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Poetry and Passion: Two-Piano Music of Franz Liszt

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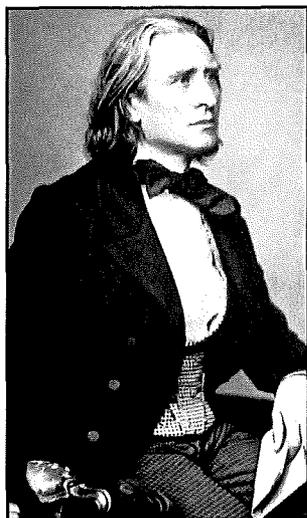
Presents

POETRY AND PASSION:
TWO-PIANO MUSIC OF FRANZ LISZT

Paul Hanson
Joanne Kong
pianists

Monday, October 17, 2011
7:30 p.m.
Booker Hall of Music
Camp Concert Hall





FRANZ LISZT

**POETRY AND PASSION:
TWO-PIANO MUSIC OF FRANZ LISZT
(1811-1886)**

Program

Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas Tree) (1882)

Psallite (Sing Psalms)

Die Hirten an der Krippe (The Shepherds at the Manger)

Adeste Fideles

Gleichsam als Marsch der heiligen drei Könige (In the manner of "The March of the Three Holy Kings")

Scherzoso (Playful)

Man zundet die Kerzen des Baumes an (Lighting the candles on the tree)

Carillon (Chimes)

Schlummerlied (Slumber Song)

Altes provenzalisches Weihnachtslied (Old Provençal Christmas Song)

Abendglocken (Evening Bells)

Ehemals (Old Times)

Polnisch (Polish)

Intermission

Symphonic Poems, transcribed for two pianos by Liszt

Festklänge (Festive Sounds) (1853)

Orphée (Orpheus) (1853-1854)

Hunnenschlacht (Battle of the Huns) (1857)



Please silence cell phones, digital watches, and paging devices before the concert.

About the Composer

Over the past few years the classical music world has celebrated the bicentennials of notable 19th-century Romantic composers, among them Felix Mendelssohn, Frédéric Chopin and Robert Schumann. With the added recognition this year of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), one finds a unique musician whose contributions have had especially far-reaching influences. General audiences are most familiar with Liszt the pianist—he raised the standard of piano technique to new heights of virtuosity, performing over 1000 concerts from 1839 to 1847 as the first international touring artist. Despite the astounding celebrity status he achieved, at the age of 36 Liszt turned his attention to composing. Many of his piano works are infused with an all-encompassing orchestral sense of varied textures and sonorities, in addition to groundbreaking technical demands over the full range of the keyboard, while some of the late works (notably *Nuages gris*) display tonal ambiguity and chromaticism anticipating the harmonic developments of the early twentieth century. In the orchestral realm, Liszt is credited with inventing the symphonic poem, and he set the convention for modern conductors to dictate the interpretation of a performance rather than merely marking beats.

The suite of pieces titled *Weihnachtsbaum* is one of many works from Liszt's late period that reflects a preoccupation with religious themes. Many of these works display a concentrated or even austere quality, in marked contrast to the bravura style of earlier years. The work was dedicated to his granddaughter, Daniela (from daughter Cosima's marriage to conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow), originally as a work for solo piano. *Psallite*, *Der Hirten an der Krippe* and *Adeste Fideles* are fairly straightforward arrangements of traditional Christmas songs. The next two pieces, *Scherzoso* and *Carillon*, are sparkling miniatures calling for crisp articulation and nimble technique. These are beautifully contrasted with those that follow—*Schlummerlied* with its subtle harmonic shifts over a rippling accompaniment, and *Altes provenzalisches Weihnachtslied*, a playful adaption of two French carols. *Abendglocken* displays the impressionistic textures that Liszt adopted in some of his late works, and is succeeded by the nostalgic *Ehemals*. *Polnisch*, the final piece, brings the set to an exuberant and boisterous conclusion.

After Liszt retired from concert touring, he held the position of *Kapellmeister* in Weimar from 1848 to 1861 and composed, among numerous landmark works, the first 12 of his 13 symphonic poems. While musical works drawing inspiration from literature, art, or historical subjects was nothing new, Liszt created lengthy musical narratives of unprecedented originality and range of emotion, unified through cyclic principles and thematic transformation. In addition to the orchestral versions, Liszt also arranged the symphonic poems for two-pianos, and piano four-hands. The fact that nearly half of Liszt's works consists of pianistic paraphrases and transcriptions is only partially explained by the need to disseminate works to a growing middle-class for whom the piano was an important outlet for entertainment. These arrangements also stand on their own as unique compositions, expanding the boundaries of Romantic pianism and sonority. *Festklänge* was written to celebrate Liszt's impending marriage to Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, an event ultimately thwarted by legal issues concerning her first marriage. The inspiration for *Orphée* was a visual one: upon viewing an Etruscan vase at the Louvre bearing an image of the musician and his lyre, Liszt desired to portray the healing and ennobling power of art. Of all Liszt's symphonic poems, *Hunnenschlacht* is the most highly charged and programmatic, in its depiction of the fifth century (451 AD) battle between Attila's Huns and the Romans, as seen in Wilhelm von Kaulbach's painting of the same name. A multitude of battle effects are exchanged between the two pianos, and the *Crux fidelis* theme, representing the victorious Christians, brings the work to a triumphant close.

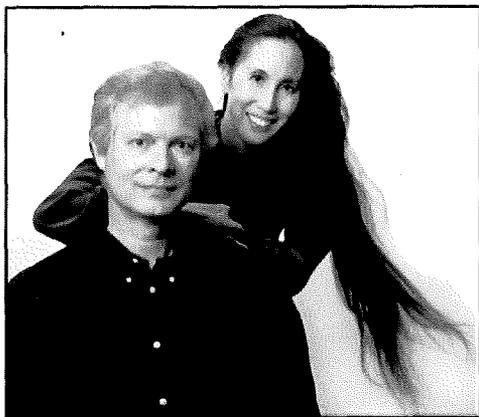
—Notes by Joanne Kong

Biographies

With their distinguished and diverse backgrounds as solo and chamber keyboardists, pianists Paul Hanson and Joanne Kong have been critically acclaimed for their impeccable musicianship, mastery of tone color, and exacting ensemble. They have appeared at numerous concert venues across the country and later this month will perform on the Smithsonian Institution National Gallery Concert Series, in honor of the Liszt bicentennial.

PAUL HANSON has been acclaimed for his “dexterous authority” (*Los Angeles Times*), “relentless tension and drama” (*The Virginian-Pilot*), and the *San Antonio Express-News* wrote that “Hanson’s tender singing line, intelligent phrasing and total magisterial command made this a distinguished performance.” He holds degrees from Washington State University, the University of Southern California and University of Oregon, and has studied with Daniel Pollack, Leonard Stein, and Victor Steinhardt. Dr. Hanson’s numerous performances include appearances for the Third Coast New Music Festival, Hindemith Festival, Columbia University, and concerts at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute where he was Assistant to the Archivist. His special interest in contemporary music includes performances of the complete solo music of Schoenberg, as well as repertoire of Charles Ives, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, and many others. During the 2008-2009 season he gave several performances of Elliott Carter’s *Night Fantasies* in honor of the composer’s centennial, and was a guest artist and faculty member at New England Conservatory’s Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice. Currently, he is a music faculty member at the University of Richmond.

JOANNE KONG’s performances have been praised for “great finesse and flexibility” (*The Washington Post*), “utmost keyboard sensitivity and variety of tone” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*), “remarkable technical ability” (*The Oregonian*), and “superb artistry” (*San Antonio Express-News*) in works “sensitively played” (*New York Times*). Her versatility includes the distinction of being the first artist to release a harpsichord-piano recording of the *Goldberg* and *Diabelli Variations*, on the BRIOSO label, and she premiered Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Michael Colgrass’s keyboard concerto *Side by Side* for soloist in the dual role of pianist and harpsichordist. Kong is a recognized Bach specialist, and the recipient of national and international honors including performance fellowships from the American Academy of the Arts in Europe and the Bach Aria Festival, designation as a Laureate in the 1983 National Beethoven Foundation Fellowship Auditions, three Ruth Lorraine Close Fellowships, and the Irl Allison Grand Prize in the 1985 International Piano Recording Competition. Dr. Kong is currently the director of the accompanying and chamber music programs at the University of Richmond.



PAUL HANSON and JOANNE KONG

THE 2011-2012 DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES
FREE—No Ticket Required— CAMP CONCERT HALL— unless otherwise noted

FALL 2011

Friday, Sept. 23—7:30p
FAMILY WEEKEND CONCERT
Jazz, Orchestra, Band, Choirs

Monday, Oct. 17—7:30p
LISZT BICENTENNIAL CONCERT
Paul Hanson, *piano*
Joanne Kong, *piano*

Sunday, Oct. 23—3:00p
SCHOLA CANTORUM & WOMEN'S CHORALE

Monday, Oct. 24—7:30p
DAVID ESLECK TRIO

Friday, Nov. 4—Saturday, Nov. 5
THIRD PRACTICE ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL
Times vary—see www.thirdpractice.org

Sunday, Nov. 13—7:30p
UR WIND ENSEMBLE

Wednesday, Nov. 16—7:30p *
CUBAN SPECTACULAR— "A NIGHT AT THE
TROPICANA"
UR JAZZ COMBO & area musicians
*Ticket Required—Modlin Box Office

Sunday, Nov. 20—7:30p
GLOBAL SOUNDS—World Music Concert

Monday, Nov. 21—7:30p
UR JAZZ ENSEMBLE & CONTEMPORARY JAZZ COMBOS

Monday, Nov. 28—7:30p
UR CHAMBER ENSEMBLES

Wednesday, Nov. 30—7:30p
UR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Featuring Joseph Moon, *cello*,
winner of UR 2011 Concerto Competition

Sunday, Dec. 4—5:00 and 8:00p
Cannon Memorial Chapel
38th ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT FESTIVAL OF
LESSONS AND CAROLS

SPRING 2012

Monday, Jan. 30—7:30p
LISA TERRY, *viola da gamba*
JOANNE KONG, *harpsichord*

Sunday, Feb. 5—3:00p
RICHARD BECKER, *piano*

Thursday, March 22—7:30p
Perkinson Recital Hall
LESLIE TUNG, *fortepiano*

Sunday, March 25—3:00p
DUO-PIANO RECITAL
Richard Becker, *piano*
Doris Wylee-Becker, *piano*

Sunday, April 1—all day, across campus
GLOBAL SOUNDS FESTIVAL

Wednesday, April 4—7:30p
UR WIND ENSEMBLE

Friday, April 6—7:30p
UR SCHOLA CANTORUM, UNIVERSITY DANCERS,
AND GUEST INSTRUMENTALISTS

Monday, April 9—7:30p
UR JAZZ ENSEMBLE & JAZZ COMBO

Wednesday, April 11—7:30p
UR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Featuring Tim Munro, *flute*

Monday, April 16—7:30p
UR CHAMBER ENSEMBLES