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JUNIOR RECITAL

Miriam Albin, viola
Larina Orlando, piano

MARCH 22, 1998, 3 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL
BACH PRELUDE
Johann Sebastian, the most famous and prolific of the Bachs, was a master at balancing creativity with intellectual control, a mastery necessary for fugal composition. A devout Lutheran and accomplished organist, Bach refined the highly technical prelude and fugue genre in the many organ compositions which he wrote for the church. Of the six suites which Bach wrote as concert pieces for solo cello, this one is unique in that it has the only prelude that includes a fugue. Probably the first works ever for solo cello, the six suites, written around 1720, have since been transcribed for many different instruments because of their success at incorporating all the elements of musical composition (melody, harmony, rhythmic variety) into one unaccompanied instrumental line. Bach’s achievement of highly refined counterpoint in only one voice is unparalleled: the solo instrument functions as both melody and harmony, which can be set off from one another by varying tone color and dynamics.

CHOPIN NOCTURNE
The two nocturnes which comprise opus 62 (B major and E major) were composed in 1846 and were dedicated to one of Chopin’s pupils, Mademoiselle von Konneritz. Cited as “perhaps Chopin’s most breathtaking venture into endless melody” (Jim Samson), the B-major nocturne indeed unfolds a far-reaching melodic line, which is ornamented in the reprise with a three-line trill. The composition is in the familiar ABA form, and in the final section Chopin’s attention to chromaticism (a hallmark of his later works) is highlighted in the extensive modulation leading to the coda.

HINDEMITH SONATA
Paul Hindemith was an accomplished performer on clarinet, piano, violin, and viola and was sufficiently familiar with all other orchestra instruments to write at least one sonata for each one. As a soldier in World War I he played the viola in the Rebner String Quartet, comprised of soldiers who performed concerts three kilometers from the front line. Immigrating from Germany to Switzerland after the establishment of the Third Reich, and then to the U.S.A., he found appreciation for his talents and became one of the most well-known composers and performers of his day, especially in the world of viola players. Living in a war-torn, disillusioned world contributed to his idea that “music is more than style, technique, and the expression of personal feelings. Music stretches beyond political boundaries, national hatreds, and the horrors of war.” Hindemith was aggressive and provocative with dissonance but never abandoned the triad, even in the midst of the takeover of atonality. This sonata, nicknamed the “machine gun sonata” by musicians, certainly does not lack structure, harmonic or otherwise. The first and second movements are centered around the recurrence of different sets of chords, the fourth movement is an athletic tour de force between two slow, heavy, meditative movements. The sonata ends on a pensive note, incidentally, the lowest note of the viola’s range.

FAURÉ NOCTURNE
Faure’s fourth nocturne became available to the public in 1885, with a dedication to Madame la Contesse de Mercy-Argenteau. Chopin had great influence over Fauré, and in this piece one hears a decorative melodic line reminiscent of Chopin’s early nocturnes. In the opening theme, this smooth cantilena is broad and cordial, and is immediately repeated in octaves. The ringing quality of these octaves is explained by Fauré in a letter he wrote to his wife: “I recalled a peal of bells we used to hear of an evening, drifting over to Montgauzy from a village called Cadrac whenever the wind blew from the west.” The second section of the piece has been described as a “mysterious angelus surrounded by a vibrant halo” (Emile Vuillermoz) and is followed by a return of the opening theme in the third (and final) section. We hear echoes of the angelus again in the final lines of the piece, as four large chords above it bring the nocturne to rest.

BRAHMS SONATA
Brahms himself performed this sonata with the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld in November 1894 for Clara Schumann at her home in Frankfurt. The piece was originally written for clarinet and piano, but the composer later arranged it for viola. The third movement of this sonata features a lyrical, almost pastoral melody that is heard at different times in both viola and piano. Note the canon between the viola and the left hand of the piano after the first repeat. The piano syncopations in the middle sections are haphazard, like raindrops falling. Perhaps the greatest strength of the third movement stems from the tireless renewal of the opening motif in both viola and piano. This movement has been called by Donald Tovey “the most deliciously Viennese of all Brahms’ works.” Notable in the fourth movement is the counterpoint between piano and viola and even within the lines of the piano. Brahms’ choice of F major as the key for this movement reinforces its ebullient character.

(note by M. Albin and L. Orlando)
• PROGRAM •

Suite no. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011
Prelude
J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)
trans. Samuel Lifschey

Nocturne in B major, op. 62, no. 1
Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Sonata for solo viola, op. 25, no. 1
Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)
I. Breit
(first and second movements proceed without pause)
II. Sehr frisch und straff
III. Sehr langsam
IV. Rasendes Zeitmass Wild
V. Langsam, mit viel Ausdruck

• INTERMISSION •

Nocturne in E-flat major, op. 36
Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Sonata, op. 120, no. 1
Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
III. Allegretto grazioso
IV. Vivace