

PROGRAM NOTES BY THE ARTIST:

Haydn – Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob XVI:52

Haydn's last and possibly greatest sonata was written in 1794 and published in 1798, around the same time as his famous London Symphonies. It is driven by an intellectual energy brought about by his use of chromatic harmony that seems far beyond his time. In the first movement, the main theme is a broad, orchestral march in the French overture style. The second theme is light-hearted and joking, nicknamed the music box theme because of its mood and the register in which it is played. The middle movement is a beautifully ornamented rhapsodic adagio, in the strikingly distant key of E major. The closing Presto is rich in harmonic surprises and poignant moments of silence.

Barber – Ballade, Op. 46

Barber composed his final piece for piano in 1977, four years before he succumbed to cancer. It was commissioned by organizers of the Van Cliburn Foundation and received its premier at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition that year. The form of the Ballade is relatively simple, an easily recognizable ABA. The mood of the piece is relentlessly dark. The A section is devastatingly sad, with a desperation brought about by frequent repetition of the main themes. Desperation continues to be the main theme at the abrupt transition to the B section, faster and this time colored with anger and fury rather than sadness.

Debussy – from Preludes

Feux d'artifice

The last and most technically difficult of Debussy's 24 Preludes, Feux d'artifice or "Fireworks" paints a picture of a brilliant fireworks display over Paris. At the open of the prelude, the listener can clearly hear a lit fuse punctuated by sparks of light in the high and low registers of the piano. As the piece develops the texture becomes thicker as Debussy depicts a night sky lit by rocket streaks and explosions, with moments of peace in the silence between explosions. As the display comes to an end, one can hear a distant quotation of "La Marseillaise," a minute display of French nationalism by the composer.

La cathédrale engloutie

The tenth prelude in the first set, La cathédrale engloutie or "The Sunken Cathedral" is based on an ancient Breton myth in which a cathedral, submerged in the water just off of the coast of the Island of Ys, rises from the sea on clear mornings when the water is transparent. Sounds can be heard of the organ playing, priests chanting, and bells chiming.

Liszt – Legend No. 2, "St. Francis Walking on the Waves"

Taken from Liszt's own preface to the second legend: "Among the numerous miracles of St. Francis of Paola, the legend celebrates that which he performed in crossing the Straits of Messina. The boatmen refused to burden their barque with such an insignificant-looking person, but he, paying no attention to this, walked across the sea with a firm tread." Liszt on his favorite drawing of the scene by the artist Steinle: "St. Francis standing on the surging waters; they bear him to his destination, according to the law of faith, which governs the laws of nature. His cloak is spread out under his feet, his one hand is raised...in the other he held a live coal, a symbol of the inward fire, which glows in the breasts of all the disciples of Jesus Christ..."

Liszt/Verdi: Rigoletto Concert Paraphrase


Franz Liszt was an incessant recycler, filling volumes with piano transcriptions of other composers' symphonic and vocal work. Here, he transcribes one of the most dramatic scenes from Verdi's opera Rigoletto. At this point in Act Two of the opera, the womanizing Duke of Mantua is seducing a young woman by the name of Maddalena. Outside, Rigoletto listens with his daughter Gilda, who is madly in love with the Duke. Dismayed at his infidelity, Rigoletto plans to hire an assassin to kill the Duke. The music that Verdi composed for this moment depicts an innocent love that has been deceived, with a focus on the drama of the moment more than the betrayal itself.

Special Thanks: to the Park Ridge Public Library for hosting tonight's piano recital, and to the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Foundation for underwriting Ethan's PRCO Scholarship.



February 11,
2016 7:00 p.m.

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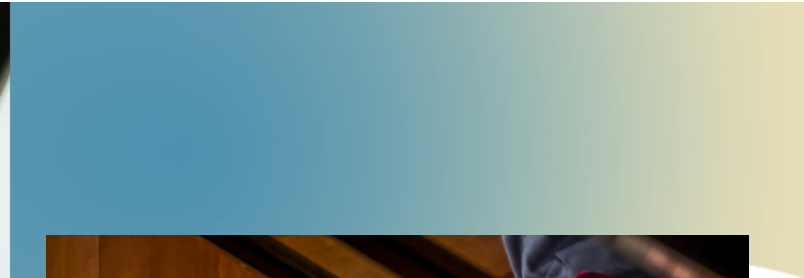
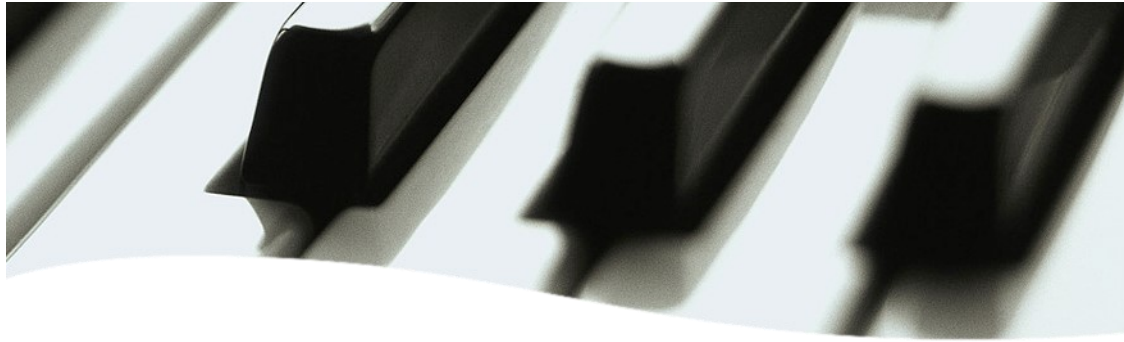
 Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
presents



Scholarship
Winner

**Ethan
Valentin**





Ethan Valentin Pianist

Haydn – Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob XVI:52

Barber – Ballade, Op. 46

Debussy – from Preludes:

Feux d’artifice; La cathédrale engloutie

Liszt – Legend No. 2, “St. Francis Walking on the Waves” **

Liszt/Verdi: Rigoletto Concert Paraphrase

** “My great grandfather was an accomplished pianist, composer, and teacher. The piano we have at home belonged to him, and is near 100 years old. Liszt’s “St. Francis walking on the Waves” was his favorite piece to play and the one he most frequently performed for guests. My grandfather bought me the music for it when I was about 14 and I finally learned it for a solo recital senior year. I’ve been playing it on and off since then, and recently placed in a competition performing it among a few others.”



Photo by
Billy Liu

Ethan Valentin of Chicago began his studies at age 6 with Drew Lindsay at the New Dynamic School of Music, working on everything from classical music to pop music to jazz. At age 13, he began lessons with Kent Jager, Music Director at Queen of Angels Parish and taking classes at the Merit School of Music's Tuition-free Conservatory, studying with Dr. Elena Doubovitskaya, Merit's Piano Department Chairperson. He performs in both a piano duo and a piano trio, and was a regular accompanist for the Lane Tech Band Department. He was a winner of the 2012 Alice Pfaelzer Private Lesson Scholarship Competition and the 2014 Park Ridge Civic Orchestra -Thomas A. Kooyumjian Foundation Scholarship, and a finalist in the 2012 Chicago Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition. He currently attends Lawrence University where he is majoring in piano performance, studying with piano professor Anthony Padilla.