

Program Notes

Prelude and Fugue X, BWV 855 by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

This work forms part of a collection named the *Das Wohltemperiertes Klavier* (The Well-Tempered Clavier) which span the dates from 1722- 1744. The “WTC” or “The Mighty Forty-Eight,” as it is known amongst pianists, is divided into two books: a prelude and fugue in every major and minor key, providing a total of forty-eight in all. Tonight’s performance begins with the Prelude and Fugue number ten, in E minor, from Book I. The prelude starts with a beautiful and lyrical melody and is accompanied by a bass line that keeps the harmony moving forward. With a dramatic change in tempo, the *Presto* section transforms the texture as well, and after interesting, harmonic “twists and turns,” ends with a majestic E major chord (known as a Picardy third). The fugue is written in two voices—both following a highly chromatic treatment of the subject and countersubject. The fugue ends similarly to the prelude in that the work concludes with a fast-moving harmonic progression and majestic E Major chord.

Adagio in B minor KV540 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

According to the Köchel catalogue of Mozart’s oeuvre, this beautiful piece was completed on March 19 of 1788. It has been said that during those times Mozart’s personal health and financial stability was increasingly deteriorating. It has also been argued that at this same time, Mozart’s music was barely noticed. Perhaps as a result, this fifteen minute piece exemplifies Mozart’s ability to showcase sadness, anger and nostalgia through music. Perhaps not considered a technically challenging work, it is, nonetheless, full of passion and deep sentiment. Tonight’s pianist believes it is necessary to contemplate every single note in order to successfully perform Mozart’s intentions.

Danzas Afro-Cubanas by Ernesto Lecuona (1895-1963)

The piece entitled *Afro-Cuban Dances* by Ernesto Lecuona actually is a twentieth century suite that symbolizes a complete party. In highlighting a few of the six dances here, the pianist states, “The suite starts with ‘*La Conga de Media Noche*,’ which is also the name of the celebration during the Lenten season, or carnival, in Cuba. Beginning with chords that symbolize drums, the first movement also contains a second, lyrical melody that symbolizes dance. The fourth dance ‘*Danza de los Ñañigos*’ is dedicated to Joaquin Nin, a Spanish composer who was also Lecuona’s professor. The last dance “*La Comparsa*” is a summary of all the six dances because it symbolizes the whole carnival. This composition starts with the gradual approach of the procession and carries one through the excitement until the last, faint notes of the departing parade die away in the distance.