



SIEGFRIED IDYLL  
DAVID DEVEAU, PIANO



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# DAVID DEVEAU

David Deveau has performed around the world as soloist with orchestra, recitalist and in chamber music. Among the major symphony orchestras with which he has appeared are those of Boston, San Francisco, Minnesota, Pittsburgh, Houston, St. Louis, Miami, Toulouse and Qingdao. He has appeared in New York at Tully, Merkin, Weill and Town Halls, and at festivals ranging from Tanglewood to Wolf Trap, Seattle and Mainly Mozart. He has served as Artistic Director of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival (MA) since 1995. Internationally, Deveau has performed in the U.K., France, Germany, China, Taiwan and Japan. He makes his home in Boston where he serves on the music faculty of MIT.

The lives of the three titans represented on this disc were, to greater and lesser degrees, interconnected. Liszt and Wagner were virtually aesthetic 'brothers' born in 1811 and 1813 respectively, championing their "music of the future", with its ever-more-daring harmony, orchestration and thematic transformation techniques. Brahms, born in 1833, is often called the Romantic Classicist. The most conservative of the three, he preferred to compose in established forms (symphonies, sonatas, variations). Their lives and careers intersected in the second half of the 19th century, sometimes in unexpected ways.

In 1848, revolutions swept Europe. Among the democratic socialists leading ad hoc uprisings was the 35 year-old Wagner, who, because of his rabble-rousing found a price placed on his head in Germany. He fled to Switzerland where he remained for 15 years. Liszt's *Funérailles* (1849) is a musical monument to those killed in these revolutions, and contains pathos, sounds of advancing armies, and music of great tenderness and beauty.

Fast forward 21 years. By 1870, 57 year-old Wagner was just married to 33 year-old Cosima, daughter of Liszt and former wife of Liszt's greatest student, Hans von Bulow. (von Bulow had led the world premieres of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* while Cosima was openly carrying on with Wagner. Liszt was understandably outraged and was estranged from the couple for several years.) Cosima bore Wagner his only son, Siegfried, near Lucerne in 1869, and Wagner's joy is felt in the beautiful *Siegfried Idyll*, composed initially for 13 players and first played as a birthday surprise for Cosima. One of Wagner's musical assistants and disciples, Josef Rubinstein (no relation to Anton, Nicholas or Artur) made several alternate versions

of the *Idyll*, including piano duet, piano and string quintet, and one for solo piano, heard here. (Rubinstein was so distraught after Wagner's death that he returned to the site of their first meeting in Lucerne to commit suicide.)

And Brahms? He was already lionized internationally as the heir to Beethoven, a great pianist and composer of many symphonic and chamber masterpieces, concerti and sonatas. He also contributed to the rich body of miniature, short works for the piano. The seven works performed here are a representative sampling, and display a remarkable range of expression. Brahms had no use for the *longeurs* of Wagnerian opera, or for the literary-inspired symphonic poems of Liszt. (Indeed, it is said that Brahms fell asleep during a private performance Liszt gave of his B-minor Sonata.) And though Wagner and Brahms had nary a kind word about each other's music, Wagner did comment, after hearing Brahms play his Variations on a theme of Handel, Op. 24, "new things can still be done with the old forms." These pieces date from Brahms's mature years, the 1870s to the 1890s.

So why should Liszt's two short pieces from 1881 and '83 end the program? Because they are futuristic in harmony (*Nuages gris* approaching the atonal), and because in the end, Liszt reestablished relations with his daughter and Wagner. Upon Wagner's death in 1883, Liszt wrote this musical epitaph. It concludes very simply, quoting a theme from *Parsifal*, premiered the previous summer at Bayreuth – where Liszt himself would die in 1886.

– David Deveau

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## DAVID DEVEAU, PIANO

### Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

- 1 Funérailles, S 173 No. 7 11:24

### Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

- 2 Siegfried Idyll 19:31  
Arr. Josef Rubinstein

### Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

- 3 Capriccio in B minor, Op. 76 No. 2 3:41  
4 Capriccio in C-sharp minor, Op. 76 No. 5 3:45  
5 Intermezzo in E-flat major, Op. 117 No. 1 5:06  
6 Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 118 No. 1 2:08  
7 Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118 No. 2 6:15  
8 Intermezzo in E-flat minor, Op. 118 No. 6 5:32  
9 Intermezzo in C major, Op. 119 No. 3 1:45

### Franz Liszt

- 10 Nuages gris, S 199 3:04  
11 Am Grabe Richard Wagners, S 202 2:52

Playing Time 65:05



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