

Tim Min

ARCT Piano Graduation Recital

7PM on July 5th, 2015

Introduction

Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV 846 (Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I) — J.S. Bach

This selection is definitely most famous for its prelude, whose harmony serves as the accompaniment for Charles Gounod's arrangement of Ave Maria. The fugue, on the other hand, is infamous among piano students everywhere for its abundance of strettos, or early entrances, of the main theme.

Ballade (slave), L 70 — C. Debussy

The original title of the piece, Ballade slave, was changed to just Ballade in later editions. However, the Russian ("Slavic") influences of this early Debussy work are very apparent. Indeed, he was the house pianist for arts patron Nadezhda von Meck. Travelling in Russia with the von Meck family (including one daughter that Debussy fancied), he perhaps left in search of love and came back having found himself.

Ballade in D Minor ("Edward"), Op. 10 No. 1 — J. Brahms

Based on the classic Scottish murder ballad Edward, this selection features expansive chords to evoke the mythical feeling of the piece. The plot? A mother questions her son about the blood on his hands; the son admits to killing his father, and in a twist reveals it was the mother who commanded him. The opening theme matches the source material, "Why does your brand so drop with blood, Edward, Edward?"

Étude in D Minor, Op. 72 No. 9 — M. Moszkowski

The opening triumphant octaves of this piece do little to bring out the range of characters contained within the piece. From light-hearted to downright demonic, the only thing that can be expected is the constant ever-moving triplets that drive the piece forward.

Étude in G flat Major ("Black Keys"), Op. 10 No. 5 — F. Chopin

As the nickname suggests, the melody of the famous right hand part is played entirely on black keys, with a single white key played in bar 66 by the right hand in a cadence. Funnily enough, 185 years has not been enough for a "correct" interpretation to be agreed upon, a feat for a piece of this popularity. What pianists do agree is that a good interpretation will put the audience at the edge of its seat, if not dancing.

Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp Minor, Op. 66 — F. Chopin

To think that such an enduring classic was meant to be cast into a fire and destroyed! Julian Fontana salvaged many earlier sketches after Chopin passed away and with them published Chopin's first posthumous work. Although pianist Arthur Rubinstein sensationally uncovered a later version of this piece, the Fontana version still remains the most popular and most studied one. The performance tonight will see many alterations (especially in the middle section) based on both pre-existing ideas as well as original ones.

Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90 — L. v. Beethoven

I: *Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck* (With liveliness and with feeling and expression throughout)
II: *Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen* (Not too swiftly and conveyed in a singing manner)

Unlike a typical sonata, which contain three or four movements, this sonata has only two movements but with completely polar characters. The names of the movements themselves serve as suitable description for what is to come. The first movement, in E minor, hints at a story of a Prince debating whether or not to court a young Viennese dancer; the second, in the tonic major of E major, features a sweeping melody that is passionate yet gentle, mature yet innocent. It is no surprise that this popular sonata is affectionately called the "Love" Sonata.

Danzas Argentinas, Op. 2 — A. Ginastera

I: *Danza del viejo boyero* ("Dance of the Old Herdsman")
II: *Danza de la moza donosa* ("Dance of the Beautiful Maiden")
III: *Danza del gaucho matrero* ("Dance of the Arrogant Cowboy")

The Argentine folk dance influences in this work make for three spectacular short dances, all which represent a character in the charming, dreamlike countryside of Argentina. The first dance, a charming and nostalgic memory of years gone by, is characterized by one hand on white keys and the other on black keys. The second dance, flowing and moving with rich harmonies, has a lamenting and pensive voice that begs to be heard. The third dance, a lively and raw finale, switches from style to style and proudly admits it is anything but modest.

Concluding Remarks