Programme Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Fantasy and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904

Bach's *Fantasy and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904*, probably composed during his Leipzig years, demonstrates his remarkable command of contrapuntal writing and musical architecture. Although the work consists of two contrasting sections, both are unified by a serious and introspective character.

The Fantasy opens with a solemn, rhythmically distinctive theme, alternating with passages of flowing contrapuntal writing. Its recurring thematic material provides structural coherence, while shifts in texture and harmonic tension create a sense of expressive dialogue.

The Fugue is particularly remarkable for its double-fugue structure. Two contrasting subjects are introduced and developed separately: the first is predominantly diatonic, while the second features a descending chromatic line. In the final section, Bach combines these subjects, demonstrating extraordinary contrapuntal ingenuity. The work achieves a compelling balance between intellectual complexity and expressive intensity.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Fantasy in C major, D. 760, Op. 15, "Wanderer Fantasy"

Composed in 1822, Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* is among his most ambitious and technically demanding compositions for solo piano. The work takes its name from his song *Der Wanderer*, D. 489, whose melody provides the thematic foundation for the Fantasy.

The composition consists of four interconnected movements performed without interruption. Rather than presenting four independent movements, Schubert transforms a common rhythmic and melodic idea throughout the work, creating a unified large-scale structure.

The opening *Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo* establishes a powerful rhythmic motive through bold chords and virtuosic passages. The following *Adagio*, in C-sharp minor, introduces the melody from *Der Wanderer* through a series of variations, exploring contrasting textures and emotional characters.

The *Presto* transforms the recurring material into an energetic scherzo, while the final *Allegro* begins with a fugato and develops into a brilliant, technically demanding conclusion.

Through continuous thematic transformation, dramatic contrasts, and pianistic virtuosity, Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* anticipates important developments in Romantic piano writing, particularly the concept of cyclic form later explored by composers such as Franz Liszt.