

Ariel Mo
piano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Graduate Diploma, 2024
Student of Pavel Nersessian and Alessio Bax

Saturday, September 30, 2023
8:00 p.m.
Williams Hall

PROGRAM

György Ligeti
(1923–2006)

from **Études**
No. 4 Fanfares
No. 5 Arc-en-ciel

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Humoreske in B-flat Major, op. 20
Einfach – Sehr rasch und leicht – Noch rascher –
Erstes Tempo, Wie im Anfang
Hastig – Nach und nach immer lebhafter und
starker – Wie woher
Einfach und zart – Intermezzo
Innig – Schneller
Sehr lebhaft – Mit einigem Pomp
Zum Beschluß

Short Pause

Alexander Scriabin
(1872–1915)

Piano Sonata No. 5, op. 53

Ligeti's 18 etudes for solo piano were composed between 1985 and 2001. These two pieces especially remind me of Pixar short films (minus the plot): varied, intricate pieces showing off incredible technical acumen within a restricted form, each its own self-contained universe.

No. 4, Fanfares: A curious machine is surprised to find his programming has gone haywire, and wreaks havoc all the way down the conveyor belt completely unnoticed by his busy co-workers. (He's kind of a Wall-E type, with assorted mini trumpets attached to a duct tape tool belt, and enjoys Fred Astaire movies and big band music.)

No. 5, Arc-en-ciel: In H. P. Lovecraft's short story "The Colour Out of Space", a meteorite crash-lands on earth, emitting some kind of colour whose hue is impossible to pin down; it was "only by analogy that they called it a colour at all." The mysterious "colour" eventually destroys all natural life in the area and drives its inhabitants mad. This is a decidedly uncorroborated comparison, and the atmosphere of Ligeti's etude is *not* so sinister, but perhaps it is similarly remote, beyond description, its winking rainbows and lightning cracks preserved for eternity within a diamond-pointed star.

Schumann famously describes the German word *humor* as "a felicitous combination of *gemütlich* (genial) and *witzig* (witty)." His literary role model and inspiration for this piece, the novelist Jean Paul, provides other useful quotes on this subject: "an infinity of contrast", "a setting of the small world beside the great", from which "a kind of laughter results which contains pain and greatness." The first time I heard this piece I almost got up in the wrong place *twice*, so here are some helpful hints if you didn't happen to bring a score tonight: between the first *Einfach* and the last *Sehr lebhaft* there are three main big sections, each of which finishes with a reprise of its own opening material. After these come three epilogues, one each from Florestan, then a jab at philistine art lovers (and maybe also artistic self-importance), then Eusebius... heart on his sleeve... EXIT CAST.

Scriabin said of this sonata: "It is a big poem for piano." He also wrote a real poem, a 300+ line affair on which both this sonata and the orchestral *Poème de l'extase* were based (<https://www.amrod.de/2020/02/27/the-poem-of-ecstasy-by-alexander-scriabin-translated-by-paul-amrod/>). In the poem the "Spirit," the central creative energy and life force of all living things, begins groggy and indeterminate, "having subordinated itself to a Finality", but through the "beat of life" and "precipitation of rhythms", it eventually gains awareness. "When the Spirit has attained the supreme culmination of its activity and has been torn away from the embraces of teleology and relativity, when it has exhausted completely its substance and its liberated active energy, the Time of Ecstasy shall arrive."

I'm very lucky to have a number of kind, supportive, and inquiring people in my life.

*Thank you to my friends for our conversations and adventures,
for your own dedication and your music (performed, written)
that always delights and inspires me.*

*Thank you especially to my family,
to my bold and generous mother,
for your constant love and support.*

I'm also deeply grateful to a number of mentors here at NEC.

To Steve:

*thank you for your faith in me,
for challenging and daring me to break out of my own comfort zone,
for exposing me to new perspectives in music and beyond.*

To Mr. Nersessian and Mr. Bax:

*thank you for your amazing care and detail in lessons,
for your fantastic imagination and patience
that has already shown me so many new dimensions.
I'm very much looking forward to the rest of this year!*

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
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