

64th Concert Series 2017-2018



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

**Charlie Albright,
piano**

Saturday, May 12, 2018

Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

President:

Betsy Shaw Weiner, Croton

Vice President:

Howard Cohen, Cortlandt Manor

Secretary:

Susan Harris, Ossining

Treasurer:

Marc Auslander, Millwood

Board Associates:

Keith Austin, Briarcliff Manor

George Drapeau, Armonk

Nyla Isele, Croton

Board of Directors:

William Altman, Croton

Klaus Brunnemann, Briarcliff Manor

Adam Glenn, Sleepy Hollow

David Kraft, Briarcliff Manor

Tom Post, Mt. Kisco

Rosella Ranno, Briarcliff Manor

Thomas Bastone, White Plains

Who We Are

Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. is an award-winning, non-profit, volunteer organization that brings to Westchester audiences world-renowned ensembles and distinguished younger musicians chosen from among the finest artists in today's diverse world of chamber music. Through our Partnership in Education program in public schools, and free admission to our six-concert season for those 18 years of age and under, we give young people throughout the county enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music, building audiences of the future.

We need additional helping hands to carry out our mission. Do consider joining the volunteers listed above. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can discuss several specific areas in which assistance is needed.

Acknowledgments

Our concerts are made possible, in part, by an ArtsWestchester Program Support grant made with funds received from Westchester County Government. Additional support is received from many friends of Friends of Music who include subscribers and other ticket holders listed in this program* who give over and above the cost of their attendance, and from the matching grants programs of IBM, Citibank, McKinsey & Co., and others. If you can choose this way to help maintain the excellent quality of our concerts, please send your contributions to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546

Program

Two Impromptus, Op. 90

No. 3 in G-flat Major

No. 2 in E-flat Major

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Improvisation

Charlie Albright

Arabesques on themes from Johann Strauss's

“On the Beautiful Blue Danube”

Andrei Schulz-Evler
(1852-1905)

Variations, Op. 41

Nikolai Kapustin
(b. 1937)

Intermission

Études, Opus 25

No. 1 in A-flat Major – *Aeolian Harp*

No. 2 in F minor

No. 3 in F Major

No. 4 in A minor

No. 5 in E minor – *Wrong Note*

No. 6 in G-sharp minor – *Thirds*

No. 7 in C-sharp minor – *Cello*

No. 8 in D-flat Major – *Sixths*

No. 9 in G-flat Major – *Butterfly*

No. 10 in B minor – *Octaves*

No. 11 in A minor – “*Winter Wind*”

No. 12 in C minor – “*Ocean*”

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Charlie Albright appears by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc. 130 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.

Piano by Steinway

Next concert

Saturday, September 22, 2018, 8:00 pm at Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY

Dover Quartet

Program: TBA

Program notes

Impromptus, Op. 90, No. 2 in E-flat Major and No. 3 in G-flat Major

Franz Schubert

Schubert was not unknown during his lifetime, but never really had an important place in public musical life. Although he died only sixteen months after Beethoven's death, each composer had inhabited a different Vienna. Unlike Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, Schubert had no support from wealthy families, although he did spend two summers in Hungary as music teacher to the Esterházy's. He lived mostly as a lower-class Viennese, congregating with friends his age; together they attended public musical events, admiring the famous musicians, especially Beethoven, from afar.

During his short life, Schubert wrote about 600 songs and almost 1000 more compositions, music in almost every form that existed in his time. Among those forms were impromptu, a term meaning a work of spontaneous character without any other fixed specific form; the first published composition given such a designation had appeared in 1822. Schubert's impromptu appeared in two groups, four in his Opus 90 in 1827 and three in his Opus 142 in 1838.

The four Impromptus in Opus 90 are generally compact pieces, song-like in form and spirit. **Impromptu No. 2 in E-flat Major**, embodying much nervous energy, begins like an etude with fast triplets in the right hand that contain an imbedded melody. The harmony shifts to the minor and then, in the central sections of the work, a booming dance begins loudly, building with many more minor modulations to *sforzandos*, as the second part exchanges chords for the earlier pianissimo runs. The final section returns to the original major tonality of E-flat, but the central dance returns as the work's coda. It ends in a desolate tonic minor *sforzando*.

Impromptu No. 3 in B-flat Major, *Andante*, has a long lyrical melody as its foundation. The subject is a familiar one that Schubert had used earlier as a pastoral interlude in his incidental music for the play, *Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus*, by Helmina von Chézy, and also in the slow movement of his String Quartet in A minor. A romantic reverie with a flowing arpeggio accompaniment, it is written in long measures that make the rhythm difficult to control; the six flats in its G-flat key send unskilled musicians floundering about awkwardly on the piano's black keys. It has five superbly inventive variations of the theme, as well as a brief coda.

Arabesque's on themes from Johann Strauss's "On the Beautiful Blue Danube," Opus 12.

Adolf Andrei Schulz-Evler

Polish-born pianist and composer Andrei Schulz-Evler studied at the Warsaw Conservatory, continuing his study under Carl Tausig in Berlin. He then was professor

of piano at the Krakow Music School, although he worked primarily in Germany. He published 52 piano pieces and songs, but today his fame rests on this single work, taking off on Strauss's most famous waltz composition. In Schulz-Evler's hands it has become a fiendishly difficult piece. Initially it was popular primarily as an encore; recently it has become a major part of the piano repertory.

There is a liquid fluidity in the Strauss music that clearly depicts the Danube River. It is fitting that Schulz-Evler gave the work the title "arabesques," since this virtuoso showpiece is a concert work containing so many ideas that they almost qualify as variations on the original Strauss themes; its embellishments and fanciful elements require a performer of great virtuosity.

Variations for piano, Op. 41

Nikolai Kapustin

Kapustin began to play the piano as a young child at home in Gorlovka, Ukraine, and later continued his musical education at the Moscow University. During the late 1950s he already had become well known as a jazz pianist, arranger, and composer and had made numerous appearances with the quintet he formed as well as with the Uri Saulsky's Central Artists' Club Big Band in Moscow. From 1961 to 1972 he toured the Soviet Union with Oleg Lundström's Jazz Orchestra. His dual interests in jazz and composing inspired him to combine the two disciplines. His early music demonstrates his interest in the instrumental concerto, but more recently he has focused on writing music for piano alone, all of it technically formidable.

Although Kapustin's musical style could be called crossover, in that it joins Classical and post-Classical art music with modern idioms of jazz and rock, his musical output conforms to classical traditions in many ways. For example, his compositions all have opus numbers, unusual for many contemporary composers, and his chamber music is written for standard combinations of instruments. Kapustin has explained: "I was never a jazz musician. I never tried to be a real jazz pianist...I'm not interested in improvisation – and what is a jazz musician without improvisation? All my 'improvisations' are written, of course...;[that] improves them."

Very little of Kapustin's music has been published; the small percentage that was published in Russia has been largely inaccessible until relatively recently. His immensely likable and easily approachable oeuvre includes thirteen piano sonatas, six piano concerti, 24 preludes and fugues for piano, a piano quintet, and many chamber works as well as compositions for orchestra.

The very colorful **Variations, Opus 41** was written in 1984, when, although Glasnost and Perestroika were on the horizon, the USSR still was in existence. At that time Kapustin composed his music for the Soviet domestic jazz/crossover market that had its own jazz traditions in Leningrad and Moscow. In this work, he creates a unique synthesis of classical music structures and the language of mainstream 20th century jazz. A short

introduction leads to its protracted 32-measure theme, which essentially is a jazzed-up version the initial solo bassoon motif of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* combined with a descending, bluesy figure. The variations, which include rhythmic displacements within the measure and over its bar-line boundaries, include all possible mainstream jazz influences from Count Basie on; yet the work, which contains some of Kapustin's most exciting music, submits also to traditional classical form.

"My school is the Russian school," Kapustin has commented, "but my compositions were taken from American culture. You can take anything, but you take it into your own tradition...The jazz style is there to give color."

In this sophisticated, urbane work, the rhythm goes through a myriad of mood swings. In the first variation, the right hand has fragmented lines and Count Basie-like chordal punctuations in dialogue with the left hand's walking bass. There also are more protracted chordal parts that support longer lines. In the next variation, some swinging writing owes its sound to the work of Erroll Garner. After a brief interlude with lines that echo be-bop over a walking bass, Kapustin inserts a fast variation that doubles the tempo of the preceding section. After an extended transition, a *Larghetto* minor key variation evokes Russian Romantic music. This variation ends with a short cadenza that leads to the final *Presto*, which includes a pair of variations filled with virtuosic passages and stride piano, bringing this brilliant showpiece to its end.

Études, Opus 25.

Frédéric Chopin

The original purpose of the etude, a study-piece or exercise, was to teach skills; not until Chopin's time was it used to display them. Throughout its history, however, the etude generally gives consideration to a single technical problem of execution, often based on a single theme. First in the line that leads to Chopin are the keyboard exercises or *Klavierübung* of Bach, intended as instructive works for composers as well as for players. The *Essercizi*, thirty sonata-like works by Domenico Scarlatti, published in 1738, follow next in that progression. In the later 18th century, in Mozart's time, keyboard playing became a more sociable, less professional pursuit, and the new market for music for amateurs changed the focus of what was composed for pianists.

When Chopin wrote his sets of etudes, he initiated a new form: the concert etude, a work where technical difficulty and musical content were of similar high standards. He composed them for public performance, and they immediately were admired by composers who were his contemporaries: Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Berlioz. As we listen, we appreciate the distinctive, pure piano sound recognizable as Chopin's.

Chopin wrote twenty-seven *Études*, two big sets of twelve, and three more for a piano instruction book. The first set, Op. 10, was composed between 1829 and 1832, and was published in 1833 with a dedication to Franz Liszt. The second, Opus 25, was composed between 1832 and 1836 with a dedication to Liszt's mistress, the Countess Marie

d'Agoult, for reasons that still continue to be a matter of speculation. The three Nouvelles Études were composed around 1840 for the Czech pianist Ignaz Moscheles.

Chopin's Études constituted the foundation of a new system of technical piano playing that was both radical and revolutionary. They are some of the most challenging and evocative pieces in the concert piano repertoire. Those of Opus 25 make a grandiose impression and are memorable as studies in coloration, in pure piano sound. Each takes one motif and in a completely abstract way develops it thoroughly until the end. Some are so difficult for the performer that Chopin had trouble playing them himself, admitting that Liszt performed them better than he could. He told his students that, in order to play them, they should maintain "a maximum of suppleness...as [there are] as many different sounds as there are fingers." He instructed them to use the whole arm when playing them, not just the fingers and wrist. He also warned them never to practice more than three hours a day because they could injure their hands and muscles.

— Notes provided by Susan Halpern

About the Artist

American pianist/composer/improviser Charlie Albright is the recipient of the prestigious 2014 Avery Fisher Career Grant, a 2010 Gilmore Young Artist Award, and the 2014 Ruhr Klavier Festival Young Artist Award, and he was a winner of the 2009 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Because of the latter, he was the recipient of Friends of Music Concerts' second Performance Award and was part of our roster in 2011. We are pleased to welcome his return to our series.

Born in Centralia, Washington, Albright began piano lessons at the age of three. He earned an Associate of Science degree at Centralia College while still in high school. He was the first classical pianist accepted to the Harvard College/New England Conservatory 5-year BA/MM Joint Program, completing a Bachelors Degree as a Pre-Med and Economics Major at Harvard in 2011, and a Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance at NEC in 2012. He received an Artist Diploma from Juilliard in 2014. He is an official Steinway Artist.

Albright's 2017-18 concert season also has included solo debuts at the Bergen (Norway) International Festival with the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, as well as return engagements with the Seattle, Des Moines, and Hilton Head Symphony Orchestras. He begins a three-concert series at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum entitled Chopin and Albright, consisting of all Chopin works and an entirely improvised concert by the artist.

Albright's debut commercial recording, *Vivace*, has sold around the world. The first of his three-part Schubert Series of live, all-Schubert recordings was released in 2017.

Grantor

ArtsWestchester

Benefactor

Marc and Rochelle Auslander

Alice and Stanley Goldstein

Anita and David Kraft

Rosella and Kurt Ranno

Betsy Shaw Weiner

Patron

Joan and Keith Austin

Alan Bandes *in memory of*
*Susan Bandes*Richard and Pascale Berner
and John Lang, Inc.Deborah Donaldson and
John Wehr

Raymond and Elizabeth Kaplan

Dr. Susan Harris and
Thomas Molnar

Ruth and David Schwab

Stephen L. Ucko

Sponsor

Eleanor M. Bromberg

Miriam and Howard Budin

Helene and Martin Celnick

Howard Cohen

Andrew and Dominique Fitch

David and Cynthia Hodes

Cynthia and Seth Jacobs

Nicholas and Shelley Robinson

Donor

William Altman

Bernie and Lois Bacharach

William Bronner and Nancy
Bloomgarden

Stephen and Susan Butterfass

Robert and Mona Buzak

Gloria and Wally Cooper

Peter and Gillian Corfield

Peter and Phyllis Davies

Ted and Blanche Dolmatch

Andrea Erstling and
Philippe Charles

Bettina Gold

Phyllis Gracer

Philip and Ellen Heidelberger

Lee Hemphill and
Elsbeth Lindner

Bob and Betsy Hughes

Nyla and Gerhard Isele

Barry Johnson and
Niamh Fitzgerald

Jacob and Irene Judd

Marvin Kalisch

Marcia and Robert Klein

Jon and Erica Kolbrener

Alan and Gail Koss

Carolyn and Lawrence Kunin

Alice B. Kurland

Barbara Lieberman

Missy and Christopher Lipsett

Margery Loewenwarter

Valerie Lyle

Margaret and Donald Mahaney

Susan and Avraham Merav

Mirla and George Morrison

Norman Nadel and
Sandra A. Forster

Peter Oden

Marianne Phiebig

Marguerite and Reid Pitts

David Post

Peggy and Tom Post

Roland Reisley and
Barbara Coats

Jean Rivlin

Elizabeth Sadewhite

Jay W. Seligman

Heda Silverstein

Fern and Jeff Stearney

Steven and Rita Waldbaum

Lois Waldman

Rita Wexler

Sandra Zinman

Contributor

Barbara and Hal Baron

Rachel Bernstein and
Alan Milton

Dorothea Bone

Lenore Brager

Elizabeth and Ronald Bronk

Klaus and Marie-Ange
Brunnemann

Haya and Zvi Caspi

Arthur and Donna Cooper

Lila d'Adolf

Pamela Dilsizian

Fred B. Draper and
Annabel Schneider

Paula and Larry Edlavitch

Melvin Fitting and
Roma Simon-FittingBruce Fleischer and
Judy Freedman

Carol and Paul Freedman

Barbara Gochman

Louise Goldenberg

Helen G. Goodman

Julia Kosow Grosberg

Sonya and Ernest Hammer

Margery Heitbrink

Dr. W. Jean Horkans

Belle Horwitz

Helene Isaac

Sally Kellock

Rosemary King

Doris Kinney

Sylvain Kleinhaus

Burton and Joyce Koyner

Jane Kratovil

Sue Kurtzberg

Elizabeth M. Laite

Shirley Leitner

Judith Levine

Daniel and Marissa Licht

Mrs. Susan Lichten

Dr. Morton Linder

David Lubell and Jody Israel

Patricia A. Mackin

Alice Marcus

Bernice Masse

Edward Mertz

Arthur Miller

Bernice Myers

Janet G. Myers

Edna Ortof, PhD

Estelle and Gerald Palevsky

Mrs. Liliane M. Potier

George J. Rehl

Joelyn Rohman

Susan Rose

Joan and Richard Rose

Frances Rosenfeld

Nechama and Bill Ross

Mrs. Lee Sack

Natalie and Vincent Schifano

Esther Schwartz

Laura S. Seitz

Gail Sider

Robert and Ruth Singleton

Rhoda Stephens

Mr. Frank Stern

Beverly and Oliver Swift

Lynne K. Verna and
Michael Sterman