



University of
Lethbridge

FACULTY OF
FINE ARTS

Piiksinaasin

Presents

Isaac Risling, piano

In a

Graduation Recital

In Collaboration with

Deanna Oye, piano

Noelle Kuntz, soprano

From the Studio of

Dr. Deanna Oye

1:00pm

April 6, 2025

Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Piano Concerto no. 3 in C minor, op. 37 Ludwig van Beethoven
I. Allegro con brio (1770-1827)

Isaac Risling, piano
Dr. Deanna Oye, piano

Étude in C# minor, op. 10 no. 4 Fryderyk Chopin
 (1810-1849)

Isaac Risling, piano

Hermit Songs, op. 29 Samuel Barber
III. St. Ita's Vision (1910-1981)

X. The Desire for Hermitage

VI. Sea Snatch

Isaac Risling, piano
Noelle Kuntz, piano

Scherzo no. 2 in Bb minor, op. 31 Fryderyk Chopin
 (1810-1849)

Isaac Risling, piano

INTERMISSION

Three Early Songs George Crumb
I. Night (1929-2022)

II. Let it Be Forgotten

Isaac Risling, piano
Noelle Kuntz, Soprano

Étude in Gb Major, op. 25 no. 9 Fryderyk Chopin
 (1810-1849)

Isaac Risling, piano

Esquisses de Crimée, op. 8

I. *Les Rochers d'Outche-Coches*

II. *Caprices de la mer*

III. *Les promenades d'Aloupka*

b) *Chaos*

Isaac Risling, piano

Sergei Bortkiewicz

(1877-1952)

Étude in C minor, op. 25 no. 12

Isaac Risling, piano

Fryderyk Chopin

(1810-1849)

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Concerto no. 3 in C minor, op. 37 (Beethoven)

Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto was the first of the genre to be composed after symptoms of his deafness began. The bulk of the writing was believed to be done in the fall of 1802, making it contemporary with Beethoven's Second Symphony, the Violin Sonatas Opus 30, the Piano Sonatas Opus 31, and the Heiligenstadt Testament. The Testament was a critical letter Beethoven wrote to his brothers in which he grapples with his advancing hearing loss and contemplates ending his life, ultimately opting to persevere for the sake of his art. It is tempting to hear these struggles in the Concerto. Yet, the multitude of energetic, triumphant, and victorious moments contrasting the dark and foreboding themes offer more creative and poetic interpretations. The orchestra and piano perform an eloquent dance in turns and improvisations on the melody.

Études op. 10 no. 4, op. 25 nos. 9 & 12 (Chopin)

The piano étude has long been a part of piano repertoire as "studies" for the pianist. Most often involving technical exercises designed to improve aspects of virtuoso playing, Chopin was the first to innovate this genre as the "concert étude." Technical elements are still well within the components of this style; however, Chopin composed them to be performable pieces containing drama, poetry, artistry, and even patriotism.

Op 10 no. 4, "Torrent," is a whimsical and dark flurry of angst and anticipation. The drama is fiery, unhinged, and seemingly never-ending. Constant runs and small clusters make for a cramped, compact hand with little room for error.

Op. 25 no. 9, "Butterfly," portrays an energetic bounce, mimicking that of a butterfly. The piece is short and playful, yet the pianist is under constant demand for fluidity to oppose the erratic jumps to shape the melodic lyricism over the bounciness.

Op. 25 no. 12, “Ocean,” is precisely what it sounds like. However, with the C minor setting, this isn’t exactly a maritime cruise that Chopin depicts, but rather the unforgiving, cruel nature of the sea. Intense drama, melodies that struggle to stay afloat amidst raging arpeggios, and sudden sonic shifts encapsulate perfectly a dark and terrible night at the ocean, concluding with the heroic sight of the sun parting from the clouds.

Hermit Songs op. 29 (Barber)

This set was composed in the 1950s, set to “poems” written by Irish monks in isolation on an island. However, “poems” and “written” are not necessarily correct descriptions. The texts of this set were found inscribed into the **margins and corners** of the manuscripts these monks wrote, not meant to be documented, perhaps not meant to be seen. Afterthoughts, daydreams, desperate remarks, or mere observations suffice to describe the mysterious texts found. The piano and voice are interwoven in a delicate braid of shared themes and complementary sonorities. Sometimes a clock is heard, or a still shoreline at dawn, and sometimes the magnificent waves thrashing at cliffs. Barber's interpretation of the curious nature of these texts is represented by lush musical landscapes shared in the voice and piano.

Scherzo no. 2 op. 31 (Chopin)

“Scherzo” is the Italian word for “joke” or “jest.” It seems, however, that Chopin’s particular jokes are somewhat diabolic. Grandioso chords and lightning-fast runs appear with no warning, all the while decorating lively melodic passages in a relatively interruptive manner. The two main themes arrive sectionally and unannounced, almost to throw the listener off and question if they are really a part of the same piece of music. Chopin brilliantly marries the two ideas using rhythmic motifs and chromatic episodes that sometimes subconsciously drive the music beneath the surface and sometimes pass in exquisite brightness within the blink of an eye. However, attempting to perform this magnum opus is the least funny joke of all. This one is for my little sister, Bella – “rmmMM rmmMMM”

Three Early Songs (Crumb)

At the early age of 17, Crumb wrote this set for his next-door neighbour, Liz, who studied with him later in university and would ultimately become his wife. Upon rediscovering this set, Crumb rewrote the piano to be more reminiscent of Rachmaninoff, and the two debuted the set in 1947. Textually set to poems by Robert Southey and Sara Teasdale, Crumb wrote the piano part mysteriously, melancholic, and pensive. Eerie ostinatos in the piano drive the music forward, while the vocal line is often stuck in time, trance-like.

Esquisses de Crimée, op. 8 (Bortkiewicz)

Born in Ukraine, composer Sergei Bortkiewicz titled this character set “Sketches of Crimea,” with each piece representing a different landscape or character of the Crimean Peninsula.

Les rochers d’Outche-Coche— “The Rocks of Uch-Kosh” is a rocky gorge at the southern tip of Crimea. This piece represents an adventurous journey through the mountains with soaring melodies of triumph and colorful arpeggios that are **continually** rising, representing the physical ascent of the journey. The musical effects of falling rocks, atmospheric winds, and scattering pebbles can all be heard throughout this bombastic piece, concluding in majestic accomplishment.

Caprices de la Mer— “Whims of the Sea” takes the performer and listener across the Black Sea and its capricious nature. Tides and winds turn in the blink of an eye as crashing waves ebb and flow beneath a rocking melody. Sparkling splashes of seawater rinse the listener in brilliant sounds amidst the dancing waters, keeping the air fresh and fulfilling.

Chaos – “Chaos” probably didn’t need a translation and is quite self-explanatory.