**TONIGHT’S PROGRAM**

*Sonata for Piano No. 13 in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1* ............ L. BEETHOVEN

- Andante
- Allegro molto e vivace
- Adagio con espressione
- Allegro vivace

*Fantasie in C Major, Op. 17* ..................................................... R. SCHUMANN

- Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen
- Mässig, Durchaus energisch
- Langsam getragen, Durchwegleise zu halten

~ Intermission ~

*Gaspard de la nuit, Three Poems for Piano* ..................................... M. RAVEL

- Ondine
- Le Gibet
- Scarbo

*Islamey: An Oriental Fantasy* ..................................................... M. BALAKIREV

- (1837 - 1910)

**TO OUR AUDIENCE**

The Performing Arts Center is delighted to hear your generous appreciation for our concert artists. We ask that you please hold your applause until all of the movements in a particular piece are finished. Generally, an artist will indicate when it is time for your applause; you can also count the number of movements in each piece – movements are listed underneath the piece’s title. Thank you for your continued enjoyment and support of the Charles Vanda Master Series.

**PROGRAM NOTES**

*Sonata for Piano No. 13 (Sonata quasi una Fantasia) in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1*  
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN  
(Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn; died March 26, 1827, in Vienna)

In 1800 and 1801, Beethoven wrote two unconventional piano sonatas that were published separately in 1802, each bearing the title *Sonata quasi una fantasia* ("a sonata like a fantasia"). The second of the pair is the one that is now popularly known as the *Moonlight Sonata*. "Fantasia," or "fantasy," was a term then loosely used for several different kinds of freely formed pieces, often improvisational in character and highly personal in expression and usually based on musical ideas that did not readily fit the organized, structural discipline of the sonata or the analytical process of development. *Sonata No. 13, Op. 27, No. 1* displays a variety of innovative approaches to the sonata form, in particular to the issue of melding movements together for formal unity.

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Op. 27, No. 1, although based on a four-movement structure, also has what we might dub the basic idea of the fantasy sonata that later composers would adopt with varying degrees of emphasis: several movements played without pause between them, but with occasional interruption by themes that are carried forward from one movement to another. Each of the movements starts attacca subito, that is to say with a sudden articulation. As Charles Rosen says in his book-length study of Beethoven's piano sonatas, “for the first time in Beethoven’s work, the movements are paradoxically well-formed independent movements in completely rounded structures that are nevertheless unintelligible played on their own” because they interpenetrate one another. Important later works of the kind are Schubert’s Wanderer Fantasy of 1822, Schumann’s C Major Fantasy of 1836 and Liszt’s Dante Sonata of the 1845, which, in a subtitled reversal of Beethoven’s formulation, Fantasia quasi sonata, Liszt wrote a “fantasy like a sonata.”

Sonata No. 13 went farther than any work Beethoven had composed thus far to unify stylistically all the movements of the sonata. It begins, Andante, with a tripartite form, ABA, and the whole movement is quite soft. The Allegro section of the movement makes a large contrast to the Andante part in style and dynamic level. Although the bulk of the movement takes a straightforward binary form, its texture is both original and complex. The second movement, Allegro molto vivace, is as Rosen says, “swift, shadowy and mysterious.” It is a scherzo and has a trio section that is very Beethovenian, with relentless bass chords rising to a fortissimo crescendo before descending back to a soft level.

The somewhat brief Adagio con espressione comes without a pause, and it is halfway between a separate movement and an introduction to the finale. Characterized by rich sonority, it has a theme that often appears doubled in octaves. After a short cadenza, it goes directly into the finale, Allegro vivace. In this movement, which is the most elaborate in the sonata, Beethoven experiments with making the finale bear some of the importance and weight usually accorded to the first movement. The movement takes the form of a sonata rondo with some fugal development. Before it ends, Beethoven makes not only the first theme recur but also that of the slow movement. He gives the piano a final cadenza and then a Presto coda closes the movement with a last permutation of the main subject.

Fantasie in C Major, Op. 17
ROBERT SCHUMANN
(Born June 8, 1810, in Zwickau; died July 29, 1856, in Endenich)

“To understand the Fantasy,” Schumann wrote to his wife, Clara, “think back to the summer of 1836, when I was separated from you.” But the background of this Fantasy is actually more complicated, for it involves many ideas and people close to the Schumanns, and it had a multi-layered presence in their musical and emotional as well as their public and private lives.

In the mid-1830’s, musical Europe was erecting a monument to Beethoven in Bonn, Beethoven’s birthplace. Franz Liszt was one of the most active
musicians in this important step towards the near-deification of Beethoven, and Schumann intended to participate by contributing his earnings from the sale of the *Fantasy* as, he said, his “pennyworth for Beethoven.” Schumann dedicated the *Fantasy* to Liszt, whom he greatly admired and who was then his friend. (Later, the Schumann-Brahms and Liszt-Wagner circles grew to dislike and distrust each other, on both personal as well as artistic grounds.)

The *Fantasy* is a freely shaped sonata that ends with a slow movement, but despite Beethoven’s radical innovations, Schumann decided it was expedient to change the title rather than to explain the difference. The work is also a confidential communication from Robert to Clara, with a secret reference to their separation that escaped notice until 1920. At that time, a German scholar noted that embedded in the “most passionate” first movement is a musical quotation from Beethoven’s song cycle, *To the Distant Beloved*, a fragment of melody that is sung to the words, “So take these songs that I have sung for you, beloved.”

At various times, Schumann thought of other extra-musical associations for the *Fantasy*. One early idea was to present it to the world as a grand sonata, heroic in character, with subtitles for each of the three movements, generally translated quite literally as Ruins, Triumphal Arch (or Trophies), and Starry Crowns (or Palms). An English-speaking composer would probably have called them something like Destruction, Spoils of War and Victory. These titles would have given an idea of the Beethoven-like, heroic aspect of the work, but when the time came to publish it, Schumann deleted these references. He replaced them with a quotation from the poet, Franz Schlegel (whose wife was an aunt of Schumann’s revered mentor, Mendelssohn): “Throughout all music there sounds the colorful dream of the earth, one quiet note played for a secret eavesdropper.”

The music is characterized by its sweeping power, its sustained lyricism and its forceful contrasts. The first movement, *Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen*, starts almost abruptly as though a door has been opened on a discourse already in progress. It is a work of “fantasy and passion throughout,” say the instructions to the player, although the music shifts for a while to a style that is “legendary in tone,” by which Schumann presumably meant that it is like a folk song.

The second movement, *Massig, Durchaus energisch*, follows without pause and is to be played at a moderate tempo, but energetically or vigorously. It is a great march in which powerful chords alternate with complex counterpoint. When Clara was learning it, she said that it made her “hot and cold all over,” and added, “If only I could hear it played by a great orchestra!” The *Fantasy* ends with a long and gentle poetic reverie, *Langsam getragen, Durchwegleise zu halten.*

*Ravel’s essentially impressionistic* *Gaspard de la nuit* is based on three prose poems emphasizing the supernatural

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which were written by the obscure French Romantic poet Louis Aloys Bertrand (1807-1842) in 1832. They were published in the magazine *Le Mercure de France* in 1908, where Ravel read them. The suite of descriptive pieces conjures up the mystery, bewitchment, castles, bells, and visions that Ravel found in the poems, which immediately inspired him to create one of the most difficult works for piano ever written — a demandingly profound musical insight requiring a pianist of great imagination as well as supreme technical command of the instrument. Ravel was not himself a virtuoso, but he consciously aimed to compose a work that would be, in his words, “more difficult than [Balakirev’s] *Islamey*.” He used the pianistic style of Franz Liszt and created what pianist Alfred Cortot called “one of the most extraordinary examples of instrumental ingenuity which the industry of composers has ever produced.”

The nocturnal Gaspard of the title is the Devil, and each of the poems is a story he tells or a picture he draws: of a water sprite, a corpse on the gallows, or an evil dwarf. Each of Bertrand’s poems is preceded by a brief quotation from another writer. Subtitled “Three Poems after Aloysius Bertrand,” Ravel’s *Gaspard* suite movements are each prefaced by one of the poems. *Gaspard* made its premiere in a January 1909 performance by pianist Ricardo Viñes, the man who introduced Ravel to Bertrand’s work.

In the first piece, *Ondine*, in which the influence of Liszt’s *Transcendental Etudes* is clear, Ravel portrays the seduction of a mortal man by the water nymph Ondine, who appears, as Ravel’s biographer Benjamin Ivry put it, “in sparkling foam amid a sparkling melodic line” and lures men to their death by drowning. An innocent sounding melodic line accompanies the piano’s water figuration: “Listen! Listen! It is I, Ondine, sprinkling these drops of water you hear on the panes of your window in the melancholy moonlight. . . . My father is thrashing in the rumbling water with a green alder branch, and my sisters, with their arms of foam, are caressing the cool islands of grass. . . .”

The second movement, *Le Gibet (The Gibbet)*, *Très lent sans presser ni ralentir jusqu’à la fin*, a portrait of the gallows, has such formidable textural density that Ravel notated nearly the whole piece using three staves. The work of Ravel’s other favorite poet, Edgar Allen Poe, and an extract from the preface of the corresponding Bertrand poem provide some idea of the musical atmosphere: “It is the bell sounding from the walls of a city far away below the horizon, and the carcass of a dead man hanging from a gibbet, reddened by the setting sun.” Ravel’s “bells” contain a slow melody, sometimes in parallel chords, and slightly irregularly grouped repeated notes, an ostinato bell-like figure that tolls as a pedal point throughout the movement. The piece is quiet yet suspenseful. Ravel directs the pianist to play “without expression” for the last part of the piece.

The final movement, named after a goblin, *Scarbo*, *Moderé*, has some of the most incredibly difficult piano music Ravel or any other composer has ever written. Scarbo is a somewhat malicious dwarf from the underworld who horrifies the night and then disappears without a trace. Ravel emphasizes
rhythm in this virtuoso display piece and intersperses pauses throughout. Full of rapid repeated notes, arpeggios, and sudden changes of texture and dynamics, this piece is well described by Ivry who says, "Like a Morse code operator gone mad, the pianist raps out Asian sounding groups of high notes. After a great, malignant, hopping dance, there are low echoing notes, and slowly the whirling returns in the best horror film style: 'He's baaaaaack.' The classical tradition of da capo offers an encore within the piece itself. The pianist goes up and down in demented reiteration as Scarbo exults in his own wickedness. The lushness of the end is like the dense final aria in Richard Strauss's Salomé, celebrating the erotic triumph of malignancy." Commentators have also particularly singled out a very difficult passage that perhaps is the result of the composer's double-jointed thumb and is certainly more than challenging for those without one. After a very loud climax, the music softens as it concludes in impish little speedy notes.

In a letter Ravel wrote, he admitted that Gaspard had been "the devil to finish which is logical since he was the author."

Islamey: An Oriental Fantasey
MILY BALAKIREV
(Born January 2, 1837 in Nizhny-Novgorod; died May 21, 1910 in St. Petersburg)

Mily Balakirev organized a musical group that became known as the Balakirev Circle, whose aim was to make a cause of Russian music of a national character in order to combat the profusion of imitations of classical German compositions, which at that time seemed dominant in Russia. Simultaneously, he founded the Free Music School in St. Petersburg and gave concerts there of works primarily by Russian musicians. The dream of uniting all Slavic nations under Russian influence animated Balakirev and other musicians of his time.

Balakirev became fascinated with the quasi-oriental melodies and rhythms of the Caucasus in the eastern area of Russia during several trips he made there. In 1869, he wrote an “oriental” fantasy for piano entitled Islamey that he based on themes he collected there during his travels. It is mostly a Kabardian dance from the north of the Caucasus. It also includes a Tartar melody from the Crimea in its slow middle section that Balakirev presumably heard an American actor sing when he visited Tchaikovsky's house in Moscow. Although the subtitle of the piece is “Oriental Fantasy,” Balakirev used that term in the sense of eastern Russia, not the Far East or the Orient, as it was then known.

Rubinstein, who was the first to perform the technically demanding work at one of the Free Music School Concerts, remarked, “I am working, poor wretched fellow that I am, at your piece, which fills me with terrible delight, and for which I thank you; I shall certainly play it at my concert in Moscow; but it is so difficult that few will cope with it; I want to be one of those few.” Through it, Balakirev’s name became known throughout Europe in the 19th century; both Rubinstein and Liszt played it frequently in many cities.
ABOUT YEFIGIM BRONFMAN

Yefim Bronfman is widely regarded as one of the most talented virtuosos pianists performing today. His commanding technique and exceptional lyrical gifts have won him consistent critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences worldwide, whether for his solo recitals, his prestigious orchestral engagements or his rapidly growing catalogue of recordings.

As a “Perspectives” artist at Carnegie Hall for the 2007-08 season, Mr. Bronfman will partner with some of the world’s greatest orchestras and conductors including the Vienna Philharmonic with Valery Gergiev, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with Mariss Jansons, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra with James Levine. During the seven concerts he has curated, he will play repertoire ranging from solo piano, chamber, and orchestral by composers from Mozart to Prokofiev and Berg to Dalbavie. The fall begins with a tour of Japan with the Kirov Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev and a solo recital tour beginning during the visit to Japan and traversing the US to culminate in Carnegie Hall in December and continuing in Vienna, Paris, and Berlin in the spring. With orchestra, he will appear with the Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, New Jersey, and Toronto symphony orchestras and will conclude the season with the west coast premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen’s Piano Concerto, written for him and commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, and participated in the Israel Philharmonic’s 70th birthday celebrations in concerts conducted by Zubin Mehta and Valery Gergiev. Other highlights of Mr. Bronfman’s 2006-07 season included appearances with the Boston, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Philadelphia, and National Symphony Orchestras; Los Angeles and Vienna Philharmonics; Orchestre de Paris and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; widely acclaimed performances at the Salzburg Easter Festival with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle; and a European tour with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kozena.

Highlights of Mr. Bronfman’s 2005-06 season included a tour of Japan with the Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra and Mariss Jansons, a recital tour and recording for EMI with flutist Emmanuel Pahud, a tour of Germany with the Tönhalle Orchestra and David Zinman coinciding with the release of their complete Beethoven concerti discs, and concerts in the Far East with partners Gil Shaham and Truls Mork. He made solo appearances with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic and Yuri Temirkanov for the opening night of Carnegie Hall, with the Russian National Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski at Lincoln Center, and at the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg with the Kirov Orchestra and Valery Gergiev.

Recent highlights have been a duo recital tour of the United States with pianist Emanuel Ax; a performance with the Kirov Orchestra and Valery Gergiev at Carnegie Hall; and concerts with the

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Vienna Philharmonic and Valery Gergiev in Japan and with Sir Charles Mackerras in Salzburg and Amsterdam. During the 2004-05 season, Mr. Bronfman served as Pianist in Residence with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, performing multiple orchestral and chamber music concerts with the orchestra’s members throughout the season. He recently completed recordings of all the Beethoven piano concerti as well as the Triple Concerto together with violinist Gil Shaham, cellist Truls Mork, and the Tönhalle Orchestra Zürich under David Zinman for the Arte Nova/BMG label.

Mr. Bronfman appears regularly with such celebrated ensembles as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Dresden Staatskapelle, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, London’s Philharmonia, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He has worked with an equally illustrious group of conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph von Dohnányi, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Yuri Temirkanov, Franz Welser-Möst, and David Zinman. Summer engagements have regularly taken him to Aspen, Bad Kissingen, Blossom, Hollywood Bowl, Lucerne, Mann Music Center, Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, Salzburg, Saratoga, Tanglewood, and Verbier festivals.

Mr. Bronfman has also given numerous solo recitals in the leading halls of North America, Europe and the Far East, including acclaimed debuts at Carnegie Hall in 1989 and Avery Fisher Hall in 1993. In 1991 he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Mr. Bronfman’s first public performances there since his emigration to Israel at age 15. That same year he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honors given to American instrumentalists.

An exclusive Sony/BMG recording artist, Mr. Bronfman has won widespread praise for his solo, chamber and orchestral recordings. He won a Grammy award in 1997 for his recording of the three Bartok Piano Concertos with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His discography also includes the complete Prokofiev Piano Sonatas; all five of the Prokofiev Piano Concertos, nominated for both Grammy® and Gramophone awards; Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3; recital albums featuring Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition and Stravinsky’s Three Scenes from Petrouchka, and Tchaikovsky’s The Seasons paired with Balakirev’s Islamey; and the Tchaikovsky and Arensky Piano Trios with Cho-Liang Lin and Gary Hoffman.

His recordings with Isaac Stern include the Brahms Violin Sonatas from their aforementioned Russian tour, a cycle of the Mozart Sonatas for Violin and Piano, and the Bartok Violin Sonatas. Coinciding with the release of the Fantasia 2000 soundtrack, Mr. Bronfman was featured on his own Shostakovich album, performing the two Piano Concertos with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting and the Piano Quintet. In 2002, Sony Classical released his two-piano recital (with Emanuel Ax) of works continued on page 22
by Rachmaninoff, which was followed in March 2005 by their second recording of works by Brahms.

A devoted chamber music performer, Mr. Bronfman has collaborated with the Emerson, Cleveland, Guarneri and Juilliard Quartets, as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has also played chamber music with Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Shlomo Mintz, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pinchas Zukerman, and many other artists.

Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, and made his international debut two years later with Zubin Mehta and the Montreal Symphony. He made his New York Philharmonic debut in May 1978, his Washington recital debut in March 1981 at the Kennedy Center and his New York recital debut in January 1982 at the 92nd Street Y.

Mr. Bronfman was born in Tashkent, in the Soviet Union, on April 10, 1958. In Israel he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro, and the Curtis Institute, and with Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin.


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