



PHOTO BY FRAN KAUFMAN

Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library & Artist Partner Program present

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

Sunday, October 4, 2015 . 3PM

Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Samuel Feinberg: Piano Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 2 (1916) (in one movement)

Samuel Feinberg: Piano Sonata No.1 in A Major, Op. 1 (1915) (in one movement)

Nicolas Medtner: Sonata in E Minor, Op. 25, No. 2, "Night Wind" (1911)

Introduzione: Andante con moto — Allegro

Tempo dell'introduzione — Allegro

molto sfrenatamente, presto — Quasi cadenza

INTERMISSION

Claude Debussy: Images pour piano, Livre 1 (1905)

Reflets dans l'eau

Hommage à Rameau

Mouvement

Franz Liszt: Venezia e Napoli (1859)

Gondoliera

Canzone

Tarantella

This performance will last approximately **two hours**.

Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 2

Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 1

Samuel Feinberg (1890–1962)

Composed in 1915–1916 and 1915;

Piano Sonata No. 1 revised in 1922

Samuel Feinberg, though little known today in the West, was one of Russia's most highly regarded musicians during the early 20th century — he was the first Russian pianist to perform and record Bach's complete *Well-Tempered Clavier*; he was widely known for his unique interpretations of Beethoven (including all the sonatas), Chopin, Schumann, Debussy and recent Russian music; Scriabin said that Feinberg's performances of his music were "the most convincing" he had heard; in 1925, the influential Moscow critic Victor Belaiev called him "Russia's most outstanding modern composer." Feinberg was born in the Ukrainian port city of Odessa in 1890 and moved to Moscow with his family when he was four. He early displayed exceptional musical gifts and studied piano and composition with noted teachers at the Moscow Conservatory, launching his parallel careers as composer and solo performer immediately upon his graduation in 1911. He joined the army in 1914 and was assigned to the Polish front; he contracted typhus and was sent back to Moscow to convalesce for the rest of World War I. Feinberg resumed his musical career after the war and in 1922 he was appointed to the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory. He appeared in Italy, Austria and Germany during the late 1920s with considerable success, occasionally performing his own works, but his tours ceased abruptly in 1929, when Stalin's reign of terror began to severely restrain many aspects of Soviet life. (The purges came threateningly close to Feinberg in 1936, when Nikolai Zhilyayev, his composition teacher and music editor, was one of the many artists and intellectuals arrested as "enemies of the people.") Feinberg, a Jew who refused to join the Communist Party, was

thereafter permitted to leave the country only to appear as a competition jury member in Vienna in 1936 and Brussels in 1938, and in his compositional style he moved away from the modernism of his earlier works toward a more conservative idiom. He continued to perform in Russia and retained his position at the Moscow Conservatory, however, and in 1946 he was awarded the Stalin Prize, then the country's highest honor in science and culture. Feinberg developed a heart condition in 1951, but he taught, performed, recorded and composed until shortly before his death a decade later, highly regarded in the Soviet Union but little noticed abroad.

Feinberg composed songs and a few chamber pieces, but his creative output was largely limited to works for the piano, which include three concertos, 12 sonatas and transcriptions of 15 of Bach's organ compositions; he also left the manuscript for a book titled *Pianism as an Art*, which his devoted pupils published after his death as a tribute to him. His distinctive style is characterized by fluidity of motion; intimate understanding of piano sonority; extended tonal harmonies; formal invention; supple, often dense counterpoint; and intricate, overlapping rhythms that require an exacting virtuosity to realize.

The first three of Feinberg's piano sonatas were composed in 1915–1916, during the time following his military service when he was in Moscow recovering his health, and their opus numbers — 1, 2 and 3 — indicate that they were intended to mark the restart of his composing career. The French pianist and composer Christophe Sirodeau, who shared recording Feinberg's complete sonatas for BIS with Nikolaos Samaltanos, wrote that they "form a coherent unit, each taking up where the previous one had left off. The First Sonata seems to be a slightly nostalgic portrayal of a childlike 'simplicity' (an impression caused by the exclusive use of diatonic material in the opening theme), then the discovery and the intoxication of a love that is either real or

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

imagined. The Second Sonata would then be a recognition of reality, of the deceptive nature of emotions and escape from life, while in the Third Sonata, after some muffled premonitions and a feeling of oppression, death arrives (its middle movement is titled *Marcia Funebre*) and war with its terrible battles.”

The one-movement Sonata No. 2 is based on two thematic ideas: a lyrical, rhapsodic melody whose ripe, chromatic harmonies create a somewhat unsettling mood; and a rising scale fragment embedded within a more animated passage. The movement is shaped around a traditional sonata-form plan, but its effect is rather that of a free fantasia grown from continuous variants and interactions of these two thematic kernels, rather like a latter-day Bach fantasia, music Feinberg knew, literally, at first hand.

The single movement of the Sonata No. 1 follows traditional form, though its rich textures, interlocking rhythms and insistent flow make it sound almost seamless. The main theme, presented immediately, is built from a descending phrase, warmly harmonized; the subsidiary subject is a rising scalar strain with chromatic inflections. The dreamy development section (marked “*tranquillo*”) incorporates both ideas before the earlier materials are recapitulated in greatly elaborated versions. The Sonata closes with a heroic transformation (“*trionfante*” — “*triumphantly*” — instructs the score) of the rising second theme.

Sonata in E Minor, Op. 25, No. 2, “Night Wind”
Nicolas Medtner (1880–1951)
Composed in 1910–1911

To a small group of faithful followers, Nicolas Medtner was the creative and pianistic equal of his two famous Russian contemporaries, Alexander Scriabin and Sergei Rachmaninoff; to most music

lovers he is almost unknown. Medtner, born in Moscow on January 5, 1880 into a family of German extraction, had begun playing piano under his mother’s guidance by age six, and showed enough promise to be given lessons by his uncle, Fyodor Goedicke, a professional pianist and composer. Medtner entered the Moscow Conservatory in 1892 to study piano (with Pabst and Safonov) and composition (with Arensky and Taneyev), and graduated in 1900 with the gold medal bestowed upon the institution’s best student pianist. He toured successfully through the European musical capitals for the next three years, but in 1903 he began publishing his works and decided to make his career thereafter primarily as a composer. His music attracted the attention of the famous Polish virtuoso Josef Hofmann and of Sergei Rachmaninoff, another recent Moscow Conservatory graduate, who was to become a life-long friend and champion. (“You are, in my opinion, the greatest composer of our time,” Rachmaninoff told him.)

Medtner established a fine reputation in Moscow — in 1909, he won the Glinka Prize for some Goethe songs and was appointed to the piano faculty of the Conservatory — but he found little acceptance of his music elsewhere. The turmoil of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution severely disrupted his life, and in 1921 he moved to Berlin, where he was able to survive only with financial help from Rachmaninoff. Following a tour to America in 1924 (organized by Rachmaninoff), he tried living in Paris, but had no more luck there than in Germany. In 1928, a year after making what turned out to be his farewell tour of Russia, he appeared successfully in London, where he was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music. After undertaking another American tour in 1929 (Rachmaninoff helped out again when Medtner’s fees were not paid) and several years of unsettled living in France, Germany and Britain, Medtner moved permanently to London in 1935. He inspired devotion from a handful of adherents — the pianist

Edna Iles gave him sanctuary at her country home in Warwickshire during the blitz of September 1940 — and he enjoyed an extraordinary stroke of good fortune in 1946 when the Maharajah of Mysore sponsored the foundation of a Medtner Society to allow the composer to record many of his most important works. A series of heart attacks impaired Medtner's health and limited his playing during the last years before his death, in London on November 13, 1951.

Medtner's musical style, like that of Rachmaninoff and Scriabin, is rooted in the Russian romantic tradition, though he lacked the innate lyricism and overt passion of the former and the mysticism and harmonic daring of the latter. He wrote songs, a piano quintet and a few works for violin and piano, but the bulk and essence of his creative output rests in his compositions for piano: three concertos, a dozen sonatas and nearly a hundred smaller pieces.

The Sonata in E Minor, Op. 25, No. 2 was composed in 1910-1911, during a four-year hiatus Medtner took from teaching at the Moscow Conservatory. The work, dedicated to Rachmaninoff, is commonly known as "Night Wind" after the poem by Fyodor Tyutchev (1803-1873) with which it is prefaced:

"What are you wailing about, night wind, what are you lamenting so frantically? What does your strange voice, now muffled and plaintive, now loud, signify? In a language intelligible to the heart you speak of torment past comprehension, and you did at times stir up frenzied sounds in the heart!

"Oh, do not sing these fearful songs about ancient, native chaos! How avidly the world of night within the soul listens to the loved story! It longs to burst out of the mortal breast and to merge with the Infinite.... Oh, do not wake the sleeping tempests: beneath them chaos stirs."

Barrie Martin, author of *Nicolas Medtner, His Life and Music* as well as the liner notes for Marc-André Hamelin's recording of the complete sonatas on Hyperion, wrote that the "Night Wind" Sonata "is the composer's most extended work in the genre, a monumental epic which taxes to the full the capacities of performer and listener alike, and which some have claimed to be the greatest piano sonata of the twentieth century." The "Night Wind" Sonata was awarded the Glinka Prize in 1916.

The Sonata, though played without pause, is in two large, linked movements that mirror the two stanzas of Tyutchev's poem. The first opens with a distinctive falling motive in octaves that recurs at important structural junctures in the movement. The lyrical melody that follows immediately provides the material for the rest of the *Introduzione*, as well as for the coda that closes the first movement and the entire second movement. The return of the falling motive marks the beginning of the first movement's vast sonata form, which takes a flowing melody derived from the falling figure as its main theme and an arching strain of milder personality as its second, though the movement's irregular five-beat meter provides a continuously unsettled foundation for all of this music. Both ideas are treated at length in the development section before a modified recapitulation of the exposition's themes and the return of the *Introduzione* lead to a momentary pause. Of what follows, Martin wrote, "The second movement, a massive free improvisation on the material of the Sonata's introduction, rushes along in a headlong torrent, pushing the expressive resources of the piano to the limit. There is little respite from the nightmarish frenzy, for even in the interludes an undercurrent of anxiety is always present. Eventually the coda is reached; fragments of all the themes are heard over a low sustained note and the scene of chaos gradually fades from view, the music at last vanishing into thin air with two swirling arpeggios."

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Images, Book I

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Composed in 1903–1905

Premiered on March 3, 1906 in Paris

by Ricardo Viñes

“The sound of the sea, the curve of the horizon, the wind in the leaves, the cry of a bird enregister complex impressions within us,” Debussy told an interviewer in 1911. “Then suddenly, without any deliberate consent on our part, one of these memories issues forth to express itself in the language of music.” Debussy distilled in these words the essence of musical Impressionism — the embodiment of a specific but evanescent experience in tone. With only rare exceptions (most notably the String Quartet of 1893 and the *Études* and three sonatas from the end of his life), his compositions are referential in both their titles and their contents, deriving inspiration and subjects from poetry, art and nature (or nature, at least, as filtered through Monet’s opulently chromatic palette). Debussy’s two sets of *Images* for Piano, composed in 1903–1905 and 1907, are among his most evocative creations. The composer himself valued them highly, telling his publisher, Jacques Durand, “I think I may say without undue pride that I believe these pieces will live and will take their place in the piano literature ... either to the left of Schubert, or to the right of Chopin.” Debussy originally proposed writing a third set of *Images* for Piano, but the ideas for those pieces were used in the three *Images* for Orchestra that he composed between 1905 and 1912.

“If there is Impressionism in music,” wrote Oscar Thompson in his classic study of Debussy, “*Reflets dans l’eau* (*Reflections in the Water*) is one of the most perfect examples of it.” All here is shimmering, luminous, evanescent, formulated, Debussy said, “in accordance with the latest discoveries in harmonic chemistry.” Visual

concordances seem inescapable in such suggestive, pastel-hued music. The British musicologist Frank Dawes offered this metaphor: “If one gazes fixedly at an object for long enough, the pupils of one’s eyes dilate, the picture loses its sharpness of focus, and a feeling of pleasant drowsiness overcomes one. So it is here. One feels that the composer gazed long enough into his pool of water to become bemused by the spectacle of endlessly shifting reflections.”

Debussy’s entire career was dedicated to finding a uniquely French musical language, free from the German influence he believed had dominated Gallic composers since the late 18th century. To that end, he sought to revive the old, long-dormant traditions of French Renaissance and Baroque music, as much for their spirit as for their technique. “French music is all clearness, elegance; simple, natural declamation,” he wrote. “The aim of French music is, before all, to please. The musical genius of France may be described as a fantasy of the senses.” He viewed the two giants of French Baroque music — Jean Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) and François Couperin (1668–1733) — as the lodestars guiding his quest. *Hommage à Rameau*, composed in the style of a solemn sarabande while he was editing the score of Rameau’s opéra-ballet *Fêtes de Polymnie*, is Debussy’s tribute, his memorial piece, what the French call a “*tombeau*” (“*tomb*”), to his musical ancestor.

Mouvement, the most ambiguously titled of the *Images*, recalls the insouciant gaiety and incessant motion of Debussy’s *Masques* of 1904, which depicts the character of Scaramouche, the clownish and easily deflated braggart of the old Italian *commedia dell’arte*.

Venezia e Napoli, Supplement to *Années de Pèlerinage, Deuxième Année: Italie* ("Years of Pilgrimage, Second Year: Italy")
Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Composed in 1840; revised in 1859

After a brilliant series of concerts in Paris in the spring of 1837, Liszt and his long-time mistress, Countess Marie d'Agoult, spent the summer with George Sand at her villa in Nohant before visiting their daughter in Switzerland and then descending upon Milan in September. As the birth of their second child became imminent, they retreated to Lake Como, where Cosima (later the wife of Hans von Bülow before she was stolen away by Richard Wagner) was born on Christmas Eve. They remained in Italy for the next year and a half, making extended visits for performances in Venice, Genoa, Milan, Florence and Bologna before settling early in 1839 in Rome, where Daniel Liszt was born on May 9. Liszt's guide to the artistic riches of the Eternal City was the famed painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, then director of the French Academy at the Villa Medici; Liszt was particularly impressed with the works of Raphael and Michelangelo and the music of the Sistine Chapel. He took home as a souvenir of his Roman holiday the now-famous drawing that Ingres did of him and inscribed to Mme. d'Agoult.

Liszt's Italian travels were the inspiration for a series of seven luminous piano pieces that he composed between 1837 and 1849, and gathered together as Book II ("Italy") of his *Années de Pèlerinage* ("Years of Pilgrimage") for publication in 1858. A year later Liszt issued a supplementary volume to Book II under the title *Venezia e Napoli* ("Venice and Naples"), which contained reworkings of pieces based on pre-existing melodies originally composed around 1840. The first two evoke the most characteristic mode of travel upon Venice's famed canals. The atmospheric *Gondoliera* was based on a popular song titled *La Biondina in Gondoletta* ("The Blond Girl in the Little Gondola") by Giovanni Battista Peruchini, a minor Venetian

composer and a friend of Gioacchino Rossini. The *Canzone* takes its theme from *Nessun Maggior Dolor*, the soulful gondolier's song from Rossini's 1816 opera *Otello* whose text draws upon Dante: "There is no greater pain than to remember happy days in times of sorrow." The third movement is a dazzling *Tarantella*, modeled on the old Italian dance in whirling 6/8 meter whose exertions are said to rid the body of poison of the bite of the deadly tarantula spider, which incorporates a *canzonetta* by the Neapolitan publisher and composer Guillaume Louis Cottrau (1797–1847).

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marc-André Hamelin's startlingly original blend of musicianship and virtuosity has earned him legendary status as a true avatar of the piano. Long known for his matchless exploration of unfamiliar pianistic terrain, Mr. Hamelin is now recognized worldwide for the originality and technical brilliance of his performances of the classic repertoire. He has appeared as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Montréal Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the London Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony and many others. In recent seasons he has offered American premieres of two concertos written specifically for him, by Mark Anthony Turnage and by Kevin Volans. Mr. Hamelin's recital performances have taken him throughout the United States and his native Canada, as well as in Europe, Australia and the Far East.

Critical acclaim for Mr. Hamelin has employed a vast range of superlatives. "A transcendental technique and a burning poetic commitment" (*Gramophone*); "Wizardry that defies the laws of nature" (*Financial Times*); "Among the wonders of the musical world" (*The New Yorker*); "Diabolical sweep and energy ... truly electrifying playing" (*American Record Guide*).

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN: ABOUT THE ARTIST (cont.)

Mr. Hamelin has recorded more than 50 CDs for Hyperion, encompassing not only neglected repertoire by Alkan, Busoni, Godowsky, Medtner, Reger and Szymanowski (among others), but also works of Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, Debussy and Scriabin. Active as a composer, Mr. Hamelin's *Etudes in All the Minor Keys* and several other works have been published by Edition Peters, and his new editions of piano music by Liszt, Weber and Rachmaninoff are available from G. Henle of Munich.

Marc-André Hamelin was honored to be made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2003 and a Chevalier de l'Ordre du Québec in 2004; he is also a member of the Royal Society of Canada. He makes his home in Boston.

Marc-André Hamelin appears by arrangement with Colbert Artists Management, Inc., 307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2006, New York NY 10001.

Marc-André Hamelin records exclusively for Hyperion Records, Ltd.

THE CLARICE AND THE COMMUNITY

The Clarice is building the future of the arts by training, mentoring and presenting the next generation of artists and creative innovators. As artists develop their craft as performers, they must become instigators of meaningful dialogue, creative research and audience connection. These skills are developed through engagement activities both on and off campus. Engagement at The Clarice is characterized by facilitated audience interactions with artists, scholars, and community leaders that are focused on process and research rather than product and performance. The Clarice supports artists in their quest for a connection with audiences through its engagement work.

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN: ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- Marc-André Hamelin will join students and faculty of the School of Music in an informal session to discuss his career and the repertoire of this performance.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL PIANO ARCHIVES AT MARYLAND

The International Piano Archives at Maryland (IPAM), a component of the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, is currently celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Originally established in Cleveland and New York in 1965, IPAM has been part of the University of Maryland since 1977. It is the only institutional collection devoted specifically to the history and performance of classical piano music. Its collections hold more than 50,000 recordings in all formats, dating from 1889 to the present; more than 27,000 published scores of music for the piano; and extensive files on the careers and professional activity of thousands of concert pianists.

IPAM serves not only the students and faculty of the University of Maryland but also performers, scholars and music lovers from around the world. It is open by appointment, Mondays through Fridays between 9AM and 5PM. A new exhibition, "Archiving Historic Pianism," traces IPAM's history with a display of rare materials from its collections. It may be viewed in the gallery space next to the entrance to the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library.

Housed within the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, IPAM's collections comprise the world's most extensive concentration of piano recordings, books, scores, programs and related materials, including the archival papers of many great keyboard artists. The Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, in collaboration with the UMD School of Music and The Clarice's Artist Partner Program, will celebrate IPAM's first 50 years and look forward to the next 50 with a four-part series of recitals by visiting pianists.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PIANO ARCHIVES AT MARYLAND

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 . 3PM

ORION WEISS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3 . 8PM

URSULA OPPENS
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4 . 8PM

MARGARET LENG TAN
CABINET OF CURIOSITIES
TUESDAY, APRIL 12 . 8PM

