

Sunday, May 4, 2008, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Paul Lewis, *piano*

PROGRAM

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Fantasy in C minor, K. 475 (1784)
Adagio — Allegro — Andantino —
Più Allegro — Tempo primo
- György Ligeti (1923–2006) Musica Ricercata (1951–1953)
Sostenuto — Misurato, stringendo poco a poco
sin al prestissimo
Mesto, rigido e cerimoniale
Allegro con spirito
Tempo di valse (poco vivace — “à l’orgue
de Barbarie”)
Rubato, lamentoso
Allegro molto capriccioso
Cantabile, molto legato
Vivace, energico
Adagio, mesto (Béla Bartók in memoriam)
Vivace, capriccioso
Andante misurato e tranquillo (Omaggio a
Girolamo Frescobaldi)
- Mozart Rondo in A minor, K. 511 (1787)

INTERMISSION



Harmonia Mundi & Eric Mannas

- Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 78 (D. 894) (1826)
Molto moderato e cantabile
Andante
Menuetto: Allegro moderato
Allegretto

This performance is made possible, in part, through the generosity of Lynn and Donald A. Glaser.

Cal Performances' 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Fantasia in C minor, K. 475

Composed in 1784.

Throughout Mozart's career, there was an undercurrent in his works of a particularly probing sort of expression, one very different from the rococo charm and surface prettiness of the vast bulk of late-18th-century music. As early as 1771, his overture to the oratorio *La Betulia liberata* (K. 118) was cast in a solemn minor mode. In 1773, when he was 17, the unexpected expressive elements that pierced the customary *galanterie* of his opera *Lucio Silla* so disturbed and puzzled Milanese audiences that his earlier popularity in Italy began to wane and he never returned to that country. Later that same year, he visited Vienna and learned of the new, passionate, Romantic sensibility—the so-called *Sturm und Drang* (“Storm and Stress”)—which was then infusing the music of some of the best German and Austrian composers, including Joseph Haydn. When Mozart returned home to Salzburg in September, he wrote his stormy “Little” G minor Symphony (K. 183).

As Mozart reached his full maturity in the years after arriving in Vienna in 1781, his most expressive manner of writing, whose chief evidences are the use of minor modes, chromaticism, rich counterpoint and thorough thematic development, appeared in his compositions with increasing frequency. It had regularly been evident in the slow movements of his piano concertos, but in 1785 he actually dared to compose an entire work (the Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466) in a minor key. At that same time, perhaps the most productive period of his life (12 of his last 14 piano concertos were written between 1784 and 1786), Mozart created a series of three piano works cast in the tragic key of C minor—the Sonata, K. 457, completed on October 14, 1784; the Fantasy, K. 475, May 20, 1785; and the Concerto No. 24, K. 491, April 1786. The Fantasy and Sonata were published together in a single volume by Artaria in December 1785 with a dedication to Therese von Trattner, the composer's 23-year-old piano student who was the second wife of the 64-year-old court printer and publisher, Johann Thomas von Trattner. Mozart

was close to the Trattners during that time, and he hired the ballroom of their palace in Vienna to present his Lenten concerts of 1784. He sent Frau von Trattner a series of letters concerning the proper execution of the Fantasy and Sonata, but these missives have unfortunately been lost (or destroyed—speculation has it that the letters may have referred to some delicate personal matters that associates and family of neither the lady nor the composer wished to have revealed); Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein said that if they ever turn up, the letters would be among “the most important documents of Mozart's aesthetic practice.”

The Fantasy in C minor consists of five large structural paragraphs played continuously—a portentous opening *Adagio* that is brought back at the end to round out the work; an unsettled *Allegro*; a cautious *Andantino*; a tempestuous *Più Allegro*; and the closing *Adagio*. Einstein believed that this tiny anthology of inchoate movements “gives us the truest picture of Mozart's mighty powers of improvisation—his ability to indulge in the greatest freedom and boldness of imagination, the most extreme contrast of ideas, the most uninhibited variety of lyric and virtuoso elements, while yet preserving structural logic.” (Beethoven's extraordinary Fantasy in G minor, Op. 77, similarly opens a rare window onto that composer's method of improvisation.)

György Ligeti (1923–2006) *Musica Ricercata*

Composed in 1951–1953.

György Ligeti, one of music's greatest modern masters, was born on May 28, 1923, to a Jewish family in the then-Hungarian province of Transylvania. He studied composition at the conservatory in his boyhood home of Kolozsvár during the early years of World War II, when he also managed to take some private lessons in Budapest with the noted Hungarian pianist and composer Pál Kadosa. In 1944, however, Ligeti, with many other Jews, was pressed by the Nazis into forced labor in dangerous situations, including working in a munitions dump just in front of the Russian advance. After the

war, Ligeti continued his studies at the Budapest Academy of Music. He pursued field research in Rumanian folk music for a short time following his graduation in 1949, but returned to the Budapest Academy a year later, when he was appointed professor of harmony, counterpoint and analysis. He fled Hungary in the wake of the Russian occupation of 1956, and settled in Vienna, where he met several important figures of the musical avant-garde, most notably Karlheinz Stockhausen; Ligeti became a naturalized Austrian citizen in 1967. In 1957, he was invited to work at the West German Radio in Cologne, where he again took up several modernistic compositions in daring idioms that he had had to put aside because of the repressive political situation in Hungary. He achieved his first wide recognition when his *Apparitions* was performed at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Cologne in 1960. Ligeti continued to compose prolifically while teaching at the Darmstadt Contemporary Music Summer Courses, Stockholm Academy of Music, Stanford University, Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood and Hamburg Musikhochschule. He was elected to membership in the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, West Berlin Academy of Arts and Hamburg Free Academy of Arts, and received the Bach Prize of the City of Hamburg and the German decoration *Pour le mérite*. He died in Vienna on June 12, 2006.

Ligeti's works include compositions for orchestra, voices, chamber ensembles, organ, piano, theater, electronics (though his music after 1958 was written only for live performance) and one experimental piece for 100 metronomes. He achieved his widest audience when Stanley Kubrick used excerpts from his *Lux aeterna*, *Requiem* and *Atmosphères* to stunning effect in his 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Ligeti's music ranges in style from his early flirtations with folk music, Bartók and post-Webern serialism, through the meterless, blurred chromatic “clouds” of soft, densely packed chords of *Lux aeterna* and *Atmosphères* and the minimalistic repetitions of several ostinato-based works of the 1960s and 1970s, to the more traditional pieces of his later years, which incorporate the influence of non-European music while embracing his Hungarian heritage. Ligeti summa-

rized his creative philosophy: “My most basic aim as a composer is the revivification of the sonorous aspect of musical form. Those factors of contemporary composition that do not manifest themselves directly as acoustical experience seem to me only of secondary importance. However, this emphatically does not mean that I intend to limit myself to the invention of new tone colors or other sound-phenomena. It is much more important to me to discover new musical forms and a new manner of expression.”

Ligeti wrote, “*Musica Ricercata* is a youthful work [1951–1953] from Budapest, still deeply influenced by Bartók and Stravinsky. The first piece contains only two pitches (along with their octave transpositions); the second, three tones; and so on, so that the eleventh piece (a monotonous fugue) uses all twelve pitches.” *Musica Ricercata*—the word comes from the Italian “*ricercar*,” meaning “to research, investigate” (the early Baroque genre of the *ricercar*, an elaborately imitative “investigation” of a theme, was the immediate predecessor of the fugue)—encompasses a wide variety of musical styles and techniques in its eleven miniatures, from jazz to fugue, dance to meditation. Ligeti rightly claimed that the first movement (*Sostenuto—Misurato, stringendo poco a poco sin al prestissimo*) uses two pitches, but the second (D) is heard only at the very end after an increasingly frenzied build-up on the note A splayed across the entire keyboard. (The pitches A–D, of course, are the skeleton of music's fundamental dominant–tonic cadential chord progression, so the entire piece, when viewed from the end, becomes a kind of giant three-minute preparation for the harmonic resolution implied by its final gesture.) The second movement (*Mesto [sad], rigido e cerimoniale*) is a solemn incantation built from two adjacent pitches through which are sounded sonorous bell-tones on a third pitch. The four pitches used in the motoric third movement (*Allegro con spirito*) outline conflicting C major and C minor chords (C, E-flat/E-natural, G), giving the music a drive and insouciance reminiscent of Prokofiev. The waltz of the fourth movement, wistful but a little cockeyed in melody and rhythm, is Ligeti's evocation of the *orgue de Barbarie*, a barrel organ invented by Giovanni Barberi of Modena around 1700 traditionally heard in the streets and

circuses of Italy and France. (Cirque de Soleil uses an *orgue de Barbarie* in its spectacular Las Vegas show, *O*.) No. 5 (*Rubato, lamentoso*) is a stern peasant lament. The sixth movement (*Allegro molto capriccioso*) exudes a pentatonic orientalism. No. 7 (*Cantabile, molto legato*) is a remarkable construction in which a dreamy melody, given first alone and then as a duet and a trio, is floated upon a ceaseless but rhythmically unrelated murmuring accompaniment. No. 8 (*Vivace, energico*), with its driving (though irregular) rhythms, tightly compacted melody and repeated phrases, traces its idiom to Eastern European folk dance. The bell tones, mixed modes and harmonic acerbity of No. 9 (*Adagio, mesto*) make it a fitting memorial to Béla Bartók. No. 10 (*Vivace, capriccioso*) is made caustic and a little sinister by its crushed dissonances and febrile intensity. Ligeti wrote that the final movement (*Andante misurato e tranquillo*), a fugue on a relentlessly chromatic subject written in homage to the early–17th-century Italian organist and composer Girolamo Frescobaldi, “is a severe, almost noble piece, hovering between academic orthodoxy and deep reflection, between gravity and caricature.”

Mozart

Rondo in A minor, K. 511

Composed in 1787.

The Marriage of Figaro played in Prague for the first time in December of 1786—it was a smash hit. When Mozart visited the city the following month for further performances of the opera, he reported that “here they talk about nothing but *Figaro*. Nothing is played, sung or whistled but *Figaro*. No opera is drawing like *Figaro*. Nothing, nothing but *Figaro*.” On the strength of this success, Pasquale Bondini, the manager of Italian opera at Prague’s National Theater and the local producer of *Figaro*, commissioned Mozart to write a new piece for the considerable sum of 100 ducats, equal to 12.1 ounces of gold bullion. As soon as Mozart returned to Vienna in February, he asked Lorenzo da Ponte, author of the masterful libretto for *Figaro*, to provide the book for the new opera, and they settled

on the subject of Don Juan for their next venture together. *Don Giovanni* was successfully premiered on October 29, 1787 in Prague. Though the new opera dominated Mozart’s work schedule throughout the spring and summer of the year, he found time during those months to write two string quintets (K. 515, 516), a violin sonata (K. 526), the immortal *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (K. 525), and a number of smaller pieces, including the Rondo in A minor, K. 511. He entered the Rondo into his catalog on March 11, 1787, soon after returning to Vienna from Prague. The piece may have been intended for a concert given by the oboist Friedrich Ramm at the Kärntnertor Theater three days later on which Mozart directed one of his symphonies (which is unknown) and presented an aria with his sister-in-law and old flame, the soprano Aloysia Lange. The new Rondo may well have been included in the evening’s entertainment. The piece was published by Hoffmeister later that year.

With the ruminative chromaticism of its principal theme, the quietly gentle melancholy of its emotional personality and the chiaroscuro of its fluctuating tonalities, the A minor Rondo exemplifies the most sophisticated expressive manner of Mozart’s later years. The work has evoked from commentators prescient comparisons with the piano music of Chopin and Schubert for its harmonic daring and thoughtful intimacy, though, as always with Mozart, its structure and mood are never allowed to rupture the dictates of rigorous musical logic—Mozart regarded the most precious quality in any music as what he called “good taste.” Arthur Hutchings, perhaps, hit upon the essence of this haunting miniature when he wrote, “The player finds himself lingering over it and wishing that it were longer.”

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Sonata in G major, Op. 78 (D. 894)

Composed in 1826.

On January 31, 1827, Franz Schubert turned 30. He had been following a bohemian existence in Vienna for over a decade, making barely more than a pittance from the sale and performance of

his works and living largely by the generosity of his friends, a devoted band of music-lovers who rallied around his convivial personality and exceptional talent. The pattern of Schubert’s daily life was firmly established by that time: composition in the morning; long walks or visits in the afternoon; companionship for wine and song in the evening. The routine was broken by occasional trips into the countryside to stay with friends or families of friends. A curious dichotomy marked Schubert’s personality during those final years of his life, one which suited well the Romantic image of the inspired artist, rapt out of quotidian experience to carry back to benighted humanity some transcendent vision. “Anyone who had seen him only in the morning, in the throes of composition, his eyes shining, speaking, even, another language, will never forget it—though in the afternoon, to be sure, he became another person,” recorded one friend. The duality in Schubert’s character was reflected in the sharp swings of mood marking both his psychological makeup and his creative work. “If there were times, both in his social relationships and his art, when the Austrian character appeared all too violently in the vigorous and pleasure-loving Schubert,” wrote his friend the dramatist Eduard von Bauernfeld, “there were also times when a black-winged demon of sorrow and melancholy forced its way into his vicinity; not altogether an evil spirit, it is true, since, in the dark concentrated hours, it often brought out songs of the most agonizing beauty.” The ability to mirror his own fluctuating feelings in his compositions—the darkening cloud momentarily obscuring the bright sunlight—is one of Schubert’s most remarkable and characteristic achievements, and touches indelibly the incomparable series of works—*Winterreise*, the “Great” C major Symphony, the late Piano Sonatas, the String Quintet, the two Piano Trios, the *Impromptus*—that he created during the last months of his brief life.

Robert Schumann called the Piano Sonata in G major (D. 894), completed in October 1826, “Schubert’s most perfect work, in both form and conception.” The score was published in April 1827 as Schubert’s Op. 78 by the Viennese firm of Tobias

Haslinger with a dedication to Joseph von Spaun, a fellow student of Schubert at the School of the Court Chapel in Vienna who became a life-long friend, supporter and frequent host of the convivial “Schubertiads” at which the composer’s friends assembled to partake of the latest blossoms of his creativity. Kathleen Dale noted several essential stylistic elements of Schubert’s piano sonatas: “For him, sheer beauty of sound was an end in itself, and whatever his sonatas may lack in constructional strength, they gain in sublimity of tonal range, in graciousness of melody, in the unusual variety of rhythmical schemes and in the exquisite beauty of the pianoforte writing. In his own treatment of form, Schubert showed great ingenuity and originality, as the analyst of his sonatas soon discovers—possibly to his surprise; certainly to his delight.”

Unlike Beethoven, Schubert made no attempt to redefine the Classical four-movement sonata structure in his music, but sought rather to expand the genre’s emotional scope through greater lyricism and more far-flung harmonic peregrinations, qualities much in evidence in the G major Sonata. The Sonata’s opening statement is floating, ethereal and luminous, a Schubertian counterpart to the rapt timelessness of some of Beethoven’s finest slow movements. The music takes on a greater urgency as its sonata form unfolds, mounting to moments of high drama in the development section, but reasserting its abiding halcyon state with the recapitulation. The *Andante*, evidence that Schubert had perfected a sublime melding of his vocal and instrumental gifts by his 29th year, is an extended song without words in alternating stanzas: A–B–A–B–A. The *Menuetto*, actually a vigorous Austrian *Ländler* rather than a descendent of the courtly 18th-century dance, is a reminder that Schubert wrote more practical dance pieces for the piano—over 400—than any other species of composition, save only solo songs. The finale is a spacious rondo of sun-dappled geniality.

© 2008 Dr. Richard E. Rodda

About the Artist

Pianist **Paul Lewis** is one of the most sought-after artists of his generation, appearing regularly at the world's major musical venues and festivals. He studied with Ryszard Bakst at Chetham's School of Music and Joan Havill at the Guildhall in London, after which he received regular coaching from Alfred Brendel. After many competition successes, including the 1994 London International Piano Competition, he was selected for the BBC's inaugural "New Generation" artist scheme, and was chosen by the Wigmore Hall for the European Concert Halls Organization's "Rising Stars" scheme. His highly acclaimed Schubert piano sonata series, presented at venues throughout the United Kingdom, including the Wigmore Hall, won him both the South Bank Show Classical Music Award, and the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year Award in 2003, and his recordings for Harmonia Mundi have won many international awards, including two successive Edison awards in Holland in 2004 and 2005. More recently, he was awarded the 25th Premio Internazionale Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena. Following from the success of his Schubert sonata series, in 2007 Mr. Lewis performed the complete cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas at venues across Europe and the United States.

His recent schedule has included recital and concerto debuts throughout Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia. He has also appeared regularly at the BBC Proms, including the televised *Last Night* in 2005, and at both the Cheltenham and the Edinburgh festivals, the Schubertiade Festival in Schwarzenberg, the Roque d'Antheron Festival, and both the Risor and Vancouver chamber music festivals. He has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony, Vienna Symphony, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, The Hallé, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony, BBC Symphony, Wiener Kammerphilharmonie, Melbourne Symphony,

Sydney Symphony and Seattle Symphony, under such conductors as Bernard Haitink, Christoph von Dohnányi, Mark Elder, Sir Charles Mackerras, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Marin Alsop, Ivor Bolton, Richard Hickox, Emmanuel Krivine, Joseph Swensen, Vassily Sinaisky and Gerard Schwarz. As a much sought-after chamber musician, he has performed with Ernst Kovacic, Adrian Brendel, Steven Osborne, the Sine Nomine Quartet and the Leopold String Trio.

In addition to his Beethoven sonata series, the last two seasons also included concerts with the London Symphony under Haitink, the London Philharmonic, Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos with Till Fellner at the 2006 BBC Proms, and a nationwide recital tour of Australia for Musica Viva. This season, Mr. Lewis opened the 2007 Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, performed in New York and Chicago with the London Symphony and Sir Colin Davis, toured Europe with the Bournemouth Symphony and Alsop, began a complete Beethoven concerto cycle in Liverpool, performed with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León in Spain, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Collegium Musicum Copenhagen, gave recitals in the United States, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Sweden and Japan, toured with the Leopold String Trio, and performed Lieder in concert with Mark Padmore.

Paul Lewis's recordings for Harmonia Mundi include two Schubert CDs, the first winning a Diapason d'Or Choc de l'Année in France in 2002, and the second won the 2004 Edison Instrumentalist Award in Holland. His third Harmonia Mundi disc, featuring the Liszt sonata, also won the Edison Instrumentalist Award in 2005. The first CD of his complete series of Beethoven sonatas was released in September 2005, and the second volume, a triple-CD box set, in October 2006. The final two triple box sets will be released during the 2007–2008 season. He has also recorded both Mozart Piano Quartets and Schubert's "Trout" Quintet with the Leopold String Trio for Hyperion Records.