



Candlelight Concert Society Presents

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN, PIANO

Saturday, October 29, 2022, 7:30 pm
Earl and Darielle Linehan Concert Hall
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

This performance is sponsored by Gerald & Françoise von Mayer

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106 “Hammerklavier”

- I. Allegro*
- II. Scherzo: Assai vivace*
- III. Adagio sostenuto*
- IV. Introduzione: Largo - Fuga: Allegro risoluto*

Intermission

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)

- Barcarolle No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 26**
- Nocturne No. 2 in B Major, Op. 33**
- Nocturne No. 12 in E Minor, Op. 107**
- Barcarolle No. 6 in E-flat Major, Op. 70**

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN (b. 1961)

Suite à l'ancienne (2020)

- I. Prélude*
- II. Allemande*
- III. Corrente*
- IV. Air avec agréments*
- V. Gavotte et musette*
- VI. Gigue*

Marc-André Hamelin appears by arrangement with Colbert Artists.

PROGRAM NOTES

PIANO SONATA NO. 29 IN B-FLAT MAJOR “HAMMERKLAVIER”

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)



Described by pianist Ashish Kumar as a “weird, titanic, gnarled, joyous, grief-stricken monster,” **Ludwig van Beethoven’s** twenty-ninth piano sonata is the most exhaustively developed and technically difficult solo work of his late period. Composed in 1817-1818, its technical demands were so far beyond anything that had

been written up to that point that no pianist dared to perform it in public until Franz Liszt finally did so in 1836. Beethoven made a special point of his intention that this work should be played on the *Hammerklavier*, known to English-speakers as the fortepiano, which implies that some performers were still playing his sonatas on the harpsichord in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

From the outset, the innovative nature of the sonata is evident. The opening movement is relentless in its complexity and chromatic harmony. Once he has stated the opening theme, the composer is off to explore all the keys at his disposal, even those that are only distantly related to the tonic, B-flat Major.

The second movement is a *scherzo*, lighter in texture than the opening *Allegro*, but certainly no less intense. Here the predominance of thirds, major and minor, that serve as building blocks for the entire sonata, is easier to discern than it was in the first movement. Here also Beethoven introduces seemingly random chromatic surprises, including an interjection of a tremolo on a diminished ninth chord at the end of the trio section and a surprising insistence near the end on the note just above the tonic (B natural) which leads the way to a final cadence in the unexpected key of D major.

With the third movement, marked *appassionato e con molto sentimento* (passionately and with great sentimentality), Beethoven produced the longest single solo piano movement ever written up to his time. He included in the score the metronome marking for 92 eighth notes per minute, which results in a 12-minute performance

time. Most contemporary performers play the movement more slowly, with recorded versions ranging from 16 to 25 minutes in length. The key, F-sharp minor, is also an innovation, as it is about as far removed from the home key of the sonata (B-flat major) as one can go. In the course of the movement, modulations take us to D major, E-flat major, and F-sharp major, the key in which it ends. In its prolonged melancholy, the movement has been identified as a precursor of late romantic music.

As the fourth and final movement begins, the slow motion and shifting modulations that marked the third movement continue. Beethoven takes the listener through an extended *largo* introduction that moves from D-flat major to B-flat minor to G-flat major to E-flat minor to B major to G-sharp minor to A major, finally transitioning to B-flat major, the key in which the sonata began. Once the home key is established, the composer introduces a fugue in three voices, and the number three becomes important as the interval of the third was in the earlier movements. The fugue is in 3/4 time, and the subject has three parts. The initial motif of the subject, an upward leap of a tenth, is actually a third stretched by an octave, and the descending scales that follow repeat at intervals of a third. Even though Beethoven was applying sophisticated contrapuntal skill to the movement, utilizing such devices as augmentation, stretto, and retrograde inversion, there is no lack of passion and excitement here. After a quiet middle section, in which exquisite calm prevails as all three voices proceed in steady quarter notes, the previous motifs return with increased vigor and intensity, enhanced by octaves and double trills. Even this final section, however, has the dramatic pullbacks to softer dynamic levels that have kept the listeners on the edge of their seats throughout the sonata.

BARCAROLLE NO. 1 IN A MINOR, OP. 26
NOCTURNE NO. 2 IN B MAJOR, OP. 33
NOCTURNE NO. 12 IN E MINOR, OP. 107
BARCAROLLE NO. 6 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 70
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Gabriel Fauré occupied a unique place in music history. As a young man, he encountered as new music the full flourish of the Romantic period, drawing inspiration from the music of Richard Wagner, Johannes Brahms, and Hector Berlioz. In his middle years, Fauré provided inspiration for the likes of Ravel and Debussy, and in his late years he encouraged his pupils and protégées to keep an open mind toward the avant-garde of the



time, when composers such as Stravinsky and Scriabin were rocking the musical boat in Paris. Fauré received his early musical training in a very conservative environment (the Niedermeyer School in Paris), where the curriculum focused on plainsong, counterpoint, and church music of the eighteenth

and very early nineteenth centuries. At that time, even the music of Schumann was considered too modern to be worthy of study. This conservatism shaped Fauré's stylistic, formal, and harmonic choices for the first two-thirds of his compositional career. Like many of his contemporaries, however, he was deeply influenced by symbolist poetry, with its fascination with mood and color and its timelessness.

Fauré published his nocturnes and barcarolles in sets at various times throughout his career, with changes in style occurring as time went on. The pieces from his youthful years are uncomplicated and charming, but the ones from his middle years are enigmatic—some fiery and turbulent, some deeply introspective. In keeping with a tradition established by Mendelssohn and Chopin, Fauré uses 6/8 meter for the barcarolle to call to mind the songs of Venetian gondoliers, whose folk songs were presumed to be shaped by the rocking motion of their boats. In *Barcarolle No. 1 in A Minor*, the rocking motion that is inherent in the rhythm is emphasized by the wavelike upward and downward movement of the opening melody, continued later in the accompaniment. The piece features a contrasting but equally aquatic middle section in the relative major key (C major). The 6/8 meter and a wavelike accompaniment motif are used to the same effect in *Barcarolle No. 6 in E-flat Major*, but here there is much more melodic development than in the earlier barcarolle. Fauré embellishes the melody with runs, arpeggios, and chords, creating a uniquely pianistic texture.

Nocturnes in their original form, as established by the Irish composer John Field (1782-1837), are recognizable by their consistent presentation of a lyrical soprano melody above a left-hand accompaniment and a calm atmosphere. Fauré acknowledges the genre as he begins both of the nocturnes in this program, although his cantabile melodies are duets, rather than solo lines. But each nocturne soon gives way to the texture and complexity of a romantic essay for the piano. Indeed, both

evolve into what might better be described as toccatas that begin and end in the manner of a nocturne.

Notes on Beethoven and Fauré by Stephen Ackert

SUITE À L'ANCIENNE

Marc-André Hamelin (b. 1961)



Translating to “Suite in the old style,” *Suite à l'ancienne* was commissioned by the pianist Rachel Naomi Kudo and completed in 2020. Kudo requested a piece inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach, to which **Marc-André Hamelin** responded with a six-movement, Baroque dance suite. Written in the key

of A Major/Minor, the work is entirely tonal, but the harmonic language is much more involved and chromatic than what might be found in the works of Bach.

The opening *Préambule* offers an impressive and ear-catching display of skill, utilizing the entire piano's range in a thunderous, yet free and improvisatory manner. It is followed by a softer and more delicate *Allemande*, only to be contrasted again by a light yet rhythmically relentless *Courante*. The fourth movement is a *sarabande*, though it carries the title “*Air avec agréments*” (Air with ornaments), to emphasize the movement's highly ornamented yet delicate composition.

The following two movements, *Gavotte* and *Musette*, embody a highly contrasting pair: “a sly, sneaky, and discreet *Gavotte* in A minor, [... and] a pearlescent *Musette* in A major, where the left hand drones in open intervals and the right hand invents overhead in coloristic and chromatic wisps,” as Kudo describes it. Finally, the closing *Gigue* is spirited with a healthy dose of humor. In the score, Hamelin indicates: “Woah, this floor's too slippery—let's go jig somewhere else,” bringing the suite to a grand and brilliant conclusion.

Note by Mira Fu-En Huang

TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN, PIANO



"A performer of near-superhuman technical prowess"

The New York Times

Pianist **Marc-André Hamelin** is known worldwide for his unrivaled blend of consummate musicianship and brilliant technique in the great works of the established repertoire, as well as for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. He regularly performs around the globe with the leading orchestras and conductors of our time, and gives recitals at major concert venues and festivals worldwide.

Highlights of Mr. Hamelin's 2022-2023 season include a vast variety of repertoire performed with the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall (Piano Quintets by Florence Price and Brahms), Berlin Philharmonic and Marek Janowski (Reger's Piano Concerto), San Diego Symphony and Rafael Payare (Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2), Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Gustavo Gimeno (Messiaen's *Turangalîla-Symphonie*), Netherlands Philharmonic and Joshua Weilerstein (Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*), and Symphony Nova Scotia and Holly Mathieson (Grieg's Piano Concerto). Recital appearances take Mr. Hamelin to Vienna, Chicago, Toronto, Montréal, Napa Valley, São Paulo, and Bogotá, among other venues across the world.

The summer of 2022 included performances at many festivals including Caramoor with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Tanglewood, Domaine Forget, La Jolla,

Schubertiade, and Festival International Piano.

Mr. Hamelin is an exclusive recording artist for Hyperion Records, where his discography spans more than 70 albums, with notable recordings of a broad range of solo, orchestral, and chamber repertoire. In January 2022, the label released a two-disc set of C. P. E. Bach's sonatas and rondos that received wide critical acclaim and in June 2022, Hyperion released the two-disc set of William Bolcom's *The Complete Rags*.

Mr. Hamelin has composed music throughout his career, with over 30 compositions to his name. The majority of those works—including the *Études* and *Tocatta* on "*L'homme armé*," commissioned by the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition—are published by Edition Peters. His most recent work, his Piano Quintet, was premiered in August 2022 by himself and the celebrated Dover Quartet at La Jolla Music Society.

Mr. Hamelin makes his home in the Boston area with his wife, Cathy Fuller, a producer and host at Classical WCRB. Born in Montreal, he is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the German Record Critics' Association, and has received seven Juno Awards and 11 Grammy nominations, and the 2018 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. In December 2020, he was awarded the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award for Keyboard Artistry from the Ontario Arts Foundation. Mr. Hamelin is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a *Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec*, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

Please...

- **In the event of an emergency**, note at least two exits, especially your nearest exit, which might be behind you. Walk, do not run, and calmly evacuate the concert hall.
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, and watch alarms.
- Do not use cameras or electronic recording devices during Candlelight Concert productions.
- Unwrap cough drops or mints before the concert begins.