

— FESTIVAL —
MOZAIQUE

**JOHN
NOVACEK**
Artist-in-Residence
OCT 18-20, 2024

**Notable Insight:
Romantic Generation**

Friday, October 18, 5:30 PM

Experimental Theater at the Harold
J. Miossi CPAC, Cuesta College

**John Novacek
in Recital**

Saturday, October 19, 2:00 PM

Patty Boyd Concert Hall,
Allan Hancock College

**Afternoon with
John Novacek**

Sunday, October 20, 5:00 PM

Libretto Jazz Club, Paso Robles



Mercedes-Benz
of SAN LUIS OBISPO

Official Auto

PROGRAM

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Kreisleriana, op. 16 (1838; rev. 1850)

Äußerst bewegt (Extremely animated)

Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch (Very heartfelt and not too fast)

*Sehr aufgereg*t (Very agitated)

Sehr langsam (Very slowly)

Sehr lebhaft (Very lively)

Sehr langsam (Very slowly)

Sehr rasch (Very fast)

Schnell und spielend (Quickly and playful)

BÉLA BARTÓK

Piano Sonata, BB 88, Sz. 80 (1926)

Allegro moderato

Sostenuto e pesante

Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Italian Concerto, BWV 971 (1735)

Allegro

Andante

Presto

FRANZ LISZT

Liebestraum No. 3, S. 541 (1850)

FRANZ LISZT

Rhapsodie espagnole (Folies d'Espagne et jota aragonesa),
S. 254 (1858)

Festival Mozaic Artist-in-Residence
generously underwritten by **Libbie Agran**

PROGRAM NOTES

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

Kreisleriana, op. 16 (1838; rev. 1850)

For nineteenth-century Germans, “Kreisler” was a meme. He was the fictional brainchild of author E. T. A. Hoffmann (who also wrote the story underlying *The Nutcracker* ballet). Hoffmann portrayed Johannes Kreisler as a volatile musician with wild mood swings, representing a parody of hyperbolic Romantic musicians (but perhaps even serving as an alter-ego for Hoffmann himself).

Robert Schumann—a quintessential model of a Romantic composer—was immediately drawn to the meteoric Kreisler, seeing him as a kindred spirit. Schumann also produced music journalism, writing essays and reviews for his self-produced music newspaper. He adopted different pseudonyms and wrote in varied prose styles: “Florestan” was fiery and impetuous; “Eusebius” was dreamy and reserved. He displayed a similar variety of styles in *Kreisleriana*, a cycle of eight character pieces. They run the gamut of moods: “very agitated,” “very slowly,” “fast and playful,” and so forth. *Kreisleriana* is an emotional roller-coaster, which Schumann later named as his favorite work.

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Piano Sonata, BB 88, Sz. 80 (1926)

The Industrial Revolution changed lives and often changed music as well. Béla Bartók was among those who realized that folk traditions were disappearing as people left their villages to take up more profitable factory jobs in the cities. He was one of the pioneering ethnomusicologists who traveled the central European countryside, recording folk songs and dances so they would not be completely forgotten. These traditional tunes soon affected his own music; he rarely quoted them exactly, but their rhythms and harmonies influenced his compositions.

A case in point is the Piano Sonata, written in 1926 as Bartók was preparing to tour internationally as a concert pianist. Its three movements reflect various Hungarian traditions: the march-like opening evokes the *verbunkos* music played by nineteenth-century military recruiters; the slow movement is stark and almost anguished, similar to a poignant folk tune. Although the drive of the finale is almost relentless, Bartók intersperses multiple allusions to the traditional rural music of his homeland.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Italian Concerto, BWV 971 (1735)

For a man who never traveled more than two hundred miles from home, Johann Sebastian Bach knew a lot about the music of other nations. He was also a zealous teacher, composing pedagogical works in all sorts of genres. One of his many ambitious projects was the four-volume *Clavier-Übung* (“Keyboard Exercise”), published during the fifteen years between 1726 and 1741. The second volume, printed in 1735, contained two pieces: an “Overture in the French Style” as well as a *Concerto nach italienischem Gusto* (“Concerto in the Italian Taste”).

This “Italian Concerto” is Bach’s keyboard version of a genre normally performed by a solo instrument and an orchestra. Writing for a harpsichord with two manuals (keyboards), Bach could replicate the effect of a soloist and ensemble by using one or both keyboards (since a harpsichord had no true way of controlling volume). Since a piano *can* play contrasting volumes, the Italian Concerto is very effective on this more modern instrument.

FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)

Liebesträume No. 3, S. 541 (1850)

If you were a person of even modest means in the nineteenth century, you were likely to have a piano in your house. Many composers—including Franz Liszt—wrote music that capitalized on the instrument’s virtuosic capabilities, but they were also acutely aware of the market for pieces that could be played “at home.” Small-scale works such as Lieder (German art songs) for a solo singer and pianist were well-suited for domestic performance. Liszt was quick to jump onto this trend, and in 1843, he set a poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath: “O lieb, so lang du lieben kansst!” (“Love for as long as you can!”). Liszt published the Lied with two others in 1850, calling them *Liebesträume*.

Even as the songs were being printed, however, Liszt expanded their artistic potential as solo piano works for the concert hall. He subtitled his revised version of *Liebesträume* as “Three Nocturnes for the Pianoforte,” and the lovely No. 3 is particularly celebrated.

Rhapsodie espagnole (Folies d’Espagne et jota aragonesa), S. 254 (1858)

Any experienced jazz musician knows “by heart” certain patterns that are the foundation of thousands of pieces: the twelve-bar blues, the “Rhythm” changes, and so forth. Art-music composers have also frequently adopted musical formulas as the underpinning for new works. Therefore, when Franz Liszt toured Spain and Portugal in 1845, his ear picked up on the “stock” musical patterns he encountered, some of which had been used for centuries.

Two of those patterns found their way into Liszt’s *Rhapsodie espagnole* (“Spanish Rhapsody”). The first was the “folia,” a fifteenth-century dance from Portugal, which originally was so fast that the dancers seemed “out of their minds.” It had slowed considerably by the nineteenth century, when Liszt used it as the basis for variations during the *Rhapsodie*. His second borrowed source was another fiery dance, the “jota,” from the Aragón region of Spain. Liszt’s treatment of these materials ranges from playful delicacy to powerful brilliance, giving the pianist (and listeners) a thorough workout by the end.