

NICHOLAS ROERICH MUSEUM

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Mark Valentí *pianist*

Four Piano Blues

Freely poetic (1947)
Soft and languid (1934)
Muted and sensuous (1948)
With bounce (1926)

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Three Sonatas (c. 1735)

E major Andante Comodo
F minor Andante Cantabile
C major Allegro

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)

Sonata no. 5, op. 53 (1907)
in one movement

Alexander Scriabin
(1872-1915)

Estampes (Prints) (1903)

Pagodes (Pagodas)
Soiree dans Granade (Evening in Granada)
Jardins sous la pluie (Gardens in the rain)

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)



PROGRAM NOTES

Although trained in Europe, Aaron Copland developed a voice that was truly American. In his attempt to forge a national style, Copland's *Four Piano Blues* utilize moods and inflections (lowered 3rd's and 7th's) reminiscent of the blues from the southern plantations. *Freely poetic* is a doleful lament while *Soft and languid* has a lilting, drooping quality. The harmony coloring the contemplative *Muted and sensuous* and the hopping rhythm energizing *With bounce* are Aaron Copland's hallmark.

The son of one of the most prolific opera composers, Domenico Scarlatti was one of the most prolific harpsichord composers with an output of over 500 sonatas for keyboard. These sonatas embody the grace and elegance associated with the Baroque and Rococo. Fanfares fill the 1st and 3rd sonatas presented here while the second shows Scarlatti's lyricism perhaps inherited from his father.

Of his 10 piano sonatas, Alexander Scriabin's *Sonata no. 5* remains a favorite amongst pianists and audiences alike. With highly contrasting themes, this sonata commences with a tumultuous introduction followed by a languid theme which segues to the principal theme, a presto toccata. The 2nd theme is one of pure lyrical romanticism. More toccata material leads to an ardent, impassioned closing theme. With each theme fully developed, and no shortage of Scriabin's famous 'mystic chord', this sonata is abounding with ecstatic urgency and ethereal mysticism.

In *Estampes*, Claude Debussy evokes three locales - Asia, Spain and France. The sonorities of the Orient heard in *Pagodes* were inspired by the Javanese gamelans (percussion orchestras of southeast Asia) heard by Debussy at the Paris World's Fair. The Spanish composer Manuel de Falla commented on *La soirée dans Grenade* that "although not one bar of this work is borrowed from Spanish folk song, the entire composition, in its most minute details, admirably conveys the character of Spain." Debussy returns to his French homeland in *Jardins sous la pluie*. Two French nursery rhymes are incorporated in this toccata which was apparently motivated by a sojourn in Normandy one rainy spring day.

-M.V

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Mark Valenti received his Master of Music from Northwestern University, Bachelor of Music from the Philadelphia Musical Academy and has studied with such notable teachers as Benjamin Whitten, Zoltan Kocsis and Mary Sauer. In addition to giving solo recitals in cities throughout the U.S., Mr. Valenti has performed in France, Belgium, Hungary and Luxembourg as well as for former First Lady Barbara Bush in Washington, D.C.

Mark Valenti has performed in recital live on WFMT classical radio. He has also done extensive work in the Jazz field including performances with Gregory Hines, Frank Foster and Al Grey and has appeared on television with Joe Sudler's Swing Machine and singer/actor Christopher Durham.

Formerly Professor of Music at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Xavier University in Chicago and the Loire Valley Music Institute in France, Mr. Valenti currently teaches at his studio in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago and is available for lessons for all levels and all styles.



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