University of Florida Performing Arts

presents

Fazil Say

Sunday, January 6, 2013, 2 p.m.

University Auditorium
Fazil Say, piano

Program

Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331 *Alla Turca*  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Three movements from *Petrushka*  
Igor Strawinsky

---------------------------- INTERMISSION -----------------------------

*Pictures at an Exhibition*  
Modest Mussorgsky

Program Notes

**Piano Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331 *Alla Turca***  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is among the best-known musical child prodigies in history, touring Europe as a pianist at age 7, penning still-memorable symphonies in his early teens, and creating a formidable catalog of works in his short life. Perhaps surprisingly, he did not begin writing piano sonatas until relatively late — for him anyway — at age 19. The Sonata No. 11 in A Major, K. 331, came “later” in his career, when Mozart was in his 20s.

Maybe because of its popularity, the Sonata has been the subject of much conjecture through the years. Some have suggested it might have been written in Salzburg, his hometown, or perhaps his adopted home of Vienna (where he moved in 1781), or perhaps even on a 1778 trip to Paris. According to biographer Maynard Solomon, the timeline on this sonata is hard to pin down because neither the paper it was written on, the ink Mozart used, nor the state of his handwriting — three often used tools for archivists who date manuscripts — have yielded conclusive dates. The most popular story is that K. 331 was written soon after his marriage to Constanze Weber, somewhere between August and November of 1783 and perhaps on their first visit to “meet the family” in Salzburg.

It is a traditional three-movement sonata, though Mozart breaks from tradition as the first movement is a theme-and-variations form rather than in “sonata-form.” The opening theme, based on a Czech folk song, is introduced simply and gracefully (*grazioso*). One can hear the theme’s structure throughout the six variations. Note the “minor variation” (No. 3) and the bouncy and expressive sixth, and final, variation. The middle movement, a moody Menuetto, is a brief respite before the upbeat finale.

The last movement is perhaps as famous as any Mozart ever wrote. Its bouncy and jocular character is explained by the “alla Turca” designation in the score; i.e., “in the Turkish style,” a reference to the “exotic” music of Turkey that was popular in late 18th-century Vienna.
Three movements from *Petrushka*
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

As much as any composer who emerged in the early 20th century, Russian composer Igor Stravinsky turned music on its head. He was unabashedly original, incorporated the energy and verve of folk music in much of his early work, and continually reinventing himself throughout his life.

Though he showed early talent, Stravinsky studied law when he entered the University of St. Petersburg in 1901 and might have actually finished his program in law had it not been for the so-called “Bloody Sunday” of 1905, which prevented him from finishing his law degree. He was not very interested in law, anyway, and Stravinsky was studying privately with one of Russia’s most renowned composers, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (an active member of the “Mighty Handful,” see note on next work below). His fate was sealed, it seemed.

Russian dance impresario Sergei Diaghilev was on hand for a performance of the Stravinsky’s *Fireworks* in St Petersburg and soon after commissioned the young composer to score several ballets for his new *Ballet Russe* in Paris. The result was three of the most compelling new orchestral works of the 20th century, all now staples of the orchestral repertory: *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *Rite of Spring*.

Though his 1913 *Rite of Spring* is generally credited with starting a musical revolution, 1911’s *Petrushka* shows all signs of the later work: the ever-changing time signatures and cross rhythms, harmonic experimentation (in the case of *Petrushka*, this is the simultaneous use of C and F# triads, the so-called “Petrushka chord”), and the verve and energy of Russian folk music. Like the *Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka* existed in a two-piano version of used for rehearsal of the Ballet Russe dancers.

Unlike the other orchestral works, *Petrushka* has endured and thrived as a solo piano work. Together with pianist Arthur Rubenstein, Stravinsky created the version we hear on this program. “My intention,” wrote Stravinsky of this piano arrangement, “was to give virtuoso pianists a piece of a certain breadth that would permit them to enhance their modern repertoire and demonstrate a brilliant technique.” In the original score, the piano represents the life-force, and its first solo appearance, the *Danse russe* (Russian Dance), represents the coming to life of three inanimate puppets: Petrushka, The Moor and the Ballerina.

In the second act, *Chez Pétrouchka* (Petrushka’s Room), the Ballerina, with whom Petrushka has fallen in love, enters his backstage “room” (barely a holding cell). We hear this when the steady tempo suddenly seems to slip away. A gentle melody emerges, interspersed with an occasional mad flurry of notes. This movement ends in a very agitated state (*Agitato*, in the score).

The last movement, *La semaine grasse* (The Shrovetide Fair), represents the final scene from the ballet. It begins with a huge sustained and insistent chord, characterizing a wild, pre-Lenten street festival and includes a peasant dancing with a bear, a merchant throwing money at the crowd, and ultimately the whole village dancing together — joined, incidentally, by the devil.

The climax of the scene is the Moor doing in the poor Petrushka because he is jealous of Petrushka’s interest in the Ballerina. The ballet ends with Petrushka’s ghost making an appearance to stir things up (called, in the original score: The Vociferation of Petrushka’s Ghost).

1Tsar Nicholas II ordered the shooting of peaceful demonstrators in the streets of St. Petersburg that Sunday in 1905. Historians suggest this act was a spark that helped ignite the Soviet Revolution.
Pictures at an Exhibition
Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky was among a group of Russian composers who came to be known as “The Mighty Handful” or “Mighty Five.” These composers — Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Alexander Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky — were active in the mid-to-late 1800s and wanted to create a true national Russian sound in music, something distinctive from the Germanic music permeating the concert halls of Europe at the time. One way in which they showed their national heritage — inspired by the Russian nationalist art critic Vladimir Stasov — was through using Russian folk art, folk tales and folk music as the basis for their compositions. Mussorgsky was the most boldly unconventional of the five composers.

In 1873, Stasov organized a memorial exhibition of Russian artist/architect Victor Hartmann, a show that went on display in St. Petersburg in 1874. Mussorgsky was so moved by the show that he was inspired to create his piano masterwork, Pictures at an Exhibition, a short time after attending the exhibit. Pictures at an Exhibition was never published in his lifetime, and has long been better known in an orchestral version created by Maurice Ravel. (Curiously, Mussorgsky’s most famous orchestral work, Night on Bald Mountain, was also only performed in a Rimsky-Korsakov’s version, rather than Mussorgsky’s brazen original version, until recently.)

Mussorgsky references 10 portraits from the exhibition. The opening Promenade — said to be “the composer’s self-portrait” — starts things off. Note that this theme returns several times, though transformed, on each occurrence. Many musical references abound: one can hear children playing in Tuileries, a lumbering oxcart in Bydlo, and fittingly, the chirping of canary chicks in the Ballet des poussins dans leurs coques (The Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shell). Limoges (The Marketplace) captures the hustle and bustle of Limoges marketplace, and Catacombae (The Catacombs) captures that dark and dank locale. The work closes with one of the great movements in the piano repertory, Le grande porte de Kiev (The Great Gate of Kiev), in which Mussorgsky imagines a celebration with, among other things, a Russian choir belting out an Orthodox hymn while “church bells of Kiev” toll the Promenade theme in appropriately majestic harmony.

— Program notes by Dave Kopplin

About Fazil Say

The Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say was born in Ankara and studied piano and composition at the state conservatory of his home city. As a 17-year-old student, he was awarded a scholarship enabling him to work for five years with David Levine at the Robert Schumann Institute in Düsseldorf. He then went on to pursue his studies at the Berlin Conservatory. France’s Le Figaro states, “He is not merely a pianist of genius; undoubtedly he will be one of the great artists of the 21st century.” His newest recording, Pictures [which includes Pictures at an Exhibition], has received the album of the month award in France, the Choc de Classic prize.

In 2010 Fazil Say completed his five-year residency at the Konzerthaus Dortmund, marked with a four-day festival and with the world premiere of his first symphony, Istanbul Symphony, commissioned by Konzerthaus Dortmund and WDR Cologne.
in connection with Ruhr 2010. Also in the 2009-10 season, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg hosted Say as artist-in-residence with a one-week festival, which was preceded by a residency that same season at the Chatelet in Paris. At the Baden-Baden Festival he played, *Fazil Say Night* with four piano concertos by Ravel, Mozart, Gershwin and Say, accompanied by the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. He again appeared as guest artist at the Salzburg Festival with four concerts, played at the Rheingau and Baden-Baden festivals, the Benedetti Michelangeli Festival in Italy, the Menuhin Festival in Gstaad, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Orange Festival, Athens Festival, the Abu Dhabi Classics and many others. He also toured worldwide through Japan, France and Spain. In the fall of 2010 the Meran Festival organized a four-day gala before he began his residency at the Konzerthaus Berlin, which includes at least 12 concerts per season.

Fazil Say is frequently invited by the New York Philharmonic, the Israeli Philharmonic, the BBC Philharmonic, the Orchestre National de France and other leading orchestras throughout the world. He has played at the Ruhr Piano Festival, the festivals of Lucerne, Verbier and Montpellier, and has also performed in many of the world’s prestigious concert halls, including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Musikverein, Tokyo’s Suntory Hall and Carnegie Hall. He has toured Europe and the United States with Russian violinist Maxim Vengerov, and he has founded a duo with the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja. Also an experienced jazz musician, he plays regularly at the Montreux Jazz Festival.

Equally renowned as a composer, he has produced his *Concerto for Piano and Violin*, followed by his second piano concerto, *Silk Road*. His oratorio, *Najm*, was first performed in Ankara and was closely followed by many other compositions, including two more piano concertos, an oratorio, *Requiem for Metin Altiok*, and a violin concerto, *1001 Nights in the Harem*. In 2010, the Salzburg Festival commissioned a piece for piano and orchestra, *Nirvana Burning*, and his concerto for trumpet and orchestra was premiered at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival by world renowned trumpet player Gábor Boldoczki. He has also composed for films, and the city of Vienna commissioned a ballet score, *Patara*.

He currently records for the Naïve label, exclusively devoted to his own works. His discography includes Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* with the New York Philharmonic and Kurt Masur; a Bach recital; and Stravinsky’s arrangement of *The Rite of Spring* for four hands, in which Say plays both parts himself and which brought him several international awards, including the 2001 EchoPreis Klassik and the German Music Critics’ best recording of the year. He has recorded Beethoven sonatas, and Haydn sonatas, in addition to three of Mozart’s concertos with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra under Howard Griffiths. His violin concerto has been recorded and released, as well as a recital CD with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, which received the prestigious German Record Award Echo in 2009. Fazil Say is under exclusive publishing contract with Schott Music Publishers Mainz.

The Franco-German television channel Arte has produced a full-length portrait of Fazil Say in Istanbul, Aspendos, Munich and other places, released on Arthaus as a DVD. Also on DVD, his work for chorus and orchestra, *Najm*, has been released. In 2008 he was appointed, together with Paulo Coelho and others, an Ambassador of Intercultural Dialogue by the European Union.