University of Florida Performing Arts

presents

Ran Dank, Piano
Soyeon Kate Lee, Piano
From Young Concert Artists

Thursday, January 23, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Squitieri Studio Theatre

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UFHealth
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HEALTH
Ran Dank, Piano
Soyeon Kate Lee, Piano

Program

Selections from Waltzes, Op. 39
No. 1 in B Major, No. 2 in E Major, No. 3 in G-flat,
No. 4 in E Minor, No. 6 in C-sharp Major,
No. 11 in B Minor, No. 14 in B Minor, No. 15 in A Major
Soyeon Kate Lee, Ran Dank

Sonata in G Major, Hob XVI:40
Allegr`etto innocente
Presto
Franz Joseph Haydn

Nocturne for the Left Hand, Op. 9, No. 2
Impromptu a la Mazur, Op. 7, No. 2
Impromptu in B-flat Minor, Op. 12, No. 2
Soyeon Kate Lee

Polonaise Op. 40, No. 2 in C Minor
Mazurka Op. 67, No. 1 in G Major
Mazurka Op. 67, No. 2 in G Minor
Mazurka KK II b No. 5 in A Minor (Emile Gaillard)
Frédéric Chopin

Hochzeitsmarsch (Wedding March),
from A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Op. 61, No. 7
Ran Dank
Mendelssohn/Liszt/Horowitz

The Rite of Spring
Igor Stravinsky

Part 1: Adoration of the Earth
Augurs of Spring
Ritual of Abduction
Spring Rounds
Ritual of the Rival Tribes
Procession of the Sage: The Sage
Dance of the Earth

Part II: The Sacrifice
Introduction
Mystic Circles of the Young Girls
Glorification of the Chosen One
Evocation of the Ancestors
Ritual Action of the Ancestors
Sacrificial Dance
Program Notes

Selections from Waltzes, Op. 39
No. 1 in B Major, No. 2 in E Major, No. 3 in G-flat, No. 4 in E Minor, No. 6 in C-sharp Major, No. 11 in B Minor, No. 14 in B Minor, No. 15 in A Major

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

German composer Johannes Brahms is often portrayed as a self-doubting artist. Biographers will mention his penchant for uncertainty, his habit of burning scores in the fireplace if he felt they didn’t measure up, or his multi-year quest to finish his very first symphony. (He was 43 when the ink was finally dry on Symphony No. 1.)

Brahms is portrayed in paintings and photos through the years, brooding and serious, but with one exception, a painting by German artist Willy von Beckerath (1868-38) who portrays the aging composer in reverie, at the piano. It captures the passion and playfulness of Brahms in a way that no other image of him does.

Just like the Beckerath painting, Brahms’ Waltzes for Four Hands, Op. 39, capture the composer seemingly unencumbered by his doubts about his own work. The 16 waltzes were finished in January 1865, just weeks after Brahms had completed editing a first edition of Vienna native son Franz Schubert’s Ländler for Piano. He was likely in an inspired mood.

These Waltzes are many-faceted miniatures featuring distinctive and subtle harmonic experimentation and a uniquely Brahmsian development of ideas. (This technique was later dubbed “developing variations” by theorist and composer Arnold Schoenberg.) No. 1 in B Major acts as an introduction to the set; the wistful No. 2 in E Major follows like a slow movement; No. 3 in G-flat continues in a pensive mood, whereas No. 4 in E Minor is more boisterous. No. 6 in C-sharp Major is a romp; Nos. 11 and 14, both in B Minor, seem to be inspired by the Hungarian folk music that Brahms loved; finally, No. 15 in A Major — the closer of this program — is inward-looking and peaceful.

Sonata in G Major, Hob XVI:40
Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Due to a late addition to the program list, notes for this piece were unavailable.

Nocturne for the Left Hand, Op. 9, No. 2
Impromptu a la Mazur, Op. 7, No. 2
Impromptu in B-flat Minor, Op. 12, No. 2

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

Was Russian composer and pianist Alexander Scriabin a “synesthete”? Not a question you probably ask yourself, not the least of which because a synesthete — a person in whom one sense triggers another sense — is quite rare. In the case of Scriabin, even things as matter-of-fact as key signatures would trigger different colors in his mind. For example, according to Scriabin, F-sharp Major was a spiritual tonality, evoking a deep blue, whereas F Major was earthy, definitely a rich red in his view.

He was as forward-looking as any composer of his day. At the end of his life, Scriabin was in the middle of writing a monumental work, Mysterium, a seven-day long “event” that was to be performed in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains complete with air scented by perfumes, light shows, pyrotechnics and a gigantic orchestra appropriately sized for his apocalyptic artistic vision. Such events are commonplace in our day, but were unheard of in his. Scriabin is best remembered for his late symphonies and for his many piano works. One of the more unusual in his catalog is the Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand. Right
Hand problems were familiar to Scriabin. Early in life he injured his right hand in a carriage accident, and later, in 1891, he overdid it practicing Franz Liszt’s Don Juan to the point of pain. Scriabin’s excellent writing for the left hand in his 1894 Nocturne sounds to most listeners like a work for two hands.

His Impromptu in B-flat Minor, Op. 12, No. 2, is certainly a nod to Chopin, who was an inspiration to him. This Impromptu, however, distinguishes itself in its intensity, with huge repeated chords singing out fortissimo in a decidedly “un-Chopinesque” manner.

**Polonaise Op. 40, No. 2 in C Minor**
**Mazurka Op. 67, No. 1 in G Major**
**Mazurka Op. 67, No. 2 in G Minor**
**Mazurka KK II b No. 5 in A Minor (Emile Gaillard)**
Frédéric Chopin (1810-49)

Polish-born composer and pianist Frédéric Chopin began life destined, it seemed, to be a great musician. By age 15, he had already surpassed the abilities of his first piano teachers and published his Op. 1, a Rondo for piano. He quickly outgrew his hometown of Warsaw and moved abroad, briefly visiting Vienna, though ultimately settling in Paris in 1831 where he took the music-loving town by storm. He became the piano teacher of note for the Parisian upper class.

Chopin wrote almost exclusively for the piano and vastly extended the repertory for it. Under his hands, the instrument would sing, pulse, dance and swell, though interestingly, and much to the chagrin of some, Chopin is said to have rarely made use of the piano’s most powerful (forte) dynamic when he performed, preferring the instrument’s more intimate piano and mezzo piano (medium soft) ranges.

The four works on this program are typical of his style. Like Brahms’ Waltzes, Chopin drew on popular dances — the Polonaise and Mazurka among them — as inspiration for his works. In Chopin’s hands, the polonaise (actually, the French word for “Polish”), becomes more than a folk-inspired dance. The Polonaise Op. 40, No. 2 in C Minor is a companion work to the very popular Op. 40, No. 1 in A Major, but by comparison it is melancholy winter-of-the-soul music. Indeed, famed Russian pianist Anton Rubinstein has called this pair a symbol of Polish glory and tragedy, respectively.

By contrast, Chopin’s Mazurkas, Op. 67, and his A Minor mazurka (dedicated to Emile Gaillard, a Parisian patron of the arts and one of Chopin’s favorite students) are palette cleansers for that winter-of-the-soul feeling. These three short works are all based on the mazurka, an up-beat dance that is quintessentially Polish: even the Polish national anthem is a mazurka.

**Hochzeitsmarsch (Wedding March), from A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Op. 61, No. 7**
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47)/Franz Liszt (1811-86)/Vladimir Horowitz (1903-89)

The now ubiquitous Hochzeitsmarsch, or Wedding March, began life as incidental music by German composer Felix Mendelssohn for a production of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Not surprisingly, the music caught on quickly at weddings as early as the late 1850s. Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt created his own version of the Mendelssohn work (Hochzeitsmarsch und Elfenreigen aus dem Sommernachtstraum von Felix Mendelssohn) and virtuoso pianist Vladimir Horowitz made a solo piano showpiece from the Liszt work, which we hear on this program.
The Rite of Spring
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky put himself on the musical map composing music for the Ballet Russes, a Paris-based ballet company with deep roots in Russia. The company’s charismatic impresario, Sergei Diaghilev, brought together more than a few lesser-known artists — artists who are now household names: painters Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse; fashion designer Coco Chanel; and composers Claude Debussy, Erik Satie, Francis Poulenc and Stravinsky, among many others.

The scenario of The Rite of Spring came to Stravinsky, supposedly in a dream, while he was working on The Firebird: a pagan rite, in which a young maiden, The Chosen One, dances herself to death as a ritual sacrifice to the god of spring. Together with Nicolas Roerich, a painter and well-known authority on the mythology of the ancient Slavic tribes, Stravinsky began to write music and craft a scenario. When asked late in life what inspired the work, Stravinsky answered: “The violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking. That was the most wonderful event of every year of my childhood.”

So many aspects of the music were ground-breaking: the daring harmony, the driving and insistent rhythms, the bold use of percussion and polyrhythms, the use of extreme registers in the instruments, and the ever-changing meters that made certain sections of the ballet seem totally out of balance. Musicologists have even coined a term to describe the music he created in The Rite: primitivism.

Like his score for The Firebird, the score for The Rite of Spring began as a piano work, but the complicated nature of The Rite required that Stravinsky write for two pianos. Still, as colorful as the eventual orchestrated score is, all of the music is in the two-piano work, from the opening melody representing spring coming to life in the Augurs of Spring to the power of the Ritual of Abduction; from the portentous Introduction of Part II to the churning percussive chaos of the final Sacrificial Dance. Indeed, the clarity of the thematic material that Stravinsky uses in the score is laid bare in the two-piano version, a tour de force for many a pair of pianists.

About Ran Dank, Piano

Lauded by The New York Times for his “vivacious playing,” pianist Ran Dank deploys his brilliant technique with astonishing energy and intensity, captivating audiences and critics alike. This season, Dank’s engagements include performances at the Bridgehampton Music Festival, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, EMMA Concert Association, Hawaii Concert Society, the Levine School of Music, the Brownville Concert Series, Music at St. Luke’s and the Vanguard Concert Series. Highlights of last season include his Boston recital debut at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, as well as appearances at Portland Ovations, Merrick-Bellmore Community Concert Association, Missouri State University, Tannery Pond Concerts and the University at Buffalo, and in the inaugural season of the ensemble miXt, with performances at New York’s Merkin Hall; Washington, D.C.’s Kennedy Center; as well as at the Paramount Theater, the Jacksonville Jewish Community Alliance, the University of Florida and the University of Georgia.

Dank has appeared as soloist with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Lincoln Center; the Phoenix, Ann Arbor, Hilton Head and Pensacola Symphonies; the Cleveland Orchestra as a laureate of the Cleveland International Piano Competition; as well as the Orquesta de Valencia in Spain, among others. He has been presented by the Washington Performing Arts Society’s prestigious Hayes Piano Series at the Kennedy Center, the Chopin Festival in Warsaw and at Finland’s Mänttä Festival, where his all-Liszt recital was broadcast on Finnish National Radio.
In addition, he has performed as a chamber musician at the Young Concert Artists Festival Week in Tokyo, and the Seattle and Montreal Chamber Music Festivals.

Recipient of the Sander Buchman Memorial First Prize of the 2009 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Dank made his New York debut in the Jerome L. Greene Foundation Concert. At the Auditions, he was also honored with the John Browning Memorial Prize, the Slomovic Soloist Prize, the Albany Symphony Prize, the Embassy Series Prize for a concert in Washington, D.C. and the Saint Vincent College Bronder Prize for Piano.

Born in Israel, Dank has appeared as soloist with the symphony orchestras of Jerusalem, Rishon Lezion, Haifa and Raanana at the Israel Festival in Jerusalem, and at the Israel Conservatory of Music in a recital celebrating Debussy’s 150th anniversary.

In addition to first prize at the Hilton Head International Piano Competition, Dank is a laureate of the Naumburg Piano Competition and the Sydney International Piano Competition. Dank is the recipient of grants from the Arthur Foundation and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation.

Dank earned his bachelor’s degree from the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University, where he studied with Emanuel Krasovsky. He received his master’s degree from the Juilliard School, where he worked with (YCA Alumni) Emanuel Ax and Joseph Kalichstein, and received an artist diploma at Juilliard under Robert McDonald. He is currently pursuing his doctorate of musical arts at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York as a Chancellor’s Fellow, working with (YCA Alumni) Ursula Oppens and Richard Goode.

About Soyeon Kate Lee, Piano

First prize winner of the prestigious 2010 Naumburg International Piano Competition, Korean-American pianist Soyeon Kate Lee has already been hailed by The New York Times as a pianist with “a huge, richly varied sound, a lively imagination and a firm sense of style,” while The Washington Post has lauded her for her “stunning command of the keyboard.” Lee’s 2013-14 season highlights include performances at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Rose Studio, Kaplan Penthouse, as well as recitals in Boston’s Gardner Museum, Weill Recital Hall and Steinway Society of the Bay Area. She tours as a member of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two with pianists Anne-Marie McDermott, Wu Han and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet at La Jolla, Music@Menlo, Columbus Chamber Music Society and Drew University. An active Naxos recording artist, her third CD featuring Liszt opera transcriptions will be released this season, and she will record two albums featuring the music of Scriabin.

Lee has been rapturously received as guest soloist with The Cleveland Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra; San Diego Symphony; the symphony orchestras of Columbus, Bangor, Bozeman, Boca Raton, Wyoming, Bozeman, Cheyenne, Napa Valley, Scottsdale, Abilene, Naples, Santa Fe and Shreveport in the United States; the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra (South Korea); Ulsan Symphony Orchestra (South Korea), Orquesta de Valencia (Spain); and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (Dominican Republic), including performances under the batons of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jahja Ling, Jorge Mester and Otto-Werner Mueller.

Recent recital appearances include New York City programs at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall; Merkin Concert Hall; Lincoln Center for the Performing Art’s Alice Tully Hall; Washington, D.C.’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Cleveland’s Severance Hall; the Ravinia Festival’s Rising Stars series; Auditorio de Musica de Nacional in Madrid — part of a 13-city tour of Spain, tour of the Hawaiian Islands; Krannert Center; and Finland’s Maanta Music Festival.
Lee was featured on the January 2006 cover of SYMPHONY magazine’s annual Emerging Artists issue and in the 2008 edition of Musical America’s More Thrills of Discovery. Her debut CD on the Naxos label, featuring sonatas of Scarlatti, was released in February 2007 to critical acclaim. KOCH International Classics (E1) released her second album in April 2009, for which she was awarded the 2009 Young Artist Award from the Classical Recording Foundation.

Lee earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and the artist diploma from the Juilliard School. While at Juilliard, she won every award granted to a pianist including the Rachmaninoff Concerto Competition, two consecutive Gina Bachauer Scholarship Competitions, Arthur Rubinstein Prize, Susan Rose Career Grant and the William Petschek Piano Debut Award.

Winner of the 2004 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, as well as the Second and Mozart prizes of the Cleveland International Piano Competition and the Bronze Medal of the Paloma O’Shea Santander International Piano Competition in Spain, she has worked with Richard Goode, Ursula Oppens, Jerome Lowenthal, Wu Han and Robert McDonald. A Steinway artist, Lee serves on the faculty of City College of New York, and resides in New York City with her husband, pianist Ran Dank. In her spare time, she designs her own concert gowns.