

2,619th Concert

May 9, 2007

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**Tao Lin, pianist**

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*Program performed without intermission*

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

*Sonata in C Major*, Hob. XVI:50 (1794–1795)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro molto

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

*Klavierstücke*, op. 119 (1892)

No. 1: Intermezzo: Adagio

No. 2: Intermezzo: Andantino un poco agitato

No. 3: Intermezzo: Grazioso e giocoso

No. 4: Rhapsodie: Allegro risoluto

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

*Four Mazurkas*, op. 68 (published 1855)

No. 1 in C Major: Vivace

No. 2 in A Minor: Lento

No. 3 in F Major: Allegro, ma non troppo

No. 4 in F Minor: Andantino

Chopin

*Sonata no. 3 in B Minor*, op. 58 (1845)

Allegro maestoso

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Largo

Finale: Presto, non tanto

## The Musician

Tao Lin's appearances in Asia, Europe, and North America have earned him unanimous critical accolades for his subtle pianism and brilliant technique. Born into a musical family in Shanghai, China, Lin was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music at age eight. He won numerous prizes in rapid succession, culminating with the Alexander Tcherepnin Award. Since his arrival in the United States, Lin has earned top prizes in the competitions of the Music Teachers National Association and the National Society of Arts and Letters, as well as in the Palm Beach International Invitational Piano Competition, among others. In addition to recitals in major venues in Asia, Europe, and the United States, he has performed with the Knoxville Civic Orchestra, the Miami Chamber Orchestra, the University of Miami Symphony Orchestra, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

A devoted chamber musician, Lin is a founding member of the Berlin Piano Quartet (consisting of himself and the Jacques Thibaud String Trio) and has been featured as a guest artist with many other distinguished string quartets. He has collaborated with such esteemed soloists as Charles Castleman, Ida Haendel, Roberta Peters, Philip Quint, Sergiu Schwartz, and Eugenia Zuckerman, and studied with Ivan Davis, Leon Fleischer, Stephen Hough, Joseph Kalichstein, John Perry, Robert Rust, and Rita Sloan. Lin's recordings for the Piano Lovers record label include works by Mily Balakirev, Beethoven, Mozart, and Schubert. Tao Lin appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists of Emeryville, California.

## Program Notes

Joseph Haydn is unique among the great composers in that he was largely self-taught. None of his teachers were pianists, so it is remarkable that he would have composed more than fifty piano sonatas, many of which are highly esteemed works of concert repertoire. He inherited a standard sonata model—a fast opening movement in sonata-allegro form, a slow middle movement in song or rondo form, and a fast final movement in rondo or sonata-allegro form—from Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788) and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710–1784), with whose works he was well acquainted. But Haydn was an innovator; nine of his sonatas have only two movements, and two sonatas are expanded to include four movements. He also introduced the theme and variations and the minuet as forms for sonata movements. The sonatas he wrote in 1794 and 1795, which include the *Sonata in C Major*, Hob. xvI:50, are his last works for solo piano, although he continued to be prolific for another twelve years. They are masterpieces that introduce movements in hybrid forms (such as double variations and rondo-sonatas) and exemplify Haydn’s virtuosity, harmonic audacity, and lyric suavity.

Johannes Brahms is universally admired as a composer who united impressive formal architecture and lyrical sensitivity in music. The four pieces he published as op. 119 are his last works for solo piano and can be seen as his final testament for the instrument. The opening theme of the *Intermezzo no. 1* is a subdued musical rumination; the second theme is somewhat brighter, but the overall mood of resignation prevails. *Intermezzo no. 2* continues the atmosphere of sweet melancholy, carried to a more optimistic level by the songlike middle section. *Intermezzo no. 3* paints a more powerful picture, with diverse harmonies and accented rhythms. It seems that Brahms was intent on continuing the increasing intensity of the music with the fourth piece but no longer found the intermezzo genre adequate, instead launching into a rhapsody (*Allegro risoluto*) with dramatic chords

and a heroic main theme. The middle section provides contrast by returning to the gentler mood of the first two intermezzi, but before long, the mighty first theme returns, overwhelming the delicate interlude with a grand extended reprise.

Frédéric Chopin's mazurkas are not as openly patriotic as his polonaises, but they are, in the words of Robert Schumann (1810–1856), “guns buried in flowers.” The mazurka is a dance of Polish origin with heroic overtones, characterized by an accent on the second (or sometimes third) of the three beats in the measure. Chopin occasionally used modal harmonies in his mazurkas, another element borrowed from Polish folk music. Like his waltzes, Chopin's early mazurkas are straightforward enough that it would be possible to dance to them, but his later examples in both genres, including the mazurkas of op. 68 (heard in this program) and op. 59 (which will be performed in this recital series by Brian Ganz on May 23), are amplified and stylized.

Having stretched the sonata form almost beyond recognition in his *Piano Sonata no. 2*, op. 35, Chopin turned back to a more classical approach in his third and last work in the genre, the *Sonata no. 3 in B Minor*, op. 58. Whereas the former is fantastic and histrionic, the latter is intimate and profound. The energy of the opening *Allegro maestoso* is subdued by two contrasting themes, one light and the other lyrical. The brilliant *Scherzo: Molto vivace* has a nostalgic trio. The *Largo* presents an inspired melody within the boundaries of the traditional song form (ABA), and the vigorous finale, marked *Presto, non tanto*, is a cleanly rendered rondo (ABACADA).

*Program notes by Stephen Ackert and Sorab Modi*