

TAO LIN, PIANO
Program, March 2010

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 - 1757)
Sonata in F major, L.385
Sonata in D minor, L.422

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)
Rondo in D Major, K.485

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Fantasy in C minor, K.475

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Sonata in C minor, K.457
 Molto allegro
 Adagio
 Allegro assai

Intermission

Frédéric Chopin (1810 - 1849)
Ballade No.1 in G minor, Op.23

Frédéric Chopin
Piano Sonata No.3 in B minor, Op.58
 Allegro maestoso
 Scherzo: Molto vivace
 Largo
 Finale: Presto, non tanto

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Chinese-American pianist Tao Lin's appearances in Asia, North America and Europe have brought unanimous critical accolades and praise for his subtle, intimate pianism and brilliant technique. A versatile musician, he is equally at home as soloist, recitalist and chamber musician.

Born into a musical family in Shanghai, he began piano lessons at the age of four, first with his mother and later his father, both on faculty at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The following year saw his first public performance and at the age of eight, he gained entrance to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. As a teenager, he performed in the Chinese premiere of Baróok's Sonata for two Pianos and Percussion, a major musical event at the time. After moving to the United States, Mr. Lin continued his active concert activities.

As a soloist, he has performed with Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony, Miami Chamber Orchestra, Knoxville Civic Orchestra, University of Miami Symphony, Harid Philharmonia, and Lynn University Chamber Orchestra. A devoted chamber musician, Mr. Lin has concertized throughout the United States as a founding member (with Jacques Thibaud String Trio) of the Berlin Piano Quartet. He has also appeared in concerts with Miami, Bergonzi, Alcon, and Rosalyra String Quartets as well as with distinguished musicians such as Ida Haendel, Elmar Oliveira, Roberto Diaz, William De Rosa, Charles Castleman, Roberta Peters, Eugenia Zukerman, Shunske Sato, Philip Quint and members of Metropolitan Opera, Philadelphia, St. Louis, National, Minnesota, Pittsburg, Berlin Staatskaplle Orchestras.

Recent and upcoming engagements include concerts in California (Santa Rosa, Orange County, La Jolla, San Francisco and Los Angeles), New York (Rockefeller University, Chautauqua Institute), Washington DC (The National Gallery of Art, Dumbarton Concerts, Kennedy Center for Performing Arts), Chicago, Arkansas (Little Rock), Alabama (Mobile), St. Louis and Florida (Miami, Sanibel, and Lake Worth).

A regular guest artist at numerous music festivals, Mr. Lin has performed at the Music Festival of the Hamptons, Mainly Mozart Festival, Music Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Arts Rolla Festival, Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival, and Bowdoin International Music Festival.

Very much in demand as a pedagogue as well, Mr. Lin has given master classes and lectures at universities and conservatories in the United States, Norway, and China. Recently he received the award for "Outstanding International Pedagogue" from Shanghai Normal University School of Music.

Mr. Lin's competition accomplishments have included National Society of Arts and Letters, Music Teacher's National Association, Palm Beach International Invitational Piano Competition, 1st International Piano e-Competition, William Kapell International Piano Competition and 1st Osaka International Chamber Music Competition.

He is currently Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Conservatory of Music at Lynn University. During summer months, he serves as an official collaborative pianist for Bowdoin International Music Festival. Mr. Lin has recorded for Piano Lovers, Romeo, and Poinciana labels.

His website is www.taolin.net.

Critical praise for Mr. Lin includes:

“Excellent facility and keen musical intelligence . . . crisp, crystalline, and exhilarating.” — Miami Herald

“Tao Lin demonstrated his mastery with inspired and sparkling keyboard work . . . ” — South Florida Sun-Sentinel

“A performance of such subtle sensitivity that few pianists nowadays could fathom, much less muster . . . a creative interpretation carried out with bravura technique and a prismatic sense of keyboard color.” — Coral Gables Gazette

“That the Chinese pianist Tao Lin delivered some of the most virtuoso piano playing heard at Arendal City Hall in a long, long time, if ever, was the verdict of the experts after the concert.” — Agderposten, Norway

PROGRAM NOTES:

SCARLATTI: Two Sonatas

Giuseppe Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples, Italy on October 26th, 1685. His musical gifts developed with an almost prodigious rapidity. At the age of sixteen he became a musician at the royal chapel, and two years later settled with his father in Rome, where Domenico became the pupil of the most eminent musicians in Italy. Soon Domenico Scarlatti became famous in his country principally as a harpsichordist.

Scarlatti met Handel in Rome in 1708. At the time of their meeting, they were both twenty-three, and were prevailed upon to compete together; they were judged equal on the harpsichord, but Handel was considered the winner on the organ. From then on they held each other in the mutual respect which formed the basis for a lifelong friendship.

The fascination of distant countries induced Scarlatti to undertake a voyage to London, where his opera *Narciso* met with only a moderate success. He lived in Portugal from 1720-28, where he was entrusted with the musical education of the princesses the royal court, and subsequently in Spain from 1728 until his death.

With the thorough musical grounding he brought with him from Italy, and his own brilliance on the harpsichord, Scarlatti immersed himself in the folk tunes and dance rhythms of Spain, with their distinctive Moorish (Arabic) and later gypsy influences. He composed more than 500 harpsichord sonatas, distinguished by their originality and omnipresent "folk" element.

MOZART: Rondo in D major

This rondo was written around the same time as the Piano Concertos in A major and C minor. In the course of the work, a theme from the third movement of the Piano Quartet in G minor (KV 478) is taken up and further developed. In spite of its considerable length and its musical depth the work was apparently not published during the composer's lifetime. The dedication, “Pour Mad:selle Charlotte de W...” (the rest is indecipherable) is an enigma. No matter which young lady Mozart had in mind, this rondo is today one of his best loved and most played piano works.

MOZART: Fantasy in C minor; Sonata in C minor

The Fantasy in C minor, K. 475, was completed some seven months after the C minor sonata. Mozart recorded the date of completion as May 20, 1785 in his private catalogue of

works. Opinions have differed whether Mozart intended the two to be performed together. Although they were published together as the same opus, Mozart sometimes performed the pieces separately.

Like many other late Mozart piano works, the Fantasy is a paradigm of dramatic contrast, with the most subtly ordered tonal shifts, dynamic inflections, harmonic invention and rich modulation.

The Fantasy has by nature a more improvisational quality than the subsequent sonata, and the pairing presents a classical correlation to the baroque combination of fantasy and fugue. Both the fantasy and sonata are linked by a focus on the bass register and octaves in the bass clef. The styles of both Muzio Clementi and C. P. E. Bach have been suggested to have influenced the composition of the fantasy, whether consciously or subconsciously.

Mozart was extremely deliberate in choosing tonalities for his compositions, and only a handful of his piano works are in minor keys. Therefore, his choice of key for the Fantasy and Sonata implies that these pieces were perhaps very personal works. The key of C minor is generally associated with tragic, violent emotions and the battle with fate. Other significant compositions in C minor (which have strikingly similar main themes) are Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto and Mozart's own Piano Concerto No. 24, K. 491.

The Piano Sonata in C minor was dedicated to Thérèse von Trattner, one of Mozart's pupils in Vienna. Her husband was an important publisher as well as Mozart's landlord at the time. Eventually, the Trattners would become godparents to four of Mozart's children.

Köchel's catalogue states, "Without question this is the most important of all Mozart's pianoforte sonatas. Surpassing all the others by reason of the fire and passion which, to its last note, breathe through it, it foreshadows the pianoforte sonata, as it was destined to become in the hands of Beethoven."

Indeed, Mozart's sonata feels in several ways prophetic of the Pathétique (which it predates by roughly fifteen years), and both works share a similar overall plan. The spacious second movement makes use of a theme remarkably similar to that of the second movement, "Adagio cantabile," of Beethoven's own great C minor sonata, the Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, "Pathétique".

CHOPIN: Ballade No.1

Born Fryderyk Franciszek Szopen on March 1, 1810 of Polish and French parentage in the village of Żelazowa Wola, Chopin is Poland's most beloved composer, and one of the most famous, influential and admired composers and virtuoso pianists of the Romantic era.

The Ballade No.1 in G minor, Op. 23 is the first of Chopin's four ballades for solo piano. It was composed in 1835-36 during the composer's early days in Paris and is dedicated to "Monsieur le Baron de Stockhausen," Hanover's ambassador to France. Chopin cited the poet Adam Mickiewicz as an influence for his ballades, but the exact inspiration for each piece is not clear.

Schumann wrote in a letter to Heinrich Dorn, "I received a new Ballade from Chopin. It seems to be a work closest to his genius (although not the most ingenious) and I told him that I like it best of all his compositions. After quite a lengthy silence he replied with emphasis, 'I am happy to hear this since I too like it most and hold it dearest.'"

The music is built from two main themes, the first introduced in bar 7 after the short introduction, and the second in bar 69. Both themes return in different guises. The piece is in compound duple time (6/4) except for the short introduction (in 4/4) and the coda (in 2/2). Sections of the piece are technically demanding, requiring complex fingering, wide chords, octaves, extremely fast chords, and even a section of chromatic chords near the end. Its

complex structure combines ideas from sonata and variation forms. In the coda ("Presto con fuoco") there is a passage which is very similar (possibly intentionally) to one in the third movement of Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata.

CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op.58

Chopin wrote the Piano Sonata in B minor, his last large-scale composition for piano, during the summer of 1844, when he was 34. He composed the sonata at Nohant, the summer estate in central France he shared with the novelist George Sand. That summer represented a last moment of stasis in the composer's life over the next several years his relationship with Sand would deteriorate, and his health, long ravaged by tuberculosis, would begin to fail irretrievably. Dedicated to Madame la Comtesse Emilie de Perthuis, a friend and pupil, the Sonata in B Minor was published in 1845. Chopin himself never performed it in public.

Chopin, like Beethoven before him, was willing to stretch classical forms for his own expressive purposes. The opening *Allegro maestoso* does indeed have a majestic beginning with the first theme flashing downward out of the silence, followed moments later by the gorgeous second subject in D major, marked *sostenuto*. The movement treats both these ideas but dispenses with a complete recapitulation and closes with a restatement of the second theme. The brief *Molto vivace* is a scherzo, yet here that form is without the violence it sometimes takes on in Beethoven. This scherzo has a distinctly light touch, with the music flickering and flashing across the keyboard (the right-hand part is particularly demanding). A quiet *legato* middle section offers a moment of repose before the returning of the opening rush.

Chopin launches the lengthy *Largo* with sharply dotted rhythms, over which the main theme—itsself dotted and marked *cantabile*—rises quietly and gracefully. This movement is also in ternary form, with a flowing middle section in E major. The finale *Presto non tanto* leaps to life with a powerful eight bar introduction built of octaves before the main theme, correctly marked *Agitato*, launches this rondo in B minor. Of unsurpassed difficulty, this final movement—one of the greatest in the Chopin sonatas—brings the work to a brilliant close.