

2-20-1998

Senior Recital: Elizabeth Thompson, cello

Department of Music, University of Richmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs>



Part of the [Music Performance Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Department of Music, University of Richmond, "Senior Recital: Elizabeth Thompson, cello" (1998). *Music Department Concert Programs*. 686.

<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs/686>

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Music Department Concert Programs by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



SENIOR RECITAL
Elizabeth Thompson, *cello*

assisted by

Susan Pierce, *piano*
Hope Armstrong Erb, *piano*
James Wilson, *cello*



FEBRUARY 20, 1998, 8 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

• NOTES •

Locatelli, Sonata in D major: Active during the latter part of the baroque period, Locatelli was a brilliant virtuoso violinist, as well as a composer of many concerti grossi and revolutionary works for the violin. Indeed, his innovative techniques (such as very high passages, chromaticism, and extensive ornamentation) earned him an international reputation and made his compositions some of the most challenging of the time. It is interesting to note how this sonata incorporates many of his trademark violin compositional techniques, which in this Piatti transcription elevates the cello to new technical and expressive heights.

One of the most important characteristics of this music (visible in both movements) is the exploration of the tonal range of the instrument. The Adagio is a dignified, expressive movement, a simple melody shaded and colored by the chromaticism in the piano. Later in the piece, ornamentation of the melody weaves in sighing grace notes and arpeggios, eventually using higher and higher notes in its themes. In the Allegro, the basic melody itself mixes extremes in range with staccato themes, leaps and arpeggios that help to tonicize several keys. The result is exciting and challenging, showing off the versatility of the instrument.

Schumann, Fantasiestücke: In contrast to the aggressive technical passages of the Sonata in D, the Schumann pieces (originally published in 1849) reflect the "Beidermeier" spirit of the times, passionate music without virtuoso writing. Though originally for clarinet and piano and later arranged by Schumann for cello and piano, the two instrumental parts share many characteristics, including very simple melodic content.

Zart und mit Ausdruck is deceptively understated. Beginning with simple minor chords in the piano and a smooth, slow-moving melody in the cello, the piece soon becomes a storm. Buffeted from beneath by increasingly dissonant piano chords, the cello rarely tonicizes the home key of A minor, relying on the emotional power of its half-steps and tritone leaps to strengthen the part.

Lebhaft leicht provides a sudden contrast to the brooding first movement. Filled with *subito forte* markings and great swells and

drops in dynamics, the piece has a very conversational sound. Additionally, the two main themes, swooping seventh leaps and tight chromatic passages, make the piece at once boisterous and intimate, a flirtatious dance.

Rasch und mit Feuer is a truly fireworks finale to these pieces. It incorporates the excitement of the dynamic contrasts from the previous movement, but the thematic material is more gritty and aggressive. It is also more technically challenging, using arpeggiated runs and repeated sixteenth notes to build the tension as it moves up the scale to the main theme (which swoops and sighs in echoes of *Lebhaft leicht*).

Bloch, Schelomo: In late 1915, Ernest Bloch was desperately depressed. He felt confined, disillusioned, and unable to compose at his home in Geneva. Tormented, he searched for a way to express his feelings by setting the Ecclesiastes text, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." After being frustrated by the inadequacy of German and Italian words to express his thoughts, he became inspired at a cello concert. "Why...should not my Ecclesiastes utilize the soaring, unfettered voice of the cello," he later explained to his daughter. "I was saturated by the Biblical text and conscious of the woes of mankind.... If one likes, one may imagine that the solo cello is the voice of King Schelomo [Solomon.] The complex voice of the orchestra is the voice of his age, his world, his experience. There are times when the orchestra seems to reflect his thoughts, just as the solo cello voices his words. The introduction, which contains the form of several essential motifs, is the plaint, the lamentation... 'Vanity, vanity — all is vanity!'"

Though originally scored for cello and orchestra, the piano reduction (also by Bloch) retains the power and drama of the full orchestration. In echoing and anticipating the cry of the cello, the piano is truly a nation of people, both following and pleading with their ruler. As for the solo cello, its sighing falsetto laments, fierce syncopated battle calls, and low, resigned groans, give eloquent voice to the torment of both Solomon and Bloch.

(notes by E. Thompson)

• PROGRAM •

Sonata in D major
Adagio
Allegro

James Wilson, cello
Susan Pierce, piano

Pietro Locatelli
(1693-1764)
transc. Alfredo Piatti
cadenza by E. Thompson

Fantasiestücke, op. 73
Zart und mit Ausdruck
Lebhaft leicht
Rasch und mit Feuer

Susan Pierce, piano

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Schelomo

Hope Armstrong Erb, piano

Ernest Bloch
(1880-1959)