Sunday, November 3, 2013, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Paul Lewis, *piano*

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) — Chorale Prelude, *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 659 (*arr.* Busoni)

(*no applause*)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) — Piano Sonata No. 13 in E-flat major, Op.27, No. 1, "Quasi una fantasia" (1800–1801)

Andante — Allegro — Tempo I
Allegro molto e vivace
Adagio con espressione
Allegro vivace — Adagio — Presto

Played without pause

Bach — Chorale Prelude, *Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, BWV 639 (*arr.* Busoni)

(*no applause*)

Beethoven — Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op.27, No. 2, "Moonlight" (1801)

Adagio sostenuto —
Allegretto —
Presto agitato

INTERMISSION

Franz Liszt (1811–1886) — Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort, S. 203 (1883)

Liszt — Unstern! Sinistre, disastro, S. 208 (1881)

Liszt — R.W.—Venezia, S. 201 (1883)

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) — Pictures at an Exhibition (1874)

Promenade
The Gnome
Promenade — The Old Castle
Promenade — Tuileries
Bydlo
Promenade — Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
The Marketplace at Limoges
Catacombs, Roman Tombs. Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua
The Hut on Fowl's Legs
The Great Gate of Kiev

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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Two Chorale Preludes
Arranged by Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)

The "chorale prelude," as its title suggests, is an instrumental introduction to a Lutheran hymn. In its essential form, it originated (and continues) as a simple play-through of a chorale melody by the organist to familiarize the congregation with the tune and set the mood for its words. Such a practice allowed for a certain amount of improvisation in figuration, harmonization, and texture, however, and gave rise to a whole spectrum of independent organ compositions based on chorale melodies: in addition to the chorale prelude, such forms as the chorale fugue, chorale fantasia, chorale motet, and chorale variation are well represented in the catalogs of many 17th- and 18th-century German Lutheran composers. As proven sublimely by his incomparable church cantatas, Johann Sebastian Bach was the greatest aggrandizer of chorale tunes who ever lived, and he made significant contributions to the repertory of the chorale prelude, most notably in *Das Orgel-Büchlein* ("The Little Organ Book"), Part III of the *Clavier-Übung* ("Keyboard Practice Book"), the so-called *Eighteen Chorales* that he composed during his tenure as organist and chamber musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar (1708–1717) and collected and revised in the 1740s, and the six magnificent *Schübler Chorales* that he wrote at the end of his life.

A number of Bach's instrumental works were rendered into arrangements for modern piano by the celebrated Italian-German pianist-composer-philosopher Ferruccio Busoni, who not only regularly played Bach's music on his recitals but also edited two complete editions of that master's keyboard music for publication. "That which induced the editor to arrange a selection of Bach's chorale preludes for the pianoforte," Busoni explained, "was not so much to furnish a sample of his capabilities as an arranger as the desire to interest a larger section of the public in these compositions, which are so rich in art, feeling, and fantasy.... This style of arrangement, which we take leave to describe as 'in chamber-music style' in contrast to 'concert arrangements,' rarely requires the highest skill of the player, except for the art of piano touch, which must certainly be at the player's command in performing these chorale preludes."

In addition to his keyboard setting of *Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* ("I cry to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ"), Bach also incorporated the melody into his Cantata No. 177, composed in Leipzig in 1732.

The chorale *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* ("Now come, the Gentiles' Savior"), which also served as the basis for two Advent cantatas that Bach composed in 1714 and 1724, is a venerable hymn in whose creation Martin Luther himself played a part.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Piano Sonata No. 13 in E-flat major, Op. 27, No. 1, "Quasi una fantasia"

Composed in 1800–1801.

"He was short, about 5 feet, 4 inches, thickset and broad, with a massive head, a wildly luxuriant crop of hair, protruding teeth, a small rounded nose, and a habit of spitting whenever the notion took him. He was clumsy, and anything he touched was liable to be upset or broken. Badly coordinated, he could never learn to dance, and more often than not managed to cut himself while shaving. He was sullen and suspicious, touchy as a misanthropic cobra, believed that everybody was out to cheat him, had none of the social graces, was forgetful, and was prone to insensate rages." Thus the late *New York Times* critic Harold C. Schonberg, in his book about *The Lives of the Great Composers*, described Ludwig van Beethoven, the burly peasant with the unquenchable fire of genius who descended, aged 22, upon Vienna in 1792. Beethoven had been charged by his benefactor in his hometown of Bonn, Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, to go to the Austrian capital and "receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn." He did study for a short time with Haydn, then universally regarded as the greatest living composer, but young Ludwig proved to be a recalcitrant student, and the sessions soon ended, though the two maintained a respectful, if cool, relationship until Haydn's death in 1809.

In a world still largely accustomed to the reserved, genteel musical style of pre-Revolutionary Classicism, Beethoven burst upon the scene like a fiery meteor. The Viennese aristocracy took this young lion to its bosom. Beethoven expected as much. Unlike his predecessors, he would not assume the servant's position traditionally accorded to a musician, refusing, for example, not only to eat in the kitchen, but becoming outspokenly hostile if he was not seated next to the master of the house at table. The more enlightened nobility, to its credit, recognized the genius of this gruff Rhinelander, and encouraged his work. Shortly after Beethoven's arrival, Prince Lichnowsky provided him with living quarters, treating him more like a son than a guest. Lichnowsky even instructed the servants to answer the musician's call before his own should both ring at the same time. In large part, such gestures provided for Beethoven's support during his early Viennese years. For most of the first decade after he arrived, he made some effort to follow the prevailing fashion in the sophisticated city, but, though he outfitted himself with good boots, a proper coat, and the necessary accouterments, and enjoyed the society of Vienna's best houses, there never ceased to roil within him the untamed energy of creativity. It was inevitably only a matter of time before the fancy clothes were discarded, as a bear would shred a paper bag.

The period of the two Op. 27 Sonatas—1800–1801—was an important time in Beethoven's personal and artistic development. He had achieved a success good enough to write to his old friend Franz Wegeler in Bonn, "My compositions bring me in a good deal, and may I say that I am offered more commissions than it is possible for me to carry out. Moreover, for every composition I can count on six or seven publishers and even more, if I want them. People no longer come to an arrangement with me. I state my price, and they pay." At the time of this gratifying recognition of his talent, however, the first signs of his fateful deafness appeared, and he began the titanic struggle that became one of the gravitational poles of his life. Within two years, driven from the social contact on which he had flourished by the fear of discovery of his malady, he penned the "Heiligenstadt Testament," his *cri de cœur* against this wicked trick of the gods. These Sonatas stand on the brink of that great crisis in Beethoven's life.

The Sonata, Op. 27, No. 1, was completed by the end of 1801 and published by the Viennese house of Cappi on March 3, 1802. The work was dedicated to Princess Josephine Sophie von Liechtenstein, *née* von Fürstenberg, wife of General Field Marshal Prince Joseph Johann von Liechtenstein; she was one of Beethoven's pupils and most important patrons at the time. The composer remained on friendly terms with her at least until 1805, when he asked her to assist his student Ferdinand Ries, who had been conscripted into the army and was about to leave Vienna penniless.

In noting the experimental nature of the form of the Op. 27 Sonatas, Beethoven specified that they were written "in the manner of a fantasy" ("*quasi una Fantasia*"). The Classical model for the instrumental sonata comprised three independent movements: a fast movement in sonata form; an *Adagio* or *Andante* usually arranged as a set of variations or a three-part structure; and a closing rondo in galloping meter. In the Op. 27 Sonatas, Beethoven altered the traditional fast–slow–fast sequence in favor of an innovative organization that shifts the expressive weight from the beginning to the end of the work, and he made the cumulative effect evident by instructing that the movements be played without pause. (Harold Truscott pointed out, however, that "the Romantic element in Beethoven's Op. 27 does not lie in the movement order but rather in the passion and use of sudden mood changes behind the movement shapes.") Maynard Solomon wrote that, by 1801, "Beethoven had gained the high ground of the Viennese tradition; he was now faced with the choice of endless repetition of his conquests or casting out in an uncharted direction.... One of these [new paths] lay in the direction of Romanticism, toward the loosening and

imaginative extension of Classic designs and the consolidation of an internal, probing, transcendent style." The Op. 27 Sonatas are among the earliest manifestations of Beethoven's soaring heroic manner that was to change forever the course of Western music.

The E-flat Sonata, Op. 27, No. 1, opens with an episode of child-like simplicity in moderate tempo that some later musicians (notably Hans von Bülow) thought unworthy of Beethoven; Sir Donald Tovey noted that the bass motive here moves "like a kitten in pursuit of its tail." Beethoven knew very well what he was about, however, since the deliberate shifting of emotional and formal weight from the beginning to the end of the Sonata requires just such a low level of tension as the platform upon which to build the successive movements. (The slow, dreamy music that begins the "Moonlight" Sonata accomplishes the same formal purpose in that work.) A sudden *Allegro* outburst erupts in the middle of the movement, but the calm of the opening soon returns. The second movement, which follows almost without pause, is an attenuated, C minor scherzo whose haunted mood presages that of the scherzo of the Fifth Symphony. An abbreviated slow movement (*Adagio con espressione*) of great stillness and introspection leads by means of sweeping cadenza-like figures to the brilliant finale, whose vibrant impetuosity is interrupted on the Sonata's penultimate page by a recall of the quiet music of the *Adagio* before the closing dash to the end.

Beethoven
Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, "Moonlight"

Composed in 1801.

Beethoven fell in love many times, but never married. (The thought of Beethoven as a husband threatens the moorings of one's presence of mind!) The source of his infatuation in 1801, when he was 30 and still in hope of finding a wife, was the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, who was 13 years his junior, rather spoiled and reportedly something of a vixen. She seems to have been flattered by the attentions of the famous musician, but probably never seriously considered his intimations of marriage; her social station would have made wedlock difficult with a commoner such as Beethoven. For his part, Beethoven was apparently thoroughly under her spell at the time, and he mentioned his love for her to a friend as late as 1823, though by then she had been married to Count Wenzel Robert Gallenberg, a prolific composer of ballet music, for two decades. A medallion portrait of her was found among Beethoven's effects after his death. The C-sharp minor Sonata was contemporary with the love affair with Giulietta and dedicated to her upon its publication in 1802, but the precise relationship of the music's nature and the state of Beethoven's heart must remain unknown; he never indicated that the piece had any programmatic intent. It was not until five years after his death that the work's passion and emotional intensity inspired the German poet and music critic Ludwig Rellstab (whose verses Schubert set in 1828 as the first seven numbers of his *Schwanengesang*) to describe the Sonata in terms of "a vision of a boat on Lake Lucerne by moonlight," a sobriquet that has since inextricably attached itself to the music.

Instead of opening with a large symphonic-style, sonata-form movement, the "Moonlight" initially falls upon the listener with a somber, minor-mode *Adagio* of the greatest introspection. Next comes a subdued scherzo and trio whose delicacy is undermined by its offbeat syncopations. The expressive goal of the Sonata is achieved with its closing movement, a powerful essay in full sonata form filled with tempestuous feeling and dramatic gesture about which John N. Burk wrote, "It is the first of the tumultuous outbursts of stormy passion which Beethoven was to let loose through the piano sonatas. It is music in which agitation and urgency never cease."

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort, S. 203

Composed in 1883.

Liszt composed *Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort* ("Sleepless! Question and Answer") in March 1883, just two months after the death of his son-in-law and musical soul-mate, Richard Wagner. Liszt called the piece a "nocturne" on the title page, and indicated that it was inspired by a poem, now lost, by Antonia Raab, one of his most gifted pupils of the mid–1870s. Though the poetic impetus of this music has vanished, the work's expressive import is still clear: the opening "question," agitated in manner and minor in mode, receives its comforting "answer" in the quiet, attenuated, major-key lines that follow. "Its subject is redemption," wrote Alan Walker in his study of the composer. "The piece might be described as a musical equivalent of the biblical text, 'Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden, and I will give ye rest.'"

Liszt
Unstern! Sinistre, disastro, S. 208

Composed in 1881.

In the early 1860s, after four decades of the most flamboyantly sensational career ever granted to a musician, Franz Liszt sought a more contemplative life. Though he was still acclaimed as a peerless pianist, excellent conductor, and influential figure in European musical life, Liszt experienced some serious reverses in the years surrounding his 50th birthday, in 1861: he resigned his post as music director at Weimar because of opposition to his artistic policies as well as the growing local animosity toward his long-time, and still unwed, relationship with Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein; his recent orchestral compositions were receiving scant attention; Brahms, Joachim, and other leading musicians published a manifesto attacking the alleged excesses of his music as well as that of Wagner and other "New German" composers; his son Daniel died in 1859, his daughter Blandine in 1862. In 1860, Liszt made out his last will and testament, and the next year he went with the Princess to Rome, where they hoped she would be granted a divorce by Pope Pius IX so that they could marry on the composer's 50th birthday, October 22nd. Their petition was denied, and they never spoke of marriage again, even after her husband died in 1864. Liszt spent much of 1863 cloistered in the monastery of the Madonna del Rosario at Monte Mario receiving the religious instruction that led to him being granted "minor orders," which allowed him to perform a few small priestly duties but not to officiate at Mass or to hear confession.

The change in Liszt's attitude toward his life was paralleled by a reconsideration of his musical speech, and a number of piano works from his last years are marked by a sobriety, austerity, introspection, and harmonic daring that leave far behind the virtuoso pyrotechnics of his touring years and look ahead to the atonal modernisms of the early 20th century. This strain of Liszt's creative personality is distilled in *Unstern! Sinistre, Disastro* ("unlucky star" or "misfortune" in German, with its approximate Italian equivalents). The thin thread of tone with which it begins, not even a melody, tries to find some rootedness as to its key, but when the harmonies begin to assemble they are also lost to convention and grow in mounting frustration to a terrifying climax that sounded to Liszt's German biographer Peter Rabbe "as if a prisoner were hammering on the walls of his cell, well knowing that nobody would hear him." There sound some ecclesiastical harmonies, perhaps the prisoner seeking consolation in prayer, but these bear neither energy nor direction, and are soon silenced by a few curdled dissonances. Descent, uncertainty, solitude follow. "Anyone who had mounted the concert platform in the late 1880s in order to play this music in public would have been considered insane," wrote Alan Walker in his three-volume study of the composer's life. "Small wonder that Liszt himself went out of his way to discourage it [*Unstern* was not published during his lifetime]; he knew that his pupils might harm their careers by doing so. As for him, he was now used to the hail of criticism that regularly descended on his music, and his

reply had long been at hand: 'I calmly persist in staying stubbornly in my corner, and just work at becoming more and more misunderstood.'"

Liszt
R.W.—Venezia, S. 201

Composed in 1883.

Richard Wagner, his heart already failing, was nearly exhausted by the taxing work of bringing *Parsifal* to the stage for its premiere at Bayreuth in July 1882. He and his wife, Cosima, elected to escape the rigors of another German winter by returning to Venice that fall, staying in the sumptuous Palazzo Vendramin on the Grand Canal. On November 19th, Franz Liszt, Cosima's father and Wagner's musical ally, arrived for a visit. Liszt was struck by Wagner's rapidly deteriorating health, and he came to associate his son-in-law's apparently imminent death with the black funeral gondolas that passed frequently below his window. He captured his impressions in two elegies, both titled *La Lugubre Gondola*, before he left Venice and Wagner on January 13, 1883. Just a month later, Liszt, in Budapest, learned of Wagner's death on February 13th, and he added a third elegy to the ones he had composed in Venice; he titled it, simply, *R.W.—Venezia* ("R.W.—Venice"). The two sections of the piece distill Liszt's grief, first in a private manner with somber music of uncertain key, attenuated texture, enervated motion, and dark sonority, and then in a public way with the striding measures of a funeral cortege. A final, dying reminiscence of the opening strains brings Liszt's threnody to its insecure close.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881)
Pictures at an Exhibition

Composed in 1874.

Though the history of the Russian nation extends far back into the mists of time, its cultural life is of relatively recent origin. Russian interest in art, music, and theater dates only from the time of Peter the Great (1672–1725), the powerful monarch who coaxed his country into the modern world by importing ideas, technology, and skilled practitioners from western Europe. To fuel the nation's musical life, Peter, Catherine, and their successors depended on a steady stream of well-compensated German, French, and Italian artists who brought their latest tonal wares to the magnificent capital city of St. Petersburg. This tradition of imported music continued well into the 19th century. Berlioz, for example, enjoyed greater success in Russia than he did in his native France, and Verdi composed *La Forza del Destino* on a commission from St. Petersburg, where it was first performed.

In the years around 1850, with the spirit of nationalism sweeping through Europe, several young Russian artists banded together to rid their art of foreign influences in order to establish a distinctive character for their works. At the front of this movement was a group of composers known as "The Five," whose members included Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, César Cui, and Mily Balakirev. Among the allies that The Five found in other fields was the artist and architect Victor Hartmann, with whom Mussorgsky became close personal friends. Hartmann's premature death at 39 stunned the composer and the entire Russian artistic community. Vladimir Stassov, noted critic and journalistic champion of the Russian arts movement, organized a memorial exhibit of Hartmann's work in February 1874, and it was under the inspiration of this showing of his late friend's works that Mussorgsky conceived his *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

At the time of the exhibit, Mussorgsky was engaged in preparations for the first public performance of his opera *Boris Godunov*, and he was unable to devote any time to his *Pictures* until summer. When he took up the piece in early June, he worked with unaccustomed speed. "'Hartmann' is bubbling over, just as *Boris* did," he wrote. "Ideas, melodies come to me of their own accord, like a banquet of music—I gorge and gorge and overeat myself. I can hardly manage to put them down on paper fast enough."

The ease with which Mussorgsky found music to memorialize his friend's pictures was in part the result of his writing in a style perfectly suited to his talents. Since *Pictures* was written as a suite of brief sketches for piano, he did not have to concern himself with the troublesome problems of orchestration, nor with the business of thematic development and large formal structure. These last two techniques were particularly difficult for the Russian composers, who had almost no training in the German symphonic traditions. Each of the *Pictures* is direct and immediately affective, with a clearly etched melodic and harmonic personality. For the most part, the movements depict sketches, watercolors, and architectural designs shown publicly at the Hartmann exhibit, though Mussorgsky based two or three sections on canvases that he had been shown privately by the artist before his death. The composer linked his sketches together with a musical *Promenade* in which he depicted his own rotund self shuffling—in an uneven meter—from one picture to the next.

Promenade. According to Stassov, this recurring section depicts Mussorgsky "roving through the exhibition, now leisurely, now briskly in order to come close to a picture that had attracted his attention, and, at times sadly, thinking of his friend."

The Gnome. Hartmann's drawing is for a fantastic wooden nutcracker representing a gnome who gives off savage shrieks while he waddles about on short, bandy legs.

Promenade—The Old Castle. A troubadour sings a doleful lament before a foreboding, ruined ancient fortress.

Promenade—Tuileries. Mussorgsky's subtitle is "Dispute of the Children After Play." Hartmann's picture shows a corner of the famous Parisian garden filled with nursemaids and their youthful charges.

Bydlo. Hartmann's picture depicts a rugged wagon drawn by oxen. The peasant driver sings a plaintive melody heard first from afar, then closeby, before the cart passes away into the distance.

Promenade—Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells. Hartmann's costume design for the 1871 fantasy ballet *Trilby* shows dancers enclosed in enormous eggshells, with only their arms, legs, and heads protruding.

Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle. The title was given to the music by Stassov. Mussorgsky originally called this movement, "Two Jews: one rich, the other poor." It was inspired by two pictures Hartmann presented to the composer showing a pair of residents of the Warsaw ghetto, one wealthy and pompous, the other poor and complaining. Mussorgsky based both themes on incantations he heard on visits to Jewish synagogues.

The Marketplace at Limoges. A lively sketch of a bustling market, with animated conversations flying among the female vendors.

Catacombs, Roman Tombs. Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua. Hartmann's drawing shows him being led by a guide with a lantern through cavernous underground tombs. The movement's second section, bearing the title "With the Dead in a Dead Language," is a mysterious transformation of the *Promenade* theme.

The Hut on Fowl's Legs. Hartmann's sketch is a design for an elaborate clock suggested by Baba Yaga, the fearsome witch of Russian folklore who eats human bones she has ground into paste with her mortar and pestle. She also can fly through the air on her fantastic mortar, and Mussorgsky's music suggests a wild, midnight ride.

The Great Gate of Kiev. Mussorgsky's grand conclusion to his suite was inspired by Hartmann's plan for a gateway in the massive old Russian style crowned with a cupola in the shape of a Slavic warrior's helmet, for the city of Kiev. The majestic music suggests both the imposing bulk of the edifice (never built, incidentally) and a brilliant procession passing through its arches. The work ends with a heroic statement of the *Promenade* theme and a jubilant pealing of the great bells of the city.

Josep Molina/Harmonia Mundi

Paul lewis is internationally regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation, with a busy international schedule of engagements at the world's most prestigious venues and festivals. His numerous awards include the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year, the South Bank Show Classical Music Award, and three Gramophone Awards.

His complete cycles of core works by Beethoven and Schubert have earned him unanimous critical acclaim from all over the world.

Mr. Lewis works regularly with many of the world's great orchestras, while his recital career takes him to such venues as London's Royal Festival Hall, Carnegie and Alice Tully halls in New York, the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Tonhalle in Zurich, the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, Oji Hall in Tokyo, and Sydney Opera House.

Mr. Lewis is a frequent guest at the many of the world's most prestigious festivals, including Lucerne, Mostly Mozart in New York, Tanglewood, Schubertiade, Salzburg, Edinburgh, La Roque d'Antheron, Rheingau, Klavier Festival Ruhr, and London's BBC Proms, where in 2010 he became the first pianist to perform a complete Beethoven piano concerto cycle in one season.

His multi–award-winning discography for Harmonia Mundi includes the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, concertos, and "Diabelli" Variations; Liszt's Sonata in B minor and other works; all the major piano works from the last six years of Schubert's life; and the three Schubert song cycles with tenor Mark Padmore.

Mr. Lewis studied with Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama before going on to study privately with Alfred Brendel. Along with his wife, the Norwegian cellist Bjørg Lewis, he is artistic director of Midsummer Music, an annual chamber music festival held in Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom.

Paul Lewis is represented internationally by Ingpen & Williams. For more information, visit www.paullewispiano.com.