than conjure, imply rather than articulate. The ensuing Sarabande is slow, almost hymn-like in its solemn yet soothing manner. The lively Rondeau that follows is jumpy and full of playfulness, while the closing Capriccio is meatier, both in its muscular first section and in the inversion of material from the opening that comes in the latter half. It is also quite a challenging finale for the performer.

Three Mazurkas, Op. 59

Frédéric Chopin

Born: February 22, 1810, Żelazowa Wola, Poland

Died: October 17, 1849, Paris, France

Composed: 1845

Duration: 10 minutes

The mazurka, a lively folk dance in triple time, originated in northern Poland. Chopin wrote at least 50 of them, and his progress as a musician can be heard in their variety. Chopin's lifelong study of Bach, which included daily

acquaintance with the preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, resulted in the complex and highly chromatic counterpoint heard in all three mazurkas of Op. 59. They never betray their humble dance origins, however; melodies do not scamper up and down the keyboard but tend to remain resolutely in a narrow range of notes, and the rhythmic lilt is never lost to the ear.

Barcarolle in G-flat Major, Op. 42

Gabriel Fauré

Born: May 12, 1845, Pamiers, France

Died: November 4, 1924, Paris, France

Composed: 1885

Duration: 9 minutes

Within a few lines, Fauré's Barcarolle No. 3 in G-flat Major leaves behind its deceptively simple opening for deeper musical waters, bright with fantastical embellishments. The whole piece has a magically improvisatory air, its fount of ideas progressing almost as if by free association.

Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58

Frédéric Chopin

Composed: 1844

Duration: 25 minutes

Characteristically in Chopin's music, certain melodic or figural wisps generate material whose kinship crosses sections and movements and provides a kind of unity that lurks beneath the surface. Almost every passage of fast sixteenth notes in the first movement can be related to the brief cascade at the outset. Chopin's *Scherzo* is one of those glistening, feather-light creations that flashes by, interrupted by an introspective central section. The *Largo* begins and ends majestically and treats the listener to some remarkable harmonic twists along the way. Chopin's finale is a surging movement whose refrain gives a feeling of inexorable power.