

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

April 14, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Nenad Ivovic, piano

Lento and Presto for piano solo (2018)

Ivan Brkljačić
(b. 1977)

Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D.960 (1828)

Molto Moderato

Andante Sostenuto

Scherzo; Allegro vivace con delicatezza

Allegro, ma non troppo

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)

INTERMISSION

24 Preludes, Op.11 (1888-96)

No. 1 – C major – Vivace

No. 2 – A minor – Allegretto

No. 3 – G major – Vivo

No. 4 – E minor – Lento

No. 9 – E major – Andantino

No. 10 – C# minor – Andante

Alexander Scriabin
(1872–1915)

8 Etudes, Op. 42 (1903)

No. 5 – C# minor – Affannato

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Piano Sonata No.1 in C Major, Op. 1 (1853)

Allegro

Andante

Scherzo; Allegro molto e con fuoco

Finale; Allegro con fuoco

Johannes Brahms

(1833–97)

Notes on the Program

Ivan Brkljačić, born in 1977, is a distinguished composer from Serbia who currently holds the position of Vice Dean for Teaching at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. He is also a full-time professor at the Composition Department and has received recognition for his work on an international level, with performances of his compositions in countries such as Canada, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands, and the United States of America.

In 2018, two of his pieces, *Lento* and *Presto*, were published. Although they were published separately, they complement each other perfectly as a pair. *Lento* is a slow-tempo piece that successfully captures a mystical character, as suggested by its name. The piece reaches its culmination at bar 19, leading to a closure that maintains the same mystical atmosphere throughout. In contrast, *Presto* features a toccata-like character, serving as a great opposition to *Lento*. This piece is highly energetic and features 5/8 and 7/8 meters that are often found in Balkan musical traditions.

Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D.960, marks the very last composition written for piano solo, completed just six weeks before composer's death. This piece is often regarded as a trilogy with the two preceding piano sonatas (D.958/D.959), composed during the same period, due to their shared elements such as the cyclical use of themes, movement organization, and a chamber-quality style that closely resembles Schubert's vocal opus, such as *Winterreise*. The Sonata in B-flat Major consists of four movements, with the first being a long and expansive Allegro in sonata form. Schubert's compositional style of sonata form is noticeable in the three-key exposition, where the second theme acts as a mediant between the first and third themes, adhering to harmonic rules. The autobiographical quality of the piece is evident from the outset, as a rumbling trill on G-flat in the left hand disrupts the peaceful and lyrical theme of the right hand, leading to the remote F-sharp minor second theme.

Though it is not explicitly stated, I believe the second movement represents a funeral march. The sorrowful melody in the right hand is repeatedly accompanied by a haunting rhythmical pattern in the left hand. This ternary (ABA) movement is filled with distant keys and features a brilliant transition from C-sharp minor to the key of C major, ending with a modulation to the fragile key of C-sharp major, which marks the final key of the movement.

As often found in the four-movement literature, the Scherzo serves as the third movement. This brief and lively movement is also in ternary form and is often performed *attacca* with the fourth movement. The dance-like opening section has a unique harmonic pattern, with each appearance of thematic material found a fourth higher than the previous. The middle section of this movement has a somewhat heavy Bohemian character, with sudden left-hand accents interrupting the melody in the right hand.

The final movement of the sonata is in sonata-rondo form. It begins with a questioning octave on G, followed by a theme-answer in C minor. This opening theme has a joyful and dance-like quality that is repeated throughout the movement, with slight variations each time, injecting fresh energy. The second theme in this movement is derived from a C major section in the second movement, showcasing Schubert's mastery of cyclical compositional technique and bringing unity to the piece on multiple levels. The coda, the final section of the movement, brings a brief but joyful and glorious conclusion to the piece.

This sonata is a testament to Schubert's brilliance as a composer and his ability to express the full range of human emotions through music. The influence of Schubert's work, including this Sonata, will be of great significance to the younger generation of composers, including Johannes Brahms.

Preludes, Op.11 is a set of 24 short pieces for solo piano composed by Russian composer **Alexander Scriabin**. It was published in 1896 and marked an important point in Scriabin's development as a composer. These preludes showcase his unique style and serve as a precursor to his later opus. They were modeled after Frederic Chopin's *24 Preludes*, which employ all twenty-four major and minor keys, adhering to the same key sequence where major keys alternate with their relative minor keys, following the ascending circle of fifths. Each prelude is a miniature gem, exploring a variety of moods and tonalities. The range of emotions that Scriabin captures in these works is remarkable, from the serene and introspective to the explosive and virtuosic. Many of the preludes are characterized by their impressionistic harmonies and exotic scales, which reflect Scriabin's interest in mysticism and synesthesia. He believed that music had the power to evoke color and shape in the mind, and this idea is evident in the vivid imagery that these preludes conjure.

Comparing to the *Preludes* that represent an early style of composing, the ***Etudes, Op. 42*** are a real showcase of the Scriabin's more mature middle period, where we can witness a significant development towards the ultra-chromaticism and instability of the key center. Composed between 1903 and 1905, the eight etudes were published in 1905 and dedicated to the famous Russian pianist Josef Lhevinne. These etudes are known for their virtuosic demands and their harmonic complexity, featuring intricate rhythms and unusual chord progressions. The *Affannato* indication at the start of the 5th etude aptly captures the mood of the piece, which lacks any moments of repose. The melody introduced in the right hand, accompanied with thunderous arpeggios in the left, culminates in the central section of the composition. Through this etude, Scriabin exhibits his distinct voice as a composer and his impressive technical proficiency as a pianist.

Johannes Brahms' Piano Sonata No.1 in C Major is one of his most iconic pieces written for piano. Despite composing his second piano sonata first, Brahms chose to publish this one first due to his belief in its superior quality for initial presentation to the public. These two sonatas were the pieces that twenty-year-old Brahms introduced himself to Robert and Clara Schumann. A comment by Robert Schumann in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* that he can't wait for Brahms to start composing orchestral music proved to be correct, as with Sonata No.1, Brahms clearly positioned himself as the main successor of Ludwig van Beethoven in his orchestral approach of composing.

Written in 1853 during the height of the romantic period, this piece truly encapsulates the spirit of that period, blending complexity and virtuosity with melody and emotion. The structure of the piece consists of four movements: *Allegro maestoso*, *Andante*, *Scherzo: Allegro molto ed un poco maestoso* and *Rondo: Allegretto grazioso*.

The first movement is written in a sonata form, and it seems that Brahms purposely quotes the opening bars of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata. The opening first theme begins with a sound of triumph, evidently resembling a rich orchestral sound that is followed by the lyrical and passionate second theme. These two themes are developed throughout as both harmony and melody take turns leading the way to create a powerful musical journey. This movement is characterized by its impressive colorization of orchestral instruments, such as the horn sound in the lower voice of the second theme.

The second movement is a theme and variations. The young composer even wrote the lyrics of the song below notes of the main theme, that this movement was inspired by. Later, in 1859, Brahms composed a song for female chorus on the same music and text. In this relatively short movement, we can hear a clear dialogue between a soloist and choir. The last variation is written in a major key, leading to a sublime ending of this movement, that serves as a spiritual transition for the following two movements.

*Verstohlen geht der Mond auf.
Blau, blau Blümelein!
Durch Silberwölkchen führt sein Lauf.
Blau, blau Blümelein!
Rosen im Tal,
Mädel im Saal,
O schönste Rosa!*

Translation:

Stealthily rises the moon.
Blue, blue flower!
Through silver cloudlets makes its way.
Blue, blue flower!
Roses in the dale,
Maiden in the hall,
O handsomest Rosa!

The Scherzo form of the third movement brings back the sense of intensity once more yet retains a playful nature with its lively rhythms. After the dynamic opening of this movement, the middle part of this ternary form (ABA) brings a lyrical, aria-like melody, that creates a significant contrast to the opening.

Finally, the fourth movement, played *attacca* after the third, brings a triumphant and glorious ending to this Sonata. It is written in a Rondo form, creating a palindrome structure of ABACACABA. This movement, together with the previous one, contains complex orchestration and virtuosic passages that challenge the performer, creating an emotionally and technically demanding musical journey.

About the Artist

At the age of four, **Nenad Iovic** began his musical training at the Music School “Mokranjac” with Prof. Milica Vasiljević Bisenić. He completed his bachelor's degree with distinction at the Belgrade University of Arts under the tutelage of Prof. Nevena Popović at the age of nineteen. Nenad has received recognition for his outstanding musical abilities throughout his career, winning numerous awards at both domestic and international competitions. These include first prize at the Step Towards Mastery competition in Saint Petersburg, second prize at the Arianne Katcz competition in Tel Aviv, and third prize at the Jacob Flier competition in New York.

In 2015, Nenad earned his Master of Music Degree from Tel Aviv University while studying with Prof. Emanuel Krasovsky. He has had the honor of collaborating with renowned musicians such as Andras Schiff, Emanuel Ax, Augustin Hadelich, Dmitri Bashkirov, Emerson Quartet, Mikhail Voskresensky, Joseph Kalihstein, Alexander Toradze, Tatiana Zelikman, and Peter Serkin, among others.

In May 2019, Nenad completed his Master of Musical Arts degree at Yale University, guided by Prof. Boris Berman. After graduation, he continued working at Yale School of Music as a collaborative pianist and chamber music coach. As of September 2022, Nenad has begun pursuing his doctoral degree at the City University of New York Graduate Center, with the guidance of Prof. Julian Martin.