



MIDDLEBURY
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

P R E S E N T S

Mahani Teave, Piano

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023

7:30 PM ET

ROBISON HALL, MAHANEY ARTS CENTER



Mahani Teave, Piano

Program

I hē a Hotumatu'a

Ancestral Rapa Nui
arr. José Miguel Tobar (b. 1956)

Suite Rapa Nui

E te 'ua Matavai
Mai Hiva te 'Ariki

Alejandro Arevalo
(b. 1984)

Nocturne in B-flat Minor, Op. 9, No. 1

Étude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12

Nocturne in E Minor, Op. 72, No. 1

Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60

Scherzo No. 1 in B Minor, Op. 20

Frederic Chopin
(1810–1849)

Ballade No. 2 in B Minor

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)

Moment Musicaux in B-flat Minor, Op. 16, No. 1

Moment Musicaux in E Minor, Op. 16, No. 4

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873–1943)

The program will be performed without intermission.

*This performance is made possible with generous support
from the Paul Nelson Performance Endowment and the Rothrock Family Residency Fund.*

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to the performance, and refrain from texting.
Photography and the use of audio or video equipment are prohibited.*



Program Notes

Ancestral/Arr. TOBAR I hē a Hotumatu'a

One of the most important ancestral songs, sung on important occasions almost as an island anthem on Rapa Nui, I hē aHotumatu'a centers itself on the legendary King Hotu Matu'a, who brought the first settlement of Rapa Nui people from a land called Hiva. This song tells of Hotu Matu'a's life and how he calls to the spirits of Hiva to come and get him when his time in this world is over.

José Miguel Tobar wrote this arrangement for Mahani and it is being performed publicly in North America for the first time for this tour.

AREVELO Suite Rapa Nui

Suite Rapa Nui is based on two different Rapa Nui ancestral chants. The first "E te 'ua Matavai" is a chant used to call for rain. Water is vital, especially on an island that doesn't have rivers and lakes and depends on rain water, so this song holds importance for the people of Rapa Nui. The second chant "Mai Hiva te 'Ariki" is about the coming of the important King Hotu Matu'a from Hiva, the homeland in Polynesia, and the King's arrival to Easter Island.

Alejandro Arevalo wrote this piece for Mahani especially for this tour, where it will received its world premiere.

CHOPIN Nocturne in B-flat Minor, Op. 9, No. 1

The Nocturne in B-flat minor emerges from silence and to silence returns. It has the form of an ample song in which a graceful melody fills the outer sections. At first it rolls along quietly, enlivened by surging waves of ornaments. An inner tension leads to a climax, to a sudden rush of *appassionato* expression, enclosed within a handful of bars. The Nocturne's middle section proceeds in the relative key of D-flat major. This takes us into a strange other world: a melody without ornaments, almost ascetic and strong, led in octaves *sotto voce*, and so softened, repeating the same phrases over and over again. In those phrases, one can detect the rhythms of a mazurka and a motif from the old song 'Chmiel' [Hops]. The whole thing flows along as if in a trance or in great meditation. But then a sudden change occurs: we hear sonorous music built from sequences of sixths and thirds, immediately followed by its distant echo. Next the graceful melody from the beginning returns *dolcissimo*, before bursting into a final

flourish and dying away in *ppp*, though not in the key of B-flat minor, but in B-flat major. Chopin would employ an optimistic major-mode ending for works adhering to a minor key – a practice taken from Bach – many times in his later works.

CHOPIN Étude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12

The twelfth Étude, in C minor, which closes the set, strikes one with its power and passion, and it is commonly called since the times of Liszt, the ‘Revolutionary’, as its first chord sounds like a gunshot. And thereafter a mass of agitated, angry sonorities rumbles along *con fuoco* and *con forza*, beneath huing and crying motives that fire off *energico* and *appassionato* into a dispassionate sky, with the utmost fervour and increasing persistence.

Attention was drawn long before now to the parallel between the musical cries of this Étude and the verbal entries in Chopin’s nocturnal diary written in Stuttgart in September 1831: ‘Oh God, You are! You are and You take no revenge?! Have you not yet had enough of the Muscovite crimes – or – you are Moscow yourself!’.

The musical logic induced Chopin to give this minor-mode étude a Picardian major-mode ending as well. However, one may surmise that the appearance of a triumphant sonority at the end of the cycle – that bright and emphatic C major – has also a deep extra-musical sense.

CHOPIN Nocturne in E Minor, Op. 72, No. 1

The Nocturne in E minor, published after the composer’s death by Julian Fontana, was deemed by him to be a work from Chopin’s youth, from the year 1827. That date was taken as indisputable. However, music historian Zdzisław Jachimecki wondered at this Nocturne’s ‘delightful sound’. Accepting Fontana’s dating as secure, he could only conclude that he was dealing with ‘a clear augury of the supreme master of the nocturnes’, and that the ending of this Nocturne sounded like ‘a prophecy of the brilliant Nocturne in C-sharp minor’.

Classical philologist Tadeusz Zieliński ventured to question Fontana’s dating, wondering if this was not in fact the last of Chopin’s nocturnes, not published for some unknown reason, but tending to indicate, with its emotional maturity and compositional excellence, the last years of Chopin’s life and work.

One is tempted to support that hypothesis by placing further question marks against the previously accepted date. Careful listening to the E minor Nocturne and a discerning awareness of its form allow us to state that in some respects it is similar to the Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 55, No. 2, published by Chopin in 1844. They both display a two-phase form that is unique to the nocturnes, in which the second phase merely reinforces the first. In both, the cantilena of the melody flows along over a regular triple rhythm in the accompaniment. Also in both nocturnes, the second phase features a change from a smooth melody to an agitated recitative, expressively embellished with rapid scale passages and trills.

The question arises as to why Chopin did not publish the Nocturne in E minor. Well, the answer seems obvious. Although it does possess irrefutable qualities, noted and appreciated by Chopin scholars, it cannot compare with the Nocturne in E-flat Major. Secondly, it is too similar to the latter in many respects. Not in every respect, however. It is certainly more nostalgic than the E-flat major, written with less distance and, as Jachimecki put it, reflects 'a melancholy state of mind'.

CHOPIN Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60

In the summer of 1845, alongside new mazurkas and songs, the Barcarolle was written – a work that intoxicates with the beauty of its sound and thrills with its seethingly ardent expression. Perhaps by coincidence, perhaps by design, the last of the three Mazurkas, Op. 59, composed in the key of F-sharp minor, ends with a switch to the bright F-sharp major. And it is in that same F-sharp major – a rare key in Chopin – that the Barcarolle begins. It is also in shades of F-sharp major (as the work's main key) that the Barcarolle's musical narrative proceeds, departing from it and returning to it again.

We do not know when and in what circumstances the idea for this music was conceived. Chopin never visited Venice. He had but a fleeting encounter with Italian landscapes and atmosphere on a boat trip from Marseilles to Genoa. A storm at sea was perhaps more likely to have impressed itself onto his memory of that fatiguing expedition than any image of the city. It is assumed that Chopin could have been given the idea of composing a barcarolle, as well as a prototype for its shape and character, by works in that genre which functioned in the current musical repertoire, especially in opera, and above all in Rossini and Auber. All the operatic barcarolles by those composers were well known to Chopin. He could not possibly have forgotten the barcarolles from *Guillaume Tell*, *La muette de Portici*, or *Fra Diavolo*.

The barcarolle genre was becoming increasingly popular in vocal and pianistic lyricism. We know that Chopin gave his pupils Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worten* to play. The sixth number in the first book of the *Songs without Words* bears the title 'Venezianisches Gondellied' [Venetian boat song]. This could certainly have been a path for Chopin into the convention of the nineteenth-century barcarolle. Yet in Chopin's Barcarolle there are no references to either the historical tradition of the songs of the Venetian gondoliers (as do appear in Liszt's 'Venezia e Napoli') or the banal idiom of the opera-salon barcarolle of the day, which would soon reach its pinnacle with the Barcarolle from Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*. In Chopin's Barcarolle, beneath the cloak of the generic convention, we find music that encapsulates his supreme pianistic experience and the musical maturity that he had attained during this rather reflective phase, and at the same time music that echoes his experience of the whole Mediterranean south of Europe: the Italian songs of Lina Freppa, Bellini's bel canto; the passionate Spanish songs of Pauline Viardot, which Chopin listened to in rapture; and the wild, but incredibly beautiful landscape of Majorca.

After the opening gesture, and after the leading rhythm has been given by the ostinato of the bass, the Barcarolle's principal melody appears. It might be said to emerge, out of silence, already mellifluous, songful, ringing with its thirds and sixths, and then its series of trills, flush with tenderness, subjected to a wave that rises and falls. Then it is repeated, still sounding restrained, yet reaching a peak. A moment of quietude, then once again, out of silence – in the key of A major, borne by the pulse of a different accompaniment – a new melody appears, which fills the middle of the work. It is just as songful, yet muffled, sotto voce, and at the same time restless, counterpointed by a second voice. After a while this melody also erupts, reaching for brighter sonorities, powerful or passionate.

Yet for all its beauty, the music of the opening is merely a preface to the further phases in the work's development. One peculiar, extraordinary moment comes at the point which Chopin defines with the words *dolce sfogato* and precedes with a lead-in filled with hushed mystery. That enigmatic, unfathomed *dolce sfogato* then starts to develop and bloom.

In his *Notes on Chopin*, French author André Gide went into raptures: 'Sfogato, he wrote; has any other musician ever used this word, would he have ever had the desire, the

need, to indicate the airing, the breath of breeze, which, interrupting the rhythm, contrary to all hope, comes freshening and perfuming the middle of his barcarolle?'[i]

The sfogato opens the way to a return of the initial theme, in the fullness of absolute strength, power and passionate expression – to an apotheosis of feelings. There follows the music of the finale: a moment of ecstasy, and then the closing subsidence and the four sonorous strikes, like a distinct gesture of closure. Chopin must have been happy with his work, as he played the Barcarolle often and with relish: in Paris, London, and Scotland.

CHOPIN Scherzo No. 1 in B Minor, Op. 20

The manuscript of the B Minor Scherzo has not come down to us. There is no trace in any correspondence of the date or circumstances of the work's composition. We know only that in 1833 the Scherzo was already in existence, and in February 1835 it was published by Schlesinger of Paris, then a month later by Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig. Incidentally, the third publisher, the London firm of Wessel, published the Scherzo a little later, furnishing the cover of the edition – as was its wont – with its own title, intended to stir up interest: *Le banquet infernal*.

In Chopin's letters from that time spent in Vienna, certain motifs recur obsessively: 'I curse the moment I left... In the salon I pretend to be calm, but on returning home I fulminate at the piano... I return, play, cry, laugh, go to bed, put out the light and dream always of you... Everything I've seen thus far abroad seems to me [...] unbearable and only makes me long for home, for those blissful moments which I couldn't appreciate... It seems like a dream, a stupor, that I'm with you – and what I hear is just a dream'.

One could hardly conceive of a greater concurrence between the emotion poured into his letters and the expression of the work at hand. Chopin called it a scherzo. Today, that does not surprise us. Ever since his four works given that name came into existence, it has been hard to imagine a scherzo that might possess a different character. But in those days? A scherzo meant jest. It was supposed to make people laugh and have fun, to create a good mood. In the symphony and the sonata, it inherited the place left by the minuet, as well as its triple meter and terpsichorean tendencies. Though Beethoven had already shown that a scherzo's humor could have sharp, angular features, it was Chopin who crossed the mark. Schumann, writing his review of

the B minor Scherzo (highly favorable, one might add), enquired rhetorically: 'How should gravity array itself when jest is already darkly robed?'

The predatory-fanatical, at times downright demonic, character of the scherzo was a Romantic innovation. Suffice it to recall Berlioz's *Songe d'une nuit de sabbat*, from the *Symphonie fantastique*, or, from another field, Goya's *Caprichos* or Fuseli's *The Nightmare*. And that is the path taken by Chopin, who established for his scherzos a specific principle concerning the dramatic structure of works in that genre. All four of his scherzos, though each is expressed in a form that differs in detail, can be reduced to a common denominator. They are linked by the idea of 'reprise form', and so form in which – as in a dance with trio or a da capo aria – the music of the beginning returns, identical or more or less transformed, to close the work. The peculiarity of Chopin's scherzos lies in the fact that between the music of that framework (and so the scherzo itself) and the music of the interior (the traditional trio) there is a contrast that is so fundamental that it resembles the collision of two worlds. The inner world brings anxiety and menace, whilst the outer world offers us refuge. It transports us to a realm of recollection and dreams.

In the B minor Scherzo, that hostile framework is filled by music which Chopin defined – rather euphemistically – with the words *presto con fuoco*: fast and fiery. It is wild and strange. It runs the length and breadth of the keyboard, unconstrained, as if at odds with itself. Discontinuous, full of sharp, unexpected accents. Interpreters are put in mind of a 'furious storm of motives' (Jan Kleczyński), 'tongues of flame bursting upwards' (Hugo Leichtentritt), 'a nerve-fraying mood' (Zdzisław Jachimecki), presaged by those two chords of the preface, 'two shattering cries at the top and the bottom of the keyboard', as one monographer put it (bars 1–24). Then all at once, the frenzied dash is halted. Just for a moment, different music takes over. A rubato of chords and octaves which first struggle with one another and then fall quiet in anticipation (bars 44–64). And the next phase of wild hurtling begins (the development of motives exposed earlier): the agitation (*agitato*), articulated in a voice that at times is softened (*sotto voce*), thereby becomes all the more remarkable (bars 69–76).

Again the music is becalmed in expectation, and we are engulfed in the unrepeatable and unforgettable aura of a Christmas carol – like a voice from another world. The lullaby carol '*Lulajże Jezuniu*' [*Hush little Jesus*] is summoned forth, by the strength of recollection, from deep silence and sung with the utmost simplicity, in a luminous B major, accompanied by a discreet ostinato, which reinforces the peace and calm of a

Christmas Eve night. And immediately afterwards a reaction. An original song, in response to the carol. A melody bursting with lyricism swells in an almost beseeching gesture and then falls (bars 320–328 (329)). The carol subsequently returns several times, entwined in that original song. The sixth time around, it is brutally broken off by a return to reality (bars 381–392).

The reprise ensues: a return to music that is fraught, wild, incredible, demonic (it has been variously termed), leading to an unforgettable finale, an explosion of raging passion and revolt, to the ninefold striking of a chord, the unprecedented dissonance of which is hard to define, and which was presaged – in a gesture of opening – by the B minor Scherzo's first two chords.

Barely a couple of weeks after the publication of the Scherzo in B minor, some unidentified critic gave an account of it in the *Gazette musicale de Paris* of 22 March 1835: 'the scherzo is of a completely new kind, and it seems to us that it offers, to a high degree, the impression of the author's intimate sensations'.

The Scherzo – distinguished by its carol lullaby – was dedicated to a particular person at a particular moment in time. Chopin's friendly gesture was extended to Thomas Albrecht, an attaché with the Saxon diplomatic mission in Paris. He would appear intermittently in Chopin's life up to the very end, on the Place Vendôme. At this particular moment, however, Chopin adopts a special role, as godfather to Albrecht's baby daughter, Teresa.

LISZT Ballade No. 2 in B Minor

As a composer, teacher and pianist, Franz Liszt developed new methods in his compositions - both imaginative and technical – which left their mark upon his progressive concepts and procedures. He also developed the method of "transformation of themes" as part of his revolution in form, made radical experiments in harmony and invented the orchestral symphonic poem.

Liszt was himself one of the greatest virtuosi on the pianoforte; he fully understood the instrument's potential and perceived its capabilities in full which he never failed to exhaust in his compositions. In the works of Liszt, we find an example of a composer writing almost exclusively for the piano. The smaller-scale piano works, such as his numerous études and assorted short pieces with poetic names are among the most

significant. Ballade No. 2 displays a powerful resonance utilizing parallel scales requiring a strong technique.

RACHMANINOFF *Moment Musicaux* in B-flat Minor, Op. 16, No. 1

The collection of pieces entitled *Moments Musicaux* Op. 16, came into being because of a routine misfortune: during a train journey, a thief relieved Rachmaninoff of the substantial sum of money he was carrying. To restore his finances, Rachmaninoff tried to compose songs and short piano pieces that would be marketable. He was only 23 at the time, and his career already faced difficulties, since his highly ambitious first symphony had suffered from a badly performed premiere. His turn to more modest work allowed him the freedom to search for a style of his own, and we see this emerging in the *Moments Musicaux*, as Rachmaninoff draws on models from high Romanticism and remolds them to suit his divergent purposes.

Chopin is the most obvious influence here, with the *Nocturnes* close to the surface of Numbers 1 and 5, and the *Études* in numbers 2, 4, and 6. But Rachmaninoff's pieces feel broader and more monumental, with a new virtuosity arising from the thicker textures containing several melodic strands. In the first four pieces the mood is unremittably dark, 'gloomy like the man himself', as one contemporary put it. The elegiac melody of No. 1 floats over the nocturne-like accompaniment and passes through several variations without shedding its character.

RACHMANINOFF *Moment Musicaux* in E Minor, Op. 16, No. 4

Rachmaninoff brews up a tempest in No. 4, possibly inspired by Chopin's famous 'Revolutionary' étude.

The Ancestral/Tobar and Arvelo program notes are courtesy of Mahani Teave; the Chopin program notes courtesy of The Fryderyk Chopin Institute; the Liszt note courtesy of the L.A. Philharmonic; and the Rachmaninoff notes courtesy of Hyperion Records, used with permission.



Biography

Mahani Teave, Piano

Award-winning pianist and cultural ambassador Mahani Teave is a pioneering artist who bridges the creative world with education and environmental activism, and the only professional classical musician on her native Easter Island. Twice topping the *Billboard* charts with her debut album, *Rapa Nui Odyssey*, she received raves from critics, including *BBC Music Magazine*, which noted her “natural pianism” and “magnificent artistry.”



Twice distinguished as one of the 100 Women Leaders of Chile, Mahani has performed for its past five presidents, embassies in over 8 countries, and at Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate, Chile’s Palacio de La Moneda, and Chilean Congress. Believing in the profound, healing power of music, she has performed globally, from the stages of the world’s foremost concert halls on six continents, to hospitals, schools, jails, and low-income areas.

Setting aside her burgeoning career at the age of 30, Mahani returned to her island to co-found Toki Rapa Nui with Enrique Icka, a non-profit and first School of Music and the Arts of Easter Island. Offering both classical and traditional Polynesian lessons in various instruments to over 100 children, Toki Rapa Nui offers not only musical, but cultural, social, and ecological support for its students and the area. A self-sustaining architectural wonder, its infrastructure was recognized with a Recyclápolis Environmental National Award and was built using Earthship Biotecture and the help of acclaimed American architect Michael Reynolds.

Mahani’s unique personal and artistic journey was captured in Emmy-nominated documentary *Song of Rapa Nui* by fifteen-time Emmy award-winning filmmaker John Forsen (Amazon Prime Video), and in a just-released children’s book “The Girl Who Heard the Music: How One Pianist and 85,000 Bottles and Cans Brought New Hope to an Island” (Sourcebooks). She was recently featured in *The New York Times*, NPR,

CBS Sunday Morning, PBS, Newshour, Graydon Carter's Airmail, the BBC, EFE, MPR's Performance Today, CNN en Español, Amanpour and Company on CNN and PBS, *Gramophone*, Good Morning America, a Tiny Desk concert, and more.

Winner of the APES Prize for best classical performance in Chile (playing with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile), and the Claudio Arrau International Piano Competition, among others, Mahani also received the Advancement of Women Award from Scotiabank for leadership and promoting music on Easter Island, and was made honorary VP of the World Indigenous Business Forum in 2017. She was named one of 23 "Chileans Creating Future" who are agents of global change creating a better future for Chile and the world.

Making her debut at the age of nine, Mahani toured with famed Chilean pianist Roberto Bravo. She studied at Austral University in Valdivia (Chile), with Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and with Fabio Bidini at the Hanns Eisler Musik Hochschule in Berlin.

Mahani currently lives on Easter Island, combining performances with leading the Music School and motherhood. A Steinway Artist, she was "rediscovered" in 2018, which led to her debut recording, released to glowing reviews. She embarked on her North American debut recital tour in September 2023.

Mahani Teave appears by arrangement with Dworkin & Company.

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We remember their connection to this region and the hardships they continue to endure.

We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.