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FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

CYNTHIA SANGER, PIANO

*DANCE AND IMAGERY IN THE PIANO REPERTOIRE*

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021 AT 4:00 PM  
VIRTUAL RECITAL



*PROGRAM*

IMAGINEMOTION

**DANCE AND IMAGERY IN THE PIANO REPERTOIRE**

THIS RECITAL IS A CURATION OF PIECES FROM THE PIANO REPERTOIRE ACROSS DIFFERENT ERAS THAT EXEMPLIFY THE USE OF DANCE AND IMAGERY.

**Faschingsschwank aus Wien Opus 26**

**Robert Schumann**  
*1810-1856*

*Allegro*  
*Romanze*  
*Scherzino*  
*Intermezzo*  
*Finale*

**French Suite No. 6 in E Major**

**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
*1685-1750*

*Allemande*  
*Courante*  
*Sarabande*  
*Gavotte*  
*Polonaise*  
*Minuet*  
*Bouree*  
*Gigue*

**Pour Le Piano Suite**

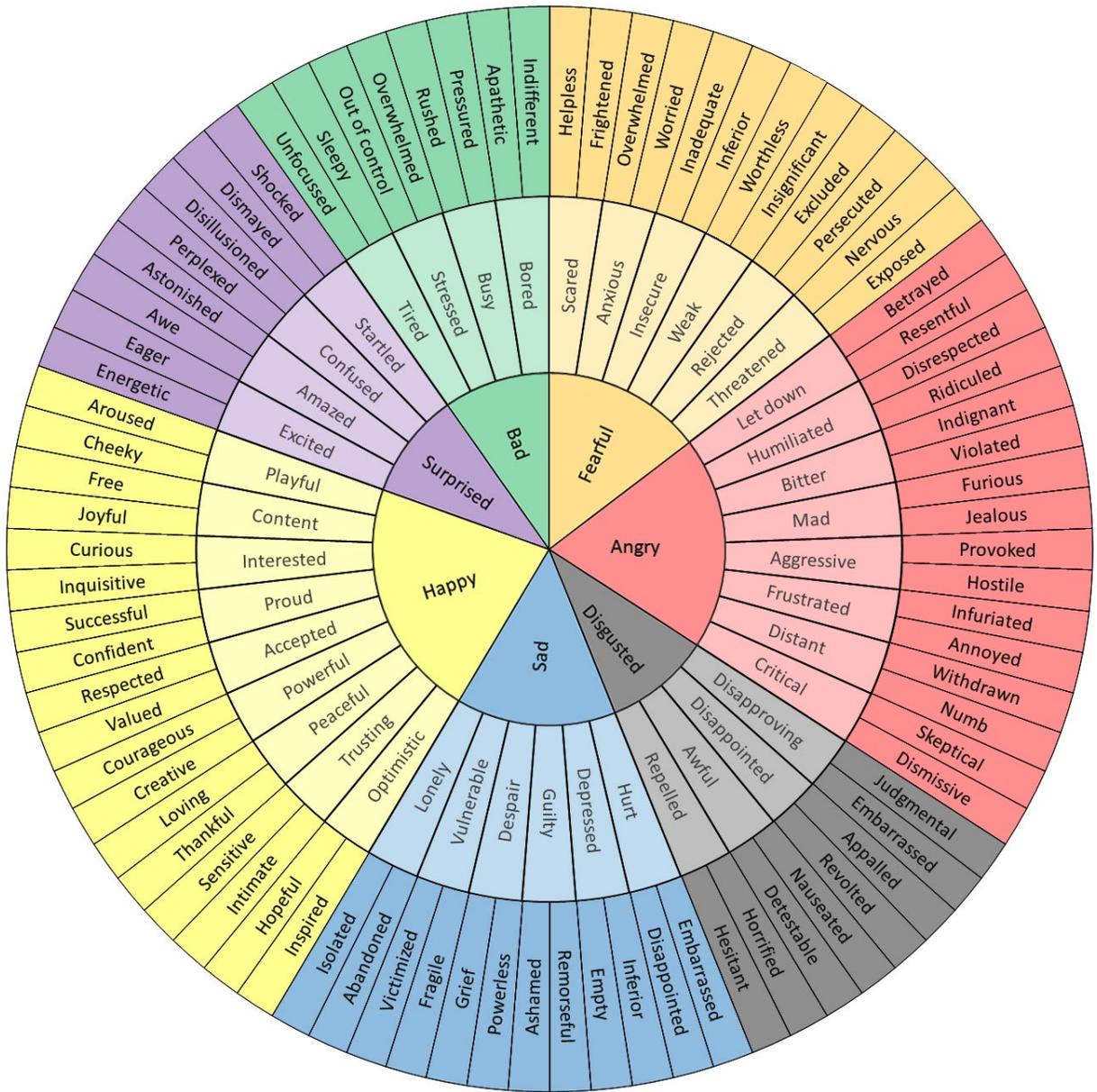
**Claude Debussy**  
*1862-1918*

*Prelude*  
*Sarabande*  
*Toccata*

**Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor**

**Frédéric Chopin**  
*1810-1849*

PROGRAM NOTES



The Wheel of Emotions designed by psychologist Robert Plutchick.

### **Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Opus 26 by Robert Schumann**

The five movements of *Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Opus 26* by Robert Schumann employ the use of Schumann's imaginary friends, Florestan the fiery and Eusebius the dreamer. Schumann wrote the first four movements during his time in Vienna in 1839 and the final movement was written in Leipzig.

The opening Allegro movement is in B-flat Major and is marked *Sehr Lebhaft*, or very lively. This is the longest and one of the more virtuosic movements, with a repeating main theme and contrasting lyrical sections. It is notable for its innovative rhythms and its brief quote of "La Marseillaise," the French National Anthem. Schumann returns to the first triumphant theme after introducing three contrasting themes, including a Viennese Waltz in F Sharp Major. The piece comes to a crashing and Florestan-like close with almost dissonant septuplet arpeggios.

The second movement titled *Romanze* is in g minor and is marked *Ziemlich Langsam*, or pretty slow. It is by far the saddest movement of the entire suite and Schumann appropriately uses a descending theme which evokes to me the image of tears falling down a face. The piece ends in a surprising G Major chord.

Schumann chose to compose the lively and joking *Scherzino* ( Little Joke) in a much welcomed B-flat major key with flirtatious rhythms and gestures. Much as the title suggests, this work is a playful respite between two sorrowful movements. A lively rhythm, with a melody based almost entirely on notes of the major chord, keeps the movement light and bouncing throughout, with the possible exception of the last run which is a progression of octaves that end in a quick and bright cadence.

The fiery and emotionally charged *Intermezzo* tells me a story of unrequited love. Schumann chooses the key of e flat minor and a marking of "with the greatest energy." This movement is characterized by its flowing sound, created by keeping a steady stream of right-hand notes in the background, interspersed with melody notes. In the end, the left hand takes a modified, E-flat major version of the E-flat minor melody, under the right hand and the piece ends in a peaceful major triad.

The *Finale* is marked highly vivid and is again a return to the triumphant key of Bflat Major and is full of moving thirds and majestic octaves. The energetic runs of the final bars bring the entire suite to a dramatic close.

### **French Suite No. 6 in E Major by J.S. Bach**

Bach is at the core of my musical being and expression - having studied the Well Tempered Clavier as part of my early piano instruction and playing the organ and piano in my Lutheran Church services as a child. Many of the pieces of Robert Schumann paid homage to Bach and Schumann even advised students to " Diligently play fugues of good masters, especially those of Johann Sebastian Bach. Let the Well-Tempered Clavier be your daily bread and you will certainly become a fine musician." The Six French Suites of J.S. Bach were written between the years of 1722 and 1725 for the clavier (harpsichord or clavichord) and dedicated to Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena Bach, during their early marriage. The first three French Suites are serious in nature in minor keys and the last three are more joyful and written in major keys. While this lively E Major French Suite Number 6 includes many types of dances, both fast and slow and serious and lively, they were never

meant to be danced to, they are instead focused stylizations of the traditional dances of the Baroque Era. All of the dances start with a pickup note, or anacrusis. The rhythm is the main component that is outstanding in this Bach Suite as is the binary form, or the idea of each dance having two sections. These dances have specific rhythmic motives that make them enjoyable and connect them to their other Baroque companions.

The opening *Allemande* is based on a duple meter dance of German origin and is serious and serene in nature. By contrast the *Courante* that follows is a triple meter piece with running sixteenth notes. The slow and stately *Sarabande* is of Spanish origin and is characterized by triple meter rhythm patterns with a hold on beat two. This form is used in the *Sarabande* of Debussy in the later portion of this recital. Following the Sarabande, is a staccato and folksy Gavotte which evokes images of clogs and clicking shoes to me. The Polonaise that follows is of Polish origin and is stately. Polonaises will appear later in the nationalist music of Chopin. Following the serious Polonaise, it a stately and gentle Minuet which is French in origin. Bach finishes the suite with a lively Bouree and a joyful Gigue.

**Debussy wrote Pour Le Piano** in 1901 as an homage to the form of Baroque suite. The opening *Prelude* in the key of a minor is marked "Assez anime et tres rythme" (with spirit and very rhythmically) and begins with a percussive melody in the bass and a contrasting legato pedal point passage to follow. Debussy was inspired to write this first movement after hearing the music of Indonesia at the 1889 Paris Exposition.

The *Sarabande* is in c sharp minor and is marked "Avec une élégance grave et lente" (with a slow and solemn elegance). The French composer Maurice Ravel orchestrated the Sarabande. and according to music historian John Keillor, the movement has been regarded as "among the most intimate music for the keyboard."

The final *Toccata* (coming from the Italian word "toccare" meaning to touch) is in c sharp minor and is marked "Vif" or fast. The sixteenth notes in this final movement are reminiscent to me of the virtuosic keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. Even though Debussy chose c sharp minor as the home key for this piece, there are bits of sunshine when C Major emerges. The entire Suite comes a final ending with a resounding C# Major Chord in both hands - a much welcomed surprise!

### **Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor by Frederic Chopin**

Chopin wrote his 2nd Scherzo (Joke) in 1837. Even though the piece starts in B-flat minor, much of the piece is in D-flat major and A Major. Following a long-held B-flat, three soft and quick ascending notes lead to a longer note; this is immediately repeated. After a pause, a very loud B-flat is followed by a long-held chord and in turn by four emphatic chords. The opening four notes return and they become an impetus that leads to much tension and drama. There are lyrical dancelike sections, filigree floating sections, and dramatic and bold sections as well. The piece comes to a dramatic close with a final D-flat major chord to contrast the B-flat minor opening.

## *ABOUT THE PERFORMER*

Active as a freelance performer, Boston-based pianist Cynthia Sanger has presented recitals at St. Thomas Kirche, Leipzig and Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. In the US she's performed at Weill Concert Hall, New York; the Adler Theater, Davenport, IA, Augustana College, Rock Island, IL and the Gardner Museum, Boston.

Ms. Sanger's repertoire ranges from Mompou, Persichetti, and Poulenc, to Martinu, Chopin, and Rota. Drawn to music that's rich with imagery and dance, she also performs piano arrangements of orchestral works such as "Peter and the Wolf," "Peer Gynt Suite," and "Rhapsody in Blue" with instrumental soloists.

Recent collaborative projects include composing and directing an arrangement for an outdoor performance of "The Entertainer" and "Simple Gifts" for twelve pianists and three vocalists as part of the Newton Festival of the Arts' Artful Piano Project. Focused on making music accessible and on audiences having a kinesthetic and participatory experience, Cynthia has also presented a dynamic "movable performance" with 13 mini performances at outdoor instruments stationed along a running route in Newton.

Ms. Sanger believes music starts and resides first and foremost in the body and is currently developing a set of workshops for athletes and musicians that explore the benefits each discipline provides the other.

A native of Moline, IL, Cynthia received her Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and her Master's degree in Piano Performance from the Longy School of Music. Her teachers have included Ruth Slenczynska, Sharon Jensen, LaVonna Bartlett, Sylvia Wang, Richard Ruggero, Alys Terrien-Queen, and Lois Shapiro. While pursuing her degrees, Ms. Sanger taught private piano and group music and movement classes. She currently teaches piano students of all ages in both private and group settings.

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