

**Upcoming Events at KSU
in
Music**

Tuesday, May 3
Kennesaw State University
Percussion Ensemble
8:00 pm Stillwell Theater

Sunday, June 12
Starlight Summer Series
KSU Jazz Ensemble
7:30 pm KSU Legacy Gazebo
Amphitheater

Sunday, June 26
Starlight Summer Series
Army Ground Forces Band
7:30 pm KSU Legacy Gazebo
Amphitheater

Sunday, July 10
Starlight Summer Series
Miguel Romero
7:30 pm KSU Legacy Gazebo
Amphitheater

Sunday, July 24
Starlight Summer Series
Atlanta Pops Orchestra
7:30 pm KSU Legacy Gazebo
Amphitheater

Sunday, August 14
Starlight Summer Series
Sauce Boss
7:30 pm KSU Legacy Gazebo
Amphitheater



Kennesaw State University
Department of Music
Musical Arts Series

presents

William Ashworth, piano

Senior Recital

**Friday May 6, 2005
8:00 pm
Stillwell Theater**

56th concert of the 2004/2005 Musical Arts Series season

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree Bachelor of Music in Music Performance

Program

Sonata in A minor, D. 537

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

- I. Allegro, ma non troppo
- II. Allegretto quasi andantino
- III. Allegro vivace

Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49

Frederic Chopin
(1810-1849)

Intermission

Fantasia

Benjamin Lees
(b. 1924)

Jeux d'eau

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 1

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

The development section provides more opportunity for dramatic interpretation than examination of compositional originality. In an unsurprisingly cinematic fashion (Prokofiev composed a great deal of film music), the themes receive a kingly coronation of sweeping arpeggios and intervallic elaboration before recapitulating quietly and conventionally, ending with the final closing section in its original clamor.

William Ashworth, a Marietta native, began piano study at the University of Georgia with Linda Li – Bleuel and Ivan Frazier. At the 2003 Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee, he served as orchestral pianist for the Festival Orchestra, studied piano with Gary Hammond and Michael Gurt, and conducted repertory orchestras and large chamber groups under the auspices of Alexander Mickelthwaite, assistant director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Ashworth performed at the 2002 Kennesaw Honors Recital and at a master class given by Robert Henry. An active chamber musician, Ashworth has performed under the artistic direction of Joseph Eller and David Watkins, giving four chamber recitals to date. His piano composition, *Variations on a Theme by John Williams*, was premiered by David Watkins at the Kennesaw Composition Recital in 2004. Ashworth has performed with the KSU Chorale since 2001 and is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, Golden Key International Honor Society, and the Dean's List. In 2002 – 2003 he was appointed a KSU Presidential Fellow, a privilege that allowed his participation in leadership workshops with KSU President Betty Siegel and the initial planning for a Habitat for Humanity project. Ashworth currently resides in Powder Springs and is currently a student of David Watkins at Kennesaw State University.

Prokofiev's piano music bears unmistakable imprints from his earliest sketches: detached writing; spare texture; fast tempi; jagged rhythms; and grating chromaticism. This chromatic writing manifests most strongly in his first four piano sonatas, all in minor keys. Beginning with Sonata no. 6, Prokofiev began explorations in the superimposition of major and minor parallel tonalities (resulting in sonorities much like the opening chords of Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze*). The tempi of his movements grew increasingly exaggerated, and his melodies departed further and further from the Russian Romanticism of his early lyricism.

His first piano sonata in one movement, very different from the rest, answers the question one might ask at this point – how might a piano idiom that is marked with bizarre modern harmony and rhythm juxtapose with romantic melody? A heavily chromatic bass line and passing chromatic harmonies lend a simple, lyrical melody particularly modern fashion. Much of the sonata resembles American jazz – at least at a tempo less typical of Prokofiev. His customary detached style resides within these chromatic elements but not with the melody, expressly marked *legato* by a series of copious slurs. In this sense Prokofiev seems to have bridged the songs and influences of his childhood with his unique harmonic and rhythmic impetus, the former legitimizing the latter and elevating Prokofiev's stylistic idiosyncrasies far above the status of “bad boy” rebellion to which they are conventionally relegated.

The sonata begins with a short introduction, foreshadowing the following chromatic drama and lyricism. The first theme, nobly sung amidst the afore-mentioned bass and harmonies, recalls Scriabin and Wagner, two important and perhaps surprising influences on Prokofiev's early writing. An abbreviated repeat of the introduction precedes an expanded repeat of the first theme, which now appears in a higher register via octave doublings. This theme ends abruptly and exposes an oft-cited weakness in the sonata, namely Prokofiev's developmental prowess. As the thematic material derives from motivic manipulation in the manner of Brahms, such criticism hardly seems warranted in a general sense; yet indeed Prokofiev's ingenuity in manipulating his themes does not quite equal his ability to generate the themes from their motivic cells. As Juilliard piano professor David Dubal notes in his introduction to the Dover edition, this weakness is “easily overcome by an experienced pianist.” Such a challenge, sent from presumably Olympian heights, one would hope to meet and exceed ...

Franz Schubert was born on January 31, 1797 – and miraculously did not die the same day. Of his thirteen siblings, only four lived to maturity. Yet in Napoleon's Vienna, recently decimated economically by the new paper currency worth 1/5 of the previous gold standard, such mortality rates were common. His father earned little respect under the new regime – Napoleon preferred loyal subjects to scholars, and Franz Sr. taught school. When young Franz graduated from the Vienna Seminary, he too became a schoolteacher, albeit an unenthusiastic one. In the meanwhile, his compositional output had grown to encompass lieder, operas, symphonies, and piano works. His one-sided nature as composer precluded self-promotion and business savvy.

Yet the blame for his only posthumous success lies not entirely with Schubert, who in reality was far from the lieder-scribbling, bier-garten frequenting bohemian most texts depict. True, Schubert visited Viennese pubs and winebars. So did every Wiener of the nineteenth century – including Mozart, Beethoven, and even Johannes Brahms. The point being that Schubert was a serious composer, considered himself as such, produced an output that supports his estimation and most assuredly did not compose at social gatherings except possibly as an adolescent or as a stunt. Furthermore, the prevailing social conditions of his time did nothing to help Schubert. Even Beethoven felt the tremors of the falling aristocracy, as Napoleon's depredations in the name of democracy shattered aristocrats and promoted the bourgeoisie. This new middle-class preferred light salon improvisations to demanding compositions within the existing traditions; if one did perform the classics, one had better have a handsome portion of charisma and virtuoso trickery to wow the masses. It is this cultural shift from tradition and respect for art to display of power and elevation of the self that most damaged Schubert's ability to support himself as a serious artist. His innovations notwithstanding, Schubert composed very much in the tradition of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven and possessed little talent or patience for showpieces. Forced to choose between empty work or an empty pocket, Schubert chose the latter.

Most composers rise to fame as virtuoso performers, conductors, and improvisers. They often begin exhibiting these skills early in life, some early enough for surrounding adults to deem them prodigies. It is through the exercise of these abilities that their compositions first receive audience; as a boy, Mozart wrote his first piano concerti for performances before astounded Italian royalty. Yet in Franz Schubert's case, no record of such activity survives, despite early choir training and the testimony of Liechtental choirmaster Michael Holzer who claims to have

taught Schubert nothing but to only have conversed with him. Perhaps this is due to a lack of parental encouragement – or force, as the case may be (Schubert’s parents did not parade their gifted son like a Mozart, compel late-night practice as did Beethoven’s father, or arrange for expensive private training as did the Prokofiev family). Schubert spent far more time reading and composing than practicing scales and virtuoso pieces. His music is an object lesson in economy; relying greatly on his inner ear, Schubert created maximum effect with minimum effort. The difficulties in his music often arise not from sheer physical impassibility, but from the unique nature of his musical textures.

At age twenty, Schubert met the rakish Franz von Schober. A renowned womanizer who divided females into the conquerable (good) and the unconquerable (bad), he nonetheless possessed a high degree of aesthetic sensibility and decided to support Schubert’s talent. After two years as his father’s assistant, Schubert moved to the Schober house where Schober’s mother and sister currently resided (Schober himself was visiting his father in Sweden). Despite this opportunity, few works survive from this period in which Schubert first tasted public recognition of his work. Perhaps Schober acted as a malignant influence; he much preferred the composer accompany him to taverns and brothels than sit quietly writing music. One of the works written at this time was the piano sonata in A minor, op. 164.

Fittingly, the work is a *Sturm und Drang* waltz. A dramatic opening figure in octaves and heavy bass is immediately supplanted by a traditional waltz melodic figure, complete with oom-pah accompaniment. Schubert modulates this theme group to the relative major, then develops it ingeniously. The octave texture assumes a transitional nature, while the actual melodic material is next set to the waltz texture. In this sense Schubert reacts to German music and responds to its legacies within his music, predating Mahler and Rachmaninoff. The waltz in Schubert’s day is no longer the court minuet but the remnant of a soon discarded royal order. We here see that Schubert functions alongside Beethoven not as a subsidiary figure but an equal, as was Debussy Wagner’s equal; whereas Wagner and Beethoven attack with force, Debussy and Schubert move with stealth. Schubert next presents his song of the day, followed by an ingeniously modulated chordal texture. At these moments he draws most upon his unique strengths as a composer, lyrical beauty and harmonic ingenuity. His further material and development derives solely from this material with the exception of a Chopin-like passage in the development reminiscent of Etude op. 10 no. 12 (Revolutionary).

The second movement, perhaps the most innovative, exhibits Schubert’s particular textural genius. A radical departure from second movement tradition, the entire movement is quite fast, especially compared to Beethoven’s *Largo e mesto* in his early D major sonata. Schubert returns to the Baroque aria tradition and creates a beautiful

Of course the well-informed student of music history would undoubtedly ask Maurice Ravel, notorious champion of formal clarity amidst Impressionist texture and harmonies, and would receive not mockery but *Jeux d’eau*. Based upon Liszt’s *Transcendental Etudes* and *Jeux d’eau a la Villa d’esté* from Book III of *Annees de pelerinage*, Ravel’s work continues Liszt’s combination of harmonic experimentation and virtuosity solidly wedded to substantial musical material.

The piece clearly outlines several themes in its exposition beginning with a broadly arpeggiated melody. Ravel then creates a transitional section based on his theme and introduces a new “Oriental” melody in the manner of Debussy’s *Pagodes*. He introduces the next theme more abruptly; a series of sliding intervals harmonize in parallel thirds and fourths. Ravel’s Impressionism manifests most strongly in his “developmental section”; the themes are harmonically and motivically reworked but with chromatic dominant sonorities that include color tones of the ninth and thirteenth. Ravel also here uses the upper and lower extremities of the keyboard for sonorous effect rather than harmonic reinforcement (as in Debussy’s *La cathedrale engloutie*). The influence of Satie and the clavecinists appears just before the recapitulation – but with visitations again from Liszt, who decorates passage-work with speed and filigree unmatched until Ravel’s *Le tombeau de Couperin*. Finally, Ravel treats his themes with the recapitulation’s usual uniformity of tonality but with additional textural development like the renewed Orientalism of the work’s conclusion.

Born on April 23, 1891, **Sergei Prokofiev** enjoyed a pampered and privileged childhood, a gift from his cultured and intellectually refined mother. His family belonged to the pre-Bolshevik equivalent of today’s *nouveau riche*; the condescension neighbors visited upon the Prokofievs taught young Sergei the importance of hard work and discipline as opposed to the easily-won gains of social class. As a boy, Prokofiev studied not only music but also chess, logic, and botany, often listing the Latin names of flowers. He was not a prodigy in the usual sense; his early pieces were childhood sketches, not the finished works of a Mozart. At age eleven, Prokofiev began musical studies with Reinhold Gliere. In 1904 the Prokofievs moved to St. Petersburg, where Prokofiev studied with Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Anatol Liadov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Prokofiev remained at the conservatory for ten years, at which he formally began his professional career.

comparison to Mussorgsky's "Gnomus" from *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Much of the *Fantasia*, in fact, bears great similarity to "Gnomus": the eerie chromaticism at *Poco meno mosso*; the very Russian passage work in the development; and the frenetic octaves that precede the final statement of the theme. Yet whereas "Gnomus" is a character piece, the *Fantasia* is a full-blown work combining rondo form with Lisztian thematic transformation. One might well view Lees as a modern continuant of Mussorgsky's internally logical yet theoretically anarchic music, confirming yet assuaging Rimsky-Korsakov's fears that generations of Russian composers would follow Mussorgsky into an abyss of vodka-fueled compositional aberrations. Lees quite possibly through his extensive training and discipline recreates much of Mussorgsky's dark and forbidding landscape but with far greater compositional control and large-scale success.

Maurice Ravel was born on March 7, 1875 in the fishing village of Ciboure. Ciboure lies on the Pyrenees near the French town of St. Jean-de-Luz in the vicinity of the Spanish border. His father, a displaced French engineer whose family temporarily settled in Switzerland, met his mother in the Spanish city of Aranjuez where the Spanish government had assigned him on a railway project. Ravel's mother was not French or Spanish, but rather a Basque. A surviving photo depicts Ravel beside a river in a pose quite unlike the salon dandy of his usual persona; here Ravel appears to be a patient Basque robber awaiting a victim. These seemingly opposing qualities of refinement and ruggedness, honestly inherited from his parents, imbue Ravel's music; in an expression often used in regard to pianist Vladimir Horowitz, this music is "an iron fist in a velvet glove." Both parents supported and encouraged Ravel's deep involvement with music, which for him began at age seven with piano lessons from Henri Ghys and harmony lessons from Charles Rene.

In 1889, Ravel entered the Paris Conservatoire. Here he remained for fourteen years amid several expulsions and strangely inappropriate denials of the coveted Prix de Rome despite his many advanced and mature compositions. As a Conservatoire student, Ravel studied composition with Gabriel Faure, who passed to him the harmonic theory of Louis Niedermeyer, based on a fusion of common-practice harmony and voice leading with the medieval church modes. During this time, Ravel unofficially studied with mentor Erik Satie, a maverick experimental composer whose work led to the clavecinist revival found in much of Ravel and Debussy's work. He also met Spanish pianist Ricardo Vines, his life-long score-reading duet partner and later performer of Ravel's piano works.

In 1901, following a compulsory expulsion from the Conservatoire upon failure to win a composition prize, Ravel wrote *Jeux d'eau*. If one traveled backward in time and asked Impressionist spearhead Claude Debussy to write a one movement piano work in sonata-allegro form, one would presumably receive laughter at best and vicious accusations of blatant Germanism at worst.

song to which he would return in the late A major sonata, fourth movement. There his song becomes the subject of extensive variations; here it receives a treatment much like Beethoven's second movement of Sonata *Pathetique* no. 8 op. 13. *Pathetique* also appears in the final episode's contracted intervals and melodic minor seconds as transitional material. The theme is followed by contrasting episodes, in which the theme gradually returns, creating a rondo-variations form. Better shared with the keyboard than the pen, this movement speaks for itself.

The third movement leaves Beethoven for the mercurial world of Scarlatti. It begins with a Mannheim rocket-like ascending scale run, then immediately shifts to a homophonic chorale at a drastically reduced dynamic level. This principle of contrast highly temporally compressed returns throughout the piece. Schubert next freely develops these ideas, then introduces two new themes of which the second is a motivic development of the chorale tune. This theme is extended, then followed with yet another Schubertian song. A triumphant theme reminiscent of Schumann's *Kriegeslied* follows, and ends the movement's first large second. The first themes act as a theme group, and when combined with the developed theme and the third theme act as a rough sonata-allegro exposition. Yet the work continues as if the exposition was the A section of a binary dance form, or even more so a waltz. Schubert therefore continues the tradition of small scale modular development in the final movement (as in rondo form) but combines this with dramatic elements of sonata-allegro and innovations of his own. This movement, like Schubert's *Wandererfantasie*, illustrates Schubert's as not only a melodic and harmonic genius but also a great formal innovator.

On March 1, 1810, the household of a Polish country estate in Zelazowa Wola witnessed the birth of **Franciszek Fryderyk Chopin**. His father, Nicolas Chopin, had entered the service of the estate's owner, Count Skarbek, after his flight from France (presumably to avoid conscription). There Nicolas met and married a housekeeper and distant relation of the Skarbeks, Tekla Justyna Kryzanowska. They moved into a thatched-roof farmhouse on the estate; here Chopin was born. Soon after, the family moved to the Warsaw Lyceum, where Nicolas taught French language and literature. In Warsaw, a six-year-old Chopin began study with Adelbert Zwiny, an eccentric pianist and violinist who fed Chopin a steady diet of Bach, Mozart, and Haydn, discouraged study of Beethoven, and nurtured the youth's talent for improvisation. At age eight Chopin performed in a public concert for the Countess Zofia Zamoyska. His parents forbid playing for regular pay, however; they wished to foster an artist, not exploit a prodigy. He later entered the Warsaw Conservatory where he studied under Jozef Elsner. Upon

graduation, he embarked upon a brief 1829 tour of Vienna and won the famous praise of Robert Schumann (“Hats off, gentlemen – a genius!”) with his variations on *La ci darem la mano*.

Chopin remained in Poland for two more years. He visited Vienna again in November 1830 and continued work on his F minor piano concerto and his Op.10 piano etudes. Yet vehement German nationalism and anti-Polish sentiments hindered Chopin’s professional success. A month later, General Paskevich, leader of the most brutal Cossack division in Russia, brutally crushed a Warsaw rebellion and burned the city. Crushed by the uncertain fate of his family and his own powerlessness to remedy the situation, Chopin fled from Vienna to Paris in 1830.

Here Chopin met his musical rival and peer Franz Liszt and the novelist Aurore Dudevant (George Sand, pseudonym). Chopin’s celebrated affair with Sand mirrored that of Liszt and the Countess Marie d’Agoult; both women had left houses of nobility to seek lovers of a less economically powerful caste (yet wealthier perhaps in spirit) and published novels under male pseudonyms. Despite their musical congeniality, Liszt’s imperial control of Paris and heady court life eventually irritated Chopin, the unfailing advocate of eighteenth-century “taste” and order. After reading a concert review by Liszt which proclaimed Chopin the evening’s “king”, Chopin allegedly replied, “A king within *his* (Liszt’s) empire.” Famously generous and well-liked, Liszt’s remarks were in all likelihood made in candor; furthermore Chopin suffered bizarre psychological episodes and often hallucinated, once mistaking Sand and her daughters for ghosts as he greeted them while playing his op. 28 prelude in A minor. Whatever the true spirit of the review, in 1841 Chopin left Liszt’s camp and began a new series of compositions with renewed vigor; these works include the *Fantaisie* in F minor, op. 49.

Many scholars attest that, like Prokofiev, Chopin’s developmental skills lagged behind his melodic invention and harmonic ingenuity. His sonatas give evidence to this, so his *Fantaisie*, in many ways a sonata without development (or perhaps a super-scherzo), allowed Chopin to write a large-scale work without compromising his strengths. The work begins with a funereal introduction that precedes a series of themes. Instead of modulating within transitional sections, modulations within each theme allow the new themes to occupy new key centers. The final theme group, before repetition of the first, is in the dominant of the relative major, suggesting a sonata exposition’s closing material. But where development would normally occur, Chopin merely modulates his themes to distant keys, ending at F# (the enharmonic Neapolitan of the work’s parallel minor key). A trio resolving to the new tonic (B) follows, and the work closes with the principal themes in the original tonic (F minor) and its relative major (Ab). The themes oscillate in character between organ toccata, Schumann’s early piano works, and Bellini opera duet while the trio would snugly fit within any of Chopin’s nocturnes or scherzi.

Chopin claimed the inherently free fantasia form and recast it to create a sonata in all but name, devoid of Germanic craftsmanship and abounding with strong melodies and bold modulations.

A Russian birth did not long deter young **Benjamin Lees** from the American west coast. Born January 8, 1924, Lees became a naturalized American citizen after his parents’ immigration, served four years in the United States military (1942-45), and studied composition with Halsey Stevens, Ernest Kanitz, and Ingolf Dahl at the University of Southern California. His work greatly impressed composer George Antheil with whom he studied for four years at which point Lees received a Fromm Foundation Award (1953) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1954). Between 1954 and 1961, Lees lived in France, Vienna, and Helsinki. His detachment from American compositional academia allowed him to develop an individual language. In 1961 he returned to the United States to compose and teach at Queens College, the Peabody Conservatory, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School. After receiving several commissions from the Tokyo String Quartet, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Aurora String Quartet, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, he received a NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) award in 1981.

For a modernist, Lees’s music appears quite traditional on paper – the odd performance instructions, unconventional metric notations, and unorthodox symbology that infest many contemporary scores do not appear in Lees’s scores. His early work betrays a love both for Prokofiev’s melodic style and Bartok’s espousal of a style based on rhythm, ostinato, and modality rather than a traditional tonal-harmonic framework. A basically tonal composer, Lees uses modal decorations at the melodic and harmonic level for distinction. His work abounds with rhythmic life and mixed meter, displaying many accents that further displace the meter and disorient the listener. Lees often selects an interval from which he extracts as much material as possible using chromatic parallelism. This interval becomes the basis for chromatic polyphony as well. In this method of strict cellular development in a post-tonal context, his work greatly resembles that of Stravinsky.

The *Fantasia* for solo piano admirably demonstrates these tendencies in a most demanding compositional medium – the unaccompanied keyboard work. The piece begins with a French overture-like fanfare but with modal color appropriate to medieval France. A toccata passage follows, emphasizing the intervals of a fourth and a minor second – again, characteristically modern and recalling Prokofiev and Bartok. The clustered octaves which decorate the return of the fanfare summon Prokofiev as well but employed in this stately, unmelodic fashion draw greater