

T H E
G I L M O R E
RISING STARS SERIES

2020-2021 VIRTUAL SEASON

Sponsored in part by the Helen Wattles Fund, supporting young artists at The Gilmore

Sunday, October 18, 2020 | 4 PM
Live Streamed from Wellspring Theater, Kalamazoo, Michigan

CHAEYOUNG PARK, piano

G. LIGETI

Musica Ricercata

IV. Tempo di valse (poco vivace "à l'orgue de
Barbarie")

VIII. Vivace. Energico

IX. Adagio. Mesto - Allegro maestoso (Béla Bartók
in Memoriam)

X. Vivace capriccioso

C. DEBUSSY

Pour le piano

I. Prélude

II. Sarabande

III. Toccata

UNSUK CHIN

Etude No. 5, "Toccata"

J. BRAHMS

Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Andante espressivo

III. Scherzo. Allegro energico

IV. *Intermezzo*. Andante molto

V. *Finale*. Allegro moderato ma rubato

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About the Artist



Chaeyoung Park

Winner of the 2019 Hilton Head International Piano Competition, Chaeyoung Park comes from Seoul and Kansas. She has received top awards in numerous national and international competitions, including silver medal at the 2016 Gina Bachauer International Young Artists Competition and 2017 Juilliard Gina Bachauer Competition; third prize at the 2015 CIPC Young Artists Competition; third prize at the 2015 Yamaha USASU International Senior Piano Competition; and gold medal in music by the National YoungArts Foundation in 2014.

Ms. Park has performed in halls such as Orchestra Hall at Chicago Symphony Center, Merkin Hall and Helzberg Hall at Kaufman Music Center in New York, Gartner Auditorium at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, New World Center in Miami, and Kodak Hall at Eastman School of Music. As a chamber musician, she has most recently participated in Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, Kneisel Hall, and Juilliard ChamberFest.

After beginning her piano studies at age six in South Korea, Miss Park moved to Lawrence, Kansas in 2007 and studied with Dr. Jack Winerock of the University of Kansas for eight years. She is currently studying at The Juilliard School with Robert McDonald, where she is a proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship.

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923-2006)

MUSICA RICERCATA, Nos. 4, 8, 9, 10

Composed from 1951 to 1953

At first hearing, *Musica Ricercata* may seem like a parody. Yet it has a deeper undertow, as Alex Ross puts it. Born in Transylvania in 1923, Ligeti witnessed what Leonard Bernstein called “the century of death” at close range. Though he lost most of his family in Hitler’s death camps and suffered further under Stalinism, Ligeti was able to write bright, witty music. Ross believes that “there is much to be said for the artwork that answers horror by rejecting or transcending it.”

When today’s piece was written (1951-53), Ligeti was teaching harmony and counterpoint at the Budapest Academy of Music. It was the height of Soviet oppression: socialist realism in music was required, folk-like choral music was rewarded, other music went unpublished and unheard. In *Musica Ricercata* Ligeti knew he was composing “for the drawer,” for his own satisfaction, not for public eyes. When the Hungarian Revolution broke out in 1956, he fled to Vienna, then to Cologne, where he met Karlheinz Stockhausen, drank in the avant-garde compositions he had been unable to hear, and began to write music that would break ground throughout the rest of his long life.

Musica Ricercata could be roughly translated as “searching music.” The title refers to the venerable *ricercar* (“to search”), a contrapuntal piece whose theme is hidden within an

intricate texture. (Ligeti entitles the last piece of the set *Omaggio a Girolamo Frescobaldi*, saluting the early Baroque master of the genre.) He himself was searching for a new musical language. Rather than setting the eleven pieces in specific keys, Ligeti chose to build them on pitch classes, using only a designated set of notes in each. He begins with two pitches in the first, three in the second, and so on, until in the last of the group all twelve chromatic pitches are in use.

Today’s program starts with the fourth, a *Tempo di valse* marked *poco vivace . . . a l’orgue de Barbarie* (“a little fast, in the manner of a barrel organ”), giving a nod to one of the favorite instruments of the Hungarian folk tradition. Ligeti transforms the traditional waltz meter—three steady beats to the bar—into the unequal beat rhythm of the Balkans by juxtaposing it with measures of two beats, creating a constantly shifting pattern of twos and threes accented by emphatic downbeats. In the eighth piece, *Vivace, Energico*, Ligeti treats the piano as a percussion instrument, just as Bartók did in his *Allegro Barbaro* of 1911, spicing the music with more Balkan rhythms, this time in measures of threes, fours and seven. The mournful ninth piece, *Béla Bartók in memoriam*, honors one of the century’s greatest composers, who, exiled from his native Hungary, had died in New York City in 1944. Ligeti provides detailed performance

instructions, beginning with music marked *wie tiefe Glocken* (“like low sounding bells”), which soon becomes *stringendo* (*wie in Panik*) (“piling up, as if panicking”), then moving into soft trills, reminiscent of the “Night Music” in Bartók’s great “Out of Doors” suite. The tenth

**CLAUDE DEBUSSY
(1862-1918)**

POUR LE PIANO

Composed in 1901

Pour le Piano was composed between 1894 and 1901 and first performed in January 1902 by Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes, who had learned of the work from Maurice Ravel, Debussy’s friend and rival, whose *Jeux d’eau* he had premiered the year before. It is a work dedicated to the instrument itself, just as the title says. As a pianist, Debussy knew the instrument inside out. Like Chopin, he began to imagine, enhance, and then unleash its evocative power, its matchless resonance and sonority.

Angela Hewitt believes *Pour le Piano* should be played with the same diligence and rigor that one would apply to a Bach fugue—and Debussy was a great admirer of Bach. All three movements are borrowed from the Baroque suite. The opening Prélude, marked *Assez anime et tres rythme* (“with spirit and very rhythmically”), lives up to its name, bustling over the keyboard, rippling notes matched by electrifying, fortissimo chords. Although a prelude could be

piece—*Vivace, capriccioso*—is indeed capricious, scampering over the keyboard, moving into a *resoluto, martellato* section (“resolute, hammered”), becoming *wie verrückt* (“as if mad”), and finally dashing away.

improvised, in this one every move has been carefully choreographed. The first two cadenzas should sound like the Musketeer d’Artagnan drawing his sword, Debussy said. The third, immaculately structured, turns the piano into a harp. Six deliciously rich chords end the movement with a flourish.

The second movement, a Sarabande, was a revised version of one written in 1894. Both versions are marked *Avec une elegance grave et lente* (“with a grave and slow elegance”), but in the earlier, Debussy added that the music should be “even a bit old-portrait, souvenir of the Louvre, etc.” It should sound both old and new, Angela Hewitt believes. The third movement, marked *vif*, is a brilliant toccata. It is one of the most exciting of Debussy’s piano works, and one of the most difficult, yet Hewitt advises that clarity, rather than speed, should be the goal. Amid the tumult, beautiful melodies emerge, and the work concludes with eight measures of fortissimo chords.

**UNSUK CHIN
(B. 1961)**

ETUDE NO. 5, “TOCCATA”

Composed in 2003

UnsuK Chin was born in South Korea in 1961 and studied at Seoul National University, where she was immediately drawn to contemporary music. Now a prolific composer with a distinguished career, she was only in her early twenties when one of her pieces was performed at a conference of the International Society of Composers of Music. In 1985 a grant from the German state paid for her to study with György Ligeti, who had by then found a home in Hamburg. Chin now lives in Berlin and has had an illustrious career, her prize-winning music performed by the world’s best orchestras and artists. She is an important voice in new music, truly an international composer. Her prominence demonstrates that women are no longer a rarity in the world of composers: their music is respected—and performed.

**JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)**

SONATA NO. 3 IN F MINOR, OP. 5

Composed in 1853

When the twenty-year-old Brahms knocked on the door of their Düsseldorf home in the early fall of 1853, he could scarcely have imagined the vital role that Robert and Clara Schumann would come to play in his musical career, nor the deep and enduring friendship

Ligeti was a demanding task master, expecting Chin to be curious, independent, and keenly aware of music in other traditions, and to live up to his own high standards of technical virtuosity. During her years of study with him, (1985-88), Ligeti was working on the first volume of his own etudes. During their composition he had to feel the music in his hand, he said, a method that seems to fit Chin’s music exactly. She is skilled at “wrestling subtlety and shape from machinery,” Paul Griffiths has observed; in Chin’s music we are in a “world between worlds . . . between past and present.” The name of today’s work—toccata—is borrowed from the past, yet the music is very contemporary. Starting slowly, it grows into a storm of chords covering the entire keyboard, full of rhythmic excitement. Finally, the music darts away.

that would carry him through the rest of his life. By time of this first visit, both of the Schumanns had been embraced by the heart of the German musical establishment, Robert as an eminent composer and journalist, and Clara as an internationally acclaimed pianist.

Brahms had brought his first two piano sonatas to share with the Schumanns. His third, today's work, Sonata in F Minor, Op. 5, was finished soon thereafter. It would be his last.

The Schumanns were bowled over. Clara described his first visit: "It is as though he has been sent by God himself! He played sonatas, scherzos, and so on that he had written, everything brimming over with imagination and emotional intensity . . . He has very attractive hands, which master the greatest of difficulties with the greatest of ease. And his works are difficult." In his housekeeping book for that day, Robert simply wrote: "Visit from Brahms. (A genius.)" He immediately introduced him to the readers of his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* ("New Journal for Music") with an article entitled "New Paths." Johannes Brahms was launched! He quickly became part of the family, sustaining Clara through Robert's illnesses and hospitalizations until his death three years later. Clara and Brahms would become devoted friends and musical advisors to one another throughout their lifetimes (she died in 1896, Brahms a year later).

Labelled a "Beethovener" at the beginning of his career, Brahms couldn't escape the shadow of his illustrious predecessor, and was expected to continue his legacy of emotionally compelling, architecturally masterful instrumental works. Brahms was so intimidated by this intense scrutiny that he didn't compose his first symphony until he was forty. Instead he used other instrumental music to try out his orchestral ideas—in particular his

three piano sonatas, Op. 3, Op. 4, and Op. 5. Dubbed by Schumann "piano symphonies," they are music for a virtuoso. Clara recalled that one day when she heard Brahms playing, so big was the sound that she wondered which friend had joined him at the keyboard in a four-hand duet. Upon entering the room, she was surprised to find that it was only Brahms, drawing big fistfuls of notes out of the keyboard.

In its exuberance, the F-minor sonata is clearly a young man's work; in its character, it is unmistakably Brahmsian. By his early twenties, he had found his voice. He set the work in the stormy, dramatic key of F minor. The first movement, marked *Allegro maestoso* ("majestic") is cast in sonata form and begins with a dramatic flourish, giving way to soaring melody lines. Packed full of contrasts, the music explores both the passionate opening chords and the lyrical melody of the second theme, covering the full range of the keyboard. The second movement, marked *Andante espressivo*, is the quintessence of Romanticism. A poem printed in the score (attributed to Sternau) sets the scene: "Dusk is falling, the moonlight appears, two hearts unite in love and are blissfully entwined." Brahms offers a profound response to these simple words, alternating between two themes: a limpid melody and murmuring accompaniment in A-flat major and a graceful dialogue in the delicious key of D-flat major. So sublime is this music that Wagner quoted its coda in *Die Meistersinger*, when Hans Sachs sings of birdsong.

An energetic Scherzo, almost a

country waltz, follows. Its chordal, chorale-like middle section, is a complete contrast. Then, instead of leading straight into the finale, Brahms gives us a surprise, adding a movement to make five rather than the expected four: a shimmering Intermezzo entitled *Rückblick* ("Remembrance"). Its drooping melody, reminiscent of the previous *Andante*, hints at falling tears, cast against a persistent left-hand rhythm. The style of music in both slow movements points the way to the future. Brahms would turn from the piano sonata to collections of *Klavierstücke* ("Piano Pieces"), short yet profound capriccios, ballades, romanzas, rhapsodies, and more

intermezzos. The sonata's finale, a rondo, takes an impetuous headlong course with a touch of Mendelssohn. It brings back both the heroism and lyricism of the opening movement, with its dashing main theme and contrasting episodes. The sonata ends with rolled chords in F major, just like the ones that concluded the first and second movements. Schumann favored similar unifying devices; perhaps here Brahms offers a gesture of gratitude to an important musical mentor.

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Professor Emerita, Kalamazoo College

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