Widely considered one of the greatest piano virtuosos of his day, and perhaps all time, **Franz Liszt** is best known for his technically demanding piano compositions and his development of the symphonic poem. He was a master of thematic transformation, developing his melodies with subtlety and grandeur in equal measure.

The *Two Concert Etudes S. 145* show two vastly different sides of the same composer. *Waldesrauschen* (Forest Murmurs) introduces a lovely, windswept theme, displaying a lyrical side of Liszt which is often overlooked for his more energetic compositions. The serenity of the first etude contrasts strikingly with the sprightly, mischievous temper of *Gnomenreigen* (Dance of the Gnomes).

**Frédéric Chopin** was a renowned Polish pianist, teacher, and composer, known primarily for his piano miniatures including four ballades and four scherzos. Chopin greatly advanced piano composition with his singing melodies and delicate passagework.

About the *Sonata in B-flat Minor*, Robert Schumann famously wrote “The idea of calling it a sonata is a caprice, if not a jest, for [Chopin] has simply bound together four of his most reckless children, thus under his name smuggling them into a place into which they could not else have penetrated.” While Schumann rightly pointed out that Chopin veered recklessly away from many venerable tenets of the sonata form, there are notable structural motifs which appear throughout the piece, connecting the movements. The sonata opens with a dark ballade, followed by a scherzo, a funeral march with an embedded nocturne offering a glimmer of hope from within the bleakest of circumstances, and a brief, yet stunning finale, likened to whistling wind among tombstones.

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance. Michael is a student of Dr. Mei-Hsuan Huang.
Program

Toccata in C Minor, BWV 911 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3 Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827)
   I. Presto
   II. Largo e mesto
   III. Menuetto: Allegro
   IV. Rondo: Allegro

INTERMISSION

2 Etudes de Concert, S.145 Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
   I. Waldesrauschen
   II. Gnomlenreigen

Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35 Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
   I. Grave - Doppio movimento
   II. Scherzo
   III. Marche funèbre: Lento
   IV. Finale: Presto

Program Notes

Though he was primarily known to his contemporaries as an exceptional harpsichordist and organist, Johann Sebastian Bach is today principally remembered as one of the greatest and most influential composers throughout the history of Western music. His masterworks include the Brandenburg Concertos, The Well-Tempered Clavier, the Mass in B Minor, and the Goldberg Variations. Bach's music declined in popularity after his death (eclipsed, in fact, by his today lesser known son, Johann Christian Bach), until it was restored to prominence by Felix Mendelssohn in 1829.

The Toccata BWV 911 blends an opening fantasy with an imitative adagio and fugue. It is composed in the Northern-German style favored by the young Bach's idol Dieterich Buxtehude, whom Bach once traveled more than 300 miles on foot to see in concert. The lengthy fugue subject is based upon a triadic theme and features less dense harmonic texture than later fugues in the WTC, allowing for virtuosic runs and ornamentation consistent with the toccata style.

The 32 piano sonatas of Ludwig von Beethoven are, in every sense, a behemoth in the keyboard literature. Beethoven was an immensely influential composer, almost certainly the most instrumental in facilitating the transition from the Classic era to the Romantic. He expanded music in nearly every sense of the word, from the sheer length of his final symphonies to the new demands he placed on the piano in particular. It is believed that Beethoven slowly and systematically destroyed no fewer than seven pianos throughout his lifetime, in a dynamic quest to display the highs and lows of human emotion which simply could not be accommodated by the instruments of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.

The Op. 10 Sonatas are decidedly experimental, as Beethoven began to move away from his earlier compositional models, while still distinctly classic in style. Beethoven was notoriously fond of developing movements, and sometimes entire pieces, from a single motive, and the first movement of the Sonata No. 7 is no exception. The deliberate opening figure is quickly broken down into a four-note gesture which subsequently appears with nearly overwhelming frequency.