presents...

RICHARD GOODE | Piano
40th Anniversary Gala

Tuesday, October 29, 2019 | 7pm
Herbst Theatre

JANÁČEK

In the Mists
Andante
Molto adagio
Andantino
Presto

CHOPIN

Nocturne in E-flat Major, Opus 55, No. 2

Three Mazurkas, Opus 59
No. 1 in A minor
No. 2 in A-flat Major
No. 3 in F-sharp minor

DEBUSSY

Images, Book II
Cloches à travers les feuilles
Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fût
Poissons d’or

La soirée dans Grenade
L’isle joyeuse

Richard Goode is represented by Frank Salomon Associates
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Hamburg Steinway Model D, Pro Piano, San Francisco
ARTIST PROFILE
San Francisco Performances presents Richard Goode for the 13th time. He first appeared in 1985 and most recently returned in February 2016.

Richard Goode has been hailed for music-making of tremendous emotional power, depth and expressiveness, and has been acknowledged worldwide as one of today’s leading interpreters of Classical and Romantic music.

One of today’s most revered recitalists, Goode will be heard in 2019–20 in London, Boston, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Costa Mesa, Houston, Rockport, Tallahassee, and at the Ravinia Festival and colleges and universities around the country. He will play Mozart with Vladimir Jurowski and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and has recitals in Italy, Switzerland, and the UK. His master classes continue to be hailed as truly memorable events.

In recent seasons, Goode appeared as soloist with Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in a program filmed as part of a documentary celebrating the 50th Anniversary of one of the country’s most popular summer musical events. He also toured in the U.S. with one of the world’s most admired orchestras and his recording partner, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Iván Fischer. Their recording of the five Beethoven Piano Concertos has won worldwide acclaim. Other orchestral appearances include the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, and in Europe with the London Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, and BBC Philharmonic.

An exclusive Nonesuch recording artist, Goode has made more than two dozen recordings over the years, ranging from solo and chamber works to lieder and concertos. His recording of the five Beethoven concertos with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Iván Fischer was released in 2009 to exceptional critical acclaim, described as “a landmark recording” by the Financial Times and nominated for a Grammy award. His 10-CD set of the complete Beethoven sonatas cycle, the first-ever by an American-born pianist, was nominated for a Grammy and has been ranked among the most distinguished recordings of this repertoire.

A native of New York, Richard Goode studied with Elvira Szigeti and Claude Frank, with Nadia Reisenberg at the Mannes College of Music, and with Rudolf Serkin at the Curtis Institute. His numerous prizes over the years include the Young Concert Artists Award, First Prize in the Clara Haskil Competition, the Avery Fisher Prize, and a Grammy award for his recording of the Brahms Sonatas with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. His first public performances of the complete cycle of Beethoven sonatas at Kansas City’s Folly Theater and New York’s 92Y in 1987–88 brought him to international attention being hailed by the New York Times as “among the season’s most important and memorable events.” It was later performed with great success at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1994 and 1995.

Mr. Goode is married to the violinist Marcia Weinfeld, and, when the Goodes are not on tour, they and their collection of some 5,000 volumes live in New York City.

PROGRAM NOTES

In the Mists
LEOŠ JANÁČEK (1854–1928)

Janáček composed In the Mists in 1912, when he was 58 years old and director of the Organ School in Brno. As a composer he was virtually unknown: a regional production of his opera Jenůfa in 1904 had brought him brief notice, but now he seemed doomed to live out his days as a provincial musician. Success would come later, but when he wrote In the Mists, Janáček was nearing retirement, he was unknown, he was trapped in an unhappy marriage, and he feared that this would be his fate.

Some of Janáček’s biographers believe that the title In the Mists is autobiographical and that it refers to Janáček’s belief that—as a composer—he was lost “in the mist.” Janáček had a fondness for enigmatic titles, and we should be careful not to read significance into a situation where it may not belong, but that suggestion is intriguing.

In the Mists is a suite of four brief movements. The mood here is neither bitter nor angry, but all four movements are tinged with melancholy. All four are in a general ternary form: an opening statement, a central episode in a different mood or tempo, and return to the opening material. But this music conforms to no set form, and the individual movements are episodic, mercurial in their short themes, repeated phrases, and quick changes of mood and color.

Nocturne in E-flat Major, Opus 55, No. 2
FREDERIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

The Nocturne in E-flat Major, composed in 1843, is remarkable for the equal importance of the two hands. The left hand is here not relegated to the role of accompanist but given a musical line that co-exists with the pianist’s right hand. This nocturne is an exercise in the deft treatment of simultaneous musical lines.

Three Mazurkas, Opus 59

Chopin composed the three mazurkas of his Opus 59 during the summer of 1845. No. 1 in A minor moves easily along its Moderato tempo, with the spare main theme in the right hand; Chopin moves to A Major for the stately second subject, which becomes more animated. At the return comes one of those points that dismayed early critics: Chopin brings the opening theme back in the “wrong” key of G-sharp Major and only gradually makes his way back to the home key.

No. 2 in A-flat Major is somewhat livelier—the marking is Allegretto, though Chopin specifies that he wants the performance to be dolce. The steady 3/4 of the left-hand accompaniment almost makes this seem like a waltz, were it not for the freedom and vitality of the right-hand melodies.

No. 3 in F-sharp minor is the most distinctive of the set. The opening right-hand melody is energized by its constant triplets, and this simple beginning grows more complex as it proceeds. The clear textures
Marc-André Hamelin | Piano
Nicholas Phan | Tenor
Gabriel Kahane | Composer/Pianist
Alexander String Quartet

Sunday, April 26, 2020 | 7pm
Herbst Theatre | $40 All Seats

Join us as we officially celebrate our 40th Anniversary with an evening concert. The program features the world premiere of a new quintet by Hamelin that he will perform with the Alexander String Quartet and a new song cycle by Kahane for Nicholas Phan.

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Children under 18 FREE
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Visit our website for the latest updates on what we have planned for this not-to-be-missed day of music.
of the opening vanish in the F-sharp Major central episode, as does the steady left-hand accompaniment, and Chopin creates music of unusual contrapuntal complexity. The opening material returns, though Chopin springs one final surprise, going back to F-sharp Major and rounding off this mazurka with an extended and quiet coda in this “wrong” key.

Images, Book II

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
(1862–1918)

Audiences should both take the title Images seriously and they should ignore it. It is true that some of these pieces have visual titles and seem to proceed from the images they suggest. Yet Debussy’s intention here is much more subtle than mere tone-painting: he aims not for literal depiction of the title but for a refined projection of mood, a combination of title, rhythm, and sonority to create an evocative sound-world all its own. Debussy was quite proud of this music. To his publisher he wrote: “With no false vanity, I believe that these three pieces are a success and that they will take their place in the literature of the piano, on the left hand of Schumann, or the right hand of Chopin, as you like it.”

Book II of Images (1907) is written in three staves throughout and shows particular attention to color. Cloches à travers les feuilles (“Bells Heard through Leaves”) is meant to suggest the sound of distant church bells heard through a forest on Halloween. It is marked by the sonority of ringing bells and layers of sound at different dynamics; Debussy asks that one passage sound “like an iridescent vapor.” Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fût (“And the Moon Descends on a Ruined Temple”) has a static quality, and some have heard in this steady chordal progression the play of light from the sinking moon over solitary ruins; that title, though, was suggested to Debussy by a friend after the piece was written. Poissons d’or (“Goldfish”) is a water-music piece, but with a difference: it was inspired not by actual goldfish but by a piece of Chinese lacquer with a goldfish on a shiny black background.

La soirée dans Grenade

Debussy apparently spent only one day in Spain, a brief trip across the border to San Sebastian, but he seems to have had an instinctual feel for the Spanish idiom. La soirée dans Grenade (1903) has been praised for having caught the sultry feel of a warm Spanish night. Musically, it takes the form of a habanera, a popular dance of Cuban origin (the title comes from the name Havana) based heavily on dotted rhythms. Debussy’s Soirée falls into a number of short sections: the languorous, lilting opening gives way to faster sections, some of them sharply syncopated.

L’isle joyeuse

L’isle joyeuse dates from 1904, a year that brought the best and worst of times for Debussy. He had finally achieved success with his opera Pelléas et Mélisande, and now he was hard at work on La Mer. That year he also abandoned his wife for Emma Bardac, a singer and the estranged wife of a wealthy banker, and his despairing wife shot herself. This unhappy incident, and Debussy’s failure to pay any of her medical bills, cost him a number of friendships.

Debussy had left his wife in June 1904, and he spent that summer with Emma on the Isle of Jersey off the Normandy coast. It was here that he composed L’isle joyeuse. Debussy drew his inspiration from an 18th-century painting, L’Embarquement pour Cythère by Antoine Watteau. Watteau’s painting depicts the moment of departure of a group of revelers for the island of Aphrodite, goddess of erotic love, and Debussy sets out to capture the sensual expectancy of that scene.

L’isle joyeuse opens with a brief passage marked Quasi una cadenza, built largely on anticipatory trills. The main theme quickly appears, so full of triplets and dancing dotted rhythms that it seems to spill over with an almost arabesque elegance. The music, in rondo form, is fast and festive, and Debussy soon moves to a gently-rocking 3/8 meter, perhaps intended to suggest the motion of the boat (he marks this section “undulating and expressive”). Gradually the tempo accelerates, the music becomes more animated, and L’isle joyeuse rushes to a sonorous close.

Debussy was proud of L’isle joyeuse and wrote to his publisher: “This piece seems to embrace every possible manner of treating the piano, combining as it does strength with grace, if I may presume to say so.” Later he offered an even more succinct evaluation of this music: “Lord, but it’s difficult to play!”

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger