ARIEL LANYI, piano
Winner, 2021 Concert Artists Guild Competition

Program I: Mountain Song

Haydn: Sonata in G major, Hob.XVI:39 **OR**
Beethoven: Sonata no. 24 in F-sharp major, Op. 78 "à Thérèse"
Grieg: Ballade in G minor, Op. 24
Medtner: Sonata-Idyll, Op. 56 **OR**
Bartók: Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs, Op. 20
-Intermission-
Schubert: Sonata in A minor, D. 845

This program presents somewhat overlooked works by these great composers, which often carry hints to their iconic works. Why is it that they are overlooked? Perhaps because they don’t quite match our expectations from the composers. When we hear the tender and amiable à Thérèse sonata, we don’t hear the Beethoven of the fifth symphony. Likewise, when we hear the stormy and fervent A minor Schubert sonata, we are confronted by raw and bare tragedy, rather than the melancholic bittersweetness of the Schubert we are used to.

Program II: Overgrown Paths

Beethoven: Sonata no. 2 in A major, Op. 2/2 **OR**
Haydn: Sonata in G major, Hob.XVI:39 **and**
Beethoven: Sonata no. 24 in F-sharp major, Op. 78 "à Thérèse"
Janáček: On an Overgrown Path, Book II
-Intermission-
This program revolves around composers looking forwards and backwards with interest and affection. The Haydn and Beethoven sonatas both hark back to a not-too-distant past: the Haydn G major sonata to the daredevil and provocative keyboard writing of Baroque composers such as Scarlatti, and both Beethoven sonatas to the grazioso style of the comic operas Beethoven’s youthful ears were immersed in. Janáček’s On an Overgrown Path was written at a time when the late-Romantic music audiences heard was ever more sumptuous and indulgent. Instead, he turned away from that particular frenzy in favor of a much more simplistic style, sometimes invoking memories of folk-themed music written by earlier composers, and at other times predicting the modernist style which was about to emerge. The pianistic writing of Schumann’s youthful Symphonic Etudes is somewhat untypical of the composer, and is often more reminiscent of Liszt than of Schumann. Besides its fiendish virtuosity, it seems to complement the piano’s characteristics (and limitations), rather than go against them, as we sometimes hear in Schumann.