

65th Concert Series 2018-2019



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

**Nathan Lee,  
piano**

Saturday, November 3, 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 now celebrating its 65th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partners in Education program in the public schools and free student admission to our concerts give young people enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music.

**In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we would welcome people who can join the volunteers listed above, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, editorial, business development, and/or fund-raising skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range together.**

**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.\* **(This year a generous donor has offered to match new and increased contributions up to \$5,000.)** If you can help us in this way, please send your contributions to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546.

# Program

---

## **Abegg Variations, Op. 1**

*Theme, Animato*

*Variations (3)*

*Cantabile*

*Finale alla Fantasia*

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

## **Sonata No. 21, Op. 53 (“Waldstein”)**

*Allegro con brio*

*Introduzione. Adagio molto*

*Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo*

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

## **Selections from Miroirs**

*Oiseau triste*

*Alborada del gracioso*

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1937)

## **Intermission**

---

**Sonata in F Minor, K. 466**

**Sonata in E Major, K. 380**

**Sonata in D Minor, K. 141**

Domenico Scarlatti  
(1685-1757)

**Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op. 47**

Frédéric Chopin  
(1810-1849)

**Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2**

Franz Liszt  
(1811-1886)

Nathan Lee appears by arrangement with Young Concert Artists, Inc., 1776 Broadway, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10019. [www.yca.org](http://www.yca.org).

Next concert

---

Saturday, March 30, 2019, 8:00 pm at **Pleasantville High School, Pleasantville, New York**

**Juilliard Baroque Ensemble**

Program: The group will explore the ways violinist-composers of the 17th century first invented and then explored the sonata form, writing conversations among three violins. Instrumentation will include, in addition to the three violins, a cello, harpsichord, theorbo, and guitar.

# Program notes

---

## **Abegg Variations, Op. 1**

Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann was one of the most important figures of the Romantic era in Germany. He started piano lessons as a very young child, and began initial composition efforts when he was just eleven. He later started studying law, but gave it up early on in order to pursue music. Because of an injury to his hand, he abandoned hope of a career as a performer and turned instead to composing, conducting, and editing an important musical journal that he founded in 1844. In 1840 he married his piano teacher's daughter, Clara Wieck, who was one of the great pianists of the era and one of the first women to become a famous composer in her own right.

Schumann completed these **Variations** in February 1830; in 1831 the work became his first published composition, hence the designation of Opus 1. At that time, German youths were enchanted by Romantic fables and fantasies of writers like Jean Paul and E.T.A. Hoffman; inspired by them, young Schumann may have invented a bit of fiction to go with his music. He dedicated it to Mademoiselle Pauling, Countess of Abegg, but there is no proof that such a person ever existed. Schumann supposedly knew a young woman named Meta Abegg, an attractive dancing partner whom he met at a Mannheim ball. However, Meta is an anagram of the Latin word "tema," or, in English, "theme." In the sort of musical game played by composers from Bach to Shostakovich, A-B-E-G-G (in German, B is B-flat) became musical pitches that Schumann transformed into the beginning of a little waltz, using them as the germ of a subject for these three variations and the rest of the work's material.

Schumann's simple waltz lends itself well to variations. In the first, he gives the theme lavish embellishments; in the second, he transforms it into a chromatic line with a syncopated accompaniment. In the spirited third variation he ornaments the theme with triplets of sixteenth notes. The quiet, reflective, and lyrical *cantabile* in the minor that follows gives way to the demanding *Finale alla Fantasia* that brings the work to its exciting conclusion.

## **Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein")**

Ludwig van Beethoven

Count Ferdinand Ernst Joseph Gabriel von Waldstein, born in Bohemia just eight years before Beethoven, was the composer's earliest noble benefactor. When he discovered the seventeen-year-old talented youth, the son of a poor choir singer, Waldstein not only secured an allowance for him so that he could continue his studies, but also gave him a good piano. The Count was one of a group in Bonn that sent the young composer to Vienna in 1792 to "receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn." Around 1791, Beethoven had composed a set of variations for piano, four hands, on a theme Waldstein had written, and also collaborated with him on a ballet.

In later years, Waldstein served in Vienna as Chancellor to the Emperor of Austria; however, he and Beethoven rarely met then because of political differences that had risen between them. Nevertheless, Beethoven dedicated this sonata to Waldstein, an act of friendship and gratitude that has immortalized the Count.

Beethoven was inspired to write this sonata, one of the great works of the piano repertoire, after acquiring, in 1803, a fortepiano built by the French piano maker Sébastien Érard. At the time, he just was beginning to experience the loss of his hearing; thus, the crisp tones of the Érard were especially appealing to him. The sonata was composed during the time that historians have referred to as Beethoven's middle period, when he was writing compositions generally characterized by technically challenging virtuosity and psychologically heroic themes. It shows complete control of his materials, his mastery of large forms, and the new power of expression made possible by his unique technical skills. In France, this sonata used to be known as **L'Aurore** ("**The Dawn**"), perhaps because of some imagined depiction of daybreak in its opening pages or because of its sense of light.

The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, in which tense melodic fragments and entire themes seem to grow out of one another, is one of the most forceful of all his works. Charles Rosen, in his book *The Classical Style*, has said that this movement reflects an “energetic hardness, dissonant and yet curiously plain, expressive without richness.” Rosen opines that the effect of this extraordinary sonata-form movement is caused by the harmonic treatment of all the themes growing from an initial “kernel,” each theme moving in a stepwise fashion based on scale progressions. Beethoven’s bold exploration of distant, emotionally expressive tonalities further attests to his compositional brilliance.

The central slow movement, *Adagio molto*, serious, introspective, and very dramatic, is only twenty-eight measures long, and runs directly into the finale without pause. Beethoven called it *Introduzione*, meaning it as an introductory transition to the final movement. Filled with counterpoint, the movement joins pure lyricism with a sense of contemplation. The last movement, after that slow Introduction, is a brilliantly formed *Rondo. Allegretto moderato*, constructed on a theme characterized by grandeur, confidence, and triumph yet resembling a Rhineland folk song. The movement ends with a great rushing *Prestissimo*, twice as fast as the principal theme. The mood, one of ecstatic celebration, is triumphant and joyous, presenting a wealth of ideas. Rondo movements traditionally were thought of as rather light-hearted, but Beethoven infuses this one with passion and emotional contrast that are unusual.

## Selections from Miroirs (“Mirrors”)

Maurice Ravel

Ravel was born in France, only a short distance from the Spanish border, to a French father and a Basque mother. Although his family moved to Paris when he was just an infant, he always was attached to the region of his birth and composed several works of Spanish inspiration. The Spanish composer Manuel de Falla once wrote, “Ravel’s Spain was a country idealized and represented by his mother. Her refined conversation, in Spanish that remained excellent always, delighted me – especially when she used to recall her youth in Madrid.”

In 1904 and 1905 Ravel wrote five piano pieces, each one complete in itself, that he assembled into a collection titled **Miroirs (“Mirrors”)**. They reflect their subjects, reality seen at a distance, perhaps even in reverse, and they also reflect about their subjects: philosophical, impressionistic musings on night, birds, boats, Spain, and valleys.

Of *Oiseaux tristes* (“sad birds”), Ravel said “I evoke birds lost in a dark forest during the summer’s hottest hours.” Ravel dedicated it to the pianist Ricardo Viñes, who gave the first public performance of **Miroirs**.

The fourth piece in the set is the brilliant *Alborada del gracioso* (“Clown’s morningsong”). Historically, troubadours in Provence and the Basque area of Spain used a form of poetry, *Alborada*, or *alba*, that often featured a song about a lover’s early dawn departure from his love. The word *alborada* also could mean a morning serenade that had evolved into a type of dance, popular in Galicia. A *gracioso* is a clown or jester in Spanish comedy, analogous to the fools in Shakespeare’s plays. Such a clown often helped musicians in performing the *alborada*. Ravel’s *Alborada del gracioso*, therefore, especially demonstrates his love for Spain; it’s a rhapsodic piece with recitatives, bursts of melody, and echoes of the guitar. It is sometimes described as being more orchestral than pianistic.

## Three Sonatas for Keyboard

Domenico Scarlatti

Scarlatti was the founder of modern keyboard technique, one of the greatest virtuosos of his time. In his youth he lived in Naples and Rome, but in 1719 he resigned from his post as director of the Papal Choir at the Vatican to become the staff musician of a young Portuguese princess who, ten years later, married the heir to the Spanish throne. From 1729 until his death in 1757 he lived and worked in Madrid as a member of the Spanish royal household. Most of the music he composed was expressly for the princess’s pleasure, and much of it evokes the songs and dances of the Spanish people.

Although he composed some operas and sacred music, we know and remember Domenico Scarlatti for his more than five hundred sonatas for the harpsichord. For him the term “sonata” meant little more than music that was to be “sounded” on an instrument, played rather than sung. Scarlatti’s sonatas were forerunners of the classical sonata. All his sonatas fit into one general shape, which we call binary form: a single movement divided into two sections, each of which is repeated. Many of the sonatas are rich in colorful echoes of the songs and dances of Spain.

**Sonata in F minor, K. 466**, from the 11th Venice volume of 1736, does not have obviously Spanish traits but has a gentle Iberian nocturnal character in its melodic flow. The melody repeats six-note phrases that spawn other thematic ideas. With its dark, melancholy character, it is hauntingly beautiful. It has an opening duple motif that later becomes the accompaniment for a good part of the sonata. Over this accompaniment, occasional ternary figures create an effect of three against two.

**Sonata in E Major, K. 380**, one of Scarlatti’s later sonatas, includes extravagant leaps, occasional hand-crossing, and the full range of keyboard figuration. One of the most famous and most frequently played of Scarlatti’s works, it has the feeling of a processional.

One of the most brilliant of Scarlatti’s early keyboard works, **Sonata in D minor, K. 141** is memorable in part because its quick repeated notes suggest the tremolo of a mandolin. The sonata has a toccata-like theme, with the accompaniment sometimes of dense chords and sometimes of a single line. It has a dramatic climax.

### **Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op. 47**

Frédéric Chopin

Chopin focused his composing skills almost exclusively on the piano. He favored not the sonata but instead the less expansive forms of the first half of the 19th century, such as the étude, nocturne, mazurka, and polonaise. During a period of about ten years, he composed four large piano works to which he gave the name Ballade, all of which can be described as innovative, sizable, and difficult. Each uses one theme throughout in varied forms, and each includes commanding virtuosic elements. For this new genre of ballade, Chopin combined loose sonata forms with the 6/8 meter often used in early vocal ballads. For him, ballade meant a melancholy poetic masterpiece, a kind of epic narrative of great rhythmic freedom, without clearly-defined, predetermined, formal interrelationships, with its main sections set between an introduction and a closing coda.

Chopin probably envisioned this new genre as a musical analogue to the literary ballad. The Romantics could readily identify with the ballad, which was one of the oldest literary forms, a narrative of legendary or historical events that usually had a tragic outcome. Critics long have hypothesized that Chopin’s inspiration for composing ballades came from his reading of a group of poems written by Adam Mickiewicz, a Polish poet who spent most of his life in political exile. The two had met in Paris.

A Mickiewicz poem, *Switezianka* or the fable known as Undine, has been associated with **Ballade No. 3**, giving critics possibilities for musical interpretation based on that literary association. In the tale, the water-nymph Undine can acquire a soul only if she marries a human being. Thus, she lures a knight to her lake and, after they fall in love, marries him. He eventually deserts her for someone he loved before he met her and, as a result Undine has to retreat to the water. In the end, her human lover returns to her, and she gets her revenge by giving him the kiss of death.

**Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major** is written in a free, continuously-developing form, nearly all of it expanding the two tiny musical ideas introduced in the first two measures. The work first takes a lyrical cast, and then becomes more heroic. It has one contrasting episode; then a long transition leads climactically to a restatement the main theme.

## Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C-Sharp minor

Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt was born in Hungary into a German-speaking family but in 1822, when he was 11 years old, he left, living most of the rest of his life in France, Germany, and Italy. However, even though he could barely speak its language, he remained attached to his native Hungary, and when he returned for the first time in 1849, he was received as a national hero. In an ode, a poet asked “You, a famous musician who belongs to the world and is true to his land wherever you go, has your piano a voice for your poor country?” Liszt answered that rhetorical question in the next six years by composing twenty Hungarian “national melodies,” many of which were later transformed into the Hungarian Rhapsodies. They were based principally on the music of the Gypsies of Hungary, not on the folk music of the Magyar people, a distinction that was rarely made until the composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, in the early 20th century, did extensive ethno-musicological research.

Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsodies echo the sounds of the Gypsy bands of the time, ensembles of clarinet, violin, and cimbalom (a dulcimer-like instrument). The form of the Rhapsodies is derived from the basic musical idea of a popular dance, the czardas, in which the sensuous, slow music of a *lassu* (slow) alternates with that of a spirited *friss* (fast). Music of narrative ballads and popular romances also is incorporated. All the Rhapsodies are works of great originality, full of challenges to the composer and the performer. Liszt even invented new devices of notation so he could get down on paper the musical ideas of folk musicians.

**Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2**, the most popular of his Hungarian Dances, was composed in 1847, dedicated to Count László Teleky, and published in 1851. Its character is that of a *verbunkos*, an 18th century Hungarian dance usually played during military recruiting. Although it begins with long, slow-moving notes, suddenly quicker and more ornamental figures abound, giving the work a rhapsodic as well as a sad feeling. Liszt himself commented, “It should be played in the haughty and melancholy manner of gypsies.”

--notes provided by Susan Halpern

## About the Artist

---

At age fifteen, Nathan Lee won First Prize in the 2016 Young Concert Artist International Auditions in New York City. It was then that we chose him as the ninth recipient of our Performance Award. Among the fourteen other special prizes he garnered that day were the Korean Concert Society Prize that provided support for his Kennedy Center debut last season, the Paul A. Fish Memorial Prize that provided support for his New York City recital debut; and Germany’s Usedom Music Festival Prize.

In addition to his extensive domestic recital schedule, Nathan Lee has been heard with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra on NPR’s *From the Top*, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has shared the stage with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Lang Lang on the Seattle Symphony’s gala evening. He has given recitals in Korea, for Radio France, and in Perugia, Italy where, to a sold-out audience, he performed in a “Three Generations Concert” featuring his instructor Sasha Starcevich, pianist, and Starcevich’s instructor Iliana Vered, pianist.

A native of Sammamish, Washington, Nathan Lee began playing the piano at the age of six, and made his orchestral debut at the age of nine.

**Grantor - \$2500 and over**

Arts Westchester

Dr. Susan R. Harris and  
Thomas Molnar**Benefactor - \$1000 to \$2499**

Marc and Rochelle Auslander

Alice and Stanley Goldstein

Anita and David Kraft

Rosella and Kurt Ranno

Betsy Shaw Weiner

**Patron - \$500 to \$999**

Joan and Keith Austin

Miriam and Howard Budin

Deborah Donaldson and  
John Wehr

Nicholas and Shelley Robinson

Ruth and David Schwab

Stephen Ucko

Donald Zagoria

**Sponsor - \$250 to \$499**

Helene and Martin Celnick

Howard Cohen

David and Cynthia Hodes

Nyla and Gerhard Isele

Jean Rivlin

**Donor - \$100 to \$249**

William Altman

Bernie and Lois Bacharach

William Bronner and Nancy  
Bloomgarden

Stephen and Susan Butterfass

Robert and Mona Buzak

Arthur and Donna Cooper

Gloria and Wally Cooper

Peter and Gillian Corfield

Peter and Phyllis Davies

Andrea Erstling and Philippe  
Charles

Andrew and Dominique Fitch

Jennifer Gardy

Barbara Gochman

Philip and Ellen Heidelberger

Bob and Betsy Hughes

Barry Johnson and Niamh  
Fitzgerald

Jacob and Irene Judd

Marcia and Robert Klein

Jon and Erica Kolbrener

Carolyn and Lawrence Kunin

Valerie Lyle

Margaret and Donald Mahaney

James G. McMurtry III, MD

Mirla and George Morrison

Sandra A. Forster and Norman  
Nadel

Peter Oden

Peggy and Tom Post

Roland Reisley and Barbara  
Coats

Joelyn Rohman

Robert Schloss and Emily Sack

Brigitte Sims

Fern and Jeff Stearney

Steven and Rita Waldbaum

Rita Wexler

Sandra Zinman

**Contributor - Under \$100**Anna Anagnostakis in memory  
of Maggie O'Sullivan

Barbara and Hal Baron

Rachel Bernstein and Alan  
Milton

Dorothea Bone

Marcia Botti

Elizabeth and Ronald Bronk

Haya and Zvi Caspi

Anne Chehebar

Karen Chow

Joan Conklin

Nancy Deland

Ted and Blanche Dolmatch

Fred B. Draper and Annabel  
Schneider

Paula and Larry Edlavitch

Rita and John Fisher

Melvin Fitting and Roma  
Simon-FittingBruce Fleischer and Judy  
Freedman

Muriel Fox

William Fried

Anne Golden and Robert  
Kruger

Louise Goldenberg

Mildred Gonzalez

Julia Grosberg and Elliot  
Fischer

Sonya and Ernest Hammer

Dr. W. Jean Horkans

Helene Isaac

Sally Kellock

Ronnie Kent

Rosemary King

Doris Kinney

Sylvain Kleinhaus

Burton and Joyce Koyner

Sue Kurtzberg

Elizabeth M. Laite

Shirley Leitner

Judith Levine

Daniel and Marissa Licht

Mrs. Susan Lichten

Dr. Morton Linder

Margery Loewenwarter

Helen Lowenstein

David Lubell and Jody Israel

Alice Marcus

Miriam Margoshes

Lisa Olsson and Robert Plotkin

Edna Ortof, PhD

Estelle and Gerald Palevsky

Stephanie and Richard Paley

Mrs. Liliane M. Potier

George J. Rehl

Joan and Richard Rose

Susan Rose

Ann and Ben Rubenstein

Gail Ryan

Mrs. Lee Sack

Ellen Sarna

Esther Schwartz

Laura S. Seitz

John and Monica Shanahan

Gail Sider

Robert and Ruth Singleton

Suzanne K. Smith

Martin Smolin

Rhoda Stephens

Mr. Frank Stern

Beverly and Oliver Swift

Ellen Theg

Dr. Henry and Karen Thomas

Lynne K. Verna and Michael  
Stemerman

Hong Zhao

