



HOPKINS CENTER
FOR THE ARTS

presents

SALLY PINKAS *piano*

Funded in part by C. Henry Hathaway 1907 Memorial Fund No. 3 and by the John M. Tiedtke 1930 Visiting Performing Artists Fund.

Spaulding Auditorium's Hamburg Steinway concert grand piano was purchased with generous gifts from Members of the Hopkins Center and Members of the Hood Museum of Art; the class of 1942, in memory of Allan Dingwall '42; and anonymous donors. Spaulding Auditorium's New York Steinway concert grand piano was restored with a generous gift by Huntley Allison '42 P'74.

Tuesday, March 7, 2017 • 7 pm

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College

PROGRAM

Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Overture
Allemande
Courante
Aria
Sarabande
Menuet
Gigue

Nachtstücke, Op. 23

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Mehr langsam, oft zurückhaltend
Markiert und lebhaft
Mit großer Lebhaftigkeit
Ad libitum. Einfach

• INTERMISSION •

Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 133

Robert Schumann

Im ruhigen Tempo
Belebt, nicht zu rasch
Lebhaft
Bewegt
Im Anfange ruhiges, im Verlauf bewegtes Tempo

Blumenstück, Op. 19

Robert Schumann

Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 971

J. S. Bach

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Presto

PROGRAM NOTES

Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

The achievements of Johann Sebastian Bach have inspired awe with each generation that has discovered his music anew, from Mozart's circle in Vienna in the 1780s, to Mendelssohn's performances of his music at Leipzig's Gewandhaus, to the many Bach festivals of the present day. It is worth remembering, however, that in Bach's own time his celebrity was not based upon the hundreds of choral and instrumental works that we now cherish, but on his legendary skill as a keyboard player. The growth of that talent is not nearly as well documented as it is with composers like Mozart and Mendelssohn, who as youngsters were known to the public as prodigies. Sebastian Bach, born into a family of professional musicians, no doubt received some training from his father; but he was orphaned by age ten, and may only have begun keyboard studies when he went to live with his older brother, Johann Christoph Bach, an organist. He apparently learned his craft by improvising fugues and other counterpoint at the organ, copying out music by other composers, and listening to great performers.

Bach's earliest jobs were organ positions at churches, where he accompanied services. He joined the establishment of the Duke of Weimar as court organist in 1708; with his appointment to the court of Prince Leopold of Cöthen in 1717, his responsibilities expanded. Prince Leopold loved music, and as his principal musician Bach supplied music for courtly entertainments. Bach also composed for his wife, a professional singer, and a growing family for whom he provided didactic keyboard works. Bach's six partitas were completed by 1731, when he published them as the first volume of his monumental *Clavier-Übung*, or "Keyboard Practice." Each of

the partitas begins with a substantial movement; the *Partita in D Major* opens with an imposing French overture. Its slow introduction features dotted rhythms and vigorous scale figures, followed by a swift section in fugal imitation. The partita unfolds in a familiar sequence of dance movements, brought to an extraordinary level of grace and technical mastery. Momentum builds through the energetic *allemande* and *courante*, but enfolded at the heart of the partita is a tender *aria* that offers a moment of pensive lyricism. The work continues with a poised *sarabande* and minuet, then closes with the insouciant virtuosity of a *gigue*.

Nachtstücke, Op. 23

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Robert Schumann grew up, like Bach, in northern Germany and was fully aware of its important keyboard traditions; indeed, Bach's works were a significant source of study and inspiration for him. As a youth he was equally passionate about music and literature, and studied piano with well-known pedagogue Friedrich Wieck even while tackling various literary projects. Schumann, however, was intensely aware of his pianistic shortcomings, only exacerbated in his early twenties by a mysterious injury to one of his hands. His compositions for piano, which show an intense preoccupation with virtuosity as well as poetry, thus became increasingly important to him. His teacher's daughter, the great pianist Clara Wieck, was the primary inspiration for Schumann's piano music, and after their marriage in 1840 she became his pianistic voice and the chief promoter of his work.

Schumann wrote an abundant amount of piano music, including large-scale forms but also many miniature pieces arranged in series or cycles, and laced with all kinds of personal and literary allusions. In March 1839 Schumann was visiting

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

Vienna when he received word that his brother, Eduard, was extremely ill. Grippled by a premonition of death—he wrote, “Always I saw funeral processions, coffins, unhappy and despairing people; often I was so distraught that tears flowed and I didn’t know why”—Schumann began working on a set of piano pieces that initially he titled *Leichenfantasie* (Corpse Fantasy). Shortly after hearing this news Schumann set off for his family home in Zwickau, Germany, but he arrived just after his brother died. Though deeply despondent, Schumann finished the set of four piano pieces, each of which had a programmatic title: *Trauerzug* (Funeral Procession), *Kuriose Gesellschaft* (Odd Assembly), *Nächtliches Gelage* (Nocturnal Revel) and *Rundgesang mit Solostimmen* (Roundelay with Solo Voices). The pieces were eventually published without the original titles. The slow, halting dotted rhythm and descending steps of the melody in the first piece create a clearly funereal mood. The second features strongly marked offbeats and harmonic ambiguities, while the third offers a wild festival atmosphere. The final piece is also the most peaceful, with lute-like arpeggiations and gentle dialogue between the voices.

Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 133

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

In 1853 Schumann had been serving a difficult term as municipal music director in the city of Düsseldorf, where he had many conducting and administrative responsibilities that became increasingly uncongenial as his physical and mental health deteriorated. A bright spot was the visit of his close friend, violinist Joseph Joachim, in late August, and his introduction to the young Brahms in September. In Brahms he recognized a genius that aroused his own creative energy, and among other things he drafted the *Gesänge der Frühe* (Songs of Dawn) in mid-October. This

period of lucidity and optimism was short-lived, however; early in the following year Schumann was beset by depression, demanded admission to a local asylum, and attempted suicide. In March 1854 he was in fact institutionalized, and the *Gesänge der Frühe* are among his last works. Clara Schumann registered some uncertainty about the pieces, writing, “dawn songs, very original as always but hard to understand, their tone is so very strange.” At times this tone is one of utmost simplicity, as in the unison, *pianissimo* opening of the first piece. Some of the music is lively, contrapuntal, and agitated. The fourth piece, in F-sharp minor, imposes a broad, lyrical melody over restless, swiftly moving arpeggios. A cautious peace returns in the final piece, in which a wistful melody and flowing rhythms unfold over rich, dark octaves in the bass.

Blumenstück, Op. 19

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Schumann’s *Blumenstück* (*Flower Piece*) originated in Vienna in January 1839, when he was exploring the city as a possible residence for himself and his wife-to-be, Clara Wieck. This piece, along with his famous *Arabeske*, was written with an eye to popular taste and publication; as he wrote, he was “hoping to elevate myself to the front rank of favorite composers of the women of Vienna.” Though he seems to have been uncomfortable with the idea of writing “salon” music, in fact the piece seems to have been a bouquet-like offering to his beloved Clara, as he sketched it out in his *brautbuch*, or bridal book, for her. It opens with a sweet, singing theme in D-flat major with a strong supporting bass line, and develops into a series of variations with rich textures, delicate accompaniments, and artful harmonic progressions that make it an entirely satisfying, youthful work.

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 971

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

As a young and aspiring harpsichordist and organist, J.S. Bach became intrigued by the concertos of Antonio Vivaldi. Vigorous, tuneful, and formally well designed, the concertos appealed so much to Bach that he transcribed several of them for solo keyboard. In later years the Italian style remained an important influence. In 1731 Bach published the first part of his famed *Clavier-Übung* in Leipzig. Far more than the "exercises" that the title implies, this massive three-part collection represents the pinnacle of

Bach's work for keyboard. The second part of the series, dating from 1735, contained the "Concerto in the Italian Style," BWV 971; here the lessons Bach learned from Vivaldi reached their fullest integration with his own complex contrapuntal procedures. Contemporary critic J.A. Scheibe took Bach to task for publishing keyboard music that was "extremely difficult to play." However, Bach's technical demands are an essential aspect of a music that is supremely idiomatic for the keyboard, powerfully expressive, and exhilarating to perform and to hear.

Kathryn L. Libin © 2017

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sally Pinkas piano, since her London debut at Wigmore Hall, has been heard as soloist and chamber musician throughout the world. Among career highlights are performances with the Boston Pops, the Aspen Philharmonia, Jupiter Symphony and the Bulgarian Chamber Orchestra, and appearances at the festivals of Marlboro, Tanglewood, Aspen and Rockport, as well as Kfar Blum in Israel, Officina Scotese in Italy, and Masters de Pontlevoy in France.

Pinkas' extensive solo discography includes works by Schumann, Debussy, Rochberg, Ileana Perez-Velazquez and Christian Wolff for the MSR, Centaur, Naxos, Albany and Mode labels. Long drawn to the music of Gabriel Fauré, she followed her critically acclaimed release of Fauré's *13 Nocturnes* (on Musica Omnia) with a recording of Fauré's Piano Quartets and his 13 Barcarolles, earning the title *A Fauré Master Returns* on an enthusiastic review by *Classics Today*. *The Wall Street Journal* noted her "exquisite performance" in her "superlatively well-played" recording of Harold Shapero's *Piano Music*, released on the UK label Toccata Classics.

Praised for her radiant tone and driving energy, Pinkas commands a wide range of repertoire and continues to explore little-heard musical realms. In 2015 she made her debut in the Philippines, performing and recording rarely heard Filipino salon music for the University of the Philippines' centennial celebrations. The Philippines' *Daily Inquirer* noted "her eloquent tone...essayed with brilliant projection" adding that "her sense of balance was impeccable, and the voicing well etched." With her husband Evan Hirsch (The Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo) she has toured extensively, and has premiered and recorded works by Rochberg, Pinkham, Peter Child, Kui Dong and Thomas Oboe Lee. She is a member of Ensemble Schumann, an Oboe-Viola-Piano Trio, and of the Boston-based Trio Tremonti. Other current collaborations include the Adaskin String Trio and the Apple Hill Quartet, and the Villiers Quartet, with whom she will be performing later this spring in Nottingham, UK.

Pinkas holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory

ABOUT THE ARTIST CONTINUED

of Music, and a Ph.D. in Composition from Brandeis University. Her principal teachers were Russell Sherman, George Sebok, Luise Vosgerchian and Genia Bar-Niv (piano), Sergiu

Natra (composition) and Robert Koff (chamber music). Pianist-in-residence at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, she is Professor of Music at Dartmouth's Music Department.



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wed MAY 3 • 7 pm • SPAULDING AUDITORIUM

Led by charismatic harpsichord virtuoso Jeanette Sorrell, this early music ensemble channels the music of Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi.



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sat MAY 20 • 8 pm • SPAULDING AUDITORIUM

Celebrating the town-gown choral society's 210th anniversary with Dvořák's poignant *Stabat Mater*, Op. 58.



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