

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

RECITAL WORKS

BY D. SCARLATTI, BEETHOVEN, SCHUMANN, DEBUSSY AND SCRIABIN

A graduate project in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Music in

Music, Performance

By

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December 2017

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ABSTRACT

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Master of Music in Music, Performance

Sonata in D minor, K.9, Sonata in D major, K.119 and Sonata in D major, K.491 by

Domenico Scarlatti

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) is among the most prolific and remarkable composers of the Baroque period. At this time, music had rapidly developed after the Renaissance. There were numerous keyboard composers, such as Bach and Handel from Germany, and Rameau and Couperin from France. The Italian Scarlatti stands out among all of them because of his unique style and how his compositions reflect his life and work experience.

Domenico Scarlatti was born into a family of musicians in Naples, Italy. His father, Alessandro Scarlatti, is considered the founder of the Neapolitan school of opera and composed over a hundred operas and over 20 chamber cantatas. Under his father's influence, Scarlatti took lessons in composition when he was very young. Scarlatti was no stranger to traveling outside of his native country. In 1705, Scarlatti moved to Portugal after he was hired as a private music teacher by a Portuguese Princess. After the Princess married, she moved to Spain and required Scarlatti to move with her as well. It was here where Scarlatti spent the remainder of his life.

Spain is a colorful country whose citizens enjoy both dancing and music for entertainment and pleasure. Scarlatti absorbed the Spanish tradition and learned its folk music and dance. This Spanish influence, along with his native Italian heritage, are reflected in his compositions. He often incorporated traditional musical elements from these two countries. Among these compositions, five-hundred and fifty-five of his keyboard sonatas are his best-known contributions to the keyboard literature.

Scholars Ralph Kirkpatrick and Alessandro Longo both individually organized and catalogued Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas. Of the two catalogues, Kirkpatrick and Longo used different letters to represent the opus number. Kirkpatrick used the letter "K" and Longo used the letter "L". Kirkpatrick organized his catalogue according to each sonata's composition date, starting with earliest works to his latest. Longo was the first person to arrange the catalogue for Scarlatti. He divided all of Scarlatti's sonatas into eleven volumes and arranged them according to key signature. Therefore, each volume starts with the sonatas in C major. As he edited these sonatas, Longo added a lot of his own personal interpretations including extra articulations such as slurs and dynamic markings. His edition is vastly different from Scarlatti's original manuscript. Today, musicians prefer to use Kirkpatrick's catalogue which is more loyal to the original manuscript.

Unlike the sonatas of Haydn, Mozart or later composers, Scarlatti's sonatas are typically short one-movement compositions set in binary form with two repeated sections. His sonatas are filled with various musical characters and ideas. They also include some technical elements that are a challenge to pianists. These include many ornaments, the use of a wide range on the keyboard, fast repeated notes, scales and arpeggios.

These techniques are on full display in the following Sonatas: Sonata in D minor, K.9, Sonata in D major, K.119 and Sonata in D major, K.491. In Scarlatti's sonatas, the tempo markings are not clear or specifically notated. However, Scarlatti often notated the tempos *Allegro* and *Andante* in his works. For his works that do not include either of these markings, it is important to look at the meter and texture in order to choose an appropriate tempo. The sonatas K.9, K.119 and K.491 are all marked as *Allegro*, but K.9 is written in 6/8 meter, while both K.491 and K.119 are in 3. Accordingly, these three pieces get faster by it numerical.

1. *Sonata in D minor*, K.9

This sonata is the earliest composition among the three previously mentioned and acquired the name "*Pastoral*" later on.¹ Pastoral is a musical form which was popular in Italy between the late 15th and 18th centuries. This sonata is monophonic with a *cantabile* mood in a simple binary structure of A A B B. It is written in a duple compound meter of 6/8 and uses grace notes, dotted notes and a rhythmic motive. Starting with a single-note melody, the texture thickens as melodic passages in thirds ascend. This can be imagined in many ways, such as, "a girl is alone in a farm and she is content with her solitude. She walks and dances freely and enjoys the rural view outside." In the B section, the trills are used in each measure and depicts shimmering rays of sunlight flowing down from the sun.

2. *Sonata in D major*, K.119

When Scarlatti wrote Sonata in D major, K.119, he was already living in Spain. This is a delightful dance-like sonata. Marked as *Allegro* in 3/8, this dance-like character is typical of Spanish folk dances. Scarlatti perfectly combines this characteristic throughout all four sections

¹ Xiaobai Lu, "Scarlatti and his sonatas", *Piano Artistry*, February 1997, p.18

of this sonata. He uses both contrasting major and minor modes and opens the first section in D major. Fast ascending scales and repeated notes are present in this section. The second section begins in A minor with a melodic line played by the right hand. The texture in the left-hand accompaniment thickens from single notes to chords as this section progresses. There are also some leaps in the left hand with the right hand playing. The third section begins in D minor. The melody descends while the key center becomes unclear. Trills begin on leading tones in a succession of different keys. The final section repeats the second section in the tonic D minor. The theme from the first section returns and ends in D Major. The various techniques required for this piece are particularly innovative and unique to Scarlatti. Pianists are required to have strong keyboard technique in order to adequately perform this work as it includes a fast tempo and dissonant chords.²

3. *Sonata in D major*, K.491

Among these three sonatas, *Sonata in D major*, K.491 is Scarlatti's latest work. Marked as *Allegro* in 3/4, this dance like sonata is regal and stately in character as it begins with three trills in the first measure. The first section begins in D major where the themes appear imitatively in the treble register followed by a response in the bass. The melodic lines are accompanied with either repeated single notes, harmonic intervals or blocked chords. Scale passages in the tonic key, leaps in both hands, descending arpeggios, and intervals of thirds moving together require technical proficiency from a pianist. The second section opens in the dominant key and returns to the tonic. It is structurally similar to the previous section and maintains a dance-like pulse until the end.

² Xiaobai Lu, "Scarlatti and his sonatas", *Piano Artistry*, February 1997, p.19

Piano Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op. 57 (“Appassionata”) by Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven is a well-known German composer born on 1770 in Bonn. He is considered a milestone composer whose compositions transitioned the Classical to the Romantic periods in the history of Western music. A prolific composer, Beethoven wrote large number of compositions. English pianist and musicologist Denis Matthews wrote the following comment on Beethoven sonatas in his book, *BBC Music Guides: Beethoven Piano Sonata*, and compared his works to those by Johann Sebastian Bach:

It would be a poor music library that lacked Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the thirty-two piano sonatas of Beethoven. They both do far more than enrich the repertoire of an already well-endowed instrument: they illustrate to perfection the almost infinite resource and flexibility of a chosen musical form in the hands of a composer of genius.³

Beethoven’s thirty-two sonatas are divided into three periods. Each period is based on its composition date and style. The first (Early) period approximately dates from 1794 to 1802, showing influences from Haydn, Mozart, and Clement. The second period dates from 1803 and is called the Middle period. Beethoven’s style reaches maturity and is accounted for much of his greatest and best-known works. These works include the *Piano Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op. 57*, also known as the *Appassionata* Sonata. Revolutionary heroism is a characteristic of this period in Beethoven’s works. The third and final period dates from 1816 to 1827 and is called the Late period. At this time, his health conditions declined. In comparison to his romantic-leaning writing style during the Middle period, Beethoven displayed his deep thoughts of life and religion in his later works. There are only five sonatas written during the Late period. One

³ Matthews, Denis, “Introduction”, in *BBC music Guides: Beethoven Piano Sonatas*, (Guildford and London: Billing & Sons Limited, 1967), 5

striking characteristic of each of these sonatas is that Beethoven included a fugue within one of its movements.

The *Appassionata* Sonata, Op. 57 is one of his most famous works and is often included in concert programs of many pianists. Completed in 1805, Beethoven was proud of this work and did not write another piano sonata for five years. Many scholars and experts relate this sonata with his *Symphony No.5 in C minor*, Op.67, because the character in both works maintain Beethoven's heroic style. The sonata was first published in 1807 in Vienna. The term *Appassionata* was originally titled by the publisher and its name has remained ever since.⁴

The *Appassionata* Sonata is known for its dramatic character, especially in the beginning of the first movement. The first movement *Allegro assai* is in a fast tempo in sonata form. Written in F minor, the primary theme of the exposition starts with a motive set in two-voice unison, two octaves apart in the middle and lowest registers of the piano. Beethoven writes this as *pianissimo* as this creates tension and a mysterious mood. Within this same motive, Beethoven suddenly changes the dynamics from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. Seventh chords in both hands marked *fortissimo* immediately follow and then the right hand ascends as each chord is inverted. It is here at this point where Beethoven presence heroic character –similar to his theme from Symphony No.5. The second theme is notated as *dolce* and is contrasting to the first theme as it is calm and flowing. The theme in A-flat major consists of mostly octaves in the right hand and broken chords in the left hand.

The second movement *Andante con moto* is written in theme and variations form in D-Flat major. The theme occurs in the middle to lower register of the piano and the melodic line is

⁴ Charles Rosen, "Sonata in F Minor, op.57("Appassionata") Composed by 1805", in *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 192

accompanied by blocked chords in both hands. The meter is marked 2/4 and the theme is relaxing. The rhythmic activity increases with each successive variation. In the theme, the rhythm is written in quarter notes and gradually evolves into eighth notes, sixteenth notes and thirty-second notes. This variation ends with a descending scale of five octaves and returns to the theme.

The third movement *Allegro ma non troppo* is a sonata form with a coda. Linked with an entrance from the *Andante* without a break, the movement enters with diminished seventh chords in dotted rhythm to create a tense dramatic emotion. The main theme of the third movement is in the low register of the piano and is accompanied by dotted rhythm. This rhythmic pattern is maintained throughout the exposition. The main theme opens the development section where Beethoven uses material from the Exposition, such as a syncopated melody. He combines this with other thematic material in the third part of the development. Then, the theme groups return in the recapitulation and in the same fashion of the Exposition. A coda in binary form closes the *Appassionata* and includes new thematic material, however his thematic dotted rhythmic pattern is also present. Finally, dramatically marked *Presto*, his quickened pulse brings a massive and tragic conclusion to the piece.

Fantasiestücke, Op.12 by Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a great German composer and critic of the Romantic era. Similar to Beethoven, his compositions can be split into three periods: the Early period (1828-1839), in which he mainly composed for piano; the Middle period (1840-1841), in which

he focused more on writing art songs; and the Late period (1841-1853), in which he completed instrumental, choral and orchestral works.

Born into a family with a genetic history of mental illness, Schumann first experienced severe depression after his elder sister and father passed away sequentially due to mental illness. In efforts to comfort his mother, he studied Law at a university, although he remained passionate towards his aspirations to be a pianist. After school, he persistently explored new techniques of piano playing through unique practicing methods. He even invented a finger-training machine to stretch his fingers. Unfortunately, his methods were proven unsuccessful as he permanently injured his right hand and his injuries prevented him from playing the piano. His inability to play the piano, as well as the subsequent deaths of his elder brother and sister-in-law, lead him to feel extremely panicked and fragile. This furthered his depressive state as he began to show neurotic and unstable behaviors. His mind became contradictory, and this was evident in his critical writings and compositions as some imaginary characters made appearances throughout his works. Pianist and musicologist Beate Perrey quoted Schumann's diary, in which he mentioned his two main characters in his mind.

In July 1831 Schumann writes, "Completely new personae are entering my diary today- two of my best friends whom, nevertheless, I have never seen before. They are Florestan and Eusebius."⁵

Fantasiestücke, Op.12 was composed in 1837; a period in which Schumann's shift in mental stability is becoming more apparent. The entire work is full of imagination and poetic ideas. Schumann vividly presents the different characters of Florestan and Eusebius. The former one represents "the turbulent and impulsive side of his nature, full of imaginative activity", while

⁵ Beate Perrey, "Schumann's lives, and afterlives: an introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13

the latter one shows a character who has “an embodiment of the gentle, thoughtful, and sensitive qualities”.⁶ The whole set includes 8 short pieces. The first four pieces were written in either one character, but the last four pieces includes both of these two characters alternately.

1. *Des Abends* (In the evening)

Des Abends is in D-Flat Major and binary form. The meter is 2/8 and its tempo is marked *Sehr innig zu spielen* which means to play inwardly intimate. It opens with a descending melodic line in the right hand within a triplet compound rhythmic texture throughout the entire movement. Using Eusebius’ character, this texture portrays a dreamy and hazy mood. Subjectively, one interpretation of this piece can envision a quiet and gloomy afternoon with a beautiful sunset that invokes a sentimental feeling.

2. *Aufschwung* (Boom)

Aufschwung is a 6/8 rondo with a contrasting middle section in F minor. The tempo is marked as *Sehr rasch* (very rapidly). In contrast to the first piece, this piece is more passionate, which shows the character of Florestan. At times it sounds anxious while at other times exhilarating. This portrays Schumann’s conflicting mind and the mental instability he experiences.

3. *Warum?* (Why?)

Warum is written in ternary form in D-Flat major. Its meter is in 2/4 and the tempo is marked *Langsam und zart*, which means slow and delicate. It is the shortest and slowest piece in the whole suite. The melodic theme consists of four bars, ending on a suspenseful open tonic

⁶ J.A.Fuller Maitland, “The Artist’s Development” in *Robert Schumann*, (Dallas: Kennikat Press, 1913),20

chord. This is unsettling because it ends on the third instead of the tonic –as if to keep the question open and leave listeners in suspense.

4. *Grillen* (Whims)

Grillen is a 3/4 rondo in D-flat major. *Mit Humor* (with humor) is the piece's marking. The whole piece is written in a waltz scherzo rhythm with many big chords, as if Schumann is deprecating a scene of dancing. In the middle section, the music grows quiet and sacred. It feels like a choir suddenly appeared and sings. It sounds magnificent.

5. *In der Nacht* (At night)

In der Nacht is a 2/4 ternary in F minor. It is the most exciting piece in the whole set. In the beginning of the piece, Schumann's marking indicates that this movement should be played with passion, *Mit Leidenschaft*. It begins with use of the lower voices of the keyboard and is marked piano. Each measure includes a contrasting crescendo swell which creates an anxious and restless feeling. The middle section is a little slower and feels more peaceful and romantic, which shows the sensitive side of Schumann.

6. *Fabel* (Fable)

Fabel is 2/4 in C major, written in ternary form with an introduction and a coda. The whole piece sounds like a narration of a fairy tale. Sometimes expressive, sometimes active, the music sounds like Florestan and Eusebius are chasing after each other. The whole story is about fantasy, humor and colors.

7. *Traumes- Wirren* (Tangled dream)

Traumes- Wirren is 2/4 in F major, written in ternary form with a coda. *Äußerst lebhaft*, is the tempo marking on the piece, and it means extremely lively. This requires pianists to have

clear articulation in their techniques. The entire piece is vivid, with mostly sixteenth notes in right hand throughout, as if depicting a fairy jumping around in the forest.

8. *Ende vom Lied* (End of the song)

Ende vom Lied is the last piece in the set, which is in 4/4 ternary form with a coda. Using a lot of vertical chords throughout, the entire piece makes a grand and massive gesture. Sounding like wedding march, Schumann included an abundance of imagination. The coda proceeds into a quiet sound which shows a reluctance to end.

Images Ière Série by Achille-Claude Debussy

French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is one of the founders of Impressionistic music of the 20th century. Born into a poor family, Debussy was lucky to be sponsored by a gifted woman pianist, Madame Mauté de Fleurville, who had been a pupil of Chopin. In addition to his free piano lessons, he was accepted by Paris Conservatoire. After winning numerous piano competitions and awards, Debussy began learning composition at the conservatoire. As a composition student, he did not follow traditional compositional rules. Instead, he created his own musical style as he discarded the notion of parallel fifths and octaves as being unacceptable and used pentatonic scales and medieval modes instead of traditional harmony. As Debussy said, “Music is made of colors and rhythmmed time”⁷, he focused more on the timbre of music instead of notes and chords. To obtain a special colorful effect, his pieces always require pianists to use a very sensitive touch and various specific pedaling. The scholar of French modern music, Rollo

⁷ Arthur B. Wenk, “Quiet Revolutionary”, in *Claude Debussy and Twentieth- Century Music*, (Massachusetts: G.K.Hall & Company, 1983), 13

H. Myers, described the way to play Debussy's piano works in great detail, "He aimed at a sort of transparent sonority, which could be obtained by attacking a note in a certain way, without force, and then prolonging the sound with the pedal after lifting the finger from the key."⁸

As an influential composer, Debussy created various compositions, including orchestral pieces, chamber music, piano, vocal works and an opera. After Debussy's successes with works such as *Suite bergamasque* and the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he started to think of writing *Images Ière Série*, but it was not written and published until 1905. The whole series has three pieces. Debussy finished the first two pieces- *Reflets dans l'eau* and *Hommage à Rameau* in 1904, and the last one, *Mouvement* in 1905.

1. *Reflets dans l'eau* (Reflections in the water)

Reflets dans l'eau is one of the most well-known compositions among all of Debussy's piano works. He used plenty of arpeggios with thirty-second or sixty-fourth notes and flowing chords going up and down to describe a mirror-like lake, which is sometimes peaceful but sometimes turbulent, and the reflections in the water are clear and sparkling. The whole piece requires pianists to approach the keys very gently and change color frequently.

2. *Hommage à Rameau* (Hommage to Rameau)

Titled as *Hommage à Rameau* is a commemoration of the great French composer, music theorist, and music educator Jean Philippe Rameau of the Baroque period. Debussy wrote the piece in the Sarabande form, a popular slow dance form in the 18th century, to express his admiration to Rameau. He included many vertical chords and marked a slow tempo in order to

⁸ Rollo H. Myers, "Chapter VII", in *Debussy*, (Bristol: Western Printing Service Ltd., 1948), 82

imitate the sounds of a church organ and create a majestic atmosphere that is reminiscent of Rameau's time.

3. *Mouvement* (Movement)

Mouvement can be interpreted as continuous motion. The texture is based on virtuosic triplets that is continually employed in the accompaniment of the entire piece. The triplets progress in groups as the piece sonically resembles a spinning wheel. Speaking of the piece, Debussy said "this must revolve itself in an implacable rhythm. The difficulties are not exclusively digital but concern also the lower extremity of the leg – the foot, that is, which must operate the pedal with ultimate subtlety."⁹

Etude in D-Sharp Minor, Op.8, No.12 by Alexander Scriabin

Alexander Scriabin is a great Russian composer and pianist who was born in 1872 in Moscow. In total he composed seventy-four opus numbers but only seven of them are orchestral works (including only one piano concerto) –the remainder are all piano works. As a composer in the transition between the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, his compositions reflect musical characteristics of both Romantic and 20th century periods. His early works (1888-1900) were written when he studied and taught at Moscow conservatory. In his early period, he was strongly influenced by Chopin, Liszt and Schumann as his compositions are romantic with rich harmonies and sounds.

Twelve Etudes Op.8 was published as his first set of etudes in 1894. As the last piece in a set of twelve, Scriabin wrote No.12 in D-sharp minor in ternary form and ended the whole set

⁹ LA Phil, "About the piece: Image Book 1", accessed by May 9,2017, <http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/images-book-1-claude-debussy>

with a passionate and emotional atmosphere. With use of dramatic sounds, the bass line uses wide leaps in the left hand while the right hand uses octaves in the melody throughout the piece. In the A section, the melodic contour is shaped as a rising sequence of ascending notes. In the B section, the melody also shows a descending shape. In the return of the A section, the texture is filled with repeated chords to create a fuller sound to end the piece with a more ecstatic feeling.

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Acknowledgements

- **Dr. Dmitry Rachmanov:** I am appreciative of your dedication to the piano department as you provide students with many opportunities to perform in masterclasses, gain new perspectives from visiting guest artists, and offer additional resources to aid our studies. I am thankful to have studied with you! In addition to musicality and technique, your guidance helped me develop the discipline required to gain improvement in my work. I learned that this is a necessary skill that can be applied to all aspects in life. My completion of this recital could not have been accomplished without your support and overwhelming generosity. Thank you so much!
- **Mr. Mark Richman:** Thank you for your musical guidance during my preparation for the recital. Your continuous encouragement and patience helped me grow and become more confident in my piano studies.
- **Dr. Gayle Kowalchyk and Dr. E.L. Lancaster:** Your support and encouragement are a positive and motivating presence in my academic and musical endeavors. Thank you so much!
- **My family:** Thank you for everything you do for me. Your unconditional love and support encourages me to pursue my goals in life. I love you more than I can say.
- **To all my friends:** Thank you for always being around, sharing your musical ideas and encouraging me. Your passion and enthusiasm inspires me always and pushes me to work harder. I could not do any of this without your unwavering support.
- **Thank you for coming to my recital tonight! I am honored to share my music with you all!**

California State University, Northridge
Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication
Department of Music

Presents

Lydia Wenye Li, piano

In her Graduate Solo Recital*

A Student of Dr. Dmitry Rachmanov

Saturday, December 2nd, 2017
7:30 P.M.
Cypress Recital Hall

**In partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree
in Piano Performance*

PROGRAM

Sonata in D major, K.491..... Domenico Scarlatti
Sonata in D minor, K.9 (1685-1757)
Sonata in D major, K. 119

Piano Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op. 57.....Ludwig van Beethoven
("Appassionata") (1770-1827)

- I. *Allegro assai*
- II. *Andante con moto*
- III. *Allegro ma non troppo – Presto*

INTERMISSION

Fantasiestücke, Op.12.....Robert Schum
(1810-1

1. *Des Abends*
2. *Aufschwung*
3. *Warum?*
4. *Grillen*
5. *In der Nacht*
6. *Fabel*
7. *Traumes- Wirren*
8. *Ende vom Lied*

Images 1ère Série.....Claude Deb
(1862-1

1. *Reflets dans l'eau*
2. *Hommage à Rameau*
3. *Mouvement*

Etude in D-Sharp Minor, Op.8, No.12..... Alexander Scr
(1872-1

***RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW**