VCU DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
JUNIOR RECITAL

INTO THE LIGHT
Lisa Niemeier, piano

Friday, August 27, 5:00 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall  |  W. E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts
Live Stream Only Event: go.vcu.edu/concerthall

Andante and Variations in f minor, HOB XVII:6                Franz Joseph Haydn
1732-1809

Mélancolie FP 105                                            Francis Poulenc
1899-1963

Étude, Op. 25, No. 12                                          Frédéric Chopin
1810-1849

Widmung (Liebeslied)                                          Robert Schumann/Franz Liszt Transcription
1810-1856  1811-1886

This recital is in honor of the journey we have traveled together over the past year. It is infused with hope and pathways toward better days.

I would like to thank all of my wonderful professors at VCU, especially Dr. Yin Zheng, whose patience, support, and encouragement have been defining factors.

This junior recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance.
Program Notes

Andante and Variations in f minor

This is an unusually serious piece for Haydn, not at all what one would normally expect to hear. It was written in 1793 in tribute to a dear friend of Haydn’s who had recently died. It was described by the late British composer and pianist John McCabe as Haydn’s “most extended and most resourceful such work for the keyboard.” McCabe wrote this in a booklet found with his boxed set of recordings of Haydn’s compete solo keyboard music.

What this piece means to me: It is often when a person dies that we ask ourselves, ‘what does life really mean?’ It is a question we also ask ourselves at various stages of life. It’s as if we expect someone else to give us the answer. Haydn’s set of variations asks this question three times. The theme asks it first; the first variation asks it more insistently; then the second variation meanders and seems absolutely lost – to the point of exasperation. Then Haydn returns to the simplicity of the first asking, ultimately answering with the tolling of the bells that we alone can answer that question...from within our own souls.

Melancolie

Written in 1940 as the Germans began the occupation of France, Poulenc expresses much of what we have felt over the past year and a half, battling a seemingly unconquerable virus. First, there is the realization that we are at the beginning of what may be a very long and disconcerting time. Then in the B section, desperation and bewilderment is mixed alternatively with thoughts that we will conquer, that if we just have the will and use everything in our power, we will survive. After an angry shout followed by a sigh of resignation, a whirling dervish type of transformation occurs and we see that not only will we survive, there is every indication we will thrive and peace descends upon us.

Étude Op. 25 No. 12 “Ocean”

Published in 1837, this is last of Chopin’s formal studies for the piano. When I play this, I picture the ocean, my place of catharsis, of cleansing, of rejuvenation, of confidence and out and out majesty. The ocean feeds my soul as no other thing of nature possibly can. I hope you will hear what the ocean means to me personally as I play this piece.

Widmung

Franz Liszt was a huge fan of Robert Schumann, especially of his songs. This song was written by Schumann to his wife Clara Wieck Schumann (who was an amazing and unsung composer and pianist in her own right) as a love song upon their marriage. Liszt transcribed the song for piano as only Liszt could. It is a passionate expression of a beautiful love story.