

Guest Artist and Faculty: “Beyond the Canon” Program Notes

Cramer - Etudes in the Form of Nocturnes, Op. 96

Although Johann Baptist Cramer is widely remembered today for his influential piano studies, he was a major pianist-composer in Beethoven's lifetime. The twelve Op. 96 "Etudes in the Form of Nocturnes" are an unusual hybrid: technical pieces that unfold with the lyricism, color, and intimate atmosphere of the nocturne, written for piano four-hands. Across the set, the listener can hear Cramer's gift for cantabile writing and refined keyboard texture.

Czerny - selections

Carl Czerny is often reduced to the world of etudes, yet his output includes substantial concert works, sonatas, character pieces, and a fascinating body of contrapuntal music. A selection from Op. 400 (The School of Fugue Playing) shows Czerny's craftsmanship in preludes and fugues, while the nocturne highlights his lyrical side. The Prestissimo agitato movement from Sonata No. 1, Op. 7 closes the set with fiery virtuosity.

Liszt - Ballade No. 2 in B minor

Liszt's Second Ballade is a compact narrative in sound, moving through sharply contrasted episodes - from brooding darkness to brilliant virtuosity. The work's dramatic sweep and thematic transformation make it one of Liszt's most compelling single-movement pieces, and it forms a fitting culmination to a program that traces a line from Czerny (Liszt's teacher) to Liszt's mature Romantic voice.