

VIRGINIA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Wednesday, October 29, 2008, 10:30 AM
Women's Club of Arlington

PIANIST

KEITH SNELL

Pour la main gauche seule

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 - 1750)

Chaconne

From *Violin Partita II* in D Minor

Transcribed for piano, left hand alone,

by **Johannes Brahms** (1833 -1897)

ALEXANDER Scriabin (1872 - 1915)

Prelude and Nocturne, Opus 9

GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797 - 1848)

Andante Finale

From *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Arranged for piano, left hand alone

by **Theodore Leschetizky** (1830 - 1915)

KATHLEEN RYAN (1953 -)

Verbs, Book Two

7. Shatter

to damage badly, to ruin

8. Bloom

to shine out; to appear or occur unexpectedly

9. Bounce

to walk with springing steps; to cause to rebound

10. Reflect

to cast back; to think quietly & calmly; to make manifest or apparent

11. Release

to set free from restraint or confinement

12. Bless

to hallow or consecrate; to invoke divine care for

FOUR MAIN REASONS FOR LEFT HAND PIANO MUSIC

1. Compositional Challenge
2. Technical Development
3. Right Hand Injury
4. Virtuoso Display

ABOUT THE *CHACONNE*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) is generally, and rightly, considered one of the greatest composers of all time; the *Chaconne*, which appears as the final movement of the *Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor*, is one of Bach's greatest works. The *Chaconne* is a type of continuous Theme and Variations. The four measure Theme is stated at the beginning, and then is transformed every four measures throughout the composition. The piece has an overall symmetrical structure: Theme – 30 Variations; Theme – 30 Variations; Theme. The second set of thirty variations is in two sections: variations 31 through 50 are in D major, then at variation 51 the music returns to D minor.

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) included his transcription of the *Chaconne* in a set of *Five Studies for Piano*. It is dedicated to the great pianist Clara Schumann, wife of composer Robert Schumann. Brahms kept the *Chaconne* for the left hand alone to create an equality of limitations: the violin has only four strings, left hand piano only five fingers.

In today's performance, several of the variations will depart from Brahms' realization of broken-chord passages and use instead those devised by one-armed pianist **Paul Wittgenstein** (1887-1961).

ABOUT THE *PRELUDE AND NOCTURNE*

In 1894, **Alexander Scriabin** (1872-1915) accepted the challenge of two fellow pianists at the conservatory in St. Petersburg, to see who could master the formidable *Reminiscences of Don Juan* by Liszt, in the shortest time. The result was an inflamed right thumb that throbbed with much pain and led the Scriabin to believe that he would have to give up his concert career. His consolation during the two year period of recovery was to compose the extraordinarily beautiful opus 9 *Nocturne and Prelude*. When Scriabin resumed performing with both hands, he regularly included the two pieces on his recital programs because they were always so well received -- he was often billed as "the left-handed Chopin".