

Doctoral Solo Recital at Barnett Hall
May 15, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Sandy Wang, Piano

Waldszenen Op.82 (1849)

- I. Eintritt
- II. Jäger auf der Lauer
- III. Einsame Blumen
- IV. Verrufene Stelle
- V. Freundliche Landschaft
- VI. Herberge
- VII. Vogel als Prophet
- VIII. Jagdlied
- IX. Abschied

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Piano Sonata Op.70 No.10 (1913)

Alexander Scriabin
(1871-1915)

~ intermission ~

Sechs Klavierstücke Op. 118 (1893)

- I. Intermezzo in a
- II. Intermezzo in A
- III. Ballade in g
- IV. Intermezzo in f
- V. Romanze in F
- VI. Intermezzo in eb

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Berceuse S.174 (2nd version) (1863)

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Berceuse from "The Exterminating Angel" (2018)

Thomas Adès
(1971-)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate of Musical Arts degree with a major in Piano Performance.

*We gratefully acknowledge that we are gathered together for this performance on the
traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people.*



PROGRAM NOTES

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Waldszenen (Forest Scenes), Op. 82 (1849)



Waldszenen was inspired by the forest, guiding listeners on a captivating musical exploration of nature's beauty, mystery, and complexity. Each piece within the collection offers a vivid vignette, capturing various aspects of the forest. Schumann's later piano works appear more defined, mature, and well-rounded.

The forest journey begins with *Eintritt* (Entrance), where one steps into the woods with gentle whispers, leading into *Jäger auf der Lauer* (Hunters on the Lookout), filled with energetic bugle calls and excitement. The mood shifts dramatically from the charming melodies of *Einsame Blumen* (Lonely Flowers) to the haunting atmosphere of *Verrufene Stelle* (Haunting Place), inspired by a poem by Hebbel:

The flowers that grow so high here,
Are pale, like death;
Only one, there in the center
Stands, a dark red.

The color comes not from the sun:
It never met its rays;
It comes from the earth,
Which drank of human blood.

Schumann's use of double-dotted rhythms in *Verrufene Stelle* is reminiscent of Bach's G minor Prelude from book 1 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. *Freundliche Landschaft* (Pleasant Landscape) exudes warmth and companionship, while *Herberge* (Shelter) offers solace amidst the wilderness. *Vogel als Prophet* (Bird as Prophet) transports audiences into an ethereal realm, where the bird's song becomes almost a sacred revelation. *Jagdlied* (Hunting Song) vividly depicts hunters and galloping horses. The collection concludes with *Abschied* (Farewell), bidding a sentimental farewell to the forest with a sense of nostalgia and longing.

ALEXANDER Scriabin

Piano Sonata Op.70 No.10 (1913)

Scriabin composed his last three sonatas, the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth, in the summer of 1913. This Sonata is a formidable challenge in his repertoire due to its physical demands, lack of tonal familiarity, and unsteady pulse. Pianists and listeners could easily become lost in the mystical atmosphere and shortened thematic lines.

Colors and synaesthesia play important roles as well as nature in Scriabin's symbolic beliefs. His friend, Leonid Sabaneyeff, recorded Scriabin's expressions about animals, plants and nature while taking walks on a summer day. "All plants and little animals are expressions of our psyches. Their appearance corresponds to the movements of our souls. They are symbols..." He further said "My Tenth Sonata is a sonata of insects. Insects are born from the sun... they are the sun's kisses..."

In Scriabin's Tenth Sonata, intervals of a major third followed by a minor third are introduced within other tone clusters to create new sounds and colors. Throughout the piece, trembling trills and tremolo elements evoke imagery of light and insect wings, serving as consistent motifs. This sonata opens with a descending thirds motif, which recurs later in the development and coda sections. The exposition features melodies with half-step motion, while the development involves trills and the motif derived from the previous section with frequent shifts in meter and harmony. As the piece progresses, it builds towards a climactic restatement of its opening theme, with trills becoming increasingly prominent. Scriabin accommodates the sonata layout to build a larger structure than the common sonata form.



JOANNES BRAHMS Sechs Klavierstücke Op. 118 (1893)

Brahms composed his final solo piano compositions, Op.116, Op.117, Op.118, and Op.119, around 1891-1893. These works exemplify his late compositional period's profound musical expression and refined style. *Sechs Klavierstücke*, Op.118 (The Six Piano Pieces) was published with a dedication to Clara Schumann.

The opening *Intermezzo* unfolds with immediacy and emotional depth. The restless harmonic shifts and heavy melodic sighs reflect rich expression, with a lively accompaniment that both supports and challenges the unfolding melodies.

The second *Intermezzo* is a simple yet poignantly beautiful work which seems to reflect Brahms' deep intimacy with his loved one.

The *Ballade* opens with a heroic and forceful texture, contrasting with a gently lyrical B section.

The *Intermezzo* in F minor features a repeating triplet figure that moves back and forth between the hands. The opening also includes a hidden canon at the octave. A canonic imitation emerges within the warm harmonic texture of the elegiac middle section.

The *Romanza* creates a spiritual and heavenly atmosphere or choir-like texture, doubling its main melody in the alto and tenor voices. The middle section features a gently rocking accompaniment elaborating melodic fantasy lines over a drone bass.

The final *Intermezzo* in E-flat minor evokes enigmatic atmospheres with whispered melodies over rolling arpeggios originating deep in the bass. However, the middle section introduces a spirit of victory that swiftly vanishes, returning the piece to a mysterious yet somewhat tragic feeling to the end.

FRANZ LISZT Berceuse S.174 (2nd version) (1863)

The term “Berceuse” refers to a music genre characterized by its gentle, lullaby-like qualities, often adapted as character pieces for piano. Chopin's Berceuse serves as a definitive example of this genre, influencing subsequent composers like Maurice Ravel and Liszt.

Liszt originally composed his *Berceuse* in 1854, reminiscent of Chopin's *Berceuse* Op. 57 in D-flat major (1844), which is written in the same key and explores intricate variations on a simple theme set against a repetitive bass pedal. Liszt later revised it into a more elaborate version in 1863, introducing chromatic passages and an extended coda. The second version is notably adorned with extensive filigree decoration, elongating the piece, but Liszt maintains the harmonic richness and personal expression throughout. He incorporates fermatas, recitatives, and cadenzas that impart a dreamlike quality to the piece.

THOMAS ADÈS Berceuse from “The Exterminating Angel” (2018)

The *Berceuse* from *The Exterminating Angel* is a revised piano piece adapted from Act III of Adès's opera, *The Exterminating Angel* (2016). This opera is inspired by a scene from Luis Buñuel's surreal film of the same title, *El ángel Exterminador* (1962). The opera portrays a bizarre scenario where wealthy guests are inexplicably trapped in a mansion by unseen forces or unspoken societal rules during a dinner party, leading to a surreal and nightmarish situation that reflects on societal norms and human behavior.

Adès's *Berceuse* from *The Exterminating Angel* depicts a heartbreaking moment where two characters, Eduardo and his fiancée Beatriz, lie hidden together in a cabinet and choose to take their own lives rather than become victims of the exterminating angel. Unlike traditional lullabies, Adès's *Berceuse* deviates from the norm with dissonant harmonies and an unsettling mood that symbolizes death in the music.

While Chopin's and Liszt's Berceuses represent the genre with serene melodies and rocking accompaniment, Adès's interpretation breaks free, evoking deeper emotional and thematic layers in his *Berceuse*, resonating with the opera's intense storyline.