

University of Missouri School of Music

2024-2025 Series • Faculty Recital

Peter Miyamoto, piano

September 15, 2024 • 3:00pm

Whitmore Recital Hall

Program

"Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," BWV 639 (arr. F. Busoni) **Johann Sebastian Bach**
(1685-1750)

Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110 **Ludwig van Beethoven**
Moderato cantabile molto espressivo (1770-1827)
Allegro molto
Adagio ma non troppo - Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo

Berceuse, Op. 57 **Frederic Chopin**
(1810-1849)

Intermission

Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5 **Johannes Brahms**
Allegro maestoso (1833-1897)
Andante espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro energico
Intermezzo (Rückblick): Andante molto
Allegro moderato ma rubato)

PROGRAM NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach Chorale Prelude “Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ,” BWV 649 (arr. Ferruccio Busoni)

In his day, Ferruccio Busoni was an important pianist, composer, conductor, teacher and author about music. Considered one of the greatest pianists of all time, he was equally influential as teacher, holding teaching positions in Finland, Russia, America, Italy and Germany. His compositions are often contrapuntal and complex (his Piano Concerto, Op. 39 incorporates a male chorus and takes approximately 70 minutes to perform). Between 1907 and 1909, Busoni transcribed 10 of Bach’s chorale preludes for piano, stating “the interpretation of Bach’s organ pieces on the pianoforte [is] essential to a complete study of Bach,” and that his aim was to “interest a larger section of the public in these compositions, which are so rich in art feeling, and fantasy.”

Bach’s original chorale preludes were themselves transcriptions of traditional German chorales used in the Lutheran liturgy. “Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ” was included in his *Orgelbüchlein*, compiled while at the Weimar court, and probably dates from 1714. It is through-composed in three voices, with the chorale melody in the top voice, a throbbing eighth-note bass-line, and a continuous stream of sixteenth-note arpeggiation in the middle voice providing harmonic background as well as constant motion. The text is an entreaty to the Lord:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, | I call to you, Lord Jesus Christ, |
| Ich bitt, erhor mein Klagen, | I pray to you, hear my complaint, |
| Verleih mir Gnad zu dieser Frist, | Lend me grace within this life, |
| Lass mich doch nicht verzagen; | Let me not despair; |
| Den rechten Glauben, Herr ich mein, | The True faith, my Lord, I seek, |
| Den wollest du mir geben, | That you did wish to give me, |
| Dir zu leben, | To live for you, |
| Mein’m Nachsten nutz zu sein, | To be useful to my neighbor, |
| Dein Wort zu halten eben | To keep your word properly. |

Bach later used the chorale in two cantatas, BWV 177 and BWV 185.

Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110

Beethoven's sublime Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110, his penultimate foray into the genre, is tightly constructed with extraordinary thematic unity throughout its three movements. Through motivic and harmonic connections, Beethoven links the movements into a stunning musical journey, taking us from the lyrical, opening sonata-form movement, through a brusquely humorous scherzo, to the phenomenal third movement, which itself traces an emotional trajectory through the pathos of its plaintive recitative and arioso sections to the life-affirming triumph of its double fugue sections.

The opening movement, marked *cantabile molto espressivo* (singing and very expressive), is imbued with spiritual repose. In the style of his late Bagatelles, the second movement features antiphonal dynamics, strange pauses, and accented meter-jarring accents, and incorporates two quotations of popular songs of the day. The final movement combines aspects of a slow movement with a finale, creating a structure that encompasses half the sonata's entire duration. It begins with a slow recitative section that leads to an aria dolente section, marked *Klagendes Gesang* (lamenting song), featuring a plaintive melody accompanied by throbbing repeated chords. The theme of the fugue that follows is closely generated by the opening theme of the first movement. After a reiteration of the *Klagendes Gesang*, now marked *Ermattet* (exhausted) and *Perdendo le forze* (losing force) and set a half-step down, Beethoven embarks on a second fugue based on the inversion of the original theme. This last fugue is marked *poi a poi di nuovo vivente* or *nach und nach wieder auflebend* (little by little gaining new life). As the fugue gains energy, it also sheds its contrapuntal texture, reaching a final declamation of the original fugue theme in *forte* chords, homophonically accompanied by rapid left hand arpeggiation, and concluding with a dizzyingly triumphant a-flat major arpeggiated flourish.

Frédéric Chopin Berceuse, Op. 57

Chopin's mesmerizing Berceuse, or "Lullaby," consists of a series of sixteen continuous variations on a simple, four-bar theme unfolding over a basso ostinato. Chopin began composing the work in Nohant during the summer of 1843 where he was staying with George Sand. He completed it 1844, shortly before he completed his third sonata. One of Chopin's subtlest masterpieces, it is a mature work, displaying Chopin's absolute command of melodic invention.

Johannes Brahms Piano Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5

The thundering opening chords of Brahms' Piano Sonata in F Minor, Op. 5 proclaim the epic scale of this virtual symphony for one instrument. Written in 1853 at the ripe age of twenty, Brahms had already so impressed Robert and Clara Schumann with his first two piano sonatas and the brilliant Scherzo Op. 4 that Clara wrote that Brahms "comes as if sent straight from God", and Robert famously published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* that Brahms seemed to "like Athena, spring fully armed from the head of Zeus." Brahms had met the Schumanns on September 30, 1853, and over the coming month threw himself into the composition of his third sonata, playing it for the Schumanns on the night before his departure, on November 2, 1853.

The sonata is extraordinary for its blending of Brahms' romantically fused musical rhetoric with supreme control over form. The epic first movement is balanced by a beautifully intimate second movement, prefaced by two lines from the poet Sternau: "The evening falls, the moonlight shines, Two hearts, joined in love, Embrace each other blissfully." The *energico* scherzo that follows features an infectious waltz *schwung* in its opening section, countered by a heartfelt trio in a chorale texture. Unusually, the sonata is in five movements, with the scherzo followed by an Intermezzo, marked *Rückblick* (Looking Back). This may be a reference to the next stanza of the Sternau, which Brahms took note of in his journal: "If ye knew how soon, How soon the trees withered, And the wood is bare, How soon comes the dreary day When the heart's beat is dumb." The finale's tensely rhythmic rondo theme is contrasted by more lyrical sections, the first quoting the famous F-A-E "Frei aber einsam" (free but lonely) motto of Brahms' friend, Joseph Joachim. The sonata concludes with a brilliant coda, marked *presto*, in the parallel major.

Notes by Peter Miyamoto
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BIOGRAPHY

Peter Miyamoto has enjoyed a brilliant international career, performing to great acclaim in recital and as soloist in Canada, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, China, and Japan, and in major US cities such as Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. In 1990, Miyamoto was named the first Gilmore Young Artist. He won numerous other competitions, including the American Pianist Association National Fellowship Competition, the D'Angelo Competition, the San Francisco Symphony Competition and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Competition.

Peter Miyamoto holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale University School of Music, Michigan State University, and the Royal Academy of Music in London. His teachers included Maria Curcio-Diamand, Leon Fleisher, Claude Frank, Peter Frankl, Marek Jablonski, Aube Tzerko, and Ralph Votapek. Middlebush Chair of Piano at the University of Missouri, Peter Miyamoto formerly taught at Michigan State University, and the California Institute of the Arts and has presented masterclasses worldwide. From 2003-2015 he served as head of the piano faculty at the New York Summer Music Festival and has served on the piano faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music's Young Artist Summer Program and the Curtis Mentor Network Program in Philadelphia.

Miyamoto's six solo CDs, available on the Blue-Griffin label, have received excellent reviews in periodicals such as Gramophone, International Record Review, Fanfare, and American Record Guide and were recognized by the American Prize. He is also Executive Director of the Plowman Chamber Music Competition.

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