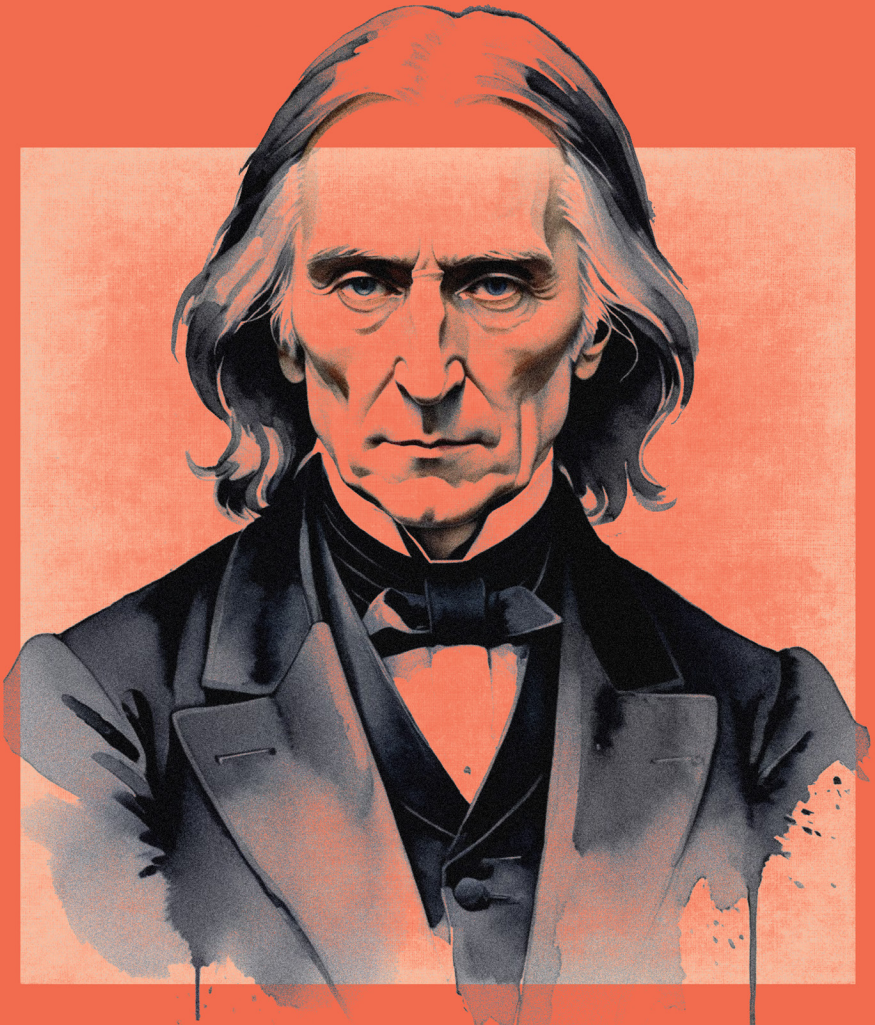


THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

VIRTUOSO SERIES CONCERT



Bryan Wallick Plays Franz Liszt

PIANO

FEATURING:

SCHUBERT SONG TRANSCRIPTIONS: Gretchen am Spinnrade, Auf dem wasser zu singen, Ständchen, Erlkönig
SONATA IN B MINOR S. 178, FUNÉRAILLES S. 173, and RÉMINISCENCES DE DON JUAN S. 418

OCTOBER 1, 2024 7:30 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL



**COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

SEASON SPONSOR:



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INTERMISSION

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BRYAN WALLICK is gaining recognition as one of the great American virtuoso pianists of his generation. Gold medalist of the 1997 Vladimir Horowitz International Piano Competition in Kiev, he has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa.

Mr. Wallick made his New York recital debut in 1998 at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and made his Wigmore Hall recital debut in London in 2003. He has also performed at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall with the London Sinfonietta and at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church.

In recent seasons, Mr. Wallick has performed with the Arizona Musicfest Orchestra, Boise Philharmonic, Boulder Symphony, Brevard Symphony, Cape Town Philharmonic, Cincinnati Pops, Evansville Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Illinois Philharmonic, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kentucky Symphony, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Portland Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, Western Piedmont Symphony, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra; and collaborated with conductors Erich Kunzel, Marvin Hamlisch, Robert Moody, Daniel Raiskin, Bernhard Gueller, Adrian Prabava, Daniel Boico, Arjen Tien, Yasuo Shinozaki, Andrew Sewell, Vladimir Verbitsky, Victor Yampolsky, Josep Vicent, Leslie Dunner, Alfred Savia, Christopher Confessore, Matthew Troy, and Wes Kenney among others. Mr. Wallick has performed recitals at the Chateau Differdange in Luxembourg, on the Tivoli Artists Series in Copenhagen, Ravinia's Rising Star Series, Grand Teton Music Festival, Xavier Piano Series (Cincinnati), Scottsdale Center's Virginia Piper Series, Sanibel Island Music Festival, Tri-C Classical Series at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Classics in the Atrium Series in the British Virgin Islands. In March 2002, Mr. Wallick played two solo performances at Ledreborg Palace for HRH Princess Marie Gabrielle Luxembourg, and HRH Prince Philip Bourbon de Parme.

Bryan Wallick is an avid chamber musician and has performed with violinists Nikita Borisoglebsky, Rachel Lee Priday, Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, Miriam Contzen, Sergei Malov, and cellists Zuill Bailey, Alexander Buzlov, Alexander Ramm, and Wolfgang Emmanuel Schmidt. He has recently joined the Mendelssohn Trio which is in residence at Colorado State University and most recently performed with them on a European tour in September 2022 visiting Switzerland, Austria and Germany. In 2015 he became Artistic Director of Schalk Visser Concert Promotions which hosts many international musicians who perform concert tours throughout South Africa. During the COVID-19 period he recorded the Beethoven Triple Concerto Op. 56 (Trio Version) with violinist Frank Stadler (Austria) and Peter Martens (South Africa) in an inter-continental virtual collaboration across three continents which won the KykNet Fiesta Award for Best Achievement in Classical Music for South Africa 2020. Mr. Wallick is also actively involved in organizing the International Keyboard Odyssey and Summer Festival (IKOF) in Colorado where he regularly performs, lectures and teaches, and is also on the faculty for the Rocky Ridge Summer Festival in Estes Park, Colorado.

His most recent engagements include appearances with the Brevard Symphony, Boulder Symphony, Cape Town Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and Western Piedmont Symphony. He has performed his latest recital project *Virtuosic Fugue* for the Grand Teton Music Festival, University of Texas (El Paso), Las Cruces, New Mexico, Scottsdale Center in Arizona, Ravinia Festival, Xavier Piano Series, Tri-C Classical Series at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and throughout South Africa. *Virtuosic Fugue (Vol. 1)* was recorded for Navona Records and released in July 2023. He made chamber appearances with cellist Zuill Bailey for Chamber Music Detroit and the Library of Congress, performed with violinist Rachel Lee Priday at the University of Washington and Colorado State's Classical Convergence series, and also performed at the Chintimini Summer Music Festival in Oregon.

Bryan Wallick has performed on Chicago's WFMT Fazioli Series and "Live on WFMT," on BBC's radio show "In Tune," National Ukrainian Television and Radio, on Danish National Radio, on Colorado Public Radio and on NPR's "Performance Today." He was given a grant in 2006 by the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts to explore his synesthetic realities in a multimedia project that allows the audience to see the colors he experiences while performing. Synesthesia is the ability to experience two or more sensory experiences with one stimulus. Bryan Wallick sees colors with each musical pitch and has created a computer program that projects images of his colored visions to the audience.

Mr. Wallick studied with Jerome Lowenthal in New York City where he was the first Juilliard School graduate to receive both an undergraduate Honors Diploma (2000) and an accelerated master's Degree (2001). He continued his studies with Christopher Elton in London at the Royal Academy of Music where he was the recipient of the Associated Board International Scholarship, receiving a Post-graduate Diploma with Distinction. He previously studied with Eugene and Elisabeth Pridonoff from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Mr. Wallick has recently been appointed as Assistant-Professor of Piano at Colorado State University where he lives with his wife and three children. George Plimpton's feature article on Bryan Wallick appeared in the March 2002 edition of *Contents* magazine.

Notes:

Gretchen am Spinnrade

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will find it never
and never more.

Where I do not have him,
That is the grave,
The whole world
Is bitter to me.

My poor head
Is crazy to me,
My poor mind
Is torn apart.

For him only, I look
Out the window
Only for him do I go
Out of the house.

His tall walk,
His noble figure,
His mouth's smile,
His eyes' power,
And his mouth's
Magic flow,
His handclasp,
and ah! his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will find it never
and never more.
My bosom urges itself
toward him.

Ah, might I grasp
And hold him!
And kiss him,
As I would wish,
At his kisses
I should die!

Auf dem Wasser zu Singen

Amid the shimmer of the mirroring waves
the rocking boat glides, swan-like,
on gently shimmering waves of joy.
The soul, too, glides like a boat.
For from the sky the setting sun
dances upon the waves around the boat.

Above the tree-tops of the western grove
the red glow beckons kindly to us;
beneath the branches of the eastern grove
the reeds whisper in the red glow.
The soul breathes the joy of heaven,
the peace of the grove, in the reddening glow.

Alas, with dewy wings
time vanishes from me on the rocking waves.
Tomorrow let time again vanish with shimmering
wings, as it did yesterday and today,
until, on higher, more radiant wings,
I myself vanish from the flux of time

Ständchen

My songs call out gently
Through the night as they beseech you;
Come down here into the quiet grove of trees,
Beloved, come to me!

Slender tree tops whisper as they rustle
In the moonlight;
No hostile traitor is going to overhear,
So do not be afraid, my love.

Can you hear the nightingales singing?
Oh, they are beseeching you
With the sweet notes of their laments,

They are interceding with you on my behalf.
They can understand the longing of the breast,
They are familiar with the pain of love,
With their silver notes they stir
Every sensitive heart.

Let your own breast be moved too,
Beloved, listen to me!
I am trembling as I await your response;
Come, make me happy!

Erlkönig

Who rides, so late, through night and wind?
It is the father with his child.
He has the boy well in his arm,
He holds him safely, he keeps him warm.

My son, why do you hide your face in fear?
Father, do you not see the Erl-King?
The Erl-King with crown and cape?
My son, it is a streak of fog.

“You dear child, come, go with me!
(Very) beautiful games, I play with you;
Many colourful flowers are on the beach,
My mother has many a golden robe.”

My father, my father, and do you not hear
What the Erl-King quietly promises me?
Be calm, stay calm, my child;
Through dry leaves, the wind is sighing.

“Do you, fine boy, want to go with me?
My daughters shall wait on you finely;
My daughters lead the nightly dance,
And rock and dance and sing to bring you in.”

My father, my father, and don't you see there
The Erl-King's daughters in the gloomy place?
My son, my son, I see it clearly:
There shimmer the old willows so grey.

"I love you, your beautiful form excites me;
And if you're not willing, then I will use force."
My father, my father, he's touching me now!
The Erl-King has done me harm!

It horrifies the father; he swiftly rides on,
He holds the moaning child in his arms,
Reaches the farm with great difficulty;
In his arms, the child was dead.

Liszt Sonata in B Minor

"This is nothing but sheer racket ... it's really awful," wrote pianist Clara Schumann on first hearing Liszt's B minor Sonata, dedicated to her husband Robert. The pre-eminent Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick couldn't have agreed more. Blending high dudgeon with feigned condolence, he scornfully sneered: "whoever has heard that, and finds it beautiful, is beyond help." Suffice it to say, Liszt's piano sonata was not welcomed into the canon with open arms, but something more akin to raised pitchforks.

The problem may well have been that in writing this sonata, completed in 1853, Liszt was going 'against brand'. Long known for his *programmatic* works—each with a story to tell, and thus a built-in framework for interpretation—Liszt had shocked many in the musical world by composing a piece of *absolute* music, a work based purely on the interplay of abstract musical ideas. His Sonata in B Minor came across as an impenetrably dense musical hairball of intertwined motives, in a single-movement format that seemed to combine the characteristics of both a sonata-form movement (exposition, development, recapitulation) and the four-movement layout of a complete sonata (sonata allegro, slow movement, scherzo, finale). In this he was undoubtedly influenced by Schubert, whose *Wanderer Fantasy* with a similar unified design he had recently arranged in a version for piano and orchestra.

Binding Liszt's sonata together is the process of *thematic transformation*, i.e., changing the character of musical themes while retaining their essential identity, their melodic outline. The multiple personalities of the *idée fixe* theme in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* is an early example, and Wagner's use of *leitmotif* is a later development of the same technique. So to follow what Liszt is doing in this sonata, you need to follow the four major themes he is shape-shifting as it proceeds.

The first three are spelled out on the first page of the score. The work opens with a pair of slow, descending scales of an exotic stamp. Then comes a forthright theme hammered out in double octaves beginning with a bold downward leap and ending with a diminished 7th arpeggio. Finally, the bass gruffly growls out a rascally little motive down low, rife with repeated notes.

The transformations begin immediately as these three themes spawn passage after varied passage of keyboard textures, all motivically interlinked, until a solemn, chorale-like fourth theme of slowly rising melody notes arrives over a pulsing carpet of sonorous chordal harmonies to complete the line-up.

In the course of this sonata the list of ‘transformations’ seems limitless. The gruff growling theme of repeated notes is transformed, among other things, into a dreamily delicious, Liebestraum-like lyrical melody in the ‘slow movement’ section. The bold theme in double octaves is tamed and brought to heel as the subject of an extended fugato in the following ‘scherzo’. And the chorale-like theme abandons its dignified ‘churchy’ solemnity and acquires major rhetorical muscle, elbowing its way into your eardrums as an important protagonist in the piece. Meanwhile, the slow descending scales that opened the work recur as boundary markers delineating major sectional divisions.

Liszt’s B minor Sonata is now recognized as one of the most important keyboard compositions of the 19th century, and the very complexity of its structuring—the quality that caused so much antipathy at its first publication—is now the chief reason it is so widely admired.

— *Donald G. Gíslason*

Funérailles

Among Liszt’s many revolutionary innovations was the symphonic poem, a one-movement orchestral piece based on a particular idea, theme or event. Both the title and the concept were Liszt’s own, and the symphonic poem was readily embraced by later composers including Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss and Sibelius: this was so-called programme music, as opposed to abstract or absolute music with no extra-musical subject.

Subtitled “October 1849”, the clear programmatic content of Funérailles relates to thirteen Hungarian generals who were executed in the unsuccessful uprising against Austrian Habsburg rule. The opening introduction features brutally clashing iron bells, building up to a trumpet fanfare. This is followed by a funeral march which magically migrates from the lachrymose minor to the more consoling major mode. The central section is a terrifying war march which gathers in speed and volume leading to a conclusion recapitulating all the themes in a series of musical twists and turns, before finally dying away in three low bass octaves.

The central section has often been compared to that of the famous Heroic Polonaise, op 53 by Chopin, who also died in 1849. It is worth recalling the comment Liszt famously made to a student who brought him the Polonaise to play: “Do I care how fast you can play your octaves!? What I wish to hear is the canter of the horses of the Polish cavalry before they gather force and destroy the enemy!”

— Robin Zebaida

Réminiscences de Don Juan S.418

The word “reminiscence,” so much less clinical than either “paraphrase” or “transcription,” suggests something personal - something subjective. The *Reminiscences of Don Juan* (Don Giovanni) of Mozart is far from a précis of the most popular of Mozart’s operas during the 19th century. It is instead an interpretation, even a portrayal, of the title character as seen by Liszt. And the result is anything but a condemnation of Don Juan’s licentious life. It is a celebration. Liszt opens with a depiction of Don Juan’s eventual confrontation with the flames of hell, sinister and eternal, but moves next to a recreation of Don Juan’s song of seduction in his duet with the peasant girl Zerlina, “Là ci darem la mano.” The duet is expanded and decorated in two variations before moving on to a rousing and climactic version of the famous “Champagne” aria - the lover’s happy anticipation of an evening of romantic conquests. Even a brief flicker of hellfire at the end cannot dampen the high spirits of this ultimate virtuoso romp, and we know for certain where Liszt’s sympathies lie.

— Grant Hiroshima

Throughout the work, the *Réminiscences* makes a great number of advanced technical demands on the pianist, among them passages in chromatic thirds, numerous tenths, and an instance of rapid leaps in both hands across almost the whole width of the keyboard that, in the words of Heinrich Neuhaus, “with the exception of Ginzburg, probably nobody but the pianola (player-piano) played without smudges.”

It is extremely technically demanding and considered to be among the most taxing of Liszt’s works and in the entire repertoire. For this reason, and perhaps also because of its length and dramatic intensity, it does not appear in concert programmes as often as Liszt’s lighter and more popular pieces, such as the *Rigoletto Paraphrase*. As Ferruccio Busoni says in the preface to his 1918 edition of the work, the *Réminiscences* carries “an almost symbolic significance as the highest point of pianism.” Liszt wrote the work in 1841 and published a two-piano version (S. 656) in 1877. The two-piano version bears a structurally strong resemblance to the original.

It was the final piece for Horowitz's graduation concert at the Kiev's conservatory; at the end all the professors stood up to express their approval. Horowitz, after claiming to Backhaus that the most difficult piano piece he ever played was Liszt's Feux-follets without hesitation, he added that *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is not an easy piece either. Horowitz had it in his concert programs, as well as the Liszt Sonata, which was not often played at the time, in his early years in Europe. Alexander Scriabin injured his right-hand over-practicing this piece and Balakirev's *Islamey* and wrote the funeral march of his first piano sonata in memory of his damaged hand.

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