

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

PIANO RECITALS FEATURING SOLO AND CONCERTO WORKS BY:
BACH, BEETHOVEN, SCHUMANN, LISZT, PROKOFIEV AND GRIFFES

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in Performance

by

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ABSTRACT

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Master of Music in Performance

Prelude and Fugue in B flat minor, from the Well-Tempered Clavier Book I.

BWV 867 by Johann Sebastian Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was born in Germany, and through his work in music, became a famous composer, violinist, and organist in the Baroque period. He composed various works, such as the The Well-Tempered Clavier, the Brandenburg Concertos, the Mass in B minor, more than 200 cantatas, two Passions, and a multitude of keyboard works. In his compositions, he used a wealth of musical creativity and polyphonic skill.

There are two books of Well-Tempered Clavier, (BWV846-893), each with 24 preludes and fugues in all the major and minor keys. This two-volume set is regarded as one of the most influential works in the history of Western classical music. The first set was completed in 1722, and the second followed twenty years later. Bach had a habit of reworking and enhancing previous source material to create his preludes and fugues. Architecturally, most of the preludes are notable for their economical number of measures, and the formal aspect of phrases and the various characters the

composer creates using a variety of tempi, finger techniques, melodic contours and harmonic vocabulary. Fugues had certain number of independent voices, usually ranging from two to five. Bach used his vast contrapuntal compositional skill in the fugues.

The Prelude in B-flat minor, from Book I, is very solemn, with a character much like a church prayer or hymn. As Bach worked much of his life as a church musician, much of his music is reminiscent of these sacred settings. In this piece, the sustained bass frequently appears throughout the whole work, giving it a rather serious tone. In the prelude, the bass and melody's presence is stronger than other voices, as they appear in two-note rhythmic patterns. The prelude is divided by a half cadence in measure 13. At the start of the second half, the melody of the right hand sounds like an answer and a dialogue in the middle and higher registers ensues. The Fugue has five voices. There are no episodes, only two sequential bridges, in measures 6 and 42. At measure 55, two voices move in parallel motion with each other. At the end of the fugue, the five voices appear in stretto, where each of the five part voices appear in gradual succession, one after another in each successive measure. Throughout the movement, this stretto motif is used frequently.

***Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109* by Ludwig Van Beethoven**

Ludwig Van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. He was a composer and pianist, and was one of the most famous and influential musicians during the Classical and Romantic periods. Beethoven composed 9 symphonies, 5 piano concertos, and 16 string quartets. Among his other compositions are the 32 piano sonatas. This collection of sonatas is known as the "The New Testament." They are sometimes grouped into three periods, representing his developing

compositional style. This sonata was composed between 1820 and 1821, which was during Beethoven's third, or late, period. Compared with the previous periods, sonatas in this final grouping display many new and sometimes experimental characteristics in his piano music: they feel more romantic, are full of unusual harmonies and modulations; generous use of trills, and a strong commitment to contrapuntal textures highlighted by fugue-like and actual fugal textures. The structure of the music is much freer than before, and he explores further the use of variation techniques in his compositions.

There are three movements in this piece. The first movement is in E major, 2/4 time, and is written in sonata form. The tempo marking is: *Vivace ma non troppo/Adagio espressivo*. In this movement, at the end of the first theme, there is a push to the second theme, leading toward a contrasting theme. This movement sounds very free, breaking away from the confines of the traditional Baroque and rigid Classical styles. Being a more expressive piece, its lyrical manner is more closely related to a vocal style. Though it is written using a straightforward tempo, there are hints of rhythmic hemiola, occurring at the same time as the fluid and beautiful melody. A strongly resonated chord announces that the coda begins. Throughout, the piece shows dynamic emotion, highlighted by many instructions given by the composer. The last chord vibrates with anticipation, as though the movement has not finished - just a slight pause in anticipation for the second movement in *Prestissimo*.

The second movement is also in sonata form, but starts in E minor, and is in 6/8 time. This movement begins immediately after the first movement without any delay. At the beginning of the second movement, the right hand is in upward motion, while, at the same time, the left hand is in contrary motion in octaves. This theme is in double counterpoint at the octave. The development begins over a dominant pedal

point with a canon between the soprano and alto which is derived from the bass theme. With the composer's instruction of *sul una corda*, the theme returns and the final chords are articulated with a strong staccato technique.

The third movement is *Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung. Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo*, E major, 3/4 time. This movement is a beautiful andante with six variations of differing characters and piano technique that contains a common melodic element that is repeated with different articulations. The theme's structure is symmetrical: eight measures with a repeat. The melody of this theme is very beautiful; the first variation is full of emotion and uses a slow waltz-style rhythm. The theme and the first variation are played in a tempo that suggests that the variations are to be very expressive. The second variation maintains a relaxed state and is joyful. The third variation, marked *Allegro vivace*, uses eighth notes and sixteenth notes alternating between the left and the right hands with continual dramatic character. The fourth variation returns to a slower andante, with an unusual 9/8 time signature. The fifth variation is a fugue. The sixth variation is marked *Cantabile*, with many kinds of rhythms constantly appearing: sixteenth-notes, thirty-second notes, triplets and a large number of trills. Almost always, each hand is responsible for two voices. At the beginning, this variation is quiet and calm, but grows gradually stronger, especially in the middle, when two hands play triplets with trills and eventually reach the musical climax. At the end of the sixth variation, in the last sixteen measures, a repetition of the opening theme restores the calm.

***Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54* by Robert Schumann**

Robert Schumann was a German composer who lived during the Romantic Period. He gave up law to study music, composing 6 symphonies, some concertos for

cello, violin, and piano, chamber music, choral pieces, many works for solo piano, opera and songs. The piano concerto by Schumann is very famous; this particular piece was finished in 1845. Before this piece, Schumann attempted to compose other piano concertos, but they were never completed.

There are three movements. The first movement is *Allegro affettuoso*, a sonata-allegro form in A minor. It expresses fantasy-like motifs. During the Introduction from measure 1 to 3, many chords appear showing a lot of powerful energy and excitement. The exposition (mm. 4-155) is comprised of the first theme (mm. 4-19) in A minor, is very expressive, as it contrasts with the introduction, where the piano and orchestra have the same theme one after the other, which is important because it includes many short motives (three descending notes or four notes ascending). There is a transition from measure 19 to 47, where the right hand of the soloist is a harp-like arpeggiation accompaniment to the melody given to the orchestra. The secondary theme from measure 67 to 111 is in C major, and is highlighted by a dialogue between the soloist and orchestra from measure 102 to 111 and measure 112 to 133 is a transition. The closing theme begins at measure 134.

The development begins at measure 156 and finishes at measure 258. It is marked *Andante espressivo*. The solo piano has many arpeggiations, which, again, accompanies the melody of the orchestra and is very lyrical. However, in measure 185, an octave appears and interrupts the lyrical part. Starting from measure 205, Schumann employs a development that has transformations in themes and motives, extensive figurations, including much harmonic and melodic manipulation. The recapitulation is from measure 259 to 398, beginning with a repetition of the primary thematic material, while the original tonic key in parallel major presents the secondary theme and closing theme. The cadenza is from bar 259 to 398, is

motivically conceived, and summarizes the thematic transformation of the entire movement. The coda, measure 458 to 544, is marked *Allegro molto* and displays much energized writing.

The second movement is an Intermezzo, with a tempo marking *Andantino grazioso* and in ABA form. At the beginning, part of the motive from the first movement is introduced. Part A is from measure 1 to 28, which is in F major. The theme is like a dialogue between the soloist and orchestra. Part B is from measure 29 to 68, full of many arpeggios in the soloist's part. The second A section is from measure 68 to 102. At the end of the second movement, there is a transition that connects the second movement to the third movement, which lasts from measure 103 to 108. At this point, the tempo begins to accelerate, rolling into the third movement without stopping.

The Third movement is marked *Allegro Vivace*, and is in rondo form. More specifically the form is ABA'CABA'+ coda. The first section begins at measure 109 and finishes at measure 148. It starts in A major, and uses a theme of ascending notes that was used in the first movement. After this opening statement, the orchestra plays an ascending scale that alternates with the soloist. Both begin increasing dynamic volume, growing more and more anxious and excited. Measure 148 to 188 is a transition, using running eighth notes in a quasi-dance. Part B, measure 188 to 251, leads to a transition of running eighth notes from measure 252 to 327. A' is from measure 327 to 359, but the theme is stated in the orchestra. At the end of the A' section, the soloist plays the main theme in the left hand with trills in the right hand. Part C is from measure 359 to 496. Interestingly, at measure 391 a new melody appears in the orchestra, alternating with the soloist. Part A' is from measure 497 to 528, and is almost exactly the same as before. Measure 528 to 568 present a transition.

Part B is from measure 569 to 632. The lengthy Coda is a major element of this last movement and runs from measure 771 to 979.

Schumann often uses cyclic compositional practices in this piece, such as using motives at the end of the piece that appeared at the beginning. He also was fond of repeating themes, modulating when necessary or using the original tonal key center.

***Obermann Valley* by Franz Liszt**

Franz Liszt was a Hungarian composer, virtuoso pianist, and conductor in the 19th century. He was known for his virtuosic piano skills, beginning when he was a child, and was touted as a prodigy. In 1831, Liszt witnessed the phenomenal Italian violinist Paganini in a performance and was heavily influenced by him. He borrowed various virtuoso elements from Paganini and transferred that style into his piano compositions. He composed symphonic poems, orchestral works, solo piano works like etudes, extended suites, and various character pieces, as well as works for piano and orchestra. Some of his most famous works are: Hungarian Rhapsodies, Paganini etudes, and the Piano Sonata. Because of the techniques he used, he was able to explore expressivity in his piano music. His performances and compositions promoted the development of piano artistry.

Liszt composed much program music; inspired by a very close relationship with literature, his pieces frequently have a descriptive title. *Obermann Valley* is from the large-scale volume of character pieces called: “*Années de Pèlerinage: Suisse.*” In the late 1830s, Franz Liszt travelled through Switzerland and Italy. Inspired by what he saw in Switzerland, Liszt captured his personal reflections in a set of pieces titled *Album d’un voyageur*, composed during his travels and published later in 1842. Between 1848 and 1854, he went back to edit *Album d’un voyageur*, revising the

cycle and expanding it to include *Églogue*, which was published separately, and *Orage*, composed in 1855. The revised cycle was renamed *Première année: Suisse* (“First Year: Switzerland”)—which was the first volume of the three-part *Années de Pèlerinage* (“Years of Pilgrimage”)—and was published that same year.

Liszt was influenced by Senancour’s epistolary novel *Obermann*. In this piece, Liszt uses the compositional technique of thematic transformation. The form of the whole piece is A A’ B C D coda. The first theme is in E minor, where the first three notes of the left hand establish the motif, which is syncopated, foreshadowing the material of the whole song. In A and A’, the melody of the left hand sounds thick, brooding and heavy, being sung from the depths of the heart. In part B, which is in C Major, from measure 75 to 118, Liszt’s syncopated motif is augmented; it feels refined and quiet, especially the top line of the right hand, where the melody shows through clear and transparent. In the second half of B, which is also expressive, the right hand repeats the motive, while the music becomes more and more agitated and excited. In part C, which is a *Recitativo*, a large number of thirty-second notes, with tremolo chords in the left hand, gives the effect of nervous anxiety. There are a lot of techniques used here, such as tremolo and octaves, pressing the music to a furious climax. This energized music continues until the end of Part C, suddenly returning to an expressive calm. Part D starts from measure 170, and in this part, it is similar to part B in E major, and has thematic transformation, a middle voice in triplets, acting as an accompaniment to the melody in the top voice. From measure 180, the music becomes *dolce*, and the theme repeats and the transformation of the theme becomes rapid and excited with many successive octave chords. The coda ends in E major from

measure 204 to 216. The theme repeats again and again, but each time, its effect varies. After a presentation of great excitement, the piece concludes in a quiet rest.

Diabolical Suggestion in D Minor Op. 4, No. 4 by Sergei Prokofiev

Prokofiev was a Russian composer, pianist, and conductor, and was one of the most famous composers in the 20th century. He composed five piano concertos, nine piano sonatas and seven symphonies. Prokofiev's piano contributions are outstanding not only in the history of the art, but also outstanding in regards to performance and piano playing style. One of his most important innovations was to create a truly modern technical approach. He was one of the earliest pioneers to take into consideration the piano's percussive nature. When he performed, he kept his fingers, wrists, biceps and triceps strong, as he explored this pioneering 20th century piano performance technique.

The forms of his pieces were mostly traditional: sonata form, ternary, rondo, etc. Prokofiev wrote many piano pieces, which has greatly enhanced the repertoire for pianists.

Diabolical Suggestion's tempo indication of *Prestissimo fantastic* hints at a piece that contains very rhythmic material. The whole piece revolves around a short motive containing a descending line of chromatic notes which alternates between the right and left hands throughout the whole piece. They are often presented with various dynamic and harmonic elements. At the beginning, the original motive is presented in the very lowest bass register. Prokofiev uses many dissonant intervals, such as ninths, in the left hand, and varies the motive by stretching and shortening it, pushing it to a lightning fast set of glissandi to the work's climax. At the end of this piece, the original motive appears again, pianissimo, ending with a poof.

Two pieces, from Roman Sketches, Opus 7 by Charles Griffes: No. 1 “The White Peacock” and No. 4 “Clouds”

Charles Griffes was an American composer who wrote many pieces for piano, voice and chamber ensembles at the beginning of the 20th century. He was a well-known representative of the Impressionist period. He is the most famous American composer who wrote in this style. He was entranced with the exotic, mysterious sounds of the French Impressionists, and was even more influenced in his compositions after he visited France. He also studied some contemporary Russian composers and that influenced his compositional style as well. In the piece *Roman Sketches*, Griffes retains French Impressionist harmony, but includes his interesting, clear-cut melodies and employs the harmonies to create a flow that propels the music forward. He composed many pieces for piano, including: *Tone Poems*, Op. 5; *Fantasy Pieces*, Op.6; *Roman Sketches*, Op. 7; *Four Preludes*, Op. 40; and a Sonata.

Roman Sketches is a suite of four pieces. “The White Peacock” is the one of the most famous of all Griffes’ pieces, and is marked: *Languidamente e molt rubato*. It has a complex meter, combining 3/2 and 5/4. Because of its popularity, Griffes orchestrated it in 1919. The form is: introduction, A B C D A’ A’’ B’ coda. There are four motives that appear in the first four measures. At the beginning of this piece, the right hand plays seven notes up and down, which is motive 1. Motive 2 is a descending rhythmic pattern, which includes one eighth note and two thirty-second notes. Motive 3 is dotted-rhythm chord in B major. Motive 4 is ninth chords falling in the left hand. In the next part of this piece, some motives appear that are similar to motives that have appeared previously. For example, in measure 7 to 9, the motive is similar to motive 1 and motive 3, with the motion of notes and similar rhythms.

Finally, motive 4 appears in measure 16 of the closing part of section A as a cadence. Compared to the earlier motive 4, measure 16 is extended with altered chords. From measure 35 to 40, the descending right hand uses the second motive. The Coda is from measure 60 to 66, which is the same as the beginning, bringing the piece to a satisfying and balanced conclusion.

“Clouds” shows Griffes using bitonal harmony in a slow-moving tempo to paint various characters of clouds. At the start, the movement of chords reminds the listener of slow moving clouds passing by on a blue sky. This piece’s form is A B C D A’ B’ + coda. A is from measure 1 to 9. At the beginning, the chords are steadily moving. B is from measure 10 to 14, C is from measure 15 to 23, D is from measure 24 to 30, A’ is from measure 31 to 34, and from measure 35 to the end is B’ and the coda. The Coda ends with extremely soft dynamics as the clouds blur and disappear in the evening.

PROGRAM I

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

PRESENT

Lu Shen

A student of Dr. Dmitry Rachmanov

In her Master of Music Recital*

Second piano, Nan Deng

Saturday, May 4th, 2013, 2:30pm

Cypress Music Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Piano Concerto in A Minor, Opus 54.....Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

1. Allegro affettuoso
2. Intermezzo
3. Allegro vivace

*In partial fulfillment of the Master of Music in piano performance

PROGRAM II

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

PRESENT

Lu Shen

A student of and Dr. Dmitry Rachmanov & Prof. Edward A Francis

In her Master of Music Recital*

Saturday, May 3rd, 2014, 4:30pm

Cypress Music Recital Hall

PROGRAM

The Well-Tempered Clavier Book I.....Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Minor, BWV 867

Sonata in E Major, Op.109.....Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

I. Vivace ma non troppo

II. Prestissimo

III. Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung

(Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo)

INTERMISSION

Vallee d'Obermann.....Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Diabolical Suggestion, Op.4, No.4.....Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Roman Sketches, Suite for Piano, Op.7.....Charles Griffes (1884-1920)

White Peacock

Clouds

***In partial fulfillment of the Master of Music in piano performance**

***In partial fulfillment of the Master of Music in piano performance**

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