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Caroline Fernandez, piano and harp

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Recommended Citation

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CAROLINE FERNANDEZ

PIANO AND HARP

FROM THE STUDIOS OF
RICHARD BECKER AND ANASTASIA JELLISON

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021

1:30 PM

CAMP CONCERT HALL

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



PROGRAM

Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major, BWV 825

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

- I. Praeludium
- II. Allemande
- III. Corrente
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Menuet
- VI. Menuet II
- VII. Gigue

Caroline Fernandez, piano

Sonata in C Minor, op. 2, no. 3

Sophia Dussek
(1775–ca. 1830)

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Andantino*
- III. *Rondo*
- IV. *Allegro*

Caroline Fernandez, harp

Intermission

Larghetto, op. 119

Nicolai von Wilm
(1834–1911)

Mandy Zhou, violin
Caroline Fernandez, harp

Scherzo, op. 12, no. 10

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953)

Elegie, op. 3, no. 1

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873–1943)

Caroline Fernandez, piano

Notes on the Program

Johann Sebastian Bach

Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major, BWV 825

This partita is the first in a set of six keyboard partitas by Johann Sebastian Bach. The partitas were published individually from 1726 to 1730; in 1731, they were published collectively in a volume titled *Clavier-Übung*, or “Keyboard Practice.” The first partita contains seven movements that follow the basic form of a Baroque dance suite: an opening movement followed by four core dances (Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, and Gigue), with an additional dance (the Menuet) inserted before the final Gigue. Notably, this was the first work Bach published independently, rather than as part of his official positions, which primarily focused on church music.

According to Rudolf Steglich, the volume’s title of “practice” does not imply the English-language connotation of a repetitive pedagogical etude. Instead, the partitas are practices “in the musical sense, as a composition for the piano-forte” (of course, at the time of composition they would have been practices for the harpsichord). Interestingly, this exploration was intended for the keyboardist, rather than an audience. In the full title of *Clavier-Übung*, Bach includes the phrase “prepared for the enjoyment of music lovers by Johann Sebastian Bach” (English translation by Grant Hiroshima). But, as Hiroshima observes, the modern recital format would not be invented until the mid-19th century, by Franz Liszt—thus meaning the music lovers to whom Bach referred would have been teacher, student, or simply someone playing for their own personal pleasure.

Sophia Dussek

Sonata in C Minor, Op. 2 No. 3

Sophia Dussek’s Sonata in C Minor is a staple of classical harp repertoire and further significant as one of the first major harp sonatas composed by a woman. The sonata was not always recognized as such, however. It first appeared in a book (the first of two) of three sonatas for the harp, published by Pleyel in Paris in 1796. According to the publisher Schott, that edition did not include the composer’s first name, and consequently for some time these sonatas were falsely attributed to Jan Ladislav Dussek, Sophia Dussek’s husband. Only in newer editions has the attribution been corrected to credit Sophia Dussek, a Scottish-born composer, vocalist, pianist, and harpist.

The sonata is written in classic sonata form: it begins with a statement *Allegro*, continues with a slower *Andantino*, and closes with a lively *Rondo Allegro*. The movements, particularly the *Rondo Allegro*, fit well into the harpist’s hand, speaking to Dussek’s own experience with the instrument.

Nicolai von Wilm

Larghetto, op. 119

German-Russian pianist, conductor, and composer Peter Nicolai von Wilm composed this harp-violin duet in 1890; it was first published in 1894. Wilm wrote primarily for piano, although he also dabbled in chamber music and, according to Hugo Riemann, composed the first string nonet. This *Larghetto*, although one of Wilm’s lesser-known works and not part of the typical harp-violin duet canon, is nonetheless structurally and melodically beautiful. It cycles through lyrical *larghetto* sections; faster, driving *animato* passages; and dialogue-esque *tranquillo* phrases, before condensing all three in its conclusion.

Continued ...

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka

Nocturne in E-flat Major

Russian composer Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka is best known for his operas *A Life for the Tsar* (1836) and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842), which, together with his other pieces, inspired many future Russian composers; biographer David Brown notes that Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky called Glinka's composition *Karaminskaya* the acorn from which the oak of later Russian symphonic music grew. This nocturne, however, predates Glinka's best-known works. It was composed in 1828 (although published only posthumously, in 1878), around which time Glinka was resigning from his government position in St. Petersburg and traveling to Italy for three years. During this time, according to program notes from the Kennedy Center, he would "[resolve] to create an opera which would contain a specifically Russian sensibility."

Interestingly, the nocturne is written for either piano or harp. Allegedly, Glinka was courting a young harpist at the time — making this nocturne strikingly similar to Sergei Prokofiev's Prelude Op. 12, No. 7, also written for piano and harp, which George Predota associates with Prokofiev's romantic pursuit of harpist Eleonora Damskaya.

Sergei Prokofiev

Scherzo, op. 12, no. 10

The last of Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev's Ten Pieces for Piano, the Scherzo is a study in perpetual, additive motion. Its recurring themes build frenetically atop each other until the satisfying conclusion that takes full advantage of the piano's range.

Prokofiev composed the set of pieces from 1906 to 1913, during his student years at the St. Petersburg conservatory, which Richard Taruskin characterizes as a period of "swift creative growth," during which he "avidly sought musical innovation." Prokofiev published and performed the set in 1914, the year he graduated, and went on to become a pillar among the Russian 20th-century greats. Prokofiev lived abroad during the Soviet Union's early years, but returned to the country permanently in 1933, where he composed such classics as *Romeo and Juliet* (1935-36) and *Peter and the Wolf* (1936).

Elegie, op. 3, no. 1

Sergei Rachmaninov

Victor Seroff has noted that whereas Prokofiev embraced experimentalism and innovation in his music, paralleling the political change in 20th-century Russia, Sergei Rachmaninov was in many ways the last bastion of the 19th century's Russian Romanticism. The Elegie, the first of Rachmaninov's 1893 *Morceaux de Fantaisie* ("Fantasy Pieces"), in many ways embodies the sweeping melodies and lush harmonies that are hallmarks of that style. It is followed by the most famous of the *Morceaux*, the ringing Prelude in C-sharp Minor, which Rachmaninov composed before the other pieces. Although the *Morceaux* are not intended to be played as a group, when listened to in succession, the Elegie's melancholic lines do sound somewhat like the mourning preceding the Prelude's funeral bells.