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Senior Recital: Denise Roberts, piano

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



SENIOR RECITAL

Denise Roberts, *piano*

assisted by

Dreama Lovitt, *piano*



FEBRUARY 27, 1999, 8 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

• • • PROGRAM • • •

Sonata in C major, K. 132, L. 457
Cantabile

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)

Scarlatti composed over 500 piano sonatas, the majority of which were written between 1749 and 1757. This sonata, gentle and decorated generously with trills, was composed in approximately 1752. It is included in a volume that at one time belonged to the composer's pupil, Queen Maria Barbara of Spain. During this period of Scarlatti's composing, he began developing his sonatas more freely and writing less symmetrically. Although this sonata follows his typical binary form, it includes an excursion in the second half that introduces new material and develops themes originally stated in the first half. Such excursions were not previously common in the sonatas. In addition, the opening of the second half does not start from the closing tonality of the first; instead, it jumps immediately into a sudden and unpredicted modulation and upsets the balance of typical binary form. This creates a sense of tension throughout the second half of the piece.

Huit pièces brèves, op. 84

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

1. Capriccio
2. Fantasy

Fauré composed the eight short pieces included in this charming collection between 1869 and 1902. His publisher gave them their descriptive titles against his wishes in 1903. The collection includes two fugues that Fauré wrote as a student in 1869, as well as two pieces (the *Capriccio* and *Improvisation*) that were written for piano sight-reading tests at the Paris Conservatoire in 1899 and 1901 respectively, although the *Capriccio* was extended beyond its original form. To these, Fauré added the *Fantaisie*, *Adagietto*, *Allegresse*, and *Nocturne*, all of which were composed in 1902. The latter four were the only ones included in what is considered the collection's first performance on April 18, 1903 by Ricardo Viñes. The *Capriccio* and *Fantaisie* each feature gracefully singing melodies and unexpected harmonic twists.

Sonata in A major, op. 120
Allegro moderato
Andante
Allegro

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

During the summer of 1819, Schubert enjoyed a two-month holiday in Upper Austria. While there, he presented a piano sonata to the “very pretty” daughter of one of his hosts. Although it is not entirely clear if the A major sonata was, in fact, the piano sonata he composed during this time, it is easy to imagine music of “such wide-eyed youthful contentment” as a response to both the mountain scenery of Upper Austria and a pretty dedicatee. This sonata is the shortest of Schubert’s complete sonatas and is sometimes referred to as the “Little” A major.

The first movement of the sonata is characterized by its happily lyrical melody that is occasionally interrupted by rather robust passages. The following Andante creates a more somber atmosphere with its stark opening theme that is developed into a haunting second idea over a rocking motion in the left hand. The final movement revives the lighthearted aura of the first. Its opening theme has a sense of playfulness that is enhanced by little added twists to the melody throughout.

Concerto in A minor, op. 54
Allegro affettuoso
with Dreama Lovitt, piano

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Schumann composed the first movement of his only concerto for piano in 1841. He referred to it as a ‘Fantasie’ and did not initially seem to have intentions to write any further movements. It was not until four years later, in 1845, that the two additional movements were added to create the concerto as it is today. The first performance of the work was in Leipzig on January 1, 1846 by Schumann’s wife, Clara.

The structure of the entire first movement of the concerto depends on the unforgettable opening melody, which enters in the orchestra and is immediately answered by the soloist. It reappears in both the orchestra and the piano throughout the piece as the basis for nearly every passage. The lyrical development section presents the theme as a tender dialogue between the woodwinds and the piano. Even the coda is an accelerated version of the main idea. Alfred Nieman summarizes the brilliance of Schumann’s writing, stating: “That so much melody has been made to come from so few sources justifies this great concerto being seen as a landmark in Romantic music. It has something to teach us even today.”