Senior Recital:

Steven Tanus, Piano

MOZART

Piano Sonata No. 13 in B-flat major, K. 333

I. Allegro
II. Andante cantabile
III. Allegretto grazioso

INTERMISSION (10 mins)

DEBUSSY

Children’s Corner, L. 113

I. Doctor Gradus ad parnassum
II. Jimbo’s Lullaby
III. Serenade of the Doll
IV. The Snow is Dancing
V. The Little Shepherd
VI. Golliwogg’s Cakewalk

LISZT

Années de pèlerinage - Première année: Suisse, S. 160

II. Au lac de Wallenstadt
V. Orage
**PROGRAMME NOTES**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791) composed a wide range of instrumental, vocal and operatic works. His **Piano Sonata No. 13 in B flat major, K. 333**, is considered one of his more mature works written for solo piano. This sonata was composed in 1783 and premiered during 1784. Mozart was well known for his exceptional gift for melody. His ability to write great operas and his God-given melodic skills culminated in, among other works, this sonata. The first movement, in its simplicity, evokes gracefulness, majestic beauty and triumph. It is generally lively in character. Both themes introduced in the exposition are contrasting, yet the themes seamlessly transit. The appoggiatura makes it very expressive. Throughout the development, themes are being inverted and fragmented. Mozart’s way of stalling for the resolution to the home key is extremely effective. As themes are being restated in the recapitulation, Mozart adds in chains of suspension to delay resolution. The movement closes with a gentle cadence. The second movement opens up with thirds in the melody, inviting the listener into the music. The lyrical melody, accompanied by flowing triadic information, gives a sense of morning music. The appoggiatura idea also runs through this movement. Chromaticism mostly occurs in the development, with the tonicization of different keys. The movement ends with an anticipation of what would be coming next. It is like an opera where an aria finishes and leads on to the next scene. The third and final movement starts with a similar harmonic progression to that of the first movement. The rondo theme repeats, with a fuller texture, rather in the manner of a concerto soloist introducing the theme, followed by an affirmation from the entire orchestra. Themes are being introduced, where the rondo theme repeats after a new section has been introduced. It progresses towards the cadential 6/4, as if anticipating a cadenza. Mozart would only structure a sonata with cadenza if he thought of it along orchestral lines. The rondo theme is presented for the final time in a varied guise, and the Sonata closes in a mood of victorious triumph. This entire Sonata, indeed, could be considered as a self-contained concerto, with the piano functioning as both the soloist and the orchestra.

**Claude Debussy** (1862-1918) composed and dedicated **Children's Corner** for his daughter Claude-Emma (known as Chou-Chou). She was 3 when her father premiered the work in 1908, but sadly died at only 13, a year after her father's death. **Children's Corner**, L. 113, consists of 6 characteristic pieces. “Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum” is a French parody of Clementi's **Gradus ad Parnassum**. The etude-like texture runs almost throughout the
entire piece, building up to a climax and ending with a loud bang. “Jimbo's Lullaby” portrays Jumbo, an elephant. The misspelling was due to the pronunciation of the word. “Serenade of the Doll” has its roots in Gounod, a French composer. Debussy's use of pentatonic scales was influenced from his visit to the Universal Exposition of 1889, where he was introduced to Eastern music. “The Snow is Dancing” depicts beauty, wonder and fantasy. Listeners can picture snowflakes rising up, drifting along and dancing. “The Little Shepherd” creates a musical image of a shepherd boy tending his sheep in the field while playing his flute and narrating a story as he plays. The final piece, “Golliwogg's Cakewalk”, is a depiction of a dancing doll. Golliwogg dolls – which still exist today – were very popular in Paris at that time. The energetic, animated character of this piece provides a joyful ending for the whole suite. In all of Debussy's output, Children's Corner suite is the only piece having English titles; they were provided by Chou-Chou's English governess.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) composed Années de pèlerinage (“Years of Pilgrimage”) when he had already given up his career as a virtuoso pianist. Many of the pieces were derived from Album d'un voyageur, his earlier suites. Années de pèlerinage has always been considered one of Liszt's finest mature works. There are 3 suites in this work. The pieces were published between 1855 and 1883. The first suite, Première année: Suisse (“First Year: Switzerland”), S. 160, was published in 1855. Au lac de Wallenstadt (“At Lake Wallenstadt”) is the second piece in this cycle. Liszt quotes a poem before each piece. Here, the quotation is taken from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage by Byron.

“There is a contrasted lake
With the wild world I dwell in is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.”

The piece opens with flowing melody and accompaniment. It is like a calm lake, with moving waters and a sunny atmosphere. The ostinato accompaniment creates a hypnotic experience. The piece gently ends as scenes from the lake slowly dissipate. Orage (“Storm”), the fifth piece, is in total contrast to the lake. As for the preface, the quotation is also taken from Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

“But where of ye, O tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?”
As the title suggests, the piece is stormy in its entirety. The introduction prepares the listener for an arising storm. The storm continues to rage. It seems to calm a little towards the end and concludes with yet another whirlwind, finishing with imposing finality.