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Senior Recital: Jennifer Bernard, multi-instrumentalist

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



SENIOR RECITAL
Jennifer Bernard

mezzo-soprano
composition
viola
piano

assisted by
Joanne Kong, piano
Laura Candler-White, piano
Russell Wilson, piano

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APRIL 6, 2002, 3:00 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

... PROGRAM ...

Concerto no. 23 in A Major, K. 488

Allegro
Adagio

Wolfgang A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Jennifer Bernard, piano

—Joanne Kong, piano

from Orchestra
concert 4/10/02

Mozart's piano concerti span his entire career, and they demonstrate not only his development as a composer, but the evolution of the Classical style in general. Mozart practically "invented" the piano concerto, taking a genre that was initially considered flashy "pop" music and making it into a highly developed and respected art form. The A Major Concerto, no. 23, was completed on March 2, 1786, during Lent. Mozart had moved to Vienna in 1781 to earn a decent living as a concert pianist and composer, and Vienna, being a heavily Catholic city, closed its theaters during the holy 40 days of prayer in preparation for Easter. Musicians took advantage of this lack of competition in the entertainment business to present numerous concerts; Mozart himself would usually write at least 3 concerti, among other things, to be performed during Lent, and would present 3 or 4 concerts per week! This particular concerto, however, was never released for publication after its performance; Mozart wrote that it was one of the "compositions that I keep for myself or for a small circle of music-lovers and connoisseurs, who promise not to let them out of their hands". It was later sent to his childhood patron, Prince von Furstenberg, but even when Mozart was going broke, he hid the score away. It's no wonder; the piece is chock full of charm and beauty. The first movement, Allegro, has a double exposition (first the orchestra, then the piano). It is marked by contrast between lyrical melodies and flourishing technical passages, and a flamboyant cadenza notated in detail by the composer himself. The second movement is a heart-rending Adagio in F-sharp minor.

Suite based on American Folk Songs

III. Not so Square Dance

IV. Ad-lib and Slow Walk

V. Middle Fiddler in 3/4 Time

Jennifer Bernard, viola

Russell Wilson, piano

Emanuel Vardi

(b. 1917)

Emanuel Vardi, originally from Jerusalem, made his career in the United States as a violist, composer, conductor, photographer, and painter. He began his musical studies on the violin, and since there is a larger and more varied repertoire of violin music than viola music, Vardi believed that violists should not limit themselves to playing "viola music," but should play transcriptions of works that were more technically demanding and musically interesting. This philosophy helps to explain why *Suite based on American Folk Songs* goes into the stratosphere of the viola

range at times, pushing the envelope of what we usually think of as viola music. The "Not so Square Dance" is a delightful piece that is possible to tap your foot to, but impossible to dance to because of the shifting meters. "Ad lib and Slow Walk" is reminiscent of Native American chants, while "Middle Fiddler in 3/4 Time" brings us back into the barn for fiddlin' with a twist (fiddle music is usually in 4/4 meter).

Trocris

Lindsay Birmingham

(b. 1978)

Jennifer Bernard, piano

I met Lindsay Birmingham at the Women Composer's Festival at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC, this past March. She received her undergraduate degree in composition at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina and is now pursuing an M.M. in composition at Florida State University, studying under Ladislav Kubik. I was attracted to this piece because of the beautiful melody and "almost" tonality of the outer sections, and the jazzy, disjunct middle section complete with a walking bass. Lindsay says the following about her piece:

Trocris was written during my undergraduate years at the Petrie School of Music at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Using the sonata form, the first section unfolds a long melody which is followed by a second thematic section with more motion. This builds up to a breaking point, which is meant to disrupt the tonic stability as well as serve as a development section. When the recapitulation comes, the returned melody expresses how it's been tainted by the previous section; this effect is created by stating the beginning melody in pure retrograde, in which remnants of the second section combine against it to lead to the ultimate "falling away" ending. The title Trocris was conceived through a careful organization of the consonants and vowels that I felt were reflected in the music.

Let Evening Come

Jennifer Bernard

I. Now Where?

(b. 1981)

II. Evening Sun

texts by Jane Kenyon

III. Let Evening Come

Jennifer Bernard, mezzo-soprano

Laura Candler-White, piano

This song cycle began as a single song, "Let Evening Come," based on the Jane Kenyon poem of the same name. After I chose it, I found out that the poem has proved to be an inspiration for many composers, including William Bolcom and J. Mark Scearce. Jane Kenyon, who died in 1995 of leukemia, was capable of expressing so many different emotions through her poetry, and I wanted to combine the first song I wrote with others to depict a natural progression of human emotions. The cycle starts with "Now Where?", whose speaker is feeling lost and ill at ease, wondering

what her faith can do for her. "Evening Sun" follows, and the speaker remembers her childhood and the pure joy of living, and comes to a resolution that nothing destroys her enough to make her give up. This resolution is reconfirmed in "Let Evening Come," which expresses a deep sense of faith and wisdom; "...let it come as it will, and don't be afraid. God does not leave us comfortless..." For me, this cycle contains the message that we all feel awful at times, but remembering the joy we have felt and having faith that things will work out helps us to realize how beautiful life is. This cycle is dedicated to my sister, Becca Bernard, who is one of my best friends and one of the strongest women I know.

Now Where?

It wakes when I wake, walks
when I walk, turns back when I
turn back, beating me to the door.

It spoils my food and steals
my sleep, and mocks me, saying,
"Where is your God now?"

And so, like a widow, I lie down
after supper.
If I lie down
or sit up it's all the same:

the days and nights bear me along.
To strangers I must seem
alive. Spring comes, summer;
cool, clear weather; heat, rain...

Evening Sun

Why does this light force me back
to my childhood? I wore a yellow
summer dress, and the skirt
made a perfect circle.

Turning and turning
until it flared to the limit
was irresistible....The grass and trees,
my outstretched arms, and the skirt
whirled in the ochre light
of an early June evening.

And I knew then
that I would have to live, and go on
living: what a sorrow it was; and still
what sorrow burns
but does not destroy my heart.

Let Evening Come

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Suite for a New Day

J. Bernard

- I. Awakening
- II. Reverie
- III. Distraction
- IV. Realization

Jennifer Bernard, piano

The title for this suite and all its individual pieces came after all four had been written, and the character of each piece is rather abstract. Every day is an adventure; these pieces evoke more of a mood than an actual story, although the listener is of course free to imagine. The four titles represent things that happen to everyone every day: we are awakened, both physically and sometimes emotionally or mentally, we daydream about things to come, we get distracted from what we're "supposed" to be doing by something more fun and interesting, and we come to some sort of realization, whether is small or big, calm or dramatic. *Suite for a New Day* is dedicated to Alan Aranas, who has taught me that my affinity for pop music is not something that I should be ashamed of or prevent from from seeping into my "classical" music, and who has been the subject of many of my daydreams, distractions, and realizations.