**Stephen Straker** (1942 – 2004)

Stephen Straker was Professor of the History of Science in the Department of History at UBC for over thirty years (1969 – 2002), as well as a frequent and devoted faculty member of the Arts One Programme. The winner of the Killam Teaching Prize in 2002, Stephen was an inspiration and mentor to students and colleagues alike, for whom he remains the model of the generous but challenging teacher, as well as the boundlessly curious and impassioned thinker.

In honour of Stephen’s memory, and in recognition of his profound commitment to Arts One, Professor William Benjamin of the UBC School of Music, with the support of Stephen’s wife, Darlene Marzari, established an Arts One bursary to enable students to attend UBC and enjoy the benefits of a liberal arts education that prizes the critical and collegial discussion so close to Stephen’s heart, and in the form to which he devoted so many years of his career. Today’s concert is offered in support of the endowment that makes the distribution of these bursaries possible, and your interest in this project is greatly appreciated.*

*You may also be interested in attending the third annual Straker Memorial Lecture on April 6, featuring historian Ludmilla Jordanova. Please visit the Green College website, www.greencollege.ubc.ca, for details.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the UBC School of Music for its tremendous support for this event; in particular, Director Richard Kurth for generously welcoming an Arts One fund-raising initiative to the Recital Hall, Dina MacDougall for her programme design work, and Laurie Townsend for making this event actually happen. Rose Harper of the Arts One Programme, Maryn Ellis of the Development Office, Emily Williams of Alumni Affairs, and June Chow and Margaret Tom-Wing of the Office of the Dean of Arts all made crucial contributions to the production and promotion of this event, and the entire Arts One Programme expresses its sincere gratitude.

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Piano Music of Liszt:
A Benefit Concert for the Stephen Straker Arts One Bursary

March 20th, 2009
12:00 PM, Recital Hall
UBC School of Music

Brandon Konoval
piano

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NO RECORDING DEVICES, CAMERAS, LAPTOPS OR CELL PHONES (INCLUDING TEXT MESSAGING) OF ANY KIND ARE ALLOWED TO BE USED IN THE CONCERT HALL.
Biographies

Brandon Konoval piano

“Konoval enchants his audience” (Kanada Kurier).

Brandon Konoval completed doctoral studies in piano performance under the renowned pianist, Robert Silverman, as well as intensive masterclass work with György Sebok at the Banff Centre and with Leon Fleisher at the Salzburg Mozarteum. A lecturer both at the UBC School of Music and in the Arts One Programme since 1999, he began performing the music of Liszt thirty years ago and continues to find works of Liszt that he didn’t know previously and now needs to play. His son, Arcadi, still prefers Beethoven.

Programme Notes

In October 1839, Franz Liszt was enjoying a measure of early retirement near the fishing village of San Rossore, sharing a 12-room home with his lover, Marie d’Agout. The Comtesse d’Agout described their retreat as “a small wooden hut”, and Liszt evidently found the accommodations somewhat crowded as well: he was soon to begin the concert tours that would enshrine his reputation as the greatest pianist of his era. Whatever concerns may have disturbed the idyll of San Rossore, it was Liszt’s determination to raise money for a Beethoven monument in Bonn, the birthplace of the composer, that directly prompted him to resume concert activities in 1839, and benefit concerts for many other projects as well made up a large proportion of his concert itinerary.

Although concerned about the effects of touring on his compositional development, Liszt both refined earlier works and found inspiration for important new works while he performed. Our program begins with two nocturnes: the first, En rêve (Dreaming) only reached its final form in the last year of Liszt’s life, while the second, Harmonies du soir (Evening Harmonies) is one of the most poetic works conceived by Liszt, genuinely transcending its identity as an etude. Three of today’s works come from the 3-volume cycle, Années de Pèlerinage (Years of Pilgrimage), which Liszt had left in unfinished form in the late 1830’s. Au Lac de Wallenstadt recalls a Swiss lake that was a treasured refuge for Liszt and Marie; and the piano setting of Petrarch’s 123rd sonnet—which was begun as an actual song—was likely also a souvenir of time spent with Marie, for not only did they read Petrarch together, but Marie—like Petrarch’s love idol, Laura—was also a married woman of the Avignon region. The intertwining of the literary and the personal is again found in Vallée d’Obermann, which is based on a Rousseauian novel by Senancour, featuring a troubled young man who, like Liszt, found solace and new purpose in the wilds of Swiss nature. Finally, Funérailles, the centerpiece of today’s program, was once thought to be a memorial to Chopin, but the date that subtitled the work, October, 1849, suggests a more direct connection with the execution of Hungarian patriots who had befriended Liszt on his triumphal tour of Hungary and Transylvania two years previously.

What became of the Beethoven monument project? It was six years before the fund-raising target came in sight, to be met with a final, grand Beethoven festival in Bonn—which lacked the necessary facilities to host the event. Liszt paid for a new hall to be hurriedly built, had a steamboat launched on the first day of the festival (the Ludwig van Beethoven, to replace the immense raft that had been scuttled to provide timber for the concert hall), and the bronze statue was duly unveiled in August, 1845. The Beethoven monument stands to this day in the Dom Platz, as indomitable as composer it represents, as well as the composer who assured its completion.

Programme

All Works by Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

En rêve—Nocturne

Harmonies du soir (Etudes d’execution transcendante No. 11)

Au Lac de Wallenstadt (Années de Pèlerinage, I, Suisse)

Funérailles (Harmonies Poetiques et Religieuses)

Sonetto 123 del Petrarca (Années de Pèlerinage, II, Italie)

Vallée d’Obermann (Années de Pèlerinage, I, Suisse)