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Market Square Concerts is dedicated to the presentation of a wide repertoire of chamber music performed by distinguished artists, both established and emerging, and to the education and engagement of students and the general public in the art form.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS



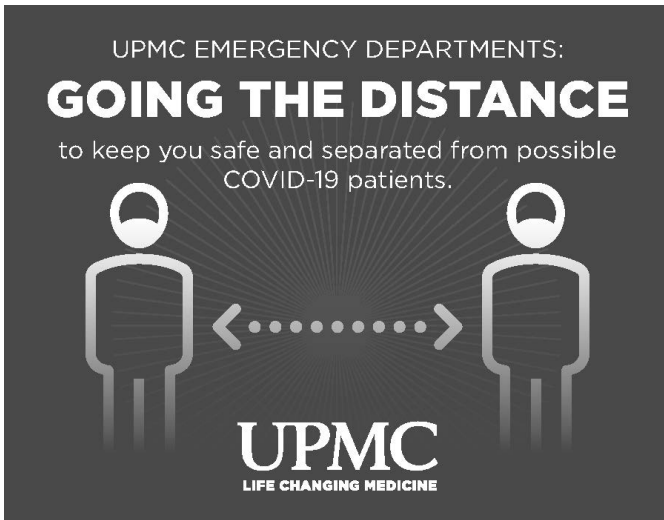
Greetings,

If you are reading this message, you have chosen to attend a live musical performance despite possible concerns over an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, proving that live performing arts are essential for the nourishment of our spirit.

We firmly believe that live performance adds a unique dimension to our lives and we are deeply grateful to all who share our love of great concerts. It is our hope that connecting to wonderful music, both familiar and new, performed by a stellar roster of artists in our 39th season will bring some lasting joy, hope, and vitality into your life.

We thank you for supporting Market Square Concerts and look forward to seeing you at our future performances.

Sincerely,
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Tuesday, October 6, 2020 ■ 7:30 PM
Whitaker Center

MARK MARKHAM, PIANIST

“DANCES AND IMPROVISATIONS”

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| French Suite No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 813 | Johann Sebastian Bach |
| Allemande | (1685-1750) |
| Courante | |
| Sarabande | |
| Air | |
| Menuet | |
| Gigue | |
|
Valse nobles et sentimentales, M. 61 |
Maurice Ravel |
| Modéré | (1875-1937) |
| Assez lent | |
| Modéré | |
| Animé | |
| Presque lent | |
| Assez vif | |
| Moins vif | |
| Epilogue: Lent | |
|
Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise, Op. 22 |
Frédéric Chopin |
| | (1810-1849) |

INTERMISSION

Improvisations

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

No. 1 in B Minor (1933)

No. 2 in A-flat Major (1933)

No. 7 in C Major, (1934)

No. 12 in E-flat Major, Hommage à Schubert (1941)

No. 13 in A Minor (1958)

No. 14 in D-flat Major, (1958)

No. 15 in C Minor, Hommage à Édith Piaf (1959)

Valse Improvisation sur le nom de BACH (1932)

The program will conclude with Improvisations by Mr. Markham of selections from the American Songbook which he will announce from the stage

Market Square Concerts is generously supported by Lois Lehrman Grass.



This concert is in memory of
THOMAS RALPH PHEASANT
(1944-2020)



ABOUT THE ARTIST



Pianist Mark Markham is equally at home as a soloist, a collaborator with great singers, a chamber musician, a jazz pianist, or a vocal coach, and his interpretations have been praised by the public and press alike. His international career encompasses performances in North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, while the artistry of his playing has been described as “brilliant”, “exquisitely detailed” and “in full service to the music”.

The 2019-20 season was without doubt one of the greatest challenges for performing artists. For me the first half of the season was unexpectedly quiet, which gave me time to learn a new program, or so I thought. How quickly plans can change. At the end of September, my friend and recital partner of twenty years, the great soprano Jessye Norman passed away suddenly. Her family asked me to perform at the funeral in Augusta GA and then again at her memorial service at the Metropolitan Opera House a couple of months later. My next performance was a return engagement in Kansas City for the Lyric Opera in early February. “In the Mood for Love”, a cabaret show I created for the young artist program was a wonderful success. In mid-February I went out to Oberlin College to play a recital with tenor Limmie Pulliam and give a master class for the vocal students. And this is where it stopped, at least for a while. In addition to giving virtual lessons, I was asked to give my first virtual concert for the Alliance Française of Hawaii. The planned concerts had to be postponed until February, so this would be a time to share live music with their members. They graciously opened the event to the entire world via Zoom, and I played from my living room on my piano for a public from twelve different countries. It was a pleasant experience and is definitely a way to communicate with your audience.

Mr. Markham began the 2018-19 season with a solo recital at the Lexington Bach Festival - “Bach and the Art of Improvisation”, followed by a recital with mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. At Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall he gave recitals

with soprano Leah Crocetto and mezzo-soprano J’Nai Bridges. Also with Ms Crocetto he performed at Lafayette College and in Raleigh NC for the North Carolina Opera. With Ms Bridges he also performed on the Spire Series in Baltimore. In February he was pianist and music director for a program celebrating the music of Kurt Weill and George Gershwin entitled “Mack the Knife is the Man I Love” at the Kansas City Opera and in March he returned to New York City for a solo recital - “My Songs without Words” - on the Sacred Music in a Sacred Space series. In May he gave a master class on the Art Song Preservation Society series in New York City and in June gave a solo recital in Honolulu for the Alliance Française of Hawaii. He finished the season with the third edition of his vocal workshop *Singing in Sicily*.

As the recipient of the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award from The Johns Hopkins University, he opened the 2017-18 season with a solo recital at the Peabody Conservatory, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Peabody-Hopkins union. Other performances included *Prokofiev’s Concerto #3* with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony, a vocal recital with soprano Leah Crocetto and baritone Zachary Nelson at the Morgan Library in New York City, Ravel’s *Concerto in G* with the Harrisburg Symphony, plus a solo recital on the Market Square Concerts series in Harrisburg and a performance of *Rachmaninoff’s Concerto #3* with Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra. The summer of 2017 marked the first season of his vocal workshop, *Singing in Sicily* - a non-profit intensive training program for talented young singers from around the world.

Born in Pensacola, Florida, Mr. Markham made his debut in 1980 as soloist with the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra and in the same year was invited by the renowned Boris Goldovsky to coach opera at the Oglebay Institute. His teachers at the time, Robert and Trudie Sherwood, were supportive of all his musical endeavors from solo repertoire, vocal accompanying, and chamber music to Broadway and jazz. During the next ten years as a student at the Peabody Conservatory, where he received the BM, MM and DMA degrees in piano performance, this same support for the diversity of his musical gifts came from Ann Schein, a pupil of Mieczyslaw Munz and the great Artur Rubinstein. While under her tutelage he won several competitions including the Munz Competition and the First Prize and the Contemporary Music Prize at the 1988 Frinna

Awerbuch International Piano Competition in New York City. While still a student at the conservatory Mr. Markham toured with soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson, a collaboration that resulted in critically acclaimed recordings of works by Messiaen, Carter, Dallapiccola, Schuller, and Wuorinen. In addition, he has toured the US, Europe, and Asia with countertenor Derek Lee Ragin and has given recitals with Gordon Hawkins, Theodora Hanslowe, Christine Brewer, Isabel Leonard and Vinson Cole.

Starting in 1995 for twenty seasons, Mr. Markham was the recital partner of Jessye Norman, giving nearly 300 performances in thirty countries, including recitals in Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Philharmonie in Berlin, La Palau de la Musica in Barcelona, London's Royal Festival Hall, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Salzburg Festival, Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo, Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, the Ancient Theatre of Epidauros in Greece, the Baalbek Festival at the Temple of Bacchus in Lebanon, and at the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize presentation to President Jimmy Carter in Oslo.

Much appreciated by the public for his improvisational skills, Mr. Markham performed at the Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany, where he collaborated with Sir Peter Ustinov for a live television broadcast throughout the country. His gift for jazz has been recognized in the Sacred Ellington, a program created by Ms. Norman in which he served as pianist and musical director, which toured Europe, the Middle East and finished in 2009 with a performance at the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City. His recording with Jessye Norman of "Roots: My Life, My Song" was nominated for a Grammy Award.

Mr. Markham is a former faculty member of the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University, Morgan State University, the Norfolk Festival of Yale University and the Britten-Pears School of the Aldeburgh Festival in England. He has given master classes throughout the US, Europe and Asia and has been a guest lecturer for The Johns Hopkins University and the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

markmarkhampianist.com

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

In his “Dances and Improvisations,” Mark Markham has managed to incorporate those two elements so creatively within a program that ranges from 18th century Bach to 20th century Poulenc with Chopin and Ravel in between. Please enjoy this grand sweep of music.

French Suite No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 813

Composed: 1722

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685-1750)



Over all music looms Johann Sebastian Bach who is often defined as the quintessential Baroque composer but whose music knows no boundaries and somehow suffers few ills from its many translations and its performance on modern instruments. Bach stayed close to home, spending twenty-seven of his productive years in Leipzig

(1723-50) where the French Suite No. 2 was completed in 1723.

The French Suite No. 2 is one of six suites for harpsichord or clavichord that Bach produced between 1722 and 1725. Like many subtitles in music, “French” was assigned to the works by someone other than the composer himself and is not entirely accurate since the Suites are more Italian in style than French but ultimately international in their implications. The movement markings, of course, support the idea of a French influence, although the so-called “English” Suites, another misnomer, also bear the French movement markings. Both these subtitles can be attributed to Johann Nikolaus Forkel in his 1802 biography of Bach.

If definition is the telling thing, we might begin with brief ones for each movement. An *allemande*, to confuse national identification even further, is based on a German dance form in 3/4 time but is generally in 4/4 time as is the opening movement of Bach’s Suite No. 2. A *courante* refers to an old French dance in 3/2 time. A *sarabande* is a stately dance generally of Spanish origin and serves as the slowest movement of the suite. A *menuet* is an early French dance form in triple time. A *gigue* is a fast 16th century country dance form usually in 6/8 or 3/4 time and often serves as the last movement of a suite as it does in this work. None of these definitions, however, explains the wonder of Bach’s French Suites

included in the first of his two collections of works presented to his second wife, Anna Magdalena, entitled *Notebook for Anna Magdalena*.

The Suite No. 2 starts with a note of sadness in the opening *Allemande*, but that is quickly dispersed in the following *Courante*, an impressive moment in the set. The *Sarabande* is both solemn and lyrical and also an expression of Bach's genius for counterpoint when two melodies are played simultaneously. Things lighten in the *Air* as Bach offers contrast and variation in the music. So does the *Menuet* offer a lively and delightful moment in the set. We are left smiling in the final *Gigue* with its dotted rhythms and many staccato notes.

Valse nobles et sentimentales, M. 61

Composed: 1911

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)



While Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales* is perhaps more famous in its orchestral version, the piano version composed in 1911 was its original form with the orchestral version published a year later. The title was intended as an homage to Schubert whose 1823 collection of waltzes bears the same title.

Ravel's incredible treatment of waltz form is readily evident in this suite which he composed on the brink of World War I that so affected him. In this work he manages to take the waltz in every direction with contrasting moods and emotional implications. While we might associate waltz form with happy moments of dance, in Ravel's hands it can become an expression of tragedy.

Despite Ravel's bow to Schubert, the first waltz marked *Modéré* is very much a modern statement and a brilliant opening to the set. Perhaps we should be reminded, however, that Schubert himself had a modern touch and, like Ravel, could be elusive in his musical intentions. The second, marked *Assez lent* (rather slow), is contemplative and even tender. While the third, marked again *Modéré*, has a similar tempo marking to the first, it is different in its cheerful and almost playful mood. The fourth waltz, marked *Animé* (animated), is an interesting moment that is at once modern and traditional in its musical effect. The fifth marked *Presque lent* (almost slowly) hints of the sadness suggested by the work's title. The brief sixth waltz, marked *Assez vif* (very lively), begins

lightheartedly but also turns powerful in the elusive way we associate with Ravel. The seventh waltz, with its marking *Moins vif* (less lively), becomes almost heroic before it turns gentle and leads to the slow but virtuosic *Epilogue* that pulls on our emotions as it concludes this remarkable work. Noble, sentimental, and brilliant it is.

Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante, Op. 22

Composed: 1831/1834

Approximate duration: 14 minutes

Frédéric Chopin

(1810-1849)



No other composer represents the Romantic piano tradition as quintessentially as Chopin. Still that does not tell the whole story, for within the exercise of Chopin's Romantic spirit lies a composer as concerned with form as feeling. Indeed he had his detractors in such wags as Oscar Wilde who said about him, "After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had

never committed and mourning over tragedies that were not my own." Yet Mendelssohn said of him: "I was glad to be once again with a thorough musician, not one of those half-virtuosos and half-classics who would like to combine in music the honors of virtue and the pleasures of vice." But perhaps the most telling quote in support of Chopin's musicianship comes from the composer himself in a letter to Delphine Potcka: "Bach is like an astronomer who, with the help of ciphers, finds the most wonderful stars... Beethoven embraced the universe with the power of his spirit... I do not climb so high. A long time ago I decided that my universe will be the soul and heart of man." Within that elusive universe, Chopin respected and practiced the great Baroque and Classical traditions handed down to him but lent to them his own vision and genius which operated in the filigree of Romanticism.

To his already existing *Grande Polonaise Brillante* of 1831, first written for piano and orchestra, Chopin added the *Andante Spianato*, composed for solo piano, in 1834. The combination was published in 1836 as *Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise, Op. 22*. While the orchestra part was dropped for this solo piece, the *Grande Polonaise* remains a work on its own in the concerto version. As suggested in the title, the *Andante Spianato* in G major serves as a moving introduction to the *Grande Polonaise* in E-flat major as the main body of the work. The term

spianato implies smoothness which aptly describes the section. The opening fanfare of the *Grande Polonaise* sets the stage for the virtuosic display it demands.

From 15 Improvisations

Valse Improvisation sur le nom de BACH

Composed: 1932-58

Approximate duration: 12 minutes

**Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)**



Although Poulenc was a member of the famous group of French composers known as Les Six (Poulenc, Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud, and Tailleferre), he transcended any collective musical thought and left his singular imprint. He is sometimes underestimated by those who hear only the charm of his music and not its originality and excellence. He was profoundly influenced by Mozart, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, and Erik Satie, but on

any ideas from those composers he left his own stamp. Scholarship often suggests that the sharp contrasts in his music—from the profane to the deeply spiritual—can be explained by the upbringing of his free-thinking artistic mother and conservative Catholic father, but there are many other factors in his life that shed light on his conflicts. Simply Paris in the 20s, 30s, and 40s says much about Poulenc.

Critic Claude Rostande's tagging of Poulenc as "half bad boy, half monk" is a telling comment on both Poulenc's life and his music. A Parisian by birth and instinct, he and his fellow members of Les Six collectively and separately pushed the edges of French music in the first half of the 20th century. Yet as Poulenc broke rules, he could also honor Classical form in a remarkable way. He was openly gay and a devout Catholic at the same time and suffered from inner struggles about the two. "You know that I am as sincere in my faith, without messianic screamings, as I am in my Parisian sexuality," he was quoted as saying.

Poulenc was self-critical of his own work which is difficult to understand since he composed such masterpieces as his opera *Dialogue of the Carmelites* and the wonderful *Fifteen Improvisations* that we hear on this program. From those *Improvisations*, Mark Markham has artfully chosen six that represent the variety and excellence of the set. As Poulenc himself chose to split the set between seven in minor keys and

eight in major keys, Markham offers us three in the minor mode (Nos. 1, 13, and 15) and three in the major mode (Nos. 7, 12, and 14). That in itself gives a taste of the variety Poulenc offered within the genius of the set composed between 1932 and 1958.

No. 1 in B Minor begins with a bang and gives us a moment of brilliant and challenging music. The melodic **No. 2 in A-flat Major** is a moment of pure Poulenc charm. **No. 7 in C Major** is lyrical and heart-warming but with powerful moments before a quiet ending. As stated, **No. 12 in E-flat Major** is an homage to Schubert. That becomes evident in Poulenc's use of repeated notes, a form that Schubert brought to the highest level of art. Poulenc gives us a happy moment in No. 12 but not without an underlying sense of the tragic that permeates the work of both Schubert and Poulenc. **No. 13 in A Minor** is both songful and contemplative with its powerful use of octave chords and a touching conclusion. **No. 14 in D-flat Major** is another cheerful moment but with serious Poulenc lurking beneath with its power and wide use of the keyboard. As indicated in its listing, **No. 15 in C Minor** is an homage to singer/songwriter Edith Piaf (1915-1963) who was an international icon of French salon music and famous for her rendition of "La Vie en Rose." Both in her singing and Poulenc's music there is a sense of love, loss, and sorrow. Both delicious and forbidding, this Improvisation seems to combine a sense of both classical and popular music without harming either form.

Mark Markham completes his treatment of Poulenc's improvisations with **Valse Improvisation sur le nom de BACH**, composed in 1932. Despite its bow to Bach, in it we hear a modern voice hinting of the music that would come in the later part of the 20th century. It offers a brilliant conclusion to these samples of Poulenc's use of improvisation. While the term *improvisation* implies a freedom of form, Poulenc's treatment of it, as indicated in this program, was done in a most carefully conceived way.

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Mark Markham will offer his comments on improvisations from The American Songbook.

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