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Mikhail Petukhov, Piano, and John Mortensen, Piano

Department of Music and Worship, Cedarville University

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THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC, ART, & WORSHIP

presents

MIKHAIL PETUKHOV
PIANO

WITH

JOHN MORTENSEN
PIANO

Six Keyboard Concerti

of

Johann Sebastian Bach

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010
8:00 P.M.

RECITAL HALL
BOLTHOUSE CENTER FOR MUSIC
DIXON MINISTRY CENTER

Program

All works by
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Concerto in A Major, BWV 1055

- I. Allegro
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegro ma non tanto

Concerto in f minor, BWV 1056

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Presto

Concerto in d minor, BWV 1052

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Intermission

Concerto in D Major, BWV 1054

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio e piano sempre
- III. Allegro

Concerto in g minor, BWV 1058

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro assai

Concerto in E Major, BWV 1053

- I. Allegro
- II. Siciliano
- III. Allegro

No flash photography, please.

Please turn off all cell phones.

Artist Biographies

MIKHAIL PETUKHOV was born in Bulgaria. His family soon moved to Ukraine and he began to perform in public at the age of ten. Studies at the Kiev Special Music School with Nina Naiditch and Valentin Kuchеров led to victory at the Leipzig 4th International Bach Piano Competition. This contest win led directly to his admission to the Moscow Conservatoire, which largely shaped his development as pianist and composer. It was there that he studied with the distinguished pianist Tatiana Nikolayeva and met some of the greatest artists of the 20th century, such as Dmitri Shostakovich, Sviatoslav Richter, Emil Gilels, and David Oistrakh.

After winning the 7th International Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, Petukhov received numerous invitations to perform in Europe, Japan and the United States. However, the Soviet Union prevented international travel, and for nearly thirteen years Mr. Petukhov was forbidden to accept engagements in western countries. Only after the Soviet collapse did Petukhov's talent resurface on the international scene, when the Italian press discovered him.

At present Mikhail Petukhov performs internationally. His concerts are enthusiastically received throughout Europe, Asia, South and North America. The Berlin Philharmonic, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Bolshoi Theatre and Great Hall in Moscow, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Philadelphia Music Academy, Milan Verdi Conservatoire, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Usher Hall in Edinburgh, Genève Conservatoire, Palais de Beaux Arts in Brussels, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Palau de la Musica in Valencia, Budapest Liszt Music Academy, Philharmonic Hall in Hong Kong, Prague Opera, Gasteig in Munich, and Herodus Atticum in Athens are among numerous stages where he has performed.

He appeared as a soloist with many of the important conductors on the world scene, including Rafael Frúbeck de Burgos, Yuri Bashmet, Valeri Gergiev, Milan Horvat, Karl Eliasberg, Yuri Simonov, Michel Tabachnick, Vladimir Fedosseyev, Mark Ermler, and Saulius Sondeckis.

He has performed with such famous orchestras as the Birmingham Symphony, Moscow Philharmonic, Royal Scottish Symphony, Stuttgart Philharmonic, Bolshoi Theatre Symphony, Belgium National Orchestra, Zagreb Philharmonic, Bornmouth Symphony, Hungarian State Symphony, Santiago Philharmonic, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

Mr. Petukhov is professor of piano at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatoire, and his masterclasses are much in demand throughout the world. The Russian government has granted him the title, Honoured Artist of Russia.

JOHN MORTENSEN studied with Lynne Bartholomew, Anne Koscielnny, and Raymond Hanson at the University of Michigan and the University of Maryland, receiving a doctorate in piano performance in 1995. The press in California described his playing as "full of energy and bravura." After a concert in the Russian city of Eisk, the press remarked as follows: "How does one judge the masterful performance of the pianist?...Only a professional of the very highest level compels the sensitive soul to respond and weep, laugh and love together with his instrument." Dr. Mortensen serves as Professor of Piano and Director of Keyboard Studies at Cedarville University.

Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach is without question one of the most prominent names in the canon of Western music history. Although he did enjoy a certain amount of prestige in his lifetime, his undeniable worth was not always valued. In his own time, his works were subjected to occasional harsh criticism and at times he faced rejection from coveted posts. His last and longest position in Leipzig from 1723 until his death in 1750 materialized only because the first choice (Telemann) took another job. Even before his death, Bach's works were falling out of fashion and his own sons' newer styles were upstaging his own. When he visited his son Carl Philipp Emanuel in Berlin in 1747, he was introduced as merely the younger Bach's father. Not until Johann Forkel's biography of the life of J. S. Bach was published in 1802 did anyone attempt to revisit the extraordinarily prolific output of this monumental figure, and not until 1829 did anyone hear a revival of Bach's music performed. Felix Mendelssohn's performance of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* with the Berlin *Singakademie* began an irreversible trend that placed Bach's works in the forefront of the canon of music history, establishing him as the icon that he is today. Additionally, a growing passion for nationalism fortified the resurgence of his music. Forkel firmly established Bach as a father-figure of German nationalism when he declared in his last paragraph, "This man, the greatest orator-poet that ever addressed the world in the language of music, was a German! Let Germany be proud of him!"

Before accepting his final position in Leipzig, Bach worked in a number of other cities. Pertinent to the Concertos being performed tonight were his tenure in Weimar as court organist and Kapellmeister, where he wrote many of his organ works, and his position in Cöthen as Kapellmeister, where he wrote many instrumental works, some of which provide the sources for his solo Harpsichord Concertos. In 1723 Bach officially began his duties in Leipzig as Cantor of St. Thomas's School. He was responsible for the musical direction and new music for four churches, plus new music for special services of the University Church of St. Paul and St. John's Church. Bach both wrote and rehearsed new music on a weekly basis, producing sacred cantatas for up to five annual cycles. It was in these conditions and under the constraints of these duties that Bach wrote the Harpsichord Concertos.

In late 1729 Bach assumed the additional duties of directing the *Collegium Musicum*, an informal private society that sponsored regular performances of some of the best young talent in Germany. In coordination with Gottfried Zimmermann, owner of Leipzig's largest coffee house on the fashionable Catherinenstrasse, performances were held there either in a hall that could accommodate large ensembles or in an outdoor garden. Performances were free, as coffee-sipping customers enjoyed remarkable performances by either Bach himself or promising musicians. Zimmermann also collected a number of instruments for the Collegium's use: at least two violins, one viola, two bassoons, and two violones (ancestor of the double bass). Thus Bach was guaranteed strings and a basso continuo for any performance. A permanent harpsichord was added to the available performing forces as early as 1733; most likely this was Bach's own possession. With the growing popularity of the performances, Bach gradually assumed responsibility for a weekly concert series. It was for these, known as *Ordinaire Concerten*, that the Harpsichord Concertos were written.

Between 1734 and 1739 seven concertos for harpsichord, strings, and basso continuo, known now as BWV 1052-1058 (BWV 1057 included two recorders), were listed as "performance materials" for the *Ordinaire Concerten*. During these years two of Bach's

sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel, were regular keyboard performers. Bach reworked earlier compositions into the present works for keyboard and orchestra.

Although all scholars today agree that these concertos are re-workings of earlier compositions, most of which were violin concertos from the Cöthen period, they do not necessarily agree on the details of the revisions or on the importance of the set. Forkel admitted that although they were important, they were antiquated in style. Albert Schweitzer, in his biography published in 1911, offered a harsher criticism, noting that the arrangements had been carelessly and hastily prepared; thus, musicians should be under no obligation to perform such “transcriptions” in today’s concert halls. Philipp Spitta, a Bach scholar writing in the middle of the twentieth century, turned from this despising attitude to a more objective approach. He believed that the Harpsichord Concertos were rearrangements of violin concertos that had been originally conceived on principles of the keyboard, which in turn had developed during Bach’s Weimar years. Spitta concludes that Bach was improving on his original conception, and thus we also should regard these works not as mere arrangements but as new developments.

Scholars can infer that Bach was keenly interested in the harpsichord concerto also from the fact that he apparently transcribed for the harpsichord all of his concertos for melody instruments. According to Werner Breig writing in 1997, there are no known solo concertos for one, two, or three melody instruments that do not also exist as harpsichord concertos. Furthermore, there are a number of extant harpsichord concertos whose source material has been lost, yet scholars agree that these too were arrangements. Based on these facts, Breig believes that the Harpsichord Concertos thus represent an important retrospective look at his entire solo concerto output and that it likewise shows us not just works that had been recycled but rather an important key to Bach’s compositional choices.

In his biography published in 2000, Malcolm Boyd argues that these works deserve attention because they occupy an important place in the development of the solo keyboard concerto. From the *Ordinaire Concerten* series, both Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel went on to further the solo keyboard genre in Dresden and Berlin respectively. Bach’s younger son, Johann Christian, would have been too young to perform in these concerts, but he surely was influenced by this style, later developing it in London and providing an important link between the elder Bach and a young Mozart.

Tonight’s performance includes all but BWV 1057 in an arrangement for keyboard and piano reduction. The surviving autograph score of these works is in one collection, along with a fragment, BWV 1059, in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin. Bach’s markings of “J. J.” (Jesu juva) at the beginning of BWV 1052 and “Finis. S. D. Gl. ” (Soli deo gloria) at the end of BWV 1057 seem to indicate that this group was intended as a set of six, like the Brandenburg Concertos. BWV 1058 follows as an independent item in the score, although it too has a mark of “J. J. ” at the top, which might indicate that it was intended as the first of another set of Concertos. Although this Concerto has a higher BWV number, there is some agreement that it was written earlier than the set comprising BWV 1052-1057. The autograph score was not accessible in the twentieth century until about forty-five years after World War II ended. Because there was never a fair copy of the Harpsichord Concertos, the singular autograph score with its extraordinary number of corrections thus remains the authority for these works while providing valuable insight into Bach’s reworking process. Contemporary pianists have recognized the great value of these works and have adopted this music into the modern piano repertoire.

BWV 1055 in A Major. Although the source for this is missing, scholars generally agree that this Concerto originated as a concerto for oboe d'amore. This oboe is slightly larger than a modern oboe, producing a lower tone. It is a transposing instrument in A, which adds further credence to the theory of the source. If this is true, it would necessarily come from the Leipzig years, since the oboe d'amore was unknown until around 1723.

BWV 1056 in f minor. The missing source is thought to be either an oboe concerto or a violin concerto in g minor. Whatever the source, it is also the origin of the cantata sinfonia of Cantata No. 156, "I stand with one foot in the grave."

BWV 1052 in d minor. Although the source violin concerto is missing, it is known to be a source also of Cantata No. 35, "Spirit and soul are bewildered," Cantata No. 146, "We must through much tribulation," and Cantata No. 188, "I have placed my confidence in God."

BWV 1054 in D Major. The source for this arrangement is Violin Concerto in E, BWV 1042. Bach transposed it to D to accommodate the range of his harpsichord, one step below the highest note scored for the violin in this piece. This work includes more progressive dynamic markings: a move from *piano* to *più piano* (pp) to *pianissimo* in the viola part of Mvt. 1 and *piano sempre* in the Adagio.

BWV 1058 in g minor. The source for this arrangement is the Violin Concerto in a minor, BWV 1041. Again, this arrangement is a transposition down one step to accommodate the range of the harpsichord. A striking feature of this Concerto is the lack of contrast between the solo and tutti parts, since the solo harpsichord plays throughout the tutti sections.

BWV 1053 in E Major. The source for this Concerto is also missing, but there is some disagreement on its nature. Some believe it to come from an organ concerto; others cite the cantata sinfonia developed in the 1730s with the solo violin virtuosity of works such as the Partita in E Major (BWV 1006) coupled with obbligato organ; still others believe it was an oboe concerto. This source also provided material for Cantata No. 169, "God alone shall master my heart" and Cantata No. 49, "I go forth and seek with longing."

Not only was Mendelssohn responsible for reviving Bach's works in general, he was also a key figure in re-discovering the Harpsichord Concertos. After a performance of BWV 1052 by Mendelssohn in 1837, music critic Robert Schumann wrote: "Will it be believed that in the music cabinets of the Berlin *Singakademie*...at least seven such concertos...in manuscript, are carefully preserved?" This was the spark that led to the *Bach-Gesellschaft*. Thanks to the efforts of these men, as well as of the Bach scholars of the past two centuries and performers such as Mikhail Petukhov and John Mortensen who bring this music to life tonight, we too can experience the excellent music of the *Ordinaire Concerten* emanating from Zimmermann's coffee house on Catherinenstrasse.

Dr. Sandra Yang, Assistant Professor of Music History