

# Program

### Brigid Drury, piano Senior Recital

•	Schubert 97-1829)
with Julia Neyshloss	
– Intermission –	
Sonata in A Major, K.208	o Scarlatti
	85-1757)
Sonata in D Major, K.492	. Scarlatti
Liebesträume No. 3	
(18	11-1886)
Piano Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 1Sergei	Prokofiev
	91-1953)

# Program Notes

### Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor (D940)

Born in 1797, Franz Schubert was one of the very few Classical Viennese composers (including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven) that was actually born in Vienna. Growing up, Schubert received piano lessons from his brother, violin lessons from his father, and organ and singing lessons from the organist at the local parish church. He received a scholarship for formal education, weighing heavily in music studies, to the Imperial and Royal City College, a quality education to which only titled aristocrats would normally have access. While pursuing his true love of composition, he understood that a day job was necessary, and he taught young children at his father's school to support his art. He was unable to manage a spot on the royal court and continued teaching music before his early death at thirty-one. In 1814, Schubert met a young female soprano who performed in his first Mass. They were going to be married, but the marriage laws of the time deemed him unable to support a family. The following year, possibly fueled by this heartbreak, brought him great productivity. Although the love failed, his music thrived by creating nine church works, a symphony, and about 140 Lieder.

Although Schubert's style did have a wide variety, some genres, such as his operatic music, were never a great success. One of his areas of expertise was in song, in which he used drastically different musical ideas, including simple melodic lines, to intricate melodic lines matching more dramatic text. He maintained a close group of friends with whom he had the ability to perform his works often. It was only closer to his death that his music was being more rapidly published and alleviated some of the financial stress. Schubert composed piano trios, symphonies, piano sonatas, quartets, and— especially towards the end of his life—songs as well. During this later period, the subject matter became more dark and existential. Some themes included the madness that one may feel when accepting and realizing permanent death or the concept of what is beyond in life after death. He realized that he was close to death in the late 1820s, and many visits to the doctor about his declining health failed to alleviate his deteriorating condition. Schubert, finally facing death in 1829, was thought to be suffering from syphilis and typhoid fever.

In terms of Schubert's piano works, his solo piano sonatas were his main focus. He did write in some other genres for piano—commonly the fantasy; and his most original piano works might possibly be his piano duets. His Fantasy in F Minor (D940) is organized into four-part sections, with the same haunting theme in the introduction as in the closing section. The second section includes reoccurring dotted rhythms and a largo tempo that inspires a mystic and lyric tone. Drastically different from the second movement, the third is a scherzo section, very related to the dance genre. Before the final theme is revisited, there is an unanticipated fugue section inserted in the piece. This section is very noticeable because it is based on an entirely new theme and seems to be a fantastic contrast to the haunting aspects heard earlier in the piece.

Regarding the inspiration for Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor, Eduard von Bauernfield—a man who wrote a memoir on Franz Schubert—stated that "Schubert was not without his infatuations. He was in fact, head over heels in love with one of his pupils, Countess Esterhazy to whom he also dedicated one of his most beautiful

piano pieces, the Fantasy in F minor for Pianoforte duet." Although it is said that many pieces were written for the Countess, the Fantasy is the only one explicitly dedicated to her in print. Although Schubert voiced his intent of the dedication, the publisher did not print it until after his death in 1829. Although the outer movements are in the key of F, the two inner movements are both in F-sharp. The largo second movement seems different from the quick third movement, but there are subtle similarities in their themes. This could represent the spiritual likeness between the Countess and Schubert and yet their difference in social status. The use of the description "con delicatezza" describes the latter lyrical section of the third movement and seemingly signifies the Countess herself: with delicacy and softness. Such cryptic messages throughout the piece tell a lot about his character—especially because it is rumored that anytime Schubert used "con delicatezza" as a description for any of his pieces, it was associated with Catherine. He became known for using small details in a piece to represent something larger. And, he was part of a group of artists that labeled themselves the "Nonsense Society," playing practical jokes on one another and little games in their works. Perhaps his dedication to Countess Catherine in the Fantasy is just another example of Schubert's genius in creating beautiful pieces that also held a much deeper meaning to those who sought it out.

#### Scarlatti's Sonata K.208 and Sonata K.492

Domenico Scarlatti's family was of a highly esteemed musical background. His father was drawn to Naples for its great opportunity in opera composition, and that is where Domenico was born in October of 1685. Not much is known about the following years of his youth. It is presumed that his musical education came from his father, Allessandro Scarlatti. Evidence of his skilled keyboard and composition skills are apparent in his first musical position, which he held under his father, who was acting as maestro. His father eventually sent Scarlatti to Venice to pursue a fruitful career, but again, not much is known about his activities. What does stand out during these years is the anecdote about a competition concerning the harpsichord skills between Handel and Scarlatti, in which Handel stated: "Besides his great talents as an artist, he had the sweetest temper, and the genteelest behaviour." His subsequent travels brought him to Portugal and Spain, leading Scarlatti to spend the last thirty or so years of his life living in Spain. Although Handel and Scarlatti greatly admired one another's work, and the competition in Rome between the two keyboardists hints at their similar training, Scarlatti's style diverged in response to his Spanish environment.

Scarlatti was known for his opera works while in Italy, and after he left his native home, his reputation there was almost forgotten. His keyboard sonatas were not well known in Italy during his lifetime, and England was the first to acknowledge Scarlatti's sonatas, outside his reputation in Spain. His keyboard works were continually edited and published in England throughout the eighteenth century. Unlike another contemporary of his time, J. S. Bach focused on the intellect of the player through logic in musical phrases—whereas Scarlatti's difficulties remained in the physical challenges,

with rapid movements over the keyboard and quick fingers. In the 1700s, some editors even changed fingering and attempted to make hand positions easier, amended certain passages, and tried to sort the pieces into lessons, all for the sake of making the pieces more easily understood for students.

Scarlatti has 555 catalogued sonatas, written in Portugal and Spain. Nine of the sonatas seem to be composed for a solo string or woodwind instrument with continuo. Even the pieces conceived undoubtedly for keyboard maintain qualities close to the style of a continuo-accompanied solo sonata. The majority (including K. 492 and K. 208) follow a four-movement format, resembling the Baroque's *sonata da chiesa* in their alternating slow and fast tempos. Although they are titled "sonatas," they are in no way identical to the traditional sonata form often associated with Beethoven's and Mozart's works. Scarlatti's sonatas are binary in form, with two repeated sections; the second section closely resembles the first section but may introduce more material or stray farther from the tonic.

In the Baroque period, the practice of unresolved tension in music became the main means of arousing emotional response. Scarlatti interpreted this idea in his sonatas by using solid harmonies that did not wander away from tonic, creating an organized line of music to back up any tension. Another slight change that Scarlatti implemented in his sonatas was featuring the same thematic material in the dominant key at the end of the first part, and then in the tonic key at the end of the second section. In Sonata K. 208, one can hear that the ending phrase sounds slightly different and more emotional than previously heard at the end of the first section.

Sonata K. 208 is one piece that resembles the sonata with continuo style, with the strong right-hand melody similar to that of a string instrument with accompaniment, yet it was composed with the keyboard in mind. Throughout the sonata, and most notably at the end of each repeated section, Scarlatti uses trills on the note preceding the ending chord. These rapid note clusters directly relate to his time spent in Portugal and Spain, as sounding similar to guitar music. In the words of Malcolm Boyd in his book *Domenico Scarlatti: Master of Music,* the percussive sound created imitates the "guitar technique, common among folk-musicians, of advancing the left hand up the fingerboard on certain strings while leaving the others open, thereby producing exotic and largely unpremeditated combinations of notes." Although Sonata K. 208 uses these small distinct trill sections, Sonata K. 492 has much larger sections of rapid running scales. The overall faster tempo, and quick running sixteenth-note scales going up in the left and hand and down in the right hand, provide a stark contrast to the slow and melodic music of K. 208.

#### Liszt's Liebesträume No. 3

Franz Liszt was a well-known virtuoso pianist of his time—a groundbreaking musician in Romantic music. Born in Hungary, Liszt quickly became known for his musical ability and was therefore sent to Vienna to study music at the age of nine. After traveling to Paris and holding positions as the director of music for the Duke of Weimar

and an abbot in Rome, Liszt decided to pursue a career in composition. He was inspired by composers such as Chopin and Berlioz, but his grand style of performing and expressive gestures made him famous. Liszt favored writing programmatic music (music based on a specific non-musical idea such as a narrative, novel, play, poem, painting, and the like) rather than the traditional music forms. He believed that program music was highly superior to absolute music and claimed it was a more "engaged" composer who wrestled with the ideas that extended beyond music. Other aspects of his creativity are seen in his symphonic poems, which was a genre that he constructed. The term involved a programmatic source for the symphonic poem, which included a one-movement piece written for the concert hall. While his Romantic compositions were very popular, Liszt had an impressive repertoire of his transcriptions of works by other composers. Also, he was one of the most influential teachers of his time. It is noteworthy that he invented the masterclass, which is a concept very widely used today: Liszt believed that as one person played for a group of peers, followed by his own observations and instruction, the pupils would all stimulate each other and rise to a higher standard of musicianship. He also was responsible for the practice of memorization as a part of performance, because he was the first to play such astoundingly difficult piano pieces by memory. Although his later music was creative in its harmonies and dissonances, indicative of the changes to come in 20thcentury music, his most famous works were sweet and romantic in their overall effect.

His collection, Liebesträume, was an example of Liszt's ingenuity in his lyrical and romantic style of compositions. The set of three solo piano works, whose meaning is translated to "Dreams of Love" in German, was published in 1850. But the most famous of the set is Liebestraum No. 3. This particular work also had a version of it for piano and high voice, as well as another rendition for two pianos, published at the same time. The pieces are all based on poems and describe different types of love. The first and second describe religious love and erotic love, while the third tackles the idea of mature and unconditional love. No. 3 is based upon a poem by Freiligrath, with a line including "Love as long as you can! The hour will come when you will stand at the grave and mourn." Liebestraum No. 3 has three sections, all based on the same melody. The melody begins with a lighter texture, and by the end of the piece, the texture is thick and covers a wider range of the piano. Each section is separated by a cadenza, filled with quick, running notes, that build anticipation throughout. Liszt introduced the idea of thematic transformation, in which various contrasting ideas of a piece stemmed out of the same recurring but perpetually varied melodies. No. 3 can be seen as an example of this idea, since the different aspects and feelings towards mature love all involve the melody seen in the introduction of the piece. Freiligrath's poem, as interpreted in the piece, shows the beginnings of love in the first section, followed by the sense of trials and tribulations of love and conflict in the middle of the piece, leading to the climax. The last section of the piece is the most dense, with lefthand crossovers into the upper region during the main melody, giving a sense of loss or appreciation for a deep love.

### Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 1

Sergei Prokofiev, Russian composer and pianist, was born in 1891. He began piano lessons with his mother at the young age of four and wasted no time trying his hand at composing. Because he started writing music so young as a student, much of it is deeply Romantic according to Russian tradition, including many childhood piano works and even an opera. These traditional musical roots, coupled with his efforts towards neo-classicism and pushing boundaries, helped turn Prokofiev into an important composer in Soviet culture later in life.

Prokofiev's love of the sonata form led to his large repertoire of compositions in the sonata genre. What makes Prokofiev special, though, as a major twentieth-century composer is his attention to the sonata form—a structure that initially was introduced in the eighteenth century. Prokofiev and Alexander Scriabin were the two primary composers from the modern era to focus greatly on this traditional sonata form that had arisen in the Classical period. Prokofiev wrote a total of nine piano sonatas. Sonata No. 1 is very fast paced and has the characteristics that belong to all of his fast-tempo compositions. They include always being rhythmically active, in which quick running notes are used, and oftentimes these phrases are accented with articulated notes. To create a more powerful sound, Prokofiev writes passages that include a wide span of the keyboard, sometimes using arpeggios for dramatic effect. Also, the use of octaves is extremely important in the nineteenth century and is often used in Prokofiev's faster pieces. As seen in the opening of Sonata No. 1, the left hand begins with rapid octaves in a downward motion to create a lively introduction. Although Prokofiev's form adheres to the standard expectations of the sonata genre, the tonality of the music is nothing like the eighteenth-century composers would have preferred. The harmonies are modern, and the dissonances, though beautiful at times, can be quite unsettling.

Unlike Prokofiev's "War Sonatas," number 7 and 8, which are more triumphant and reminiscent of the Revolution in Russia, his first sonata is actually a reworking of the first movement of a three-movement sonata from his student years. He would have been around eighteen years old when he composed this work. Although there are no written movements or even separations between each of the three movements, the listener can hear two distinct pauses in the music to hint at the new sections. Because of the constant, tumultuous, and quick feel of the sonata, it is very obvious when any pause occurs.

Prokofiev referred to this piece with a surprising attitude: "As a rule the publication of his first opus is a landmark for the composer, a sort of dividing line between his early work and his mature compositions. With me it was different: Sonata No. 1, a naive and simple little piece, marked the end of my early period...." In my opinion, it's up to the audience to decide if what they hear sounds simple and naive. Enjoy!

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