Thank You

Mrs. Clarfield: How perfect a pairing we have been for the past four years. Through many laughs and a few tears I finally made it, and could not have done it with out your guidance and faith in my abilities. It is truly a blessing to have had a teacher who nurtures my eccentricities (and I have quite a few…) into something with which I can create beautiful music. I will miss you so much!

Mom and Dad: This concert is for you. I am so blessed to have been supported in whatever (varied and bizarre) music endeavors I have attempted to undertake. Who could've guessed where it would lead me, but none of it would have been possible without your constant love. I love you!

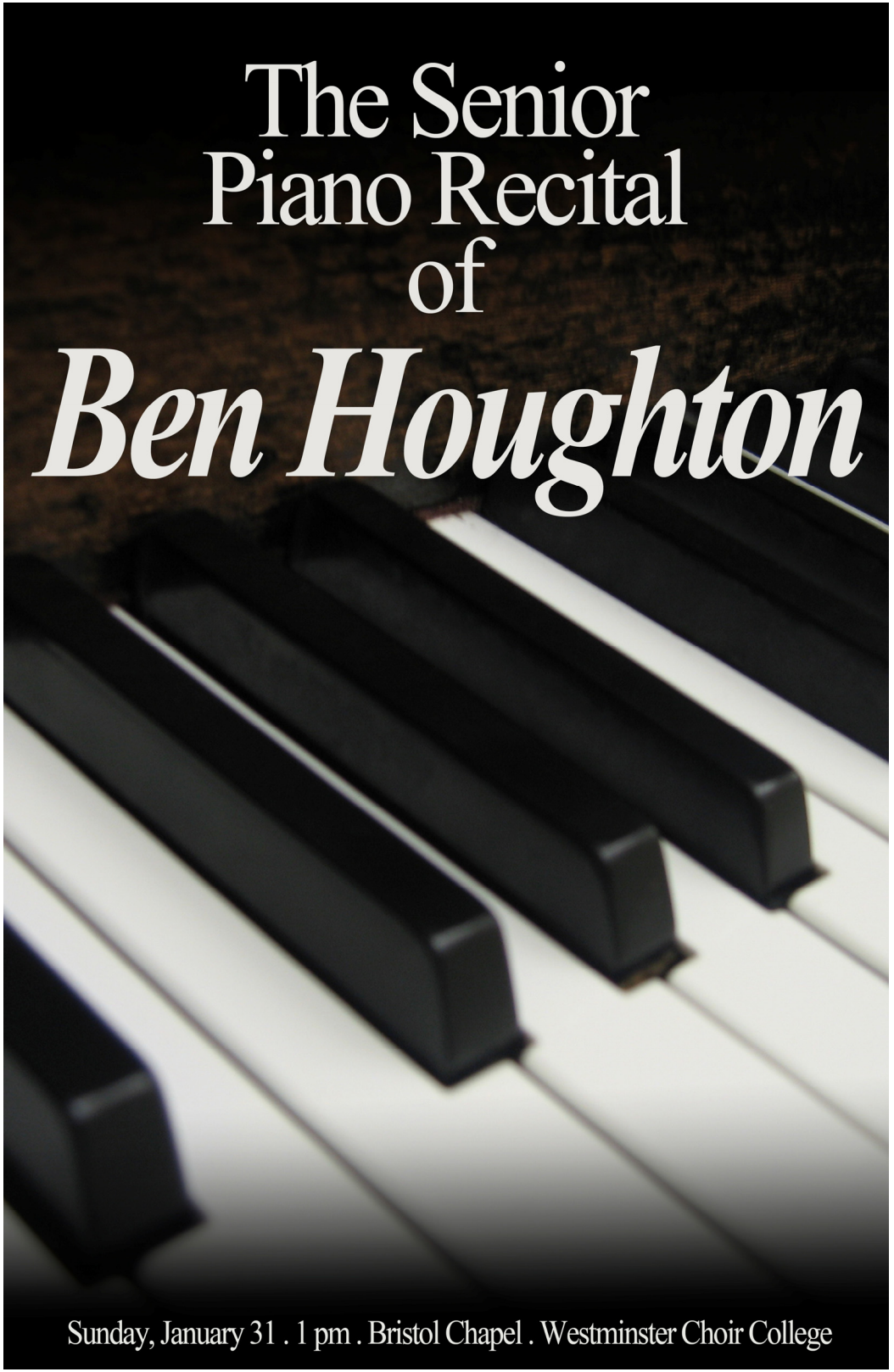
Nathan, Aaron, Lay Lay: I'm sorry I was so annoying and wouldn't ever stop practicing, but it could've been worse. I could've played the trumpet or violin or something obnoxious like that.

The Clarfield Studio: You guys are the best! I have had so much fun laughing with all y'all in studio class, and maybe playing the piano sometimes, too. I will miss all of you and wish you well in the future.

Rebecca and Anthony: You two have been awesome friends to have and helped these past years go by a little less painfully. I am so grateful to all the help you have given me throughout the years, and the fun and crazy experiences we have shared.

Leah: You are hilarious. Thank you so much for adding your talents to my recital. Lets go graduate already!

My friends: I have learned so much from each and every one of you. I am so blessed to know so many inspiring and talented people who make the life I was meant to lead so enjoyable.



The Senior Piano Recital of

Ben Houghton

Sunday, January 31 . 1 pm . Bristol Chapel . Westminster Choir College

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Sonata in a minor K. 310 — W. A. Mozart (1756-91)

I. Allegro Maestoso

II. Andante cantabile con espressione

III. Presto

Liebestraume No. 3 — F. Liszt (1811-86)

The Garden of Eden — W. Bolcom (b.1938)

III. The Serpent's Kiss (A Rag-Fantasy)

INTERMISSION

Goldberg Variations, BWV 988 — J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Aria

Variation I

Variation II

Variation XVI Ouverture

Sonata in c# minor: Op. 27, No. 2 "Quasi una fantasia" — L. Beethoven (1770-1827)

I. Adagio Sostenuto

Rhapsody in Blue — G. Gershwin (1898-1937)

Anthony Baron, orchestral reduction

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of a B.M. in Piano.

Ben Houghton is a student of Ingrid Clarfield.

Cover and program design by Alyssa Brode

Beethoven's Op. 27, No. 2 is more commonly known as the "Moonlight" sonata. But I think of it more as a "Peanuts" sonata.

A great American composer of both classical and popular music, **George Gershwin** was born Jacob Gershowitz in Brooklyn on September 26, 1898. After showing an interest in music around age ten, his parents bought him and his older brother, Ira, a piano. George was the brother who excelled on the piano under the instruction of Charles Hambitzer until 1918, where he studied classic European forms. However, when he was fifteen he left school to work on Tin-Pan Alley as a song-plugger. His first big hit was *Swanee* in 1919, which gained him national recognition and a job working as a composer and arranger for the Aeolian Company and Standard Music Rolls. He went on to compose several musicals with his older brother as lyricist. Their first collaboration, *Lady Be Good*, was written in 1924, the same year George wrote his famous piano concerto **Rhapsody in Blue**. Surprisingly enough, it was his first major classical composition. It remains one of his most popular classical pieces today due to the infusion of jazz and ragtime rhythms and harmonies into a symphonic context. The piece begins with the signature clarinet solo which, following an extended trill on the dominant, glissandos up to state the main theme. This theme is then repeated in a series of exciting and unique variations played by different combinations of instruments and solo piano to create various moods: jocular, frantic, sarcastic, even mournful. Sometimes the orchestra accompanies the piano, while at other times it appears that the piano is doing the accompanying. After several cadenzas and virtuosic solo sections, the piece finally calms down into a beautiful contrasting theme in E major, a tritone away from the original key, Bb major. This second theme is also treated with a variation technique that abruptly returns to the most frantic and virtuosic variation of all, speeding up and modulating to a grand finale and bombastic statement of the theme, one final time, before returning to the home key and a fantastic finish.

school in Luneburg, where he furthered his musical education. After graduation, Bach worked for seven months as a court musician for Duke Johann Ernst in Weimar. During this time his reputation grew and he was given the position of the organist at St. Boniface's Church in Arnstadt. In 1706, Bach left for a more beneficial position at St. Blasius's in Muhlhausen. Here he met his first wife, Maria Barbara with whom he eventually had seven children. After only a year, Bach left to work in the court at Weimar, where he stayed until 1723 composing many keyboard and orchestral works. During this time, his wife passed and he remarried Anna Magdelena and had thirteen more children. In 1723 he was appointed at St. Thomas's Lutheran church, where he stayed as Director of Music until his death in 1750. During this time he published his famed **Goldberg Variations.**

The Goldberg Variations, published in 1744, are a part of the fourth series of his *Klavier-Ubung*, or keyboard exercises. It consists of an Aria followed by thirty variations on that theme. An early biographer of Bach, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, tells the story of how the variations got their name: "We have to thank the instigation of the former Russian ambassador to the electoral court of Saxony, Count Kaiserling, who often stopped in Leipzig and brought there with him the aforementioned Goldberg, in order to have him given musical instruction by Bach. The Count was often ill and had sleepless nights. At such times, Goldberg, who lived in his house, had to spend the night in an antechamber, so as to play for him during his insomnia. Once the Count mentioned in Bach's presence that he would like to have some clavier pieces for Goldberg, which should be of such a smooth and somewhat lively character that he might be a little cheered up by them in his sleepless nights. Bach thought himself best able to fulfill this wish by means of Variations, the writing of which he had until then considered an ungrateful task on account of the repeatedly similar harmonic foundation. But since at this time all his works were already models of art, such also these variations became under his hand. Yet he produced only a single work of this kind. Thereafter the Count always called them *his* variations. He never tired of them, and for a long time sleepless nights meant: 'Dear Goldberg, do play me one of my variations.' Bach was perhaps never so rewarded for one of his works as for this. The Count presented him with a golden goblet filled with 100 louis-d'or. Nevertheless, even had the gift been a thousand times larger, their artistic value would not yet have been paid for."

The beautiful and simplistic aria is a Sarabande with a gentle counterpoint and ornamented melody in two even repeated sections of sixteen measures. The bass line and harmonic structure of the aria is used in each of the following variations. Every third variation functions as a canon, with changing intervals of variation. The third is at a unison, the sixth, a second, the ninth, a third, etc. The final variation is a quodlibet, or a combination of two popular songs in counterpoint. The first variation is in start contrast to the slow and mellow aria, beginning with a sharp mordent in the right hand echoed in the left hand followed by running passages of contrapuntal sixteenth notes. Hand crossing and syncopations make this variation lively and exciting. The second variation is much slower and functions as a two-voice contrapuntal exchange with voice crossings over a steady bass line. The sixteenth variation functions as a French Overture due to its chordal and arpeggiated opening in a slow simple meter, followed by a quicker compound meter with four-voice counterpoint.

PROGRAM NOTES:

Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart, born January 27, 1756, is know as one of the most prolific and brilliant composers of the Classical era. His works, ranging from solo piano works to opera to symphonies to concertos to choral works, more than 600 in total, were all composed in his brief life of thirty-five years. Recognized at a young age as prodigious, his musical genius was nurtured by his father, Leopold, an established teacher and court musician to the Archbishop of Salzburg, and Wolfgang began excelling at performance and composition even by the age of five. He and his sister, Nannerl, toured throughout Europe, playing in Munich, Paris, London, and other important cities by invitation of royalty. In 1773, Mozart was employed as a court musician in Salzburg. Here he was allowed to experiment compositionally and began composing his violin and piano concertos, early operas, and piano sonatas. In 1777, Mozart left the court of Salzburg, discontented with the lack of opportunity to perform his operas.

It was during this period away from Salzburg, while in Paris, that he composed his **Piano Sonata in a minor, K. 310**. Of all the piano sonatas written by Mozart, only two, K. 310 and K. 457, are written in minor keys. The minor key, coupled with the recent death of his mother, distinguishes this piece as one of his darkest sonatas. The first movement begins traditionally with the main theme in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. However, instead of an Alberti bass, he uses blocked chords to create a much more aggressive and bold feel to the opening. The piece also incorporates aspects of a Turkish Janissary band, or military marching band, a reflection of the fear felt by western Europeans of the constant threat and mystery of the Eastern cultures. Janissary bands included instruments such as the fife, bass drum, cymbals, and Turkish crescent (large stick with bells on the top played by banging the bass of the stick on the ground.) Throughout the first movement, the percussive rhythms and articulations and the quick, high, piercing melodies mimic these instruments. A percussive and resolute statement of three V/III chords signal the end of the first theme and transition traditionally into the second key area of C major. In this lighter theme, the fife is a more prominent presence and the drums lighten up, but are still present in the left hand figures. The exposition ends with sound of horns cadencing in C major with, again, three percussive chords. The development doesn't stray too far melodically, keeping to closely related key areas, but stirs up the intensity with constant running sixteenth notes and a murky bass line that further darkens up the piece. The recapitulation returns after a chromatic scale leading up to the main theme, which is recalled alternating in both the right and left hands. The three percussive chords signal the end of the recall and the start of the rhyme, which is in the home key of a minor, a traditional move. The rhyme of the recapitulation is slightly longer, due to the interruptions by ascending and descending arpeggiated diminished chords, leading to a final call of the horns to end the first movement.

The second movement, marked *Andante cantabile con espressione*, is in stark contrast to what has come before it. The slow and peaceful feel of a Sarabande, use of Alberti bass, lyrical melody and the key of F major give the piece a pastoral and peaceful feel. Instead of a Janissary band, this movement has more of a string quartet impression. Only in the B section of the ternary form do we see the

darkness creep back into the piece. The left hand accompaniment becomes blocked and murky, the harmonic structure twists and turns, including a visit to the minor dominant, and the texture becomes harsh and percussive again before relaxing into a return to the pastoral A section.

The third movement, marked *Presto*, closes out the sonata with a dark, yet frantic feeling. The short, clipped melodic lines, uneven phrase structure, and dotted rhythms that pervade the piece give it an uneasy and restless mood. One measure may be marked forte, while the next is pianissimo; the melody may be in the right hand for the beginning of the phrase, but then abruptly switches to the left hand. Large jumps in the right and left hand make the piece a challenge to the performer and listener to follow the frantic melodic line. The middle section of the piece is almost mockingly simple. In the parallel key of A major, the stress lifts as the melody becomes smoother, the left hand settles into simple Alberti pattern, and the phrase structure is in even groupings of eight measures. In two parts, the B section could stand alone as its own rounded binary piece. Perhaps it is a glance back on simpler times, before the turmoil and tragedy of life had entered and darkened everything. This brief journey to the past ends just as abruptly as it came and returns back to the frantic chase of the A section. The piece ends with a return of the percussive 3-note motive from the first movement.

Hungarian **Franz Liszt**, born October 22, 1811, was one of the greatest composers and virtuosic piano players of the nineteenth century. His famed virtuosic talents made one of the most popular concert pianists of his time and make his compositions extremely technical and challenging, as they were suited for someone of his technical ability. His legacy as a performer is matched by the influences of his compositional innovations in chromatic harmony, extensions of thematic transformation, and the creation of new musical forms, such as the symphonic poem. He came from a long legacy of musicians: both his grandfather and father had been employed by the Esterhazy's, a previous employer of Josef Hydan. Enraptured at an early age by the piano, he began receiving lessons at the age of seven, and concertizing by the time he was nine. Liszt moved to Vienna and studied with Carl Czerny, a student of Beethoven. After the death of his father he moved to Paris with his mother and made a living giving piano and composition lessons. During this time, he came in contact with many of the great Romantic thinkers of the day including Hugo, Chopin, Heine, and Berlioz, each of whom had a tremendous effect upon him. The most influential, however, was the great violin virtuoso, Niccolo Paganini, who inspired Liszt to become just as great on the piano. As his technique grew and his concertizing became more popular, Liszt became a superstar across Europe with women swooning over him and his possessions became prized. He became very wealthy and began donating the proceeds of his concerts to charity.

One his students, Valerie Boissier, is quoted saying: "M. Liszt's playing contains abandonment, a liberated feeling, but even when it becomes impetuous and energetic in his fortissimo, it is still without harshness and dryness. He draws from the piano tones that are purer, mellower and stronger than anyone has been able to do; his touch has an indescribable charm. He is the enemy of affected, stilted, contorted expressions. Most of all, he wants truth in musical sentiment, and so he makes a psychological study of his emotions to convey them as they are. Thus, a strong expression is often followed by a sense of fatigue and dejection, a kind of coldness, because this is the way nature works." This quote describes the sentiments expressed in the third of his **Leibestraume**. Translated as *Dreams of Love*, his third, and most famous of the set, is derived from the poem "*O leib, so lang du leiben kannst"* by poet Ferdinand Freiligrath. Written on the score are the first stanzas of the poem, translated as:

O love, so long as you can!
O love, so long as you may!
The time comes, the time comes,
Where you'll cry and weep on their graves!

In strophic form, the piece begins with a statement of the theme in Ab major and a simple outline of the harmonic accompaniment. As the first stanza comes to a close, Liszt adds a virtuosic flourish to lead into the second stanza, an augmented third higher. Building with more and more passion, Liszt adds another interlude to lead into the third stanza in E major. This is the "impetuous and energetic fortissimo without harshness and dryness," spoken of by Boissier, that, after a beautiful cadenza leads to the fourth and final stanza back to Ab major. This final stanza does have "a sense of fatigue and dejection, a kind of coldness" that symbolizes the end of love "where you'll cry and weep on their graves!"

Born in the United States on May 26, 1938, **William Bolcom** has had a successful career as a composer and pianist, earning two Grammy Awards, the Pulizter Prize in 1988, and the National Medal for the Arts in 2006. He taught composition at the University of Michigan from 1973-2008, and during that time was named composer of the year for 2007. He frequently concertizes with his own piano compositions and songs, written for his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. Together they have recorded 20 albums. His suite, The Garden of Eden, is a collection of descriptive works depicting scenes from the Biblical creation myth. The third movement, **The Serpent's Kiss,** is a post-modern comment on the early twentieth century style of piano playing called Ragtime. The characteristics, such as a steady bass under a syncopated right hand, are evident in the composition, but amidst the ragtime features are twentieth century harmonies, off-kilter rhythms, unique meters, and bizarre contrasting sections. In addition to having the pianist play the piano, nontraditional techniques are used, such as stomping, tap dancing, and whistling. The combination of all of these aspects makes the piece very difficult to coordinate, but it is a crowd pleaser and an exciting piece to watch.

Baroque genius **J.S. Bach** was born on March 31, 1685 in Eisenach, Saxe-Eisenach (modern day Germany). A master of the art of counterpoint and one of the best organists in Europe, Bach worked as a church musician composing tremendous amounts of sacred and secular works for keyboard, orchestra, solo instruments, and voices. Orphaned at age ten, he moved in with his older brother Johann Christoph, a church organist, where he copied, studied and performed music with aid from his brother. At the age of fourteen he studied at St. Michael's