

PROGRAM

ACT I: An Array of Lines

- Étude in E Major, Op. 10, No. 3 (1832) **Frédéric Chopin**
(1810–1849)
- Étude No. 1: pour les “cinq doigts” “*for the five fingers*” (1915) **Claude Debussy**
(1862–1918)
- Étude No. 4: Fanfares (1988) **György Ligeti**
(1923–2006)
- Sonata in C sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 “Moonlight” (1801) **Ludwig van Beethoven**
I. Adagio Sostenuto (Sonata quasi una Fantasia) (1770–1827)

ACT II: Loud Noises! (and some soft ones)

- Étude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12 “Revolutionary” (1832) **Frédéric Chopin**
- Étude No. 1: Orbital Beacons—Homage to Luciano Berio (1996) **Augusta Read Thomas**
Étude No. 2: Fire Waltz—Homage to Béla Bartók (1996) (b. 1964)
- Fantasy (2012, *Premiere Performance!*) **Matthew Jaskot**
I. Contemplations (b. 1984)
II. Intensity
III. The Wheel Goes Round

ACT III: Simplicity, Colors and Patterns

- Peace Piece (1958) **Bill Evans**
Transcription by Jim Aikin (1929–1980)
- Étude No. 3: pour les Quartes (fourths) (1915) **Claude Debussy**
- Étude No. 10: Der Zauberlehrling **György Ligeti**
The Sorcerer’s Apprentice (1994)

PROGRAM NOTES

Chopin's **E Major étude** is notable for a beautiful melody, a line that the composer considered one of his best.¹ The contrasting middle section is stormy, highlighted by arpeggiated diminished 7th chords. The **Revolutionary étude** is a tour de force for the left hand, which provides a perpetual layer of sixteenth notes against which a march like melody is heard.

Debussy shows his sense of humor in his **first étude**, an exercise for all five fingers dedicated to Carl Czerny. The opening sounds like a warmup exercise before blossoming into a collection of rapid scales and arpeggios. Keep your ear open for the power chords at the end! **The third étude** is filled with harmonies based on the interval of a perfect fourth. The piece is filled with pentatonic motives (i.e. the black keys of the piano), eastern sounding sonorities and sounds that evoke orchestral colors (i.e. listen for the staccato "bassoons" in the middle of the piece, the "harp" glissandi during the march section).

Ligeti uses an ostinato, or a repeated pattern, (in this piece an ascending scale) as the basis for **Fanfares**. The scale is divided irregularly (3+2+3 rather than (2+2+2+2)). Against the ostinato, melodic fragments occur, at first synchronized. As the piece progresses, the melodies become asynchronized, at different points in groups of 7 (3+2+2) or 9 (3+3+3) against 8. Ligeti is known for using extremes both in register (highest and lowest notes of the piano) and dynamics (volume). **Der Zauberlehrling** is a perpetual motion piece influenced by African *balafon* (*xylophone*) music.² The piece starts with two notes heard in reiterated patterns. Eventually a rhythmic pattern (4+3+2+3) emerges followed by a diatonic melody. The music descends to the lowest end of the piano, seemingly runs out of room only to recycle at the highest end to restart the descent. This shape demonstrates Ligeti's interest in the idea of infinity.

Thomas' **Orbital Beacons** is about rotating harmonies and glow. The work juxtaposes very loud notes with very soft ones, making a counterpoint of layers and implied voice leading in which at first there are more soft notes than loud ones; by the end of the piece, this has been reversed. The work, which should sound clean, natural, and colorful, is highly organized. It is about the beauty of resonance, echo, decay and luminosity. **Fire Waltz** is a variation on Étude Number 1, in which the notes that were loud are strung together, exactly in order, lowered by two octaves, and turned into a boogie woogie bass line. The notes that were soft in Étude 1 form Bartok-like, jazzy chords.³

¹ Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques. *Chopin: pianist and teacher – as seen by his pupils*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 68.

² Steinitz, Richard. *Gyorgy Ligeti: Music of the Imagination*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003, 305.

³ Thomas, Augusta Read. *Six Piano Etudes (1996–2005)*. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc.