

50th Birthday
CONCERT

Christopher Pouliot

DOVER TOWN HALL
APRIL 8TH 2017 AT 7 P.M.

50th Birthday

CONCERT PROGRAM

Sonata in C Major K.545 W.A.Mozart

Allegro
Andante
Rondo

Impromptu D. 935 #2 F. Schubert

Allegretto
Trio

Berceuse Opus 57 F. Chopin

(In Loving Memory of Emma P)

Rhapsody in G Minor Opus 79 No. 2 J. Brahms

~ Intermission ~

Nocturne in E flat Major Opus 55 No. 2 F. Chopin

Jardins Sous La Pluie C. Debussy

Clair de Lune C. Debussy

Toccata No. 2 G. Antheil

(Please turn cell phones to vibrate. Thank you.)

W.A. Mozart

1756-1791

Easy is a word so many biographies quote Mozart as using to describe his Sonata K.545 in C, when in fact it's difficulties lie in its pure perfection of simplicity: one of the most difficult feats to achieve as a performer of Mozart's piano works. In fact this sonata is a late work of a mature master, composed in 1788 three years before Mozart's death. The key of C Major is used in the opening movement and has a purity and a child-like freshness which makes the piece so compelling. The second movement is something far more personal and intimate.



Thaddeus Helbing
"Mozart at the Spinet"

"There is a weariness about it, a current of nostalgia perhaps in keeping with its having been dated ten years to the day after he was told that his mother would not last the night" Maynard Solomon wrote in his biography of Mozart.

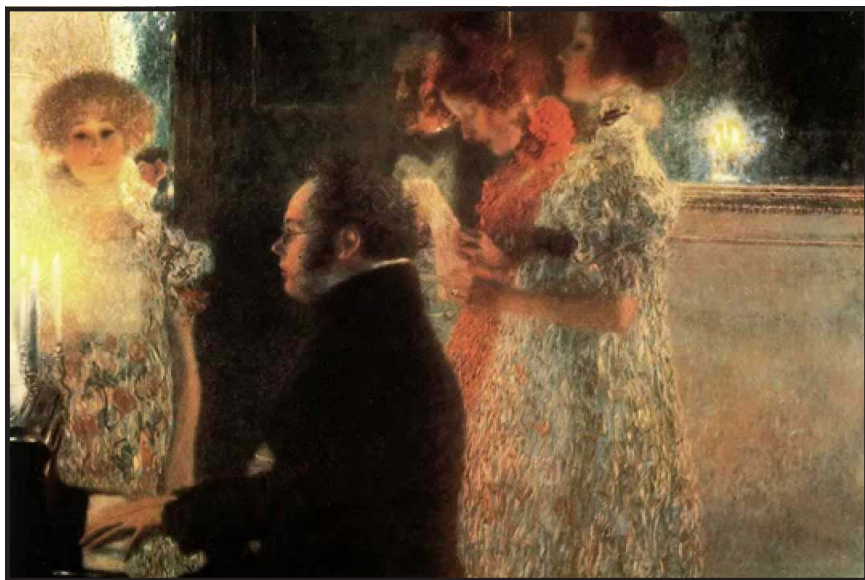
For a brief time Mozart uses g minor to expose darker emotions, but does not stay in that world too long, returning to the comforting remembrance of the key of G Major. The third movement is a traditional Rondo form returning to the home key of C Major, and is filled with playful, bouncy, gesture; as well as, outright laughter recalling many animated arias from Mozart's operas.

One of the greatest musical geniuses of Western Musical tradition, Mozart wrote over eighteen piano sonatas for his use as a performer and as vehicles for teaching his students, and very likely for his son Franz Xavier who would go on to be a fine concert pianist.

Francis Schubert

1797-1828

Schubert's Impromptu Opus posth. 142 D935 in A flat Major opens with a soft, wistful melody followed by a courageous and assertive second phrase, once again bringing to mind the high contrast of the Sturm and Drang style in music and art of the early Romantic Period. The form of this piece is ternary. (A musical piece in three parts. ABA) The A section is followed by a dance-like Trio in D Flat Major before returning to the A section in A flat Major. We can see a compact, streamlining of ideas into essential forms, much like Schubert's gift for storytelling in his lieder (or art songs). This Impromptu is part of a set of four written in December of 1827, thought to be a continuation from his Opus 90 a set of four Impromptus written earlier that year. This was a significant year in music history as it was the year of Beethoven's death. Some historic accounts place Schubert at Beethoven's bedside. More accurate accounts witness Schubert as a pall bearer: significant in that Schubert is seen as successor to Beethoven in music history.



Gustav Klimt

"Schubert at the Piano"

Tragically, Schubert would die the following year. Along side these eight Impromptus Schubert wrote his masterpiece for voice and piano know as *Winterreise*, a dark exploration of the artists soul throughout multiple songs sung over the course of one evenings concert. Schubert was ill at this time and there appears to be a heightened awareness of his need to express his art in the most direct way possible.

Schubert was most articulate in his more than 600 songs for vocalist and piano. The fluent language of his melodies is replayed in many of his piano and chamber pieces, to the degree of even incorporating his original melodies as a basis for other music. One famous example is his "Trout Quartet".

It is important to note that Schubert, like Mozart, was a very prolific composer often completing a work in a matter of days. Both composers would also die tragically young.

Frederic Chopin

1810-1849

Chopin's *Berceuse*, (French for lullaby) is an intimate jewel in the large body of work that is his legacy to the piano literature. Lullabies are often six-eight time (a combination of three beats into two larger group) suggesting the rocking motion of the mother and child. The left hand accompaniment suggests the gentle rocking motion of a cradle, while the right hand spins out the melody. This piece can also be thought of as a character etude. In Chopin's vast output the form of the etude was developed to the highest mastery and catapults the development of the 19th century piano technique. Many of the forms Chopin chose



Paul Helleu
"Berceuse"

to compose in, the mazurka, the waltz, the polonaise, the nocturne, the barcarolle, are all types of miniature forms, which transport the listener to another place or evoke intimate life moments. Chopin drew widely from his Polish and French heritage when composing his works; as well as, his travels throughout Europe.

The piece is like lacework, a fine filigree of notes in melodic figures spun out in various harmonic inventions. The overall effect is that of the ultimate nocturne or "night song" or "night prayer". According to

known dates Chopin's last composed nocturne was 1843 and the *Berceuse* was 1843-44. Both forms are prayers either to the night, like the nocturne or they are prayers to protect during the night like the *Berceuse*, especially at this time in history when infant mortality was comparatively high. Chopin was known to compose late into the night.

Johannes Brahms

1833-1897

Robert Schumann wrote in his diary the first day he meet Brahms, "Visit from Brahms, a genius." as quoted in Malcolm MacDonald's biography of Brahms. This was the beginning of a close emotional and artistic relationship with Robert and Clara Schumann which would last the rest of Brahms' life. Schumann publicly praised the young composer and helped to establish Brahms' reputation in the highest musical circles in Germany and Austria. Brahms was an extraordinary pianist, conductor, musicologist and a brilliant



J.M.W. Turner - "Snow Storm — Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and Going by the Lead"

composer. He brought a rich new harmony to the Classical forms he had inherited from the great masters who came before him.

The Rhapsody in g minor was composed in 1879-80. This piece was first published as a

set with his b minor Rhapsody at a time when Brahms was composing smaller works for the piano, much in the same way Schubert had done at the end of his life. The character of the g minor Rhapsody is direct, heroic, muscular, and at times recalls the epic journeys of his two virtuosic piano concertos, both of which were written in minor keys. The g minor rhapsody explores the mysterious worlds of life's tragedies, and several passages are dramatically cloaked in a velvet like sound. Brahms seems to raise his fist at the very end of the piece with an explosion of defiance and courage, earthbound to the bitter end.

~ *Intermission* ~

Frederic Chopin

1810-1849

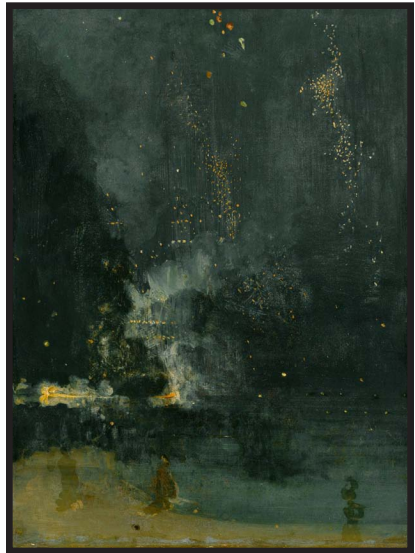
Frederic Chopin was known as gentle, aristocratic, (both by birth and bearing), snobbish, brilliant, and an elegant artist.

He was a child genius and began his musical education in his native Poland before traveling throughout Europe and finally settling down in Paris, the intellectual and artistic capital of Europe in the early 19th century. By the age of nineteen Chopin had written his two great piano concertos which would become imbedded in the piano repertoire from that time on. Chopin's musical legacy is centered around his primary musical vehicle, the piano.

One of the musical forms which Chopin raised to great artistic heights was the nocturne. The Irish pianist and composer John Field created the form which simply means "nightsong". Chopin composed twenty known piano works in this

form, employing John Field's characteristic elements. Chopin's gifts as a composer of great melodies and of a newly sophisticated harmonic language raised the form to a higher artistic level. Among Chopin's compositions the nocturne is perhaps the most intimate.

Historical accounts tell us that Chopin was known to compose late into the night when the world around him was still. Bird calls have been skillfully woven into the melody of the nocturne in E flat Major. There is an atmosphere of painting with sound that pervades this work. Chopin's love of opera and the Bel Canto (or beautiful singing style) is evident in his long melodic phrases. The left hand creates the rhythmic, harp-like movement (arpeggiated) and color for the aria-like tunes to rest on.



J.A.M. Whistler

"Nocturne in Black and Gold"

Claude Debussy

1862-1918

Debussy revolutionized the harmonic world inherited from Chopin; he created new ideas about musical form, leaving the Classical period's strict structural designs in the past. Continuous sound worlds replaced the high architecture of his predecessors. The sound itself became exquisite in its variety of color and nuance. As he performed, Debussy made a point to withhold the title of his works until the end of the piece so as not to influence the listener's experience.

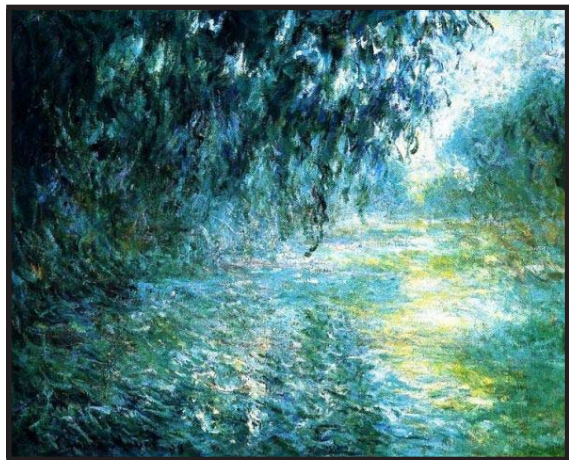
"To feel the supreme and moving beauty of the spectacle to which Nature invites her ephemeral guests!...that is what I call prayer."

— Claude Debussy, as quoted in
Claude Debussy: His Life and Works (1933)
by Léon Vallas, p. 225 © Fr

Culturally, Debussy possessed great taste in his manner, his love of gourmet cuisine, and his careful selection of clothing. These characteristics were all part of a supreme sensibility of beauty and refinement.

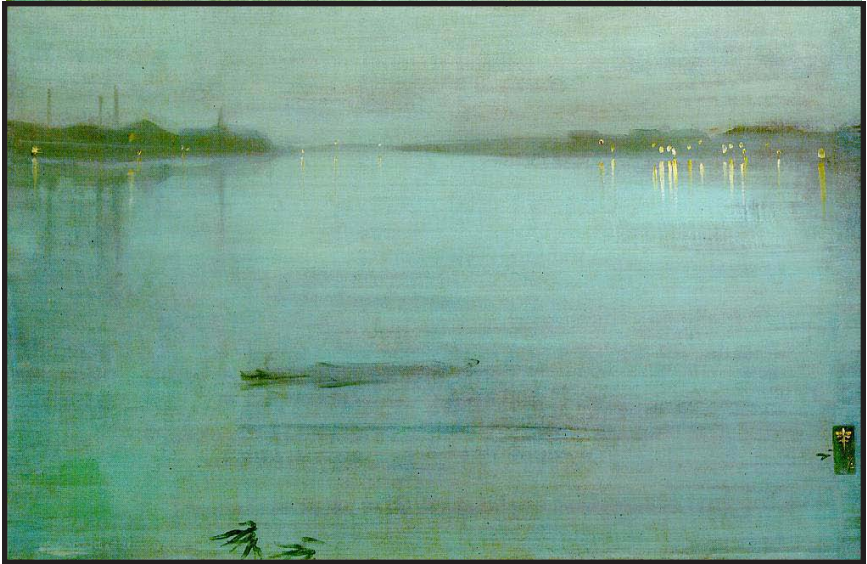
Jardins Sous La Pluie

or "*Gardens in the Rain*" explores nature's effect in a garden. Thunder, pouring rain, light gentle rain and a cascade of sound use rhythm to illustrate action in the garden. Debussy also quotes from two popular French children's songs at various points in this piece, bringing to light the pleasures which can be heard in a garden as children play.



Claude Monet

"Morning on the Seine in the Rain", 1897



Whistler

Cremorne Light

Clair De Lune, a famous nocturne, is evocative of great beauty and evening light. Mood and serene calm flow, creating for the listener an atmosphere of timeless beauty. Perhaps Debussy's best known piano work, this masterpiece is unmistakable as the first two iconic chords are played.

George Antheil

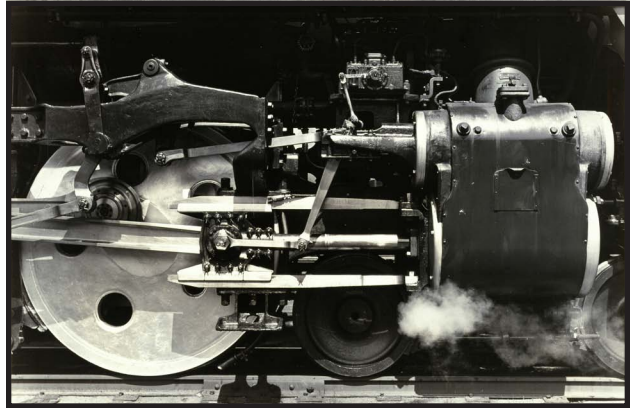
1900-1959

American composer George Antheil, considered the “bad boy” of the early 20th century Parisian music scene, became wildly famous for his piece Ballet Mecanique: which premiered in Paris to a riotous reception. Multiple

player pianos and numerous mechanical devices arranged on stage without performer or conductor automatically performing for eleven minutes.

Machinery was a passion, joy, and

fascination for Antheil. A native of New Jersey, (a manufacturing center) the machine age of the 20th century was his early inspiration. Unlike the machine precision of Ballet Mecanique, this toccata written in 1948 was meant for a human interface. The idea of “touch” of toccata demands exacting precision with no room for excessive emotion on the part of the performer.



Charles Sheeler
“Wheels”

*Gratitude to all
for joining me tonight
as I share this milestone
in my life with
the gift of music.*

