

2024–2025

Marian Anderson Hall

Sunday, March 23, at 7:00

Lang Lang Piano

Fauré Pavane, Op. 50

Schumann *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16

- I. Äusserst bewegt
- II. Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch
- III. Sehr aufgeregt
- IV. Sehr langsam
- V. Sehr lebhaft
- VI. Sehr langsam
- VII. Sehr rasch
- VIII. Schnell und spielend

Intermission

Chopin Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3

Mazurka in B-flat major, Op. 17, No. 1

Mazurka in E minor, Op. 17, No. 2

Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4

Mazurka in C major, Op. 24, No. 2

Mazurka in B-flat minor, Op. 24, No. 4

Mazurka in D-flat major, Op. 30, No. 3

Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 30, No. 4

Mazurka in C major, Op. 33, No. 3

Mazurka in B minor, Op. 33, No. 4

Mazurka in D major, Op. 33, No. 2

Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 59, No. 3

Chopin Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44

This program runs approximately two hours.

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Soloist



Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today. As a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, he has become one of the world's more influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally happy playing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing, the 2020 Dubai EXPO Opening Ceremony, the 2024 reopening of Notre Dame in Paris, or for just a few hundred children in public schools, he is a master of communicating through music. He has performed sold-out concerts all over

the world; formed ongoing collaborations with conductors including Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach; and played with all the world's top orchestras. He is known for thinking outside the box and frequently steps into different musical worlds. His performances at the GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and jazz legend Herbie Hancock were watched by millions of viewers.

Lang Lang's passion for innovation has led him to partnerships beyond classical music. He has worked with global pop icons such as Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Rose from BLACKPINK, and Jay Chou, bringing classical music to new and diverse audiences. He has also collaborated with Disney. For the past decade he has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008 he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building young audiences. In 2013 he was designated by the secretary general of the United Nations as a "Messenger of Peace" focusing on global education.

Lang Lang began playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before he was five. He entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at nine and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently came to Philadelphia to study with Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was 17 when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Concerto with the Chicago Symphony; he became an overnight sensation. He was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was picked as one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. In 2011 he was honored with the highest prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. Lang Lang is an exclusive recording artist of Universal Music Group and Deutsche Grammophon. For further information visit www.langlang.com and www.langlangfoundation.org.

The Music

Pavane

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Organist, pianist, and composer Gabriel Fauré approached music in a very personal way, imagining an intimate conversation between creator and muse. Even his popular Requiem turned away from the earlier judgement-threatening Requiems to assure comfort and solace at death's hour. His piano works were equally refined, with languid melodies over Impressionistic harmonic palettes. He originally composed the Pavane for chamber orchestra and optional chorus in 1887, subsequently arranging a version for solo piano, which he recorded with player piano. Deriving its rhythm from the 16th-century traditional dance, the Pavane captures the Belle Époque elegance of pre-World War I Europe.

Kreisleriana

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

Robert Schumann composed the piano cycle *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, over four days in 1838 as an homage to an E.T.A. Hoffmann literary character, the eccentric composer Johannes Kreisler, whom Schumann saw as the “very essence of the new Romantic spirit in art.” Comprised of eight keyboard vignettes, the cycle expresses Schumann's dual musical personalities of the exuberant Florestan and introspective Eusebius. The short pieces alternate between agitated or very fast and intimate or very slow, ending with a *schnell und spielend* (fast and playful) movement calling for a wide range of dynamic effects and pianistic touches. Schumann expressed great enthusiasm for *Kreisleriana*, writing to Clara Wieck (his future wife), “My music seems to me, just now so extraordinarily intricate with all its simplicity,” and that the work “speaks so entirely from the heart.”

12 Waltzes/Polonaise

Frédéric Chopin (1810–49)

In 1830, age 20, Frédéric Chopin left his native Poland and eventually settled in Paris. Although he never returned to the country of his birth, Poland was so ingrained in his identity that the urn of Polish soil Chopin took with him on his departure was buried with him when he died. Poland never left Chopin, but rather informed his musical writing, with three Polish folk dances particularly influencing his keyboard repertory: the lively oberek, the more reflective kujawiak, and the animated mazurka.

The triple-meter mazurka originated in the 17th century in the province of Mazovia near Warsaw and evolved, along with its musical cousin, the polonaise, from an informal folk idiom with singing to an instrumental dance popular in European aristocratic circles. Musical traits include accents on the second or third beats and unusual scales accompanied by steady chords resembling a bowed stringed instrument. Chopin's more than 50 mazurkas for piano not only kept his homeland alive, but his unique combination of song, dance, and storytelling were also a way of expressing himself. G.C. Ashton

Jonson wrote that in Chopin's hands "the mazurka ceased to be an actual dance tune, and became a tone poem, a mirror of moods, an epitome of human emotions, joy and sadness, love and hate, tenderness and defiance, coquetry and passion."

The Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3, begins with a melancholy introduction before launching into a Slavic melody contrasted by guitar-like arpeggios. A middle section, marked by a joyful dialogue, leads to passages in which the right hand carries the mazurka rhythm and the left hand the melody.

The Op. 17 mazurkas, published in 1834, demonstrate Chopin's own brilliance as a pianist. The opening one in B-flat major begins with a bright and triumphant theme. A middle section of mixed meters between the right and left hands conveys humor, suggesting instrumental musicians playing together informally. The Mazurka in E minor, No. 2, moves effortlessly between a nostalgic kujawiak waltz and quicker mazurka rhythms. The closing Mazurka in A minor, No. 4, builds a poignant melody from a three-note cell, varied with a fluid, jazz-like right hand against steady chords. A chipper middle section in A major recalls Chopin's happy childhood summers in the Polish village of Szafarnia.

The mid-1830s Op. 24 set shows great use of the oberek and kujawiak. The Mazurka in C major, No. 2, evokes a shepherd's flute in the right hand over steady chords evoking a bowed stringed instrument. The closing Mazurka in B-flat minor, No. 4, is full of musical interplay, with cascading chromatic counterpoint as two voices struggle to come together and are propelled apart.

The Mazurka in D-flat major, Op. 30, No. 3, from 1837, begins with a single note before launching into a conversation of contrasting dynamics and shifts from major to minor. The Mazurka in C-sharp minor, No. 4 of the same set, reaches into the highest register of the piano with right-hand appoggiaturas and guitar-like accompaniment in the left hand.

The four mazurkas of Op. 33, published in 1838, differ in spirit from one another, with the Mazurka in C major, No. 3, marked with the unusual notation of *semplce*. The middle section is striking in its elegant thirds and sixths. This Mazurka was later transcribed as a lullaby by the great dramatic mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, a good friend of Chopin's. The Mazurka in B minor, No. 4, is a multicharacter ballade in rondo form with the theme repeated eight times. One episode is for left hand only, while a section in B major presents one of the composer's most expressive melodies. The Mazurka in D major, No. 2, is one of the most difficult pianistically, with contrasting voices in the right hand and a second beat upbow in the left hand. This Mazurka captures both a rustic polka spirit and the charm of salon dancing.

Chopin's Op. 59 set from 1845 reflects the composer's lifelong study of Bach and has been described as Chopin "at the summit of his powers." The Mazurka in F-sharp minor, No. 3, mixes major and minor passages with triplets conveying a crisp oberek feeling. Swirling eighth notes lead to a majestic, yet quiet, close.

Like the mazurka, Chopin's more than 20 polonaises for keyboard helped make the

dance a national symbol of Poland. The Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44, is the first of his three “grand polonaises” in which he departs from the conventional form to create a free-fantasy “dance poem.” With its distinctive rhythm in the left hand, this Polonaise is full of patriotic spirit and rich keyboard orchestral effects. A mazurka in the central section reminds the audience of the power of Poland’s musical soul.

—Nancy Plum

Nancy Plum has been a program annotator for 30 years and has written notes for The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Kimmel Center, Carnegie Hall, and Philadelphia Singers, among others. She has been a music critic in Princeton for more than 35 years and is a member of the Philadelphia Chorale. She wrote a history of the U.S. Air Force Singing Sergeants and is completing a book about an incident in the Cuban underground in the 1950s.

Musical Terms

Appoggiatura: An embellishing note or tone performed before a note of the melody and falling on the beat

Arpeggio: A broken chord (with notes played in succession instead of together)

Ballade: A term applied to an instrumental (normally piano) piece in a narrative style

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Dynamics: The varying and contrasting degrees of loudness

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Mazurka: A lively Polish dance in triple meter

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Pavane: A court dance of the early 16th century, probably of Spanish origin

Polka: A lively 19th century couple dance of Bohemian origin in fast duple time

Polonaise: A Polish national dance in moderate triple meter

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Tone poem: A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

Triplet: A group of three equal notes performed in the time of two

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Aufgeregt: Excited, energetic

Bewegt: Animated, with motion

Innig: Heartfelt, sincere, fervent

Langsam: Slow

Lebhaft: Animated, lively

Rasch: Quickly, lively

Schnell: Fast

Semplice: Simply

Spielend: Easily, effortlessly

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Äusserst: Extremely

Nicht zu: Not too

Sehr: Very

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