

1 From Bach

1–3 **Concerto for Two Pianos in C Major, BWV 1061**

(1732–1735)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Allegro 6:53

Adagio 4:51

Vivace: Fuga 5:28

DEREK HAN, GLORIA CHIEN, *pianos*; ARNAUD SUSSMANN,
SOOVIN KIM, SEAN LEE, KRISTIN LEE, *violins*; SUNMI CHANG,
MARK HOLLOWAY, *violas*; LAURENCE LESSER, DAVID FINCKEL, *cellos*;
SCOTT PINGEL, *bass*

4 **Rondo in A Major for Piano, Four Hands, op. 107, D. 951**

(1828) 11:49

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

DEREK HAN, HYEYEON PARK, *piano*

5 **Andante and Variations for Two Pianos, Two Cellos, and Horn, op. 46** (1843) 19:48

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

DEREK HAN, GLORIA CHIEN, *pianos*; DAVID FINCKEL,

LAURENCE LESSER, *cellos*; KEVIN RIVARD, *horn*

6–8 **Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, BB 115** (1937)

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Assai lento – Allegro molto 13:43

Lento ma non troppo 6:10

Allegro ma non troppo 7:14

WU HAN, GILBERT KALISH, *pianos*; CHRISTOPHER FROH,
IAN ROSENBAUM, *percussion*

Recorded July 19, 2013, The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton. Recording producer and engineer: Da-Hong Seetoo. Steinway grand pianos provided courtesy of ProPiano. Cover art: *Imprint*, 2006, by Sebastian Spreng. Photos by Tristan Cook, Diana Lake, and Brian Benton. Liner notes by Patrick Castillo, Andrew Goldstein, and Dr. Richard E. Rodda. Booklet design by Nick Stone. CD production: Jerome Bunke, Digital Force, New York. Production Assistant: Andrew Goldstein. Music@Menlo 2013 was made possible in part by a leadership grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation with additional support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Koret Foundation Funds. American Public Media was the official radio and new-media broadcast partner of Music@Menlo 2013.

Music@Menlo *LIVE*

1 From Bach



BACH | Concerto for Two Pianos

SCHUBERT | Rondo in A Major, D. 951

SCHUMANN | Andante and Variations

BARTÓK | Sonata for Two Pianos
and Percussion

1 From Bach

Music@Menlo's eleventh season, *From Bach*, celebrated the timeless work of Johann Sebastian Bach, the composer whose profound legacy has shaped Western music over the two and a half centuries since his death. Each disc of the 2013 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE* captures the spirit of the season.

Johann Sebastian Bach was lauded in his own lifetime as a virtuoso organist, and his impeccable writing for keyboard distinguishes such masterpieces as his Concerto for Two Harpsichords. Schubert's Rondo in A Major coaxes orchestral immensity from one keyboard, and Schumann's Andante and Variations likewise exploits an alchemical ensemble of two pianos, two cellos, and horn to ravishing effect. Bartók's pathbreaking Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion displays Bach's tangible influence in the twentieth century.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Concerto for Two Pianos in C Major, BWV 1061 (1732–1735)

In the time leading up to Bach's life, the harpsichord had been utilized either to provide continuo or as an unaccompanied solo instrument. With its penetrating tone, Bach reimagined the harpsichord as a solo concerto instrument and transcribed fourteen of his concerti for other instruments, such as oboe or violin, for harpsichord. Of these fourteen, scholars believe the Concerto for Two Harpsichords in C Major is the only one originally intended for harpsichord from its genesis. It is presumed that the concerto was written during Bach's Cöthen period and revised in 1734. Scholars surmise various possible reasons behind Bach's exploration of writing for two harpsichords—the most unanimously held proposition being



Johann Sebastian Bach's Concerto for Two Pianos in C Major, BWV 1061. F-B: Gloria Chien and Derek Han.

that such a work as the C Major Concerto was to be performed by him or his two sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel, both of whom were avid harpsichordists. Bach wrote the Concerto for Two Harpsichords in such a fashion that each harpsichord is uniform in tone and timbre, with the two players constantly changing the roles of tutti and soli. Rather than anticipating conflict between the two players, the duo works harmoniously in presenting a brilliant, celebratory declaration. The first movement, a festive three-part *concertante*, exemplifies this intricate yet full-bodied relationship between the two harpsichords. The keyboards are supported by the string accompaniment, which remains separated from the harpsichord dialog throughout the work.

—Andrew Goldstein

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Rondo in A Major for Piano, Four Hands, op. 107, D. 951 (1828)

The Rondo in A Major for Piano, Four Hands, (also known as the “Grand Rondeau”) is one of three outstanding works by Schubert for piano duet. The other two—the f minor Fantasia and the Allegro in a minor (*Lebensstürme*)—are dark and tempestuous works. The rondo, however, belies the suffering of Schubert’s final battle with syphilis. Its simplicity is deceptive; its charm masks its ingenious design. First, where a typical Classical rondo might present a straightforward eight-bar refrain in alternation with equally straightforward eight-bar episodes, Schubert’s refrain is thirty-two bars long. Matching the refrain’s breadth is the sprawling first episode that follows. Again defying the common simplicity of the Classical rondo, the episode contains no fewer than four distinct melodic ideas, as if the form were insufficient to contain Schubert’s melodic imagination. The episode begins with an understated opening which blossoms into a brighter, but still delicate, phrase. What sounds like a simple transition to the next theme, Schubert deftly extends into a fully formed musical idea in its own right and then a new, chorale-like melody. Finally, a gently swirling melody takes the music back to the refrain—this all within the first episode. A wealth of musical ideas that, for another composer, might have served as the basis for a fully developed sonata-form movement, Schubert works into the ostensibly less sophisticated rondo structure. His melodic genius elevates a typically simple form into, indeed, a “Grand Rondeau.”

—Patrick Castillo

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

Andante and Variations for Two Pianos, Two Cellos, and Horn, op. 46 (1843)

The Andante and Variations for Two Pianos, Two Cellos, and Horn represents something of a curiosity in Schumann’s oeuvre, if for no other reason than the mere fact of its unusual instrumentation. Though Schumann was initially dissatisfied with the

Andante and Variations and withdrew it from his catalog, he later republished it, at Mendelssohn's urging, in a version for two pianos. In 1868, more than a decade after Schumann's death, his protégé Johannes Brahms saved the original version from historical oblivion, giving its public premiere with Clara Schumann (the composer's widow and one of her generation's most outstanding pianists). In 1893, with Clara's blessing, Brahms published the original version, restoring the Andante and Variations to the literature in the form most commonly performed today. Much like Schubert's late piano duets, Schumann's Andante and Variations combines intimacy with immensity. Following the slow introduction, the pianos, in dialog with one another, unfurl an enchanting theme. The twelve variations that follow are impressive, not only in Schumann's imaginative transformation of the theme in each one but also in their dramatic flow. The first four variations grow increasingly animated and flow seamlessly, giving the impression less of a series of variations on a theme than of one long, steadily evolving musical thought. The fifth variation has the feeling of a funeral procession and calls on a martial rhythmic figure from the horn above keening lines in the cellos. In the ninth variation, the horn comes forward as soloist, bellowing a majestic hunting call. One of the work's most striking moments comes in the midst of the variations, immediately following the funeral dirge. Schumann quotes the song "Seit ich ihn gesehen," from his song cycle *Frauenliebe und -leben*, op. 42, composed three years previously. The text of the song has to do with a young woman's amorous feelings towards the man she eventually marries. With the understanding of the Andante and Variations as a portrait of Romanticism, Schumann's use of this song—and, in the case of a Romantic like Schumann, it's entirely appropriate to read such meaning into it—contributes mightily to the overall ardor of the work.

—Patrick Castillo

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, BB 115 (1937)

In 1937, for the tenth anniversary of the Swiss chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music, conductor Paul Sacher asked Bartók to write a piece commemorating the event, and Bartók responded with the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. The work was written on a holiday in the Austrian province of Carinthia during the summer of 1937 and premiered in Basel on January 16, 1938, by the composer, his wife, Ditta Pástory, and percussionists Fritz Schiesser and Philipp Rühlig. Bartók provided the following précis of his Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion:

The first movement opens with a slow introduction which anticipates a motive of the *Allegro*. The *Allegro* movement itself, in C, is in sonata form. The exposition presents the principal subject group, consisting of two themes (the second of which has already been mentioned in connection with the introduction); then there follows a contrasting theme which gives rise to a broadly fashioned concluding section, at the end of which the contrasting theme again appears briefly. The development section, after a short transition with fourths overlaying each other, consists basically of three sections. The first of these uses the second theme of the principal subject group, in E, as an ostinato motive, above which the imitative working-out of the first theme of the principal group takes on the character of an interlude. After this, the first section—with the ostinato in G-flat and inverted—is repeated in greatly altered form. The recapitulation has no real final section; this is replaced by a fairly extensive coda which (with a fugato opening) is based on the concluding theme, to which the principal theme is eventually added. The second movement, in F, is in simple ternary form, ABA. The third movement, in C, represents a combination of rondo and sonata forms. Between the exposition and the reprise, there appears a new thematic group fashioned from two motives of the first theme, treated in imitation. The coda, which dies away pianissimo, concludes this movement and the work.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda



About Music@Menlo

Music@Menlo is an internationally acclaimed three-week summer festival and institute that combines world-class chamber music performances, extensive audience engagement with artists, intensive training for preprofessional musicians, and efforts to enhance and broaden the chamber music community of the San Francisco Bay Area. An immersive and engaging experience centered around a distinctive array of programming, Music@Menlo enriches its core concert programs with numerous opportunities for in-depth learning to intensify audiences' enjoyment and understanding of the music and provide meaningful ways for aficionados and newcomers of all ages to explore classical chamber music.