Student Ensemble Series:

Piano Ensemble Concert

Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 8pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center
Pacific Lutheran University
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music present

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Diana Walker, Director

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches, pagers and cellular phones for the duration of the performance.
Use of cameras, recording equipment, and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

Program

Piano Sonata ........................................................................................................... L. Beethoven (1770-1827)
Jessica Ho and Danielle Heins

Serenade ................................................................................................................ F. Schubert (1797-1828)
Elizabeth Hambre and Diana Walker

“Ritmo” from “Danses Andalouses”........................................................................... M. Infante (1883-1958)
Asia Wolfe and Caitlin Kidd

“Menuet” & “Ballet” from “Petite Suite” .................................................................... C. Debussy (1862-1918)
Alexa Bayouk and Rebecca Bowen

“Old Adam” from “The Garden of Eden” .................................................................... W. Bolcom (b. 1938)
Stephanie Robinson and Briellen Link

Piano Sonata K. 381, Second Mvt, Adagio........................................................................ W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
Amanda Robinson and Jorge Valesquez

Brandenburg Concerto.................................................................................................. J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Christopher Boe, Kyrie Benson, Christopher Warren and Jennifer Matson

C.S. Theme and Variations, Op. 6 ................................................................................ R. Compton (b. 1954)
The PLU Piano Ensemble
Program Notes

Bach is the perfecter of what had come before. Mozart is music’s brightest single shining moment. **Ludwig van Beethoven** is Power. He left behind what has been called the mightiest body of music ever created by one composer and half of his output was written when he was deaf.

**Franz Schubert** is a surprising composer and one who has to be constantly reevaluated. When he died he was known mostly as the composer of songs. Some of his smaller pieces were printed shortly after his death, but the manuscripts of many of the longer works, whose existence was not widely known, remained hidden in the cabinets and file boxes of his family, friends, and publishers. In 1838 Robert Schumann, on a visit to Vienna, found the dusty manuscript of the *C Major Symphony* and took it back to Leipzig, where it was performed by Felix Mendelssohn. The most important step towards the recovery of the neglected works was the journey to Vienna which Sir George Grove (widely known for the “Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians”) and Arthur Sullivan made in 1867. They rescued from oblivion seven symphonies, the *Rosamunde* incidental music, some of the Masses and operas, some of the chamber works, and a vast quantity of miscellaneous pieces and songs.

**Manuel Infante** was born near Saville. He settled in Paris in 1909 and lived the rest of his life there. His most significant music was written for piano and included 2 suites for two pianos. His music is melodic, graceful and makes much use of the folk colors of Spain. He has a masterful command of the unique qualities of writing for the piano.

At age ten, **Debussy** entered the Paris Conservatoire. From the start, though clearly talented, Debussy was also argumentative and experimental, and he challenged the rigid teaching of the academy, favoring instead dissonances and intervals which were frowned upon at the time. He was a brilliant pianist and an outstanding sight reader. His music is characterized by rich harmonies and textures which would later prove important in jazz music. He added more to piano technique than any composer since Chopin. These two pieces from the *Petite Suite* are good examples of his sense of floating, ethereal harmony and his focus on mood and color. Debussy was the foremost Impressionist of France (although he hated the term “Impressionist”).

Genre-hopper extraordinaire **William Bolcom** first became famous as a leader of the ragtime revival of the 1970s. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, two Guggenheim fellowships, and numerous other awards, Bolcom received his doctorate in music from Stanford University and has taught composition at the University of Michigan since 1973.

Bolcom was born in Seattle. At the age of 11 he entered the University of Washington to study composition and piano. He later studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College, with Leland Smith at Stanford University and with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire. In an interview in the 1980s he criticized the typical university music department for its “reign of terror” insisting on atonal dissonance to the exclusion of everything else, saying, “We’ve ghettoized serious music and separated it from popular music…The lie to the distinction of pop versus classical, is in my own compositions, …as each uses elements of both. I have very classical textures and harmonies in my rags and a sort of regretful bluesiness in my sixth symphony”.

In *The Garden of Eden Suite* the composer notes that *Old Adam*, is a “Chicken Scratch” recalling the animal dances of the 1900’s, and contains a reminiscence of Chris Smith’s ‘teens hit “Ballin’ the Jack.”
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was no stranger to duet playing. This composition may have been written for his sister who was a talented and accomplished pianist in her own right.

In one of the many bitter ironies of music history, Johann Sebastian Bach’s six Brandenburg Concertos are now his most popular work and an ideal introduction to his art, yet Bach himself may never have heard them—nor did anyone else for over a century after his death. Scholars speculate that nearly half Bach’s output is lost and many of his concertos exist only in later arrangements or questionable copies. But the Brandenburg’s survive in his original manuscript, which he had sent to the Margrave of Brandenburg in late March 1721. To use current terms, Bach apparently wrote them on spec, but never received any payment or even acknowledgment from the Margrave and there is no evidence that they were ever played at the Margrave’s court.

Randall Compton. Mr. Compton has degrees in psychology and music education from Iowa State University. C.S. Theme and Variations is a witty composition with lots of surprises.

About the Performers

These young men and women each have from nine to twelve years of piano experience behind them. Although most of them have been awarded piano scholarships not all of them are piano majors or even music majors. Their different disciplines include: Hispanic studies, environmental studies, physics, psychology, English, piano, composition, Chinese, religion, chemistry, and math.