

MUSIC AT ST. PHILIP  SUMMER SEASON

PRESENTS

◆ 2019 SUMMER KEYBOARD CONCERTS ◆

PROGRAM No. 2



Piano
Passions

Todd Van Kekerix

SUNDAY | AUGUST 18, 2019 | 2:00 p.m.

St. Philip Presbyterian Church ◆ 4807 San Felipe Street ◆ Houston, Texas

About the Artist



Todd Van Kekerix serves at the University of Houston as Lecturer of Piano and Piano Pedagogy, Coordinator of Class Piano, and Faculty Affiliate in Piano to the Community Arts Academy. Recent performance highlights include the Esterházy Palace in Eisenstadt, Austria, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and a concerto performance with the University of Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra. He previously served as Director of Enrichment Activities at The New School for Music Study in Kingston, NJ and Adjunct Professor of Piano at Kean University in Union, NJ. He earned his doctor of musical arts (DMA) degree from the University of Oklahoma, an artist's certificate and master's degree (MM) in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Southern Methodist University, and a bachelor's degree (BA) from Augustana University. Previously, he was a faculty member at the Practical Piano Pedagogy summer seminar series in Kingston, NJ and an instructor at the SMU Institute for Young Pianists in Dallas, TX. Recent conference presentations include "My Festival Romance: Putting the Fun Back in Festivals" at the Texas Music Teachers Association Conference in Houston and "Elvina Pearce: An Excursion Through the Life and Contributions of a Piano Pedagogue" at the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy in Lombard, Illinois. His spare time is filled with reading, cooking, and exploring all the exciting things Houston and the surround area has to offer.

About the Piano

Weighing 990 pounds, the Steinway model D concert grand piano is nine feet long and just over five feet wide. The instrument of choice by the world's most discerning concert artists, it is believed that over 90% of concert grand pianos worldwide are Steinway model Ds. Steinway & Sons produced their first model D (or D-274 as it is also known, 274 being its length in centimeters) in 1884. Since then, well over 25,000 model D pianos have been built in Steinway's New York and Hamburg studios. The St. Philip instrument was built in New York in 2002 and acquired by the church in 2018. While most Steinway D pianos are very fine, the St. Philip instrument is considered to be particularly exquisite, with beautiful, even, warm tone, extraordinary clarity from lowest notes to highest, and an exceptionally wide dynamic range from the tiniest whisper to the most thrilling roar — all of which we will hear this afternoon!

About the Music

Haydn's **Fantasia in C major** is based on the Austrian folk song *Do Bäuren hat d'Katz valor'n* ("The farmer's wife has lost her cat"). In March 1789, Haydn wrote to the publishing company Artaria, saying, "In a moment of great good humor I have completed a new Capriccio for fortepiano, whose taste, singularity and special construction cannot fail to receive approval from connoisseurs and amateurs alike. In a single movement, rather long, but not particularly difficult." The fact that Haydn wrote the fantasia "for connoisseurs and amateurs alike" was most likely a nod to C. P. E. Bach's *Für Kenner und Liebhaber* ("For Connoisseurs and Amateurs"), which he had requested from Artaria the year before. But the piece is more difficult than Haydn thought it would be, with zany virtuosity and orchestral effects, in many ways recalling the last movement of his *Sonata No. 48*.

Gaspard de la nuit (subtitled *Trois poèmes pour piano d'après Aloysius Bertrand*) is a suite of piano pieces written by Maurice Ravel in 1908. Each of its three movements is based on a poem or *fantaisie* from the collection *Gaspard de la Nuit — Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot*, completed in 1836 by Aloysius Bertrand (1807–1841). Ravel's work was premiered in Paris by Ricardo Viñes on January 9, 1909. The piece is famous for its difficulty, partly because Ravel intended the **Scarbo** movement to be more difficult than Balakirev's *Islamey*. Because of its technical challenges and profound musical structure, Scarbo is considered one of the most difficult solo pieces in the entire standard repertoire for piano.

See Program for more specific details on each movement. →

The **Three Intermezzi** were composed by Johannes Brahms in 1892. The intermezzi were described by the contemporary critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904) as "monologues" . . . pieces of a "thoroughly personal and subjective character" striking a "pensive, graceful, dreamy, resigned, and elegiac note."

The **Piano Sonata No. 1** by Carl Vine was composed in 1990 and dedicated to Australian pianist Michael Kieran Harvey, who made the sonata's debut recording on the Tall Poppies label in 1991. Carl Vine is one of Australia's best known and often performed composers, with an impressive orchestral catalogue featuring eight symphonies and twelve concertos. His piano music is performed frequently around the world, and recordings of his music on more than 60 CDs play regularly on Australian radio. He has an extensive range of chamber music alongside various works for film, television, dance and theatre. Since 2014 Vine has been Senior Lecturer in Composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. The first printed edition of his Piano Sonata No. 1, published by Chester Music, bears the following description: "A complex and challenging piano sonata composed by Carl Vine for the Sydney Dance Company in 1991. The piece was first performed by Michael Harvey in North Melbourne in June 1991. The music is full of rich chordal movements, unusual flowing harmonies and tonalities, with great extremes of dynamic and energy. Reflecting the physical origins of the piece as a dance, the music is dotted with very strict changes of tempo which require exact adherence, rather than the *Rubato* approach that typifies many piano interpretations."

Program

Piano Passions

Fantasia in C major ♦ Hob. XVII:4

Franz Joseph Haydn
1732–1809

Gaspard de la nuit ♦ M. 55

Maurice Ravel
1875–1937

I. *Ondine*

Written in C# major and based on the poem “Ondine” — a dreamy tale of the water nymph Undine singing to seduce the observer into visiting her kingdom deep at the bottom of a lake — this movement is reminiscent of Ravel’s earlier piano piece *Jeux d’eau* (1901), with the sounds of water falling and flowing, woven with cascades.

II. *Le Gibet*

Written in E♭ minor and based on the poem “Le Gibet”, the observer is presented with a view of the desert, where the lone corpse of a hanged man on a gibbet stands out against the horizon, reddened by the setting sun. Meanwhile, a bell tolls from inside the walls of a far-off city, creating the deathly atmosphere that surrounds the observer. Throughout the entire piece is a B♭ octave ostinato, imitative of the tolling bell.

III. *Scarbo*

Written in G# minor and based on the poem “Scarbo”, this movement depicts the nighttime mischief of a small fiend or goblin, making pirouettes, flitting in and out of the darkness, disappearing and suddenly reappearing. Its uneven flight — hitting and scratching against the walls, casting a growing shadow in the moonlight — creates a nightmarish scene for the observer lying in his bed. With its repeated notes and two terrifying climaxes, this is the high point in technical difficulty of all the three movements. Technical challenges include repeated notes in both hands, and double-note scales in major seconds in the right hand.

Three Intermezzi ♦ Op. 117

Johannes Brahms
1833–1897

1. *Andante moderato*
2. *Andante non trope e con molto espressione*
3. *Andante con moto*

Piano Sonata No. 1

Carl Vine
b. 1954



**Please join us for a reception in the Gathering Area following the program.
FREE ICE CREAM FOR ALL!**

**Your presence and generosity are welcome. A freewill offering in support of
Music at St Philip Concerts will be received at the Sanctuary exits.
Donations may be made by cash, check or credit card.**



MUSIC AT ST. PHILIP SUMMER SEASON

◆ 2019 SUMMER KEYBOARD CONCERTS ◆

2:00 p.m. on the 3rd Sundays of July, August, September — FREE (contributions welcome), plus free ice cream afterwards!



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Matthew Dirst HARPSICHORD
SUNDAY | JULY 21, 2019 | 2:00 p.m.

Resident keyboard master and scholar **Matthew Dirst** presents a program of both solo and ensemble harpsichord music, in works by **Bach, Handel, Telemann, Michel Corrette, Gaspard Le Roux, and Giovanni Legrenzi**. With violinists **Kurt Johnson** and **Maria Lin**, and cellist **Barrett Sills**.

John Phillips harpsichord ◆ 2012 (after an instrument by Albert Delin • 1768)



②



Todd Van Kekerix PIANO
SUNDAY | AUGUST 18, 2019 | 2:00 p.m.

Newly appointed as a member of the piano faculty at the University of Houston, **Todd Van Kekerix** presents a recital of both brilliance and tenderness. His program features the truly stunning *Gaspard de la nuit* by **Maurice Ravel**, the dazzling *Piano Sonata No. 1* by Australian composer **Carl Vine**, and other works.

Steinway model D piano ◆ 2002 (acquired 2018)



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Aaron Tan ORGAN
SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 15, 2019 | 2:00 p.m.

Canadian organist, scientist, and pianist **Aaron Tan** was winner of the First Prize and Audience Prize at the prestigious American Guild of Organists (AGO) National Young Artists (NYACOP) competition in 2018. His thrilling program of exciting and varied repertoire is co-sponsored by the Houston AGO Chapter.

Paul Fritts organ ◆ 2010

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