

Candlelight Concert Society
presents

Soyeon Lee, pianist

Saturday, March 17, 2012, 8:00 PM

Pre-concert discussion with Dr. Hsien-Ann Meng, HCC Music Department, 7:15 PM
Smith Theatre, Horowitz Performing Arts Center, Howard Community College, Columbia, MD

“Invitation to the Dance”

Six Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Stick game (*Joc cu bâta*)

Peasant costume (*Braul*)

Standing still (*Pe loc*)

Song of the mountain horn (*Buciumeana*)

A garden gate in Romania (*V Poarca Românească*)

Little one (*Maruntel*)

Dauidsbündlertänze, Op.6

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Lebhaft

Innig

Mit Humor

Ungeduldig

Einfach

Sehr rasch

Nicht schnell

Frisch

Lebhaft

Balladenmäßig Sehr rasch

Einfach

Mit Humor

Wild und lustig

Zart und singend

Frisch

Mit gutem Humor

Wie aus der Ferne

Nicht schnell

Intermission

Iberia Book I

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)

Evocation

El Puerto

Fête-Dieu à Seville

Paraphrase on a Waltz from Gounod's "Faust", S 407

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Pianist and Naxos artist Soyeon Lee won first prize in the 2010 Naumburg International Piano Competition.

The Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, Inc.; Lucy Rowan Mann, Executive Director

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Invitation to the Dance

Program Notes

Soyeon Lee

Six Romanian Folk Dances, Sz 56

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Hungarian composer and pianist Béla Bartók was one of the founders of the field of ethnomusicology, having collected over 14,000 folk melodies of Hungarian, Croatian, Romanian, Slavic, and Bulgarian origin. This study, which he shared with another Hungarian composer, Kodaly, deeply influenced and inspired his distinct style of melody, rhythm, and the unique sound world created by imitating the original folk instruments, and thus introduced a new sound world in the 20th century and a new form tonality.

Romanian folk melodies and dances, for which Bartók had a special affinity, are believed to have been more isolated from outside influences and therefore remained more authentic. When the outbreak of World War I made it difficult for Bartók to continue the collections, he began to formalize the various dances that he had collected during 1910-1912 by Romanians living in what is now Hungary.

The popular ***Six Romanian Folk Dances*** are short, characteristic dances, written during this period. Each dance has a distinctive character and mood, encompassing despite such brevity the spirit of joy, mournfulness, mystery, and humor.

Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

In 1833, at the age of 23, Schumann became the editor of the New Journal of Music, (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) which was initiated by a passionate group of young musicians who came together to exchange ideas of poetry, music, and art, and aimed to stand up against the “philistines” of the society. It is this group that inspired in him the imaginary “League of David”, or *Davidsbünd*, a name that undoubtedly alluded to the biblical story of David and Goliath as he saw the League of David rising and reigning victorious against the philistines of the arts.

The League of David is an amalgamation of real and fictional characters, most notably Schumann’s two alter egos— Eusebius, representing his Apollonian and inward nature, and Florestan, representing his Dionysian and passionate side. It is in honor of this secret League of David that Schumann composed the ***Davidsbündlertänze*** (*The Dances of the League of David*) in 1837, in which these two figures of his personality, sometimes alternating and sometimes joined, became authors of these dances.

Written in an astounding and inspired eleven days during the month of August in 1837, *Davidsbündlertänze* is, along with so many of Schumann's compositions, a love letter to Clara. After months of separation, Schumann had entered into a secret engagement with Clara on August 15th, and despite the foreseeable difficulties with her father he recalled these months following the engagement to have been "the most blissful and purest days of my life." It is all the more fitting then that a direct quote from Clara's own *Mazurka, Op. 6, No. 5* opens the piece, and lets one into one of Schumann's most heavenly and private compositions.

Davidsbündlertänze is divided into two books of nine "dances". The movements, each with its own striking mood, invites the listener into Schumann's most intimate, joyful, heartbreaking, and passionate journey, which ultimately ends in the key of C, again representing Clara.

Iberia, Book I

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)

Written between 1905 and 1909, during the last years of his life, Spanish composer Isaac Albeniz's monumental **Iberia** stands as one of the pillars of 20th century piano repertoire. Olivier Messiaen described the work: "*Iberia* is the wonder for the piano; it is perhaps on the highest place among the more brilliant pieces for the king of the instruments." *Iberia* is an homage to the composer's native land, divided into four books of three movements each, which are based on Spanish dance rhythms in combination with the *copla*, the sung verses of these dances.

Book I opens with *Evocación*, a serene, nostalgic reminiscence of Spain. It utilizes elements of a *fandanguillo* and *jota navarra*, and one can immediately hear the impressionistic flavor from the use of the whole-tone scale. *El Puerto*, inspired by the port town of *Cádiz*, is formed by a combination of three different dances: *polo*, *buleriás*, and the gypsy *seguidillas*. The striking sounds of the guitar permeate throughout *El Puerto*, and all the flourishes of the dance finally give way to a quiet coda.

The last of this book, *Fête-Dieu à Seville*, is one of Albeniz' most programmatic works. It depicts a Corpus Christi day procession in Seville where the statue of the Virgin Mary is carried through the streets accompanied by a crowd of people including marching bands and singers. The sound of drum rolls in the opening leads to the march-like main theme, which intensifies throughout until it is interrupted by the *saeta*, a deeply powerful religious lament song. The return of the opening is much more elaborate, and main material is transformed into a lively *tarantella* until it ends abruptly with a climatic chord, followed by a pensive, gentle *coda* evoking distant church bells and remnants of the flamenco guitar.

Waltz from Gounod's "Faust"

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

In 1861 Franz Liszt visited Paris, seven years after his last visit to the French capital. His arrival caused an uproar in both high and artistic society, and, as always, he became an instant member at the crème de la crème of artistic society, where his acquaintances included luminaries such as Berlioz, Delacroix, Rossini, and Meyerbeer. He was invited to dine with Napoleon III at the Tuilleries, and was said to have made the Empress cry as he performed the Funeral March of Chopin's second *Piano Sonata*.

It was at a dinner party hosted by Count and Countess Metternich that Liszt was joined by Charles Gounod, whose new opera of 1859 *Faust* was the talk of town. The opera was, indeed, a grand accomplishment, and managed to single-handedly revitalize the world of French grand opera.

Gounod had brought a score of the opera as a gift to Liszt, and he, always the gentleman, presented him (to Gounod) "with his waltz for dessert – to the great entertainment of those listening", as he later wrote, reminiscent of that evening.

And it is this waltz, along with the love duet of Act Two that were used as the cornerstones for the construction of the one of Liszt's most successful concert paraphrases, a paraphrase which, just as Faust itself, attempts to combine the diabolical with the angelic, the Apollonian with the Dionysian, and the super-human virtuoso with the philosopher-poet. It also utilizes the entire gamut of pianistic sounds and effects in order to emulate the full sound of the orchestra, the vibrancy of the human voice, and even the sounds of Nature (as the "nightingale" that appears in the slow section of the work). It is a work that became a resounding success and still brings the same excitement and wonderfully touching moments both to the performer and the listener.