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Junior Recital: Denise Roberts, piano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

JUNIOR RECITAL

Denise Roberts, piano

assisted by
Hope Armstrong Erb, piano

APRIL 11, 1998, 8 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL
Sonata in D minor, op. 31, no. 2, \textit{"The Tempest"}
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Largo-Allegro
Adagio
Allegretto

The three sonatas of opus 31, which were composed in 1801-1802, are considered “an epilogue or farewell to the standard high-Classic sonata and a transition toward a new line of development” (Maynard Solomon). The second sonata of this opus, Beethoven’s only sonata in D minor, is particularly noted for its innovations. The first movement opens with a soft and mysterious arpeggiated chord that is immediately interrupted by a quick and forceful allegro motive. These two opposing tempos and characters create an underlying tension that increases in intensity throughout the movement. The mysterious opening arpeggiated chord develops into expansive and ethereal recitatives, while the aggressive allegro motive expands into increasingly dramatic and stormy passages.

The second movement, in B-flat major, echoes elements from the first movement in a brighter and warmer atmosphere. The opening arpeggio now has the comfortable and confident quality of a B-flat major chord, unlike the eerie quality of the similar motive in the previous movement. Also, notice the mysterious “drum-rolls” in the bass throughout that reflect the storm of the previous movement. The final movement of the sonata, again in D minor, is characterized by its continuous motion that sweeps through the piece, dying away unexpectedly in the final measure.

Six Pieces (Klavierstucke), op. 118
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

1. Intermezzo in A minor
2. Intermezzo in A major
3. Ballade in G minor

In 1893, at the age of 60, Brahms composed the last of his works for piano: the six pieces of op. 118 (four intermezzi, one ballade, one romanze) and the four pieces of op. 119. The first piece of op. 118, an intermezzo in A minor, is very tumultuous and vague of key, never fully settling into a key until it reaches A major in the final cadence. This provides a transition into the second piece, a wonderfully intimate and expressive intermezzo in A major. Opening with a beautiful and lyrical theme, the piece then flows into a more unsettled and freely passionate section, concluding with a gentle return to the initial theme. The third piece of the set is a ballade in G minor and is characterized by its very rhythmic, chordal, and brusque opening melody. A contrasting gentle and singing section in B major interrupts this lively theme before it returns at the conclusion of the piece.

Concerto no. 20 in D minor, K. 466
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

1. Allegro

Composed in 1785 in Vienna, this piece is the first of Mozart’s two concertos in a minor key. The somber nature of the key and the syncopation of the opening theme create a tragic and stormy atmosphere. The orchestra begins softly but ominously, accumulating volume and intensity as the theme develops. The piano enters with a new theme that is never stated by the orchestra. This is unlike Mozart’s previous concertos, in which the solo generally enters with a statement of the orchestra’s opening theme. Here, the new theme given to the piano is gentle and pleading, creating a sharp contrast with the stormy quality of the movement’s opening theme. This contrast sets up a struggle between the orchestra and the solo that carries throughout the movement.

Mozart did not leave a cadenza for this concerto; however, various composers have published their version of the cadenza. The most frequently performed is the cadenza by Beethoven, (played in this recital) whose style creates an interesting blend with the passion, pathos, dynamic range, and varying mood in this concerto. The orchestra’s soft conclusion to the movement, as described by Louis Biancolli, “is as if the furies had simply become tired out and had lain down to rest, still grumbling, and ready at any instant to take up the fight again.” (D.R.)
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Adagio
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