



School of Music, University of Victoria presents

Steinway & UVic

Celebrating 12 years as an all-Steinway school

Featuring

BRUCE VOGT

PIANO

Sunday, March 15, 2020 | 2:30 PM

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria

Admission by donation


STEINWAY & SONS

UVIC music


TOM LEE
Music

PROGRAM

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Waltz in E-flat Major, Op. 18 (1833)

Nocturnes

No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2 (1830–33)

No. 8 in D-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 2 (1835–36)

No. 12 in G Major, Op. 37, No. 2 (1838–40)

No. 13 in C Minor, Op. 48, No. 1 (1840–41)

No. 17 in B Major, Op. 62, No. 1 (1846)

No. 18 in E Major, Op. 62, No. 2 (1846)

INTERMISSION

Concession open in the lounge

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

Paraphrase of a Waltz from Gounod's "Faust" (1861)

Trois Valses oubliées (1881–85)

No. 1 in F-sharp Major

No. 2 in A-flat Major

No. 3 in D-flat Major

Mephisto Waltz No. 4: Bagatelle sans tonalité (1883–85)

Elegie: Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth (1880)

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

BIOGRAPHY

Bruce Vogt appears regularly in concert across Canada and also inspires audiences abroad. He toured Japan for the fifteenth time in October of 2019 and has toured China three times, teaching, lecturing, and playing concerts in a number of cities. He has given solo recitals and chamber music concerts in European centers including London, Oxford, Norwich, Paris, Bordeaux, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Weimar, Wiesbaden, Krakow, Trieste, Sophia, Oslo, and Prague.

Vogt grew up in Southern Ontario, where he studied with Damjana Bratuz and Anton Kuerti. He later studied in the U.S. and Europe with such celebrated musicians as Gyorgy Sebok, Louis Kentner, Fou Ts'ong and Dario de Rosa.

Vogt's repertoire is diverse, encompassing music from the sixteenth century to the present. He has long championed the music of contemporary composers, and has commissioned and premiered a number of new works by such Canadian luminaries as Murray Adaskin and Alfred Fisher. He is also a dedicated performer on period instruments; one of his recordings features music of Robert Schumann performed on a restored 1864 Erard. Other recordings include two volumes of the music of Franz Liszt, which established for him an enviable reputation as a Liszt interpreter. In 2011—the bicentenary of the composer's birth—he recorded two subsequent Liszt CDs.

In addition to his career as a soloist and chamber musician, Vogt is a professor at the University of Victoria. Because he sees working with teachers and young pianists as an important commitment, he lectures widely, leads masterclasses and workshops, and adjudicates for festivals.

In recent years he has been invited more frequently to indulge another passion—presenting and improvising accompaniments to great films of the silent era. He has lectured on and otherwise introduced films by Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd, Griffith, Murnau and others. He has been invited to offer these presentations in Germany, England, France, Italy, Romania, Japan and the USA, as well as across Canada.

PROGRAM NOTES

The relative accessibility of a number of Chopin's **Nocturnes** perhaps encourages us to take them for granted. Yet Claudio Arrau for one thought of them as the composer's greatest achievement. We don't need to share his conclusion, but it can inspire us to further examine their tremendous range—a variety which has perhaps been obscured by the pedagogical role they have played. Virtually all piano students have worked on at least two or three nocturnes—though the ones chosen for study are typically the less experimental, closer to the John Field model, however beautiful in themselves.

It does seem that it was the Irish composer and pianist John Field (1782-1837) who first used the title “Nocturne,” or “Night Piece” for a single solo piano work. From Field, Chopin, in a number of these works, took the device of creating a web-like accompaniment by means of intricate broken chord figures in the left hand, combined with the sustaining pedal. To this Chopin added his much richer harmonic language and his unrivaled command of long sustained melodies. **Opus 15, No. 2** and **Opus 27, No. 2** certainly demonstrate Chopin's genius for expressive melody. However, he goes far beyond Field in harmonic range as well as in his seemingly inexhaustible capacity for inventing imaginative textures. **Opus 37, No. 2** is a kind of *Barcarolle* with a completely un-Field-like texture and form. With **Opus 48, No. 2**, we can hear the powerful influence of great bel canto singers. The pair of *Nocturnes*, **Opus 62**, were written very near the end of his compositional life and three years before his death. Along with great melodic and harmonic richness, there is a remarkable contrapuntal ingenuity, discreetly absorbed into the ongoing vocal texture.

It is easy to underestimate the expressive power of even the most frankly virtuosic works of Liszt. The opera fantasies contain some of his most remarkable pianistic innovations; they constantly demonstrate why every subsequent composer for the piano has been greatly indebted to Liszt. The opera fantasy is a genre that was extremely popular with the numerous piano virtuosi and their audiences towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of these fantasies were simply pot-pourris of melodies crudely strung together and decorated with impressive but most often empty embellishments. Liszt alone recognized the expressive possibilities of the form: the re-creation

—indeed intensified recollection—of the stage work that inspired it. The **Waltz from Gounod's "Faust"** is, on the surface, a lighter and less ambitious work than some of his other fantasies. And yet the glee with which the composer transforms the waltz into something truly Mephistophelian is quintessentially Lisztian. The rapture of the middle section—an arrangement of the duet "O nuit d'amour"—is soon obliterated with a cynically hard-edged return of the waltz theme: one can hear the mocking laughter of the Devil as the lovers awaken to their daytime reality.

Liszt was often criticized for his borrowings, for taking inspiration from too wide a range of sources. But Béla Bartók—the twentieth-century composer who understood him most fully—had this to say: "...whatever Liszt touched he so stamped and so transformed with his own individuality that it became like something of his own We can say he was eclectic in the best sense of the word: one who took from all foreign sources but gave still more from himself."

Liszt's last years were spent teaching and composing. He did nothing to make his compositions known and even discouraged his students from playing them. "Yet there still remain several things for me to say, irrespective as to whether they may be quickly understood or recognized. Sometime when I am no longer of this earth, [this remaining work] will find itself. I can calmly await the event while I go on working, and meanwhile composedly expiate my virtuoso reputation with the disapproval my compositions have excited." But it was not until the enthusiastic endorsement of Bartók and Ferruccio Busoni that these late works were recognized for what they are: an astounding anticipation of major new paths which music was to follow. In their radical simplicity, obsessive rhythms and strange harmonies, they take the listener to the very brink of tonality.

Between 1881 and 1885, Liszt wrote four **Valses oubliées**, or "forgotten waltzes." They are each very different in character, but share a kind of otherworldly strangeness.

The publishing history of the fourth **Mephisto Waltz: Bagatelle sans tonalité** demonstrates both the incomprehension with which these works were received and the composer's listless indifference to their fate. The work was written sometime between 1883 and 1885 but remained unknown until 1956 when it was finally published in Budapest.

Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth originated as a song composed in 1843. Nonnenwerth is an island on the Rhine which had a ruined monastery and a chapel which Liszt used as a retreat during the summers of the early 1840s. The poem refers to love abandoned, with the monastery (Die Zelle) a symbol of loss and death. Liszt subsequently wrote four versions for piano, and the metamorphosis over the years is extreme. In this last version, written in 1880, little is left of love abandoned; instead, there remains a sense of profound resignation with echoes of ghostly chanting and distant bells from the long-deserted monastery.