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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
CONCERT SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
FOUNDED 1830

Senior Recital

Christopher Marks, *piano*

April 3, 1992, 8:15 PM

North Court Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Sonata in B-flat major, K. 333

Allegro

Andante cantabile

Allegretto grazioso

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

Sonata for Piano (1949)

Allegro energico

Allegro vivace e leggero

Adagio mesto

Allegro con spirito

Samuel Barber

(1910-1981)

INTERMISSION

Prelude in B major, op. 16, no. 1

Alexander Scriabin

(1872-1915)

Mazurka in C-sharp minor, op. 25, no. 5

Feuillet d'album, op. 45, no. 1

Prelude in E-flat minor, op. 11, no. 14

Venezia e Napoli

Gondoliera

Canzone

Tarantella

Franz Liszt

(1811-1886)

Mozart's 19 sonatas for fortepiano constitute a body of work central to the solo piano repertoire. This one, written in 1784, is certainly one of the most elegant and expressive sonatas he wrote. The first movement's many themes (for which Mozart never seems to be at a loss) make it very colorful. The second movement is very operatic, with aria-like textures and lyrical melodies. The third movement, a rondo, is written in imitation of a concerto. Mozart switches between orchestral and solo textures, even adding a cadenza toward the end, in order to simulate interplay between orchestra and piano.

Samuel Barber is probably most well-known for his brilliant art songs and his *Adagio for Strings*. This sonata is one of the few pieces that he wrote for solo piano. It was commissioned by the League of Composers and first performed by Vladimir Horowitz in 1949. It is famous for its virtuosic and extremely creative writing. The first movement, a dramatic and occasionally painful one, opens with a descending minor 2nd in the right hand; this two-note motive is seen repeatedly in this and subsequent movements. Most of the movement is extremely chromatic and dissonant, making Barber's timely use of triadic harmonies particularly poignant. The second movement is a whimsical picture of a world out of balance. He laughingly evokes the sound of the expected dance movement by including a waltz with an extra beat and twisted harmonies. The third movement rediscovers the mournfully chromatic mood of the first, with frequent use of twelve-tone harmonies. The first and last sections exhibit a texture similar to a Baroque aria, with a stark accompaniment and a lyrical melody. Between these two sections, Barber fleshes out the music with grandiose gestures reminiscent of the nineteenth century. The last movement, a fugue, uses jazz rhythms and harmonies, placing it indisputably in the category of American music.

Alexander Scriabin was a Russian composer whose style owes a great deal to Chopin. Although his works are not as well known as many of his compatriots', he was one of the most famous composers in Russia during his lifetime. He wrote hundreds of short pieces for piano, as well as ten sonatas. The first prelude on the program is very similar to a Chopin nocturne with its rolling left-hand accompaniment and extremely lyrical right-hand melody. The mazurka is also an homage to Chopin, who wrote many piano pieces based on this Polish dance form. Later in his life, Scriabin became more adventurous with his harmonies and his textures as he grew more deeply interested in mysticism. The *Feuillet d'album*, while from this later period, is not nearly as extreme as some of the other pieces he wrote at this time. It is a very short and quiet gem of a piece. The last prelude is a boisterous and flashy piece in 15/8, showing Scriabin's tendency to dabble in unusual time signatures and rhythms.

Liszt and his erstwhile mistress, the Countess Marie d'Agoult, left their homes in Paris in the late 1830's in order to avoid the scandal which their love affair had created. During this time, they travelled extensively in Switzerland and Italy, the latter being one of their favorite places to visit. Liszt wrote a three-volume set of pieces based on these travels, entitled *Années de Pèlerinage. Venezia e Napoli* ("Venice and Naples") is the supplement to the second volume (also known as "the Italian year") of this set. The first section, "Gondoliera," is based on a Venetian gondolier's song, written by a virtually unknown composer named Peruchini. The second is also based on a gondolier's song, this one from an aria in Rossini's opera *Otello*. The third, "Tarantella," is based on several selections from a collection of Neapolitan folk-songs produced by a Frenchman named Guillaume Cottrau. Throughout this set, one can hear Liszt imitating the Italian *bel canto* opera style, with vocalistic lines, uncomplicated accompaniments, and cadenza-like flourishes.

--notes by Christopher Marks

Next: Junior Recital
Julie Price, soprano
Ann-Janette McEntire, guitar
North Court Recital Hall
April 5, 1992, 3:00 PM