

Core Memory Music

Amy Goto, cello
Simon Bürki, piano

Saturday, December 14, 2024

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)	Sonata for arpeggione in A minor, D. 821 <i>1. Allegro moderato</i> <i>2. Adagio</i> <i>3. Allegretto</i>	1824
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)	Fantasiestücke, Op. 73	1849
	<i>Intermission</i>	
Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)	Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat major, Op. 61	1846
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)	Pezzo capriccioso, Op. 62	1887
Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881–1950)	Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor, Op. 81 <i>1. Allegro moderato</i> <i>2. Andante cantabile</i> <i>3. Allegro con spirito</i>	1948

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Please join us on Saturday, December 28 at 2:00 pm for a special holiday performance by 15-year-old pianist Ian Lin.

Schubert: *Sonata for arpeggione in A minor, D. 821*

Schubert ignored the duo-sonata genre (piano and one other instrument) throughout his musical adulthood, with the exception of two works composed in 1824: the *Introduction and Variations on "Trockne blumen"* for flute and a sonata for an instrument known as the arpeggione, a six-stringed guitar held between the knees and played with a bow like a cello.

Invented by one J.G. Stauffer, the arpeggione began its short life around 1814. Schubert's friend Vincenz Schuster, who had mastered the instrument, probably commissioned the sonata. By the time it was published posthumously in 1871, the enthusiasm for the novelty of the arpeggione had long since vanished, together with the instrument itself.

Tchaikovsky: *Pezzo capriccioso in B minor, Opus 62*

Pezzo capriccioso was composed in August 1887 while the composer was staying at Aachen, Germany with the seriously-ill Nikolay Kondratyev (whom Tchaikovsky had come especially to see). His friend's illness took a considerable toll on the composer's morale and this composition was the single fruit of his musical spirit that summer. Tchaikovsky dedicated the work to cellist and composer Anatole Brandoukov.

The first performance took place on 16 February 1888 at the Paris home of Marie de Benardaky; the cello part was played by Brandoukov and the piano part by the composer. The first performance with orchestral accompaniment was given by Brandoukov in Moscow at a special concert of the Russian Musical Society in November 1889, conducted by Tchaikovsky.

This short, virtuosic work was Tchaikovsky's second composition for cello and orchestra (the first was *Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33*). Tchaikovsky also arranged *Pezzo capriccioso* for cello and piano, the version we will hear today. The work is in one movement, lasting approximately 7 minutes in performance.

Myaskovsky: *Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor, Opus 81*

Nikolai Myaskovsky's second cello sonata was written in 1948, in direct response to the famous Resolution on Music issued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and leveled specifically at Myaskovsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian. The issue was formalism, which Soviet musical dictionaries define as "the artificial separation of form from content to the detriment of content." To the Stalin regime, it was a matter of elitist complexity vs. democratic accessibility.

This sonata was the work that got Myaskovsky out of trouble. It is of a studied simplicity and a no less studied return to the traditional values of Russian music, as the Party defined them. There are folk-like themes, modeled in the first movement on modal peasant songs, and in the last on the typical *moto perpetuo* of instrumental dance tunes. There is also diatonic purity of harmony.