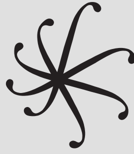


SAN FRANCISCO **PERFORMANCES**

presents

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, piano

Thursday, February 9, 2012, 8pm
Herbst Theatre

HAYDN — **Piano Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20**
Moderato
Andante con moto
Finale

BARTÓK — **Suite for Piano, Opus 14**
Allegro
Scherzo
Allegro molto
Sostenuto

DEBUSSY — **Images, Book One**
Reflets dans l'eau
Hommage à Rameau
Mouvement

INTERMISSION

CHOPIN
Waltz in F minor, Opus 70, No. 2
Waltz in G-flat Major, Opus 70, No. 1
Waltz in D-flat Major, Opus 70, No. 3
Waltz in A-flat Major, Opus 42
Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Opus 47
Nocturne in B Major, Opus 62, No. 1
Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Opus 23

The Shenson Piano Series is made possible by Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston, the Shenson Foundation

This performance is made possible in part through the generous support of David and Judy Preves Anderson and the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation.

Leif Ove Andsnes is represented by IMG Artists North America, 152 West 57th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY. artistsny@imgartists.com

Hamburg Steinway Model D, Pro Piano San Francisco

Photo: Felix Broede

Artist Profile

San Francisco Performances presents Leif Ove Andsnes for the seventh time. He appeared solo in 1997 and 2003; with violinist Christian Tetzlaff in 1994, 2002 and 2009; and with tenor Ian Bostridge in 2004.

The New York Times has called **Leif Ove Andsnes** "a pianist of magisterial elegance, power and insight." With his commanding technique and searching interpretations, the celebrated Norwegian pianist has won worldwide acclaim, prompting the *Wall Street Journal* to call him "one of the most gifted musicians of his generation." He gives recitals and plays concertos each season in the world's leading concert halls and with the foremost orchestras. Andsnes is also an active recording artist, as well as an avid chamber musician who has joined select colleagues each summer at Norway's Risør Festival of Chamber Music. He will serve as Music Director of the 2012 Ojai Music Festival in California.

Beethoven will figure prominently in Leif Ove Andsnes's 2011-12 season and beyond, in concerto performances, recitals and recordings. Together with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Jiří Bělohlávek, he will perform the Third Concerto in London and on tour in Spain. Soon after, he performs the First Concerto with the Vienna Symphony and Andris Nelsons, including concerts in Vienna's Musikverein. Andsnes will play

the same two concertos with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra in Gothenburg and Oslo. He then heads to North America for a series of fall performances of the First Concerto: with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Manfred Honeck; the Montreal Symphony with Roger Norrington; and, in January, the Boston Symphony under David Zinman, before returning to the Third Concerto, which he performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Herbert Blomstedt. Andsnes will play and direct both concertos with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra in Örebro, Sweden; and with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra in Trondheim, Norway. He will tour with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra in Italy—including performances in Brescia, Lugano, Torino, Bergamo—as well as Dresden, Prague, and Bergen. The Prague concerts will be recorded live by Sony Classical—his label debut—and are the beginning of a multi-year project, entitled "Beethoven—A Journey," to play and record all five of Beethoven's Piano Concertos.

Other highlights of the 2011-12 season include performances of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Hannover's NDR Radiophilharmonie, Japan's NHK Symphony, and his hometown orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic. While in Japan, he will also give recitals in Tokyo and Nagoya. Music by Chopin, Debussy, Bartók and Haydn will be featured on a recital program in North America and Europe. The first leg of the tour includes performances in Los Angeles; Morrow and Savannah, Georgia; Washington, DC; New York's Carnegie Hall; Chapel Hill, NC; and Chicago. A nine-city European tour includes performances in Schloss Elmau (Munich), Brussels, Oslo, Paris, Birmingham, London, Florence, Genova and Berlin. A spring recital tour featuring songs by Mahler and Shostakovich brings Andsnes back to the States for performances with baritone Matthias Goerne in San Francisco, St. Paul, Kalamazoo, Detroit, and New York's Carnegie Hall.

Among the many highlights of Leif Ove Andsnes's 2010–11 season were two residencies: as Pianist in Residence with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, he performed five diverse programs including chamber music, Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 with conductor Bernard Haitink, and a solo recital. He also served as Artist in Residence with his hometown orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic. He toured Europe with the London Philharmonic and Vladimir Jurowski as well as Mariss Jansons and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and performed concertos with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris. An extensive spring recital tour took Andsnes to Boston, Chicago, and New York's Carnegie Hall, followed by concerts in Rome, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Madrid, Vienna, Hamburg, Geneva, and other cities. Last fall, EMI Classics released a recording of Rachmaninov's Piano Concertos Nos. 3 and 4 with Andsnes, Antonio Pappano and the London Symphony Orchestra; in the spring his recording of Schumann's complete Piano Trios with violinist Christian Tetzlaff and his sister, cellist Tonja Tetzlaff was also released on EMI Classics.

Leif Ove Andsnes now records exclusively for Sony Classical. His previous discography comprises more than 30 discs for EMI Classics—solo, chamber and concerto releases, many of them bestsellers—spanning repertoire from Bach to the present day. He has been nominated for eight Grammys and awarded many international prizes, including five Gramophone Awards. His recordings of the music of his countryman, Edvard Grieg, have been especially celebrated: *The New York Times* named Andsnes's 2004 recording of the Piano Concerto with Mariss Jansons and the Berlin Philharmonic a "Best CD of the Year," and the *Penguin Guide* awarded it a coveted "Rosette." Like that Concerto recording, his disc of Grieg's Lyric Pieces won a Gramophone Award. His recording of Mozart's Piano Concertos 9 and 18 was another *New York Times* "Best of the Year" and *Penguin Guide* "Rosette" honoree. He won yet another Gramophone Award for Rachmaninov's Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 with Antonio Pappano and the Berlin Philharmonic. A series of recordings of Schubert's late sonatas—innovatively paired with selected songs sung by Ian Bostridge—prompted lavish acclaim, with the *Chicago Tribune* calling one release "Schubert playing of the highest order throughout." Reviewing his CD with the world-premiere recordings of Marc-André Dalbavie's Piano Concerto and Bent Sørensen's *The Shadows of Silence*—both written for Andsnes—paired with Lutoslawski's Piano Concerto and solo works by Gyorgy Kurtag, *The New York Times* called Andsnes "a dynamic performer of contemporary music."

Leif Ove Andsnes has received Norway's most distinguished honor, Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav. In 2007, he received the prestigious Peer Gynt Prize, awarded by members of parliament to honor prominent Norwegians for their achievements in politics, sports and culture. Andsnes has also received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist Award and the Gilmore Artist Award. Saluting his many achievements, *Vanity Fair* named Andsnes one of the "Best of the Best" in 2005.

Andsnes was born in Karmøy, Norway in 1970, and studied at the Bergen Music Conservatory under the renowned Czech professor Jiří Hlinka. Over the past decade, he has also received invaluable advice from the Belgian piano teacher Jacques de Tiège, who like Hlinka, has greatly influenced his style and philosophy of playing. Andsnes cites Dinu Lipatti, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Sviatoslav Richter, and Géza Anda among the pianists who have most inspired him. Andsnes currently lives in Copenhagen and Bergen, and also spends much time at his mountain home in Norway's western Hardanger area. He is a Professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, a Visiting Professor at the Royal Music Conservatory of Copenhagen, and a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. Andsnes occasionally contributes written commentaries to NPR's *Deceptive Cadence* blog, and in June 2010, he achieved one of his proudest accomplishments to date: he became a father for the first time.

Program Notes

Piano Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20

Franz Joseph Haydn
Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau
Died May 31, 1809, Vienna

Haydn's one hundred and four symphonies and his eighty-three string quartets have become–generally–part of the repertory, but his sixty-two keyboard sonatas remain much less familiar. These sonatas span his creative career (he wrote the earliest about 1750 at age eighteen, the last in 1794 when he was sixty-two), yet they are not widely performed, nor is a great deal known about them, and they have made their way into the repertory very slowly. As late as 1950, the distinguished piano pedagogue Ernest Hutcheson suggested that it did no real harm to the music if performers played individual movements from the sonatas rather than playing them complete.

The *Sonata in C minor* raises the issue of the specific instrument Haydn was writing for. He originally drafted it in 1771, and on that occasion the manuscript was inscribed "Sonata for the Clavichord." But Haydn held this sonata back for several years, revised it thoroughly, and published it as part of a group of six keyboard sonatas that appeared in Vienna in 1780. As part of the revisions, Haydn added dynamic and phrasing markings that are possible on the piano but not on the clavichord, and it seems clear that

ultimately this music was conceived for the greater expressive range of the piano (Haydn did not acquire his own first piano until the 1780s, but he doubtless had access to pianos long before that).

This is indeed very expressive music. Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon has hailed it as "one of the very finest sonatas by Haydn" and has noted that it is "the first in a distinguished line of C minor keyboard sonatas by each of the principal figures in the Viennese Classical School, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert." The grave and shaded beginning of the opening *Moderato* may establish an atmosphere, but it does not prepare one for the variety of music that will follow—this movement can be urgent one moment, full of power and blistering runs, then subside into long and expressive pauses the next. The *Andante con moto* moves to A-flat major, and its opening theme–already ornate on its initial statement–undergoes a process of continuous variation. The *Finale* returns to the C-minor mood of the first movement. Its slashing opening idea spins off energy as it goes, and Haydn's writing here is particularly athletic and forceful, right through the emphatic concluding chords.

Suite for Piano, Opus 14

BÉLA BARTÓK
Born March 25, 1881, Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary
Died September 26, 1945, New York City

In 1912 Béla Bartók, then a professor at the Budapest Academy of Music and a well-known piano virtuoso, was struggling as a composer. He was having trouble getting his works performed or published, and after the rejection of his opera *Bluebeard's Castle* by the judges of a national opera competition Bartók withdrew from public musical life. He stopped giving recitals and composing and instead devoted himself full-time to teaching and to collecting folk-songs, which had become a passion with him. With his friend Zoltan Kodály, Bartók made long tours through Romania, Transylvania, Hungary, and North Africa, writing down the folk-songs he heard and sometimes making crude recordings of them. In the process, Bartók collected well over ten-thousand folk-songs.

With the beginning of World War I in 1914, musical life went into decline all over Europe, and Bartók–with time on his hands–returned to composing. During the war years he wrote the *Sonatina for Piano,* various choral arrangements and songs, the *Second String Quartet*, and the ballets *The Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin.*

The *Suite for Piano* also dates from this period. Bartók completed the score in February 1916 and gave the first public performance in Budapest on April 21, 1919. While the *Suite* contains no actual folk material, it does show the influence of its composer's familiarity with the folk idiom. The first movement, which seems on first hearing the most "folk-like," has certain features common to Romanian folk-tunes, and Bartók's biographer Halsey Stevens calls the third "openly Arabic" in its inspiration and feels that Bartók made use of the Arab idiom he had observed in North Africa in June 1913 (the influence of those Arab songs would appear strongly in his *Dance Suite* for orchestra of 1923).

The title *suite* formerly implied a collection of dances, but here Bartók intends it to mean simply a collection of short pieces. The are four movements in the brief *Suite for Piano.* The opening *Allegretto* shows its folk affiliations most readily in its jaunty opening theme, while the second movement–titled *Scherzo*–moves rapidly across the range of the keyboard. The *Allegro molto* is built on a pulsating ostinato in the left hand, over which the four-note main theme is heard. Curiously, the last movement, marked *Sostenuto*, is slow, and many have noted that the structure of the *Suite*–several fast movements concluded by a slow one–is exactly that of Bartók's *Second String Quartet,* written during this same period and also showing a North African influence. This final movement, quiet and oddly expressive, forms an effective conclusion to the *Suite.*

Images, Book One

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
Born August 22, 1862, Saint-Germain-en-Laye
Died March 25, 1918, Paris

In the early years of this century, Debussy's piano music, already a miracle of subtlety and tone color, took on a new depth and sophistication. It may be possible to find reasons for this in the composer's life. After years of struggle, Debussy—now in his early forties—had two significant successes: the opera *Pelleas and Melisande* was produced in 1902, and *La Mer* followed three years later. With these achievements behind him—and with a new sense of orchestral sonority derived from composing the opera and *La Mer*–Debussy returned to composing for piano. He produced the first book of *Images* in 1905, the second in 1907.

Audiences should both take the title *Images* seriously and they should ignore it. It is true that some of these six individual pieces have visual titles and seem at first 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 his achievement in this music. When he sent the first set off 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." Few would argue with that claim.

The first book consists of three quite different pieces. Some of Debussy's finest works were inspired by water, and the first of this set—"Reflections in the Water"—is one of them. The repetition and growing complexity of the chordal melody from the beginning has inevitably been compared to dropping stones into the surface of water and watching the patterns of ripples interweave. The music rises to a shimmering climax and fades into silence on fragments of sound.

At the same time he was writing *Images,* Debussy was also editing an edition of the opera *Les Fêtes de Polymnie* by eighteenth-century French composer Jean-Philippe Rameau, and he wrote this movement quite literally as homage to the older composer. Debussy does not quote Rameau but instead writes in a baroque form, the sarabande, as a way of honoring a master whom he revered. A sarabande is an old dance (originally from the sixteenth century), and this one–in G-sharp minor–dances gravely. The abstractly-titled *Mouvement* is characterized by great rhythmic energy (Debussy marks it *Animé);* some have heard pre-echoes here of the sort of ostinato-based piano music Stravinsky and Bartók would write a generation later.

Waltz in F minor, Opus 70, No. 2
Waltz in G-flat Major, Opus 70, No. 1
Waltz in D-flat Major, Opus 70, No. 3
Waltz in A-flat Major, Opus 42

FREDERIC CHOPIN
Born February 22, 1810, Zelazowska Wola
Died October 17, 1849, Paris

When Chopin died in 1849, a few months short of his fortieth birthday, his final publication had been his *Cello Sonata, Opus 65,* which appeared in 1847. In the years after Chopin's death, his friend and colleague Julian Fontana set out to collect and publish a

number of works that Chopin had held back, and these appeared as Chopin's Opp. 66-77 in the years 1855 and 1859. Chopin would not have been pleased–there were specific reasons he had held these works back–but music-lovers have reason to be delighted: several of these posthumous works have become quite popular. Chopin's Opus 70–which was published in Berlin in 1855, six years after his death–consists of three waltzes, but these waltzes have nothing in common except their form, for they were composed over a span of twelve years (1829 to 1841).

At this recital, Mr. Andsnes performs the waltzes out of their published order. Chopin's performance marking for the *Waltz in F minor*, composed in 1841, is *Tempo giusto,* and this music proceeds firmly along its way, with the ornate melody in the right hand flickering through a variety of moods. There is no tempo change for the somewhat brighter middle section, but this passes quickly, the subdued opening mood returns, and the music comes to an understated close. Listeners will quickly recognize the *Waltz in G-flat Major,* also composed in 1841, as one of the movements later orchestrated as part of the ballet *Les Sylphides*. Its athletic opening theme (Chopin marks it *brillante)* gives way to a central episode marked *cantabile* whose falling phrases have a gracious Italianate flavor. *The Waltz in D-flat Major* is a very early work, composed in Warsaw on October 3, 1829, when the composer was only nineteen. Its initial tempo marking is a comfortable *Moderato,* but it is the central section that had unusual meaning for the young composer: he had fallen in love with a girl named Konstantsya Gladkovska, and he wrote to a friend that she had been the inspiration for this waltz; in that letter Chopin copied out the theme of this central section as evidence of his emotion.

The *Waltz in A-flat Major*–composed in 1840, just as Chopin turned thirty–feels more like a breathless sequence of waltz-ideas than a tightly-unified structure in the expected ternary form. It has a brief introduction–a quiet but expectant trill–and off the music goes. Chopin supplies no tempo indication, but the implied marking is clearly very fast indeed, and the waltz ideas almost shower down around a listener. Particularly impressive is the first, where the left hand has the expected waltz rhythm 3/4, but the right-hand melody is accented in 6/8; this is quickly followed by a series of sparkling runs and further waltz-tunes. The central episode (insofar as one can be isolated) is a very brief, chordal waltz marked *sostenuto,* but Chopin passes through this quickly, as if anxious to get back to the energy of his opening ideas. These drive to an exciting conclusion, after which the sudden close feels almost brusque.

Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Opus 47

Chopin himself was the first to use the term "ballade" to refer to a piano composition, appropriating the name from the literary ballad: he appears to have been most taken with the lyric and dramatic possibilities of the term, for his four ballades fuse melodic writing with intensely dramatic–almost explosive–gestures. After Chopin's death, Liszt, Grieg, Faure, and Brahms would compose works for solo piano that they too called ballades.

Formally, Chopin's ballades most closely resemble the sonata-form movement (an opening idea contrasted with a second theme-group, and the two ideas developed and recapitulated), but the ballades are not strictly in sonata-form, nor was Chopin trying to write sonata-form movements. His ballades are quite free in form, and their thematic development and harmonic progression are sometimes wildly original. All four ballades employ a six-beat meter (either 6/4 or 6/8), and the flowing quality of such a meter is particularly well-suited to the sweeping drama of this music. All four demand a pianist of the greatest skill.

Because of the literary association and the dramatic character of the music, many have been quick to search for extra-musical inspiration for the ballades, believing that such music must represent the attempt to capture actual events in sound. Some have heard the Polish struggle for independence in this music, others the depiction of medieval heroism. Chopin himself discouraged this kind of speculation and asked the listener to take the music on its own terms rather than as a representation of something else.

Chopin wrote the *Ballade in A-flat Major* in 1840–41 and performed the work in public in 1842. The least overtly dramatic of the four ballades, this one nevertheless contains music of extraordinary beauty. The opening theme–a quiet, rising figure–also contains the falling half-step that gives shape to the lilting second subject.

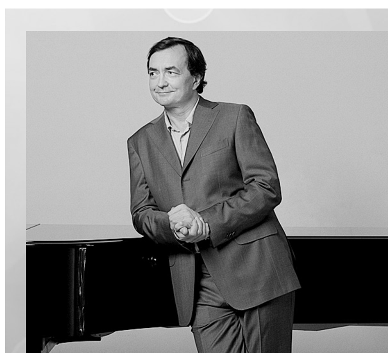
Nocturne in B Major, Opus 62, No. 1

Chopin composed the two nocturnes of his Opus 62 in 1845–46: they were the last nocturnes he published during his lifetime. While the *Nocturne in B Major* shows the delicacy one expects from this form, this particular example is quite restrained. Chopin marks the opening both *dolce* and *legato,* and the music proceeds with unusual gentleness. The middle section brings little contrast–Chopin marks it simply *sostenuto,* and it is just as restrained as the opening. Only the quietly-surging syncopations in the left hand ruffle the calm surface of this music. The most distinctive part of this nocturne comes at the return of the opening theme, for now Chopin buries it beneath a continuous (and very difficult) trill in the pianist's right hand. Gradually this trill vanishes, and the *Nocturne in B Major* makes its way to the understated close.

Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Opus 23

Chopin began work on the *Ballade in G minor* in 1831 in Vienna and completed it four years later in Paris. A portentous seven-bar introduction of uncertain tonality gives way to the opening episode, a waltz-like theme in G minor. The second theme is much more dramatic but–curiously–is related to the waltz theme. This second theme undergoes a brilliant development, though this ballade lacks the recapitulation that would be expected at this point in a sonata-form movement. Instead, Chopin brings back the waltz theme briefly before launching into the coda, appropriately marked *Presto con fuoco.*

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger



Pierre-Laurent Aimard
piano

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